NERCORMP is a joint livelihood project of International Fund for Agricultural Development and North Eastern Council, Govt. of India. The project is operating in six districts of three States in N. E. India. The overall objective of the project is to improve the livelihood of vulnerable people in a sustainable manner through improved management of their resource base.

What makes your idea unique?

The project emphasize on participatory bottom up planning, design, implementation and monitoring & Evaluation. Community members assessed...
The Project addressed the issue of financial inclusion of the rural areas with formation of micro credit unit. In many areas the banking facility is almost nil and credit from bank is near impossible. The project also tries to increase access to basic services and infrastructure facility. The Project also addressed the issue of food security. The project activities such as transferring skills from external agencies, setting up of market linkages and provision of loan to SHGs had considerably improved household income. As a result of the project, now women members are participating in village level decision making as well as in household decision. Slowly women are also participating in village level traditional institution meeting. The project initiative is also successful in improving the female health services and adoption of family planning measures.

Describe the primary problem(s) that your project is addressing.

The North Eastern Region represents a unique socio-cultural framework and faces a unique set of problems which the project addressed. The project also tries to address the critical institutional constraints to development in the area, improve livelihood of vulnerable people, enhance savings capacity and establish the habit of thrift, increase access to basic services and infrastructure facility. The Project also addressed the issue of financial inclusion of the rural area. In many areas the banking facility is almost nil and credit from bank is near impossible. The project also tries to address the problem of marketing. In some cases the product volume is not sufficient for big and continuous market linkage. The people’s mind set is the most important and difficult issue addressed by the project. The project also gave importance to the immense biodiversity resources of the region.

Describe the steps that your organization is taking to make your project successful.

The project address the critical institutional constraints to development and focus on introducing approaches which are more responsive to communities perceptions of needs and priorities, involve communities more in decision making and planning, make communities more responsible for management of their development programme in order to generate a greater sense of ownership. The project introduced participatory planning process and finance priority activities identified through the involvement of the entire community in the formulation of Community Resource Management Plan which reflects more productive and sustainable use of the available resources. The project addressed the issue of food security. The Project addressed the issue of financial inclusion of the rural areas with formation of micro credit unit. In many areas the banking facility is almost nil.

What impact have you had?

Farming as a household occupation has substantially increased in most of the villages. The project also facilitated easier accessibility to water, which helps in increase agriculture productivity and also in health and hygiene through setting up of low cost toilets. The use of low cost toilet not only improved the sanitation of the household but also improved the aesthetics of the village environment and brought about the dignity of women. In agricultural activities there is a notable decrease in the practice of jhum and increase other cultivation practices such as terrace, orchard and home garden etc. The introduction of new crops and upscaling of traditional practices in area under agriculture resulted in manifold increase in production and addressed food security. The project activities such as transferring skills from external agencies, setting up of market linkages and provision of loan to SHGs had considerably improved household income. As a result of the project, now women members are participating in village level decision making as well as in household decision. Slowly women are also participating in village level traditional institution meeting. The project initiative is also successful in improving the female health services and adoption of family planning measures.

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Better convergence of project initiatives with Govt. schemes in all districts is an important step the project is going to take up. It is quite visible in some districts that all line departments/agencies coordinates for preparation and implementation of district plan. It gives holistic approach of development which is important in rural development. No one can work in isolation to achieve the target but every department has to substantiate each other to achieve their respective goal. The project also should continue selection of activities relevant to the need of the target group.

What are the three most important actions needed to grow your initiative or organization? STEP 3:

The project needs to take urgent step in value addition and better marketing linkage. With project intervention the community members have come up with higher production level, which needs value addition and better marketing tie up to fetch higher prices. It will build confidence among the community to expand the organization. This sector needs to carefully identify key areas and extend strategic interventions’ supports. Value addition is taking place but to bring more areas under the same success arena, the area has to be given due thrust.

Describe the expected results of these actions.

Replication and expansion of project activities will give a bigger platform to work as pressure groups in all level including implementation of Govt. schemes. The increase volume of marketable surplus will give power to the community to dictate terms to buyers (better bargaining power). Increase of villages in the project districts will give better option and functioning of micro credit initiative of the project. Better convergence of different departments/agencies in the district can support each other to accomplice their target easily and also holistic development approach. All the development agencies can use the same platform or village level institutions to implement schemes to avoid duplication of work and save time and money. The value addition and better marketing link can give better income to the community members to earn confidence in their effort in the project to work hard.

What was the defining moment that led you to this innovation?

