

Title: Information System on Public Investment for Small Producers in Agriculture

Project owner: CIOEC-Bolivia (Coordinadora de Integracion de Organizaciones Economicas Campesinas de Bolivia)

Abstract

The project supports organisations in terms of access and information on public funds for productive investments and farmers are guided in the submission process. An electronic information (database) system in CIOEC is developed and communication (e-mail) system between CIOEC and organisations is improved. CIOEC and organisations are trained in basic ICT and management of information processes. Initially the project will work with 34 farmer organisations out of the 300 affiliated organisations around Bolivia.

The office for coordination of the integration of farmer organisations in Bolivia (CIOEC) aims to strengthen the position of farmer organisations by means of institutional support, support in the production and marketing and lobby activities towards the government. The project is to enhance the support to the organisations in terms of access to public funds for productive investment. Organisations are provided with information on the funding opportunities, guides in the submission process and will lobby to overcome obstacles in the submission process. For this an electronic information (database) system in CIOEC is developed and the communication (e-mail) system between CIOEC and organisations is improved. Both CIOEC and organisations are trained in basic ICT skills and in the related information processes. Initially the project will work with 34 farmer organisations out of the 300 affiliated organisations around Bolivia, which can be expanded over time if successful.

The project has until now strengthened 16 information centres reaching a total 145 representatives of 55 farmer organisations. Several organisations have effectively participated and won tenders for the delivery of various products to municipal governments and exporters. At the lobbying level, CIOEC has been able to pass law that favours buying national products over foreign products, increasing the competitiveness of their affiliated Organisations.

Objectives

This project empowers farmer organisations by means of informing and lobbying on public investment funds available for small producers. Farmer organisations will have increased access in rural areas to public funds by means of improving access to public investment funds.

Planned outputs

- Development database on public funds
- Development website
- Integration database with website
- Strengthening ICT facilities at CIOEC
- Strengthening ICT in participating farmer organisations
- Training CIOEC
- Training participating farmer organisations - Information Services
- Inform farmer organisations on public investment programs
- Monitoring of process of access to public investment programs
- Description of experiences
- Evaluation of opportunities and problems limiting access to public funds
- Distribution de bulletins
- Lobbying for access to public funds

Development effects

The project is highly innovative in terms of the type of info services provided and may have a considerable impact on empowerment and access to public funds by small farmers. Will provide an interesting example of a governance project. The project owner plays an important political role in Bolivia and has strong support of the affiliated farmer organisations. The main risk is found in the weak institutional capacity of the project owner and limited possibilities of finding financial sustainability. It is expected that the project can help the project owner to enhance its institutional capacity and to bring a clearer focus in the service package offered to affiliated organisations.

Evaluation

This project will be evaluated through IICD's M&E tool. The results from the tool present an indication of the perceived impact by small farmers. Are they better able to be involved in decision making? How do they perceive an improvement in the sector?

Title: Information on Conflicts and Negotiations in Communitarian Original Indigenous Lands in Bolivia

Project owner: Confederación de Pueblos Indígenas de Bolivia (CIDOB)

Abstract

For over three centuries, indigenous groups in Bolivia have been fighting for the legalisation of the original indigenous territories. Started in 2001, CIDOB developed an information system (database and website) to track the process of land-right claims for Indigenous groups in Bolivia. Information is collected through the regional branches of CIDOB. Information is used to keep regional indigenous groups informed about the status of land right claims and to lobby for action at government level and international level.

Update

Explicit efforts have been made to improve Internet access and use and to provide training to indigenous leaders in rural areas. The demand for training by indigenous leaders is enormous with 925 persons trained over 2002 - mid 2005. Young future indigenous leaders of all 8 branches of CIDOB are also trained. Increasingly, regional offices and the central office take on operational costs of the project.

Objectives

To support their objectives, they have opted to set up a confederation of indigenous people, now representing 34 indigenous groups in the lowlands of Bolivia. To enhance the land claims, the confederation has entered negotiations with the government, resulting in the establishment of a law recognising the claims of indigenous groups on their original territories and providing in a mechanism for the expedition of related land titles. However, conflicts arise in the application of this law, impeding the actual legalisation of lands. Hitherto only a few of the 52 claims by indigenous groups have been settled. Once legalised, new conflicts arise over the exploitation of land by indigenous groups and competing private land owners and local governments.

To address this issue, the project will develop an information network providing information on the legalisation and management of community lands of indigenous people in Bolivia. The network will provide actualised information on both the legalisation proceses and the management of the territories. The information is used as a input for negotiations with the government. National and international agencies interest are also provided with actualised information on these issues, which can assist in lobby activities. As such, the project is to contribute to the realisation and monitoring of the agreements between the indigenous people and the government.

The members of CIDOB collect the information through its 8 regional offices. The information is send by Fax, E-mail or Internet to the central office of CIDOB in Santa Cruz. At the central office, data are collected and systemized in a dynamic database accessible through a website. Regional offices will have direct access to the information through the website or are informed via Fax or E-mail. The central office will use the information to support lobby activities at government level and through international NGOs and donor agencies.

