PARTICIPATORY PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Insights from
Women's Empowerment Through Literacy and
Livelihood Development (WELLD) Project

CONTENTS

1

This manual on Participatory Programme Management explains all the stages of project management with steps and methods by highlighting the case of a project called Women's Empowerment Through Literacy and Livelihood Development. (WELLD) which PRIA and World Education with its four partner organizations implemented in the states of Madhya Pradesh (MP) and Andhra Pradesh (AP) in India. This pilot project was initiated in 1999 and concluded in 2002 and provided very important insights into various stages of project management- planning, designing, implementation, and evaluation of the project, which have been presented in this manual.

The first section on *Introduction* explains the concept and definition of the project. The stages are enumerated from the second section –*Project Appraisal* that emphasizes on how problem identification takes place and how projects are conceptualized, this is followed by section three on *Project Planning and Designing*, which illustrates the steps involved in the designing of projects. Section four on *Project Implementation and Monitoring* consists of the implementation stage which describes that activities planned begin to take place with proper monitoring and review followed by the fifth section on *Project Review and Evaluation* which describes the importance of reviews and evaluations and how these are done. The sixth and last section on *Project Closure* deals with the withdrawal process and steps involved in it. All these stages are explained through the case of WELLD. This manual offers some practical illustration and bridges the gap between theory and practice. The left side of the document contains general principles and steps while the right side of the document includes the case of WELLD from the section two on Project Appraisal. Each section contains a description of methods and how the projects pass through different stages. At the end of each section there are some key lessons listed which are based on our experiences while involved in the WELLD project from the appraisal to closure stage.

Many people have extended their support and advice in the preparation of this manual and deserve a special word of thanks. First of all, I express my gratitude towards President of PRIA, Dr. Rajesh Tandon who was a constant guide in the process of making of this document. His advice on the framework and contents was very useful in the final preparation. Secondly, Namrata Jaitli, Programme Manager of PRIA who was

associated with the project right from the beginning deserves huge acknowledgement for her support and inputs in the preparation of this manual. She made things simpler by putting all the information at one place and constantly filled gaps wherever they existed. I am also very grateful to Joysula Lakshmi and Sonal Surange, PRIA WELLD State co-coordinators in providing information whenever needed. The World Education team needs to be thanked for their feedback and important information on this manual. The contribution and support of numerous others like implementing NGOs in both the states as well as women learners was instrumental in providing soul to this practice oriented manual. We are immensely grateful to the Ford Foundation for providing financial assistance for this manual.

This manual will be useful for the project managers, trainers who wish to train others in the application of project tools and practitioners who wish to apply the steps and methods in the field. This manual can be treated as a guide to be used frequently to assist and support project managers and implementers at each step.

Anju Dwivedi, PRIA, 2002

3
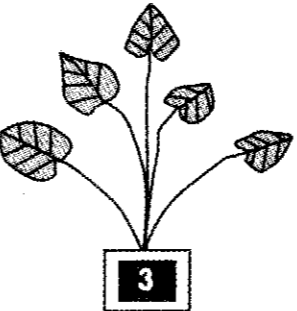
SECTION 4

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING
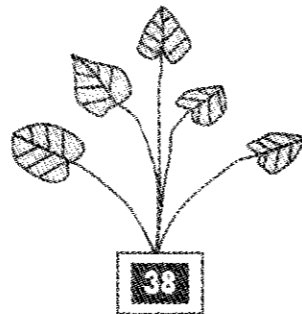
When the project is planned, the implementation of activities begins to take place, which marks the beginning of the project implementation stage.

During project implementation, the activities planned begin to get carried out in the fields with sufficient inputs. What will the staff do? Are they capable of doing what has been assigned to them? What support do they require in terms of money, equipment, vehicles etc. begin to become more crystallized.

This stage requires close monitoring of the activities and progress, as it is the most crucial stage of the project.

(A) ENSURING REGULAR MONITORING AND MAKING APPROPRIATE CHANGES IN THE PLAN

Monitoring is a systematic and continuous assessment of the progress of the work. It helps in knowing how the project is going? Are we going on the right track? Were we able to achieve what we wanted to? Any problems/ any actions delayed? Reasons for deviations and what could be done to be on the right track and how do we need to modify our plans?

Monitoring means to follow closely what is happening in the project, it ensures that the project reaches its goal so any problem discovered should be solved at an early stage to put things right.

Programme monitoring should focus on the use of resources, progress of activities and the way these are carried out.

It is useful to understand the monitoring in the following ways:

Designing a monitoring system: This requires collection and use of information on an activity, which needs to be communicated to all the partners

In the WELLD project, NGOs were chiefly responsible for management of the project at the field level with the women. While WE was responsible for providing support to develop primers on literacy, savings and credit and livelihood, PRIA's responsibility was to provide capacity building inputs to NGOs on Institutional development and Project management.

