

## **PIM booklet 3: Application examples**

**by Burkhard Schwarz, Eberhard Gohl and  
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Participatory Impact Monitoring (PIM) is a concept for guiding self-help projects in development cooperation. The actors involved carry out the monitoring themselves. Because PIM assumes that these actors are autonomous, it has several strands or „strings“ - the monitoring systems of the self-help groups and the development organizations are separate. The strings are periodically compared: the actors reflect on their observations and assessments, adapt their planning accordingly and deepen their dialogue with one another.

PIM was developed as an alternative to conventional planning, monitoring and evaluation procedures. It does not presuppose the availability of good planning documents, nor does it postpone reflection to a late evaluation.

The main purpose of PIM is to document socio-cultural impacts. By doing so it initiates and reinforces learning processes, and complements more technically or economically oriented monitoring. At the same time, it is compatible with many other monitoring concepts.

PIM was designed in a joint study by workers in development cooperation from the Philippines, India, Bolivia, Argentina and Germany, and tested in 1993/94.

FAKT

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# Palmyrah tapper's families in Tamil Nadu, India

A Case Study

Amirtharat Anandhy, PWDS

The case study of Palmyrah Workers' Development Society (PWDS) is presented in order to illustrate a situation in which PIM was introduced independently and without external advisors. The NGO had only the preliminary version of the PIM guide. PIM was applied systematically, which made it easy for the communities and the NGO's field workers to understand how it works.

## 1. Background

Development organization / NGO

Palmyrah Workers' Development Society (PWDS) was founded in 1976. It was registered in 1977 under the Societies Registration Act. Since its inception, the Society's main objective has been to promote the formation of a movement of palmyrah tappers and other socially and economically deprived groups for their social and economic liberation and to increase their awareness, dignity and self-reliance. This is done by guiding and encouraging them in establishing community-based income-generating units, by organizing training programmes, and by participatory development of value-added palm products such as candy (sweets), syrup, spiced and refined jaggery (see glossary below). PWDS staff members come from the same social background as the palmyrah tapper families.

Self-help groups

A precondition of the development process is empowerment of the weaker sections of the population at grass-roots level. The first step towards achieving this is organization of the community. With the encouragement and guidance of PWDS, Mantram or village-level associations for tappers and women have therefore been formed in rural areas. The groups are involved in attaining self-sustained development through awareness education, community-based employment and income-generating programmes, and other self-help activities, e.g. a revolving loan and savings scheme. At present, 110 women's groups and 200 tapper's groups are functioning in different parts of Kanyakumari and Trivandrum Districts.

PIM is being introduced in the community-based candy production units. Community-based means that the units are owned and run by a group of palmyrah tapper families. The candy is produced in separate buildings. In the past, each family processed the neera (see glossary) in their own house, with the result that the women's workload was extremely high, children had to help in production, the houses became dirty, and the income generated by all this drudgery was very low.

Motivation, financial assistance in the form of concessional loans, and technical and marketing support are provided by PWDS. The whole programme relating to the candy production unit has been designed to promote participatory and self-sustained development.

## GLOSSARY

Palmyrah = palm which yields sugar sap

neera = sap tapped from the flower of the palm

jaggery = solidified sugar syrup

brix = measure of sugar content in the sap (°brix equivalent to % sucrose)

## **2. Monitoring practice prior to introduction of PIM**

Development organization / NGO

Responsibility for implementing each project was assigned to different sections of PWDS, which operated with a coordinator, a supervisor and other staff members, including field workers. Planning, decision-making and monitoring were done by the superiors after joint discussions. In monitoring, the main emphasis was on assessment of activities, i.e. the technical and economic impacts of the projects.

Self-help group

Leaders selected by the group monitored the activities. Planning, decision-making and impact assessment were carried out jointly by the community and PWDS staff. The community's participation is assured in all phases from the start of production to the sharing of profits. The community holds meetings to take decisions on whether to set up candy production units, the location and management of the units, prices of neera and candy, employment of candy makers, profit-sharing etc. In short, the community is given the ability to monitor the units in accordance with PIM principles.

## **3. Introduction of the PIM concept**

Development organization / NGO

PWDS introduced PIM gradually in its various programmes. In 1993, PIM was introduced in the palm product development programme. A planning session for staff members was held to decide on methods of implementing PIM in the candy-making units. At this session the steps in introduction were listed, and activities are now being carried out accordingly.

Next, the staff were trained in the use of PIM tools, including assessment of socio-cultural impacts. Monitoring is now being carried out on this basis.

Self-help group

Group-based impact monitoring was introduced in the community-based candy production units. PWDS provided motivation and guidance. First, the members of the community were made aware of the need for PIM, to ensure their full participation and to make the programme self-sustaining. Then they were motivated to introduce a system of this kind.

The community then articulated their expectations and fears concerning the project. Corresponding indicators were also identified. An observation committee was selected and trained in the use of PIM tools

The steps in the introduction of PIM may be summarized as follows:

Steps in the introduction of PIM in community-based candy production units

1. Introduction of community and field workers to principles of PIM
2. Articulation of community's expectations and fears
3. Identification of indicators
4. Identification of monitoring team
5. Training of team
6. Documentation of observations
7. Reporting of observations, analysis of impact and corrective action if necessary.

#### **4. Details of group-based impact monitoring**

With the help of PIM, the tappers' families are able to observe the changes brought about by the candy production units. Members of the self-help groups were trained as observers, e.g. they had to learn how to measure brix and pH of neera themselves.

All the candy production units and PWDS meet regularly at fortnightly or monthly meetings. The monitoring results are regularly reported and assessed. Impacts are analyzed and any corrective action needed is taken jointly by the community. In the course of time the system has become well established in the units.

Some of the community's expectations and fears and the indicators derived from these are listed below:

##### **COMMUNITY'S EXPECTATIONS**

Higher profit from candy production than from jaggery production

Production of high-quality candy with high yield

Generation of alternative employment for women

Promotion of saving habit

Development of production unit (e.g. construction of their own building)

##### **INDICATORS**

Cost of producing candy; candy and jaggery prices; profit given to tappers

Candy yield and quality; brix of neera; pH of neera  
No. of women doing alternative jobs

No. of members saving  
attendance at meeting; participation in the project

##### **COMMUNITY'S FEARS**

Tappers may not cooperate in supplying neera

Tappers may not supply quality neera

PWDS may not pass on full profit to tappers

##### **INDICATORS**

No. of tappers supplying neera; total quantity of neera supplied

Brix of neera; pH of neera  
Profit given to tappers

## 5. Details of NGO-based impact monitoring

NGO-based impact monitoring is carried out by PWDS. PIM principles were discussed among the staff members and decisions were taken on how to implement NGO-based impact monitoring. The NGO's expectations and fears with regard to the project were listed, and indicators to measure them were identified.

### NGO'S EXPECTATIONS

- Candy can be produced with high yield
- Gradually the community will take more and more responsibility for the unit, including analyzing impact, processing candy and maintaining accounts
- Reduction of women's workload
- More people may join the project
- New groups may set up candy production units
- PO will undertake other needbased projects

### INDICATORS

- Candy yield and quality
- List of responsibilities taken by group
- Reduction in women's working hours
- Number of partners actively participating in the project
- List of groups with established candy production units
- List of new schemes initiated by group (e.g. community savings, community credit)

### NGO'S FEARS

- Whether tappers' families will cooperate and become involved in the project
- Whether sufficient quantity of neera will be available to the units

### INDICATORS

- Number of tappers' families supplying neera
- Average quantity of neera supplied daily

Observation is carried out regularly and reflected upon at the fortnightly meetings. Impacts are analyzed and corrective action is taken whenever difficulties or obstacles arise.

Joint reflection workshops are arranged for the PWDS staff and the producing groups. Experience gained in setting up and monitoring the units is shared by the people from three candy units. They discuss lessons learned regarding successes and failures of the programme and take corrective action to overcome the obstacles and to plan for future activities. Each group is able to learn from the others.

## 6. Impacts observed and induced by PIM

The impacts observed include not only expectations and fears. Especially at socio-cultural level the actors noticed other changes with regard to attitudes and behaviour. Some of these were induced or reinforced by the application of PIM itself.

Technical and economic impacts

1. Higher profits from candy production.

2. Efficiency of candy production is increased.
3. Tappers' income is doubled.
4. Alternative employment opportunities are created for women.
5. Women's workload is reduced.
6. School-age children have more time to devote to their studies.
7. Saving habit is promoted among tappers' families.

#### Socio-cultural impacts

1. Development of cooperative attitude within community.
2. Involvement of groups in decision-making, analyzing impacts etc.
3. Women are now able to devote more time to their children and loved ones.
4. Tappers' houses and surroundings have become cleaner.
5. Women have time to participate in important social functions.
6. People have better knowledge of testing and processing candy.
7. Spirit of enterprise has developed among members.

Moreover, PWDS and the communities were able to identify various multiplier effects:

- integral multiplier effects
- new members are joining the programme
- women also participate more actively in monitoring: they organize meetings once a month to reflect on what has been observed and take decisions relating to the programme
- vertical multiplier effects
- alternative employment opportunities are created for women
- promotion of the saving habit among the members
- horizontal multiplier effects
- impressed by the success of the candy unit at Kamplar, two more groups have started producing candy.

## 7. Conclusions

The monitoring system being practiced in the units has increased the autonomy of the groups in management. In the long run it is expected that the units will achieve full self-management.

The application of group-based impact monitoring has been a learning process for the community in the sense that their ability to produce candy efficiently has improved.

The monitoring system used by PWDS and the self-help groups can be managed easily by those involved. PIM makes it clear which impacts are important to the people and to the NGO, and helps to monitor them continuously. Although indicators may not meet scientific standards, they are helpful for the actors for the purpose of reflecting on successes and failures and thus steering the project.

If carried out properly, PIM can promote autonomy and contribute to the success of projects by augmenting growth-promoting factors and overcoming growth-depressing factors.

Address: Palmyrah Workers' Development Society (PWDS) Crystal Street Martandam 629 165  
Tamil Nadu India  
Lessons on Responsibility for Credit  
PIM experience in mining cooperatives in Bolivia

Beatriz Delgado, Florinda Gonzales, Ivan Velasquez, Burkhard Schwarz

The case study from the Federation of Mining Cooperatives of the Department of La Paz

(FEDECOMIN) demonstrates how people and NGO staff approach the task of clarifying the economic backgrounds and the internal organization of their joint projects. This induces individual capacity- and responsibility-building and organizational learning processes. The relevance of the work of the NGO's staff, previously underestimated, is made clear. PIM has been tested in two self-help groups affiliated to FEDECOMIN. (A detailed case study on PIM in Caracoles is available from CODECOMIN and FAKT.)