The project team in the central office will receive training to allow for internal development of the system (based on MySQL, PHP and Dreamweaver). Responsible officers in the regional offices will receive training in information and system management.

Development effects

The network assists indigenous people in the legitimization of land titles and the exploitation of these lands, providing them with a stronger and legal basis of existance.

Evaluation

This project will be evaluated through IICD's M&E tool. The results from the tool present an indication of the perceived impact by the indigenous groups. Do they perceive the government to be more transparent? Did they get insight in how to use ICT's to improve their standard of living? Does the project support effective decision making?

Title: Rural women's information network in Zabré, Burkina Faso

Project owner: Association Pag La Yiri

Summary

This empowerment project aims to provide information and access to communication to members of the women's association Pag La Yiri (11.000 members) in the information-poor area of Zabré, through the installation of an Internet connection and the setup of a small community radio station. The radio station will also benefit other local organisations and the local population in general.

Update

The project started in March 2005. A consultant (Jean-Eugène Ilboudo) was hired to assist Pag La Yiri in its' efforts to obtain the proper licences for radio broadcasting, and to assist with radio-oriented capacity development. Trainings will start mid 2005. Sulga Concept helped the organisation with the selection and the ordering of ICT-equipment, and a field visit to Zabré took place in order to assess the existing infrastructural situation. During the field visit, members of Pag La Yiri were informed about the project, its ICT-component and its objectives. Training needs assessments were done by IICD training partner Yam Pukri.

Introduction

The region of Zabré, in the southwest part of Burkina Faso near the Ghanaian border, is an important agricultural region. The region lacks good transport infrastructure and communication infrastructure, which hampers its development. Even national radio and television can hardly be received here – many people tune in on the Anglophone radio stations from their Ghanaian neighbours.

Pag La Yiri is a strong women's association which delivers alphabetisation programmes, agricultural information and training programmes, agricultural transformation services and pharmaceutical services to women and farmers in this region. One of its major problems is the timely dissemination of its information to the rural villages, which can be located up till 120 km from Zabré. There are no regional or local radio stations which cover this region, and the analphabetic percentage amongst the population is high. Communication with headquarters in Ouagadougou is possible through the use of telephone, but information products have to travel by (dirt) road. These problems are common for all organisations or institutions which work in the area. Setting up a community radio station may help overcome the information and communication gap between Zabré and the rural villagers, while the use of Internet and e-mail may facilitate the exchange of and the search for relevant information.

Objectives

The general objectives of the project are poverty alleviation and empowerment of women. The specific objectives of the project are to create an effective and locally appropriate information system for women in the region of Zabré.

Planned outputs

- Supply equipment for basic ICT and Internet use in the offices of Pag La Yiri in Zabré and Ouagadougou.
- Supply equipment for a community radio station in Zabré
- Obtain a broadcasting license for the community radio station in Zabré.
- Start broadcasting.
- Set up a regular broadcasting programme.
- Use the Internet for information search and exchange purposes.
- Use e-mail for communication purposes.
- Capacity development of 4-6 members in the use of ICT.
- Capacity development of 10-12 members in the use of radio broadcasting.
- Development of information campaigns via the radio.

Development Effects

The direct beneficiaries of the project are the 11.000 members of the association Pag La Yiri in the surroundings of Zabré. Indirect beneficiaries are the other inhabitants of the region (approximately 120.000) and NGO's and associations which work in the area. Indirect and direct economic benefits are expected once the radio will be on the air. Pag La Yiri will be able to drastically reduce its transport costs between Zabré and the surrounding villages. By providing locally relevant information, the radio may help people reduce travel costs, be informed on market prices, made aware of training opportunities etc. The Internet connexion will help Pag La Yiri to save on its transport costs from Zabré to Ouagadougou. The project has a large element of Capacity Development and will specifically empower women in the rational use of information and communication technologies.

Evaluation

This project will be evaluated through IICD's M&E tool. The results from the tool present an indication of the perceived impact by the members of the association Pag La Yiri. Do they have access to information through this project? Are they more aware of the possibilities of ICT's to improve their sector? Do they have more skills?

Title: Women's Information for Development Network (WIDNet), Zambia

Project owner: Zambia Association for Research and Development (ZARD)

Summary

ZARD and Zambian women's organisations are running the Women's Information for Development Network (WIDNet) project in order to enhance and strengthen information exchange and knowledge sharing, thus contribute to the empowerment of women. The project uses ICT as tools to collect indigenous information, analyse research data, and coordinate the dissemination of information that is relevant and appropriate to the women's movement and individual women in the country.

Update

To date ZARD has ICT-enabled its Resource Centre with modern multi-media PCs and a small ICT access and training corner. They have furnished WIDNet partner organisations with computers and internet connectivity where required, allowing them to start sharing information as planned. Further, ZARD is electronically indexing the information resources available at the resource centre and have published the [second quarterly e-bulletin](#) (129.3 KB) which collects and shares information on relevant activities WIDnet partner organisations (subscribe through zardwidnet@microlink.zm). ZARD is currently defining and developing the WIDnet website, and contuniing to support its partner organisations in using the ICTs effectively as well as establishing ICT tools like databases to help in administering information requests.

