

Monitoring and Evaluation Summary Report 2007 Country Programme Burkina Faso

"The project focus group helped us to take account of results that we were ignoring."
Manager of an agricultural project

This report summarises the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) report on the Burkina Faso Country Programme in 2007. Summaries are posted on the IICD website to showcase the work of our project partners and the results obtained by these partners and IICD. It should be noted that the purpose of evaluation reports is to learn from projects, concentrating on project outcomes and impact as well as their successes and difficulties, rather than to assess the progress of the project or the amount of money spent (such matters are addressed in quarterly reports).

Evaluations are based on questionnaires completed by the various stakeholders involved. Depending on the country, the evaluation may cover project teams (reflecting on the support provided by IICD), participants in training sessions (reflecting on capacity building) and end users (reflecting on the projects in which they participated). The data from these questionnaires are analysed by a local M&E partner, who also facilitates a subsequent focus group with the partners implementing the various projects. The discussions in focus group meetings generate additional qualitative data on projects (by explaining what is really happening on the ground) and allow exchanges of experience (on successes and challenges) and the lessons to be drawn for IICD and its partners.

The evaluation report below is the integral work of Mr Dr. Daniel Thieba, the M&E partner in Burkina Faso. It provides an overview of the data collected and the discussions in the focus group. Although sensitive information on certain partners has been deleted to maintain a relationship of trust between partners, M&E reports are honest representations of the process and the lessons learned concerning the Country Programme. In 2007, the Burkina Faso Country Programme comprised six projects with about 1,050 users, and 421 questionnaires were collected. This summary gives the results of the questionnaires collected from the end users of agricultural sector projects and the educational project.

Generally speaking, M&E activities went well in 2007. Progress was made in data collection, with greater rigour and increased assumption of ownership of the process by the organisations implementing the projects, particularly in the agricultural sector. For the first time, all the projects organised a project focus group for end users.

Programme in the agricultural sector

In Burkina Faso, the IICD supports five projects in the agricultural sector, one of which is more a health education project than an agricultural project properly speaking. Projects in this sector are aimed at improving communication and information exchange between national and regional offices, awareness raising for agricultural operators to enhance their negotiating and decision-making capacity, and improving production techniques. The end users – agricultural producers belonging to federations – benefited from various information and training sessions as well as access to multimedia tools.



Presentation of roles & responsibilities M&E

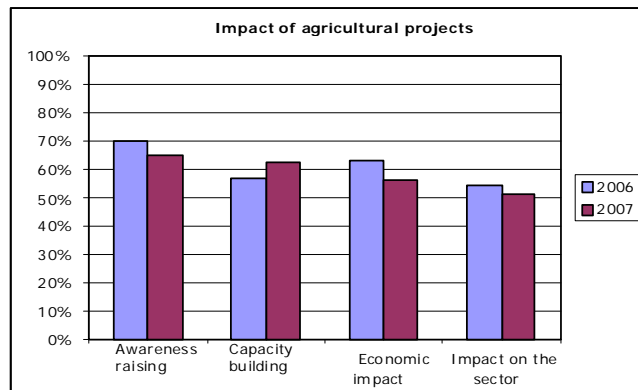
The level of satisfaction with the services provided was rather high, but the results are less positive regarding the cost of access to services and the quality of the service. This is mainly due to the constraints on access to electrical power and to problems with the Internet connection. The focus group meeting drew useful lessons concerning the various solutions adopted by each project. The representatives of Pag-la-Yiri, for example, stated that they had shifted from the electric generator to the mill engine as the source of electric power, which considerably reduces their energy costs. FEPPASI benefited from a national solar energy project and now generates its electricity using this highly efficient, reliable technique. Sahel Solidarité, in contrast, has experienced considerable difficulty with its solar panels, but this may be due to poor equipment quality or improper installation.

To address these common challenges, and in particular to overcome Internet connection problems, it is essential to engage in advocacy (involving local elected officials) in conjunction with the Burkina-NTIC network. The focus group participants suggested among other things:

- Negotiating with the national telephone company ONATEL on payment terms for Internet connection charges in rural areas;
- Working together to ensure that information and communication technology is taken into account in community development plans;
- Forming a technology watch committee within B-NTIC charged with identifying all Internet connection options;
- Organising working sessions with local authorities to make them aware of the potential and importance of ICT for local communities, in order to increase their involvement in the negotiations;
- Conducting a separate study of Internet connection possibilities in rural areas;
- Conducting a variety of awareness-raising activities at local level, and increasing and operationalising advocacy at the central level for access to Internet connections (e.g. after many unsuccessful attempts to get a telephone line, FEPPASI finally acquired one by sending a letter directly to the minister

for the post office and telecommunications).

The impact in terms of awareness raising on ICT is higher than the impact for the other categories of indicators. Most project users have not yet felt a real economic impact, because the projects are still in the start-up phase and their effects on economic conditions take time to emerge. The fact that 50% gave favourable responses in this regard shows that things are moving in the right direction though.