# **FEDECOMIN in Caracoles, Bolivia popular consumption store in Caracoles mining sector case 1:**

## **1. Background**

Development organization / NGO: FEDECOMIN with CODECOMIN

The Federation of Mining Cooperatives of the Department of La Paz (FEDECOMIN-La Paz) was founded in 1977. About 80 mining cooperatives are legally affiliated to FEDECOMIN, representing more than 7,000 cooperative members, members of their families not included.

For several years there has been a technical consultancy service within FEDECOMIN called CODECOMIN. This was developed to meet the various social and technical needs expressed by the cooperatives. Another objective of CODECOMIN is to strengthen the mining cooperatives as people's organizations.

Self-help groups: The mining cooperatives

The mining cooperatives are a genuine miners' self-help organization. The "traditional" prospect mines were abandoned by private or government companies because they were not profitable. The mining cooperatives are now a highly relevant sector of the economy, providing employment and generating national income in foreign currency. They accomplish this with very little capital and usually under extremely adverse working conditions. The average family income of cooperative miners is currently Bs. 200 300/month (US\$ 50 - 75).

The length of the working day varies from one cooperative to another and even from one member to another. Generally they do not have sufficient breaks, and work from Monday to Sunday. The cooperatives use substandard equipment under poor conditions.

Since production is irregular, 80% of the cooperatives can save no money for internal investments. Because of their precarious economic situation all the cooperatives suffer from strong fluctuations in membership and are therefore structurally weak.

Popular consumption store in Caracoles

There are three neighbouring mining cooperatives in the Caracoles area: Libertad, Porvenir and El Nevado. In each of them there is a Housewives' Committee. While these women's organizations are formally independent, in practice they depend on the cooperatives, which are run by men. Most of the women, whose native language is Aymara, speak no Spanish.

The Popular Consumption Store was founded in 1990 as a response to the problems that cooperative members' families faced in purchasing basic necessities - mainly with regard to price and quality. The distance separating the cooperatives from the markets supplying them, the bad roads and the lack of an own vehicle were other reasons.

The founding of the Popular Consumption Store was also intended to consolidate the organization of women in the mining cooperatives in both of their roles, as active members and as housewives.

In the administration of the store, however, there were fundamental problems which made it difficult to attain these objectives. On one hand, the housewives' lack of education was an obstacle to collective and effective management, while on the other the unfavourable power structure led to continuous interference by the (male) cooperative members, e.g. regarding basic decisions on the

repayment of credits.

## **2. Monitoring practice prior to introduction of PIM**

Development Organization / NGO: CODECOMIN

CODECOMIN mainly accompanies productive and social projects. While the work done has been monitored regularly, comparing it to the plans was not very systematic and was hampered by frequent problems and fluctuations in the cooperatives and by changes in the general political situation in Bolivia.

The monitoring mechanisms were not sufficient to reflect changes and impacts within the projects. The information was restricted to a small group of individuals, i.e. staff members and federation leaders. Three-quarters of the cooperative members may have noted some changes individually, but there was no opportunity to analyze them collectively: were they positive or negative, were they due to members, leaders or staff? There was a lack of communication between cooperative members and staff.

CODECOMIN was unable to understand the logic of internal functioning and the complexity of the cooperatives' organizational problems. Due to this unstable context, practically none of CODECOMIN's projects evolved as planned. This situation caused frustration among the staff members, the cooperatives, within the federation, and even with the funding agency. The work of the staff, and especially of the social development department, was not at all appreciated.

Against this background the socio-economic consultant of FAKT suggested that CODECOMIN should participate in the PIM field phase. PIM was supposed to improve project guidance by making monitoring more participatory, more realistic, more successful, and by making the hidden achievements of the CODECOMIN team visible and thus more respected.

Self-help group: Housewives' Committees in Caracoles

The Caracoles Housewives' Committees undertook general monitoring, but not with regard to the store, the purpose of which was not only to provide goods but also to improve nutrition in the miners' families. Formally, the women's store was managed through regular meetings of the housewives' committees on the basis of quarterly financial reports. In practice, the meetings tended to be spontaneous and restricted, involving only a small group of housewives. Management was not continuous. Nor was it transparent, as it was concentrated in the hands of a few very dynamic individuals. The men from the cooperatives intervened by fixing the prices, while administrative tasks were delegated to university students doing practical training in the mines.

The administrative reality was far from the aspirations expressed in the objective to make the housewives active managers of the store and thus to stimulate and strengthen the Housewives' Committees.

## **3. Introduction of the PIM concept**

Development Organization / NGO:  
Development of a preliminary PIM concept

As a first step in implementing PIM at FEDECOMIN/CODECOMIN level, a workshop was held with federation leaders, one representative each from Kantuta and Caracoles, and staff members from CODECOMIN's Social Development Department. At this meeting it was finally decided to implement PIM in the two cases reported on here. The new spirit of socio-cultural participation to be introduced by PIM was articulated by starting the workshop with two Andean ritual ceremonies, the

akulliku and the ch'alla.

Afterwards the participants exchanged ideas about the results and limitations of planning, and about conventional monitoring techniques.

Then they asked themselves:

- What is PIM good for?
- What do we want to achieve by implementing PIM?

To obtain answers to these questions, they held a brain-storming session and recorded the ideas.

Self-help group

In February 1993, several formal and informal meetings were held to introduce PIM in the context of the Popular Consumption Store - with the housewives, the members of the cooperative and both genders. Those attending the meetings set up an appropriate indicator system.

Also in this context, the akulliku and the ch'alla were indispensable for consolidating communication and creating the right atmosphere. In addition, various popular education methods were applied to avoid weariness. It helped the participants to express their opinions more freely. At first it was mainly the men who voiced their opinions concerning the problems, but later more of the housewives participated in several spontaneous brainstorming sessions, putting their views on the Popular Consumption Store.

#### **4. Details of group-based impact monitoring**

The indicator system established by the Libertad, Porvenir and El Nevado cooperatives was defined in three steps. A formal meeting was organised for expressing project expectations and fears. Their points of view were recorded on poster paper. For the purposes of this booklet we have selected just a few of the 14 expectations and 9 fears recorded:

##### **EXPECTATIONS**

- that the nutritional status of cooperative members would be improved
- that there would be active participation of housewives
- that basic foods etc. would be supplied at fair prices
- that the housewives would learn how to run a store

##### **FEARS / DOUBTS**

- that members of the cooperative would not pay their debts
- that it would not be supervised by the housewives' committee
- that they would not be able to administer the store and would go bankrupt
- that they had a total lack of knowledge of how to run the store

Identifying indicators

In a second step, through discussion' the participants reduced their expectations and fears to observable indicators, again using poster paper:

##### **EXPECTATIONS / FEARS**

- that the nutritional status of cooperative members would be improved
- that basic foods etc. would be supplied at fair prices
- that there would be active participation of housewives
- that it would not be supervised by the housewives' committee
- that members of the cooperative would not pay their debts

## INDICATORS (derived from expectations or fears)

Increase in consumption of particularly nutritious food products

Prices are fixed according to increase in market prices

Housewives' Committees are informed about store management at each meeting

Names of cooperative members who have not paid and the amount they owe are recorded

In total, 14 indicators were identified, and of these 8 were prioritized. The other indicators should be kept in mind for further studies.

Determining the method of recording indicators

The third step resulted in the following recording method for each indicator (only an extract can be documented in this booklet):

## INDICATORS (derived from expectations or fears)

Increase in consumption of particularly nutritious food products:

- higher consumption of lentils and quinoa
- lower consumption of noodles, rice and sugar

Prices fixed according to increase in market prices, with coordination of the three cooperatives

Housewives' Committees informed about store management at each meeting

Names of cooperative members who have not paid and the amount they owe are recorded

## OBSERVATION METHODS

Measure weight of each product sold (lentils, quinoa, corn flour, dried field beans, noodles, rice and sugar) separately, and record it appropriately

Answer YES or NO and record observations and comments

Answer YES or NO and record observations and comments

Keep a record in the form of a table, separate for each cooperative

Some indicators were recorded in tables, others also as graphs. One reason why we preferred to visualize some figures was that changes would be understood better by housewives who were not used to reading.

Building an observation team

Next day, the meeting was continued in order to choose the observation team, which consisted of three housewives, one from each Housewives' Committee or cooperative.

Final definition of observation instrument

Simultaneously, a meeting was held with the observation team of the three cooperatives, to train the team in using the observation instruments, e.g. how to draw a graph. At this meeting we defined in detail the method of recording the indicators prioritized at the previous formal meeting.

Informal meeting: women speak out

Afterwards a meeting was held, chaired by a cooperative leader. Each cooperative put its point of view on the management problems of the Popular Consumption Store and possible solutions to them. The great majority of the participants were women. The problems and solutions which they discussed were simultaneously visualized by the moderating leader. The results of this discussion helped to define the indicators of the group-based PIM.

## 5. Details of NGO-based impact monitoring

The indicators were derived from the expectations and fears of CODECOMIN members concerning the running of the Popular Consumption Store.

First, the participants expressed their expectations and fears with regard to the Popular Consumption Store in a verbal brain-storming session, which was recorded by the moderator on poster paper. As a second step, after a short discussion, the participants reduced these expectations and fears to observable indicators, again visualized on poster paper. The indicators listed were later prioritized; the other indicators were to be kept in mind for further studies.

Next the participants agreed on methods of recording observations. They developed tables for the measurable indicators, and for the descriptive indicators they set up YES/NO-questions, asking for additional "observations". The watchers were elected, and the equipment they needed was ascertained.

However, as a result of the dynamics of the meetings in Caracoles, a series of modifications were necessary. Some days later, the CODECOMIN-PIM team held a team reflection session on the activities accomplished in the introduction of PIM in Caracoles. As numerous interesting aspects of management of the store had come to the surface at the informal meeting, some of the conclusions to be drawn were now discussed.