A two-phase approach was adopted to implement the project in both states with the main objective of using the learning from phase I for phase II implementation. In each phase there are 20 groups with 20-30 women participants in each group. The project aimed to cover about 800 poor rural women in two states.

At the field level

❖ Identification of the villages (basic criterion for selection- low literacy rates, poverty, literacy demand from women). In all the villages, facilitators for each group were identified.

❖ Environment building, mobilization and preliteracy activities -regular visits, exposure visits, puppet show, video screening, songs etc., link to other programmes, public meetings, learners get together.

❖ Strengthening Saving and Credit (S&C) Groups by providing capacity building of groups –s&c, learners get together, passbook entry, ongoing capacity building, supervision.

❖ Facilitating Literacy classes and livelihood enhancement.

At the organisational level

❖ At the project level efforts were made to enhance partner NGOs' understanding and skills for implementing the integrated model of literacy, savings and credit and livelihood within an empowerment framework.

❖ They were involved in the development of the three-stage curriculum (basic literacy, post literacy and the livelihoods improvement workshops). They gained expertise not only in curriculum development but were also able to efficiently implement and monitor the program with groups of women. Project teams in both the states spent a considerable amount of time to design and develop the basic curriculum so that it was in line with the WELLD project goal.

❖ Capacity building interventions on livelihood development and saving and credit intervention and empowerment issues (orientation- workshop, exposure visit, ongoing support from technical support organizations like CDF in AP, Livelihood development interventions, utilized the information collected on existing livelihood options, attempts to adapt their ongoing economic enhancement efforts, field support workshop, round table, exposure).

❖ The NGOs were assisted to internalize the learning of the project in their development agenda. Their institutional capacities were strengthened to effectively implement the WELLD project and plan for its expansion. Specifically, efforts to strengthen their internal monitoring, documentation, financial management and information systems were made. They were also assisted in strengthening existing and forging newer linkages to enable them in implementation and expansion of the current project.

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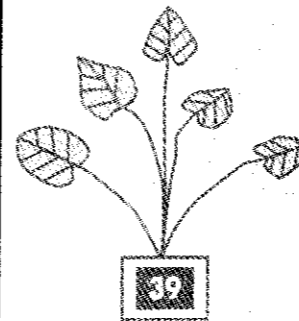
involved in order to take appropriate action as desired.

Defining the aim of the monitoring : A monitoring system is designed to meet specific needs and these vary according to the nature of activities at each level. It is important to know who needs monitoring and why it is needed.

All the actors involved in the project should feel accountable towards each other to ensure joint responsibility of ownership of the project. The communities should be able to hold the project officials accountable by articulating what they think of the project, is it making any impacts in their lives, or should it be planned in a different way.

Finalizing Indicators : The next step should be to decide which information on the basis of interest of each partner should come from where. And how that would be collected. Indicators, which depict progress or change, should be finalized at each level.

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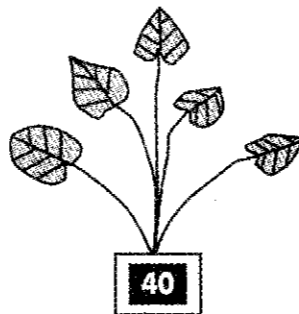
During the WELLD experience, it was found that monitoring was required by all the actors and partners involved. Women learners were keen to know their own progress vis a vis literacy and livelihood, while other implementing and support organisations were interested in knowing:

➢ The overall progress

➢ To maintain quality of inputs

➢ To ascertain the effective use of resources

➢ To look at the process of development

➢ To identify problems and possible solutions at an early stage

➢ To plan work

A monitoring system was developed at

1. At the level of women's learners.

2. At the implementing organizations level.

3. At the support organizations level.

In AP and MP, the indicators were built with the facilitators and the women learners on what they consider as their progress in the project. After several rounds of facilitation, women came out with indicators which best depicted their progress. The indicators identified by the women learners in MP are presented in *sheet 4*.

At the level of NGOs, a simple system of monitoring was developed taking each activity and building output indicators. LFA, which was simplified in the planning stage was used for monitoring. Similarly, for the support organizations a system with the activities and output indicators was developed. For instance, on the training at the level of implementing organizations the indicators were:

1. How many facilitators attended the training

2. How many were trained

3. The skill gained and attitudes changed due to the training

4. How the learning gained will be used while teaching the women learners?

For the support organizations the indicators were:

1. How many facilitators training conducted
(In addition to indicators (1-4) mentioned above)
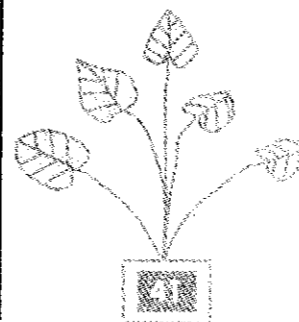
SHEET 4

