



INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' FORUM AT IFAD

Findings of four case studies
conducted by indigenous peoples on
IFAD-funded projects in ASIA and the
Pacific
A Regional Overview

Asia and the Pacific Case Studies on IFAD-funded projects

A regional Overview

The IFAD Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples approved by the Fund's Executive Board in September 2009 introduces the establishment of an Indigenous Peoples Forum at IFAD as an instrument to systematically engage indigenous peoples at the local, national and international levels through a process of dialogue and consultation between representatives of indigenous peoples, IFAD staff and Member States. As part of the implementation of the Policy, the Indigenous Peoples Forum at IFAD was established in February 2011 to: 1) monitor and evaluate the implementation of IFAD Policy of Engagement with Indigenous Peoples, including its contribution to the realization of the UNDRIP provisions, and share and discuss these assessments with IFAD staff, Member States and representatives of indigenous peoples in order to improve the benefit for indigenous peoples; 2) build and strengthen partnerships between IFAD and indigenous peoples in order to address poverty and sustainable development with culture and identity, taking into account the perspectives and aspirations of indigenous peoples; and, 3) promote the participation of indigenous peoples' organizations in IFAD's activities at country, regional and international levels, at all stages of project and programme cycles, and support the capacity-building processes of indigenous peoples' organizations.

Based on the successful experience in 2005 in reviewing the IFAD-funded projects with indigenous peoples by indigenous experts, independent studies were conducted on selected IFAD-funded projects in each region. The studies on IFAD-funded projects with indigenous peoples are aimed to support IFAD in enhancing its development effectiveness in its engagement with indigenous peoples. In general, the case studies:

- a) Identified existing policies and institutions, good practices, key success factors and innovations in selected on-going IFAD-funded projects with indigenous peoples with a potential for scaling up and replication;
- b) Assessed the implementation of the IFAD Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples in IFAD-funded projects taking into account that the selected project has been approved before the approval of the policy; and,
- c) Identified challenges and suggested areas of improvement in strengthening partnership between IFAD and indigenous peoples in order to address poverty and sustainable development with culture and identity.

The case studies also provided suggestions on specific indicators to measure the effectiveness of IFAD-funded projects/programmes with indigenous peoples and for the implementation of the IFAD Policy on IPs.

Three case studies of IFAD-funded projects were conducted in Asia and one in the Pacific.

The Asian projects were the Jharkhand Tribal Development Project (JTDP) in Jharkhand, India; the Rural Livelihood Improvement Programme (RLIP) in Attapue Province, Lao PDR and the Northern Mindanao Community Initiatives and Resource Management Project (NMCIREMP) in the Philippines. The three case studies aimed at identifying good practices, key success factors and innovations in IFAD-funded projects, at assessing the implementation of the IFAD Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples, and at identifying challenges and areas of improvement in strengthening partnership between IFAD and indigenous peoples.

The Jharkhand Tribal Development Project (JTDP) was implemented from 2003 to 2011 in six Munda villages of the Arki Block in the district of Khunti, Jharkhand, through the collaboration of the Jharkhand Government, the Jharkhand Tribal Development Society (JTDS) and facilitating non-government organizations. The main objective of the project was to empower communities to participate in decision-making, and to develop sustainable community institutions and livelihoods. The case study shows that the JTDP has been very effective in improving the lives and food security of the people in the project area by providing livelihood opportunities and upgrading the economy in the tribal communities. The project initiated a process of strengthening the Gram Sabha (GS), a grassroots-level traditional system of governance, to plan, implement and monitor the project. Programme components included natural resources management and self-help group (SHG) based activities, which were identified, planned and implemented by the beneficiaries. The project created farm-based livelihood opportunities and non-farm activities such as water harvesting, community-based forest management, fishery and animal husbandry. The case study shows that the objectives of the project were achieved to a large extent, especially through activities directly related to livelihood concerns, such as asset creation, micro-finance, diversification and expansion of agriculture and market. There were training programmes for awareness building, skills development and assertion of indigenous peoples' rights. The project built on existing indigenous systems of governance, indigenous knowledge, natural resources, and human and tribal rights. The project also brought about significant changes among the women who were particularly capacitated through various awareness-raising and income-generating activities. Through the project, women were organised and empowered to play an active role in the development of their community, as they had never done before.

The Rural Livelihood Improvement Programme (RLIP) (2005 to 2014), is being implemented in three districts of Attapue Province, Lao PDR among the Mon-Khmer ethnic groups. The RLIP aims for economic growth and improved sustainable livelihoods for the rural poor, including women and ethnic groups, through social development; economic development and natural resources management; rural infrastructure; institutional development and capacity building. While this case study is not yet complete, preliminary findings show that the program components were successfully implemented through initiatives such as village development

funds, rural infrastructure, agricultural and economic development. The activities of RLIP contributed to the improvement of the ethnic groups' livelihoods in the area and provided better road access to their villages. Villagers' agricultural production has increased, food shortage has been reduced, and ethnic villages now have easier access to the market. Most children from ethnic groups in the project area have been provided access to education. Ethnic women have better access to health care services and their participation to decision making processes at village level has improved.