The following is a selection of the team's expectations and fears:

### EXPECTATIONS

- that prices would be lowered and better quality offered than by other stores
- that more integration of the three Caracoles cooperatives would be achieved
- that the Housewives' Committees would take over responsibilities
- that spaces for the participation of women would be created in the cooperatives

### FEARS / DOUBTS

- that the cooperatives might not pay the store
- that the women might not be able to run the store themselves

Should they sell for cash only or give credit? that they would not recover credit

### EXPECTATIONS / FEARS

- that prices would be lowered and better quality offered than by other stores that they would not recover credit
- that the cooperatives might not pay the store
- that more integration of the three Caracoles cooperatives would be achieved
- that the Housewives' Committees would take over responsibilities

### INDICATORS

- The prices of 20 staples in the store are lower than in other stores nearby
- The total credit given each month does not exceed the cash payments received
- A meeting of the cooperative leaders to be held each month to analyze the recorded results
- The committees have been able to efficiently control the discount granted
- The CODECOMIN staff selected 11 indicators for observation, of which 9 were prioritized. The following four have been chosen as examples:

### INDICATORS

- The prices of 20 staples in the store are lower than in other stores nearby

The total credit given each month does not exceed the cash payments received  
A meeting of the cooperative leaders to be held each month to analyze the recorded results  
The committees have been able to efficiently control the discount granted

#### OBSERVATION METHODS

List the prices of each staple monthly for the store and for 5 other stores nearby separately;  
Answer YES or NO and record observations and comments  
List the credit granted and payments received. Answer YES or NO and record observations and comments  
Answer YES or NO and record observations and comments  
Price lists and prices charged are checked monthly by the committees. Answer YES or NO and record observations and comments

#### Possible further indicators

The informal discussion with the women in Caracoles on the store's problems and possible solutions to them produced plenty of information. From this information the team derived possible indicators and agreed to keep them in mind (the following is an extract):

#### INDICATORS

The established business hours have been maintained  
Opinions of informal groups have been recorded  
Interventions of management in opposition to agreements concerning credit granted by the Cooperative's Store were avoided

#### RECORDING METHOD

Answering: YES - NO  
Observations  
Answering: YES - NO  
Observations  
Answering: YES - NO  
Observations

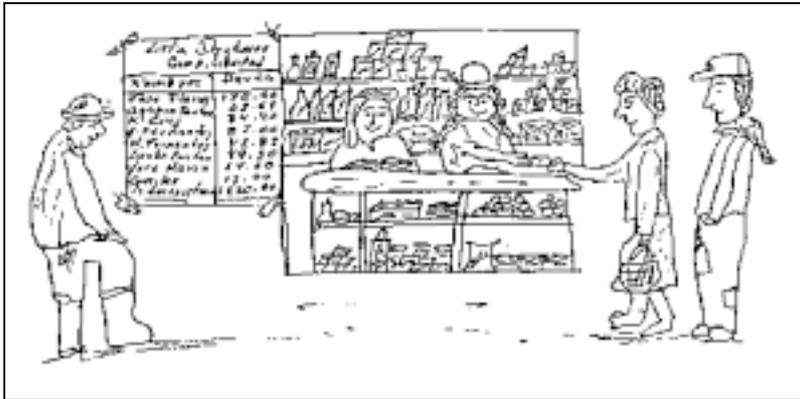
#### Joint reflection meetings

From the very beginning, joint reflection meetings were intended as the central element in the application of PIM. They were therefore to be held monthly, because it seemed necessary to support the observation team methodologically and also to strengthen their position within the local power structure, which in all three cooperatives was opposed to the store being run independently by the housewives.

With regard to the performance of PIM, an internal evaluation meeting was held at CODECOMIN level to analyze it at both levels. It was decided to continue with the same indicators. New indicators were developed from the accumulated information about the store. These potential indicators were to be taken up as concrete proposals at both PIM levels if it proved necessary to complement PIM and complete the observation - reflection - action cycle more efficiently.

## **6. Impacts observed and induced by PIM**

Many things have changed since the introduction of PIM. Impacts of the Popular Consumption Store project have been observed and in some cases even directly induced with the help of PIM.



### Impacts on the project

Among the housewives and the miners of Caracoles there was increasing concern about the devolution of credits. Not only did the miners repay their credit to the store; the store also increased its amortization of the credit which had been channelled by FEDECOMIN/CODECOMIN. The housewives took more care to adjust the prices in the store regularly. In time the store received new supplies more regularly and its stocks of nutritive staple food increased.

Although many of the housewives were illiterate, their organizational structures became more dynamic. Women participated more actively in the project and in solving the problems of their store, and this led to a higher estimation of their own abilities and thus to greater self-esteem.

Their real ability to solve problems also increased; new, positive attitudes towards the store emerged, and the women started to take their own medium-term and long-term aims into account. This was manifested when they introduced new administration rules which were more transparent and appropriate for the cooperative structures; this again increased the demand for more transparency in the work of the housewives' committees.

The importance of communication regarding the joint project within and between the organizations increased both in CODECOMIN and in the Housewives' Committees. All this led to a new awareness on the part of the housewives about their own capabilities, and as a result the economic situation of the store gradually improved.

### Impacts with regard to PIM

PIM generated mechanisms to feed back information about the store between the genders and to facilitate dialogue between leaders and members. PIM helped make all these changes more visible and contributed to collective reflection on them (among both housewives and miners).

The Housewives' Committees do not yet monitor independently, support from CODECOMIN is still needed. But PIM has put more social pressure on the leaders to penalize lack of responsibility with regard to the store, and it has dynamized decision-making and adjustments in the store.

Many cooperative members did not like PIM because of its tendency to show up existing problems and provoke confrontation. The housewives, however, recognized that PIM helped to analyze and resolve the problems of the Popular Consumption Store. PIM seems to work as a continuous learning and reflection process and is thus becoming a catalyst for the sustainability of change.

## 7. Conclusions

It is important to point out that the way an indicator is perceived depends on the context in which it is used.

The first indicator of group-based PIM (Increase in consumption of particularly nutritious food products: - higher consumption of lentils and quinoa, - lower consumption of noodles, rice and sugar) aims at resolving a socio-cultural problem, as it focuses on new consumption patterns to improve the nutrition of the families in the mining cooperatives.

Before the PIM application, a certain apathy of the housewives was noticeable in that they did not ask for such products either in the Popular Consumption Store or in other shops. After the introduction of PIM they started to ask for even more products with high nutritive value, not only in their own store but also in the other shops. There was an appreciable increase in the consumption of quinoa, lentils and corn flour among the families in Caracoles.

From the fourth indicator of group-based PIM (Names of cooperative members who have not paid and the amount they owe are recorded) may seem to be a technical and economic indicator; from the housewives' point of view, however, it reflects the power structure.

This indicator was questioned from the start, mainly by the (male) cooperative members, and it was even a topic of open disputes between the housewives and the miners. It is of central importance because it visualizes, on a large chart in the store, how much each member of the cooperative owes the store. While the women were at first afraid to display this sensitive data in public, after some months the observation team, with the support of all the committees, deliberately published the lists inside the store: the fact that every member of the cooperative could see who owed how much whenever he came to the store led to a certain collective consciousness and increased social pressure, with the result that the miners repaid their debts faster. This transparent monitoring even caused problems between husbands and wives, but fortunately these were resolved in due course.

Something similar happened with other indicators from group-based PIM. In this case it was observed that the cooperatives continued not to allow women to attend its meetings. It was thus impossible to report on the Popular Consumption Store at the cooperatives' meetings. (Reports would have been necessary, as the cooperatives also had debts with the store, which they did not pay back.) Consequently, the women changed the indicator slightly (monitoring the presentation at the meetings of the Housewives' Committees instead of at the meetings of the cooperatives). It may be concluded that if the people themselves select the indicators to be monitored, no clear distinction can be drawn between technical and economic indicators on the one hand and socio-cultural indicators on the other. Selecting the subjectively important changes to be watched regularly means starting to monitor the socio-cultural impacts upon oneself.

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# **FEDECOMIN in Kantuta / Bolivia ore dressing project in Kantuta mining cooperative case 2:**

## **1. Background**

### Ore Dressing Project in Kantuta

Kantuta Ltd. is a cooperative which runs a gold mine. It consists mainly of people who were previously employed as mineworkers, drivers, bricklayers and in some cases university graduates. At first there were 50 members, but because of the working conditions and the low profit margins this number gradually decreased. Now only 26 members are left and almost all of them live with their families in the city of La Paz, a six-hour journey from Kantuta. The miners work in two shifts: one half of the members are working in the mine while the other half stay in La Paz. The change of shift once a month is the only opportunity for a meeting of the whole cooperative.

Kantuta cooperative has invested about US\$ 200,000 in improving and enlarging the equipment and machinery in the mining and mineral concentration process. By increasing the exploitation rate the cooperative would be able to solve the problems of low productivity. The miners of Kantuta participated in the planning of the investment project. CODECOMIN was involved, but only its Mining Department, not its Economic or Social Development Department.

However, the new equipment is not working at full capacity and Kantuta's investment project is facing several problems. At a meeting with FEDECOMIN/CODECOMIN, the members of the cooperative therefore decided to implement Participatory Impact Monitoring (PIM).

## **2. Monitoring practice prior to introduction of PIM**

Once a month there was a meeting of the cooperative at which the members were informed about progress in implementation of the investment project. One member was responsible for financial management. Reporting was both formal and informal but not very systematic. The cooperative's leaders relied on the technical reports from CODECOMIN's Mining Department.

## **3. Introduction of the PIM concept**

### Self-help group

At the various meetings between the CODECOMIN-PIM team and the representatives of the Kantuta cooperative, several participatory and motivating methods were applied. The *akulliku* and *ch'alla* ceremonies aroused the miners' interest and not only helped to establish a basis of confidence, but also facilitated spontaneous brainstorming sessions, allowing every participant to express his opinion about the ore-dressing project.

## **4. Details of group-based impact monitoring**

### Expressing expectations and fears

The indicators were defined in two steps. They were derived from the members' expectations and fears relative to the investment project. The members' opinions were expressed in a verbal brain-

storming session and recorded on poster paper by the moderator. The following table is a selection from the total of 14 expectations and 14 fears recorded:

### EXPECTATIONS

- that the equipment and machinery would be improved to increase production
- that living standards would improve (working hours, new dining room)
- that the miners would have less hard work
- that there would be confidence in the members' responsibility with regard to the fulfilment of their credit obligations

### FEARS

- divergent opinions on the convenience of the credit, depending on individual members' means
- that the credit would not satisfy their needs
- that production costs might increase
- that the members would be frustrated because of the delay in granting the credit

### Identification of indicators

In a second step, the participants discussed their expectations and fears and reduced them to observable indicators on poster paper. They were classified according to the categories to which they belonged (technical, economic, social and organizational areas). In some cases several expectations and/or fears were summarized in a single indicator.

