

Capitalization of Experiences «Water, Land and People»

Lessons learned from the process

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LESSONS LEARNED ABOUT THE METHODOLOGY

TO ESTABLISH A JOINT LEARNING PROCESS, ALL GROUP MEMBERS MUST BE AWARE OF AND ACCEPT A METHODOLOGY FROM THE BEGINNING, WHICH SHALL ALSO BE THE BASIS TO BUILD A JOINT LEARNING PROCESS. THE GROUP MEMBERS SHALL ALSO BE FLEXIBLE ENOUGH TO ALLOW INNOVATIONS AS PART OF ITS ADJUSTMENT TO THE LOCAL REALITY.

- In the case of the Bolivia Learning Group, the methodology was not clear from the beginning; actually this had to be established throughout the process. The late arrival of the methodological principles and story telling instruments was actually positive, in that it allowed for the necessary openness and flexibility to address the different issues and for greater innovation from the Work Groups; however, it was also negative due to the lack of an optimum project structure, clarity in terms of timing, theme details, definition of the environment, etc. The need to make methodology decisions “on the spot” in order to achieve a thematic, timely, spatial, methodological, etc. clarity required an additional investment of time.

- The wealth of the process in the Work Groups did not have the same intensity and scope as that of the larger Learning Group. On the other hand, the level of exchanges between the Work Groups was limited, except at the end of the process, given that the meetings, in general, were more focussed on the discussion of operative and methodological aspects than on the contents and common elements of the process. The methodological improvisation and “on the spot” construction have been the determinant elements to waste exchange opportunities and a greater shared in-depth analysis.

RESPECT TO THE “TRUTH” OF THE STORY-TELLERS IS THE BASIS FOR THE PROCESS’ AUTHENTICITY AND THE LEGITIMACY OF THE RESULTS.

- In general it could be stated that the story telling methodology was not applied in its full extent, but only some of its elements, for example the “philosophy” of recovering the legitimacy of the testimonies, specially allowing the stories to flow, without leading, directing or prejudging, but instead believing and accepting the actor’s “truth”, which guarantees its authenticity.

Respecting the actor’s “truth” allowed the access to and visualization of perceptions, experiences, visions, passions, etc., from the “actors” mind, his/her tacit knowledge and spontaneity regarding the process’ issues; this provided greater wealth to the Learning Group analyses, discussions, reflections, etc.

- The groups analyses, reflections, discussions, etc. do not start from prior “hypothesis, nor has it applied a scientific thoroughness, nor was it focussed *a priori* to specific products or results. This has also allowed for a greater openness, spontaneity and legitimacy in the groups’ work with the stories and in the performance of its members.

- The products were defined along the way and are not conclusive, rather they are reflections, under a format of lessons learned, they are provocative and targeted to contribute to the construction of a vision and conceptualization of an Integrated Water Resource Management.



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FOR AN ADEQUATE RAPPROCHEMENT WITH THE REALITY FOUND THE STORY TELLERS HAVE TO BE ACTORS THAT ARE DIRECTLY RELATED TO THIS REALITY AND THEY NEED TO REPRESENT DIFFERENT SECTORS.

- The methodology's application depends highly on the subject selected and on the story-tellers' clarity and knowledge of the subject. Although the actors mix is important to gain access to stories that show different visions, perceptions, experiences, etc., from their experience and knowledge of the process, it is also necessary to search for representation, balance and inclusion during the selection process of the story tellers, so as to reduce any bias towards certain trends or to leave gaps in the reality found.
- The Work Groups have applied different methodological instruments, input and material. In some cases external support was sought to recover the stories, its transcription and initial editing, which makes harder the subsequent work and the process orientation, given that in such cases external styles were appropriated, questions lists, emphasis on the conversations, etc., which is why it is better if the stories are transcribed by the group members.
- Given that the stories were collected at different times and by different actors, the first ones have very general information and with mixed approaches from the persons collecting the information, which is what created the need to delve into it and complement the information, including more particular aspects as a result of the most important thematic axes identified from the first stories.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE PROCESS OF "CAPITALIZATION EXPERIENCES IN WATER, LAND, AND PEOPLE"

