

THE EASTERN ANATOLIA WATERSHED REHABILITATION PROJECT

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INTRODUCTION

The main theme of the third workshop of the MEDCOASTLAND project is “Promoting participatory management of the land system to enhance soil conservation” and topics of the workshop are, as stated in the project's documents;



- Legislative aspects of participatory approach including gender issues;
- Economic, social and institutional aspects of participatory approach and their impact in the sustainable use and management of natural resources;
- Analyses of bottom-up and top-down approach;
- The relation between effective land management and farmer's participation;
- Centralization and decentralization;
- The role and tasks of rural communities, scientists, researchers, policy and decision makers to enhance soil conservation and improve environmental quality;
- Participatory Irrigation Management (PIM) and Participatory Land Management (PLM)
- Rural and urban participation;
- Public and private partnerships in natural resources management;



Above mentioned objectives are completely matching the objectives of the “Eastern Anatolia Watershed Rehabilitation Project” which was carried out between 1993 and 2001 in Turkey. Key point of this project was the participation of local people during the preparation and implementation phase.



The World Bank experts and government officials are involved preparation phase and three main government agencies are involved implementation phase. Although it was an intention, there was no any indication that NGO involvement is sufficient.

Project also has been chosen most successful project of its type.



Recently an evaluation report has been issued by World Bank and this report includes the views of all parties. The views explain very well that what was expected from project and what was achieved at the end.

It has been thought that carefully reading the different views of different partners of the project will help very much to increase the benefits of this kind of investment and at the same time to the public servants, local people, scientists and researchers when they intend to formulate similar projects.



*Views given here has been taken from
the evaluation report, involved
agencies and staff involved
implementation of the project,
and
intentionally no remarks has been
made by the writers.*



VIEWS FROM DIFFERENT PARTIES



***WHAT FINANCER SAY
(WORLD BANK)***



The government of Turkey has been attaching increasing priority to sustainable environmental management and natural resource conservation. Soil erosion is one of the most serious problems affecting the sustainability of agriculture. Approximately 16 million hectares are affected, over 70% of the cultivated or grazed land area. It is a particularly severe problem in the three provinces initially selected under the project which are in the upper watershed of the Euphrates River – Elazig, Malatya and Adiyaman.



It was the first project of its type in Turkey to be built around a community participation approach to enable a negotiated balancing of longer-term watershed management treatments such as closure and afforestation of degraded hillsides with shorter term income generating investment such as improved forage crops, irrigation and horticulture.



The objectives of the project were stated as: to “help to restore sustainable range, forest and farming activities in the upper watersheds of the three project provinces, reducing soil degradation, erosion and sedimentation in reservoirs as well as increasing productivity and incomes in this impoverished region of Turkey”



Participation Processes

The heart of the project was the community participation processes. While this process took some time to become fully established, essentially the approach involved;



- a) initial visits by technical specialists to communities in the potential selected micro-catchments (there are a number of communities in each micro-catchment)
- b) meetings with the *muhtar* (the elected village leader – a form of village mayor)
- c) one or more open village meetings with the community
- d) a so-called *Farmer-Centered, Problem-Census, Problem Solving Exercise* in which, with the help of facilitators, technical staff and the *muhtar*, each family writes down lists of problems, consolidates these in small groups, then the small groups offer findings to a plenary to develop a final village list
- e) this list is then prioritized and technical staff offer ideas about how the project could help. Options for closing grazed areas are discussed at this point. The community, at any point, is given the option to reject project assistance
- f) individual households are then selected as potential beneficiaries and eventually have to sign a Memorandum of Understanding.



Findings

The project largely delivered what it intended with respect to inputs in the selected micro-catchments on forest land and arable land – but there was failure on rangeland. In other words, trees were planted, terraces were constructed and agriculture was improved, especially forage, but there was limited change in range areas. Whether the inputs put in place will translate into the intended longer-term impacts such as reduced flooding and sedimentation in dams it is too early to say.



