From Participatory Community Farmer Education to Mountain Women Empowerment

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Bhutan+10: Gender and Sustainable Mountain Development in a Changing World
15-19 October 2012, Thimphu, Bhutan
Presentation Outline:
1. General introduction to the FAO Technical Cooperation Project
2. Introduction to Participatory community farmer education
3. Challenges Encountered and Solutions
4. Impact of the Community Farmer Education
1. General Profile of the FAO Technical Cooperation Project

**Title:** Enhancing food security and improving livelihoods in concert with environmental protection for farmers and herders in poverty-stricken ethnic minority areas of Western Sichuan Province

**Years implemented:** April 2010 to November 2011

**Geographic focus:** Kangding County, Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province, China

**Background:** Mountain people rely on collecting declining Chongcao and being migrant workers for income generation.

Low productivity, low income
Implementation Institution: FAO in collaboration with Sichuan Agricultural Department

Gender proportion analysis of the trainees (n=138)

Targeting:

◆ Minorities (100%)
◆ Rural poor (average income per capital is 38.5% below national poverty line)
◆ Encouragement of women participation

Expected **Outcome:**

Livelihoods of poor, ethnic minority populations in Western Sichuan have been improved with more income resource without harm to the environment and agrobiodiversity.
3. Introduction to Participatory Farmer training

Stage 1: Natural resources profile and action plan formulation Training

- Understand value of natural resources
- Raise environment protection awareness
- Use natural resources sustainably to improve livelihoods and food security

Stage 2: Farmer Field School

- Improve productivity and income
- Train farmer on how to grow Chinese herbs
- Empower farmers (confidence, decision making, self-development)
- Critical skills development: observation skills, communication skills, analytical thinking skills
3.1 Natural Resources Profile and Action Plan formulation Training

Drawing the natural resources

Specimen collection

Making specimen

Voting

Making presentation
Analysis of the results

Number of species against various service categories recognized by local communities

- Food: 32
- Income: 24
- Chinese herbs: 79
- Beauty: 16
- Eco-services: 0
- Social: 10
- Materials: 10
- Pasture grasses: 15

Feedback

Action plan formulated
3.2 Farmer Field School

- Needs assessment
- FFS opening
- Study tour
- Field investigation
Mulching experiment
Variety trial
Group Dynamic exercise
Intercropping vs. monocropping
4. Challenges encountered and Solutions

1. Relatively low educational levels

   Educational level analysis (n=134)
   - Primary school: 56%
   - 3-year education: 36%
   - Junior middle school: 7%
   - Illiterate: 1%

2. Language challenge

   Visualization

   Non-scientific language

   More facilitators from township level who speaking Tibetan language
5. Impact of the Community training to Mountain women and the community

- Critical skills were developed: observational skills, critical thinking, analytical skills, leadership skills, communication skills

- Mountain women were empowered to speak in public, make decisions, inclusively benefiting from new technologies, contributing to improvement of livelihoods, food security and better nutrition

- Increased income through multiple sources;

- Reduced exploitation of Chinese medicinal herbs in the wild and protected the environment

- Improved accessibility of mountain women to new agricultural technologies

- Improved resilience
In Summary

* participatory Community Education (i.e. Farmer Field School) with gender sensitivity is a powerful tool to build the ownership of the community and empower farmers and herders including mountain women for self-development.

* government services on communication and technology delivery need to be improved
Thank you very much!