

**EXPERIENCE
CAPITALIZATION**

***EXPERIENCE
CAPITALIZATION:
WORKING TOWARDS ITS
INSTITUTIONALIZATION***

12



The “Capitalization of Experiences for Greater Impact in Rural Development” project is implemented by CTA in different parts of the world, in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), and with financial support from IFAD, the International Fund for Agricultural Development. This project aims to facilitate the adoption of an experience capitalization process in rural development initiatives, where it can help improve the analysis, documentation, sharing, and the adoption and use of lessons and good practices – as an approach for continuous learning, improvement and scaling up.

The cases featured in this booklet were selected and written by those participating in the project. Responsibility for the information and views set out in each case lies entirely with the authors. Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

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FOREWORD

The Capitalization of Experiences for Greater Impact in Rural Development project aimed to improve the quality of rural development initiatives, ensuring better results in the fight against poverty and food insecurity. Its key objective was to facilitate the adoption of tried and tested approaches to improve the analysis, sharing and the use of lessons and good practices.

Participants from many projects and organisations, working in different parts of the world, joined training workshops organised by the project, leading to many starting their own capitalization processes, sharing lessons and recommendations through booklets, articles, blog posts and other outputs. The project also produced its own training materials, including a facilitators' guidebook, and supported an online community of practice, where all those involved have been sharing ideas and information. The biggest mark of success though, for the project, is the extent to which experience capitalization has been adopted by the workshop participants and others.

The cases captured in this booklet show the steps taken in many of these projects and organisations to support and ensure the adoption of an experience capitalization approach. Working together with their colleagues, those who joined the CTA workshops have become active “champions”: organising their own training sessions, they shared information in different ways, and have shown how others can benefit from the capitalization process.

They have helped to create the conditions for experience capitalization to be more widely adopted by their organisations. As a result, there are many new capitalization processes going on, and many more will be taking place in the future – effectively underpinning more accountable and efficient projects in the future and greater progress in rural development.



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INTRODUCTION

Starting in April 2016, the “Capitalization of Experiences for Greater Impact in Rural Development” project organised a series of training processes with hundreds of individuals, all of them representing projects and organisations in different parts of the world. Some of them were familiar with this approach while many had not heard about it, but all of them were eager to look at the best way to start and complete a process which would help them describe and analyse the work they were doing, draw lessons and recommendations, and share them with a broad audience. The training sessions led to many interesting discussions, most of which continued as part of the ongoing online community of practice (COP). And by joining these workshops and discussions, all participants actually started and completed a capitalization process, and the results of their work has been shared in more than 120 stories included in 10 booklets like this one.

These have been very positive results, and they have helped validate the approach we followed and which is presented in the different documents and training materials prepared by the project. But the objective of the project was not to train a number of representatives of projects and organisations, nor only to help them complete a capitalization process. Complementing these efforts, we were especially interested in the institutionalization of an experience capitalization approach, and in facilitating a process that would lead to its adoption in projects and organisations.

The different training workshops included a session on institutionalization, and participants looked at the problems they would face back home, and at the steps which the theory suggested they should take. Many of them prepared “action plans” which they promised they would implement, and we soon started hearing about them: some of the participants mentioned that they had shared information with their colleagues, others described the workshops they organised, and the new capitalisation processes they started. It was soon clear that the path towards institutionalization was not only theoretical, but that it was actually taking place.

More than 60 persons responded to a message sent to the members of the community of practice, all of them describing in detail their institutionalization efforts, and also the results they had already seen. Twenty-five were invited to come to the Netherlands, and together we compared the theory and the practical steps they had taken – also comparing them to the steps we took at CTA (supporting the COP, sharing information with our colleagues, training facilitators, etc.). Together we explored the main conditions and requirements needed for the effective adoption of the approach. Building on the discussions and the peer-review process we had, participants were able to complete their case studies, and show the processes going on in countries as diverse as Argentina and Zimbabwe.

Factors, conditions, requirements

The first set of articles highlights the importance of an internal training process: those who joined the CTA meetings organised similar workshops, and helped their colleagues go through the basics of an experience capitalization process, and develop the necessary skills to complete it and also to support others. In addition to regular training sessions, for example, Renuka Rai describes the “chain mentorship” process that she guided in Nepal (p. 14), while Ismail Moumouni presents the broader efforts of the Advanced Distance Training Centre for Agriculture in Benin (p. 20). In a similar vein but pointing at the need to convince team leaders and managers, other articles describe internal advocacy process. Gilbert Tarimo and Mahua Roy Choudhury show the steps taken inside the MIVARF project in Tanzania (p. 34) and the Bihar Rural Livelihoods Promotion Society in India (p. 52), seeing the approach incorporated into job descriptions and performance indicators.

Other authors describe steps which differed from the ones tried by the project. Describing the work of his organisation in Ghana, Moses Nganwani Tia shows the importance of non-formal methods that have included storytelling or folk music and which he aptly describes as a “smart way” (p. 98). Working in a totally different environment, Diana Mosquera and her colleagues in Colombia show how they tried to “reach an audience that has limited time”, and actively and successfully engage them in the process (p. 110). Another group, in contrast, shows the importance of working together with other organisations. Haoua Ouattara, for example, describes how Oxfam has been able to work with many different partners in Burkina Faso (p. 129).

Teamwork

The important role played by different persons is one of the common elements found in all cases. Edson Natha shows how his institutionalization efforts in Mozambique involved farmers (p. 71), while Violet Nyando and Micheline Ouamega point to the important role of the “champions” in Kenya and Burkina Faso. All of them show that the institutionalization of the approach, just as the approach as a whole, is successful only if many different persons join as active participants and work as a team.

Looking back, the same can be said of this project: the positive results that we have been able to see and share were only possible because many persons were involved. CTA is therefore indebted to all those who joined the different training sessions and who shared their ideas in our different publications. And we are especially grateful to all those who, working in different countries and in many different ways, made up our team. To Krishan Bheenick, Merche Rodriguez, Ibrahim Khadar and Thierry Doudet, and to Shalini Kala, Laura Eggens, Yennenga Kompaoré, Sophie Treinen, Federico Sancho, Peter Bury, Eva van Heeswijk, Ana Tumi, Ivan Kulis, Pankaj Shrivastav, Marta Araujo, Ismail Moumouni, Gorgui Alioune Mbouw, Marga Janse, Marilyn Minderhoud, Helen Gillman, Karen Hampson, Fernanda Arraes and Bhawana Luthra – a very big thank you!



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TRAINING & MENTORING

A ONE-ON-ONE APPROACH TO START INSTITUTIONALISING EXPERIENCE CAPITALIZATION

Prudence Ayebare



To encourage the adoption of the experience capitalization approach within the Uganda National Farmers Federation, those who had joined the CTA training workshops opted to share information and explain the main concepts and the steps involved to all team members through tailored one-on-one sessions. Through such meetings, the trained staff were able to convey the importance of the approach and demonstrate how it could meet the varying needs of the different departments.

Cover UNFFE's Policy Research Officer during one of the workshops organised by CTA

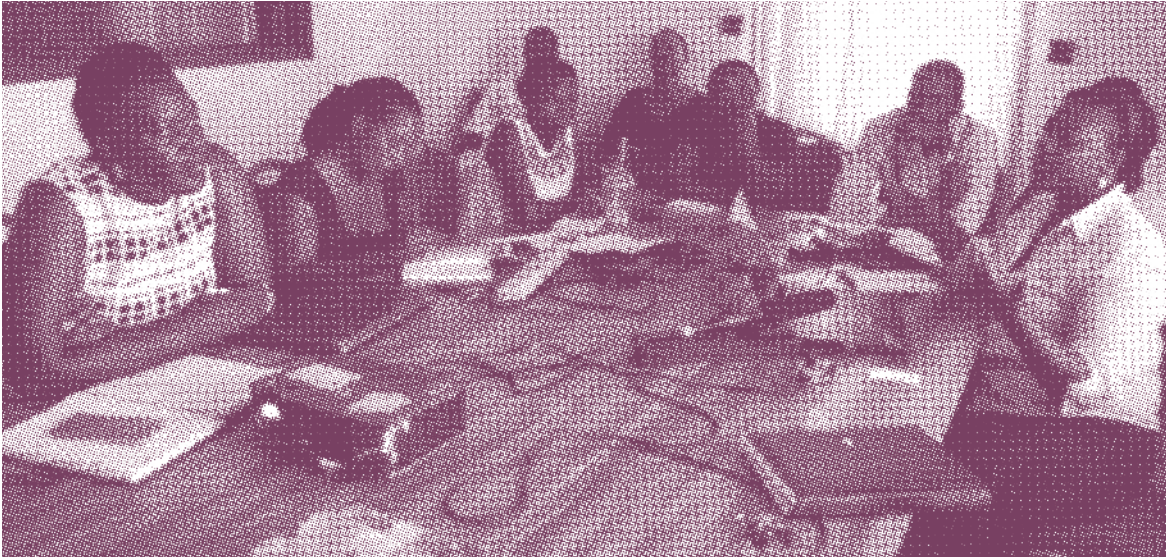
An experience capitalization workshop held by CTA in Nairobi in November 2016 first introduced the experience capitalization approach to three staff members of my organisation – the Uganda National Farmers Federation (UNFFE). The workshop showed how UNFFE could make use of this approach and benefit in many ways. As workshop participants, we were asked to develop plans on how to advance the practice of experience capitalization back home. Together with my colleagues, we developed a detailed Action Plan to help us scale-up this approach within the organisation. These plans were completed during the second training workshop held in Arusha in March 2017.

The first experience capitalization workshop showed how to draw lessons from a particular project or initiative with a set of steps that ensure that practical experiences are captured, and that lessons, as a tangible “capital”, can then be shared. The experience capitalization approach helps identify effective innovations and practices, and helps understand the reasons behind the successes or failures seen in the field. These insights can help improve the ongoing projects, or help prepare better workplans or better proposals. Experience capitalization can also support a project’s advocacy efforts by providing concrete evidence on a given

subject, and by encouraging the involvement of different participants, such as farmers, policymakers, local leaders or the staff of an organisation. Going through it helps all participants, such as those writing case studies and documenting project data, strengthen their skills.

As all my colleagues have very busy schedules, we organised a series of one-on-one sessions with the managers and the directors of the different departments who had expressed an interest in an approach that would help us fill the gaps on our organisation’s knowledge management (KM) strategy. Because of the many conflicting schedules, the one-on-one approach helped us present what we had done and learned, and discuss the potential benefits of the approach with different individuals. The presentations we made improved every time we met another colleague, and each time we tried to focus on his or her specific interests. They made more people interested in adopting the approach. Following the one-on-one awareness sessions, we also agreed upon the need for an extensive training course with more interested staff. We drew up a training programme and identified the specific subjects they would want to address.

Having been working with UNFFE since 2013, it was good to see the difference that experience capitalization could bring to our monitoring and



Left A discussion session with the UNFFE heads of departments, Kampala

evaluation (M&E) department and to our policy and advocacy initiatives. The training workshops and all the discussions we held showed that this could help us understand the day-to-day issues affecting farmers, especially in terms of the agricultural inputs they require, land use management issues, markets and agro-processing, as well as in terms of pests and diseases. We saw how important it is that knowledge is organised and shared as the different steps of the process suggest. We can say now that the approach has continually influenced, strengthened and transformed the way we gather, organise and disseminate information.

UNFFE's director for policy research and advocacy recognised that experience capitalization is a tool that can help address different governance issues among the UNFFE member organisations. For too long, there has been a repetitive process going on in

these organisations, focusing on a particular issue and, after some time, seeing the same issues come up again and again. The director was quick to note that experience capitalization could help in systematically generating information, organising it and documenting the processes for improving any future engagement process.

Institutionalization of experience capitalization

We saw that sharing more information on experience capitalization with our colleagues was crucial for getting the approach adopted within the organisation. Building awareness of the approach within the organisation led to many colleagues expressing their interest in joining the training workshop. As a result, we were able to get a five-week-

The training workshops and all the discussions we held showed that this could help us understand the day-to-day issues affecting farmers.

Below Following the writing guidelines prepared together with all participants

long training process started in November 2018. This helped us start the description and analysis of different cases, and also plan how to continue using this approach.

During the more extensive training sessions held with interested staff members, all participants and the facilitator developed a set of writing guidelines. Programme schedules for successive trainings were also decided upon. Eight staff members enrolled for the first training, and other staff members who did not enrol expressed their willingness to join the next group which started in January 2019.

Eight stories have been completed, focusing on the piggery, poultry and livestock value chains that UNFFE supports, while other participants wrote about the rural livelihoods in general. These case studies are almost ready and will soon be shared on the online platforms in which individuals from all over the world are sharing information as part of their different experience capitalization processes (the community of practice supported by CTA using the Dgroups platform), and also on Facebook and other social media channels. These will also be shared internally: UNFFE is interested in using them as part of its advocacy efforts, and also to lobby in favour of the experience capitalization approach.



Beyond UNFFE

Another workshop organised by CTA took place in Rome in October 2018, focusing on the best way to facilitate a new capitalization process, and support colleagues or members of another organisation. This gave us a new opportunity to explore how can experience capitalization be used within the organisation's day-to-day information management and sharing procedures. Following the discussions we had with all participants we developed a plan to roll out this approach to other like-minded agricultural and environmental institutions, such as Caritas Uganda, PELUM Uganda, the Advocacy Coalition for Sustainable Agriculture, or with the Uganda National Young Farmers Association. These organisations have members at the grassroots level, and a desire to communicate the results of their work to policymakers, farmer organisations, and legislators.

After mapping all stakeholders, a two-page concept note was shared by mail with all of them, leading to internal discussions among themselves and their M&E officers. Some of these officers gave immediate feedback on the possible arrangements we could have for sharing the details of the capitalization approach. Others, like the Uganda Farmers Common Voice Platform, were interested in discussing how to get as many farmers as possible to join the process, and review the changes seen since their different interventions started. Together we organised sessions of about 1 or 2 hours with each group, where we shared the basic concepts and showed how this approach could help them support their organisations' day-to-day operations, enhancing the visibility of their work.

As a result of the presentations and discussions we had with 16 partner organisations, 9 of them added it to their work plans for 2019. Others, like a church-based social services organisation and 3 environmental associations, have invited us to continue discussing the best way to support them adopt the approach.

The training process has helped strengthen the writing skills of our staff and this has also improved the way we share the results of our work.

Challenges and opportunities

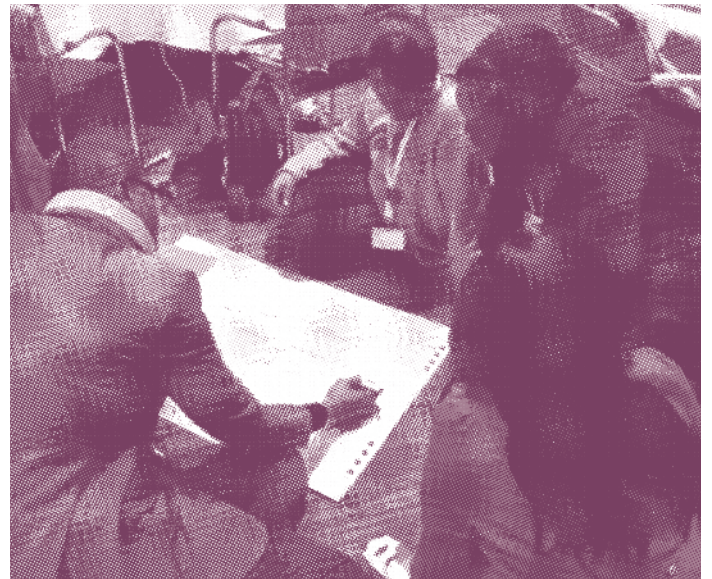
With different cases going on and others in the pipeline, UNFFE's 2019 budget considered sufficient resources to support the district member associations interested in learning how to use experience capitalization to communicate results.

The training process has helped strengthen the writing skills of our staff and this has also improved the way we share the results of our work. It has also been instrumental in involving many different staff members, as managers, staff and even volunteers can follow this approach to generate information, and all departments can utilise experience capitalization as a tool for managing their knowledge and skills. Supporting the work of many farmers organisations, it encourages participants to discuss and exchange information.

We have also seen that experience capitalization is a good driver for mobilising resources, as it increases an organisation's visibility with the use of social media, newsletters, radio stations and other communication channels. In addition, using experience capitalization in our organisation has not been very expensive, as it does not need separate or additional funds to complete it. In general terms, it is cheaper than other methods since it encourages people to come together to share their views and document their experience, so it can be easily included within other general budgets.

However, there have been some challenges: for example, when some colleagues did not show much interest in joining the discussions or the training processes, mostly because the concepts we shared were not easy to understand. Many others mentioned that it was not easy to get more than 3 hours per day to participate in a training course (which is why

Below The one-on-one awareness sessions were followed by an extensive training course with many colleagues





Above “The one-on-one approach helped us present what we had done and learned, and discuss the potential benefits of the approach with different individuals”

some of the training sessions lasted only 2 hours.) In addition, many colleagues did not consistently attend all sessions, finding it especially difficult to join those planned in the afternoon. An even larger problem was that the general information and recommendations prepared as a result of the training workshops were shared when the annual planning process had finished, and a document outlining all activities had already been prepared. This limited the inclusion of the activities planned for some programmes.

The rolling out of experience capitalization has undoubtedly had its share of ups and downs and has required an innovative approach in getting others to learn more about it. However, efforts are ongoing to fulfil the goal of scaling-up experience capitalization within UNFFE, and rolling out the approach to partner organisations. The results so far are encouraging.



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HOW TO ADVOCATE FOR AND PROMOTE THE EXPERIENCE CAPITALIZATION APPROACH? A FEW LESSONS FROM NEPAL

Renuka Rai



The High Value Agriculture Project (HVAP), implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development of Nepal and funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), has taken different steps to adopt the experience capitalization approach, and has shared the main lessons drawn with other IFAD-funded programmes. In order to extend and monitor the uptake of this approach, it has introduced a “chain-mentorship” approach, helping it reach more staff members.

Cover Facilitating a focus group discussion with producers in Kalikot

The High Value Agriculture Project (HVAP) works to reduce poverty and vulnerability in 13,500 households in the hilly and mountainous areas of Nepal, through the development and promotion of agricultural value chains. This is implemented by the Ministry of Agricultural and Livestock Development, and is one of the four projects supported by the International Fund for Agricultural Development, IFAD. Working in different parts of the country, representatives of these different projects meet at least twice a year to look at the steps taken and at the results achieved in the field. These meetings have proved fruitful, helping them build stronger linkages between them and also sourcing resources to meet specific project needs. They have also helped them all pool and share knowledge and information in the form of lessons and recommendations – for example on experience capitalization.

During the past two years, the experience capitalization approach became part of the HVAP programme. The process started in 2017 when a colleague and I were invited to attend two 4-day workshops organised by CTA in Goa and Pondicherry, in India. During these workshops, on behalf of our project, both of us developed an institutionalization plan which would help us adopt the approach within HVAP. The plan was later shared and discussed with the entire project team and endorsed by the project

manager, with slight revisions to align the process with the project’s yearly operations and budget mandates. My colleague and I facilitated a set of meetings with which a group of well-qualified professionals came to understand the purpose of an experience capitalization approach, and developed the basic skills needed to run it. This helped convey the need to work towards the institutionalization of the approach.

Adopting the experience capitalization approach

When we shared with our colleagues what we had seen and learnt during the experience capitalization workshops in 2017, many of them – both at the head office and at the different field offices – were impressed. They were able to see the potential benefit of adding it to the everyday documentation processes and methods we had been using, such as success stories, case studies and progress reports. The HVAP project has since developed and introduced some of the steps, such as that of “framing” the whole process to make it more contextual and relevant to our activities. Rigorous discussions also focused on the need to revise the project’s knowledge management strategy. Our objective was not to replace the ongoing KM activities, but rather to complement the current tools, techniques and processes that were already in place. This process is still going on.

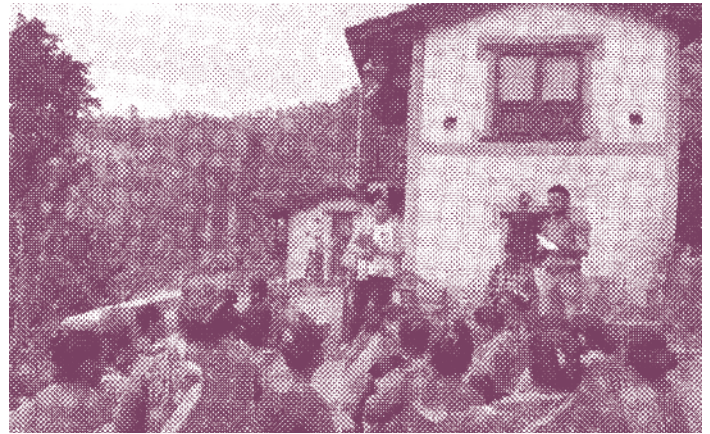
The HVAP project manager was so impressed with experience capitalization that he asked us to conduct and facilitate a dedicated session to train all staff members. The session helped us show how experience capitalization can leverage project knowledge and experiences in an efficient way. Describing what we did in India, we showed how we had focused on one of the project's most significant interventions – the Business Literacy Class (BLC) – and how, as a result, we were able to develop multiple knowledge products and communication materials: radio programmes which were later broadcast in local FM stations, video products (a short documentary), and written products. The BLC success stories were also shared on the social media accounts of the projects and on IFAD's Facebook page, as well as in local newspapers. These products have helped us show the results of our project to the donors, to the project beneficiaries, and to a wider audience that has included the provincial and the local governments, other IFAD-funded projects and partner NGOs. Most important of all, they helped us identify and share key lessons and recommendations that we shared with our own teams.

At first we shared information about the approach with the project staff, including the district project coordinators and the social development officers, providing useful tips on how to start and complete an experience capitalization process. These colleagues were busy collecting data and information, and were in charge of identifying, assessing and documenting specific experiences, and then presenting draft documents to the project management unit to be further processed and completed. Spot coaching and one-to-one mentoring was provided to those in the field.

Such efforts not only helped them recognise the value and significance of experience capitalization, but also helped to create a sense of unity and the team spirit needed for achieving a common goal. In this way, the experience capitalization approach was not owned by one or two individuals, but by the team as a whole. Experience capitalization has been considered and treated as a cross-cutting effort, and although led by the KM unit, it is now included in everyone's job descriptions. This means that all staff members' performance will be evaluated as per their contributions to the capitalization processes that are taking place.



*Left “This is what we did”:
gathering and sharing
information with those
directly involved in the
Business Literacy Classes*



Above Project staff facilitating a capitalization session in the Jajarkot district

And even more important, perhaps, is that the lessons we drew have also been taken by other IFAD-funded projects in Nepal. This was largely the result of the four-day training workshop which took place in Pokhara, in January 2018, as one of the regular meetings where managers of the four IFAD-funded projects in Nepal get together. Together with other colleagues who also joined the CTA workshops, we shared concepts and ideas, and invited them all to look at their own activities and results, and draw key lessons.

Key learnings for innovation and advocacy

During the first CTA training workshop, the facilitators presented the “learning module” prepared by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and this gave us all a general idea of the approach. The module is very informative, clearly describing all the theoretical aspects behind an experience capitalization approach: the basic

principles, the conditions needed and the steps involved. The workshops we went to in India also helped a lot, and the information shared both by the facilitators and by all participants was very useful. However, a key element has been the “learning-by-doing” approach which was chosen, and the facilitators’ suggestion of starting and completing a process – and effectively learning by doing this.

Equally important has been the involvement of my colleagues. Coming back from India I invited all staff members to share their ideas about the experience capitalization approach, and we looked at the potential benefit of adding it to our regular KM system. I also encouraged many of them to actively work on and contribute to this process. After talks with the KM unit, and as suggested and approved by the project manager, we formed a gender-inclusive team with members who were comparatively young, with a diverse background and technical expertise and, most importantly, with a strong “can-do” attitude. The team included a wide range of staff members, from senior experts at the head office to field level staff.

The session helped us show how experience capitalization can leverage project knowledge and experiences in an efficient way.

Having followed the experience capitalization process proactively for 2 years now, I have seen the capacities and confidence of my colleagues grow.

The objective of forming such a team was to support the involvement of as many colleagues as possible, representing the project's different levels and departments. The newly formed team consisted of 35 social mobilisers from the field offices, seven social development officers from the district offices, and a social inclusion expert and a capacity development officer from the head office. With different offices and locations involved, it was not possible for me to mentor each team member individually, and at all times. This is why I introduced the concept of "chain-mentorship".

This meant sharing a general overview first with this team, together with useful tips and how-to advice for institutionalising the experience capitalization approach. The social inclusion expert and capacity development officer, both of them working at a national level, had the overall responsibility of backstopping the social development officers at the district offices, who then supported and shared information with the social mobilisers from the field offices. As overall facilitator, I also worked together with the entire team, focusing on a few technical matters as needed.

This helped us work at different levels simultaneously, giving us the feeling of performing as a team. At the same time, it helped us enhance the skills of many staff members. Most importantly, this approach proved helpful in balancing the workload associated with the adoption of experience capitalization, distributing tasks evenly among team members.

Having followed the experience capitalization process proactively for 2 years now, I have seen the capacities and confidence of my colleagues grow. I have also seen my own skills develop, and this has helped me advocate for and support the adoption of the lessons we identified, and of the approach as a whole – even beyond the IFAD projects in Nepal. A small example this can be seen in the development of the action plans I made for sharing the lessons learnt with the BLC case. Presenting no objections, the project manager approved the budget that was required to collect data from the field (a total of NPR 200,000, or US\$ 1,800), and later, to produce a short video documentary. This will soon be online.

Below Rigorous discussions focused on the need to revise the project's knowledge management strategy, and on the best way to complement the tools and techniques already in use





Above Those who were invited to join the team shared many qualities – the most important of these was a strong “can-do” attitude

Recommendations and way forward

Many colleagues were not very enthusiastic at first and did not see the benefits of incorporating experience capitalization into the existing KM practices. Some team members were not convinced as the project already had its own well-established KM system, which had been widely recognised and praised by the government and donors. Others doubted the need of doing this at such a late stage (the project started several years ago). Many colleagues had the idea that experience capitalization had to be taken up by the KM unit, as it was not initially included in everybody’s job descriptions. In short, there was an unspoken reluctance and a lack of motivation to work together as a team.

In spite of these difficulties, we have had positive results. With this in mind, I strongly recommend three things to be considered by CTA or by any other organisation working to support the adoption of the experience capitalization approach. First, one or two

staff members should not be the only ones responsible for trying out a capitalization process within an organisation. Instead, it is better to organise an inception or orientation workshop with representatives of the projects or teams that are going to be involved, and officially launch the approach. The meeting should consider the participation of project managers and key staff of each of those projects.

Second, the adoption of the approach should be included in the discussions that take place during the design of a project, and not when this has already started. Third, we should have a national and a regional pool of experience capitalization facilitators. While carrying out any workshop, meeting or training course on experience capitalization, these experts can be called upon to support the efforts going on in their country or region.

Running an experience capitalization process and at the same time mentoring other facilitators can be labour-intensive and inefficient. All organisations should introduce the chain-mentorship idea as we did in Nepal. This can go hand-in-hand with the organisation of a country-level Community of Practice. As the best way to advocate for or support the adoption of the approach, this can be done by engaging and involving government professionals, private sector representatives, development partners, and civil society professionals.



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EXPERIENCE CAPITALIZATION – TRAINING, TEACHING AND PRACTISING IT IN BENIN

Ismail M. Moumouni

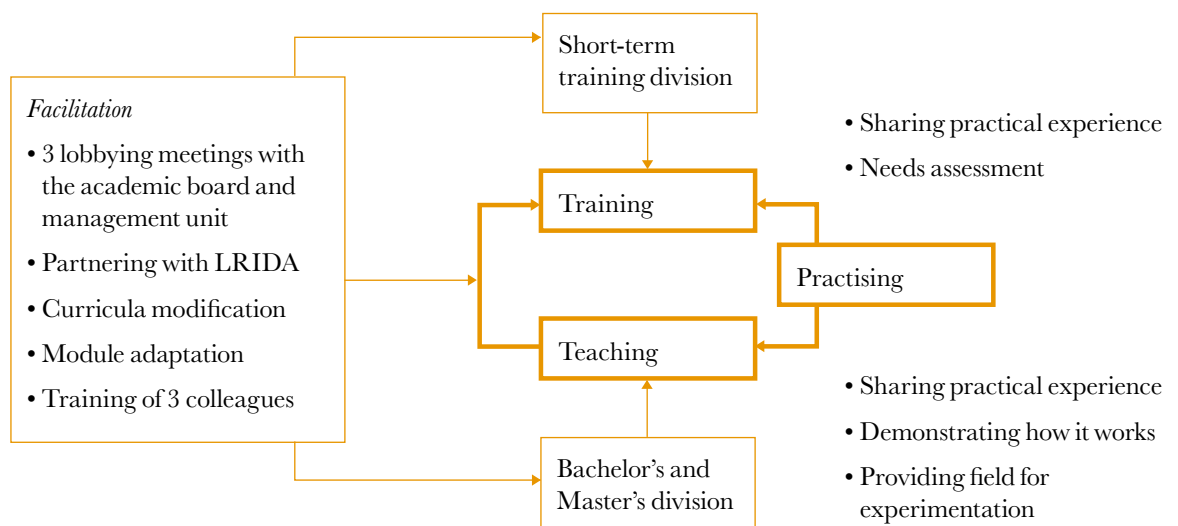


As an education and training institution, the experience capitalization institutionalization strategy of the Advanced Distance Training Centre for Agriculture (CePeSA) covers three aspects: including experience capitalization modules in the training curricula; including training on capitalization in our portfolio of fee-based short-term training services for agricultural development workers; and implementing processes to capitalise the relevant experiences of the centre. The capacity to adapt training modules and methods is crucial for meeting the needs of different target groups and client organisations.