The projects also discussed the value of monitoring and evaluation activities and the "project" focus group. The leader of one project thinks that these activities gave them a good idea of the current situation of their projects: *"Now we know what our strengths and weaknesses are"*. The managers of this organisation stated that: *"The "project" focus group brought their attention to results that, although an integral part of the projects' achievements, were being ignored by project staff"*. Another described the results achieved as follows: *"We have seen an improvement in the negotiating capacity of project managers and a reduction in the time required organising activities, and the results are better"*.

Programme in the education sector

The principal objective of the education project is to promote the integration of ICT into secondary education in Burkina Faso by supporting initiatives aimed at facilitating access to ICT and sharing and exchange of knowledge, resources and teaching practices using ICT in the country's education system.

It emerged from the surveys that the vast majority of survey respondents are male. In fact, 93% of respondents are men. Considering that women make up a large

proportion of staff in secondary schools, their low participation in the project is primarily due to family reasons (difficulties in adapting their work schedule to their load of domestic tasks). Another reason for the low female participation rate is that women still have difficulties participating in project activities. To resolve this problem, the participants suggested:

- Organising specific awareness-raising and training activities for women;
- Integrating ICT in school projects;
- If necessary, practicing positive discrimination by giving special support to any woman who joins the ICT and Education Group to encourage more active participation of women in project activities;
- Coordinators could also select a core group of women for training; these women would find it easier to interest other women in participating and draw them towards the project. To this end, each participant could propose a list of women in his/her school. Coordinators could also think about a strategy to motivate women so that they participate in the project on an equal footing with men.

The assessment of the conduct of project activities, in terms of training and counselling, was generally positive. The project was implemented using a diversified range of training media and tools. The impact of the project was higher in 2007 than in 2006, with one exception: the impact on the sector decreased. The focus group was aimed at finding out why the impact on

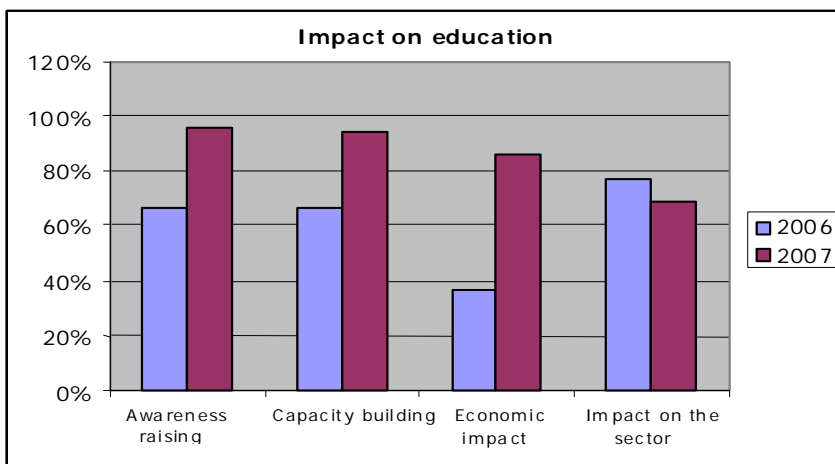
the education sector as a whole declined slightly in 2007, despite the fact that the project had considerable impact on individual users in terms of awareness raising, empowerment and economic situation.

The participants evoked a variety of reasons as to why sector impact would have decreased:

1. To this point, teachers work with the project on a volunteer basis;
2. Insufficient cooperation with school principals;
3. Computer labs are inadequate and their equipment obsolete;
4. It is not easy to obtain supplies of consumables from school administrations.

Considering that the impact on the sector is linked to the impact in individual organisations, since the sum of these organisations constitutes the sector, participants proposed adopting a holistic approach in order to increase the impact on the sector. This would involve actions at four levels:

1. **teachers:** for example, make teaching-related ICT resources available on a local network within the school;
2. **pupils:** give pupils access to computer labs so that they can back up their theoretical training with hands-on training; involve pupils in managing computer labs and motivate them;
3. **computer room:** increase accessibility for all users;
4. **institutional level:** informing and training administrative staff and partners about the advantages of the project and getting parents involved.



Respondents' main suggestions for improving the project can be grouped under five categories listed below:

- increase the number of initial and refresher training sessions;
- give more emphasis to practical applications in training sessions;
- extend training to other members of the school staff and devise sessions matching their needs;
- provide schools and trained staff with ICT equipment;
- examine options for higher-speed Internet connection and improve the quality of Internet access.



Wrap up of the discussion by Mr. Thieba

Prospects for 2008

The conclusion is that local organisations can gradually take on a larger role in monitoring and evaluation. The experience of 2007 shows that great strides have been made. In terms of division of roles and responsibilities, the following prospects are defined for 2008: in the process of local take-up of M&E, those responsible for M&E within the partner

organisation must assume more responsibilities. To this end, certain activities to strengthen their capacities, like an M&E training and coaching were initiated in 2007. They should be continued and stepped up in 2008, so that the role played by the M&E partner gradually diminishes in favour of the responsible person within the partner organisation.

With the right tools, people in developing countries can considerably improve their livelihoods and quality of life. Better access to information and communication technology (ICT) is particularly vital in enabling them to achieve their goals. This is why the International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD) creates practical and sustainable solutions that connect people and enable them to benefit from ICT. As an independent not-for-profit foundation, we put knowledge, innovation and finance to work with partners from the public, private and not-for profit sectors. Together, we can make a world of difference.

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