A few days later a meeting was held with the observation team of the Kantuta cooperative to train them in application of the observation instruments. They defined in detail the method of recording the prioritized indicators. The result of this session was a series of forms to be filled in by the watchers.'

Expectation: That the equipment and machinery would be improved to increase production

Indicator: The operation of the equipment and machinery bought with project funds was gradually improved.

Equipment / Machinery	Problems identified
Grinder	does not work
Radio	works at 100 %
Transport	works at 100 %
Mill	works at 20 %
Jigs	works at 70 %
Perforators	one does not work

Observations: *high fuel consumption for generator*

### Recording in a table

Expectation: That the miners would have less hard work

Indicator: The work done by the members will gradually be mechanized.

<p>Recording new acquisitions of equipment and machinery, and answering:</p> <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> YES <input type="radio"/> NO</p> <p><i>1 compressor was brought</i></p> <p>Observations: <i>investments specially inside the mine</i></p>
--

## 5. Details of NGO-based impact monitoring

After the meeting with the miners from Kantuta, the CODECOMIN-PIM team reviewed its expectations and fears relative to the investment project. For the purpose of this booklet we will document only four indicators and present examples of observations made from a monthly monitoring sheet:

1. The person responsible presented monthly reports on the project at every meeting .

Observation: Yes, the current situation of the Investment Project has been mentioned at every meeting, but this has not led to any decisions.

2. The instalments and the membership fees of FEDECOMIN are up to date.

Observation: No, the credit repayments have not been regularized. Yes, the payments to FEDECOMIN-LP are up to date.

3. The number of members of the cooperative has increased.

Observation: No, because the value of shares has not yet been decided.

4. The Cooperative's book-keeping is up to date.

Observation: Yes, since January 1993.

## 6. Impacts observed and induced by PIM

As in Caracoles, many things have changed since PIM was introduced:

PIM has introduced new dynamics into the cooperative: people are aware that it is necessary to prepare meetings beforehand. The miners are anxious to bring the indicators up to date and incorporate new ones in order to document the new situations and problems. They now want transparency in the economic management of the investment project, so that the organization structures in general are being made dynamic and updated.

The cooperative has introduced new administrative procedures which are more transparent and more appropriate. The permanent recording of changes facilitates decision-making on necessary adjustments of organizational structures. Despite an initial conflict on competences, the members are continuing with PIM because they know they have to optimize their organization structure.

In particular, the miners of Kantuta have recognized the importance of communication, both for processes within their cooperative and personally among themselves. The professional resources of the members who have graduated from universities are valued more highly. However, the members have also become aware that in the past they did not undergo sufficient training.

Generally, PIM facilitated participation in project activities. The miners gradually abandon their short-term view in favour of achieving their long-term goals. They develop attitudes and the capability to confront problems and not postpone them. They are increasingly aware how important it is for all members to participate in the investment project and a general responsibility to comply with the obligations of the credit has emerged. The reports from the joint reflection meetings are also highly valued by the funding agency (EDCS) because they give a picture of the cooperative's situation.

Also, the attitudes towards monitoring have changed, in two directions:

Negatively, because PIM makes problems visible and thus brings conflicts to the fore. Therefore, it is still not easy to maintain the new monitoring rules autonomously: PIM is still dependent on the motivation of CODECOMIN staff.

Positively, as people recognize that PIM helps them in analysis, criticism, self-criticism and responsible implementation of the tasks assigned to them, and they consider it the best way to overcome their problems. The members of the cooperative demand administrative continuity, avoiding untimely interruptions, because they know that they can only solve their problems and turn in a good performance if their leaders achieve their tasks.

The joint reflection meetings give prominence to the quality of the individual and thus motivate the members to participate. The CODECOMIN staff attaches more importance than in the past to the moments of informal communication. At the meetings, the quality and dynamics of decision-making has improved, and an awareness of "time investment" and efficiency has developed.

## **7. Conclusions**

The FEDECOMIN leaders' and the CODECOMIN staffs' experience with PIM in Caracoles and Kantuta motivated them to introduce an improved, systematic monitoring system for all CODECOMIN programmes. This new monitoring system is a mixture of conventional monitoring, derived from planned objectives, and NGO-based PIM, derived from the staff's expectations regarding socio-cultural changes.

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# **SIBAT / PARTNERS in Bacgong / Philippines how PIM came to Bacgong: An adventure in action Research**

Resource Persons:

Amando A. Bolunia, Dorsi Germann

## **1. Background**

The two development organizations / NGO

SIBAT is a network of NGOs based in Manila, Philippines. It gives advice and support to its member NGOs in the fields of Appropriate Technologies and Sustainable Agriculture. The services offered are an information and library service, project development assistance, and technology assistance. SIBAT's principles are sharing experiences and responding to needs. For many years SIBAT has been a cooperation partner of GATE/GTZ.

PARTNERS Inc. is an NGO and a member of SIBAT. Its working area is the province of Camarines Sur. PARTNERS was willing to participate in the PIM field phase and selected the community of Bacgong, where a project called the Agricultural Production Project (APP) is being implemented.

APP has two major components:

1. Organization and education.
2. Agricultural production (rice, vegetable and livestock) to improve nutrition and self-sufficiency.

Self-help group (SKB)

The community of Bacgong has 67 households with a total of approximately 360 individuals. The main economic activity is agriculture. Food production is below subsistence level. The community consists of two types of organizations: the barangay as the basic unit of government in the Philippines; and SAMAHANG PANG-KAUNLARAN NG BACGONG (SKB), which was organized as a people's organization or a self-help group of farmers in 1989 by staff of PARTNERS.

SKB's main task is to carry out projects. The organization has three sections the Farmer, Women-farmer and Youth Sectors. Practically all the inhabitants of Bacgong are members of SKB. For the purposes of implementing PIM, the Women's Production Team was chosen to work on the project because of its group cohesion, manageability, and level of articulation of every member of the group.

There are thus three organizations involved in this PIM project:

1. SIBAT Network Secretariat
2. PARTNERS Inc.
3. SAMAHANG PANG-KAUNLARAN NG BACGONG (SKB): a self-help group

## **2. Monitoring practice prior to the introduction of PIM**

Development organization / NGO

In theory, monitoring consisted of verifying planned activities, their status and any deviation from the plan. In addition, new opportunities were to be identified on the basis of project experience. In

practice, however, there was more talking about and planning of monitoring than actually doing it.

Reporting is based on correspondence, narrative reports and tabular reports. There are quarterly and annual reports. The difficulties in report writing lie in constructing data („What is there to write?") and in explaining the status of the activities and the projects. Above all, the complexity of a project is difficult to describe.

The monitoring system is time-consuming, the data are unreliable, and the system does not allow timely intervention in the projects.

Self-help group (SKB)

Monthly meetings are held to discuss the problems in the organization; the analysis of problems is unsystematic. Monitoring is mainly done in informal discussions, by sharing stories.

Every three months, the situation is described and assessed on two to three pages. This is summarized in a form with four columns:

PROJECT	WHAT HAS HAPPENED?	PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED	RECOMMENDATIONS
cucumber 1/4 kg seeds	seeds were distributed to all 3 groups	leaves of some plants turned yellow	in future a full-time technician should check the plants for disease

The area coordinator of PARTNERS collects these sheets. However, until now they have not been incorporated in an efficient feedback system.

### 3. Introduction of the PIM concept

Development organization / NGO

The fact that three different organizations were locally involved in the implementation of PIM meant that the process took longer. But it had the advantage that in SIBAT and PARTNERS there were two equal organizations which depended little on one another.

Only SIBAT had been a cooperation partner of GATE for many years, and was therefore committed to the PIM project. PARTNERS was independent and only associated with SIBAT via the network.

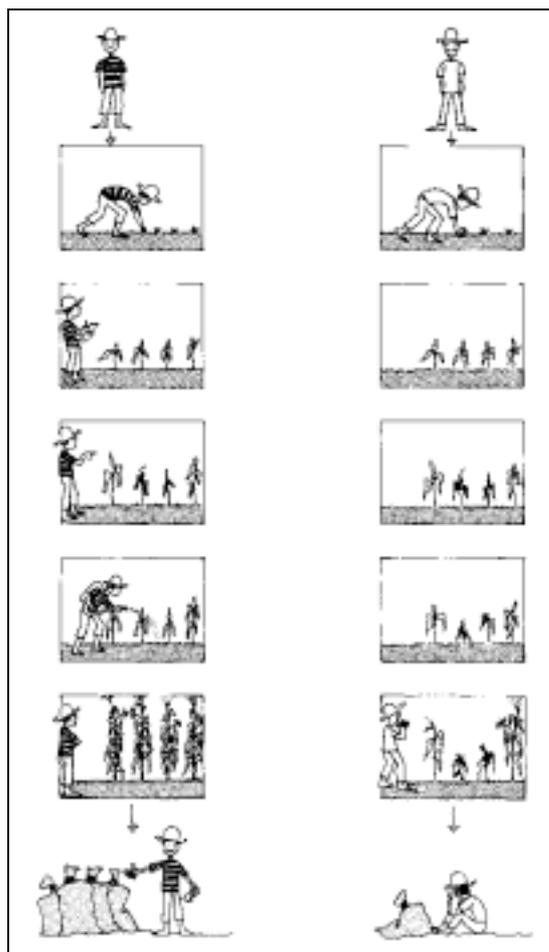
As the Network Secretariat, SIBAT rarely implements projects of its own, it mainly cooperates with member organizations. SIBAT therefore needed the consent and cooperation of PARTNERS to implement and test PIM.

For this reason PARTNERS had to be convinced right at the start that PIM was a feasible and useful method; so the basic concepts and ongoing strategies of PIM had to be well understood and accepted.

PIM therefore required an easily understandable and smooth means of information transfer for different levels (NGO and self-help group) which would avoid generating resistance or apportioning blame (for concerning gaps in personal knowledge or mistakes in project implementation).

Moreover, it should not be inconvenient, boring or lengthy: PIM had to be as attractive as possible.

It was therefore decided to use visualization. Many parts of the PIM concept were translated into drawings and picture-stories related to everyday life in the Philippines. This was done together with the colleagues of the SIBAT Secretariat and PARTNERS, to some extent directly at village level. So by preparing the various PIM workshops, the highly abstract information was transformed into concrete cases. Participants learned by translating verbal into visual messages. A teacher-pupil situation between colleagues was therefore avoided. The situation was less tense and work and pleasure were combined.