*Cover “Learning by doing”:
staff members recording data
and evidence to show their
activities and performance*

The Advanced Distance Training Centre for Agriculture, CePeSA, based at the University of Parakou in Benin, was created in 2010 to provide training services to clients who live in remote areas for professional or social reasons. A small management unit was set up to lead operational activities, while a pedagogic council is responsible for the strategic decision related to the development of new training programmes, new partnerships, recruitments, etc.

The management unit includes one division for short-term courses (of 1 to 4 weeks), generally followed before a bachelor’s or a master’s degree. About 100 new students come to the centre each year to improve their competencies in various domains of agriculture and rural development, such as agricultural advisory services, animal breeding, crop production, or natural resources management. The demand for such a training centre is actually very high, also in other



Experience capitalization was known by some of the participants as a tool that development professionals use to document a whole project experience.

countries in West and Central Africa. Millions of people are missing out on the opportunity for advanced training. In Benin, such a training centre exists only in the agricultural sector. Our experience can inspire many other centres to develop appropriate programmes for various target groups.

Targeting the managers of education and training centres and also capitalization facilitators, this article reflects on how experience capitalization practices can be integrated into training organisations, showing the path we followed. We first describe how we started the process and brought other stakeholders on board, then we present our three key operating areas (Figure 1). The first one is based on the addition of capitalization modules in the training curricula so that all the master's students in our training centre become familiar with the experience capitalization approach. The second refers to its inclusion in our portfolio of fee-based short-term training services offered to agricultural development professionals. The third one is about capitalising the relevant experiences of the centre.

Creating alliances, sensitisation and advocacy

Getting decision-making staff members on board was crucial for the successful adoption of experience capitalization. Planned activities included the steps to sensitise colleagues, board members and professionals; providing development workers with training opportunities on experience capitalization; and supporting the centre so that it would adopt and set up its own experience capitalization framework. In implementing these activities, CePeSA worked together with other institutions. For example, the centre signed a partnership agreement with the Laboratory of Research on Innovation for Agricultural Development (LRIDA) to share expertise and experiences as LRIDA is specialised in knowledge management. Together, the

organisations planned two meetings to develop a common understanding on all training projects and to plan activities. To bring colleagues on board, academic board meetings were held to show the importance of experience capitalization and to discuss the feasibility of its adoption in detail.

Experience capitalization was known by some of the participants as a tool that development professionals use to document a whole project experience. Based on a well-prepared advocacy plan, we agreed with the training centre pedagogic council to include capitalization modules in the training portfolio and curricula. In addition, a decision was made to start a capitalization process focusing on the critical issues related to our professional distance training programme, such as the development of training materials, the distance training management process, the evaluation of students and the organisation of training sessions.

Doing, teaching and training

Looking back, our strategy can be seen as having had three “legs”:

(a) *Doing*

CePeSA and LRIDA jointly ran two experience capitalization workshops. As a result, staff members now systematically record data and evidence showing their activities and performance. At the meetings held at the end of each academic year, a session is dedicated to exploring, documenting and drafting capitalization outputs, and the head of the division in charge of capitalization issues finalises the writing and editing process. Articles will be published on LRIDA's website, which is also in charge of the quality control of all articles. For 2018, the training centre is about to publish its first capitalization article:

Le CePeSA : un dispositif durable de formation des techniciens agricoles en emploi pour la professionnalisation de l'agriculture.

(b) *Teaching*

In 2018, for the first time, 30 master's students got to know the concept, process and tools needed for an experience capitalization process. During one week, they went through the whole training module with an emphasis on the capitalization principles and on the conditions needed for it, as participants did not have a concrete capitalization project (yet). Arrangements are now in place for this module to be given each year to all master's students.

(c) *Training*

We organised four training sessions for different target groups, including master's students, projects managers from public and private organisations, the local district staff in charge of documentation and of archiving project information, and staff from other public/private agricultural training and education organisations.

Participants at the first training session were master's students and the 25 participants who attended the second training were development professionals. For the 5-day training course, they paid 40,000 FCFA (€60), an amount equivalent to the minimum guaranteed monthly salary in Benin. The third training session was the result of CePeSA being asked by DEDRAS, a national non-governmental

organisation, to support 15 local government staff members in identifying cases to be capitalised, and to write articles. The fourth training was part of the facilitation process the centre had been asked to run by a vocational education and training project supported by the German Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).

The objective of each one of these processes was to identify and share best practices in agricultural education and training at agricultural schools and universities. Best practices should address issues such as gender inequality, training, training evaluation and sustainability, and support for employment. The process of facilitating an experience capitalization process included a call for proposals, pre-selection of promising cases, a face-to-face training workshop, and the provision of technical support to all authors for improving and finalising their articles.

A selection committee, which includes representatives from academia, ministry departments in charge of agricultural planning and training, the national platform for vocational training and different training centres, was set up to assess the submitted articles. The selection committee selected five best practice articles out of those which were submitted for publication.

Right More than 100 persons joined the training courses; all of them with different professional profiles and representing various institutions



Except for the first workshop, the training sessions were very practical as participants were expected to produce capitalization articles that could be shared easily. The quality of these articles was better after the last session as training performance improved with time; we developed more practical tools for guiding the processes, and we also improved the way we coached participants between the meetings.

The four training sessions, all of which were held over the course of one year, were attended by more than 100 men and women with different professional profiles and representing various institutions. The trainings were evaluated from the trainers' perspectives and also from the participants' perspectives. Two colleagues were continuously involved in the training and the capitalization processes, something that gave them the opportunity to learn more about the approach.

Success and limiting factors

We can say that we have been successful in institutionalising the experience capitalization approach in our training centre because we designed the process in such a way that we did not need to request any financial support. The specific skills that were needed included data analysis, article writing and publishing; these roles were assigned to those working at the existing structures (divisions). At the same time;

- The capacities and skills of facilitators to lobby decision-makers, build a team, coach colleagues, and adapt modules to clients' requirements were met;
- The capitalization training modules developed by CTA provided very useful materials that we adapted to meet the specific expectations of our clients;

- The openness of the management unit and the academic board of the centre to new ideas eased the adoption of the approach.. Without their support, it would not have been possible to bring changes to the curricula and to get the logistic support needed to provide training to development professionals;
- Colleagues' willingness and commitment made it possible to build human resources. Many people are now able to facilitate capitalization processes and to train students and colleagues.

Practising experience capitalization, and learning and sharing lessons, is a powerful way to demonstrate how it works. This shows practical experiences and generates lessons which can be shared with students and trainees. This is especially useful for young students who do not have a large experience in development work.

The capacity to adapt training modules and methods is crucial for meeting the needs of different target groups, in the same way as developing new learning materials. A capacity to adapt to different contexts is also required when it comes to addressing clients' requirements, regarding e.g. the duration of a training course or the availability of training equipment. This remark applies particularly to organisations such as NGOs and farmer organisations, which request training for their staff members. Because of the resources they have available, they may be willing to ask for short (3 days), medium (5 days) or long (more than 1 week) versions of the experience capitalization training process. In addition, there is always a need to adapt methods according to the training facilities that are available. (One of the limiting factors, as we saw, is the lack of comfortable training rooms and/or equipment.)

The capacity to adapt training modules and methods is crucial for meeting the needs of different target groups, in the same way as developing new learning materials.



Above The demand for training centres is very high, also in other countries in West and Central Africa

The way forward

Institutional settings and human resources are in place for CePeSA to continue teaching and training on experience capitalization. Each year, we plan to publish two capitalization articles. Two training sessions will now be systematically organised each year, one for master's students and the other for professionals. We are also open to the possibility of more training courses if requested. Our main challenge now is to support the Faculty of Agriculture and the University of Parakou develop and implement a capitalization plan. Our first needs assessment showed that this will be very useful for sharing experiences and knowledge with other institutes/faculties with regard to teaching and supervising large classes and groups of students.



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BEHIND THE TREES, AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN: THE ADOPTION OF EXPERIENCE CAPITALIZATION AT THE FOREST DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT IN ARGENTINA

Esteban Tapella and Natalia Naves



In the field of forestry development there are many experiences that are not sufficiently documented or shared. In order to encourage a critical reflection within such projects, and circulate the lessons learned, the National Department of Forest and Industrial Development at the Argentinean Ministry of Agriculture has held experience capitalization workshops with its staff. Positive results have led to the adoption of the approach in Mendoza.

Cover Sharing experiences in situ

Right Supporting others to critically review and reflect on the extension work done

The National Department of Forest and Industrial Development (NDFID) supports various forestry development initiatives that contribute to economic growth, social equity and the environmental sustainability of Argentina. Not all of these initiatives constitute successful experiences. However, all of them include processes and results from which it is possible to identify successes, limitations, favourable conditions and above all, learning. Whenever there is real interest in learning from action, these experiences can lead to knowledge that is useful for future interventions. This was the main aim and motivation of NDFID's experience capitalization project during 2016 and 2017, particularly in its capacity to be institutionally embraced within the NDFID system.

The idea of analysing forest development experiences and of drawing specific lessons involved a 2-year process. This started with an intensive training workshop on experience capitalization, which was held over 4 days. This used CTA's training framework, and targeted the programme's extension agents working in different parts of the country. Following this, an open call was made to all those developing forest extension projects in Argentina, to present cases to be analysed using this methodology. Four experiences were chosen in different parts of the country, with different nuances, productive systems and degrees of progress; and were published in

NDFID's national magazine, *Producción Forestal*, in September 2016. This was followed by the most difficult stage – that of institutionalising the methodology.

Although the actors involved in the training process all agreed that experience capitalization is useful, institutionalisation of this practice has not been as widespread as expected. However, there are some encouraging and outstanding experiences that are worth noting, such as those in the Cuyo Region, in the province of Mendoza. Here, the local team adopted the methodology in such a way that it is used autonomously in almost all extension actions, adding the lessons learned to a pool of shared knowledge.



Dissemination and adoption

The main strategy to promote the use and adoption of experience capitalization within the framework of NDFID in Argentina consisted of a series of trainings provided by an interdisciplinary team from the *Programa de Estudios del Trabajo, el Ambiente y la Sociedad*, PETAS, at the National University of San Juan. These trainings, which were provided to the technicians of the forest extension area, focused on the need to strengthen capacities to critically review and reflect on the extension work that had been done in the field of forestry development.

The training process attempted to provide participants with a basic command of the conceptual foundations, methodology and tools for experience capitalization, differentiating it from the processes of monitoring and evaluation (M&E). The course was attended by 23 technicians, with different levels of experience. The workshops were divided into four conceptual modules: (a) understanding the main concepts and methodological foundations of experience capitalization; (b) management of the key steps of the experience capitalization process; (c) identification of the most relevant tools and activities to facilitate a capitalization process; and (d) the preliminary design of an experience capitalization plan for specific cases that would be identified and prioritised.

As a consequence of the training process, the rural extension agents came to recognise the usefulness of experience capitalization as a form of collective learning. The capitalization approach was understood as a process of critical reflection that could help the forest extension services understand their

interventions' failures and successes. Participants valued the idea of generating replicable lessons from a particular practice. They also embraced the idea that experience capitalization should be as participatory as possible in order to take into account differing opinions and knowledge.

Towards the institutionalization of the experience capitalization approach

The region of Cuyo is one of the least developed in terms of forest production, in spite of an unsatisfied demand for wood and of low production costs. A strategy to develop the industrial forestry chain was adopted by NDFID in Mendoza. The objective was to help make the forestry sector "visible", generating active and sustainable public policies.

As part of this strategy, NFID found a place for producers and technicians to join workshops and technical meetings for the exchange of knowledge. The training sessions on experience capitalization helped participants share their ideas and join different ongoing debates. More important, they helped them draw lessons for improving the rural extension services. It is now possible to say that the knowledge and lessons shared are being used by different extension workers in all provinces throughout the country. This has been a positive element of the "visualization" strategy, showing the forestry sector as a valuable alternative for the development and growth of Argentina.

This has been a positive element of the "visualization" strategy, showing the forestry sector as a valuable alternative for the development and growth of Argentina.



Above The experience capitalization approach was seen as one which could help the forest extension services understand their interventions' failures and successes

Lessons from Mendoza

The decision to start an experience capitalization process rests on the idea that experiences should be used to generate a broader understanding of a particular subject, and that lessons can improve current practices as well as shape future interventions. There are many lessons learned from the Mendoza experience:

(a) Experience capitalization should be embedded in the existing institutional work plans

Learning from action does not happen by accident – it must be planned, either during the design of a project, in the workplans of the personnel in charge, in the team meetings or as part of the general culture of the institution. That is, learning must be part of the intervention policy.

At the national level, despite the training sessions and the awareness-raising efforts carried out, the broader workplans did not include this. The Mendoza case was one of the exceptions. It is therefore necessary, on the one hand, to promote, design and conduct learning processes within broader initiatives that were not

designed with this purpose in mind, and on the other hand, to motivate the NDFID authorities to adopt experience capitalization in its annual plans as part of the activities to be developed.

(b) The value of learning from practice should be balanced with the capacity to do so

The process of adopting an experience capitalization approach also has to do with understanding and facing those factors that limit the institutional embracement of the approach. This involves addressing two dynamics: the opportunity to capitalise on experience and the capacity to do it. The first is determined by the institutional awareness of learning from practice. That is, the interest of each organisation and the social actors involved in each intervention to create plural spaces to critically reflect on an experience's successes or failures. The second is determined by the attitudes and skills of the actors involved – or that can be developed with effective support – for doing experience capitalization. From the Mendoza case, we have learnt that it is possible to institutionalise experience capitalization when there is a balance between these two dynamics.

Considering the opportunities to carry out an experience capitalization process, we have observed that not all NDFID delegations are willing to support and facilitate these processes. What we saw in Mendoza showed that

- It is important that the different social actors that participate in a programme or project have a real motivation to complete a capitalization process. Getting different actors involved in a critical reflection process may have negative implications for some people, since it can be seen as revealing weaknesses in their own work. It is thus necessary to advocate the idea that open spaces for critical, multi-actor and grassroots level reflection may bring opportunities for improvements;
- There must be sufficient time and resources allocated to experience capitalization, since creating spaces for the engagement of different stakeholders involves slow and costly processes that institutions cannot always afford;
- It is very important to have the support of a person or team who facilitates the processes *in situ*, with knowledge of the local situation and cultural idiosyncrasy of all participants. The adequate use of communication tools and socio-cultural animation processes is also essential;
- In many cases we have seen that local stakeholders lack critical reflection skills because they have been rarely involved in such a process. Training is therefore required;
- It is very important to build a local-level capitalization team. This team should be convinced of the value of the process, and be capable of involving relevant social actors throughout the whole process. The team must also accompany the participatory process, from the prioritisation of the most relevant issues and the formulation of questions and objectives, to the communication and facilitation of the use of the results. This can be achieved by defining indicators, compiling and analysing data, and drawing conclusions and recommendations.

In addition to the dynamics of institutional awareness and opportunities for experience capitalization, which work as a fundamental motivation for all participants, it is necessary to strengthen the necessary skills to carry out the process, and to participate in it. Building such capacities implies implementing an active training programme throughout the whole process. We have learnt that those organisations which support experience capitalization processes, but have been reluctant to create a space for a critical and participatory reflection, have more difficulties.

The Mendoza case showed the need to

- Make an effort to adapt the contents and methodologies of experience capitalization to the capacities of the social actors involved – looking for common understandings, interests and compromises during the process, and addressing the challenges that arise;
- Advise on the varied set of tools for experience capitalization that exist today, and be willing to adapt and/or recreate them to serve the participatory processes required by this approach (considering the development of appropriate tools, games or dynamics that guarantee a deep involvement of most social actors – and not just those with a greater understanding of the topic);
- Appreciate that the tools cannot do everything and that it is necessary to demonstrate in each meeting

Below NDFID found a place for producers and technicians to join workshops and technical meetings for the exchange of knowledge and information



Building capacities implies implementing an active training programme throughout the whole process.

that a real participatory vocation exists. This means having an open-mind attitude, which is expressed as tolerance to mistakes, the will to re-explain concepts as often as necessary, and the openness to review agreements and redesign work plans;

- Clarify our role as external agents – that is, motivating without pushing, reflecting with the group without conditioning conclusions, contributing ideas without imposing and asking questions without suggesting the answers.

Conclusions

NDFID is convinced of the value that experience capitalization brings to the M&E practices of any institution. The process certainly contributes to the knowledge management and the institutional capacity building efforts of any organisation in the field of development. Even though the experiences developed under the scope of NDFID are incipient and there is still much to be done, we believe that cases such as that of the province of Mendoza show that it is possible to adopt and institutionalise the experience capitalization approach.

From the NDFID experience, we can highlight some limitations at the national level for the institutional embracement of experience capitalization, summarised as follows: (a) not all agricultural and forestry engineers are prepared to conduct participatory workshops; (b) in many cases, farmers' demands for technical services takes up a lot of the project's time and experience capitalization is not prioritised; (c) in other cases, local projects are not successful initiatives, so rural extension agents feel reluctant to share their experiences widely;

(d) in some provinces there is a continuous process of human resource replacement, so those who go through a training process leave and are replaced by others.

As mentioned, we considered the Mendoza experience as a successful case, since experience capitalization was adopted and applied autonomously in this province. According to the local team, experience capitalization served to (a) strengthen the organisation's rural extension activities; (b) improve the staff's ability to reflect, analyse and propose solutions; (c) provide new and different knowledge from the most relevant actors to improve local projects and the whole programme; and (d) contribute to the construction of more inclusive and equitable development policy, since civil society interests are taken into account.



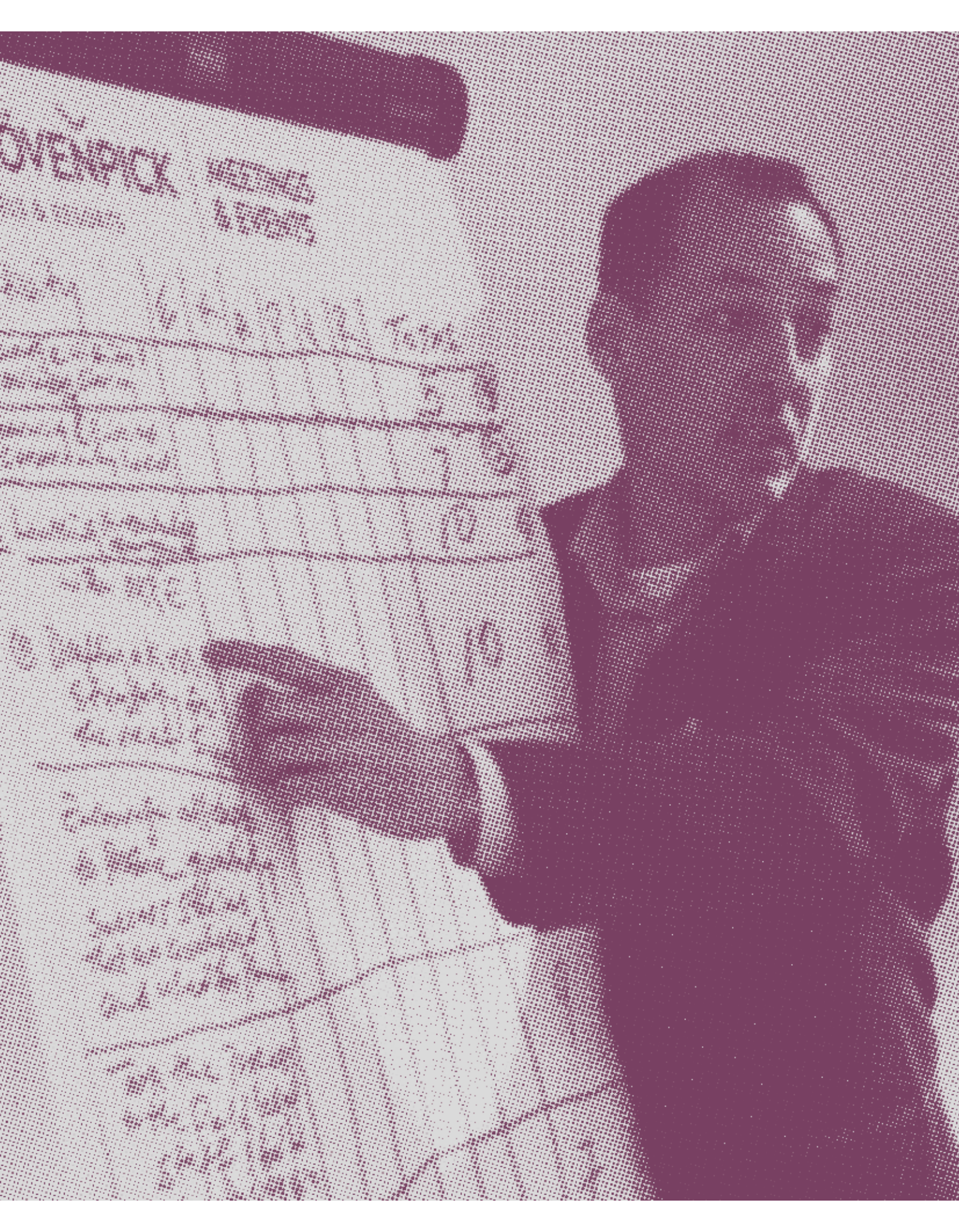
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Date: June 2019
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THE INSTITUTIONALISATION OF EXPERIENCE CAPITALISATION IN MIVARF

Gilbert Tarimo



The Marketing Infrastructure Value Addition and Rural Finance (MIVARF) support programme in Tanzania has gradually adopted the experience capitalisation approach and, in the process, has learnt six key lessons about its institutionalization.

Cover “We started by developing a common understanding of what experience capitalization means”

MIVARF, the Marketing Infrastructure Value Addition and Rural Finance support programme is a national initiative working to sustainably enhance the incomes and food security of rural households in Tanzania, through increased access to financial services and markets. The programme is operating under the Prime Minister’s office; is headquartered in Arusha; and is funded by the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) and the African Development Bank (AfDB). MIVARF is implemented in more than 70 local governments, with nine business development-services consultant firms who have been contracted to work with farmer groups.

The need for experience capitalisation

MIVARF’s experience capitalization process started after a workshop was organised by CTA, with support from IFAD, in Kigali, Rwanda, in December 2016. An immediate results of this workshop was that MIVARF organised its own training process for its programme staff and stakeholders in February 2017 in Arusha, Tanzania.

MIVARF’s interest in the experience capitalization approach emanated from the struggles and difficulties that most organisations see when trying to reflect,

understand and report their implementation plans, activities, outputs, results and outcomes. The same challenges are there when trying to capture and share the lessons learned as knowledge products – success stories or failures – to other farmers and actors in the different agriculture value chains. “The reason why we want to adopt an experience capitalization approach is that we find it to be very important, not only for us as a programme, but for any other organisation that wants to make a difference in the way it works towards its objectives or expected outcomes. This particular initiative has yielded great results, which are probably not different from those seen by others working in different conditions and environments,” said Leonard Muhoni, the producer’s empowerment and marketing linkages (PEML) specialist at the programme.

Mainstreaming experience capitalisation

The CTA workshops paved a way for MIVARF’s new experience capitalization mission. The trainings helped to explain how the adoption of the approach could be beneficial in terms of knowledge management and of the dissemination of the programme’s undertakings. The objective of the team that was trained was to make the process part



Left Leonard Muhoni sharing the results of the MIVARF capitalization process in Zanzibar

of MIVARF's standard plans and activities. But as Wangaeli Lema, the programme monitoring and evaluation (M&E) specialist mentioned, "This is a process that needs pioneers as champions for reinforcement; there is a need to discuss strategies and approaches or steps that could make experience capitalization fit in to our organisational culture and conditions as a long-term initiative." The team therefore undertook a series of steps to encourage the institutionalization of experience capitalisation:

First: We started by developing a common understanding of what "experience capitalization" means, presenting it as a concrete approach, including the steps required and the potential benefits for an organisation, service providers and stakeholders. We achieved this by conducting two

experience capitalization training sessions that involved over 90% of our stakeholders. The big number of participants made it challenging, especially when compared to the small number of people facilitating the process.

Second: We identified individuals and organisational capacities and skills, especially focusing on the staff who have the skills and capacities to support an experience capitalization process and, most importantly, to become "actors of change". Together with a colleague, I volunteered to be one of these pioneers, and my first task was to convince others to join our team. Some colleagues seemed to have the capacity and skills to do this, but were worried about time constraints after taking on new responsibilities.

Adoption of the approach could be beneficial in terms of knowledge management and of the dissemination of the programme's undertakings.

Third: We identified motivated participants – people who were passionate and had understood the benefits. There were individuals who had not necessarily played the part of trainers or facilitators, but whom we thought could help us in influencing others and convince them to join the experience capitalization processes. Fredrick Ogenga and Savior Mbele – two of our service providers and programme consultants – have played a key role in motivating other participants to join many discussions and share lessons.

Fourth: Clear roles and responsibilities were divided among the experience capitalization “champions” within the organisation. I was responsible for supporting all experience capitalization practitioners with the necessary materials, guidelines and manuals. I also helped documenting and sharing information, as well as making sure that there was the continuous support of our managers for a long-term capitalization plan. Savior Mbele was responsible for motivating others, and for developing plans on how to share lessons or best practices within the programme and among our stakeholders. The challenge we faced was the reluctance of some individuals to share information.

Fifth: We have engaged with and encouraged our service providers – those who have had to regularly submit an activity implementation report – to follow the experience capitalization approach, thus ensuring that experience capitalization became part of our operations. We have encouraged our staff

and other departments (M&E) to share their ideas, and to discuss steps that help making experience capitalization part of our organisation’s culture.

Last: We are working to obtain the necessary resources and budget needed to ensure the institutionalization of the approach. We have successfully delivered two experience capitalization training sessions, and this was not easy because of the limited budget available. We plan to solve this by including experience capitalization as a subject in other training sessions organised by the programme.

Time constraints have also been a challenge. To overcome this we have plans to start an information management and knowledge-sharing department, as a new group that can work in line with the M&E department. This new department will have its budget set aside for new experience capitalization processes and knowledge products, and will be responsible for ensuring that the approach is shared widely with the knowledge outputs. This will be managed by the planning committee, as those who are responsible for proposing the next/up-scaled programme phase (MIVARF II).

Below Staff members with the skills needed to support an experience capitalization process were invited to join as “agents of change”



We have seen changes in the quality of our stakeholders' reports and on the way they carry out different activities.

Positive results

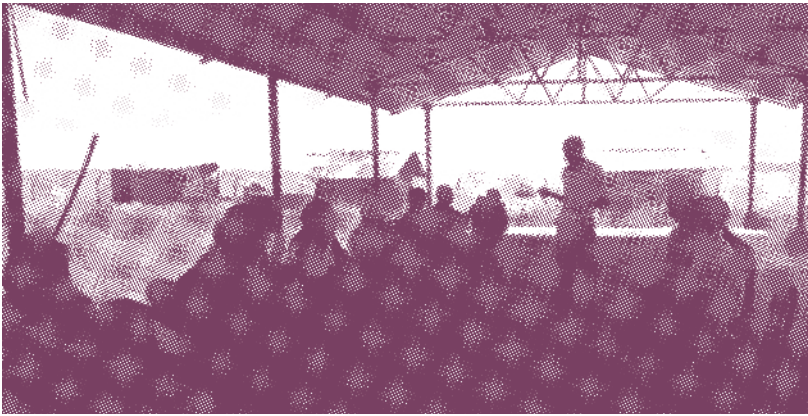
During the past two years we have seen many results. An increased awareness about the experience capitalization approach by those who are part of the MIVARF programme is our first criteria for measuring the effort we put towards institutionalization. This increasing awareness is the result of the two training sessions we conducted with around 100 participants (including programme stakeholders and staff). The training sessions helped develop a common understanding of the experience capitalization idea, including the processes involved and the benefits. At first it was difficult to conduct the training and kick-start the experience capitalization process as we lacked experience in facilitating such an approach. However, this was possible with the support of CTA, who provided us with the necessary materials to carry out the workshops and facilitate the experience capitalization process.

The technical capacity and motivated pool of human resources is another measure of good results and achievement – in building the best team to reinforce the targeted outcomes and impacts. We identified individual staff members with the skills needed to support an experience capitalization process, and most importantly, to act as “agents of change”. This was a difficult exercise because although we knew our individual capabilities, the challenge was for everyone to take on new responsibilities. To convince and influence others, Leonard Muhoni, Savior Mbele and myself volunteered to be pioneers, taking the responsibility to act and convince others to join us.

We can also talk of impact after the steps we have taken towards institutionalization. We have seen changes in the quality of our stakeholders' reports and on the way they carry out different activities, with many of them recognising the lessons that have been drawn as best practices that can be followed. There has been a focus on the lessons that are captured from our service providers' work with farmers, and they have been shared widely.



Left "I was responsible for supporting practitioners with the necessary guidelines and manuals. I also helped documenting and sharing information..."



Above Savior Mbele collecting ideas from his colleagues. He took the responsibility of sharing lessons and best practices within the programme

Plans have been developed for sustaining the experience capitalization processes that we started, making them part of our daily activities. This has helped create a capitalization culture and make it easier to incorporate the approach in our daily work. We have been able to encourage our staff and other departments (M&E) to share ideas and find the best way to make this part of our organisational culture. We have set new rules for our service providers, who have been responsible for submitting their activity implementation reports, to follow the capitalization approach, and to share with our community the lessons they have learnt. As a result, we have made sure that experience capitalization has become part of our operations.