Against the background of failed development initiatives and the general air of distrust and disillusionment in the North East India, the project introduced and demonstrate a new approach to development which focuses on interventions which are technically appropriate, culturally sensitive and institutionally effective. This is based on requirement for developing a genuine partnership between the communities, government and other interveners such as NGO. Research Institutions in which all interventions are demand driven and client oriented and for which the indigenous knowledge and capabilities of the communities is accorded due recognition. The project design process, formulation and appraisal has been highly participatory in an effort to meet the expectations of the potential target group population. The problems and aspirations of communities were sought through detailed socio economic and production studies commissioned by Govt. of India with IFAD prior to detailed formulation of the project design. The project strategy is to use its limited resources to develop innovative approaches that are sustainable and replicable, have a catalytic effect and are consistent with government policy towards poverty alleviation. Assistance is towards the most vulnerable groups in rural society, namely the Schedule Castes, Schedule Tribes and other Tribals, the landless, women and small and marginal farmers. The strategy also lays stress on building partnership between NGOs and Govt.

Tell us about the social innovator behind this idea.

This is the project initiated by Government of India for rural development of North East with financial assistance from International Fund for Agricultural Development as soft loan in the backdrop of failed development initiatives in the region. The major project design is prepared as per guidelines of Govt. of India and IFAD and amended from time to time as per need arises in implementation process. This is an innovative bottom up approach of rural development with community participation in every level. The project covers all interrelated and important areas of development like Capacity Building of Community and participatory Agencies, Income Generation, Social Sector, Infrastructure Development with Natural Resource Management Sector to give holistic approach of development. The project formed the community based organizations called SHG, NaRM-G, NaRM-G Association and SHG Federation based on the implementation requirement and field situation. The project developed the CBOs as village development body in the project area so that same can be used for implementation of all development work of different agencies. The project also works with close coordination of traditional institutions in the village, wherever exist to support each other in the development initiative.

How did you first hear about Changemakers?

I heard about changemakers and online global competition from my friend Mr. Ajit Sharma, Assam Dairy development Board, Guwahati.

Sustainability

What would prevent your project from being a success?

The most difficult aspect for the project is the people mindset which includes all stake holders the community members, partner NGOs, project staff and Government members who implement and frame development schemes. Before the project implementation the community members themselves did not believe about their own capacity of planning and implementing such schemes. The Govt. line departments thought that preparation of work plan and implementation of rural development scheme is beyond community capacity and so should be done by department peoples. And so the work plans are prepared by Govt. employees as per their understanding of requirement for the community. At first it was very difficult to change the mindset of people and give responsibility to the community to prepare and implement their own development schemes. But once it is done in one place replication is easy. Here support from the people in Govt. who takes decision at various level is important to have convergence. Another major hurdle for the project is the low literacy level of the people. Because of low literacy the people have less absorption/understanding capacity and difficult to make them understand. The communication process used is totally different like video documentary, pictorial chart, music etc. which is easy to understand and remember. Generally people want to continue the existing system and not ready to accept changes.

Financing source

If yes, provide organization name.

No

How long has this organization been operating? (i.e. less than a year; 1-5 years; more than 5 years)

The Project started in 1999 with joint funding from Govt. of India and soft loan from IFAD routed through Govt. of India. IFAD funding completed in 30th September’08 and project taken over by North Eastern Council.
Does your organization have a Board of Directors or an Advisory Board?
Yes. The Board is chaired by Secretary, NEC and members from different Govt. line departments

Does your organization have any non-monetary partnerships with NGOs? (yes/no)
Yes

Does your organization have any non-monetary partnerships with businesses? (yes/no)
No

The Story
Does your organization have any non-monetary partnerships with government? (yes/no)
Yes

Please tell us more about how these partnerships are critical to the success of your innovation.
The NERCORMP project is working with close coordination of Govt. line departments for holistic development of the area. As the project has limited resources (human and financial) it is important to have close coordination with other Govt. and Non-Govt. agencies to support each other. The project seeks technical support from Govt. line agencies in implementation of schemes wherever possible. The project also implement many Govt. awareness programme like Total Sanitation Campaign, Total Literacy Campaign and National Rural Health Mission etc. in the project area, as economic and social development needs to go side by side. The project team members also participate in district level coordination committee to share their ideas, experience and working plan for overall coordination of development programme in the area.

How many people will your project serve annually?
More than 10,000

What is your organization’s business classification?
Non-profit/NGO/citizen sector organization

What is the total number of employees and total number of volunteers at your organization?
119 Employees (and 50 partner NGOs till 2008)

Have you received funding from any of the following groups? (Please check as many as apply.)
None of the above.

Source URL: https://www.changemakers.com/agriculture/entries/north-eastern-region-community-resource-management#comment-0