Two farmers growing corn

The pictures and stories helped to situate PIM in a familiar local context. The visualized message stimulated learning processes through both cognitive and affective responses. Humour and fun helped to reduce anxiety caused by too much pressure to understand the theoretical concept. Boredom and resistance in the face of routine tasks were also reduced to some extent.

PIM was first introduced to the staff members of the SIBAT Secretariat who were involved. After levelling-off, the second step was carried out by preparing the workshops to introduce PIM to PARTNERS and to the community of Bacgong.

To introduce PIM to PARTNERS, a two-day meeting was held with the staff involved. The intention was not merely to give an idea of what form PIM should take at the project site, but also to agree among partners about the strategy to adopt in carrying out this activity together with the self-help

group (SKB).

## PROGRAMME FOR MEETING WITH PARTNERS

### OBJECTIVES:

1. Level off with PARTNERS and SKB member on what PIM is
2. Come up with a mechanism for operationalizing PIM

### PROGRAMME:

#### 1. Introduction to PIM

Purpose of visit / Context of PIM / Actors in PIM

#### 2. Checking expectations / Setting objectives

#### 3. Presentation of PARTNERS' and SKB's experiences in establishing and running a project

- Aim: to acquaint SIBAT with the dynamics of PARTNERS' and

SKB's projects

- Entire project cycle; how does PARTNERS start projects?

#### Guiding questions:

1. What important changes for the people has your work induced?
2. Which changes are normally reported on? Which of them are often not evaluated?
3. What has changed in people's behaviour? What have they learned?
4. Have other groups learned from this experience?
5. Is it possible to find simple indicators for these changes?
6. How far can these indicators be observed by the group members?

#### 4. Presentation of Participatory Impact Monitoring participation, monitoring, impact introduction of PIM project timetable

#### 5. Setting up a mechanism for implementing PIM the workshop intends to come up with a set of working objectives for the project to work on in discussing the topic, the workshop should consider that the actual working mechanism of the project will be determined and designed by SKB. What the workshop could discuss are the initial steps that will help SKB bring PIM up to date.

This programme was not adhered to in every detail. As APP is the first joint activity of PARTNERS and SKB, many questions were still open. There was a general agreement to start PIM, but SKB's capability to carry out monitoring of this type was questioned, in view of the fact that they have little experience so far in development projects.

A number of experiences regarding participatory development surfaced during the discussion:

1. Appraising socio-cultural changes in a community requires a people's organization with fairly well developed awareness and lengthy experience of community projects. Otherwise there is a danger that observation/data gathering might be fixed on the technicalities of the project.
2. The PIM project presents an opportunity for an NGO to systematize and document and gather data on the effects of its services. On a large scale, NGO monitoring of the people's organization

is more a „black box“, depending on individual subjective perception rather than on a specific set of criteria applied to everyday reality of the group.

3. There are technical and behavioural constraints to people's participation in development work, above all to participatory management: e.g. shortage of skills, absence of a critical awareness necessary to deduce and induce cause-effect relationships, and an absence of interest and motivation manifested by an attitude of helplessness and inability to influence a given situation. This must be resolved before effective project management and implementation are possible. There are a few individuals in the people's organization who can do the job, but training involves years of experience before any tangible results are visible.

4. The presentation of concepts should be simple, easy to understand and adapted to the socio-cultural context.

#### Self-help group

A first workshop was held for two villages. PIM was explained in simple form by drawings, picture stories and referring to other examples of day-today life. Supplementary visualized materials were distributed. The text was written in the local language. The main objective was to raise awareness and attract one community for cooperation. SKB from Bacgong agreed to participate in the PIM-project.

A second workshop was then held in Bacgong for SKB only. The participants were asked about their expectations and fears; simple indicators were then identified to observe some of these fears and expectations.

#### Setup of project expectations and fears

##### EXPECTATIONS

- that the project will promote the development of the community
- that the project will help to improve the livelihood of the people in the community
- that we will no longer need to buy vegetables from the market
- that other barangays will not have to buy vegetables from the market
- that other barangays will follow in having an organization involved in production
- that cooperation in the organization will be better and smoother that crops will be improved

##### FEARS

- that crops will not grow properly
- that labour and other efforts will be wasted
- that the crop yield might not be bought at the right price
- that it will be difficult to deliver produce to the market because there is no reliable bus service
- that the military might confiscate the crop
- that we might not be able to pay back our loans for the crop that pests might get on the crops
- that the harvest will be poor because of drought that the harvest might not be sold

Two aspects were chosen for observation: the social development of the group and its agricultural production. Between these, 2-3 expectations/objectives were selected by prioritizing. At this very early stage only a limited number of topics were suggested for monitoring, to avoid overburdening the farmers. It was important not to diminish the motivation to start something new. Other aspects could be added later when people were more experienced.

#### 4. Details of group-based impact monitoring

In accordance with their own expectations and fears concerning the APP project, the SKB members decided to monitor the two aspects with several indicators:

##### 1. Improved cooperation

###### INDICATOR

percentage of group attendance at SKB's meetings and activities  
compliance with organizational schedule efficiency of activities

###### SOURCE

verification of attendance reports  
verification of organizational plan of activities  
verification of activity reports

###### FREQUENCY

once a month  
once a month  
once a month

##### 2. Agricultural production and consumption („Food Always In The House" - FAITH-programme)

###### INDICATOR

source of vegetables for domestic consumption  
varieties of preparing particular vegetable dishes

###### SOURCE

locality / source of vegetable  
names of new dishes / vegetable preparation

###### FREQUENCY

weekly  
weekly

Two members of SKB were nominated to observe and regularly document these indicators. During the second visit, however, it became clear that observation and documentation had been rather irregular.

Expectations and fears were then reviewed, and the discussion revealed that the increased vegetable production had led to a surplus which could not all be consumed in the village. The farmers expressed the wish for direct marketing and asked for assistance from PARTNERS. The NGO, however, refused to support marketing as the FAITH programme's objectives were improved nutrition and self consumption - not marketing.

The project reality had changed. Some of the objectives of the FAITH project were no longer compatible with the farmers' expectations. Nevertheless, the NGO and the farmers' group agreed to continue PIM under these conditions. The reinstallation of a project-oriented, non-adapted monitoring scheme forced the farmers to choose items in which they had little or no interest.

1. Smooth and improved cooperation in the organization

Month: ...			
<b>Indicator</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Problems</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
monthly attendance			

2. Not to buy vegetables from other places/markets

Month: ...			
<b>Vegetable</b>	<b>Individual Production (quantity)</b>	<b>Consumption (quantity)</b>	<b>Source</b>

This second attempt also failed. There was no need to observe, reflect and act on items that were unrelated to the farmers' needs. There was no motivation. The hope with which the farmers had begun their cooperation with the NGO gave way to disillusionment.

In the meantime, SIBAT and SKB carried out a Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA). In the light of the problems identified and strategies worked out together, changes in the APP project appeared advisable, too. PARTNERS felt that they had been passed over.

PARTNERS, which bore most of the responsibility for implementation of the APP project, finally saw the need to change the concept of the project. They decided to start a new programme for Bacgong, introducing a demonstration farm. However, neither the areas chosen nor the changes in the project concept were suited to actual needs. As a result the monitoring again made no progress and failed.

As there was no successful ongoing project, the community of Bacgong decided to concentrate increasingly on internal processes, i.e. the gradual increase in the cohesion of the group (by counting the participants at meetings) and the joint activities to resolve problems at village level.

One fear was: „The crops in our gardens are often eaten by stray animals". This caused in-depth discussions in the group. The Barangay Council had passed an ordinance banning loose livestock, and this had worked for a certain time, but then some owners released their animals again. At the meeting, the group described the community before and after the ordinance was enacted:

<b>BEFORE</b>	<b>AFTER</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The community pavement was littered with animal dung.</li> <li>2. There are no gardens outside houses.</li> <li>3. Farm plots were located far from the community.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The pavement is unlittered.</li> <li>2. Gardens can be found in household yards.</li> <li>3. Farm plots are nearer than before.</li> </ol>

The number of households with stray pigs was counted. It revealed that there were only three of them, two of which were already looking for their pigs that night. The problem had been resolved instantly by the group itself.

The self-help group of Bacgong continuously experienced that many of their expectations were not fulfilled by the APP project and by PARTNERS. Other personal demands and requests did not fit into the framework of the project. By observing/monitoring their own activities and by reflecting that they were often solving problems themselves, their belief in the omnipotence of the NGO slowly diminished, and criticism and self-confidence grew.

The farmers became more active. They decided not merely to observe group cohesion by attendance of participants but by observing how the meeting was held.

Typical questions were:

Who talked and how much? Who dominated the meeting?

They developed a documentation system of their own: to visualize the length of a speech and the dominance of one speaker they drew increasing sizes of a mouth behind his name.

Increasing importance was given to the aim of learning and growing until they themselves would be able to cooperate directly with a funding agency: they started discussing how they could learn and grow and how these procedures could be observed and documented.

## **5. Details of NGO-based impact monitoring**

The NGO's existing monitoring system was initially regarded as adequate, although it was not very efficient in the case of the APP project. Even the visits to the community were quite rare, mainly due to the distance and the time it took to walk there.

The expansion of the existing monitoring system was rediscussed when the PO changed its own monitoring practice and decided to watch the cooperation pattern instead of technical issues only. It was agreed that there was a need to know about, and reflect on learning processes at grassroots level. The questions arose as to whether and how a self-help group could initiate and observe its own learning processes and how these could be accompanied and monitored by an NGO within an acceptable time-frame.

The NGO agreed to examine these questions, to clarify details of an additional monitoring scheme and to inform the SIBAT Secretariat. But in the end a broader, NGO-based impact monitoring system was not established.

The argument was that it was not considered necessary to monitor similar aspects as monitored by the people's organization. The need for knowledge and discussion of the learning processes at grassroots level was agreed upon, but the time needed was considered to be too high.

Other possible reasons why NGO-based PIM was finally rejected include

- the unsolved problems between SBK and PARTNERS
- the open conflict between SIBAT and PARTNERS
- the underlying doubts about the usefulness of the APP project
- the inability to accept and recognize weak points and mistakes and to learn from them
- the fear that a transparent, participatory monitoring scheme would make it easier to control the group from the outside.