Experience capitalization has proved to be relevant to our organisation because it relates to our day-to-day need for reflecting upon our plans and our implementation outcomes. It relates directly to our interest in reporting about, and advocating for, our achievements. We have been able to adopt the experience capitalization approach despite the challenge of limited resources. Its institutionalization within our organisation has been possible because we have been able to link the approach closely to our daily activities, especially by incorporating it within our M&E plans.

This is one of the results of the process started by the “Capitalization of Experiences for Greater Impact in Rural Development” project, implemented by CTA, FAO and IICA and supported by IFAD.
<http://experience-capitalization.cta.int>

“The institutionalization of the experience capitalization approach is a gradual process that needs a lot of effort. It has been successful in our case because we have been able to relate and link the approach to our day-to-day M&E activities,” said Bernard Ulaya, the programme coordination specialist at MIVARF.

“Linking experience capitalization with the programme’s implementation plans and activities did not guarantee the achievements we have had as a programme. We needed a strategy to mainstream this approach, and to follow particular steps, to see this taking place. The challenges we faced made us plan again, and think of new activities to move forward.”

Recommendations

There is a need to engage regional agriculture programmes – such as those that are supported by IFAD in East Africa – and plan joint capitalization workshops. This would make more people aware of the benefits of an experience capitalization process, while encouraging the exchange of experiences with others using the approach. The support of organisations like CTA will be necessary for regulating and facilitating the discussion and knowledge products that may result from such workshops.



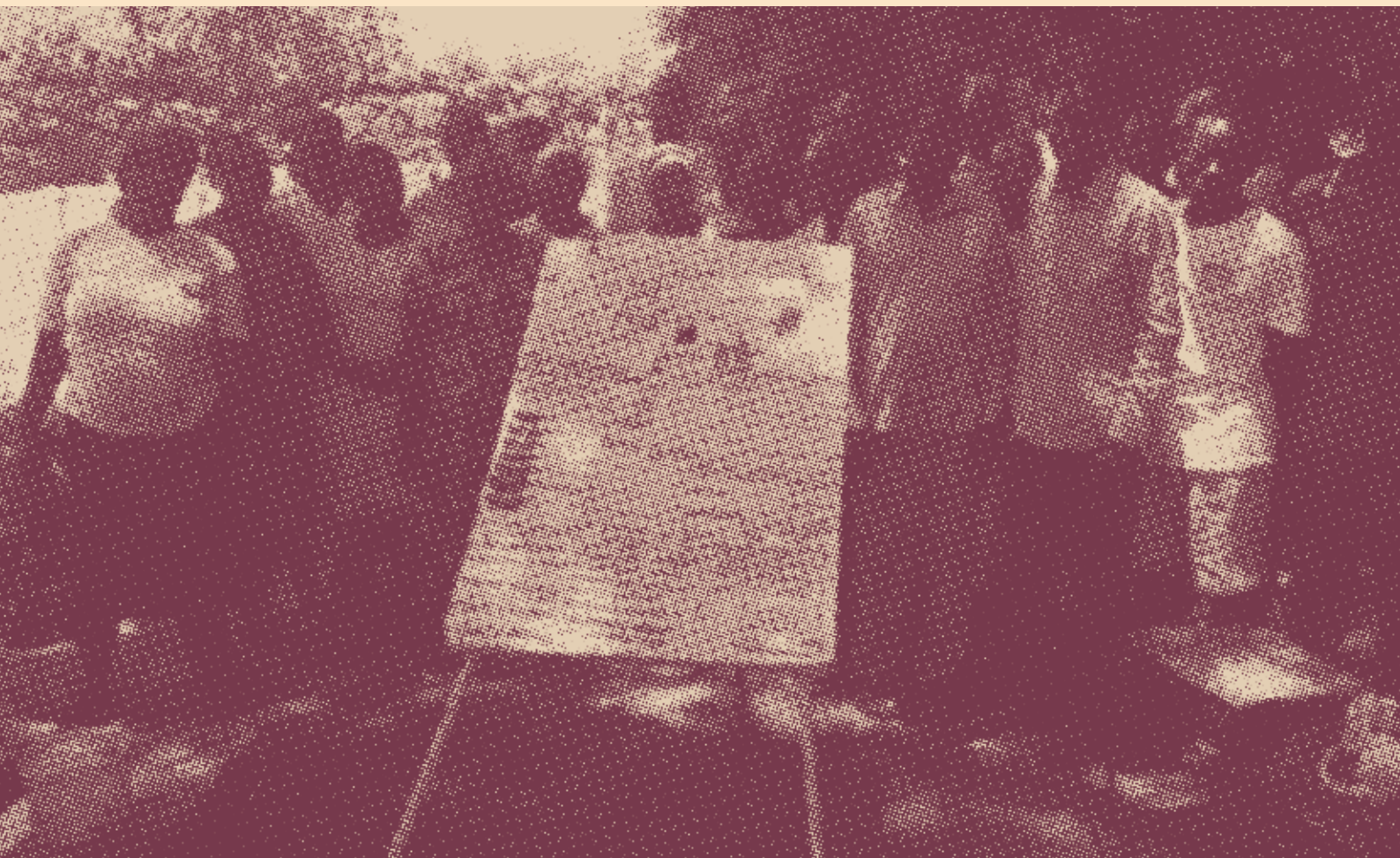
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MAINSTREAMING EXPERIENCE CAPITALIZATION IN ZIMBABWE'S DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH AND SPECIALIST SERVICES

Freeman Gutsa



Following the different steps of an experience capitalization process to produce various knowledge products, DR&SS has been able to raise the visibility of its agricultural development projects and innovations. As a result, improved bean varieties have been taken up by local smallholders and the Ministry of Agriculture has adopted a policy recommendation submitted by the Department.

Cover Identifying and prioritising cases

The agricultural sector is known for its potential to reduce poverty, create employment, improve food and nutrition security, enhance export earnings, improve people's livelihoods, and ultimately spearhead the socio-economic transformation of the country. The Department of Research and Specialist Services (DR&SS), a public research institution in Zimbabwe, works to promote a sustainable and viable agricultural sector through the development and dissemination of appropriate technologies, as well as knowledge and information systems. In this regard, many transformational initiatives by DR&SS – working together with partner institutions – have been implemented, and knowledge to sustainably empower extension services has been generated. Key innovations for farming communities, for example, are piling up, and research to influence policy is also growing.

Many valuable project experiences, success stories and lessons exist, but remain out of reach to those who may benefit from such information because they have not been captured and disseminated. As a result, similar failings are replicated across DR&SS projects and the projects of supporting institutions, even though there is a wealth of past experiences to learn from.

Experience capitalization may be the missing link in public research, given its potential to enable an organised learning process from past experiences, in a way that these are beneficial, not only to DR&SS,

but to agricultural research worldwide. Training workshops for facilitators of the capitalization approach were organised by CTA in Nairobi in November 2017 and in February 2018 in Arusha, and attended by representatives of different institutions. This article highlights the roadmap I followed, as facilitator of the process within DR&SS.

The stepwise journey

Our interest in mainstreaming the experience capitalization approach initially required a critical “reality check” to see how the DR&SS was structured, and to establish where the experience capitalization facilitator would fit within that structure. The CTA training equipped me with the best strategic tools and information to convince my colleagues and the DR&SS-supporting institutions of the need to facilitate experience capitalization processes. During the process, I supported various initiatives such as interfacing with the media to produce newspaper articles describing the capitalization approach. This went on until significant progress was made. With time, experience capitalization was not just championed by individuals, but included within the mandatory actions of all staff.

Any new development needs to be approved by the senior managers before it is passed on to the general

staff. In this way, I needed to discuss the capitalization initiative with the DR&SS directorate and get its approval. Following my training with CTA, internal discussions focused on the intention of institutionalising the process within DR&SS, the modalities for making it part of the system, the probable benefits, impact to the organisation's reputation, the extent to which the initiative may increase company awareness, and the costs involved. The key to securing the approval of the directors was to link experience capitalization to a specific gap within the institution — in this case a general worry around the external recognition of the added value of an organisation like DR&SS.

Within 3 months of the CTA training, approval for its institutionalization was granted by the directorate. The second phase was to introduce the concept to lower management, comprising the heads of the DR&SS institutes and the programme coordinators. Lastly, the concept was introduced to the project implementers and to all partner organisations. In total, 67% of the DR&SS staff became aware of the experience capitalization concept, including non-technical staff such as the finance and administration personnel. Identifying a “champion” within the directorate to promote the process was particularly difficult during this stage. They needed to be approachable, with a good track record (having convinced others to adopt new procedures), and they all had to have a good understanding of the capitalization concept.

Part of the conscientisation process at this stage involved holding extensive training sessions with staff. This was organised in July and August 2017, together with the International Centre for Tropical Agriculture and with funding from CTA. The training workshops ran under the theme: *Looking back at what we have done in*



the past, to do better in the future. The aim of the training was to show the benefits of an experience capitalization process at an individual and at an institutional level. A total of 26 participants attended the workshops. The cost of not adopting experience capitalization was clearly articulated and aroused interest among the participants. A booklet with an experience capitalization article describing a DR&SS project (on “innovation platforms”) was shared with all participants, showing the relative simplicity of the subject.

The institutionalization of any initiative won't succeed if appreciation at the individual level is not achieved. The training workshops had to make sure that participants understood the critical issues involved. The idea was to highlight the value of taking up the initiative at the employee level, and subsequently within the wider company. Besides recapping key aspects of the process, such as framing and planning, gathering and organising information, and analysing, documenting and sharing project data, the workshops

Above Mr Gumbomunda, a farmer, sharing the results of his works to the DR&SS staff

The key to securing the approval of the directors was to link experience capitalization to a specific gap within the institution.

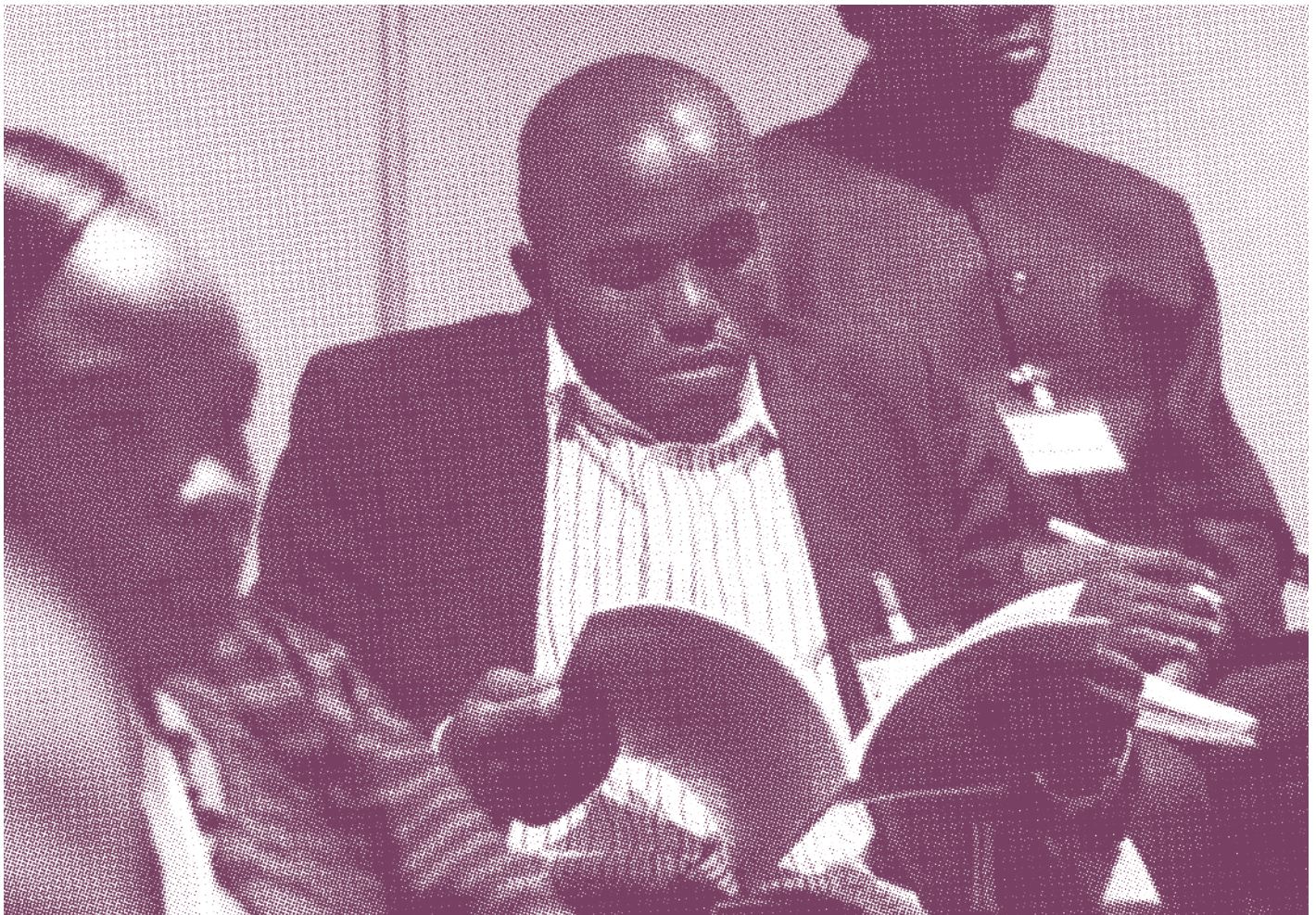
Below Many platforms were chosen to share information with all stakeholders, including the Journal of Agricultural Research and many agricultural shows

went as far as discussing how DR&SS should proceed in terms of mainstreaming the initiative. After presenting the benefits of an experience capitalization process, there was a clear understanding among the trainees of the advantages of adopting the process.

The next step involved planning how the institutionalization processes would be led, and creating a “movement” for the cause. It’s not an easy thing to internalise a new practice within an institution, and “champions” need to be brave enough to stand alone and instruct and direct other staff members. Those staff who were willing to adopt the approach played a key role helping others to also implement it. The turning point was the identification of a second staff member to act as a second “champion”. From this moment others joined, and as more and more people took up the approach, it became easier. In the process, me and my colleagues completed a few articles, followed by others and later by the majority of the DR&SS project team members.

Establishing support within the organisation

The general understanding was that to be able to fully, effectively and sustainably institutionalise experience capitalization, the right framework had to be developed. DR&SS had no existing unit to oversee knowledge management (KM), nor did we have a communications team. With the assistance of the DR&SS managers, a seminar was organised mid-2018 which culminated in the establishment of a KM unit. Selected individuals from different institutes in the department attended, and a team of nine members was selected to run the new unit. The selected members then organised a separate meeting where the Terms of Reference for the unit were established to cover the following:



Documentation is a key component of experience capitalization – as are M&E and impact assessments – but this is only part of the process.

- Oversee the development of a KM strategy, and coordinate the preparation of the work plan and budget;
- Improve the institutional appreciation of knowledge as an asset, the documentation of experiences as a requirement and sharing as a performance measure;
- Develop or adapt improved internet-based (website and portals) systems and other relevant tools and processes for the collection, processing/analysing, storing and sharing of created knowledge;
- Ensure that innovative experiences, lessons and good practices are captured, synthesised, documented and shared continuously to improve future performance and mitigation of known risks;
- Contribute to the department's efficiency and effectiveness, enhancing accessibility to knowledge from experiences encountered over the years;
- Disseminate relevant information to the right people, at the right time, and for the intended purpose;
- Facilitate the creation of a more adaptive, responsive, dynamic and flexible department, capable of unleashing new ideas and innovations;
- Support advocacy efforts by providing evidence of impact.

The good news

The institutionalization process has yielded great results in the Zimbabwean context. Impact was achieved through the commitment of the trained champion, the development of a clear roadmap, the support from the DR&SS leaders, the successful articulation of the benefits of inclusion and the costs of exclusion of the approach, the ability to create

followers and demonstrate value for the institution, and the establishment of guiding frameworks (e.g., KM unit) for sustainability. A vibrant website for DR&SS, including a KM web portal, as well as the Journal of Agricultural Research and agricultural shows, were identified as critical platforms for sharing experiences with stakeholders.

A DR&SS Publicity Committee was also established to ensure that activities carried out by the Department were publicised using different channels, such as television and radio programmes, as well as in educational dramas. To raise awareness of the experience capitalization approach and its benefits, KM has been included as a thematic area in the Harare agricultural shows, and the KM unit has, over the years, exhibited its products to more than 4,600 stakeholders visiting the DR&SS stand.

Since June 2018, the local newspaper, Newsday, has featured regular articles showing the organisation's projects and innovations, all of them generated through the experience capitalization approach. This has led to the completion of even more capitalization products, as more staff members are interested in joining after seeing the work of their colleagues published in the local newspaper. One of the stories published was about a new canning bean variety that was bred by the Department and which increased average bean yields from 1.5 tonnes to more than 5 tonnes per hectare. The interest shown by the farming communities meant a huge demand for the bean seeds.

Another effective capitalization product was a policy brief developed by DR&SS in May 2018, which was submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture, and which advocated for the adoption of an innovation platform approach in development initiatives. The brief led to the adoption of the recommended approach by the Ministry at a national level.

Right Participants at one of the DR&SS capitalization workshops, 31 July-3 August 2017



Key lessons learnt

One of the main lessons learnt is that writing case study articles requires different writing skills. The production of research documents is common practice among researchers. But writing documents which clearly articulate project experiences, and which target a broader audience, is best done following a step-by-step process.

At face value, participants of the experience capitalization training sessions interpret the approach as simply monitoring and evaluation (M&E) or impact assessment. Participants can also see no difference between experience capitalization and a documentation process. Documentation is a key component of experience capitalization – as are M&E and impact assessments – but this is only part of the process.

Another problem is that participants of the internal workshops who are assigned to write articles on previous project experiences are not able to find the information needed for completing the process.

This means that there has not been enough documentation before introducing the experience capitalization approach. Participants noted that the key steps of an experience capitalization process should start when an initiative starts, and not at the middle or when all activities are completed. For this to be achieved, the institutional adoption of experience capitalization is a critical step.



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This is one of the results of the process started by the “Capitalization of Experiences for Greater Impact in Rural Development” project, implemented by CTA, FAO and IICA and supported by IFAD.
<http://experience-capitalization.cta.int>

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VODP'S EXPERIENCE CAPITALIZATION JOURNEY

Anthony Wanyoto



To build on the achievements of the Vegetable Oil Development Project in Uganda, different experience capitalization trainings and workshops are being held with staff and stakeholders of a follow up project – the National Oil Palm Project (NOPP). It is anticipated that the capitalization process will help strengthen the monitoring and evaluation component at NOPP, and help bring about change in the agriculture sector more widely.

Cover “This journey started in Kigali, where I was first exposed to the approach by CTA”

Population growth and rising incomes in Uganda continue to fuel an annual growth rate of 9% in the domestic and regional demand for vegetable oil and its by-products. However, the country imports 60-70% of the oil-based products it requires. The Vegetable Oil Development Project has been Uganda’s strategic effort to increase domestic vegetable oil production, address rural poverty by involving smallholder farmers in oil crops production, and improve the health of the population through increased vegetable oil intake.

In a country where agriculture is the most practiced economic activity and the largest employer, the oil production project could not be more appropriate. Government statistics indicate that although more than 70% of Ugandans practice agriculture, less than 20% do so on an intensive and commercial scale. The lack of cheap and available credit has been singled out as one of the main hurdles, and the government has been trying to extend credit to rural farmers to boost their productivity and facilitate value addition.

Since this project started more than 10 years ago, Uganda has been able to increase the production of edible cooking oil to match the local demand, which currently stands at 120,000 tonnes, and cut the amount of imports of the same by 55,000 tonnes. To many Ugandans, VODP has been a wonderful intervention that they will live to remember. VODP

has empowered people financially and socially, integrating them into the cash economy and equipping them not only with modern farming technologies, but also with financial literacy tools to manage the income accrued from their farming activities. This has all had a positive impact in terms of sustainable development, and many lessons can be drawn before the project finishes in December 2019.

Scaling VODP success

A new project – NOPP – is being rolled out from 2019 to 2025 as a follow-up, and it intends to expand oil palm production in other districts of Uganda. Additionally, a concept note for a National Oil Seeds Project (NOSP) is also being prepared with the objective of increasing oil seed production, improving incomes, increasing milling capacities and creating employment opportunities. In the process of these developments, several attempts have been made to streamline experience capitalization in order to document VODP’s cross-cutting experiences across multiple interventions, and benefit these new initiatives.

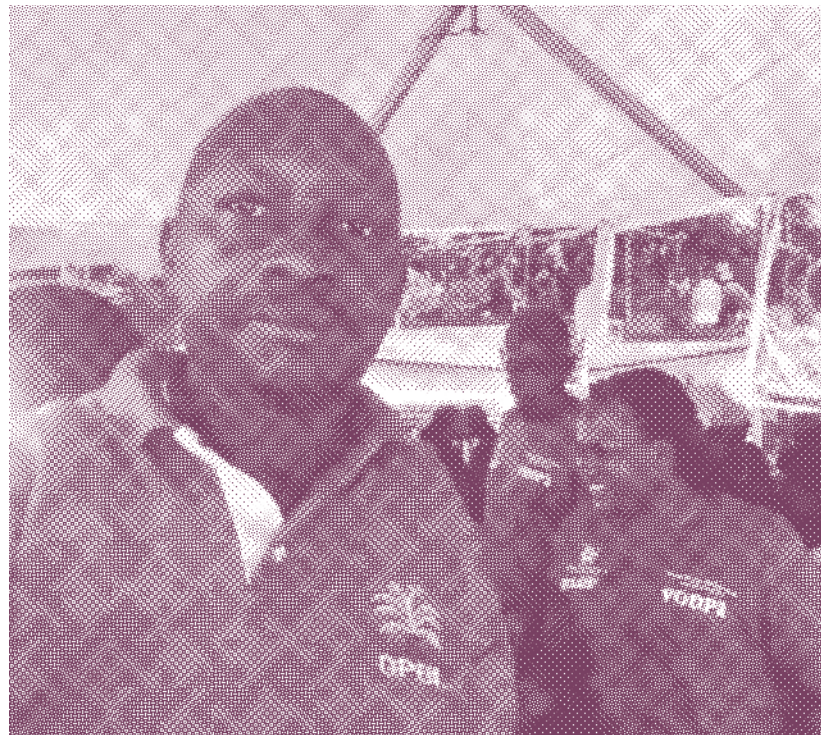
Plans are underway to ensure that all of those working on the new NOPP and NOSP initiatives are abreast of the new framework under which the projects will run, considering the challenges and lessons learnt during the 10 years of implementing VODP. As such, several

trainings sessions are being held by VODP to familiarise all stakeholders with the experience capitalization methodology. All participants in these trainings – from the top managers of the value chain to the smallholder farmers – will also be introduced to the strategic bottlenecks of the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) process through which the project's results will be tracked and documented, and the impact for local communities measured.

Discussions at the trainings sessions and workshops will also focus on the strengths and weaknesses identified during the past ten years. The purpose is to develop workable action points that will be incorporated into the projects' annual work plans, such as the gathering of information for communication outputs; and the budget approved by the donors and by the Government of Uganda. VODP worked in 53 of the 112 districts in Uganda. With a total cost of €185 million, NOPP will scale up VODP's successes to four more districts. The main goal is to increase the sustainability of rural livelihoods through investment in an oil palm industry that complies with modern environmental and social standards.

Increasing project reach

Attaining the above objective will not be easy, but several strategies have been lined up to extend the reach of the project. These strategies include the institutionalization of the experience capitalization approach to strengthen the M&E process – the details of this will be factored into the annual work plan and budget as an output. A knowledge management and communications plan will also be developed to create various outputs for mass consumption to extend the project reach.



Communication content will include a total of 700 success stories featuring beneficiaries narrating their experiences as part of VODP (all of them grouped as the “Our Story” series). These articles will be accompanied by professional photographs that will capture the work of role model farmers. This will help bring the print articles to life and to tell the stories from a visual perspective. Other communication outputs will include 10 video documentaries showing success stories, which will be circulated on both traditional and social media platforms.

Above Sharing results at the National Agricultural Show in Jinja

The main goal is to increase the sustainability of rural livelihoods through investment in an oil palm industry that complies with modern environmental and social standards.

One might ask; what criteria will be followed while generating this content, and who will be taking the lead on it? The content gathering process will follow a set of guidelines that will be developed at the beginning of the project in order to guide the creation of community experiences that tell a story – all of which build on the approach we started discussing in 2017. It is in the best interest of the project that all M&E officers adopt the guidelines as indicators to gauge their progress.

Institutionalising experience capitalization

Our experience capitalization journey started in Kigali, Rwanda in 2017, where I was first exposed to the approach by CTA, together with other colleagues, oil palm farmer leaders and private sector partners. Workshops were also held in Arusha, Rome and Amsterdam to help us adopt this approach within our workplace. As the current “champion” at VODP, I have been instrumental in spearheading different experience capitalization plans, arguing in favour of the approach and empowering the team to embrace it.

After sharing documents, pictures and articles from the CTA experience capitalization workshops, some of the lessons have already been adopted within the annual work plan, and by the budget team.

The VODP team is now creating a data bank of content to record success stories, project articles, farmer profiles, photos and experience capitalization materials to help characterise the 10-year journey of the project. These resources can then be used by stakeholders involved with the project during various presentations, such as implementation review meetings.

But the capitalization of an experience is not an end in itself. Each capitalization process aims for change, be that in public perceptions, behaviours, practices or policies. This explains why part of the work being undertaken by VODP and the new projects will educate all M&E officers about the experience capitalization process. To ensure these results, it has been resolved that NOPP will have a separate department for KM and learning, with a dedicated manager. The department will have a KM officer and M&E officers based in their own hubs, together with communications staff.

Right VODP has empowered people, both financially and socially (Photo: Peter Kasirye)





Left A proud and happy sunflower farmer in the Oyam district, Northern Uganda

A dedicated focal person – or “champion” – for NOPP will also be identified to design and implement the experience capitalization work plan. Unlike in VODP, where the champion model was hard to implement, NOPP will have additional staff in the M&E team who will be able to provide support. The project will move from having a single champion at the centre, to having several sub-champions in the different project hubs.

Based on the new funding agreement for NOPP, signed between IFAD’s President and Uganda’s Finance Minister, 30,800 farmers are set to benefit from this new project. To document such achievements, especially by a team that is just being set up, is going to be an uphill task. And like any project, there are other challenges likely to hamper the implementation of the experience capitalization framework, such as the interest of staff to participate in the process. A WhatsApp group has been created for colleagues working at the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, through which experience capitalization plans, works and experiences are shared and discussed. At the office level, members of the group are also in talks with the Ministry to move experience capitalization discussions online to

the Ministry’s website and social media platforms, for better engagement among the various team hubs, and to increase knowledge on the subject.

In his 2019 New Year’s message, the President of Uganda noted that the country will look to half the number of imports and increase the number of products it exports to foreign countries. With the start of NOPP, the new design of NOSP, and with other ongoing projects such as the Kalangala Oil Palm Project, a self-sustaining oil production system may not be out of reach after all. This is all showing that Uganda truly is the “Pearl of Africa”.



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This is one of the results of the process started by the “Capitalization of Experiences for Greater Impact in Rural Development” project, implemented by CTA, FAO and IICA and supported by IFAD.
<http://experience-capitalization.cta.int>

Country: Uganda
Region: East Africa
Date: June 2019
Keywords: advocacy; training; adoption

IMPACTING GOVERNANCE AND REACHING RURAL WOMEN THROUGH EXPERIENCE CAPITALIZATION

Mahua Roy Choudhury



The adoption of experience capitalization by the Bihar Rural Livelihoods Promotion Society (JEEViKA) in India has helped us disseminate the organisation's learnings and reach a wider, more diverse audience. This has resulted in the widespread adoption of the practices JEEViKA promotes for the development of agriculture, livestock rearing and health and nutrition.

Run by the government of the state of Bihar, JEEViKA is India's largest women's socio-economic empowerment programme, working directly with 9.4 million families, and is one of the country's flagship programmes for poverty alleviation. The objective of the programme is to diversify and enhance household-level incomes and improve access to and use of nutrition and sanitation services among rural households.

JEEViKA presently operates in more than 34,000 villages in Bihar. Under the programme, there are nearly 830,000 self-help groups (SHGs), which is the highest number in any state. Women who are part of these SHGs have collectively mobilised over €87 million in savings. Today, there are more than 400,000 women entrepreneurs in rural Bihar, all of whom have successfully established small businesses that not only provide additional incomes but also create new jobs in the rural economy.

The organisation has a three-tier operational architecture, with the state project management unit as the apex body, the district project coordination units in 38 districts, and the block project implementation units in 534 blocks. JEEViKA has a total of 5,830 employees based at these units. The project has engaged over 65,000 community resource persons to provide extension services to SHG members in the areas of financial inclusion, health and nutrition, agriculture and agri-allied extension services.

