Practical Answers:
Technical Enquiries Service of Practical Action
Final Report: August 2007 – March 2009

15/05/2009

Introduction

This is a final report on the Practical Answers project carried out from 1 August 2007 until 31 March 2009. The implementation time of the project has been extended by 8 months with no additional funding from DFID. The project achieved its objectives and lessons learned during the project implementation have been used in developing a follow-up 3-year work plan for 2009-2012 period. The report is based on detailed reports from country and HQ offices (available on request), external evaluation conducted in January-March 2009, and 'Report on Learning - Practical Answers'. The full financial report is included in Annex 1.

Purpose of the project
The purpose of the project was to ensure that Practical Action has a thorough understanding of how to deliver Practical Answers, (i.e. an improved, sustainable Technical Information Service responding to demand for knowledge in poor communities).

The achievements, outputs and impact of the project are reported against the 3 major outputs stated in the logical framework:

Output 1: Practical Action has improved understanding of the demand for technical information for poverty reduction and the effectiveness of different marketing approaches.

Output 2: Practical Action has greater understanding of the impact of technical information provision.

Output 3: Practical Action will continue to deliver an ever improving Technical Information Service with a measurable impact on poverty.

Project activities were carried out in 7 country/regional offices (Bangladesh, Kenya, Nepal, Peru, Sri Lanka, Sudan, and Zimbabwe) and UK HQ office. In the period August 2007 – March 2009: the total of 8,201 enquiries has been answered, the total of 374,790 downloads (technical briefs and other materials) downloads have been done from Practical Answers' websites (UK, Peru, Sri Lanka). An estimated number of beneficiaries of these services are over 1,000,000.

August 2007 – March 2009 Statistics

Technical Enquiry Service - Global (TES)

Number of Enquiries	
Bangladesh	1782
Sudan	1697
Peru	1504
Sri Lanka	1125
UK	842
Kenya	688
Nepal	229
Zimbabwe	334
Total	**8201**

Enquirer Category	
Individual	3342
National NGO	968
Commercial	911
Others	909
Government	435
International NGO	690
Academic	605
Not specified	212
Community Based Organisations	64
Student	54
Practical Action office	11
Total	**8201**

All enquiries were analysed in order to learn more about the demand from diverse groups of users and to understand potential impact of knowledge delivery to poor people.

Theme	
Agriculture	1275
Energy Technology Use	914
Agro-Processing - Foods	855
Livestock	583
Water and Sanitation	522
Energy Sector	456
Construction	381
Knowledge & Learning	300
Agro-Processing - Crops	258
Manufacturing and Process	250
Development Practices	249
Business and Marketing	248
Energy - Stoves	227
Technology in Development	226
Fisheries	196
Health	184
Livelihoods	172
Agricultural Production	154
Social Development	148
Environment	131
Conflict and Disasters	114
Development Education	88
Forestry	79
Transport	52
Human Settlements	38
Communications and ICTs	36
Information Technology	35
Economics	17
Mineral Industries	13
Total	**8201**

Region	
South-eastern Asia	2473
Northern Africa	1703
Latin America and the Caribbean	1541
Eastern Africa	854
South-central Asia	785
Southern Africa	338
Northern Europe	198
Western Africa	117
North America	50
Not Specified	41
Middle Africa	20
Western Europe	18
Eastern Europe	16
Southern Europe	16
Western Asia	11
Australia and New Zealand	8
Eastern Asia	7
Melanesia	5
Total	**8201**

Technical Information Online (TIO)
Practical Answers Website, UK, http://practicalaction.org/practicalanswers/

Articles
Total no of document downloads =   324 735
Est. Total no of beneficiaries =   545 553

Top 20 countries by number of beneficiaries

Country of Use	Download Batches	~No. of Beneficiaries
India	2220	47857
United States	2621	29528
Philippines	808	20904
United Kingdom	1667	17876
Nigeria	606	16806
Indonesia	717	16670
Kenya	531	15675
South Africa	825	14501
Australia	691	9433
Uganda	294	8028
Sudan	300	7871
Tanzania, United Republic of	218	7696
Malaysia	422	7169
Sri Lanka	250	6998
Ghana	246	6666
Ethiopia	189	6482
Pakistan	248	6424
Nepal	187	6017
Bangladesh	177	5674

Top 20 by document download by number of beneficiaries

| Article	Downloads	~No. of Beneficiaries
Solar (PV) Water-Pumping	8952	84414
Oil Extraction	8427	81717
Solar distillation	8412	81264
Solar (PV) Energy	5643	67890
Handpumps (human-powered water lifters)	4650	54888
Run-off rainwater harvesting	5553	52803
Compost Toilets	4962	49692
Windpumping	5196	48570
Clay tile manufacture	4638	41844
Earthquake resistant housing	4959	37089
Recycling plastics	2976	36096
Recycling of Organic Waste	2928	35598
Sand Dams	3897	35577
Water harvesting in Sudan	3897	35505
Hydraulic ram pumps	3366	35439
School buildings in developing countries	2808	34614
Micro-Hydro Power	3825	32097
Essential Oils - Small-scale Production	3474	31506
Refrigeration for Developing Countries	2532	30042