## 6. Impacts observed and induced by PIM

At the level of the self-help group SKB the SIBAT staff observed the following impacts:

1. even a weak project can mobilize and initiate capacity-building among farmers if sound methods of analysis and reflection are applied
2. skills were developed in using and managing tools for visualization
3. awareness of the management of the organization has increased
4. self-esteem and self-assertiveness increased
5. the farmers have started to develop their own tools
6. the farmers have moved from resignation to increasing intervention in their own affairs
7. the farmers have recognized that learning and growing are very important
8. the farmers wanted to become equal and independent partners of the NGO and the funding agency (FA).

At NGO level, the impacts noticed were:

1. SIBAT became aware of the project performance and the inadequacy of the existing management system
2. documentation was recognized as refined information for decision-making
3. SIBAT and PARTNERS became aware that awareness-raising and the development of skills need not be long-drawn-out processes: tangible results can be seen in small situations in the community
4. it was shown that ineffectiveness is more likely to be due to the method of intervention than to a lack of intervention (quality instead of quantity)
5. PARTNERS became aware of the discrepancy between the objectives of the APP project and the expectations of the farmers' group
6. through PIM, all the actors involved gained further insights into the APP project, including its weaknesses; but the fact that positions were attacked and defended caused conflicts - the cooperation was not constructive.

Both organizations started to question their decision-making structures, their relationship with each other and with other organizations.

## 7. Conclusions

The beginning of this case study was promising. The introduction of group-based PIM at village level was quite successful. In the light of failures and changes in the APP project, PIM expectations and indicators were subsequently changed, and the interest in observing and documenting was kept up. It finally switched from the project level to individual and group level, where changes and achievements are self-determined and less dependent on outside intervention. The farmers' group started to develop their own documentation sheets and ended up with a desire to learn and grow, and become more independent.

It takes time to internalize PIM and adapt it to one's own situation and the continuously changing environment. However, it is worthwhile investing time, because once PIM has been really understood it can be changed by the people themselves to fit into varying contexts.

PIM is a useful tool for self-help groups - to describe their own situation, to exercise their judgment and to clarify their goals vis-à-vis the NGO. For the NGO, too, PIM is useful for reflecting on goals, activities and instruments. But there are several obstacles to implementing PIM.

PIM is an instrument and a methodology. As an instrument, it helps people watch and analyze learning effects and all kinds of changes. As a methodology, it initiates learning and changes.

As PIM is a system for watching and analyzing reality jointly in a conscious and systematic way, it helps people to learn from project failures: the weakness of a project call for more independent solutions on the part of the farmers. Once identified as their own contribution, these actions will build up their self-esteem and their wish to continue to learn and grow.

PIM helps to bring out discrepancies between official project goals and farmers' reel expectations and needs.

If the actors are strong enough to accept mistakes constructively without blaming each other, the prospects for learning from one another and for continuous change in the joint PIM workshops are good.

However, if the actors are weak and only try to defend themselves, conflicts will escalate and cooperation will stop. Handling problems and conflicts under such adverse circumstances will require additional know-how in conflict management and mediation.

If PIM is introduced in a highly hierarchical organization, more conflicts and obstacles arise. PIM requires flexibility and openness on the part of all parties involved. Moreover, PIM needs additional capacities and time for smooth cooperation to be ensured, especially in conflict-prone cases.

The observation of external and internal changes initiates further change processes. The latter are experienced more consciously by the people, and are therefore more persistent than changes induced from outside.

With SIBAT and PARTNERS, conflicts arose early: a project had been set up, and it responded too little to changing conditions and needs at grassroots level. Weakness led to fear of transparency, and ultimately to refusal to cooperate. There had been early signs of the problems which, much later, led to a reorganization of the project and project management. With PIM it was possible to record these early rumblings "seismographically".

In the long run, a monitoring system based on active participation of the grassroots is only feasible if the project really corresponds to people's needs. They will refuse to participate in monitoring for irrelevant activities and objectives. It seems that the existence of a functioning participatory M+E system is itself an indicator of people's interest in a project.

The general climate in development cooperation is often an obstacle to discussing problems openly. Fear of competition, fear of forfeiting professional respect and standing, and of losing projects and potential sources of funding - all these fears create an unproductive atmosphere, putting people on the defensive, making them play „hide-and-seeK". This strategy is often adopted by all the actors involved - funding agencies (FA), NGO and groups - and complicates the business of establishing a constructive atmosphere of trust and confidence, mutual acceptance and learning.

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# **INDES in Misiones / Argentina promoting the development of a grassroots organization with PIM**

Resource Persons:

Cristian Krieger, Burkhard Schwarz

## **1. Background**

Development Organization / NGO

INDES is an NGO for rural development which operates in north-east Argentina. Its main purpose is to promote farmers' organizations and to support their projects with technical assistance and credits. INDES works in four provinces with a relatively autonomous team of three to six staff members in each province. The INDES team in Misiones participated in the PIM field phase.

Self-help group

Unión y Progreso is a women's organization. It was set up in 1989 with 25 women. By 1994 membership had increased to 83. As the area covered by the organization is very large it is not easy for the members to meet. The group's main objective is to improve family living standards. Its principal projects are gardens to grow vegetables for family consumption, poultry production, training courses (in health and nutrition) and a credit scheme; the women hope to produce surpluses by selling their produce.

Formally, the organization is led by a management committee with 9 members, and has subgroups which nominate delegates. Informally, the president is a strong leader, supported by a nucleus of 5-6 committee members. The main concern of the members are tangible benefits, in return for which they offer political and religious loyalties.

## **2. Monitoring practice prior to introduction of PIM**

Development organization / NGO

In the first phase of its existence, up to 1989, INDES made various attempts to institutionalize participatory methods of planning and evaluation. These were applied to some extent, in the form of monthly meetings between staff members and groups evaluation and planning workshops at area level every six months internal evaluation and planning workshops with staff members.

In the second phase, a financial crisis has led to a reduction in personnel numbers, greater autonomy of the teams, and activism. Periodical meetings with the groups which INDES supports continue, but no more internal workshops at INDES level have been held.

Self-help group

Unión y Progreso previously had no specific monitoring system. The group's management mechanisms are: fixed monthly meetings, with written minutes annual general meetings with presentation of the annual report and annual evaluation exercise (at the suggestion of INDES staff members) reflection meetings on specific problems (at the suggestion of INDES staff members) meetings for coordination and exchange of information with other groups and institutions.

At the last annual general meeting it was obvious that the group had considerable internal

problems.

### 3. Introduction of the PIM concept

Development organization / NGO

At first INDES was reluctant to introduce PIM, due to a lack of internal discussion and because the field staff felt that the method would be too complicated for the group and INDES would not be able to maintain continuous close contact.

In 1993, the INDES team was strengthened by two young local promoters. On a ten-day visit a consultant helped to implement PIM. It was introduced at several working sessions and implemented in the following four steps:

- short conceptual discussion on participatory impact
- monitoring identification of organizational aspects as main
- monitoring topics reflection on expectations and fears of the INDES
- team definition of indicators and easy data collection tools.

The identification of organizational aspects as the main area to be monitored on behalf of INDES was an exercise for introduction of PIM at group level. Expectations and fears were reflected upon in the following five steps:

1. the principal issues were defined
2. expectations and fears were collected in a brain-storming session
3. expectations and fears were classified and synthesized
4. the synthesized items were transformed into indicators
5. the method of collecting data was determined.

#### Expectations

that they know how to work that the proposed organization structure would lead to an increase in membership that growth of the group would have positive impacts on the social organization of the community and the appreciation of the women's role. that the capacity for collective management (of projects and administration) would increase that activism would still leave sufficient scope for reflection, planning and evaluation in the group.

#### Fears

- that the delegates would not be able to ensure satisfactory communication between the subgroups and the group as a whole
- that distortions in communication between the group and INDES would worsen
- that no operational readerships would emerge which would dynamize the subgroups
- that power conflicts would emerge between delegates and management
- that roles and functions would become confused among the subgroups and the group
- that the increasing diversification of activities might exceed the group's management capacities and lead to failures
- that the organization of the group was directed too much towards material interests
- that the group's founders would reject new interests within the group that were different from their own.

Therefore, PIM was introduced mainly by applying it directly. The staff members faced some difficulties with the presentation of PIM; and due to a shortage of time, they did not have much opportunity to reflect on the concept.

## Self-help group

The INDES staff's first attempts to introduce PIM in Uni $\frac{1}{2}$ n y Progreso failed, due to a shortage of time in the group meetings and a lack of clarity and security among the staff. However, the fact that the subgroups did not work satisfactorily was a certain motivation to introduce monitoring mechanisms.

When the PIM advisor from Bolivia arrived, a special meeting was held between the INDES staff and women's group. This first meeting focussed exclusively on explaining how a monitoring system in general, and PIM in particular, works.

Two days later, there was a second meeting (3 hours) at which the members of the group agreed to apply PIM. Although they had not completely understood the monitoring concept, they agreed in the hope that monitoring would be useful for them and that they could learn by doing it. The women expressed their interest in improving, above all, their internal organization, especially the division into subgroups. Therefore, „participation and organization" was decided on as the main topic of monitoring. Occasionally, the group selected the same issue as the INDES staff; the staff were thus fully prepared to help establish an organization monitoring system for the group.

Next, the indicator system was developed in five steps:

1. the issue "participation and organization" was defined
2. expectations and fears concerning the women's own organization were collected in a brainstorming session
3. expectation and fears were grouped and synthesized
4. the synthesized items were transformed into indicators
5. the indicators were refined
6. the method of collecting data was determined.

There was not enough time to complete steps 4 to 6 for all the indicators at this same meeting. Finalization was therefore postponed, along with the selection of observers, until the next regular meeting.

A minor difficulty arose because in the brainstorming session the expectations and fears had not been documented properly, but only in catchwords. As a result, each catchword had to be rediscussed and interpreted. Some of the original ideas were thus lost.

## 4. Details of group-based impact monitoring

The indicators finally worked out by the members of Uni $\frac{1}{2}$ n y Progreso included the following:

1. the number of organized subgroups has increased
2. the number of subgroups which meet in the course of the month has increased
3. the support provided by INDES staff in the activities of the subgroups has increased
4. the number of members who have surpluses of vegetables and eggs and who are selling them has increased.

It was difficult for the watchers to find time for their task. Even if they did not inform the group properly, they were nevertheless conscious of the indicators.