Knowledge management and communications in JEEViKA

JEEViKA's knowledge management programme intends to create, capture, share, distribute, leverage and archive knowledge for the organisation's internal use, to improve and enhance its implementation capabilities and service delivery mechanisms. The KM practices also intend to reach out to a wider external domain for effective policy advocacy. This is spearheaded by a programme coordinator, who is supported by a state project manager and project manager at the state project management unit, and 25 district communication managers at the district project coordination unit. By adopting various approaches, JEEViKA intends to cater to and reach out to the following audiences:

- Communities and beneficiaries – particularly rural women
- JEEViKA officials and staff at all levels within various initiatives
- National, State and District Governments and related departments
- Global audiences

The team has published thematic booklets and manuals for the dissemination of best practices on, for example, livestock rearing and health and sanitation; it organises

Cover Hundreds of thousands of rural women are now running their own businesses

Key communication outputs usually focus on the portrayal of success stories and project achievements.

periodic seminars and workshops, and participates in state and district-level events, such as agri-tech shows, craft fairs and government-sponsored infotainment platforms, to more widely disseminate its communications products. Key communication outputs usually focus on the portrayal of success stories and project achievements.

Institutionalising experience capitalization

In April 2017, three JEEViKA officials were exposed to the experience capitalization approach as established by the International Fund for Agricultural Development and CTA, and they started exploring how this could strengthen JEEViKA's objectives. The training workshop organised by CTA exposed officials to the importance of critically analysing project successes and failures, and of identifying the gaps in areas of policy framing, capacity building, project implementation, and progress tracking.

The discussions amongst these officials during this training were the first steps for institutionalising the approach within JEEViKA. They decided to bring their ideas to top management after preparing a plan to integrate the process, which included activities and objectives as per the table below:

The trained officials confidently defended all the apprehensions of the senior management team and were successful in drawing support from the World Bank technical assistance team. They coordinated with various sectors to identify 15 project experiences and developed a structure to document these experiences. The experience capitalization framework was co-designed with the World Bank technical assistance team, who agreed to jointly develop the cases. A group of 15 members representing the JEEViKA senior management team and six members of the World Bank team jointly developed 10 experience capitalization cases by July 2017.

Capitalising on the initial success

Encouraged by their initial success to ingrain experience capitalization within their organisation, the initiators/facilitators developed further plans to sustain the process, as shown in Table 2.

A pool of 25 district communication managers were oriented on the use of different experience capitalization tools by JEEViKA officials, and case write-shops were conducted from October 2017 to March 2018. The resulting documents were peer reviewed, edited and compiled. The communication managers, all of whom are posted at the district level units, created a pool of 10-15 officials from the district

Table 1: Ideas brought up by the team

	Activities	Objective
1.	Concept sharing with the senior management	Broad acceptance of experience capitalization within the organisation
2.	Pitch experience capitalization during the August 2017 World Bank mission	To draw attention and support from officials at all levels
3.	Constitute and train a team of senior officials and other members from the KMC team	Planning and completion of experience capitalization cases withing JEEViKA
4.	Publication of a <i>Learning Note</i> series	To establish the proof of concept at the apex unit of operation

Table 2: A plan to sustain the process

Activities		Objective
1.	Restructure the KMC strategy to incorporate experience capitalization and include it within the annual action plan and budget	To sustain experience capitalization by incorporating the approach in the results framework
2.	Capacitate the KMC team on experience capitalization by using staff learning funds/ on-the-job training funds	To nurture a team and to engage more facilitators to extend experience capitalization processes at all levels of project operations
3.	Competency mapping of the district communication managers	To better utilise the potential of the communication managers
4.	Create four sub-teams based on the competencies of the communication managers, including a documentation team, an illustrations team, a video production team and a group of translators	More efficient and time-bound results
5.	Incorporate the development of experience capitalization cases as the key result areas and key performance indicators of communication managers	To generate experience capitalization cases on a continuous basis
6.	Publish monthly newsletters and quarterly magazines which include experience capitalization cases	Dissemination of the results of the different experience capitalization processes
7.	Establish partnerships with local print and electronic media	Wider circulation and dissemination
8.	Produce videos on experience capitalization cases	Reaching a larger audience
9.	Nurture community reporters	Promote a community-driven experience capitalization process

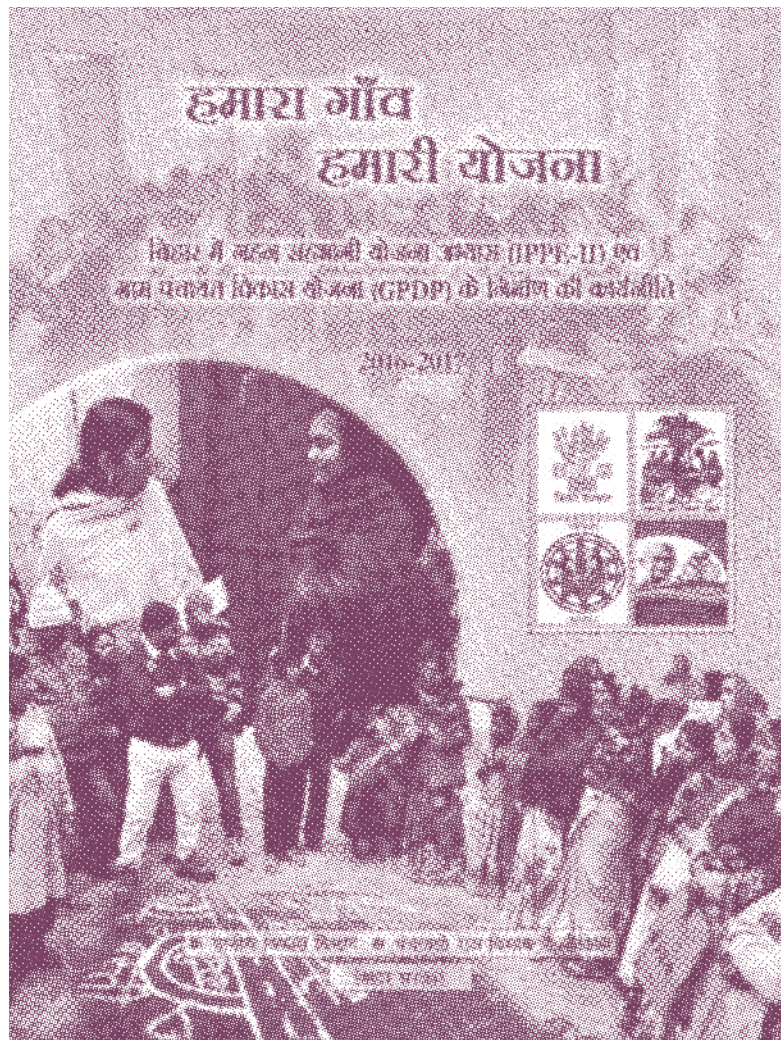
Experience capitalization was incorporated into the job description of the communication managers, and as a performance indicator for the implementation units.

and block units to conduct experience capitalization workshops amongst themselves to generate experience capitalization cases in their respective districts.

Strategic publications, such as monthly newsletters, a quarterly magazine called *The Change Makers*, booklets and a *Learning Note* series, were designed and launched in June 2017 to reach a wide range of audiences. Partnerships with print and electronic media houses were also established for the publication and telecast of the documented cases. And the project leaders or “champions” of the cases documented were further trained to share their experiences in public, and express the challenges they faced regarding the adoption of the project-promoted best practices.

Furthermore, experience capitalization was incorporated into the job description and key result areas of the communication managers, and as a performance indicator for the implementation units. This resulted in the development of several cases on varied thematic areas, from financial inclusion to running farm enterprises.

Below Different publications help reach a wide range of audiences



Successes

The World Bank and JEEViKA jointly launched “*A Decade of Rural Transformation*” during the project completion ceremony organised at the World Bank Headquarters in Washington, DC. The publication featured on both of the organisations’ websites, and was widely disseminated and applauded. The cases aptly credited the contributions made by each official and thus motivated and helped to ingrain the processes referenced. The published cases were referred to when preparing the implementation plan for the next project phase of the World Bank assisted project (the Bihar Transformative Development Project). The publication was also acknowledged by the Ministry of Rural Development and was recommended as a resource book for the implementation of the National Rural Livelihood Mission (a flagship programme of the government aiming at social and economic empowerment by promoting vibrant community institutions. The mission is being implemented in 28 states of India).

Twenty-eight officials, representing all three operation units, were trained in experience capitalization techniques, and they formed the core experience capitalization facilitation team. This team invited a larger group of 75 officials to join. Eighty-nine experience capitalization cases were developed and featured in the various publications produced. Some of the cases have been adopted as teaching examples in training modules delivered by JEEViKA officials to frontline workers and community resource persons. These include different “products” such as a cartoon series.

Videos have been developed to demonstrate the use of best practice packages for agriculture, health and hygiene and livestock rearing, among others, with the narrative woven into a story format. The practitioners in the videos share their experiences of adopting the practices, explaining the challenges they faced as well as the outcomes. A digital library of over 300 community videos is now available on the website. These videos are used for training and agriculture extension purposes, and the adoption of the practices is gauged through a Management Information System-based software.

Just as important, the SHG members have learnt to share their experiences systematically, and have used various platforms to mobilise their fellow community members and influence policies.

Challenges

Prior to introducing the process of experience capitalization, knowledge management processes at JEEViKA revolved around conveying best practices and following a strict protocol for publications. Any communication products generally described success stories and had a limited analytical agenda. The culture of project gratification was so deeply ingrained that it was challenging to consider a critical analysis that would help identify intervention failures and lessons. A continuous facilitation and peer reviews assisted in the wider adoption of the experience capitalization methodologies.

On the other hand, we also had time and motivation constraints. Initially, it was assumed that if the senior officials were trained in experience capitalization, the approach would be automatically accepted. However, their busy schedules limited their engagement in mentoring and training district and block-level officials. Further, although most of the thematic managers agreed that experience capitalization is an effective tool, they were reluctant

to get started as they saw that this demands an in-depth and time-consuming probing of project experiences. The process was also not considered as an important deliverable by some.

Pitching the concept of experience capitalization at the senior management level at an opportune time is important to see a wider acceptance of the approach. Involving senior management officials, and providing them with sufficient support, also helps to keep interests alive.

Piloting the concept in a smaller group by involving selected senior officials resulted in the publication (*“A Decade of Rural Transformation”*), and its wider dissemination helped in ingraining experience capitalization processes within the organisation. Incorporating the steps of an experience capitalization process within the organisation’s performance indicators was important to keep the managers motivated and willing to facilitate the processes. Chalking out concrete plans with purpose and defined objectives helped achieve the desired results in a time-bound manner.

Below Sharing JEEViKA's success stories at the World Bank headquarters, Washington, DC



Pitching the concept of experience capitalization at the senior management level at an opportune time is important to see a wider acceptance of the approach.

The way ahead

Experience capitalization has helped disseminate the learnings of our different interventions in a more effective manner. The next step is to develop a dissemination strategy catering to the different audiences that the programme works with. The project has already disseminated learnings through videos, posters, pamphlets and other tools. In order to reach all of its 9.4 million rural women, a television programme at prime time is planned to be screened. The show intends to share experience capitalization cases, featuring the local “champions”.

A partnership with a local newspaper to publish a fortnightly tabloid dedicated to the experience capitalization cases is also planned for June 2019. The partnership will involve community reporters who will be trained in photography and audio reporting. Their stories will then be published and circulated by the daily newspaper. This initiative will exclusively cover rural news and rural experiences.

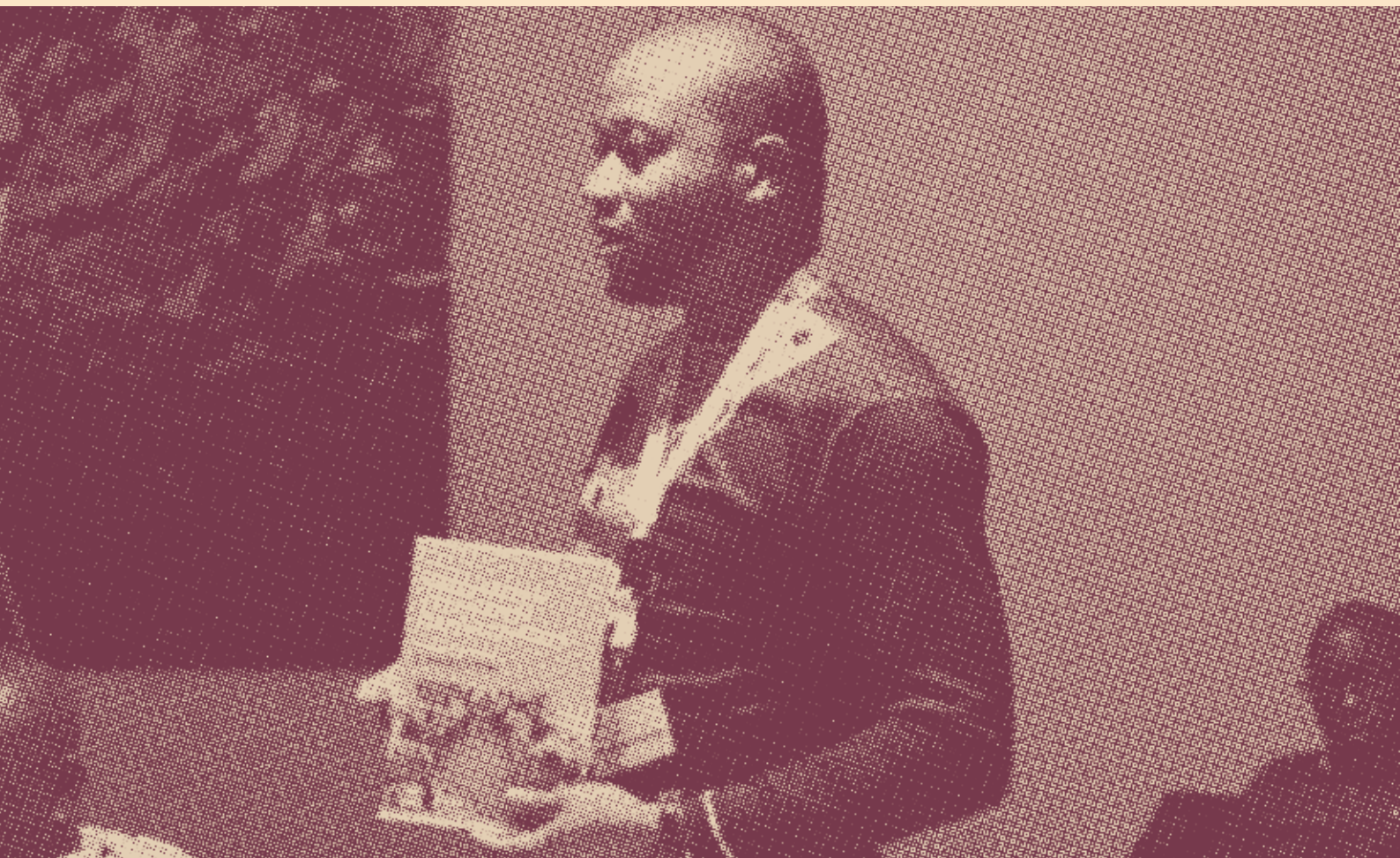
Capitalising experience at scale is our new motto, and the institutionalization process aggravates the pace of outreach. Experience capitalization can impact project delivery mechanisms and create an environment of learning within and outside an organisation. JEEViKA has started the process and now aspires to maximise its impact.



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FACILITATING THE ADOPTION OF EXPERIENCE CAPITALIZATION TO INSPIRE CHANGE

Emmanuel Sahr Gbakie



The Rural Finance and Community Improvement Programme Phase II (RFCIP II) in Sierra Leone has started several experience capitalization activities, from organising and facilitating training workshops for key project staff, to producing knowledge products and sharing them with other development programmes. This article highlights some of the key steps taken for the adoption of the approach, as well as the lessons learnt and the way forward.

Cover Showing the knowledge products which were completed helped convince others

Below Facilitator and participants in one of the first workshops in Accra

According to the literature, experience capitalization is a systematic, iterative and participatory process through which an experience is analysed and documented. This helps generate knowledge which can be shared and used to support decision making processes in development projects. With this in mind, the adoption of this approach has been, and continues to be, the main goal of many projects and organisations.

In March 2017, I was introduced to the experience capitalization approach at a CTA-organised workshop for the English-speaking countries in West Africa. This followed up on a 2-day workshop that had been organised in Sierra Leone, a month beforehand. During the workshops, me and another colleague learnt about the different steps involved and saw how this could help us document our experiences, and share the lessons learnt.



The Rural Finance and Community Improvement Programme Phase II is working to set up Community Banks (CBs) and Financial Service Associations (FSAs) in many rural communities in Sierra Leone. Its aim is to ensure access to finance, helping the rural poor embark on profitable activities, such as agribusinesses. The project is financed by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Government of Sierra Leone, and since the project began in 2009, we have been able to establish 76 rural finance institutions across the country.

Over the years, documenting the experiences of rural projects and programmes has been, and continues to be, a major challenge. Most of the time, the various units and components of a project produce reports and complete documents that respond to the project log frame and the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system. But most of these reports fail to capture the experience in detail. Hence, exposing our project to the experience capitalization methodology encouraged project staff to go beyond the “normal” processes for producing reports, and to discover why we did a particular activity in a certain way, and the reasons behind the results achieved.

This article shows how far we have gone as an organisation to ensure we institutionalise the experience capitalization approach across various



Left “If we are to change the face of agriculture and rural development programmes in Africa by making them more efficient and evidence-based, there is a need to look in detail at all activities and results, and to share lessons and recommendations”

project activities. We decided to implement these processes as a means of ensuring we no longer miss out on documenting and learning from our own experiences, even at the pilot stage.

Supporting the institutionalization of experience capitalization

During the CTA workshop in Ghana, we were charged with developing articles using the experience capitalization methodology, i.e., selecting a specific case study, setting the boundaries of this experience (such as a time frame), gathering information, describing and analysing the case – and in this way looking in detail at the way we were implementing our project. We decided to write about the establishment of CBs in Sierra Leone.

Presenting a case study was a prerequisite for attending the second follow-up workshop organised a couple of months later. The need to develop a written document helped us build a very good case to solicit financial and moral support from our programme coordinator and from the programme as a whole. Institutionalising experience capitalization within the organisation includes, but is not limited to, the steps outlined below.

(a) Advocacy within the organisation

Advocating for the institutionalization of the approach within RFCIP II was not difficult as the programme coordinator had also been a part of the workshop for technical staff held a few months before. During this workshop, key staff were introduced to the experience capitalization concept, and how it could be pivotal in project implementation. This made the institutionalization process much easier than I had expected. It was also helpful that during the first workshop in Ghana I sent constant e-mail updates of the training to key staff – including the programme coordinator – showing and explaining what we were doing. The e-mail updates informed staff of the next steps of the process, such as the preparation of the case study article.

Upon my return after the first workshop with CTA, I organised a meeting with the programme coordinator and mentioned the importance of holding an experience capitalization session for all those working with and related to the programme. The session would focus on the steps needed to develop the article showing the establishment of the CBs – which would subsequently be published by CTA. This gave way for the approval of budgets to organise four different workshops for more than 35 staff members at both the National Programme Coordination Unit (NPCU) and the Apex Bank – an entity established under the project with support from the Bank of Sierra

Right Explaining the process that the team followed to the managers of the Financial Services Association

Leone, and given powers to monitor and supervise all 76 rural finance institutions – on experience capitalization. The results of this effort included:

- Increased staff knowledge on the need and importance of an experience capitalization process;
- Published knowledge products on various topics related to rural finance, community development, climate change mitigation, production and rehabilitation of tree crop/oil palm, and road and inland valley swamp rehabilitation;
- The decision to start at least one experience capitalization process annually for all major departments;
- A dedicated budget line within the annual work plan and budget for undertaking knowledge management / experience capitalization activities;
- A synchronised approach with the M&E department for embarking on experience capitalization activities;
- Many different face-to-face meetings, all of which helped to develop the staff's capacities for documenting project experiences;
- The sharing of experience capitalization information and knowledge products among staff, via e-mails and social media platforms, convincing others of the need to take up the approach.

(b) Facilitating experience capitalization process

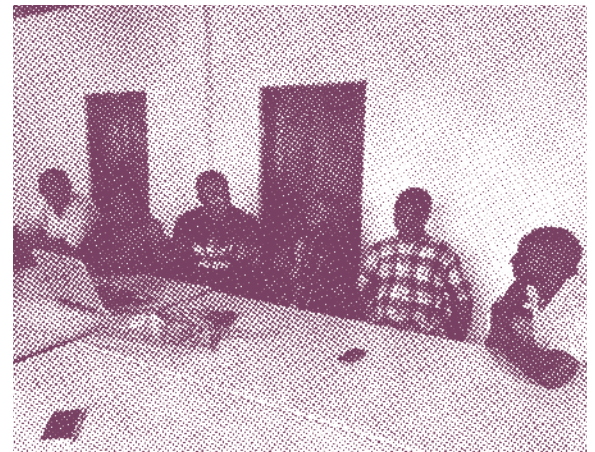
One key factor we have considered throughout our institutionalization efforts is the selection of key participants/stakeholders to help implement new processes. Thus, we targeted the directors of the Apex Bank, as heads of various project units and departments. Various workshops were organised and facilitated together with the head of the M&E/KM unit. Also, at the first workshop where all staff were present, we invited co-facilitators from Plan

International and the United Nations Development Programme (who were part of the workshop in Ghana), to support the process and to add credence to it. Although only one person from Plan International was able to join and support the facilitation team, this was a very good move.

Different articles were developed after various presentations on experience capitalization, all of them using the template developed by CTA to gather information. Converting the template into articles was somehow a challenge for some participants, so in some cases we hired an editor from a local newspaper to help us. In collaboration with the M&E team, we were able to jointly develop criteria and indicators for measuring the impact seen.

(c) Stronger links with M&E

The role of the M&E unit is crucial when it comes to developing indicators and criteria to measure and analyse the successes and failures identified with an experience capitalization process. Therefore, the M&E and KM units were merged to ensure that the data included in all knowledge products has gone through the M&E system.



In collaboration with the M&E team, we were able to jointly develop criteria and indicators for measuring the impact seen.

In spite of some difficulties, we have seen positive results, and many of the lessons learnt are now used to inform future projects, such as the newly approved Agricultural Value Chain Development Project.

A meeting was organised with the M&E/KM unit after the first CTA workshop to ensure that project data was provided to all staff when documenting the different project experiences. It was also important to remember that the M&E unit also conducts thematic studies to provide evidence of project outcomes: the results of such studies can serve as the starting point of a new capitalization process. We have also tried to mirror the analysis – which involves identifying and selecting criteria and indicators to critically analyse the results obtained – within the project’s logical framework, using these indicators to determine whether a specific activity has been successful or not.

Most importantly, we realised the experience capitalization process differs from the standard M&E and KM methods because of the way the information gathered is tabulated. Before adopting this approach, the documentation of project activities and experiences was done by using different report formats for different audiences. Now we have a standardised format to gather information, and the templates allow us to properly record our activities. Using these templates, we can go back and try to find answers to the questions we weren’t previously asking, focusing on all those steps that were good and on those that were not so good in relation to each project result.

Challenges and lessons learned

The main challenge in our organisation has been the absence of field visits to our various operational areas to validate and gather more information on the experiences being documented. This was due to limited funding for scaling up the process. Additional funding would have been necessary to increase the number of days over which the workshops were held – to increase participants’ understanding of the process – and embark on field visits where applicable.

But in spite of these difficulties we have seen positive results, and many of the lessons learnt are now used to inform future projects, such as the newly approved Agricultural Value Chain Development Project, which will start later this year and work to establish strong linkages between the private sector and smallholder farmers. Additionally, a former colleague who worked with me during the various workshops I held, has expressed interest in replicating the path we have followed in his new office at the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society. Our organisation looks forward to providing all the necessary support they may require.

Experience capitalization is a timely idea, not only for my organisation but for many other development organisations in Africa where there is need to document the lessons learnt in rural development initiatives. If we are to change the face of agriculture and rural development programmes in Africa by making them more efficient and evidence-based, there is need to look in detail at all activities and results, and to share lessons and recommendations.

Right Key staff were shown how experience capitalization could be pivotal in project implementation. This made the institutionalization process much easier



The need to embark on strategic partnerships that will popularise the methodology in this part of the globe cannot be overemphasised. Towards this end, tangible evidence in the form of knowledge products has been generated and shared by this project. Sharing these knowledge products is especially important, in the same way as supporting change agents within development organisations. A wealth of information from rural development initiatives (particularly agriculture) is available, all of which can help improve other initiatives. Experience capitalization can help scale-up success.

Next steps for NPCU

The financing agreement for the new Agricultural Value Chain Development Project was recently signed by the Government of Sierra Leone and IFAD, and implementation of the same will begin soon. As a result, we look forward to building on what we have already started within the Rural Finance Programme by documenting experiences at every stage of the new project. The human resources department will help us by ensuring that the job descriptions of all key

department staff include experience capitalization functions. The staff's commitment to such activities will be reviewed as part of their annual performance evaluations. Additionally, since the concept of experience capitalization is new to most organisations in Sierra Leone, we look forward to sharing information with those interested. This will be done with the products we have developed and, where applicable, with new experience capitalization training workshops.



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This is one of the results of the process started by the "Capitalization of Experiences for Greater Impact in Rural Development" project, implemented by CTA, FAO and IICA and supported by IFAD.
<http://experience-capitalization.cta.int>

Country: Sierra Leone
Region: West Africa
Date: June 2019
Keywords: advocacy; M&E; communications



3

PARTICIPANTS

INSTITUTIONALIZATION IN THE ASIA INDIGENOUS PEOPLES PACT

Prem Singh Tharu



The environmental and agricultural practices of indigenous people in South East Asia are being threatened by aggressive developments, which exploit their natural resources and displace them from their ancestral land and territories. The Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact is using experience capitalization processes to share many innovative experiences, all of which are successfully helping indigenous people fight for their rights.

Cover Participants at one of the Interstate Exchange Visits

The Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) regional organisation was founded in 1988 by indigenous peoples' movements. AIPP is committed to the cause of promoting and defending indigenous peoples' rights, and articulating issues relevant to indigenous peoples. At present, AIPP has 48 members from 14 different countries in Asia, made up of 18 indigenous peoples' national alliances/networks, and 30 local and sub-national organisations. Of this number, 16 are caste-based and include six organisations focused on the rights of indigenous women, four on indigenous youth, and one on the rights of indigenous persons with disabilities. AIPP has been working with its members and partners since its formal inauguration in 1992.

AIPP documents the sustainable and environmentally-friendly practices of indigenous peoples relating to their customary traditional livelihoods, and relating to land, water and forest management. The organisation also documents any developments related to the protection, promotion and management of resources. Besides good practices, AIPP and its members and partners document human rights violations against indigenous peoples in their land and territories, and submit the cases to the relevant agencies and institutions for necessary action and justice.

As a human rights-focused regional organisation, AIPP promotes evidence-based advocacy for the

recognition and respect of good practices by indigenous peoples, and lobbying at the local, national and global levels. This is the reason why the AIPP website (www.aippnet.org) is populated with case studies and research, as well as education and communication materials in different languages, developed by its various programmes. This approach has been instrumental for AIPP, as well as its members and partners, in doing effective advocacy and networking at the local, national and international levels.

AIPP also facilitates the participation of indigenous peoples in various regional and international processes. Likewise, it facilitates the engagement of its member organisations, in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) through the International Indigenous Peoples Forum on Climate Change (IIPFCC). AIPP uses the space provided by the UNFCCC to share the experiences of Asian indigenous peoples by organising side events and exhibit booths at UNFCCC meetings. As a result of these activities, the different education and communication materials on climate change developed by AIPP are now being used by indigenous peoples in Kenya, Nicaragua and Suriname.

At the regional level, AIPP has been consistently organising learning exchange events in different countries, helping indigenous peoples share their good

practices and learn from each other. Knowledge products, such as briefing papers, comic books and success stories based on the experiences presented during those regional learning exchanges are also presented and disseminated. However, there are a number of good experiences and practices that are at risk of declining due to a lack of adequate legal recognition. The work of many organisations, of indigenous people is being threatened by aggressive developments which exploit their land, forest and natural resources, as well as displaces them from their ancestral land and territories. Furthermore, land grabbing has become a serious challenge for indigenous peoples because it hinders their traditional way of life and practices, and violates their human rights.

The process of experience capitalization was taken up by AIPP after attending workshops organised by CTA in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in 2017 with support from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The experience capitalization workshops helped all AIPP's board members and staff agree on the need of an "institutional memory" that will help preserve project experiences, and add value to the organisation's information systems. Experience capitalization can also help when developing future project proposals and contribute to fund-raising, as documents produced through the process help to highlight the successes, good practices and lessons learned by various interventions. The experience capitalization workshops have proved to be instrumental for documenting cases and stories. The institutionalization of the approach has therefore become one of our organisation's main priorities.

Capacity building in experience capitalization

AIPP's Environment Programme is currently implementing projects in the areas of sustainable livelihoods and biodiversity management, among others, in six countries of South Asia and South East Asia. It has been helping indigenous peoples understand their rights to land, forest and natural resources, and documenting their strategies for protecting and promoting land, forest, water and natural resource management through innovative knowledge and practices.

The first and second CTA experience capitalization workshops, attended by a team of six AIPP staff members in June and November 2017, encouraged the adoption and institutionalization of the approach within project operations. The workshops explained the need and importance of experience capitalization

Below Knowledge exchange visit in Jharkhand, India



The work of many organisations of indigenous people is being threatened by aggressive developments which exploit their land, forest and natural resources.



Above Knowledge products, such as briefing papers or comic books, are presented and shared during the regional learning meetings

for effective advocacy, networking, awareness raising, institutional memory, fund raising and so on.

Experience capitalization has since become one of the cross-cutting priority agendas, and capacity building sessions through workshops, training and meetings, have enhanced the abilities of AIPP and partners organisations to implement it. As a result, partner organisations have since started to produce and disseminate around 10 success stories and case studies annually to the indigenous groups they work with, as well as to attendees at regional and global forums.