Findings of particular importance include following;

- The project achieved a nationally important learning experience through a series of first steps with rural community participatory approaches although it was not a full Community Driven Development approach.
- Inter-agency coordination was exceptionally strong and has provided a very useful national rural coordination experience.



- Four effective project years is rarely enough to reach sustainability of community processes, particularly since in this case those processes had only reached an early stage of processes development.
- While the project lasted seven years, community processes were only fully functioning for four years. With the project now closed, it is doubtful whether sustainable processes have really been built to last.
- There is little evidence of similar decision making in other community endeavors, except in one or two cases of project-created Water Users Associations. Possibly the recently proposed government decentralization will help in due course.



Lessons

There are five main generic lessons and some other specific lessons for Turkey;



Generic Lessons

- As has been found in other cases, preexisting administrative or community processes, with risks of elite capture, need to be challenged to accommodate the needs of women and the poorer households. This will be so even if the main elements of the traditional structure are found to be essentially workable. It is especially so in cases such as this where elected officials may face conflicting incentives as both people's representatives and answerable to a government department.
- This project, and wider experiences, suggest that generally it takes more than the span of one project to develop and sustain new processes and skills to support community-driven development. But experience suggests that with longer support agreed criteria for phased exit at community level need to be developed early in the process.
- Policies related to community forest management rights and responsibilities need careful analysis and possibly enabling legislative action in advance of a natural resources management project. In this case there was insufficient attention to incentives for community forest management.



Lessons For Turkey and Future Directions

- Continued focus on policy, particularly related to the Constitutional constraints to increased community role in forest management and the incentives for marginal areas cultivation provided by the flat-rate direct subsidy.
- Greater attention to challenging traditional community decision processes, in particular to demonstrate additional processes of women consultation and poverty targeting including ensuring the inclusion of semi-nomadic livestock herders.



- A program to rapidly generate technical data for assessment of least cost impact in different soils and slopes.
- Greater attention to off-farm income support. Out-migration will be the future for many households, projects may be able to assist this process.
- The setting up-front of community process-related targets with trigger points for phased graduation from intensive support.



Sustainability of Project

Sustainability is rated non-evaluatable, based on a weighting of several elements. The objectives of the project as stated were, essentially, “... to restore sustainable (land management) in the upper watersheds”. There are a number of concerns about sustainability but also, given the very long-term impact of these objectives and the lack of early impact data unusually large uncertainties.



The sustainability elements of the project can be divided into: sustainability of watershed investments; sustainability of community processes.



With respect to investments, field observation suggests that most agricultural investments on private land, representing 30% of the actual total treatment area, are likely to be sustained because of private profitability.

With respect to community groups which were another means to the physical and welfare ends, it has been argued above that the traditional processes were not challenged by the project enough with respect to women and the poorer households.



WHAT IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES SAY



Ministry of Forestry



- It is said in this report that; there have been some doubts on developing the natural vegetations sufficiently, even if, there would have been some risks on sustainability because of closing down the area against grazing after soil protection afforestation and it has been claimed that the project did not produce enough data on the basis of sustainability.
- This is the fact that, in Turkey, most of the land degradation e.g. deforestation have been resulted from over and uncontrolled grazing. So, we are not agreeing with this opinion. Additionally, this subject had been examined with the World Bank expert in the office and the field. It has been cleared that closing the area against grazing has a positive effect on regeneration of existing and degraded forest and the area could improve by



10 Besides this, with afforestation activities on bared land, new forests have been established by seeding and planting methods. Finally; there has been improved on water, soil and vegetation sources in watershed and decreasing the erosion. With these precautions the flood and torrent have been prevented.