## 5. Details of NGO-based impact monitoring

The INDES staff defined 13 indicators which can be grouped in three categories:

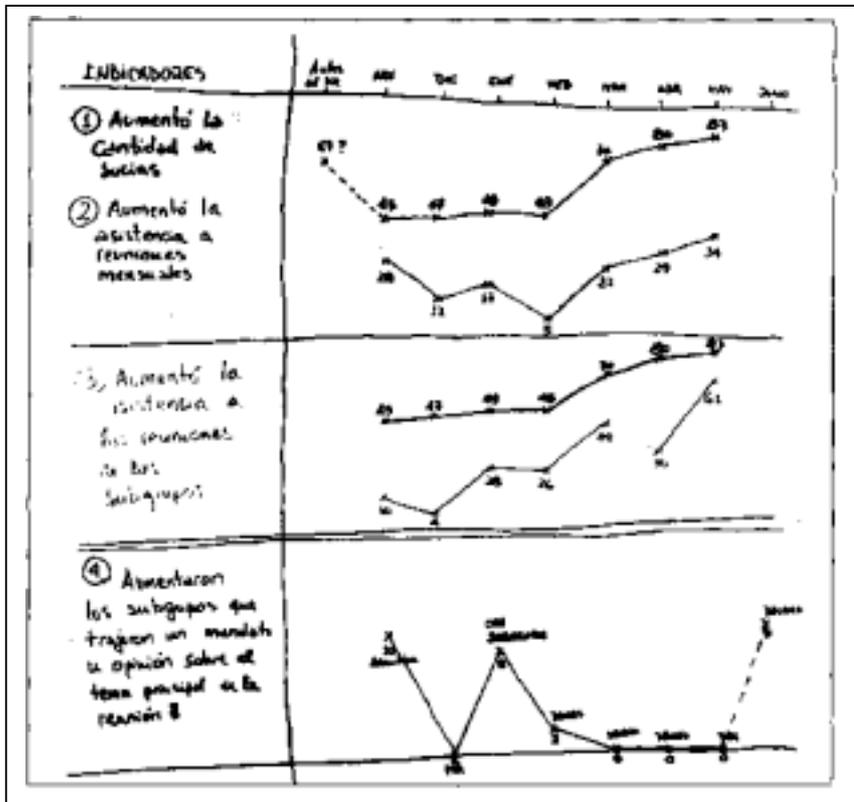
1. operational aspects and internal communication
2. decision-making aspects
3. internal relations.

Examples of indicators:

1. number of group members
2. number of group members participating in monthly assemblies
3. number of group members participating in subgroup meetings
4. number of subgroups which send their delegates to the assemblies with mandates
5. number of autonomous activities of the subgroups
6. coordination of meetings was done by a member of the group.

The indicators were presented monthly in one of two ways:

- simply reading them, without graphs;
- visualization through graphs.



## 6. Impacts observed and induced by PIM

In the women's group, some of the impacts induced by PIM were observed immediately:

- The introduction of PIM has already generated decision-making.
- The formation of subgroups was accelerated and activities were transferred to this level.
- Roles and responsibilities were more strictly defined.

- The need to collect data for PIM led to a better internal communication structure.
- The presentation of INDES-based PIM prompted changes in responsibilities and in the decision-making structure.

There was also an impact within the INDES team:

The implementation of PIM contributed to the formation of a field workers' team. The INDES staff had a better understanding of the group with which they worked.

The activities carried out by the staff for the women's group were supervised.

PIM induced critical self-reflection of the staff on their activities and their relations with the people's organization.

## **7. Conclusions**

PIM can be easy to apply - after its first application. The initial investment, in the learning of new methodological principles, is considerable.

PIM enriches the principles REFLECTION and ACTION by putting the emphasis on verifiable information. On the basis of these findings, PIM allows different perceptions and expectations in a joint project to be accepted as relevant.

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## **SUMMARY What have we learned from the field studies?**

This summarizing chapter is structured in the same way as the application examples. It attempts to sum up the experience gained so far and present it in a way that will enable future PIM users to avoid certain mistakes, or to shorten the learning process. Your application of PIM should produce good results right from the beginning, and not break the motivation of those involved before PIM has had a chance to unfold!

### **1. Background**

This section emphasizes the preconditions and requirements for implementing PIM.

Development organization / NGO

NGO motivation

The development organization or NGO should feel a need to introduce a transparent monitoring system. The personnel have to be motivated to apply PIM, because starting this monitoring concept will involve extra work. The additional inputs in cost and time, and how they are to be borne or financed, should be realistically clarified before PIM is introduced (SIBAT).

Participatory and intercultural approach

The NGO should have a participatory and intercultural approach to self-help support. Additionally, a stable organization structure and sufficient horizontal internal communication dynamics are desirable. If the information flow within the NGO is disrupted (merely due to structural instability or internal conflicts), the success of PIM will be limited (FEDECOMIN).

The NGO also has to be flexible enough to adapt and even change planned project activities if monitoring makes it clear that the initial plans do not correspond to the felt needs of the group (SIBAT).

Continuous information flow

For the application of PIM a continuous flow of information between the NGO and the people's organization (PO) is desirable; one aim of PIM is to improve this flow. If there are any major gaps to be bridged in communication, for example if the geographical distance is large, application of PIM will prove more difficult, but not impossible.

Self-help group

Autonomous and stable structure

The self-help group should have an autonomous structure. The NGO should not push the idea of implementing PIM too hard; rather, there should be a genuine interest in improving the running of a project. The PO must exhibit a minimum of organizational stability; there should not be any marked internal discrimination of members. Extreme migration dynamics make PIM more difficult to implement (Caracoles; SIBAT).

To a certain degree, horizontal formal or informal decision-making and communication structures should exist in the self-help group. If there are continuous disruptions of vertical power structures, the success of group-PIM as a guidance tool for the self-help group will be limited (Caracoles).

Further characteristics

Literacy of all members of the group is not necessarily a precondition for implementation of PIM (Caracoles).

Geographical concentration of members of the PO is an advantage. If the people participating in PIM are dispersed over a very large area, it is more difficult to apply (INDES). The same is true for organizational structures where adequate internal communication is hampered, e.g. by shift - working (Kantuta). This could be a serious obstacle to the sharing of PIM results which is vitally important.

Incidentally, all these factors also tend to determine the integral, vertical and horizontal multiplier effects relating to the PO's application of PIM.

## **2. Monitoring practice prior to introduction of PIM**

This section attempts to identify the starting point for implementation of PIM, and discusses how existing elements can be used to build up PIM.

Development organization / NGO

Weak internal control mechanisms

In NGOs, monitoring is usually neglected due to a lack of time. Internal control and reporting systems are often lacking or not very effective.

NGOs' monitoring concepts tend to be rather vague if they exist at all. It is difficult for them to recognize or admit this, and consequently it seems difficult to clarify concepts in theory. The best way to start is to implement an actual monitoring procedure.

If a conventional monitoring system is already being applied it will reflect only the NGO's needs for project management, and not the views of the PO. Existing systematic monitoring practices are useful for the staff's understanding of PIM logics.

Communication between NGO and the self-help group

The NGO's knowledge of the group's internal structures is generally very limited. Usually there is no permanent flow of communication between the NGO and the self-help group. The usually unsystematic observation modes are exclusively based on the NGO's own initial knowledge of the group and the project context.

Self-help group

Control and change mechanisms

The groups have their own control mechanisms. Formally, there are regular meetings where basic decisions are taken, and elected leaders who put the decisions into practice. Informally, a group often depends on a few dominant persons who want to keep the power in their hands and not give away information.

There are almost always strategies for observing internal and external changes. They can sometimes be exploited for building PIM up organically, but normally they are not sufficiently systematic and frequently not participatory.

### 3. Introduction of the PIM concept

This section points out some critical aspects which were experienced in the field phase and which are prerequisites for successful introduction of PIM.

Development organization / NGO

Learning process

The introduction of PIM also involves a learning process for the NGO. The way in which the results of PIM are shared internally has to be clarified at the beginning.

It is advisable to introduce PIM gradually in one or two projects before introducing it on a large scale (PWDS). External advisors are often required when PIM is introduced for the first time, but they can be dispensed with if basic agreement has been reached concerning the implications of a participatory approach (PWDS).

Observation of socio-cultural issues

The socio-cultural issues should be developed in the context of concrete discussions about technical and economic issues. Special training in observing and assessing socio-cultural impacts and learning processes is useful. Staff members should give concrete examples based on personal experience.

Even for the staff it is helpful to develop PIM on the basis of traditional customs, in order to emphasize the importance of traditional structures and informal communication (FEDECOMIN).

Communication with the self-help group

The PIM design should consider the possibilities of information collection realistically, e.g. in the context of geographical distances separating the NGO from the self-help group, and communication difficulties.

It should be emphasized at the beginning that the NGO is helping the self-help group to introduce PIM. It is a kind of rehearsal if the introduction of PIM is begun by introducing first NGO-PIM and then group-based PIM; however, there is also a risk that the results of NGO-PIM will influence the results of group-based PIM.

Self-help group

PIM responsibilities and group structure

As mentioned above, the group's geographical and organizational structure should be considered in detail before defining the logics of PIM application. In particular, this is to avoid creating parallel political structures. It is recommended that the group's sub-structures be represented in the PIM observation team (FEDECOMIN).

PIM must be made compatible with the group's formal and informal meeting rhythm and logic. Although it is possible to work with PIM within the usual group meetings, the introduction of PIM requires a meeting of its own (INDES).

A conscious decision has to be taken as to whether those responsible for PIM should be linked to the group's decision-making level or separated from it. When choosing the PIM observation team, these alternatives have to be taken into account in the context of internal power structures. The „observation-reflection-action" cycle will be completed better if the self-help groups representatives participate in the PIM observation team (Kantuta).

Special training of the observers is indispensable, not only in order to create awareness but also for technical skills (e.g. measurement of pH) and illustration of the findings (PWDS, FEDECOMIN).

The introduction of PIM should be guided, if possible, by moderators who are „insiders“. The development of observation methods should not be assigned to a committee; it should be done collectively (Caracoles).

#### People's culture and PIM

The PIM information base has to be built up by authentic insider knowledge of the reality of the group. The indicator system should be closely linked to the group's decisive and authentic priorities. The PIM design should also be adapted organically to expressions of the group's culture and its forms and logics of communication. Traditional ceremonies help to establish a basis of greater confidence between the group and NGO staff members. It is made clear that PIM is intended to be a flexible guidance tool which is compatible with the culture and the rules of the group (FEDECOMIN / SIBAT).

The PIM learning process will be delayed if the methodological approach does not correspond sufficiently to the cultural concepts of the group. In particular, the way observations are shared within the group has to be clarified.