One of the reasons behind the success of this initiative is that the case writers get the opportunity to share their stories in different forums, such as the United Nations Climate Change Conference, and this serves as an incentive. Equally useful in the path to mainstream the approach have been CTA's valuable contributions in, for example, helping to identify the cases to be explored and written up, and in the framing and analysis of the data and information gathered.

Those who were trained have been training other key colleagues and project partners. The trained staff have also been writing stories and cases showing good practices. These are members and partners who gather information of those experiences and document them. The reported successful experiences are further

furnished and finalised by AIPP in close consultation and collaboration with the respective partners and knowledge holders.

But it is important to note that, since the experiences and good practices are the intellectual property of indigenous communities, it is always necessary and important to obtain their prior consent before the documentation and dissemination steps. Cases relating to human rights violations can be very challenging as some country governments exploit indigenous groups and have strong political power. In the publication of such cases, security threats to the indigenous groups are a major concern. Despite the varying challenges, AIPP documents the various human rights cases and reports to the mechanisms for justice. This is done directly or via different international political forums where the respective governments, international organisations and concerned stakeholders are present.

On the other hand, we have also seen conflicts of interest among team members, especially when taking credit for a particular experience, and in some cases it has also been difficult to convey the importance of documenting good practices. Despite this, we can say that experience capitalization has been successfully mainstreamed within AIPP.



Highlights and impact

The fact-based documentation of project experiences is the first step towards the institutionalization of the experience capitalization approach, a step which requires a common understanding of the approach and capacity building efforts. Trained and motivated staff members become the necessary “change agents”.

The next step includes the verification and consent from the indigenous communities as the sole owners of the information to be shared. The third stage is respect and recognition of the experiences, which must take place as part of every capitalization process. AIPP always gives priority to obtaining consent from the communities in which the project works because they are the innovators and knowledge holders.

The support received from CTA has contributed significantly to mainstreaming experience capitalization in AIPP, its partners and members. The learnings of the experience capitalization workshops are being transferred to the partners who are also adopting the process and mainstreaming the approach.

Experience capitalization has become an instrumental tool for AIPP because it supports the processes of advocacy, networking, institutional memory, capacity building and awareness raising. This is now widely felt among AIPP staff, its partners and networks, all of whom are promoting the experience capitalization approach for a more effective replication of the lessons learned and the positive change seen on the ground. The transfer and transmission of experiences and knowledge to the next generation is also a key incentive which is helping to revitalise and promote similar experiences within a community and among communities.

In order to learn from and understand the impact of the approach, the next step is to monitor and assess its use and benefits. This would also help to identify areas of improvement to make the process more practical. Future action for the institutionalization of experience capitalization needs to be taken as a part of a results-based management strategy.

Above Facilitators and participants at the knowledge and skills sharing sessions in Jharkhand, India



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This is one of the results of the process started by the “Capitalization of Experiences for Greater Impact in Rural Development” project, implemented by CTA, FAO and IICA and supported by IFAD.
<http://experience-capitalization.cta.int>

Country: Thailand
Region: South East Asia
Date: June 2019
Keywords: advocacy; communications; indigenous peoples

LEARNING WITH FARMERS AND TRADERS IN MOZAMBIQUE

Edson Natha



As part of an experience capitalization process, a simple questionnaire or a set of templates can help collect and organise information, and prepare a short document. But even more important is to ensure that the beneficiaries of a project actively join the process. These have been the two main elements of the new experience capitalization initiatives starting in Mozambique.

With a total budget of approximately €38 million, the Rural Markets Promotion Programme (PROMER) is implemented jointly by the Government of Mozambique and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). It works to increase the incomes of small-scale farmers by helping them market their surpluses more profitably. The programme started in April 2009, and had different components focusing on the need to develop more dynamic market intermediaries; the creation of enterprise-led value chain initiatives; improving the market environment; and the necessary policy and institutional support.

In 2017, project representatives were selected to participate in two seminars organised by CTA in Maputo, joining staff members of other IFAD-supported projects in Mozambique and also in Brazil. The workshops were organised to introduce the experience capitalization approach, and to explain how to prepare a set of articles that would help share information about these different initiatives and about the results of the programme.

I was one of the project team members invited to join the CTA experience capitalization training sessions. This was a relatively new subject, but already during the first meeting I started to think how to replicate what we were doing, and how to use the various strategies we were discussing to describe and analyse

our work at PROMER. We were recommended to use templates with a few key questions, and I immediately saw that this is an instrument that can help identify a specific experience, and describe it in detail. Similar templates helped us identify the factors behind the results seen in the field, as part of a broader analysis, and also a set of lessons and recommendations. The use of templates or tables to identify the positive and negative aspects of a project is an attribute that differentiates this approach from others we had used before.

The use of these tools helped us prepare articles that were consistent, analytical and informative. During the second training session we wrote articles about the experiences that we identified in our projects and regions, all of which have now been published by CTA as a collection of case studies written in Portuguese: “Capitalization of Experiences: Lessons for Rural Development in Mozambique and Brazil”. Convinced of the benefits of the approach, after this workshop I organised a similar workshop with my colleagues from one of the PROMER implementation units (where I work as agribusiness officer and coordinator of one of the 3 programme implementation units). In total, 18 persons from different backgrounds attended the experience capitalization training process that I facilitated.

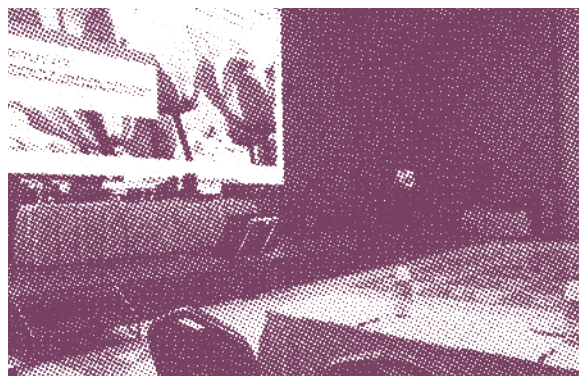
Cover “Presenting the experience capitalization methodology to my colleagues, I argued in favour of it being added to the M&E and the KM group of activities in our project”

The idea of running a new training workshop was to make my colleagues aware of and interested in the experience capitalization approach, and to show the purpose of the tables we had been taught to use. I wanted to share what we had learnt about the analysis with them all, and also show how to structure a report.

Institutionalising capitalization

We were required to develop success stories as part of the experience capitalization process we started with CTA, but this is also one of the things we do as part of the implementation of all PROMER activities. To help my colleagues with the production of these documents, I encouraged them to use the same set of tables I had used to organise the information available and prepare a short document in Maputo. However, using these tables and elaborating the texts was not enough to comply with the essence of the approach: the experience capitalization methodology is meant to be participatory. To address this problem, there was a need to re-design some of the activities which were planned as part of the PROMER programme in the course of 2018 and accommodate some structural changes.

All staff members of the programme-implementing units were invited to join a planning session at the end of 2018 where the PROMER's National



Right Participants at the seminars organised by CTA in Maputo came from Mozambique and from Brazil

Coordination Unit encouraged us to identify those parts of our programme that could be documented and shared with beneficiaries, partners and district governments as part of the phase-out plan of the programme. At this event, I made a short presentation of the experience capitalization methodology to my fellow colleagues and discussed it with the programme management unit, arguing in favour of it being added to the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and the knowledge management (KM) group of activities. My suggestion was approved at the meeting.

Once the plan was approved, the next step I took was to suggest to those involved in the implementation of all activities in the field, including all service providers, to focus on the lessons identified during the project's exchange visits conducted in the past. Exchange visits have been a common practice in our programme and have often seen beneficiaries and implementing staff actively interacting with one another. I saw this would help meet our objectives regarding the participation of all stakeholders – by involving technicians, producers and rural traders.

Achievements

Two experience capitalization processes were planned and completed. The first was with a farmers group from the district of Alto-Molocué (in the province of Zambézia, in the northern part of the country), which looked in detail at the work of another farmers' organisation in the district of Ribaué. The farmers in Ribaué had been practising fish farming in addition to agricultural production to diversify their sources of income and food security. Following the capitalization approach, the farmers in Alto-Molocué showed that they were able to replicate the results obtained by the Ribaué district farmers' organisation, and they were able to identify the key factors that helped them do this.

The second capitalization process involved rural traders and district government officials representing

Positive steps have been taken to institutionalise the experience capitalization approach, and new processes are planned by the M&E staff.

four districts in the provinces of Nampula and Zambézia. The participants joined an exchange visit with an association of rural traders in Milanje, another district in Zambézia. This association had been trying out different commercialization strategies, such as linking up with small farmers to buy their crops, establishing communication mechanisms with the local government agencies to access financial services and other business support extension services, and organising the crop marketing process in close collaboration with the local authorities. With the support of the project staff, the visiting traders and government members looked at the possibility of adopting and implementing similar strategies in the context of their own needs.

Completing an experience capitalization process, these individual traders learnt that they could organise themselves as an association, and work together to overcome the challenges they faced. Such challenges included the need of small farmers to aggregate their crops for selling, marketing intermediation and the need to draft and sign contracts. They also decided to dialogue with the government and to discuss the difficulties and opportunities they identified.

Planning the way forward

With these positive results, and with the continuous need to prepare and share success stories within PROMER, we can say that positive steps have been taken to institutionalise the experience capitalization approach, and new processes are planned to be conducted systematically by the M&E staff. Follow-ups sessions by the management team will help ensure the use of the acquired knowledge by all participants.

The experience capitalization process allows for the generation of knowledge coming from rural development interventions. The approach also encourages the involvement of different target groups in the monitoring and evaluation processes of all development activities. The participation of project beneficiaries is particularly useful.



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FROM DAKAR TO AMSTERDAM, AND AN ONGOING PRACTICE IN BURKINA FASO

Micheline Ouamega



Solidar Switzerland took part in the experience capitalization training workshops that took place in Dakar in October 2017 and February 2018, and in Amsterdam in 2019. This helped us start incorporating the capitalization approach to review our project intervention methods and monitoring strategies for improved results. After the workshops, a “champion” was identified to advocate for the institutionalization of the capitalization approach, and after several months of hard work, the process is showing results. Several developments within the organisation – from the collective training of colleagues to individual interventions and support of the process by the company leaders – have been beneficial.

Solidar Switzerland is an international NGO that has worked in Burkina Faso for more than 40 years. The aim of the organisation is to contribute to the fight against poverty and improve the living conditions of the beneficiaries of its development projects. The main intervention areas include governance, education, food security and the fight against child labour.



The fight against poverty is a long-term process that requires innovative, sustainable strategies inspired by the results seen in the field. This is why Solidar Switzerland attaches great importance to the capitalization of experiences because this makes it possible to improve the implementation of its projects for greater impact. Participation in the CTA experience capitalization training was a great opportunity seized by the organisation, and the representative who took part in the various workshops has since followed the action plans that were developed then, and the recommendations that were made. Different experience capitalization processes have started and been completed. So how successful have we been? And what lessons can we share?

Towards institutionalization

Going home after the second CTA workshop in Dakar in February 2018, I updated the Country Representative on what the training had entailed and on the process of experience capitalization. During this meeting, the director asked if we could organise an internal workshop with other colleagues and share what we had learned, and convey the importance of the process, and the stages involved. Because of the differing schedules and time constraints of all the staff members that we wanted to join the workshop, it was actually held in March.

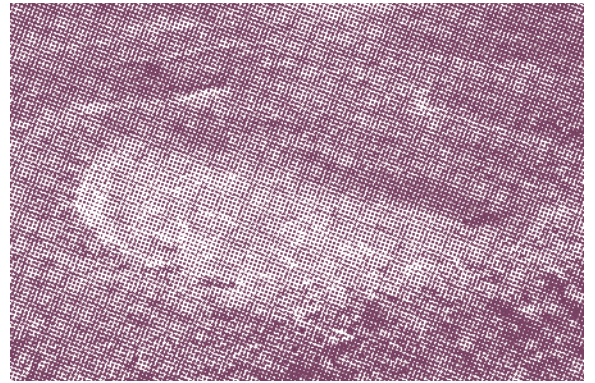
Cover The reasons for success included the steps taken to share information with all colleagues

Right The half-moon technique promoted by Solidar Switzerland shows clear results in the field: more water and higher yields

During the first CTA training workshop in 2017, I worked to complete an article that looked at the use of the half-moon technique (an agricultural practice that involves digging a half-moon-shaped hole in which crops are grown with manure to increase productivity), as a specific experience I was involved in. I shared this with my colleagues, describing the process I followed and the general steps of the methodology. Thus, the meeting held in March was an opportunity to present my case, and introduce the e-learning module – developed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and explained during the CTA training – on how to complete an experience capitalization process through various different steps. There were eight people at the workshop, including six project managers, the country representative and the deputy coordinator.

During the third week of May 2018 we had three further days of training with the eight staff members who had come to the first workshop. The training focused on the capitalization process and made use of the FAO training module. During this session, we conducted an inventory of good practices that could be capitalised on. In July 2018, another 3-day workshop was organised with the partners of Solidar Switzerland.

Thanks to these training sessions and to the internal advocacy steps, the budget allocated to capitalization within the organisation was increased for the year 2019. This was possible because the headquarters had authorised a re-reading of the budget that had already been drawn up. This exercise also allowed the implementing partners to increase their budget for capitalization activities, taking into account possible resource persons they would need to institutionalise the process.



Thanks to these training sessions and to the internal advocacy steps, the budget allocated to capitalization within the organisation increased substantially.

These different actions can be considered as successes. However, it should be noted that these successes were not obtained without difficulties. One such difficulty encountered in the process was the unavailability of actors for the planned meetings. This somewhat delayed the activities that had been planned. Another difficulty – and one of the most important ones – was the different way in which we all saw the key elements of the approach when implementing it. Under the experience capitalization approach, you focus on one experience at a time in order to learn from each individual intervention, and do not necessarily consider the project as a whole. This was a difficult concept to grasp for some.

Analysis

After training colleagues on the experience capitalization approach, the challenge was to integrate the process with our regular monitoring practices. This task was somewhat met through the systematic integration of lessons learned within project databases. Taking into account factors of intervention success or failure also led us to integrate progress markers or indicators, such as the reach of all project interventions, into the logical frameworks of the projects. Such markers have also been added to the monitoring plans.

We are also changing the way we track activities in the field. In terms of data collection, for instance, we pay more attention to the beneficiaries and to the ways in which we interact with them. This is helping us improve the quality of the information we obtain. During the CTA training, we discussed the best way to hold interviews in the field in order to collect qualitative information, e.g. by making all interviewees feel important and understood. Following this, the interviews with the project stakeholders are much better now. Instead of the interviews being limited to implementing partners and beneficiaries, we also started to include other actors, such as civil servants working with the state agencies which play a role in our projects. These actors have also since been invited to our project assessment meetings. We are only at the beginning, but we expect to raise awareness on the importance of experience capitalization among these stakeholders, and explain to them how it can help improve the dissemination of information to engage their support.

Another important fact is the involvement of consultants outside the project, all of whom are experts on a specific intervention area and can follow up on the outcomes. Their presence can be very useful. Indeed, as an implementing actor, we do not see some mistakes that we make. An outside eye sometimes reveals other aspects of reality.

In order to fully institutionalise the experience capitalization approach, beyond the conviction of organisation managers, it is essential to get employees to “buy” the process individually. It is not only the senior management who will be involved in any future process, and staff at all levels must be involved. Often, it is those at the field level who are best placed to suggest a specific experience to describe and analyse as they see first-hand the impacts of the projects to local communities.

As the experience capitalization “champion”, I did not have any particular problems with my line managers in implementing the approach and am in the process of involving more of my colleagues. The leaders of an organisation can decide that this becomes a regular activity, but if they do not adhere to it, and continuously encourage and support all colleagues, then this will not take place.

*Below The “champion”
in action*



We must continue to encourage and advocate, and that is what we committed ourselves to do.

Successes

One of main factors that contributed to the success we have seen was the willingness of our managers themselves to engage in the approach – both in Burkina Faso and at the headquarters in Switzerland. I was responsible for developing these ideas within the organisation, but they were already aware of what the approach could do for Solidar Switzerland, and I discovered that the process was a part of their vision.

The second reason for success included the steps we took for sharing information with my colleagues. It is useless to try to have the monopoly of an approach. The more people involved, the better, and the greater the successes. When the link to the FAO online course was shared with our program officer for Burkina Faso in Switzerland, she sent it on to more colleagues, and today, the team in the Mozambique branch are also engaged in the process.

The third reason is the engagement of all project managers in the capitalization dynamics. As already mentioned above, it is the individual colleagues who, at their own level, will put the experience capitalization approach into practice. If they are not convinced, it would be difficult to see this approach being adopted, even if the leaders of the organisation are in favour. To summarise, we can say that the main cause of success is adherence to – and accompaniment of the process – by all colleagues.

Conclusions

It is important to remain focused and to regularly start new processes. Experience capitalization is not a one-time intervention but a continuous process. We must continue to encourage and advocate, and that is what we have committed to. One of the ways to ensure the continuation of the process is by including experience capitalization activities/knowledge within the staff job descriptions and specifications. Staff engagement with and contributions to the approach can then become part of the annual review processes. The roles and responsibilities of the staff involved in every process will also need to be clarified so that this practice becomes and remains a reality within the organisation.



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ACTIONING SUCCESS THROUGH EXPERIENCE CAPITALIZATION: THE KENAFF CASE

Violet Nyando



Following the experience capitalization training process that CTA started in East Africa, the Kenya National Farmers Federation (KENAFF) asked its two selected trainees to select two other colleagues in order to help them introduce the approach to all staff members and help institutionalise it. Despite some challenges in maintaining the initial momentum, the processes for documenting success stories have improved and new monitoring and evaluation tools have been developed, all of whom are helping capture more information and share lessons and recommendations.

Cover A brainstorming session at KENAFF

CTA, in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), organised a series of experience capitalization training workshops for organisations based in East Africa. These took place in November 2016 (Nairobi), December 2016 (Kigali) and March 2017 (Arusha), and involved representatives of those organisations running different agricultural and rural development initiatives. The workshops were planned to introduce the approach and show participants how to run and

support an experience capitalization process. I was one of the beneficiaries of this process, having been selected, together with my colleague Daphne Muchai, to represent the Kenya National Farmers Federation (KENAFF).

KENAFF is a non-political, member-based organisation of Kenyan farmers, which represents the interests of farming families. The Federation envisions a vibrant agricultural sector with improved livelihoods, promoting agri-businesses through targeted interventions. Its strategies are focused on lobby and advocacy, targeted capacity building and training, farmer empowerment and the promotion of cohesiveness between sector stakeholders. To strengthen its impact, KENAFF works with a network of like-minded partners and coalitions locally, regionally and internationally.

KENAFF's journey

KENAFF's experience capitalization process began when two senior management staff were asked by the East Africa Farmers' Federation (EAFB) to attend the CTA-organised workshops. This small team — the general manager for external relations, policy, lobbying and advocacy (myself) and the general manager for institutional development and institutional strengthening (Daphne Muchai) —



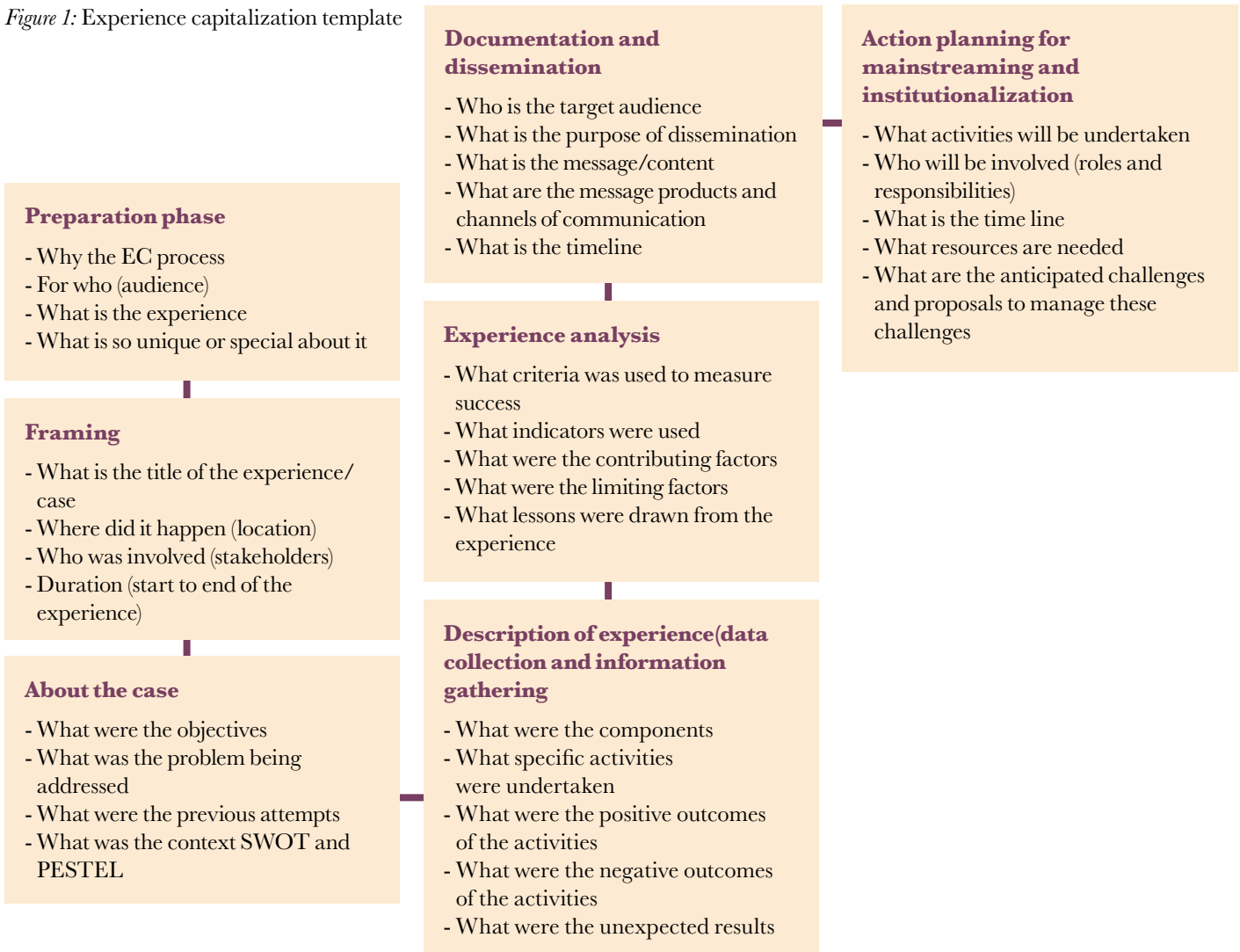
was taken through the whole process of identifying an experience and completing a set of steps which included framing the case, planning the process, gathering and organising data and information, conducting a thorough analysis of the information gathered, documenting a short article and disseminating the lessons learnt. The process considered the use of a template that allowed us to systematically fill in details in a logical manner. This was accompanied by peer review sessions that helped refine the templates (see Fig. 1).

The capacity building process used the online FAO/IMARK experience capitalization learning module (<https://tinyurl.com/yyq3mtj5>). This is a step-by-step web-based training course describing the entire

experience capitalization process, including reflective questions that help understand all concepts.

As a team, we drew up an action plan for mainstreaming and institutionalising the experience capitalization approach at the individual and organisational level, acting as “champions” and/or facilitators. This can be seen as the most interesting outcome of the entire learning process. The purpose was to embed experience capitalization knowledge and practise within KENAFF. This involved the deliberate effort to facilitate a process which would help insert the approach in the organisation, becoming part and parcel of the standard organisational operating procedures (embedded in the design of all systems, structures and procedures).

Figure 1: Experience capitalization template





Above Together with Daphne Muchai, the original champions

Institutionalization at KENAFF

The mainstreaming and institutionalization process began with a comprehensive back-to-office report to the KENAFF CEO, who later allowed the report to be shared with the entire KENAFF staff during a monthly staff meeting. This provided a general idea of what an experience capitalization process and the whole approach is all about. In the meeting we all agreed that the experience capitalization approach could be instrumental in supporting the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) department in collecting relevant information that can support the KENAFF management team make informed decisions. As “champions” we were asked to select two additional key staff members: one who is in charge of the KENAFF membership and partnerships; and another one working as programme implementation

coordinator for climate-smart agricultural technologies. These two colleagues were selected as they were working with many KENAFF members and stakeholders, and the managers thought that the adoption of experience capitalization would then trickle down to the field officers whom they were supervising. The now four KENAFF “champions” were also part of the technical team that is responsible for reviewing all KENAFF publications and the preparation of awareness-raising materials, and for supporting the M&E team collect data and information using KENAFF’s key performance indicators.

My colleague Daphne and I, as the original “champions”, took our colleagues through the experience capitalization process and helped them complete the templates we had learned to use. We also introduced them to the FAO/IMARK online module. EAFF representatives who had also been trained by CTA supported us in the initial stages of mainstreaming the approach. EAFF also encouraged KENAFF to contribute to the online communities that CTA established for those who had joined the different workshops in other parts of the world, sharing our new experiences. KENAFF worked together with EAFF to complete the case studies that we started during the training workshops so as to have them in the booklets published by CTA.

As a result of the trainings, there are improved processes for documenting success stories, and many of these have been published in the KENAFF bulletins. The M&E department also developed new tools for collecting data on project/programme implementation, with an inbuilt tracking system that linked field data to the KENAFF headquarters’

As a result of the trainings, there are improved processes for documenting success stories, and many of these have been published in the KENAFF bulletins.



central repository. The tools allowed the real time sharing of data, allowing for reviews and for questions and the request for additional information. This has helped the KENAFF field teams improve their analytical skills, providing a more complete picture of the situation in the field – especially when compared to previous reporting processes. The KENAFF teams provide more of the reasons behind the changes seen in a community, as well as explaining any variances in results observed, instead of only considering the targets and showing what was achieved. We can see that, with the adoption of the experience capitalization approach, a section on “why these results?” is now part of the reporting template.

The two team members who joined the first capitalization training workshops have since moved to other organisations. This slowed the momentum that had been slowly building up. In 2017 there were also changes in the KENAFF management team, with a transition period that saw a new CEO and only a few consultation sessions to discuss the experience capitalization process. Attempts are being made to resume these consultations, asking managers to support new processes with the new staff. We think this is particularly necessary as there has been a huge turnover of staff, including in the M&E department.

Lessons learnt

Our experience has shown that to successfully mainstream an approach like experience capitalization it is necessary to actively engage all team members. This should include managers (as experience capitalization supporters) and the technical teams (as experience capitalization practitioners). Trying it out, and continuously reviewing the process allows it to become embedded in the day-to-day activities of the organisation, providing for regular feedback on what is working well and what needs to be improved.

Secondly, we have seen that facilitation is a key element, and that there is therefore a need to have committed “champions” who dedicate time to ensure that the experience capitalization process is being implemented on a continuous and progressive basis. These “champions” act as experience capitalization trainers and facilitators. By doing this, more and more team members join a process whilst other staff continue to deepen their understanding and application of the approach.

Last but not least, it has become clear that having experience capitalization integrated into the existing systems minimises the fear of managers and the Board of Directors of introducing unbudgeted cost lines that would strain the organisation. In the case of KENAFF, experience capitalization has been part and parcel of the organisational monitoring and evaluation process. In this way, it has then become embedded in the M&E activities and budgets.

Above Taking colleagues through the experience capitalization process

Right From a back-to-office report to the KENAFF CEO to a recurrent practice

Way forward

The experience capitalization process requires commitment in terms of resources, most importantly staff time. However, there are many conflicting interests at the organisational level, and setting aside time for starting a new exercise can be challenging. Most projects have many case studies that can be capitalised on, but this means there is a need to determine guidelines on which ones to prioritise. This challenge has seen many staff struggling to frame their cases from a pool of many potential cases, with some biting off more than they can chew.

The focus of every capitalization initiative should be on the processes and not so much on punctual activities. This is what gives answers to the questions of “why” and “how”. The problem is that many experience capitalization practitioners prefer reporting on the positive aspects only, and not on those which have had a negative effect. This is a mistake, as it is the latter which provide more useful lessons. We have learnt that experience capitalization is not a stand-alone component or department in an organisation. Staff who try to treat it this way find it difficult to adopt. There is also the challenge of staff turnover which creates knowledge gaps and shocks in the organisation – particularly if those who are leaving were championing the approach.

Experience has taught us that it is crucial to engage new staff members, and to facilitate new training workshops. On a personal basis, I am committed to introducing the approach to my current employer. I am sure we will be able to share many success stories soon.



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FIRST STEP ON THE ROAD

Karen Hampson and Kevin Perkins



Farm Radio International was invited by FAO to contribute content to an online course on experience capitalization, and later by CTA to attend the Inception Meeting of its project. Recognising the value of this approach – for improving relationships, for detailing gaps or successes, and for supporting innovation and learning – we decided to introduce it to some of our larger projects.

Cover Nelson Kawawa of Radio Citizen interviewing Magret, a mango farmer in Kenya

Right New information helps preparing healthier meals (Photo: Simon Scott)

In 2007, the launch of the African Farm Radio Research Initiative (AFRRI), funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, sparked a major change in the work of Farm Radio International. We grew in size, ambition, and reach. We opened offices in five African countries, developed new partners and implemented an action research project that sought to capture hard evidence – for the first time – of the extent to which small-scale farmers are affected by radio campaigns that aim to help them make productive changes on their farms. The results, reported in 2011, were extremely positive. Farmers throughout the areas covered by a broadcasters' signal could be expected to listen in large numbers (66% of potential listeners), learn from what they heard, and introduce the practice featured in the radio campaign (21% of listeners, on average). The results encouraged us to expand our operations as an organisation and move proactively into promoting the use of interactive radio as an efficient and effective means for communicating, sharing good practices and delivering a range of development outcomes at scale. As an international organisation, we began to develop long-term strategies and an institutional framework for consolidation, growth and development. In particular, we offered development partners our specialized approach to using interactive radio to help bring improved practices to scale.