- The groups' wealth was their mixed composition, with members representing different experiences. That as well as the subjects addressed gave way to the division in 2 Groups, so as to allow a better utilization of the knowledge of the different participants.
- The people's participation, the way they fit into the group and their representation was also mixed. The length of the initiative causes a certain lack of continuity of the representatives; along the path there were drop-outs but there were also recruitments; also, the levels of commitment and involvement varied along the process and along the way.
- Groups have also been mixed in terms of their members' knowledge and participation in the processes analyzed. Some of the lead actors in the processes provided their own testimonies, and also were permanent members of the group; they also participated in the discussions. Others did not provide a testimony because they were not directly involved in the processes, but they were active participants in the Learning Groups. Finally, some - given the importance of the processes being analyzed- were invited to provide their testimony but did not participate in the Learning Groups.
- These different ways of participation and involvement are advantageous because the participation of the leading actors in the process enrich the Group analysis during the discussion and internal reflection process, which would not be possible if the Group analyzed a situation that is unknown to them and would only be based on the testimonies collected. However, the participation of the leading actors in the processes can also cause a certain level of incompatibility or conflict of interests with the Group's work results, which in certain cases has hampered and entangled the discussions and reflections



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- The learning Group is an uncommon place for the discussion of concepts, ideas, perceptions and passions, it is enriching at an individual level and at a Group exchange level; however, one of the limitation on this type of learning processes are the individual agendas of the group members.

- The participation of local social actors directly related to the processes being analyzed, was limited to the collection of data, although it would have been very valuable. The duration of the reflection process and the work pace acquired by the Learning Group were a limitation for the permanent participation of the local social actors in the process.

In Bolivia's case, COSUDE's vision of International Programmes was not reflected in the Group in the terms originally envisaged. One of the most relevant moments came as a result of the IV Global Water Forum in Mexico, where interesting exchanges on the processes and progress made took place among the members of the Bolivia, India and Mali Groups, as well as the participation and presentation of reports. Also, similar exchanges in terms of the status of the processes occurred during the Indian Mission visit to Bolivia, and also through the occasional participation of the institution's representatives to work events scheduled by the Group.

- It is the Group's perception that we appreciate story-telling as a learning mean, this can be an important work tool in field work, specially when related to local processes where different actors who also have different interests and experiences participate, and where a better understanding of the ongoing processes is sought, for instance to plan and find consensus for future actions. Its application is limited, where another type of information is required to understand the context or the process, for example quantitative information or other tools for qualitative analysis. It can be stated that in the extent that the context's complexity and the number of mixed groups that participate in the process increased, the methodology loses effectiveness, because the learning groups have a limited capacity to work with a larger number of stories with different visions and experiences.

- The group would consider it interesting and as a complementary task, the compilation of stories and delving into the learning process "Capitalization of Experiences in Water, Land and People" by answering the following questions:

- Why have I participated in the Group "Capitalization of Experiences in Water, Land and People?"

- What was my motivation?

- What have I learned as a result of my participation in the Group?

- How have I learned, which were the tools used?

- What do I want to do from this point forward with what I have learned?



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LESSONS LEARNED ON INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

WATER AS A POWER AND IMBALANCE ELEMENT BETWEEN THE SECTORS

- Water has become a determinant power element (at a national as well as local level), and has also acquired different expressions. In the two cases studied the leading role in the processes span around the irrigators sector (sector lead role-sector interest).
- At a macro as well as local level a sector's positioning and its empowerment produces imbalance in the capacity for political leverage and the expression of power between sectors, thus putting aside the collective interest and superimposing corporate interests and even personal interests.
- The capacity to maintain in effect this sector and personal statement is based on the evolution and adaptation of the reasoning capacity over the current situation, and also in the capacity to sustain relations and leadership between the local dynamics and the national dynamics.
- A common feature in both processes has been the weakness of public institutionalization at a macro (national) as well as micro (local) level. Within this context the role of the international cooperation agencies at a national level is similar to the role of the Projects/ Programmes/NGOs at a local level.
- A common element is the prevalence of the sector's vision and strategies (sector use) over the integral vision (integrated use) in the area of water management. Fragmentation is still a predominant element, whereas a integrated vision is still a theoretical element.
- Sector interests, the recognition of rights, and autonomous decisions relative to use and access to water, in terms of irrigation, have been the basis for the elaboration of the sector regulations and the beginning of institutionalization of Water Management for sector actors and interests.

However, acknowledging these existing rights (consuetudinary rights) also demands the need for a more integrated planning under equality principles.

- Thus, it is important that planning of integrated water resource processes be developed with broad and inclusive social and institutional foundations (participation-consensus). The principle of equality is a key factor in terms of GIRH, respecting social interests, local use, traditions and dynamics.



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