At the end of the evaluation report, it has been said that;

- ← 🕒 The project has highly plentiful effects on capacity building,
- ← 🕒 The performances of the World Bank and the other organizations have been evaluated satisfactory,
- ← \bar{x} There is some uncertainty of sustainability of project,
- ← 🕒 As a result, there are no deviations to be indicated according to beginning and implementing of the project,
- ← 🕒 In 1999, the project has gained “The World Bank Perfection Reward”



General Directorate of Rural Services



Although some problems have aroused during the implementation phase, the project was successfully implemented in general. Firstly, the coordination between government institutions was sufficient. Secondly, the coordination between government institutions and local people was well organized during the project preparation, implementation and protection steps. Participation of local people in the project, in terms of support for supervising and contribution, was very high compared to the other projects implemented in Turkey before. Thirdly, technical and environmental experts rated the project very successful from technical and environmental aspects.



During the project implementation, General Directorate of Rural Services faced some problems because of the insufficient local budget and some of the villager's demand could not be covered by the project.



State Planning Organization



Activities, which were initially planned to be limited to three provinces and 54 catchments, were subsequently expanded to 11 provinces and 88 catchments until the end of 2001. AGM took part in project-related works in 85 of those catchments while TUGEM and KHGM were active in 86 and 51 catchments respectively.



All the organizations concerned spent a total amount of 78.3 million USD, including 47.9 million USD funded by the foreign loan during the nine year project implementation period.



The shortcoming caused by the planning phase has resulted from the failure to analyze the project adequately and insufficient involvement of the parties concerned (public agencies such as State Planning Organization and the Treasury, target groups, etc.) and their analyses. Thus, the report states that “participation” was of crucial importance to development, preparation and implementation of the project, adding that it constituted the underlying philosophy of the project. In fact, “summarized excerpt from interviews with village target groups”, which is attached to the report in question, indicates that participation of target groups was not adequately efficient.



The findings and opinions expressed in section “Lessons Learned” and “Future Orientations” of the report and “Excerpt from Interviews With Village Target Group”, which is attached as an annex, substantially overshadows the project's success. As a consequence, the project's physical and cash realization ratios remained low. As a natural outcome of that fact, the cost of the loan, which was utilized at a rate of 62%, to our country further increased due to amounts paid for undisbursed amounts (commitment fee).



A total of 27 missions consisting of the Bank's personnel were organized during project implementation and a total of 860000 USD was spent, which corresponds to 1.8% of the loan borrowed to fund the project and is therefore considerably high.



WHAT TARGET GROUPS SAY



These extracts were taken from selected focus group comments. There were 14 focus groups done by the consultant following a guidance format and about another 7 partially following the same format by Project Performance Appraisal Report task manager. Attendance ranged from 4 to 20.



- 30 officials came in 1998 to introduce the project to the village. The village government called all villagers together at the school and 70 males of 19 households participated in the first meeting. Only three or five people intentionally did not participate because they did not want the project implemented in our village. Those people were owners of large livestock herds who were using the rangeland and did not want the rangeland closed for rehabilitation. The villagers wrote down their demands and these demands were then graded according to the majority's choice. The following year some measurements taken from water, soil, etc. and the project started to be implemented.
- ... but the conditions of all villagers do not change... There have not been any changes for us.
- Our village will benefit today and also in the future from the project activities.



- ... all of the villagers received something from the project and it was of great benefit to villagers.
- The only project activity that was bothering some of the villagers was the land closure for rangeland rehabilitation... There are not any costs to the poor households, on the contrary they all benefited from the project.
- All the villagers except women participate in decision making.
- Most of the villagers were satisfied with the project.
- After the project, we lost the rangeland and we can not graze our livestock because of closure



- People wishing to get hives, gave their names to the village governor and the ones who received hives were chosen by drawing lots.
- The project has been of greater benefit for those who have their own land.
- I believe that since we owned the project, the activities have increased in our village.
- Purchasing power of the people is weakening.