Our success in attracting grants or sub-grants from development partners for interactive radio project was partly due to the strength of the evidence generated through AFRRI, and also through the contacts made during the research phase. FRI's interactive radio projects are run much like typical development projects, with an emphasis on participatory planning and inclusion (of target listeners, radio stations, local government and extension workers, relevant women's and farmers groups, local NGOs, etc.), at each stage of the project cycle. From the beginning, we understood the importance of monitoring, evaluation and generating evidence – not only to improve our results and impact on the audiences, but also to generate data and evidence to push us forward as an organisation, and constantly seek new and better approaches.





As such, every FRI project includes a number of evaluation methods and activities – formative research, mid-project reviews featuring community visits, group discussions, polls over the airwaves, an end-of-project summative evaluation (with community and radio station partners), and a full outcome evaluation based on a household survey of a randomly selected, statistically significant sample of potential listeners. In this way, each project adds to the body of evidence for the effectiveness of radio in rural development, and specifically for increasing awareness and adoption of agricultural practices in Sub-Saharan Africa. The evidence to date was recently summarised in a journal paper: Hudson, H.E., *et al.*, 2017, *Using radio and interactive ICTs to improve food security among smallholder farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa*.

FRI's early impact projects were largely based around the Participatory Radio Campaign approach that was developed and tested during AFRRI. As we evaluated our projects, and spoke with a range of partners and funders, we gained greater insights into how listeners

use radio, and we saw that there was room for other types of radio formats and approaches, aimed at different objectives and audiences. Some of the types we developed were radio dramas with follow-up discussion and phone-in shows, a Radio MarketPlace, cooking shows, and formats for weekly interactive farmer programmes (among others) through a cycle of iterative learning. While the outcomes of these approaches were evaluated through qualitative and quantitative means, we wanted to understand more about the process involved – we were getting good results, but why and how? What were the factors for success? How could we replicate them? If we could understand the details around causes for success (or where we fell short) we could further develop our approaches, and improve results for both listeners and partners.

The field of digital communication for development is ever-changing. Internet and mobile phone access in rural communities in sub-Saharan Africa increases almost daily, and the range of options for interacting

*Above Broadcaster prepares programme, Tanzania
(Photo: Simon Scott)*

*Right Radio-ICT
workshop, Tanzania*

and sharing information grows – smartphones, apps, online courses, and communication tools such as WhatsApp present many opportunities for creativity. Almost inevitably, these devices and applications are heralded as the “death knell” for radio. In fact, the opposite has been the case, with new communication technologies making radio better, more cost-effective, more interactive and demand-driven, and more popular than before. Because of the transformative potential of new technology for radio, we invest considerable time and resources in research and innovation – finding ways to strengthen radio with digital tools. FRI also built on the investments it made through AFRI in measuring and sharing knowledge about best practices in and impact of interactive radio. In 2014 it established a Knowledge Management Team with the mandate to evaluate the results of projects, capture and share learnings, and make sure our work is shaped by evidence from other research and development initiatives.

Around the same time, FRI was invited by FAO to contribute content to an online course in experience capitalization (EC) by bringing examples of how to use radio, and sharing our experiences in documentation and reflection up to that time. A short time later, CTA and partners began to implement a pioneering project promoting this approach among development-focused organisations. CTA invited FRI to attend the Inception Meeting and join the Community of Practice and wider network. The EC approach and the network of partners we met through these events inspired us to introduce experience capitalization at the closing phase of two specific partnership-based projects in Uganda. In both cases, the FRI staff member that contributed to and participated in the EC course and CTA workshops briefed FRI’s in-country team in Uganda, and co-facilitated short

reflection workshops with all partners involved in the projects, including the radio stations that broadcast the programmes. Both capitalization processes led to and informed the development of a second project phase. The reflection workshops also strengthened the relationships between all project partners, and resolved tensions which formed during project implementation, largely due to poor communication.

Once we saw the value of the EC process – for improving relationships, for detailing gaps or successes in the project process, and for supporting innovation and learning – we decided to introduce it to some of our larger projects in other countries. Inspired in part by the EC approach, FRI’s Knowledge Management Team has introduced its own internal Insight Reports, through which project teams share simple, yet key insights about their work. Insight Reports answer questions like: What did they learn during a project? What tips can they share with the rest of the organisation for everyone’s benefit? Did they try something new for FRI and how did it go?



Because of the transformative potential of new technology for radio, we invest considerable time and resources in research and innovation.

Inspired by the experience capitalization approach, FRI introduced its own Insight Reports.

In 2017, IUCN's SUSTAIN-Africa project in Tanzania put out a call for partners who could support the sharing of useful farmer-tested practices, learnings and technologies among their primary project groups, but also reach out and share with farmers beyond the project area. IUCN, the Africa Wildlife Foundation, FRI and CTA worked together in a unique EC+radio project to analyse and document a selected number of Inclusive Green Growth (IGG) practices from the SUSTAIN

programme, which were being used by farmers, relevant, interesting and easy to use. Together with two local radio stations, FRI transformed the written good practices into radio programmes and shared the practices and learnings – on beehive fencing, clean seed cane multiplication and cocoa nursery management practices – through interactive radio, thereby promoting widespread sustainable land and water use techniques to millions of listeners in the Kilombero valley.

Project summary

Project name	Experience Capitalization for analyzing, documenting and sharing SUSTAIN Africa learnings – EC4S
Partner(s)	AWF – African Wildlife Foundation, CTA – Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation ACP-EU
Funder(s)	IUCN
Location	To establish the proof of concept at the apex unit of operation
Date	2017–2018
Radio station(s)	Pambazuko FM Abood FM

Key results

Coverage	Broadcast area reaches 3,500,000 rural working-age audience
Stations	Two radio stations, 20 new interactive radio programmes aired in total (plus repeats)
Registered listeners	7,740 farmers



Above Members of a community listening group in Uganda

This year, 2019, FRI is developing its next five-year strategy, which we will begin implementing in 2020. As part of, and to support our intentions around innovation and learning, knowledge management and increased use of radio as a tool for rural development audiences, FRI has decided to institutionalise EC as part of its new plan. This is the first step on the road to formal institutionalization. It will be a process of testing, reflection and learning as we expand its use in the organisation. We will develop an in-house EC toolkit, incorporate EC in new proposal budgets and use it as part of the evaluation process in large ongoing projects. It is an exciting new phase and we are counting on the support of the wider EC community as we move forward!



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4

***INNOVATIVE
APPROACHES***

EXPERIENCE CAPITALIZATION FOR RESULTS-BASED PLANNING, REPORTING AND MONITORING

Seblewengel Tesfaye



The BENEFIT Partnership in Ethiopia is using an experience capitalization approach to improve the way it plans and reports the collaboration efforts that it is promoting. A few critical reflection tools regularly seen as part of the capitalization approach have also been tried to ensure that the monitoring and evaluation processes are more meaningful and results-oriented.

Cover Participants at the BENEFIT collaboration field day in the Amhara region

Right Collaboration review meeting, Bishoftu Pyramid resort

The BENEFIT Partnership covers a portfolio of five agriculture programmes funded by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (EKN) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. All activities are coordinated by the Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation, in partnership with Ethiopian universities, agricultural research organisations, government offices at different levels, NGOs, public enterprises and private companies.

During the first phase, the programmes under the BENEFIT umbrella worked independently of each other. When the second phase started, it was agreed to work closer together and one of the collaboration strategies that was decided was to focus on a specific geographic location and on strategic crops. It was expected that this would help achieve better results in terms of crop productivity and market linkages, and also in terms of a better agricultural policy environment.

However, autonomy is at the centre of all BENEFIT activities, and it was difficult to build linkages and work together as they had not been designed to do this. Thus, although focusing on programmes in one specific location was an interesting idea, implementing and monitoring this idea was difficult, especially when trying to list and review the progress made and the lessons learned – and it depended on the willingness and interest of those working in each programme.



Experience capitalization

The experience capitalization approach was introduced to the BENEFIT partners in a workshop organised by CTA and the Netherlands' Embassy in September 2017, in Addis Ababa. The purpose of the workshop was to produce high quality “change stories” and to share them online (see <http://www.foodsecurityethiopia.nl/>). We were interested in articles that would describe positive impacts and developments as a result of the EKN-funded agriculture projects in Ethiopia. I got the chance to participate in this workshop and I found that reaching our objective was not going to be difficult – many of these “change stories” were soon online. But I also saw that this approach could also help us monitor and evaluate, and in this way support, our efforts to work together.

Inspired by the training, I revised BENEFIT's collaboration planning and reporting templates to see if we could adapt them on the basis of the experience capitalization principles and steps. Some of the major activities I subsequently undertook were advocating for the concept, and sharing and presenting it to the management team. After receiving feedback and the approval of the management team to use the method for the collaborative initiative, I presented and discussed it with other concerned colleagues towards the end of 2017, asking for their opinions and additional feedback. Since then, we have been using an adapted version of the process we followed in Addis Ababa, and our collaborative intervention planning and reporting has become more and more results-oriented. This has made the whole M&E process easier and more meaningful.

The first test came when we had to prepare the 2017 report presenting the collaborative intervention efforts. Using the experience capitalization approach, we were able to analyse the steps we took towards a stronger collaborative model, and what we saw was very encouraging. To make this initiative even more productive, we also revised the collaboration initiative planning tool. The collaboration planning process for 2018 was conducted using the new revised version. Familiarisation approaches were used to present the amended tool to the staff who would implement it. The management team played a significant role by setting an example, and facilitating internal workshops and meetings.

Institutionalization success and challenges

In my view, in addition to asking good questions about the planning and reporting tools, the involvement of the management team inspired other staff members to be more engaged in the process. This did not prevent us from overlooking some of the steps of the experience capitalization planning/reporting approach, and this proved to be an obstacle in our journey – but one we could identify and try to solve.

Below "I saw that this approach could help us monitor and evaluate, and in this way support, our efforts to work together"



Using the experience capitalization approach, we were able to analyse the steps we took towards a stronger collaborative model, and what we saw was very encouraging.

Right The management team played a significant role, facilitating internal workshops and meetings

An understanding of all the critical reflection tools is important for ensuring the experience capitalization process can be strategic and results-oriented. The “six thinking hats” tool, for example, works like a role play and helps experts and managers to comment on a given situation without reservations. This activity was implemented during the 2018 review workshops and during the 2019 collaborative planning process, with success. A results-oriented planning and reporting process was completed with the use of experience capitalization in a collaborative M&E system. Furthermore, the experience capitalization approach clears the way for the collaborative steps without creating friction between the partnership programmes.

It is always useful to have a refresher on the experience capitalization concept during the annual collaboration workshops, to reinforce its importance. But the use of the experience capitalization planning and reporting template has already been institutionalised as a BENEFIT M&E collaboration tool. One of the key factors has been the combination of the experience capitalization planning and monitoring tool with critical reflection tools during implementation. This has helped participants engage in many discussions and draw specific lessons from the documents that have been presented and shared, and this has benefited all partners.

The next step is to work together to strengthen the way we track progress, complementing the planning and reporting processes. Increased facilitation of the critical reflection methods is also required to maximise the planning and implementation potential of all programmes.



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INNOVATIVE INSTITUTIONALIZATION USING SMART APPROACHES

Moses Nganwani Tia



SavaNet-Ghana has innovatively institutionalised the experience capitalization approach using smart non-formal approaches which include a farmer-to-farmer capitalization platform, folk music, storytelling and drama. This article highlights the steps taken, and some of the obstacles seen.

Cover SavaNet recognises the significant role that drama can play when documenting experiences

SavaNet-Ghana is committed to the development of agribusinesses in Ghana. Our participation in the experience capitalization project run by CTA, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), helped us recognise the importance of this approach, and to take the steps needed to institutionalise it.

As described below, SavaNet-Ghana is following various strategies to support the use of this approach within the organisation and in the larger farmer community in our country. We are also playing a lead role, both in Ghana and across West Africa,

by promoting the adoption, dissemination, and institutionalization of experience capitalization within other development organisations, supporting them so that their development interventions have a greater impact.

Institutionalization the smart way

Experience capitalization is in line with the organisation's mission, vision and its core farmer/agribusiness development activities. After we first heard of this approach a couple of years ago, its adoption has followed different strategies:

Farmer-to-Farmer Experience Capitalization Platform (F2F EC Platform):

This has been designed as a community of practice (COP) platform to promote a process for describing and analysing concrete experiences through drama, storytelling, folk music and oral presentations, working with illiterate rural farmers and other agripreneurs.

This COP aims at promoting the exchange of technology/innovation information, and at supporting a knowledge management (KM) strategy. This innovative platform also promotes the adoption of experience capitalization by the wider farming community in Ghana. The F2F EC Platform was first established in October 2018 and has a current membership of 377 farmers and agri-entrepreneurs.



Many reasons explain SavaNet-Ghana's success, one of which is the training that its staff received.

Non-Formal Experience Capitalization Documentation Programme:

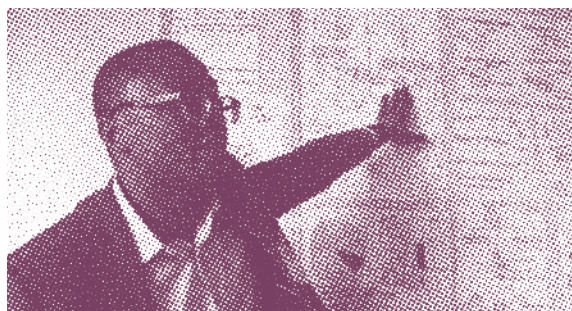
This programme aims at providing the large rural population, including farmers and other agripreneurs, with practical, non-formal training opportunities (i.e., using drama, storytelling, folk music, etc.) for the documentation of their experiences. This initiative began in October 2018 engaging 150 farmers and other agripreneurs working within the SavaNet-Ghana farmer network. They meet every three months and discuss the best way to adopt and support different strategies for the documentation of their experiences and for the dissemination of lessons and recommendations:

- (a) Folk Music: SavaNet-Ghana understands the unique value that folk music has in the traditional system followed for documenting, disseminating and promoting the adoption of best practices and innovations. The organisation therefore employs music for documenting the experiences and innovations of farmers and other agripreneurs, which are translated into simple lyrics in local languages, complemented with music tunes. These are easily sung by adults, young people and children, promoting the adoption of a specific practice. SavaNet-Ghana's KM department is working to promote the dissemination of these experience capitalization songs via community radio stations, community social events, rural media platforms, etc. (Farmers own the copyright of these experience capitalization songs.)
- (b) Drama: SavaNet-Ghana also recognises the significant role that drama can play when documenting experiences, innovations and technologies, or when supporting their adoption. Experience capitalization drama clubs are organised in farming communities to regularly translate the experiences, innovations and technologies that farmers and other agripreneurs are developing into short and simple drama played in local languages.

The teams involved in these experience capitalization drama series also include adults, youth and children, helping promote the inter-generational adoption and dissemination of experiences, innovations and technologies. SavaNet-Ghana's KM department facilitates the development of the drama storylines. The department also provides training on drama as a tool for expressing key ideas.

- (c) Storytelling: Recognising the importance of storytelling in a documentation process, or when disseminating and promoting the adoption of best practices, SavaNet-Ghana is using this technique to ensure that illiterate farmers are able to identify and share lessons and recommendations. SavaNet-Ghana has developed a storytelling guide and has trained a large group of farmers and other agripreneurs, all of whom are using it to share their best practices, innovations, and technologies. This storytelling guide also promotes traditional storytelling techniques among farmers and in farming communities.

Folk music and drama are also used to enrich the storytelling process, so SavaNet-Ghana has instituted an experience capitalization storytelling volunteer programme in different farming communities. Our KM department is working to develop these experience capitalization stories into audio and videos that can be disseminated via various rural media platforms.



Below Experience capitalization is now a major thematic area in the 2019-2023 SavaNet-Ghana Development Strategy



Above Working with farmers and agripreneurs representing diverse ethnic groups, SavaNet-Ghana had to translate its guidelines and documents

Experience Capitalization Policy Development Programme:

SavaNet-Ghana has instituted this initiative to promote the development of innovative policies, and in this way support the documentation, dissemination and adoption of best practices within the SavaNet-Ghana farmers network. The Policy Development Programme started in November 2018, engaging 200 farmers and other agriculture and rural development stakeholders in Ghana.

Training of SavaNet-Ghana staff and farmers:

Training is regularly carried out (every quarter) to enable SavaNet-Ghana farmers and staff to enhance their knowledge on experience capitalization, as well as enhance their involvement in the institutionalization process. The purpose is to develop the necessary skills for monitoring performance and measuring impact – and for using a comprehensive set of indicators in the documentation process. SavaNet-Ghana has so far trained 40 programme officers and 45 farmer leaders.

Why did we succeed?

Many reasons explain SavaNet-Ghana's success in the institutionalization of the experience capitalization approach, one of which is the training that its staff received from CTA. But equally important has been its decision to try innovative and non-formal strategies. Positive results are also due to the leadership and support of the KM department and the organisation's development partners: the Ministry of Food and Agriculture; the United Nations Development Programme; and the Environmental Protection Agency.

Innovatively, SavaNet-Ghana's institutionalization strategy is largely led by the farmers themselves, which ensures the sustainability of the approach. SavaNet-Ghana also works with partners and other organisations, providing the required leadership, technical support services and funding, and sharing its expertise.



Above The innovations of farmers and other agribusinesses are shared as simple lyrics in local languages, complemented with music tunes

Next steps

Experience capitalization is a major thematic area in the 2019-2023 SavaNet-Ghana Development Strategy, and will continue to be a key focus area in the subsequent periods. The adoption of the experience capitalization approach is in line with SavaNet-Ghana's mission, vision and core farmer/agribusiness development strategies, so we are sure it will be part of our work, and that of our network members, in the near future.

Working with farmers and agribusinesses representing diverse ethnic groups within its network, SavaNet-Ghana has seen the need to translate its guidelines and documents, and to work in various languages/dialects. This was a problem which was partly solved by engaging the farmers themselves and inviting them to complete the necessary translations. At the same time, inter-ethnic conflicts affected the level of trust between farmers. This challenge was addressed through dialogue, permanently promoting cooperation agreements among farmers.

SavaNet-Ghana is designing innovative experience capitalization projects, and their implementation will strengthen the work carried out by our organisation. SavaNet-Ghana will also assist other organisations in northern Ghana to adopt the approach and strengthen their KM strategies. This will help us develop the necessary cooperation and partnership agreements required for rural development in our country. We equally aim to work with other development organisations interested in the dissemination of our experience capitalization initiatives in other parts of the world.



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A BETTER PROGRAMME FOR MENTORING YOUTHS

Caleb Amboga Atuya



The Kenya Livestock Producers Association (KLPA) is working to institutionalise the experience capitalization approach in its M&E department by developing specific Terms of Reference (TOR) which will be used in the ongoing and subsequent projects that KLPA is engaged in. KLPA is an apex farmer organisation, formed in 2004 with the aim of helping farmers with market linkages, conducting farmer trainings on various value chains, and lobbying and advocacy. In 2017, KLPA partnered with Mkulima Faida Africa and started the DIGIFARM project. The aim is to help young people in agricultural value chains share their success stories and encourage more youths to create value in the sector.

Seventy percent of Kenya's economy depends on agriculture, and thirty out of Kenya's 47 counties are actively involved in agriculture. However, the sector faces many challenges as many best farming practices are not sufficiently adopted by smallholder farmers. This is largely the result of an inadequate extension service – one that does not pay sufficient attention to the positive results of many research and development initiatives.

A couple of years ago, three colleagues and I felt there was a need to form an organisation that would focus on capacity building and on mentorship programmes that would support the adoption of farming practices proved to be successful and of

climate-smart agriculture techniques, in both crop and livestock value chains. Targeting youth in the agricultural sector, we established Mkulima Faida Africa as a sister organisation of KLPA. Our aim was to share young people's success stories to encourage other youths to start embracing agriculture and digital farming.

Mkulima Faida Africa primarily mentors and trains youths in agricultural value chains, helping them to document and share their success stories using the experience capitalization process. This involves identifying, analysing and documenting experiences to encourage an exchange of good practices and lessons learnt. In this way, we promote the adoption of best farming practices by other youths in the region.

In September 2017, KLPA and Mkulima Faida Africa – in partnership with Safaricom, iProcure, Mercy Corps and Arifu – started a project called DIGIFARM. The idea was to tackle those issues that cut across smallholder crop and livestock farming, and to document the process using experience capitalization so that the lessons and solutions are shared with other young people. DIGIFARM has focused on the general access to information, the need for an input loan facility, or the importance of markets for the local products. To tackle all of these challenges, the team began with a pilot project in eight counties in September 2017, namely, Bomet,

Cover Gathering information meant going to the field with the M&E team





Above A training session with different extension officers

Kericho, Kirinyaga, Makeni, Marakwet, Meru, Migori and Nyandarua. The selected counties include both arid and semi-arid areas. We successfully achieved our aim of reaching one million farmers by the end of the 6-month pilot programme.

Institutionalising experience capitalization within KLPA

KLPA mainly uses traditional reporting tools, but after the training process organised by CTA on experience capitalization, I understood the need to implement this process and complement our M&E activities. We think this can help us in terms of data collection, data analysis and documentation. The experience capitalization process can also help

KLPA and other organisations write and publish their project success stories. With the knowledge gathered from CTA in March 2017 in Arusha, I felt the need to start incorporating experience capitalization into all of KLPA's projects.

The first critical step was to identify the departments and colleagues who could help us promote the experience capitalization process within our organisation. Recognising that the M&E and information systems departments have a key role in the process, I was able to recruit two colleagues from the M&E department to join our team. Next, we did an internal presentation and briefed our colleagues in the M&E department, showing what an experience capitalization process is all about and highlighting its potential benefits to the organisation. After the brief,

The aim of the training was to equip our colleagues with relevant knowledge on experience capitalization.



they also saw the need to incorporate experience capitalization in our daily project activities, and many agreed to join a two-week training process, in November 2017.

To conduct the training we used write ups and training materials from the previous CTA workshops and from the experience capitalization community of practice (COP) – the online group of individuals from all over the world sharing information about the experience capitalization approach. The aim of the training was to equip our colleagues with relevant knowledge on experience capitalization. We envisaged that if our colleagues bought into the idea, then it could be easier to convince our bosses that we should start new capitalization processes across the organisation, as we would have already started this within some of the existing projects. We then planned to start sharing the success stories coming from these projects with other colleagues and external partners. During these initial stages, we had the advantage that our bosses had given us leeway to bring in new ideas and develop them, and I was able to share with them the article that I had completed during the workshops ran by CTA.

After conducting our internal experience capitalization training, we started documenting the case of an older project working on climate-smart agriculture, and making the necessary arrangements for sharing the final article that we were working on. At this point, we felt it was time to approach KLPA management and try to convince them to adopt experience capitalization. We scheduled a meeting in December 2017 and took the managers through the experience capitalization process. At first we had difficulties convincing the organisation to adopt it due to budget constraints, as training a lot of people would have been very expensive. But as we had volunteered to spearhead the process within the M&E department, after a series of lengthy meetings, we were permitted to pilot the experience capitalization process in the DIGIFARM project, which I was leading. For this, we were allowed to ride on the project's budget.

Implementing experience capitalization in DIGIFARM

One of the aims of this project was to increase farmers' access to inputs, which required opening DIGIFARM depots in villages, where farmers are able to buy what they needed at an affordable price. The depots are able to provide relatively cheap inputs by sourcing them directly from the manufacturers. This has helped farmers to save a lot on input costs and boosted their yields. The consequent increase in their incomes has encouraged farmers to embrace agriculture as a business. We felt that it was important for us to document this experience because many organisations in the past have tried such projects, but there has rarely been reports that effectively convey the lessons learnt.

We decided to gather all of the documents that talked about experience capitalization on the e-mails shared by the members of the COP, and to collect the insights that we received from those implementing experience capitalization processes in other countries, to guide us through the documentation process. We resolved to develop a capitalization strategy, draft some TORs and prepare a training manual to support the process within KLPA. With this in place, we were ready to document the experiences of the DIGIFARM project.

Left Sharing information about the experience capitalization approach with our partners

But before the experience capitalization could start, I felt there was a need to train the various stakeholders (partners, farmer leaders and county government officials) who were directly involved in the project. This was challenging, since most of them did not understand the importance of the experience capitalization process, or the need to get started. Arifu, an organisation that uses technology platforms to educate smallholder farmers, was a notable exception.

Arifu was impressed with our work and with the different steps taken as part of the DIGIFARM project. As a result, they were willing and ready to join the experience capitalization process. Arifu mobilised their colleagues from various departments and asked them to include it in their day-to-day activities. We conducted a one-day workshop on experience capitalization in January 2018, where we introduced the concept and helped the Arifu team get ready to implement the process. Fifteen staff from the M&E and communications departments attended the workshop.

Challenges

The challenges we faced during included:

- The lack of commitment to the process by various partners in the DIGIFARM project;
- The need for the M&E team to have a digital data collection tool to help retrieve the right data. There were no funds to get an external developer to come up such a system, but we received assistance from the internal ICT team, who developed a data collection system;
- The time needed: an experience capitalization process is time consuming, especially because of the need to train other stakeholders who oversee the DIGIFARM project in our absence in the various counties;
- The lack of funds for capacity building and training of staff on experience capitalization.

Right “We have seen that an experience capitalization process goes an extra mile when documenting the successful stories of projects...”



I am happy to report that experience capitalization is an ongoing effort at KLPA, even after I left the organisation to join Mkulima Faida Africa.

The positive response to experience capitalization by Arifu has given us hope that more partners will come on board. We recently asked Arifu to identify other colleagues who would need to be trained on experience capitalization. Then we will organise another one-week training workshop with them, going through the different steps: from data collection and documentation to writing and publishing an article.

Until now, the reports and documents that cover the first phase of DIGIFARM (after the steps of data collection, field visits, data analysis and writing) are much better and include more details than those produced as part of a “regular” M&E report. During the process, we noticed that M&E is generally more about facts and gathering data, unlike experience capitalization, which captures and analyses the information available.

All in all, the experience capitalization process was successful because a few of my colleagues joined the training courses, and had vast knowledge of the whole process. As a result, Mkulima Faida Africa is currently developing a framework document for the institutionalization of experience capitalization. We have also made a resolution to develop concept notes, which we will share with NGOs and farmer organisations to help them adopt this approach.

Recommendations

We have seen that an experience capitalization process goes an extra mile when documenting the successful stories of projects, rather than depending on standard day-to-day M&E reports that usually leave a lot of insights uncaptured. Since the introduction of the experience capitalization approach to East African organisations in 2016 and 2017, there have been a lot of articles describing different methods to institutionalise this approach. However, there is need to get more organisations to follow the recommendations in these articles and to implement the process as part of their work.

I am happy to report that experience capitalization is an ongoing effort at KLPA, even after I left the organisation to join Mkulima Faida Africa. The only remaining challenge is a lack of funds to hire an editor to review our cases and publish the articles and stories that we have written so that we can share them with the rest of the world. KLPA is also planning to start an online information sharing tool to help it reach a larger number of people. This will soon be available.



Above Sharing the lessons learnt with other young people

As an organisation that works with small-scale farmers, KLPFA needs to fully institutionalise the experience capitalization process. This will help it to identify gaps in its data collection and documentation processes, and also identify the way to fill these gaps and share many success stories with the rest of the world, particularly with other organisations implementing similar projects. CTA needs to assist organisations that have already started to draw and share lessons by training their staff, with international workshops and with guidebooks.



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<http://experience-capitalization.cta.int>

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Date: June 2019
Keywords: youth; dissemination; communications; training

LEARNING FROM A LEARNING INITIATIVE

Diana Marcela Mosquera Echeverry, Érika Eliana Mosquera Echeverry, Álvaro Rendón Gallón and Luz Stella Pemberthy Gallo



In Colombia, the Inter-Institutional Research Group on Regional Competitiveness Models has been running a series of experience capitalization processes for several years, modifying the approach to meet the needs of its members and partner organisations. Working for many years, and focusing on those steps generally recognised as the most difficult ones, has helped them draw key lessons.

Cover “We can expect greater results if we can make sure that our learnings are used in new experiences”

The Inter-Institutional Research Group on Regional Competitiveness Models (RCM), created by the Regional Center for Productivity and Innovation of Cauca (CREPIC) and the University of Cauca (Unicauca), was formed in 2001 in the Cauca department, in Colombia. RCM was launched to support the development of productive projects, implement associative processes and articulate joint activities among the academic, governmental and business sectors.

RCM has been running different experience capitalization processes for more than 10 years with the aim of extracting lessons from its different projects, but it has also been interested in learning how to do this better and get better results. Over time, RCM has allocated more resources to the implementation of this approach, and worked to enhance its potential by following creative processes focused on the local context.

First steps

Since 2001, RCM has led 60 projects that have contributed, either conceptually or methodologically, to the development of joint activities and collaboration efforts between a large group of regional actors, and to support them sharing information as part of a broad knowledge

management (KM) initiative. As a result, different KM processes have become an integral part of RCM’s approach. Aware of the broad experience of the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) in this field, in 2008 RCM asked this organisation to run a series of workshops and share their ideas. A few RCM researchers joined these workshops, together with representatives of other organisations.