Introduction

In Zambia, the problem of gender inequalities, inequities and the empowerment of women is still a serious issue of concern. Most women are very poor, illiterate, uninformed about many issues that affect them and their development. Women also suffer great injustices and their rights are violated. When talking about poverty, women are the majority of the poor. When talking about people with ill health, the malnourished and hungry, women are the majority.

Women's lack of access to required information is one of the major problems that contribute to gender inequalities. While women in Zambia are the operational heads of households, with the responsibility for children, household expenditures and other essential livelihood activities falling on them, the lack of opportunities to generate or receive income leads to their inability to sustain the family and overcome poverty.

Although in Zambia there are many women's organisations adding value to the process of empowering women, their efforts are fragmented because of limitations in information, knowledge and sharing of experiences.

When embarking on the formulation of the ICT project, ZARD conducted a focus group discussion with a representative sample of organisations from the Zambian Women's Movement to determine their perception of the current situation. The participants identified the following as critical needs and issues:

- Need for a network and partnership in information sharing to make the work of the women in Zambia visible;
- It is difficult to access information that is Zambian which can be used as a basis for decision-making;
- Organisations are working in isolation leading to fragmented approaches and reduced levels of impact;
- There is little information on who is doing what and where;
- Many small organisations have very good material but do not have the means to publish it to make themselves visible;

- Women lack access to information to inform and enable them to realise their own income-generation and projects to improve their lives;
- It is difficult to find information on the situation of women in Zambia, such statistics on various subjects for presentations at international workshops and conferences;
- Parliamentarians lack supportive information on the situation of women as such they find it difficult to make informed decisions;
- The problem of lack of information is worse for people in rural areas.

Objectives

The overall objective of WIDNet is aimed at empowering the women's movement, women's organisations and individual women by enabling improved and informed decision-making for individual, organisational and national development. Specific programme objectives are:

- To make use of ICTs to build, strengthen, and maintain an information network among organisations active in the Zambian women's movement, allowing NGOs in the women's movement to establish effective working relations with each other, with other NGOs in Zambia, and with appropriate organisations globally (networking);
- To make use ICTs to increase awareness among stakeholders on the necessity for sharing, support and solidarity on women's rights, gender, and development, and help women fight social injustices through application of ICTs (Lobbying and Advocacy);
- To enhance the ICT capacity and skills of women in the women's movement and individual women to be able to use ICT tools for accessing new knowledge and education, study and job opportunities, establish new business contacts, communication and networking for improved livelihood, and for civic and political participation (ICT basic skills Training).
- To improve the availability of appropriate information resources to the key target groups by upgrading and making more user-friendly the indexing and retrieval system of the ZARD Resource Centre;
- To utilise the project's outputs by availing the information to professional organisation (international NGOs, research institutions, etc.), by increasing public awareness on gender inequalities, and by aiding women in developing improved opportunities, thus complementing and increasing the sustainability of ZARD's activities.

Planned outputs

Established network among selected NGOs, disseminating and coordinating the exchange of useful information and knowledge resources through, for example:

- Interfacing with member NGO and government information centres
- Facilitating online and face-to-face meetings among information officers from member NGOs
- Provision of information services to member NGOs
- Newsletter(s), E-Bulletins
- Publishing of member NGO information
- Sharing of E-Catalogues
- Others

Awareness raising, lobbying and advocacy activities implemented through, for example:

- E-bulletins
- Information exchange channel with Parliament
- Networking with journalists (radio, print, television)
- Facilitating topical online discussions for the wider public
- Information search service
- Others

Capacity Building of women's organisations staff and disadvantaged women, through facilitating, for example:

- Basic & Intermediate ICT skills training for member NGO staff
- Project system training for member NGO staff
- Training sessions on using ICTs for Effective Writing (Proposals), Effective Internet Searching, and

Managing household accounts

- Others

Improvement of **Resource Centre** with appropriate usability and resources, through, for example:

- Electronic resource indexing and retrieval system
- Identification of resources available via website
- Bulletins of new additions to Resource Centre
- Availability of public machines for information searching on the Internet and training
- Others

Development effects

The expected impact of the project is both direct and indirect. First, indirectly, creation of capacity of ZARD to effectively disseminate information and efficiently coordinate the hub for the women's information network is expected to lead to better identification of cooperation possibilities and more effective implementation of individual organisations' empowerment activities. Secondly, and more directly, the creation of capacity among groups of disadvantaged women in Zambia to use ICTs effectively is expected to enable them to access information, communicate and network for socio-economic empowerment, gender equality and equity, social justice and transformation

Evaluation

To evaluate this project the IICD evaluation methodology will be used. The perception of the project users will provide their opinions which form the basis to get an indication of the impact. For example, it will provide us with the information whether the intended services of the project are satisfactory to the user groups. Also, the perceived impact is measured. Are the users more aware and empowered?