1.0 General Information

1. Total Classes held	2. Attendance of women
3. The lesson	

2.0 Literacy

Reading
1. Alphabets	2. Words
3. Sentences	4. Numeracy

Writing- With the help of book
1. Alphabets	2. Words
3. Sentences	4. Numeracy

Writing- Without consulting book
1. Alphabets	2. Words
3. Sentences	4. Numeracy

Discussions
1. Understanding of the subject	
2. Discussing without hesitation	3. Participation

3.0 Savings and Credit

At the level of women
1. Need fulfillment	2. Regular savings
3. Unity and trust	4. Participation

At the level of a small group
1. Management of accounts	2. Linking with livelihood
3. Forming rules and regulations	

At the level of a large group
1. Management of accounts	2. Linking with livelihood
3. Forming rules and regulations	

(B) THE COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

There are many different ways of collecting data. The most appropriate method can be selected according to the kind of information needed, who is collecting it and how it is used.

Some methods of collecting data could be:

Participatory Learning Methodologies: These methods are useful in engaging people in collection as well as analysis of the information on the progress of a piece of work. If these methods had been used at the planning stage these become very effective during monitoring. Example: resource mapping before the project and during the project when it is sufficiently contributing in the growth of trees and other natural resources, similarly literacy mapping before and during the project could present a situation of improvement in the status of literacy.

Surveys: The surveys can be conducted to compare the population affected by the work or compare the current data with the results of the baseline study carried out before the work began.

Besides the above-mentioned methods, some more methods could be used for monitoring which were also tried in WELLD and are presented on the next page.
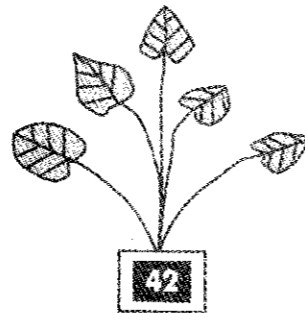
Pictorial formats : These were developed for the women learners who were not very skilled to read and write in the beginning. All indicators were explained through pictures, which conveyed the meaning of indicators.

Written Formats : Some formats like in the *sheet 5* on activities planned and undertaken were developed with the NGOs staff who were implementing the project.

The analysis was done focusing on

- Key Lessons
- Key Challenges
- Are we making any difference?
- Any other insights, observation, analysis

The use of LFA for monitoring was less tried as the implementing NGOs felt that the framework did not allow qualitative changes to figure in. And secondly, the monitoring process in LFA was focusing too much on activities than on indicators.

Case Studies: The case studies of learners were written by the facilitators. Daily account or any observations demonstrating change in learners were noted down by the facilitators in the classroom after the classes. Each facilitator had maintained a register and marked 3–4 pages having names of the individual women learners. Daily accounts used to contribute in developing a case on the process of change in women learners.

On site visits: The frequent visits by project officials of WELLD from state and national office was an other way of monitoring.

Regular reviews and meetings: The NGOs and SOs used to meet every six monthly to make each other aware on the progress of work, by making presentations on the project outcomes/achievements, challenges with reasons. After the presentations, the next round of the plan used to be made by the team. The reviews helped in bringing out issues of partnership since the WELLD project was implemented by six partners in the two states. The problems of co-ordination, communication were identified and sorted out during review meetings.

Reporting and Maintaining Diaries: Facilitators used to maintain a diary having information on women learners. The project coordinators and supervisers used to get the information from the facilitators and with their own observations used to write a report having the components as mentioned in *sheet 6*.

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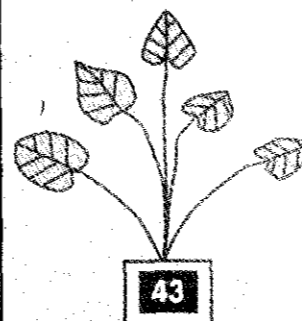
SHEET 5

Activities Planned	Activities Undertaken	Explain discrepancy (if any)

43

Facilitators Daily Diary Format

Why are some women not turning up and the steps being taken to motivate them.

Content - issues presented and discussed.

Methodology - various activities undertaken.

Women's participation in the class - interest, articulation, initiative, creativity.

Problems and suggestions.

Other issues.

Facilitators monthly report format was based on daily diary format. It was the summary of daily diary.

Facilitators Monthly Report Format

Attendance - % of women present in that month.

Absentees - why are some women not turning up and the steps being taken to motivate them .

Savings - number of women saving, the amount each is saving and the total savings of the group followed by 2,3,4,5,6 points of daily format.

Impact - on the learners and facilitators - to monitor the process of change in their lives:

Ability to articulate - at home, in the center, and outside

Mobility - attending the center, going to the market, bank, travelling to a neighbouring village - doing all this on their own

Decision-Making - regarding the timings of the class, the location of the center, content being taught. Ability to decide issues within the family like marriage, number and spacing of children, children's education, resource utilization and participation in different activities.