The Northern Mindanao Community Initiatives and Resource

Management Project (NMCIREMP) in the Philippines was a six-year project implemented from 2003-2009 in Region X (Caraga) and Region XIII (Northern Mindanao). The target groups included, among other sectors, indigenous peoples belonging to six major indigenous groups. The project sought to reduce the target groups' vulnerability, improve access to essential services, support diverse livelihood options, champion the empowerment of grassroots institutions, and mainstream gender and indigenous peoples' concerns. The case study focused specifically on the support fund for indigenous peoples (SIP), noting that there was a significant drop in the budget allocation for this component by the time the project was finished. It also noted that upon project completion, the SIP component had been able to achieve most of its targets. The project provided security of tenure for indigenous peoples through the acquisition of Certificates of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT) and facilitated the formulation of their Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plans (ADSDPPs). The project resulted in improvement of livelihoods and increased incomes in the target areas. It contributed to the collective empowerment of indigenous peoples through representation of tribal councils in the mainstream local development councils. The establishment and operation of schools of indigenous knowledge, arts and tradition (SIKAT) helped revitalize traditional knowledge, culture and identity. The project improved basic health conditions by reducing the incidence of underweight children. The construction of gender-sensitive irrigation systems providing facilities for women to bathe and do their chores is identified as a best practice. However, these salient project accomplishments need to be further validated through field investigation.

In the Pacific, the study of the Rural Development Programme (RDP) in the Solomon Islands is still on-going, and no preliminary results are yet available.

The good practices, key success factors and innovations highlighted in the three case studies of IFAD-funded projects in Asia include the following:

1. Strengthening of community-based traditional institutions and governance systems at the village level greatly enhanced participatory planning, implementation and monitoring of the projects.
2. Development of gender awareness and capacity building among women resulted in significant improvements in women's wellbeing and participation in decision-making.
3. Introduction of infrastructures and appropriate technologies such as roads, land contour improvements, trenches and bunds benefited the livelihoods of a significant percentage of villagers..

4. Self-help groups among farmers, producers and women facilitated the development of their economic and financial capacity.
5. Opening new livelihood opportunities and improving market access and engagement contributed to increased income and food security.
6. Improved access to mother tongue education, health services and clean water are important in ensuring indigenous peoples' wellbeing. However, despite these efforts, physical access to education remains a tremendous challenge, especially in remote villages.

In relation to the implementation of the IFAD Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples, the case studies show that:

1. While all three projects started before the adoption of the IFAD Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples, it is positive that the three projects addressed the particular concerns of indigenous peoples, and applied some of the principles of the IFAD policy, though not fully.
2. Indigenous peoples and project staff are not fully aware of the IFAD Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples, which still needs to be disseminated to IFAD project staff and communities at the national and local levels.
3. A big gap remains in bringing the gains at the international level, such as the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and UN agencies' policies, down to the community level and to the national and local governments.

Among the challenges, areas of improvement and recommendations in strengthening partnership between IFAD and indigenous peoples are the following:

1. Ensure community involvement in the project design, planning and implementation so indigenous peoples' communities may get a sense of ownership over the project. This could ensure project sustainability and independence of the communities so they are able to continue the project activities even after the project has ended.
2. Also ensure that the project has a clear exit plan and well-defined phase-out strategies with specific implementation guidelines, in order to ensure the project's future sustainability. Among the priorities of the exit plan should be capacity building of the community to manage the project, and a process of developing and transferring 'ownership' of the project to the community people.
3. IFAD –funded projects should promote land tenure security for indigenous peoples, such as providing support for the acquisition of communal titles in order for the community to secure lands and resources, which in turn will enhance the sustainability of the project.
4. Indigenous peoples are among those most affected by the impact of climate change. Environmental degradation, erosion of natural resources and biodiversity loss are challenges, which affect indigenous peoples' ability to cope with and adapt to climate change. IFAD should build awareness of its members on FPIC, UNDRIP and climate change adaptation. These concepts should be applied to IFAD projects and support should be given for the participation of indigenous peoples' communities in determining the priorities and strategies for their own development.

5. The creation of a project board for IFAD-funded projects is recommended. Such a project board could serve as a supervisory and advisory committee to monitor accomplishments and deviations of the project. The project board could include representatives of indigenous peoples, the government and even the academe.
6. It is further suggested to create a policy working group supported by IFAD, to contribute to the broader policy dialogue with the government. The group could provide feedback on the effectiveness of ongoing policies and explore the potential for scaling up of successful operations.