One of these researchers took the responsibility of adding the experience capitalization approach to the RCM projects. This “champion” saw the implementation of seven processes between 2008 and 2010, following the methodology developed and shared by CIAT. This was based on the utilisation of a log document (where information from an experience is recorded and can be referred to at a later date), with key questions designed to motivate those directly involved in a particular experience to analyse their cases. During this period we continued using this log, even if, gradually, the process underwent some adjustments. The facilitator, for example, began writing the final report when the researchers were too busy.

In 2013 RCM started a new project which came to be known as InnovAcción Cauca, involving 16 organisation in a strategic alliance, with the main purpose of developing a training process to boost

innovation processes throughout the department. An interesting characteristic was that this project decided to run an experience capitalization process from the very beginning. The person in charge of this new initiative worked for two years, and was replaced in 2015 by a new experience capitalization facilitator.

The working styles of the two facilitators were very different. The first facilitator, for instance, was especially interested in considering the opinions of all project partners, beneficiaries and the research team through evaluation exercises and the completion of the log. These actors, however, were not trained in the experience capitalization process, so their role was simply to provide information to the facilitator. The second facilitator preferred to train the RCM research team, and helped them lead their own processes and write their final reports.

The best of both worlds

In InnovAcción Cauca, the new facilitator found a team where the experience capitalization steps had been followed regularly and all documents and records were kept (researchers had been recording their activities using the logs). However, the team did not see the purpose of these steps, nor could they recognise a milestone, or identify key lessons, or see the difference between experience capitalization and an evaluation process. It was therefore necessary to develop a training programme, share concepts, and agree on a common objective.

Another challenge was that the participation of the project academic committee (AC) which included a representative of each project partner, was not as active as it should have been. This was a significant problem because the InnovAcción Cauca partners

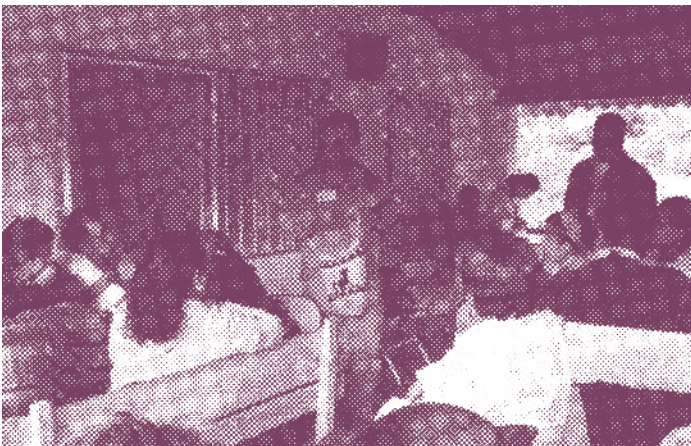
are also its main beneficiaries, so the AC's point of view was needed. In 2017, InnovAcción Cauca joined a workshop in Costa Rica organised by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) in the context of the CTA-led project on experience capitalization ("Capitalization of Experiences for Greater Impact in Rural Development"). One of the issues discussed here was the best way to engage stakeholders – something that helped us plan better ways to work. For example, one idea that InnovAcción Cauca followed was to run separate workshops, some with the research team and others with the AC, in both cases guided by the facilitator and by another communications professional. Both were in charge of capturing and transferring opinions between the two groups in a way that would help avoid any possible conflict.

Having separate groups gave even better results than expected: although just 9 of the 15 AC members participated in these workshops, they expressed opinions that had never been said out loud before. The inputs provided by the AC helped the research team to carry out a deeper analysis of their experience, focusing in those aspects they had not considered before.

Facing new challenges

During the 2017 workshop in Costa Rica we also heard about other challenges frequently faced when running a capitalization process, such as those related to the dissemination of the knowledge products created. Many workshop participants said they do not feel responsible for these dissemination processes, stating that they lack the expertise and skills needed. They also said they have some

Below Working together in different sessions, the inputs provided by the AC helped complete a deeper analysis of the experience





Above Comics were seen as a the best way to reach an audience that has limited time

problems engaging their communications teams and getting them to understand the logic of the approach. We saw that InnovAcción Cauca had an advantage here as its experience capitalization process had been led by a communications specialist.

Due to RCM's familiarity with the experience capitalization approach, InnovAcción Cauca decided to share the lessons drawn from the process with its 16 partner organisations. We wanted to let other researchers benefit from the lessons learned and widen the reach of the project results. KM processes are a key element of the RCM programme, so the challenges and hurdles we faced were seen as an opportunity to generate knowledge.

Up until the moment InnovAcción Cauca decided to share these lessons with other organisations in 2017, it had been preparing written stories, videos and reports – but it seemed that people were losing interest in these media after 4 years of the project. InnovAcción Cauca decided to try to reach an audience that has limited time, such as those who work in science, technology and innovation activities, in a quick and amusing way: by using comics. The project created the interactive comic *Súper.Nodo*, responding to the idea that people must reflect in order to learn (see <http://www.unicauca.edu.co/innovacioncauca/super-nodo>). *Súper.Nodo* has 10 chapters based on the most important project learnings, which were extracted

Proving that experience capitalization can solve the needs of an organisation is very important for institutionalising the process and making it sustainable.

from all the situation that were described and analysed. At the end of each chapter, the story offers two options to solve a problem and asks readers to select the one they prefer. Each option redirects the audience to a different ending, but only one of them provides key lessons.

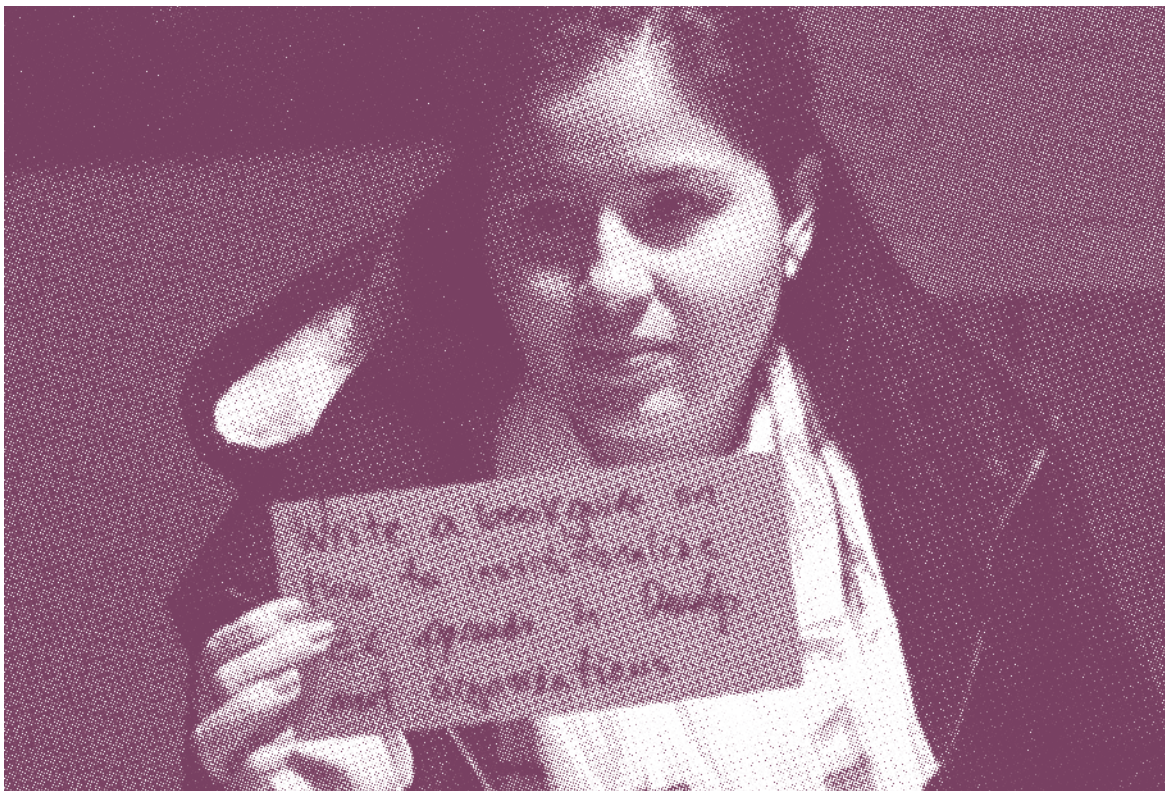
The project has been evaluating the results of this comic during the first months of 2019. We plan to prepare a guidebook and share the key steps we followed and the main lessons we are drawing.

A few lessons

The sustained application of the experience capitalization approach has been key to the maturation of the RCM team and of the approach itself. Time and practice have allowed all team members to identify, by themselves, the advantages of an experience capitalization process. They have also had the opportunity to experience different ways to apply this approach and to get the best results according to their needs. Proving that experience capitalization can solve the needs of an organisation is very important for institutionalising the process and making it sustainable, as people can see its value and add it to their day-to-day activities.

Just as important has been the support provided by the leaders of RCM and of InnovAcción Cauca, with resources allocated for the different capitalization processes and for their communication and evaluation strategies. These leaders have been willing to try new ways to complete an experience capitalization processes and in this way have better results. And although the group in which the experience capitalization process has been institutionalised is small, the process has the potential to reach more people because it is being shared with a network of institutions in Cauca. In addition, during the years that the RCM team has been applying the approach, it has adapted the process to the needs of the region so that the experience capitalization methodology can be more easily adopted by its partners. For example, now we know the kind of information that those in the network demand and which of our partners can supply it. We have also provided creative methods for developing the experience capitalization process in the context where we work, and some of our partners have already recognised this approach as a mechanism for learning, and not just for communicating results.

In addition, we should highlight that RCM made the decision to go beyond the mere adoption of



Left Next step: write a guidebook and share the main lessons drawn



Above Engaging stakeholders helped the team make better plans

experience capitalization, and helped develop a stronger process by evaluating the results and incorporating little explored actions, such as the dissemination of lessons and recommendations. The project has not just focused on reporting what it has achieved to its beneficiaries, but on showing what it has learned and on using these lessons.

In summary, the project has learned that in order to institutionalise experience capitalization, it is not enough to study the steps involved: it is also necessary to explore complementary fields that have the potential to enrich the approach. With the purpose of guaranteeing that the developed knowledge is, in fact, used by all beneficiaries, such fields include communications and impact measurement. If we can make sure our learnings are used in new experiences, we can expect greater results.



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5

OUTREACH

EXPERIENCE CAPITALIZATION – WE ARE ALL IN THE SAME BOAT

Anil Maikhuri



Within development projects, the monitoring and evaluation and knowledge management systems are interlinked, and must be coordinated effectively to support project implementation. As we have seen in the Integrated Livelihood Support Project (ILSP) in Uttarakhand, India, both systems can be strengthened with experience capitalization, a process which involves the critical analysis of project experiences. Through a capitalization process, information gathered from a specific experience can be turned into institutional knowledge and utilised for improving project activities and impact.

Cover “I had a meeting with my colleagues and convinced them to work together...”

I received an invitation from CTA to attend an experience capitalization workshop in Goa, India, in April 2017. I had no idea what the workshop would involve. The facilitator, Shalini Kala, sent some pre-workshop exercises to help us introduce ourselves and the project we were working on, which was the Integrated Livelihood Support Project (ILSP), and share this information with all participants – and get started.

I had been working in the field of communication and documentation for 15 years by the time I attended the workshop, and for the last 3 years, had been handling the Knowledge Management (KM) portfolio for ILSP. As in other projects and initiatives, we faced different challenges, especially when trying to capture tacit knowledge from the field; analyse data regarding our production or marketing efforts; when trying to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system which is used to capture and disseminate learning during project implementation; or when trying to ensure the M&E and KM systems effectively support project implementation.

In ILSP, managers for M&E, KM and the Monitoring Information System (MIS – the system used to capture field data), directly report to the project director. Other managers within the programme are involved in its implementation

and report to the chief programme manager. After attending the first experience capitalization workshop, I was developing a case study on how village level producer groups are promoting goat production as their prime economic activity. I was going through all the MIS data and analysing it with the M&E format for the project. However, every time I sent my case to the CTA facilitator, she wrote back with more questions regarding the case. I dug deeper into the data and asked more questions to the stakeholders involved. For example, I asked the field level staff, “Why do some villagers not join the goat groups?” The answer to this question provided valuable insights into the culture of the village: goat rearing, for example, is a caste-based profession and not done by the upper castes.

Focusing on the analysis, I was able to make a story out of the data available, showing the main challenges we faced and the results we found. And through this process, I learned that MIS, M&E and KM are all interlinked and must be better coordinated to be more effective and productive. A culture that supports experience capitalization needs to be built within the project to trigger this process. This realisation was the starting point of my journey as a practitioner and “champion” of the experience capitalization approach.

Clarity and institutionalization action

Through a very interactive facilitation process with CTA, I was able to develop the first draft of my case on goat rearing. With this draft, I attended the next experience capitalization workshop in Pondicherry, India in September 2017. This time, Mrs. Shalini was accompanied by another facilitator, Pankaj Srivastav. In this workshop, the participants discussed their own individual cases and completed a peer review process that helped to improve their analyses. The feedback I received from the co-facilitator was especially helpful in improving my case. He taught me how to relate a particular field experience with the national and international development goals. He also provided me with insights of some great work and research done on livestock and goats.

We discussed the need to institutionalise the experience capitalization approach to a great extent, and listed the activities that needed to be done to achieve this within our projects. I prepared an Action Plan and supportive narratives to implement it, which included specific activities to:

- orient the project director towards experience capitalization and show him the potential benefits of its institutionalization;
- orient my colleagues and show them how experience capitalization can be a better tool for achieving the project's envisaged outcomes;
- identify the resources needed to complete a capitalization process;
- identify the themes within the project for which knowledge can be capitalised;
- identify indicators to monitor the process; and
- replicate the process.



As per the action plan, I met with the project director to explain the benefits of experience capitalization, and how we could adopt this participatory approach to document project learning. During this meeting, we also discussed how experience capitalization could help increase our project's impact. I briefed him that we needed to train our field staff, and develop their capacities to collect data and analyse it.

I had a meeting with my colleagues to try to convince them to work together with the field level staff and capture information on different project themes, such as the development of specific value chains, marketing issues and gender sensitization. We identified staff members who could join as participants, and selected the key themes that the experience capitalization training session would cover. Our assumption was that we would be able to capture the "real" experiences of the project with this approach, and we planned and prepared a new workshop.

Above A training workshop for the ILSP staff, for some of its NGO partners, and for two of the project implementation agencies: Uttarakhand Gramya Vikas Samiti (UGVS), and the Project Society – Watershed Management Directorate (PS-WMD)

In this workshop, participants discussed their own individual cases and completed a peer review process that helped to improve their analyses.

Below The adoption of experience capitalization requires teams to make it part of the project implementation processes

Pankaj Srivastav agreed to be the recourse person for this new experience capitalization workshop. The key challenge however, was that all the workshop documents were prepared in English and the field level staff only spoke Hindi. All the formats therefore had to be translated, but this was possible with the help of the facilitator. We met a total of 32 participants in Mussoorie, Uttarakhand, between the 13th and the 17th of December 2017 (please visit: <http://experience-capitalization.cta.int/a-new-initiative-in-india/>).

The workshop

As I had joined a similar workshop before, and had already completed a first article, I co-facilitated this new process. Participants identified 12 themes, and we developed 30 different case studies. Taking part in the experience capitalization workshop allowed field-level staff, for the first time, to play an active role in the analysis of the activities they are all involved in. As one of the participants commented, *“This was the first time we have been involved in the process of experience capitalization. It allowed us to ‘observe’ the project and analyse the data we have generated during last four years of project’s implementation.”*

Organising this initial workshop was the first step towards institutionalization. But we also held a separate session with 12 senior staff members of the project to enhance their capacity to become experience capitalization “champions”. The objective of this session was to help these staff members facilitate experience capitalization processes in future, and become focal points for its institutionalization. In ILSP there are two project implementation agencies, and it was the first time that officials representing these two organisations had come together to share their experiences.

I led the process for getting approval from the senior management, engaging the project team and instituting a process for selecting suitable and interested staff to train. I was also responsible for identifying the capitalization themes, formulating a communication plan for experience capitalization, identifying appropriate technical support, and I was also in charge of other tasks related to the organisation of workshops, including budgets and other resources. Unfortunately, and due to personal reasons, I left this position in April 2018. The last three points of the action plan were implemented by my successor.

Reflection

One of the key lessons I’ve drawn from this experience is that if we capture knowledge and information from the field in a systematic way – as this methodology teaches us – we can see that in development projects all staff members are equally responsible for their implementation and results. The efforts of all those working at all levels can be translated into institutional knowledge and utilised for improving project activities and impact. This knowledge can also be adopted by other organisations implementing projects with similar activities and envisaged results.

The 30 case studies produced in the initial workshop were presented to the IFAD review mission in September 2017, along with a report with the main observations made during the two experience capitalization workshops. As the final report mentioned, *“this was found to be very helpful and we now propose to organise two experience capitalization workshops in the state. It would be useful to prepare grassroots level case studies by local staff. The project implementing agencies should consider planning these workshops together.”*



Key steps

- A workshop to teach participants how to complete an experience capitalization process. This should be held over 4 days;
- Support to participants to develop high quality cases;
- A final writing workshop to finalise the cases developed. This should be held over another 3 days to allow sufficient time;
- Creation of a compendium of cases from the above process.

Expected deliverables

- Specific skills developed among participants to start and complete a capitalization process, and to draw lessons from it;
- Identification of the issues to address when developing a case study;
- A map of the stakeholders from whom participants will collect the information/data for the identified case study;
- An outline of cases on which participants will work for the next month (after the first workshop) and develop their case studies;
- Specific plans to continue and complete the capitalization process to strengthen and integrate M&E system of the projects;
- Specific skills among participants developed to facilitate a process and support others;
- A set of cases to share between participants and with other interested organisations;
- A set of action plans detailing the steps towards the institutionalization of the approach. All participants will also have clear further plans to repeat this process of learning and sharing;
- A set of action plans to disseminate the knowledge/learning participants have captured through this process.

Challenges

In October 2018 I joined another workshop where we looked at the best way to facilitate a new process. After this, I was very keen to convey this learning to the rest of the organisation, and to offer facilitation support to other projects so that they capture field-level knowledge and turn it into institutional knowledge for dissemination and adaption. With this idea, I developed a proposal to start experience capitalization processes in different projects, as outlined in the box. But any proposal needs to consider the challenges it will face.

The experience capitalization process is a unique methodology through which KM and M&E systems can be better integrated within a project. Adopting it, however, requires teams to make it part of the project implementation processes. Monitoring indicators for experience capitalization should be developed as part of a project monitoring system. At the same time, the availability of enough resources within these teams is another challenge. Adoption will be simpler and more effective if donors are fully convinced of this methodology as a tool for generating knowledge and project monitoring. Donor support for the process will be helpful when looking for the resources required to complete all activities, such as the organisation of workshops and training sessions, and for supporting its uptake within a project.

Below From team discussions to the development of an action plan





Above The experience capitalization workshops allowed the field-level staff, for the first time, to play an active role in the analysis of the activities they are involved in

Last, and in terms of sustainability, it is important that a team identifies who will be the experience capitalization “champions”, covering the different districts or regions where a project is implemented.

Final remarks

As rightly said by Anton Chekhov, “Knowledge is of no value unless you put it into practice.”

It is time to put the experience capitalization knowledge into practice. I have started the process of institutionalising the experience capitalization approach in the new projects where I work, and helping other organisations to do the same. I believe that experience capitalization will become recognised world-over as a ground-breaking methodology within the KM and M&E domain.



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This is one of the results of the process started by the “Capitalization of Experiences for Greater Impact in Rural Development” project, implemented by CTA, FAO and IICA and supported by IFAD.
<http://experience-capitalization.cta.int>

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Region: South Asia
Date: June 2019
Keywords: training; facilitation; adoption; M&E; knowledge management

EXPERIENCE CAPITALIZATION TO SCALE UP INNOVATIONS AND GOOD PRACTICES IN MALI

Modibo Coulibaly



The Forum des Services de Conseil Agricole et Rural du Mali (FOSCAR-Mali) has adopted the experience capitalization approach, linking it to the production of radio programmes and videos. Produced in a participatory manner, these involve various stakeholders linked to the rice value chains.

Cover FOSCAR-Mali has been selected as an operator to support the capitalization of the IFAD programme in Mali

FOSCAR-Mali is a national platform for Malian organisations, and is part of the Network of West and Central African Agricultural and Rural Advisory Services, the African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (AFAAS) and the Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS). Formed in 2015, it has since stepped up its interventions to help restructure the existing agricultural extension and advisory services through the promotion of good agricultural practices and innovation. Since 2018, FOSSCAR-Mali has also adopted the experience capitalization approach to enhance its capacity to document innovative agricultural advisory and extension strategies, practices and experiences.

The network has more than 200 registered members representing civil society organisations, producer organisations and NGOs. It seeks to harmonise and improve their collaboration strategies in order to meet the challenges which face the agricultural and rural sector in Mali, such as low productivity and poor extension services. Its objectives are, among others, to support the development of a more sustainable and modern agricultural sector; put in place mechanisms for sharing knowledge and reaching a large number of farmers; and to promote new approaches, such as innovation platforms and the use of ICTs.

FOSSCAR-Mali has started several projects developing innovative approaches to enhance extension and the provision of agricultural advice to producers, inputs suppliers, and traders of agricultural products. One such innovation was the development of the Participative Media Campaign (CMPC), which combines radio, video, social networks and other ICTs, to disseminate project experiences. The organisation's Facebook page and WhatsApp groups, for example, were followed by the Green Farm Council WebRadio and WebTV. Since 2015, more than 3 million producers in the regions of Mopti, Koulikoro, Segou and Sikasso have benefited directly or indirectly. And as part of its different initiatives, the organisation is encouraging rural communities to participate in the analysis, management and evaluation of the existing agricultural advisory systems – and the selection of those best adapted to their needs – through 600 “Community Listening Clubs”, set-up between June and August 2018 in 10 project areas.

From Senegal to Mali

Starting in September 2017, CTA organised two training workshops in Dakar, focusing on the experience capitalization approach. I joined both meetings as the FOSSCAR-Mali focal point, together with many other “champions” from West and

The four orientation and planning workshops held by FOSCAR-Mali have allowed the establishment of multidisciplinary teams for the systemic production of radio broadcasts as “capitalised experiences”.



Central Africa. As part of the training course we had to select a specific experience and complete a capitalization process. I decided to look at the activities and results achieved by the Community Listening Clubs to improve agricultural advice through radio, especially in relation to the different innovations which were meant to strengthen the local value chains. The convincing results of this capitalization exercise encouraged FOSCAR-Mali and its strategic partners to adopt the experience capitalization approach, and to describe and analyse the different projects run by the organisation. We have started with one of these, running from 2017 to 2022: The use of Radio Broadcasts, Video and Community Listening Clubs in Disseminating Innovations on the Rice Value Chain in Mali.

Right after the second workshop, also held in Dakar in February 2018, I organised a meeting to share my impressions with eight members of the FOSCAR-Mali staff, and I described the importance of the approach and the steps needed to complete it. The team unanimously decided to integrate the approach into the implementation of CMPC, which began in

2018. The proposal to have experience capitalization as a key component of the CMPC project was validated by FOSCAR-Mali, but the other strategic partners, including the Green Innovation Centers (CIV) supported by the German GIZ, also had to approve this.

FOSCAR-Mali proposed to hold an experience capitalization workshop with CIV in May 2018 and use it to review the CMPC annual strategy. This grouped a total of 15 participants: 10 from CIV and five from FOSCAR-Mali. All of them agreed to start an experience capitalization process, with the following recommendations:

- FOSCAR-Mali will lead the capacity development activities for steps such as the development of the radio programmes, involving the regional directorates of agriculture, partner radio stations, the Community Listeners Clubs, farm input supply companies, and producer representatives;
- By organising four workshops with different stakeholders from the 10 project areas, FOSCAR-Mali and CIV will follow an experience capitalization process for writing articles in French and for recording audio testimonies from farmers;
- All partners, as part of the capitalization team, will take pictures and videos to relate their project experiences for sharing via WhatsApp, Facebook, or through the community of practice supported by CTA.

Left Videos help show the needs of the stakeholders involved

Below The proposal to have experience capitalization as a key component of the project was validated by all partners

Next page The ten multidisciplinary orientation teams organised different training workshops for the Community Listening Clubs

Results

The four orientation and planning workshops held by FOSCAR-Mali have brought together between 20 and 25 actors, and allowed the establishment of multidisciplinary teams for the systemic production of radio broadcasts as “capitalised experiences”. A radio programme model based on the project’s stories and experiences, was produced during each workshop.

The 10 multidisciplinary orientation teams, in turn, organised training workshops for the Community Listening Clubs, with representatives of the organisations which make the rice value chain. They have also been given the responsibility for setting up new groups, providing them with radio sets, and organising, preparing, broadcasting and monitoring the programmes, and collecting feedback and reporting this back to FOSCAR-Mali. Our task is then to analyse if the topics and content of each radio programme respect the strategic plan developed. As an example, at the suggestion of the groups in Npegnesso and Zoloko in the Sikasso area, the team asked FOSCAR-Mali for the distribution of videos presenting the System of Rice Intensification (SRI). The establishment of an SRI online group, the FOSCAR Facebook page and an SRI WhatsApp group, helped all stakeholders share their experiences and discuss the results of the radio broadcasts.

Audio and videos

FOSCAR-Mali produces participatory videos which show the needs of the stakeholders involved, as well as the progress of project interventions towards meeting these needs. Two videos produced showed the advantages of SRI; one, for example, focused on the experience of producer Sekou Coulibaly, president of the group in the Selingué area. Having adopted SRI, his field recovered after the 2018 flood, while his neighbours using conventional practices have lost everything.

“I am the president of the group in Selingué. Following the workshop organised in Baguinéda by FOSCAR-Mali and CIV, I have been working together with my radio programme production team. The team members appointed me president. The other members are two radio broadcasters from RadioBAYA, the CIV’s focal point rice specialist at the Selingué Rural Development Office. Depending on the agricultural calendar, we identify the subject, the stakeholders involved, and a village with an interesting experience to share. We agreed with RadioBAYA that the radio programme on the SRI techniques will be held each Friday. On the day of the show, we go to the village to generate the content with the farmers of the village in the field and at home. Personally, I communicate regularly by phone with the pilot producers in the Baguinéda area who are ahead of us in the practice of SRI. Sibiri Konaté, an SRI seed farmer from Baguinéda for instance, shares a lot of information with me by WhatsApp.”



In order to better develop the contents of all radio programmes, the production teams include men and women who attended the FOSCAR-Mali capacity development trainings. The programmes are produced in the local language selected by the farmers in the area. Before the production process actually starts, a draft table of contents is shared over the radio to encourage producers from neighbouring villages to join the process.

Each programme must have at least 50% of its content coming from the farmers themselves; 30% coming from the different extension agents, and not more than 10% presented by a radio journalist. This encourages all actors to share their knowledge and opinions, as well as the lessons learned in the field. By listening to the radio programmes, either on air or by using a flash drive during one of our meetings, farmers are able to learn from what others have done without having to organise field visits.

Sustaining and upscaling the process

One of the key decisions taken has been the creation of a system to cover all costs with individual contributions of 10 CFA francs per day (€0.015). This revolving fund is used to pay the radio station so that it will continue producing the agricultural advice programmes when the project ends. In this way, the farmers and the radios stations can set up their own experience capitalization processes.

FOSCAR-Mali has been selected as an operator to support the capitalization of the IFAD programme in Mali. In addition to this, FOSCAR-Mali is working on scaling up the institutionalization of the capitalization of rural experiences using participatory video, and through the training of several actors in experience capitalization techniques. This means that we will continue collaborating with CTA and with other “champions” and facilitators, and in this way learn from each other. We have to learn together and also share these lessons with others.



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INSTITUTIONALISING THE EXPERIENCE CAPITALIZATION APPROACH: FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

Haoua Ouattara



During 2018 and following the workshops organised by CTA, the Oxfam offices in Burkina Faso decided to institutionalise the experience capitalization approach. This is now included in the organisation's operational plan and also in its new project proposals. Oxfam plans to operationalise its monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning platform to boost the use of the capitalization approach, and involve other Oxfam offices in other countries in West Africa.

Oxfam is an organisation that wants to be at the forefront of the fight against poverty and all forms of injustice by proposing locally-adapted innovative solutions. In 2015, its office in Burkina Faso recognised the difficulties it had when describing its work and drawing specific lessons, and set itself the goal of creating the necessary conditions and developing the skills needed to start and complete many capitalization processes. As the planning, monitoring, evaluation, learning and accountability (PMEAL) manager, my participation in the training workshops organised by CTA in Senegal was a great opportunity to see how to improve the capitalization processes we were running as part of our different programmes.

The main objective of these workshops was to share information and form a pool of "champions" coming from different organisations and countries in West Africa, as those who would support a series of capitalization processes in the region. After taking part in the two training sessions, the PMEAL team committed itself to the gradual institutionalization of the experience capitalization approach; starting by adopting the tools CTA recommended we should use. This process was not too difficult as resources had already been allocated: we were thus able to hold workshops and to start several capitalization processes. This has been a participatory process,

involving representatives of our different teams and of our partner organisations.