- They brought apiculture which the villagers were unfamiliar and we could not cope with it.
- The project has been a source of income for many villagers during the implementation process. It has also helped the co-operative to strengthen. Flooding and erosion has stopped over a period of five years. Nearly the whole land has been closed and livestock farming has stopped.
- No contribution from women. They do not have any information about the land being afforested... They know that three ponds were built but they do not have any contribution to the project activities or the decision mechanism.



- The only successful project activity was afforestation.
- The villagers did not have trust in the project at the beginning and they thought nothing could be done. In time, with the implementation, the consultation with the villagers, and the participatory approach, the villagers had a positive feeling about the project.
- We can not ask Rural Services to help in the maintenance of the ponds because no one listens to us. When ponds are shared by four or five households the officials do not asked for monetary contribution for cement but if it is an individual pond the villager pays for cement.
- Since the ponds were not built in a healthy way and less cement was used the walls are peeling off.



- About 30% of the planted seedlings have died.
- If they could get back to 1996 they would not have let the project be implemented. Not all that was promised by the project was realized and those that were realized were not done in a healthy way.
- Afforestation has not been completed.



- Market conditions have improved, nowadays you can find anything you want to purchase. But the economic condition of villagers weakens, although we earn much money we can not afford things as we used to.
- ... they had some disputes with a neighboring village about the project activities.
- The villagers were told that the project would provide seedlings, but they have not received any seedlings from the project.
- A hundred beehives were given to five households who had given up livestock farming with the project... some courses were given... some of them could not cope with bees.



- Women do not take part in decision making.
- In general villagers were not satisfied with the project and they were complaining about incomplete activities.
- The villagers had positive feelings about the project because of the rotational closure to grazing (the rangeland selected was to be separated into two or three parts and these lands were to be used for range activities in turn). But this activity was not realized.



- There are 10 poorer households who do not have land in the village. The project did not affect these households either good or bad. Nothing has changed for these households with project implementation but they will benefit from afforestation in the long run.
- In general villagers were not satisfied with the project because not all of the activities that were proposed were implemented... They were complaining about the contractors and weak supervision by Rural Services.
- If the objective of the project is preventing erosion why do they not let us graze in rangeland?
- The villagers did not take part or contribute in labor.



- Irrigation conditions have improved with the project... However the poor are still poor and nothing has changed for the villagers who do not have any land or livestock.
- The project provided water to some of the households but it would be better if it had provided something that would serve all of the villagers.
- There was one pond built but it was banned because it was on rangeland.



- They mentioned that they used to take decisions collectively in the past but in time cooperation and unity have weakened. Participation in the meetings was low... nobody objected to the project but everybody had hesitation that it would not be implemented.
- In agriculture there has not been any change with the project.
- No meeting was held with women for the project.



CONCLUSION



All of the views gathered from different parties showed that for a rural development project, it is very important to have participation of local target groups and local staff who is responsible for the implementation, at the beginning of the project but most importantly, it is crucial for the implementation phase. When we look at the parties' views separately, although they express some difficulties, they insist to say that they have done whatever necessary to complete the project according to original plan. But, since the project expanded from its original coverage in terms of number of province and micro-catchment, and took more time than it was planned, things have changed enormously. Reflection of the centralized implementation agencies' internal problems and regulation discrepancies to the project activities were unpredictable.



It is very well understood that effort spent for the local participation at the beginning did not yield a continuous commitment, because villagers did not involve the implementation phase and they just waited completion of what was decided during the planning period. But at the end of project they were not completely satisfied. Why? There may be few reasons for this. Expected outcomes may have been exaggerated or over estimated by the officials in order to increase local participation. There was an effort for involving locals to decision making mechanism but most of the time they have just expressed their problems, and the best solution to the problem came from the officials of the implementing agencies. This sometime caused another unexpected results as we see in many village.



The problem definition method applied for this project was very new for the villagers in the project area who are not familiar to this kind of approach at all. This also caused greater expectation which was not planned.



As a result, there is not much to conclude since all the parties expressed themselves very openly and gave the all reasons that caused some problems during the project life-span.