#### Identification of socio-cultural impacts

The socio-cultural issues should be developed around practical discussions on technical and economic issues. The case studies of PWDS and FEDECOMIN have shown clearly that when the protagonists identify indicators for changes that are subjectively important to them (because they will change their lives considerably) they utilize very tangible „technical-economic“ illustrations which often stand for socio-cultural impacts.

Not every expectation or fear is related to the impact level. Although this may lead to theoretical discussion, in practice it is no problem because operational or short-term expectations/fears, if converted to indicators, will soon be replaced by the group, whereas the continuous expectations/fears will be maintained.

#### Visualization

Pictures are crucially important as aids to explaining PIM. The visualized message stimulates learning processes through both cognitive and emotional responses. Humour and enjoyment help to reduce stress, boredom and resistance (SIBAT).

However, although visualization has proved useful, it is not necessarily always the culturally appropriate method (PWDS). Especially in indigenous contexts, the oral tradition should be considered for new ways of applying PIM. Visualization should not be given sole preference.

## **4. Details of group-based impact monitoring**

This section illustrates some typical handicaps of group-based PIM during the first trials, and how they can be overcome.

#### General framework

First, it should be emphasized that during the field phase all the self-help groups succeeded in setting up and running a group-based monitoring system. However, the degrees of intensiveness and ways in which it was done were context-specific. The application of PIM was quite irregular at

the beginning unless the NGO carried out intensive follow-up.

The more political support PIM enjoys within the group, the more successfully it will be applied and the more useful it will be. Members of the group must understand the sense of comparing observed results as a fundamental part of the system. Continuity in the PIM observation team, i.e. observation by the same individuals over a prolonged period of time, is crucially important.

If decision-making cannot be influenced by monitoring, people lose their motivation to apply it (SIBAT).

Indicators

It is useful to formulate complete questions to make the meaning of an indicator clear. This is also helpful in remembering the meaning at subsequent meetings, and in encouraging active contributions by members of the group (FEDECOMIN).

There is no need to work out scientific indicators. Tables and graphs have been used for all numeric indicators. Although they will be new to some members of the group at the beginning of the monitoring exercises, people become familiar with them and lose their fear of statistics. Even the YES/NO indicators have proved meaningful if they are complemented with the question "Why?" or "Further observations?" (FEDECOMIN).

The monitoring of group performance as the only issue dealt with by PIM is possible but does not seem to be self-sustained in the long run (SIBAT, INDES).

One handicap in the implementation of PIM may be that highly confidential or "sensitive" internal information will not be transformed into indicators by the group, although this would be the most important issue. Structural difficulties of this type can only be overcome by more internal and autonomous management of PIM, i.e. by the group itself.

Joint reflection workshops

In the joint reflection workshops also, PIM should be guided by moderators who are also insiders. However, when PIM is first implemented, group-PIM has to be facilitated by members of the NGO's staff. It is for this reason that, at first, there is sometimes no clear distinction between group-based PIM and joint reflection workshops - but it should develop in the long run. The PIM team from FEDECOMIN decided to hold joint reflection meetings once a month, and PWDS even twice a month, by introducing PIM elements in their regular meetings.

Joint reflection meetings between members of the NGO's staff and the group are held more frequently in the initial stages of PIM. In the long run they will probably be superseded by joint reflection "workshops" which are held only once or twice a year to analyze the project impacts in greater depth.

At the joint reflection meetings/workshops it is helpful to present the results of group-based impact monitoring first and those of NGO-based impact monitoring later. The comparative nature of PIM can be emphasized by visualization or equivalent methodological approaches.

The dynamics of change should lead to smooth adaptation of PIM tools in the joint reflection meetings/workshops. Continued observation of factors which have already been dealt with and are obsolete makes PIM boring (Kantuta).

If there are serious difficulties in completing the "observation-reflection-action" cycle, it may be useful to monitor the efficiency of decision-making and of adjustments induced by PIM as well. Even the efficiency with which PIM results are shared internally could be assessed.

Joint reporting by various groups or people's organizations which carry out similar projects makes good sense. This exchange of experience induces direct learning processes among the people themselves, as the groups can learn better from each other (PWDS).

#### Adjustments

The members of the group should try to assess their experience with PIM independently. To prevent PIM drifting away from reality, the group must develop adjustments of PIM themselves, corresponding to the increase in their familiarity with the problem.

## 5. Details of NGO-based impact monitoring

In this section, similarly to the previous one, methods of overcoming some handicaps in the implementation of NGO-PIM are described

#### General framework

As for the self-help group, continuity of the PIM observation committee, i.e. observation by the same individuals for a prolonged period of time, is also crucial for the NGO. The staff must also fully understand the logics of comparison of the observed results as a fundamental part of the PIM monitoring system.

Frequent rapid assessment of the application of PIM, considering both NGO and group level, is useful for adapting it to the dynamics of the environment (FEDECOMIN). Intercultural problems between NGO and the group and the logics of normal communication flow between the two sides should be taken into account. Internal sharing of PIM results, and reflection on the efficiency of the method of sharing internally, should not be forgotten.

If there are serious difficulties in completing the "observation-reflection action" cycle, it may be useful to monitor the efficiency of decision-making and of adjustment of the results of PIM observation even in NGO-based impact monitoring.

#### Indicators

Although NGO-based impact monitoring mainly focuses on socio-cultural impacts, the technical and economic issues are likewise monitored. As we have seen above, they are often an expression of expectations and fears relating to socio-cultural learning processes. Moreover, they have a considerable influence on the success of the project if no conventional monitoring system was previously used (FEDECOMIN, PWDS).

There is a risk that too many indicators will be worked out, focussing on similar aspects. Such monitoring tends to be boring. It will not be done regularly or with the necessary drive and may be useless within a short period of time (INDES).

#### Unexpected impacts

One of the main tasks of the NGO staff during the joint reflection meeting/workshop is to resolve the following methodological problem: while expected or supposed impacts have been identified, unexpected impacts may be more important. They are surprising, unpredictable events and as such are not directly covered or taken into account when the indicators are defined.

This leads to the difficulty that unexpected impacts have to be recorded separately. The best way to do this seems to be to reserve some time at joint meetings exclusively for this purpose.

#### Joint reflection workshops

Good preparation and management of the joint reflection workshops and meetings is crucial to the success of PIM implementation. Both workshops and meetings should be jointly moderated. The NGO staff member should take the chair alone only during that part which concerns the NGO; s/he should not dominate the entire meeting. Indicators should be recorded by each side before the joint reflection workshop/meeting, not during the workshop itself.

Generally, visualization seems to be the most suitable and culturally adapted tool for NGO level during the joint reflection meeting.

## **6. Impacts observed and induced by PIM**

This section attempts to illustrate the link between subjective and objective impact assessment.

General remarks

PIM reveals the complexity of people's expectations and of project impacts. PIM goes beyond project issues, it clarifies the project context and the situation of the group.

The impacts observed with PIM seem less important than the impacts induced by PIM.

Impacts on communication between self-help groups and NGO

PIM helps to consolidate actual economic projects (PWDS, Kantuta, Caracoles), and to develop new management capacities (Kantuta). This is mainly due to the fact that PIM can help to overcome problems of intercultural communication between NGO and groups.

Conscious observation of changes and the joint reflection meetings improve communication between the NGO and the self-help groups, and this leads to collective learning processes. PIM also produces, on the one hand, NGO knowledge about groups and about itself, and on the other hand, group knowledge about NGO and about itself.

Impacts on participation, organization and decision making structure

PIM generates self-confidence, in particular at group level (Caracoles, SIBAT). It creates awareness of the responsibilities of the parties involved in the project, and helps the parties assume those responsibilities. The permanent recording of changes facilitates decision-making. Thus, PIM offers an opportunity to adjust plans and adapt the project to the needs of the people, or for staff members to initiate corrective action.

The group has an opportunity to define the main issues of its project activities. The NGO's staff have an opportunity to find out what the group thinks and feels about the project. PIM reveals that it is often different from what staffs expect, or that key implications of a project have not been understood. Also, within an organization, PIM can lead to the creation of new communication instances (Kantuta) and even change the organization's structure.

PIM makes the organization transparent, and tends to change the de facto decision-making structure. For this reason it also provokes resistance from those in power. This includes a potential danger that can lead to self-destruction of PIM.

## **7. Recommendations for avoiding basic risks**

The PIM field phase has elicited many critical reflections on this monitoring concept. On the basis of

the internal evaluation the following recommendations, relating to certain basic risks encountered during the field phase, have been formulated:

The key factors in successful implementation of PIM are the continuity of its application, the sharing of its results and a proper communication structure.

PIM necessarily has to take the specific cultural normative systems of the actors as the basis for estimates and expectations concerning its impact

PIM should not lead to increasing interventions by NGOs in the self-help group's affairs, and thus to the reduction of the group's autonomy in management (especially during the joint reflection meetings). A mutual respect for different levels of confidential and „sensitive“ information management is the basis for the efficiency of PIM.

People's reality and at the same time their knowledge of and familiarity with problems are highly dynamic. Accordingly, the implementation of PIM has to be adapted dynamically to these changes. PIM is intended to lead rapidly to an alleviation or a substantial reduction in workloads. This means that the methods necessarily have to be simple, and their application has to be quick and easy.

During the application of PIM, there should always exist absolute clarity about the separation or conjunction of the two levels decision-making on one hand and PIM observation on the other. It will influence the selection of personnel and the contents of the monitoring.

PIM can promote internal emancipation organically only if there is a genuine political consensus on this subject. If not, PIM may provoke more internal contradictions, and this can lead to its self-destruction.

## **8. Conclusion**

PIM is not only a method for monitoring projects. It is at the same time an instrument for planning and for the development of teams and organizations and it induces individual learning processes for all parties involved.

Although PIM is simple, it does require a certain amount of effort to teach its contents. The first organizations in which PIM was introduced did not understand the concept entirely. Here the introduction was accompanied by more intensive support. In one organization, however, where only a basic introduction to PIM was given, the PIM concept was quickly implemented. The successful communication of the concept of PIM still needs to be clarified.

PIM is a young concept which needs to be developed further. Right from its beginning it has been conceived together with partners from all over the world - in a process-orientated way.

We need the cooperation of other practitioners and thinkers to test and to improve PIM.

If you are implementing and testing PIM in your project area we would be very interested to hear from you. Write and tell us about your experience with PIM.

We are planning to organize more regular and more efficient exchanges, if a substantial number of practitioners continue with the development and adaptation of PIM.

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Thank You