After the training workshops we set up a mailing group similar to the one used by CTA (using the Dgroups platform) for the exchange of information between those leading the experience capitalization processes in our teams and in our partner organisations. This mailing group brings together the PMEAL team, the programme staff, monitoring officers and all partners, and is managed by the Oxfam IT manager. During the past few months this platform did not always work well, with technical difficulties that resulted in an increased workload for the PMEAL team. Conscious of this problem and challenged by many platform members, these deficiencies are being solved by a colleague working as online facilitator and moderating all exchanges. The individual exchanges between partners are working well.

Success / results

The first step we took was the organisation of an advocacy meeting with the country director and the senior team. During one of our weekly meetings, the 11 members of the management team became aware of the importance of the experience capitalization approach and saw the role that the

Cover Participants at one of the four training sessions organised by the internal team

different programmes could play in its institutionalization. This team was in favour of implementing the Action Plan that was developed during the second workshop held in Dakar.

A next step was the creation of an internal “champion group” composed of four members of the PMEAL team, formed to lead the process. They were selected as the leaders because of the role they already played in improving the quality of the programmes we were running together with our partners. Next, the PMEAL team suggested a meeting to strengthen the capacities of these partners according to the CTA capitalization model. Their commitment to the process made it possible to adopt the model and to plan a training module that would help our staff and also our partners. Since then, the role of this internal facilitating group has been to train and support partners. More specifically, the team supports the inclusion of capitalization actions in programmes and projects, in collaboration with the programme managers, and ensures the quality of the resulting products.

One of the key steps taken was the organisation of four training sessions, put together by the internal team between December 2017 and April 2018. These workshops helped develop the skills of 14 programme officers and 32 representatives of our partner organisations, with two persons invited per organisation. (As mentioned in the report prepared by DANIDA, a donor providing funds for the promotion of human rights in Burkina Faso, “*the capacity building sessions were much appreciated*”.) During the workshops, participants proposed different capitalization themes or subjects which were discussed and agreed by each organisation. The PMEAL team took the responsibility of monitoring all processes and of providing technical support.

Organisation	Themes
Alliance Technique d'Assistance au Développement	Implementation of social safety nets
Association Gestion de l'Environnement Durable	Rural health and sanitation
Association Aidons l'Afrique Ensemble	Food safety lots in the North
Coalition Burkinabè des Droits des Femmes / Secrétariat Permanent des ONG / Coalition Nationale pour l'Éducation Pour Tous	The exercise of public accountability in the process of local governance: the case of the municipality of Bama
Fédération des Professionnels Agricoles du Burkina (FEPAB)	The experience of “ <i>tierce detention</i> ” (collateral management agreements) at FEPAB
Union Nationale des Etuveuses de Riz Soutenir l'Émergence et la Valorisation de l'Économie en Afrique	Processing and marketing of local rice
Union des Mini-laiteries et Producteurs de Lait du Burkina	Milk processing
Programme Accès Innovation (PAI)	The implementation of the Fonds de Développement de l'Innovation, 2018-2019
Mouvement Burkina des Droits de l'Homme et des Peuples (MBDHP)	The provision of judicial assistance to the victims of the September 2015 coup attempt
Centre National de Presse Norbert Zongo	FILEP: A platform for media men and journalists for the promotion of freedom of expression
Réseau National de Lutte Anti-Corruption	The Regional Anti-Corruption Committees (CRACs) and the fight against corruption in Burkina Faso

Organisation	Themes
Centre pour la Gouvernance Démocratique	Democratic dialogue, a framework for promoting democratic debate
SEMFILMS	Organisation of the Ciné Droits Libre festival, a space for the promotion of human rights
Association des Femmes Juristes du Burkina Faso	Legal clinics: A salutary mechanism for respecting women's rights
Association Jeunesse – Culture – Développement	Exchange meetings between civil society organisations and municipal councils for the development of communal plans and municipal development actions
Réseaux Initiatives de Journalistes d'Afrique pour la Coopération et le Développement	Advocacy for improving local journalists' access to public information of municipal councils
Association de Développement / Goute d'Eau pour l'Enfant	Mobilisation of local financial resources at the level of a municipality
Mouvement Citoyen pour le Développement de la Bougouriba	Framework for civil society organisations and territorial collaboration
Centre pour la Qualité du Droit et la Justice	Preparation of the memorandum on good judicial practice in preventive detention
Centre Diocésain de Communication / Radio Notre Dame du Sahel	Experiences of religious pluralism through broadcasts and listening clubs and dialogues
Union Fraternelle de Croyants	Mobilising moderate voices in the prevention and fight against radicalisation and violent extremism in the Sahel
Association des Jeunes pour le Développement Durable au Burkina Faso	The organisation of the National Women's Leadership Forum
Centre International de Recherche en Eau & Assainissement	The organisation of consortia for the promotion of the human right to water and sanitation
Association de Développement / Goute d'Eau pour l'Enfant	Mobilisation of local financial resources at the level of a municipality
Mouvement Citoyen pour le Développement de la Bougouriba	Framework for civil society organisations and territorial collaboration
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Right “The workshops organised by CTA were a great opportunity to see how to improve the capitalization processes we were running”

The necessary steps to monitor these capitalization processes have been integrated into the programme. For example, up to seven field trips were organised to monitor the progress made by each partner. This strategy made it possible to speak with many more people in each organisation, and to invite all leaders to describe the experience selected, and describe the steps planned as part of the process.

In addition to the PMEAL champion group, the programme managers and officers have also become aware of the importance of the experience capitalization process. The latter now take care to include the approach in all the new concept notes which are prepared, and in the specific Action Plans that are drafted. Experience capitalization was included in the 2018 and in the 2019 Country Operations Plans: both documents mentioned the organisation of at least one capitalization process per programme.

Main challenges

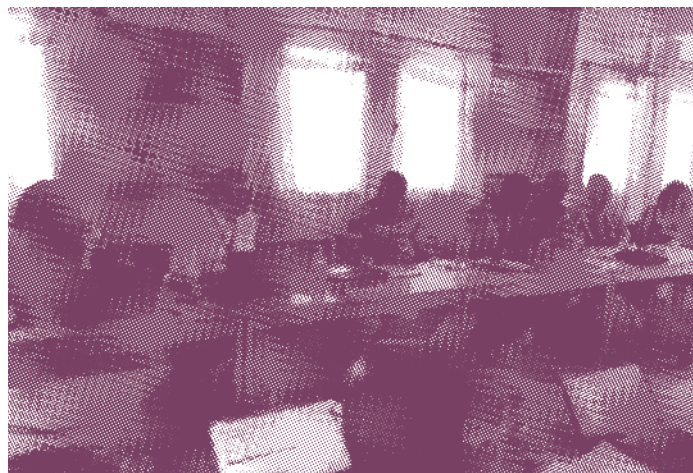
Having more than 60 partners, the main challenge we have faced has been their diversity and the differences they all show in terms of structure and capacities. Tailored support is effective but difficult to provide for each one of them. The organisation of one workshop with each organisation/partner would be ideal, but this requires resources which are not always available, so most exchanges are by mail or telephone. Added to this challenge is the translation of the tools we have been using into the local languages, so that even the smallest organisations, such as Cadre de Dialogue Citoyen (Citizen Dialogue Framework) can use them.



On the other hand, we have also seen that we need to ensure that the different programmes running as part of the Oxfam portfolio work together, and that coordinated steps are taken to institutionalise the approach. This is especially important when planning to archive and disseminate the main lessons and outcomes, and to better influence their respective fields.

One of the main lessons we have learnt is that those responsible for institutionalising an experience capitalization approach within an organisation need to be empowered to carry out the required activities, and need to be able to have the necessary resources. We could also help increase the general awareness level and acceptance of the approach with the development of a simple guide, translated into different languages.

All opportunities are seized to talk about the capitalization of experiences, and other training workshops in M&E and the establishment of PMEAL networks are also planned.



Next steps

Oxfam is committed to further institutionalising the experience capitalization approach by:

- Accompanying partner organisations and supporting their own institutionalization process;
- Organising training workshops to reinforce the capacities of new partners and those not yet trained on the approach;
- Boosting the mailing group exchange of information between specialists in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and experience capitalization;
- Sharing capitalization tools and products with other Oxfam offices at the regional level to improve practices, and support its adoption in other countries;
- Defining outcome indicators to assess performance in terms of the adoption of the approach; and
- Publishing the documented experiences on the Oxfam website.

The institutionalization of the experience capitalization approach is a reality within Oxfam. Indeed, we are committed and in favour of the process, which is reflected in the 2019 operational plan: we plan to complete the description and analysis of at least three experiences, and also run two training workshops. All opportunities are seized to talk about the capitalization of experiences, and other training workshops in M&E and the establishment of PMEAL networks, are also planned. And as for our partner organisations, their testimonies show their interest in starting a similar institutionalization process.

Above Those responsible for institutionalising an experience capitalization approach need to be empowered to carry out the required activities, and need to have the necessary resources



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HARVESTING STORIES FROM THE FIELD – CONTINUOUSLY

Krishna Thapa



IFAD has helped add the experience capitalization approach to the activities of its regional projects, supporting their efforts to improve their knowledge management strategies and to develop richer impact stories that can be shared with key audiences. The lessons learnt with this approach during the past 2 years are now being adopted, and the approach itself is also being used by other projects as part of their knowledge management strategy.

The High Value Agriculture Project (HVAP) was designed to reduce poverty and vulnerability in the rural areas of Nepal. Starting in February 2011, this project came to an end in September 2018. During these years, it developed and applied a tablet-based M&E system for tracking results, helping show all outputs, outcomes and impact. However, although the project efficiently tracked results, it regularly found it difficult to demonstrate how these results were achieved, and to share information with the national and international donors.

Recognising that managing knowledge is crucial to any project, the projects funded by the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) in Nepal were quick to see the potential benefits of an

experience capitalization approach. To enhance the knowledge management (KM) skills at HVAP, two team members (the monitoring and evaluation expert (myself) and the gender and social inclusion expert) accepted the invitation made by CTA to attend two experience capitalization events in Goa and Pondicherry, India. Experience capitalization was presented as an approach that could help us gather and share our project's knowledge. We saw that we could use it to demonstrate how results have been managed; and how our project innovations are helping improve the livelihoods of rural people.

The main lessons learnt were then shared with other HVAP team members, with the representatives of other IFAD-funded projects working in Nepal, and also with projects outside Nepal.

Introducing experience capitalization

After the initial experience capitalization events organised by CTA in India, our team put together an orientation programme to transfer and pass on the experience capitalization knowledge to all our colleagues. This took place in April 2017 in Surkhet, in the western part of the country. Altogether, 35 project staff from different thematic teams and districts participated in the event.

Cover Sharing information with the representatives of other IFAD-funded projects



But we also made use of another opportunity. For several years, the IFAD-funded projects in Nepal have been holding thematic team meetings for planning, M&E and KM, and project staff meet every 6 months to share and exchange project results and knowledge. This is part of an ongoing Community of Practice (COP) that also considers the use of e-mails and social media, involving team members working at different levels. With the purpose of sharing the knowledge gained during the training workshops in India, we organised an experience capitalization event in Pokhara, in January 2018.

More than 30 participants attended this meeting, including project managers, planning officers, M&E specialists, information system experts and KM specialists from the four projects, as well as from the IFAD head office in Kathmandu. Interested in learning about the approach, five government officials also joined, including the joint secretary of agriculture and senior agriculture officers. The event was organised together with the IFAD-Nepal country programme officer and the four project managers, and was facilitated by Jorge Chavez-Tafur from CTA, in close coordination with local facilitators. Information about the entire process was successfully shared with project staff and participants looked in detail at, and shared information from, 14 experiences selected from across the different projects being implemented.

A few results

Our involvement in CTA's experience capitalization project helped us complete and share one case study – *Business Literacy Classes for enhancing Nepalese women's access to knowledge, skills and resources*. This was published by CTA together with other cases prepared by projects and organisations in India, and was included in one of the booklets that have been printed and distributed throughout the world (with cases from East and West Africa, South East Asia and from the Pacific region). But this was not the only product:

- The book entitled *Journey of Prosperity* was published a few months later, including the stories of 30 Nepalese farmers. This book was written in Nepali and uploaded to the project webpage (<http://www.hvap.gov.np/ne/successstories.php>), and shared with all project stakeholders, including agribusinesses and service providers, as well as farmers themselves. One of these stories, for example, shows how Goma Chaudhary went from earning 30,000 rupees to 3 lakh rupees in 3 years, largely as a result of the support provided. This has also been shared on the IFAD Asia site;
- Five practice briefs were completed, describing the steps followed by the project and the results seen: Inclusive Value Chain Development; Service

Right. Just like in Pokhara, in January 2018, representatives of the different projects in Nepal meet every six months to share information and show results



Interested in learning about the approach, five government officials also joined, including the joint secretary of agriculture and senior agriculture officers.

Market Development; Multi-stakeholders' Platform; establishing business linkage; Inclusive Producers' Group Formation; and Financing and Project Management. All of them were published on the HVAP site (http://www.hvap.gov.np/downloadfile/HVAP_approach_final_1552297472.pdf) and shared with the members of the CTA community of practice;

- One policy brief was also completed, presenting the HVAP theory of change and the main lessons learned by all those involved in its implementation. Together with the practice briefs, this is also being printed and distributed.

The completion of these documents has already had positive consequences. The main lessons and recommendations presented in the document presenting the Business Literacy Classes have been adopted by the Accelerating Inclusive Markets for Smallholders Project (AIMS) project in Cambodia and by the Rural Enterprise and Remittances Project (RERP) project in Nepal. The innovative business classes that we described is now helping other farmers identify the relevant value chain actors, explore market opportunities, and calculate the costs involved. In a similar way, the analysis of the tablet-based M&E system pioneered by the different HVAP teams was adopted by the AIMS project in Cambodia, as well as by two projects in Nepal. The systems efficiently track individual household outcomes regularly, which help in planning and showing the project's results. As a whole, this M&E system helps the project in many areas, enhancing the speed of data collection, reducing the human resource cost for data collection, reducing paper costs, and increasing the active participation of all team members.

But an even better indicator of success may be the number of project staff members involved in the capitalization processes that helped produce all these



Left "Our work has shown that experience capitalization is a systematic process that leads to many knowledge products"

documents. Only two persons attended the first training workshops on experience capitalization. Later on, five persons were trained and started supporting others, while actively working on the documentation of 40 case studies and the completion of the practice briefs mentioned above. Additionally, fourteen case studies were developed by the other IFAD-funded projects in Nepal, all of which are going to be finalised in a new joint event, this time organised by the RERP project during 2019. The planning, M&E and KM teams of the IFAD projects are now all actively implementing an experience capitalization process as a regular activity. Having joined the Communities of Practice supported by IFAD and by CTA, they also exchange information with the representatives of other IFAD-funded projects in Bhutan, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, and in other parts of the world.

A knowledge management strategy was drafted in December 2018 for a new project called Agriculture Sector Development Project (www.asdp.gov.np), and this will include the implementation of regular capitalization processes as part of its KM tools. In total, 20 case studies will be developed and shared around its different thematic areas: cluster intervention and economic growth; household methodologies;

mainstreaming of the value chain approach in urban municipalities and rural municipalities; or local government partnerships. In addition, these regular processes are expected to support the cluster-level results tracking system and the staff performance processes. We expect the main lessons to be shared too in the COP meetings taking place every six months.

And the advantages of this approach have not only been shared in Nepal, but also in Cambodia. Responding to the interest shown by the AIMS team, we have shared a concept note and are helping them prepare a training workshop similar to the one we had in Pokhara.

An ongoing process

During the past two years, our work has shown that experience capitalization is a systematic process used for generating many knowledge products. But we have also seen that it takes time to complete the process. In many cases, some steps are left out as a way to save time. However, if a step is left out during the case study development, it is difficult to achieve the quality required. The time needed for developing case studies is one of the challenges for institutionalization.

During the development of the different knowledge products, the project has followed the experience capitalization process systematically, but this sometimes requires additional funds. This is another regular challenge faced by those interested in mainstreaming the process. In general, managing knowledge is a task for the KM officer/specialist and few other project staff are on board. But it is not possible for the KM team to effectively focus on all projects or activities on their own. It is therefore necessary to engage all colleagues, but this is not always easy: the active participation of all project staff is the third challenge regularly seen.

Recognising the strong links between M&E and KM, the project proposed to merge the two areas in order to better manage the data and information collected. The following steps were taken:

- Introduce the experience capitalization process to 35 staff, representing the different thematic units and district teams;
- Encourage staff to develop specific case studies, and to present them in the quarterly and annual review meetings, as well as in all knowledge sharing events;
- Include case studies in the templates used for all progress reports;
- Provide mentoring support to all staff for the development of these case studies.

In spite of these difficulties, HVAP was able to adopt an experience capitalization approach, and to benefit from it. This helped us highlight the project's main achievements, and manage the knowledge gathered during the past 2 years. Similar activities are going to continue as part of ASDP, ensuring even better results.



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TOWARDS LEARNING ORGANISATIONS: MAINSTREAMING EXPERIENCE CAPITALIZATION IN LATIN AMERICA

Federico Sancho



The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA) was one of the implementing organisations of the experience capitalization project led by CTA, preparing the necessary tools and organising training courses throughout Latin America. This paper documents the steps taken by the Institute to adopt and to support the adoption of the experience capitalization approach during the past 18 months, working together with partners and organisations in different countries in the region.

Cover Sharing information and ideas with representatives of 14 countries from the whole region

The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA) is a specialised agency for agricultural and rural development in the Americas. Founded in 1942, the organisation has international, regional and national operations in 34 countries in the Caribbean and Latin American, and also in Canada and in the United States. Prior to the project implemented together with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and CTA, “experience capitalization” was not a well-known concept. Today, it is seen as a unique, useful and innovative technique that falls under the knowledge management (KM) umbrella. For IICA, in the same way as for many of its partner organisations, experience capitalization is the missing link between a set of information management activities (like the establishment of libraries, databases, or websites) and a programme for developing skills on knowledge management (training, education, facilitation). Experience capitalization supports an internal reflection process, looking in detail at what an organisation is doing, and why, and at the best way to scale it up. Recognising its many benefits, IICA is encouraging its partner organisations in the region to adopt it, and is also taking steps to scale-up the approach.

Starting point

IICA was a part of the curricula design team of the experience capitalization course that was launched by FAO in 2016 (“Experience capitalization for continuous learning”) and was responsible for translating the original learning material into Spanish, adapting it to the Latin American context. Several months later, after the CTA-led project started, IICA invited its own staff to follow this course, and organised a three-day training course, together with a set of mini-workshops, for the IICA staff interested in knowledge management approaches, and for the project leaders and representatives of the public and private organisations with whom we work.

During the next 18 months, and as part of the project, IICA organised a series of training workshops and invited representatives of many different organisations in Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Paraguay and Peru, following slightly different approaches:

- Costa Rica: IICA held two different workshops in 2017, both of them at the institute’s headquarters in San Jose. The first included a group of experts and “champions” from 14 countries, and focused on the FAO training module and on the changes required to adapt it to the local context. The second meeting

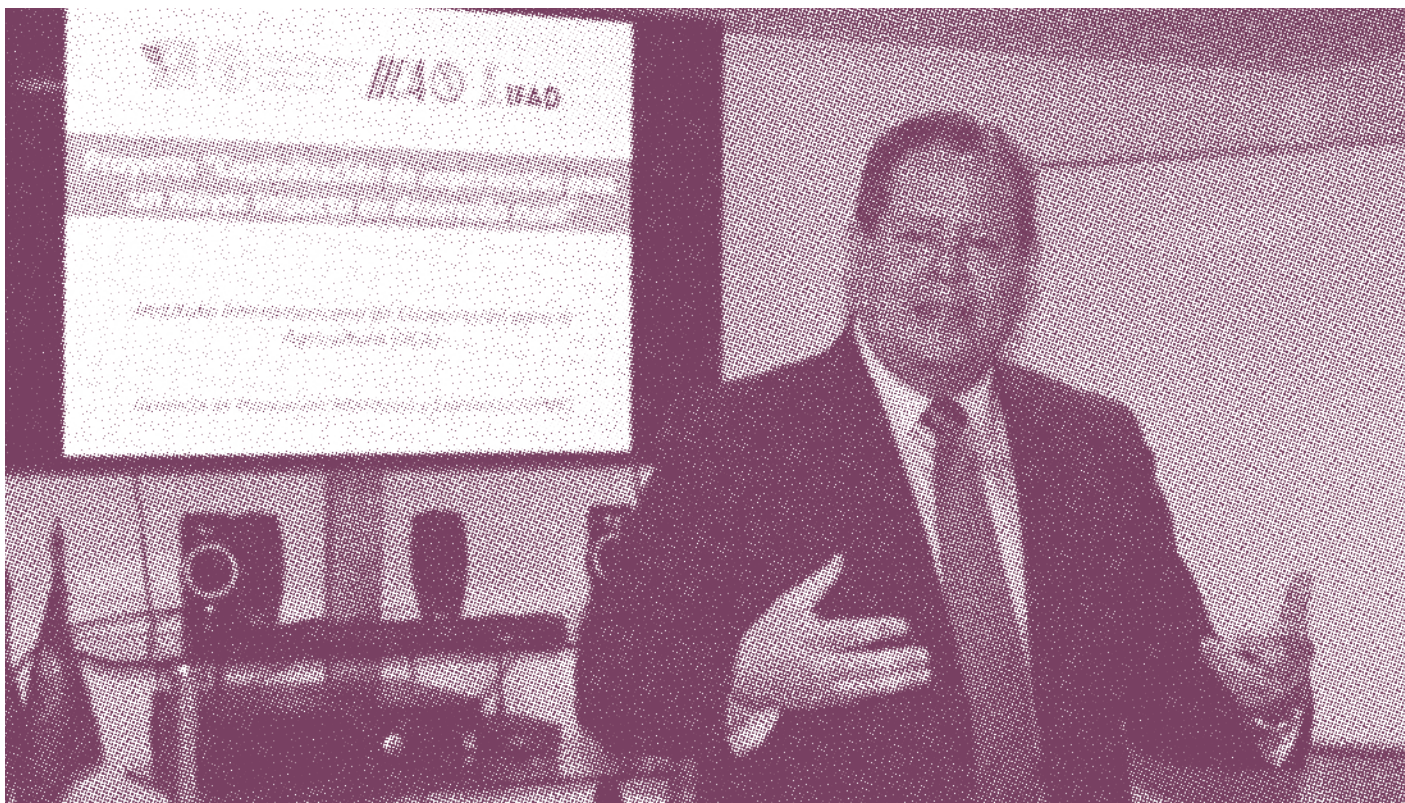
was a training course attended by representatives of the partner organisations working in different parts of the country: *Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación y Enseñanza*, *Sistema de Banca para el Desarrollo*, and the *Secretaría de Planificación Sectorial Agropecuaria*. These are all developing an action plan to start their own capitalization processes;

- Guatemala: A group of 20 researchers working with an ongoing USDA programme (and representing the Ministry of Agriculture, local research institutes and universities) joined a training workshop in January 2019. They identified four major themes, and developed a plan to complete the process within a few months, focusing on the intervention strategy of their programme and on the specific results seen;
- Peru: Together with *Alianza Aprendizaje*, a national network of development organisations, IICA organised a training workshop in August 2018, focusing on the steps that the network had already planned and completed, and on the potential links with other KM techniques. Representatives of the 10 network members, such as RIKOLTO, Helvetas or Lutheran World Relief, developed a follow up plan, and these were all discussed during a follow up mission to Lima a few months later. Government institutions, also members of the network, have mentioned the inclusion of experience capitalization in their budgets for 2019;

- Colombia: Representatives of 15 public and private institutions joined two courses in Bogotá and Medellín. The first one included researchers, extension agents and freelance consultants, as well as representatives of farmer organisations; the second development professionals working with WWF and CIAT. While different plans were prepared for new capitalization processes, one of the most interesting results has been the intention of the country's *Universidad Nacional* to deliver an open course of at least 120 hours as part of its extension services ("diplomado"). This will start during the second half of 2019;
- Paraguay: A first group of 26 professionals coming from different government programmes and from the IFAD-supported projects in the country, joined a training workshop in September 2018, planning the steps needed to draw lessons from these projects. More than € 70,000 were allocated to the completion of these plans, and activities started with the collection of information. IICA ran a follow up mission in March 2019, with more than 20 project representatives attending a second training session.

But IICA has also looked inwards. During the past months, the Planning and Evaluation unit was actively involved in the development of the new strategic plan for the period 2018-2022. Under the broad idea of "walking the talk as a learning

Below, New activities are now starting in Chile



Our objective is to see more projects including this as part of the implementation cycle, and in this way improving the quality of all interventions

Right “Our idea was to ‘walk the talk’ as a learning organisation”



organisation”, the experience capitalization approach became part of the institutional managerial cycle for cooperation initiatives. This meant that the implementation of all projects and actions within IICA have to include an experience capitalization process, and identify lessons that can be shared with the whole institute. Our unit is planning monthly work sessions for supporting this mainstreaming effort. Our objective is to see more projects including this as part of the implementation cycle, and in this way improving the quality of all interventions. Also, several evaluation efforts occurring at IICA are going along a similar path, rather than relying on a “regular” M&E process.

Challenges

Even though IICA adapted the content included in the FAO learning module and helped prepare the Spanish version of the course, its “real work” started when we organised the first face-to-face meeting in San José. One of the first challenges we faced was the need to draft key messages showing the importance of an experience capitalization process so that it could be fully understood. The second was when selecting institutions and participants that would be interested in joining, and would be committed to the

goal of mainstreaming experience capitalization after a training session.

The approach we followed was challenging, not only because it tried to change the behaviour of individuals through the adoption of a new technique, but also because it asked them to identify an experience and look at it in detail, as a “hands on” training process. But we think that this has had positive results, and trainees are now able to adapt and adopt the methodology and scale up its use in different projects. This has helped us all show that we “walk the talk”, moving from theory to practice. Our projects have the space and time to reflect, and to look at the steps they are talking and at the steps that are needed to scale-up successful initiatives.

But this has been a gradual process. At first, IICA used a more open or general approach, as in Costa Rica and Peru, based on the information provided on the FAO course. Later processes, like those started in Colombia, Guatemala and Paraguay, were more practical and focused on the selection of a particular experience and the development of a capitalization plan. This allowed us to include a more hands-on effort, so participants could interact more, use templates to write each case, and have a better chance to try it out. There have also been a few “quick wins” after the training sessions: the organisation of a training course by the university in Colombia, the approval of a new IICA-IFAD project to run a comprehensive process in Paraguay; or the resources provided by a USDA programme in Guatemala to complete at least four experience capitalization processes.

These are only a few results, but activities have not been going on for very long: the translation of the online module into Spanish, and then its use in different countries in Latin America, only started in August 2017, leaving us with little more than one year to implement all the activities we had planned

as part of the CTA-led project. In the following months, we expect to have more projects using capitalization processes and calling on our support for implementation.

Lessons learnt

Looking back, the best results have been seen when participants came up with a draft idea of what to capitalise and had several colleagues who, in a participatory manner, could discuss the way forward. It was a bit easier then to draft a working plan for the following months.

The face-to-face courses served as a “reality check” for all of those interested in the adoption of the experience capitalization approach as an essential part of our efforts to become a learning organisation. Every course showed the main constraints which are common (a general lack of time, motivation, or organisational support), and helped us discuss the best way to solve them.

Our work with different organisations also showed that, in general, NGOs are more open and flexible, and thus better able to adopt a new approach like experience capitalization. In many cases, this is because they have been following similar processes like an After Action Review, using them to monitor and evaluate their activities and results. (NGOs are

generally seen as being more interested in improving the way they implement a new project.) We found it harder to use words like “capitalization” and “learning organisations” when working with civil servants and representatives of the public sector, but we have also seen that, with time, authorities become more interested in these ideas. For example in Peru, a few offices under the Ministry of Agriculture have already assigned resources to start a capitalization exercise as part of their annual planning process. In Paraguay and Guatemala, through externally-funded projects, the organisations we worked with were able to start a similar exercise after a few months. When financial resources are not an issue, actions occur faster, like in Colombia, where the Universidad Nacional developed a training programme and is now inviting students to follow a short-term course.

IICA’s M&E unit has been fully involved in all activities, so it was not difficult to insert the experience capitalization approach in the institute’s bloodstream. At least five technical cooperation projects had already prepared Terms of Reference which included thorough documentation and evaluation processes, and after hearing about experience capitalization, preferred to follow this path. IICA also received a specific grant from IFAD, supporting the use of the methodology in a climate change-related project in Central America

Below A training workshop in Guatemala





Above A first training workshop in Paraguay, with 26 participants coming from different government programmes

(INNOVA-AF). Currently, several IICA projects are using experience capitalization as a means to improve effectiveness.

This all falls under the Planning and M&E division. Being responsible for the evaluation of all projects, the unit is promoting the use of the capitalization approach. Evaluation specialists at IICA have been exposed to the methodology and they are the ones who are taking the most advantages from it. The first “champions” of the approach are the IICA team of evaluators who recognised that the development of strong relationships with all M&E activities will support the long term adoption of this approach. Outside IICA, those working with innovative projects like the ones in Paraguay and Guatemala were also instrumental in the process.

Future activities will be even more successful if we can show the results of our work. We need good examples that show the whole process and, most importantly, the change seen as a result. As summarised in many IICA workshops: a documentation process (or *systematisation*, a word commonly used in the region) focuses on the production of a document, while experience capitalization focuses on the adoption of the lessons drawn, and the implementation of new and better development initiatives. We need a document, video or audio piece where an experience is shown, but we also need evidence of the change seen. At the end of a story, we need to be able to demonstrate how an organisation is learning from its experiences, and show how it is using these lessons to improve the work it does.



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EXPERIENCE CAPITALIZATION: WORKING TOWARDS ITS INSTITUTIONALIZATION

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