Control - over their earnings, savings and assets. Control over their body - issues of violence (battering), sexual harassment including marital rape

The NGOs and SOs used to compile the information coming from the fields and used to incorporate the details of their activities and outputs, achievements, challenges.

NGO Monthly Report Format

The NGO monthly report format is based on the NGO staff's activities of the month and the monthly reports received from the facilitators in villages.

1.WELLD Centres' Overview
* Same as the previous format with additions

2. Project Coordination
* Planning meetings with NGO head and other staff
* Planning meetings with A.P WELLD team
* Administrative responsibilities

3. Capacity Building
* Training \ Workshops attended
* Training \ Workshops conducted

4. Monitoring & Evaluation
* Field visits
* Review meetings

5. Documentation
* Field reports
* Workshop reports
* Review reports
* Meetings minutes

6. Networking
* Village, Mandal & district level networking

NGO and WELLD State Quarterly Report Format

1. Introduction - Background, Objectives
2. Project Coordination
3. Capacity Building
4. Monitoring & Evaluation
5. Documentation
6. Networking
7. Field Overview (will include all the components mentioned in the monthly format)
8. Conclusion
* What was achieved
* What could not be achieved and why
* Lessons learnt
* Challenges \ Concerns

The **analysis of data** coming from monitoring should be carried out simultaneously. The data gives a trend but, why such data emerges, what could be done to continue or to improve the situation should be analyzed by all partners. If the data by women indicates that some women are not coming to attend classes, a proper analysis would offer reasons for that, women should be encouraged to discuss those reasons and plan out what should be done to check the women's irregular attendance. The analysis would also give rise to some possible action to be taken at the level of NGOs and SO - such as changing the time of classes, making sessions interesting by using other methodologies etc. The data should be used for reviewing the plans, taking some action, which was not taken earlier. The results are used by each partner such as the programme/project teams, communities and donors in deciding the future course of action.

A good monitoring system is about good management. A good monitoring system should include the use of results, which could be for planning procedure, for institutional learning and for undertaking formal reviews and evaluations.

44
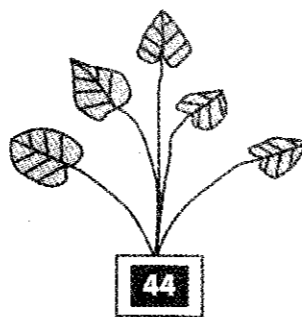
In WELLD, the women after filling up the formats used to discuss within their groups as to why certain progress had been achieved or not achieved by some or all the women in the groups. The facilitators used to help women articulate reasons and what possible action could have been taken to check this problem. The group analysis used to be presented in a consolidation sheet by facilitators to generate more analysis and discussions.

At the level of NGOs, WE, and PRIA, the regular visits, reviews, ongoing meetings used to help focus on the progress of the project and challenges. The plans used to be made after every meeting, which used to focus on achievements and challenges. The steps to overcome used to be discussed followed by a revised plan, which used to indicate how those challenges would be overcome in the next phase. Regular feedback on the reporting used to be provided.

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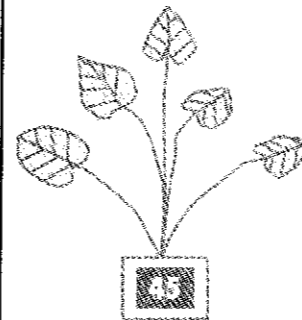
SOME KEY LESSONS

Practice related

- The planning stage gives rise to the implementation stage, but in practice the planning stage never ends. With implementation and constant monitoring of the progress of activities, the plan keeps changing and one has to engage constantly in the process of planning.

- A multiple partnership project like WELLD can be a very innovative kind of an experiment, which can bring diversity of strengths for the project along with certain problems of co-ordination, communication and institutional priorities. If not resolved timely, the problems may hinder the progress of work.
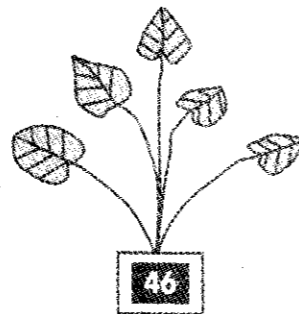
Capacity building

- Capacity building requirements are not constant for each organisation, therefore different organizations may require different inputs at different times of the projects, which SO should be able to assess and provide support. Structured workshops serve a limited purpose. Classroom learning should be translated in the fields.

Use of Methods

- Usually there is confusion about methods to be used in monitoring. The methods, which are used in planning, can be used in monitoring when certain progress in the work has taken place. The comparisons can show the change and can indicate what more needs to be done. Often it is seen that the link between methods tried in planning and monitoring remains missing.