Practical Answers Websites, Peru

Country office website: **Infolactea:**
http://www.itdg.org.pe   **http://www.infolactea.com/index.pe**
                                               from January 2008

Total no. of visits	680 000	**Total visit**	58718
2007-2008 visits	300 000	**Hits**	206497
2008-2009 visits	380 000	**Downloads**	36588
Average per month	40 000	**Average** no. of visits per month	8000
Total Download			
through the Website	261 145	Web **most popular** (no. of visits):	
		News	21267
D**ownloads** August	48 777	Library	18760
2007 – March 2009		Directory	13957
Type of users		**Publications most download:**	
Academics are	19577	Advances in modelling Ruminant Nutrient	
Micro enterprisers	9511	Utilization:	740
NGO	3966	Elaboración de yogurt batido con fresas	
Others	9298	(processing of yogurt):	1533
Producers	4362	Elaboración de mantequilla (processing of butter):	2370
Government	2263		
Use of the information			
Develop a project	16569		
Research or study	19221		
Improve production	5681		
Others	7306		
Geographic zone			
Rural	28420		
Urban	16567		
Others	3790		
Number of beneficiaries per download			
1 to 5	17976		
6 to 14	8394		
15 to 20	8018		
+ 50	101513		
Others	3876		

Practical Answers Website, Sri Lanka

Janathakshan: http://www.janathakshan.net/
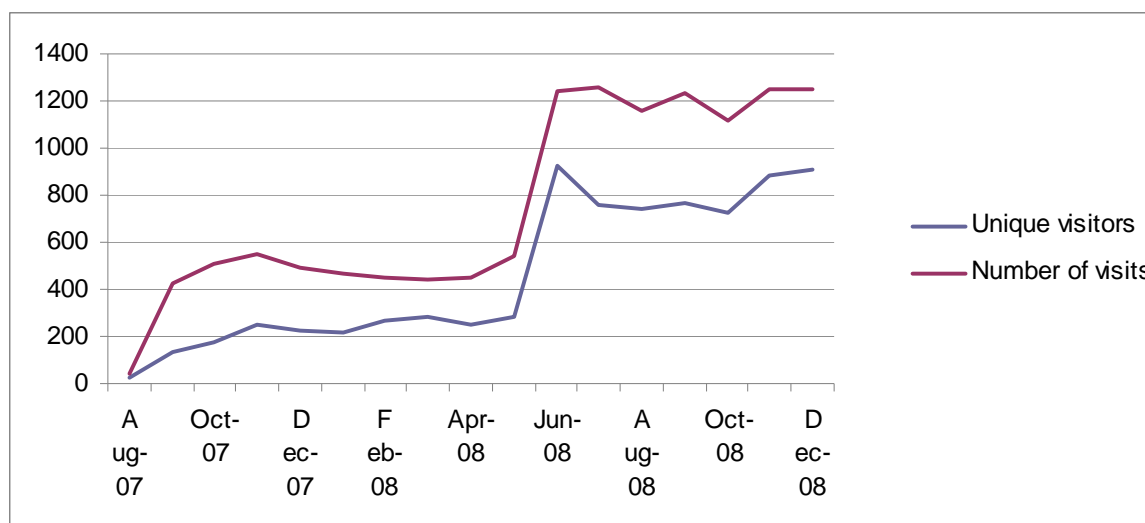
Name of file	Downloads	Name of file	Downloads
HOUSING		**ENERGY**	
Rat trap	193	Solar Distillation	119
Roofing options	41	Energy conference	21
Wall in situ	118	Stove	118
Specific building		Solar Distillation	127
Technology options	6	**WASTE MANAGEMENT**	
QA2	35	Home composting bin	34
Arches technology	6	Mechanical waste recycling	6
QA	35	Home composting system	12
Guidelines for housing development in coastal Sri Lanka	36	Earthworm	3
Building material catalogue	18	Home garden	3
Ferro Cement	45	Need for waste management	2
Filler slab tech	13	IUD Pdf	1
FISHERIES		**TRANSPORT**	
Solar fish dryer	152	Apropriate transport	23
Boat Building	33	**MISC.**	
Further resources	7	Wandruppa	7
Kapuhenwala	24	Visit to landslide affected areas and to relief camps	3
Fisheries and aquatic resource Act	7	Rice products	3
Principles and standards-fisheries	6	Bringing back the missing link into community radios	1
Ten year plan	6	Abilympic	4
Rekawa	2	I have limited space in my garden and want to make best use of this space	5
		Rubber packing technology	3
			1,278

Assessment of Project Achievements

Context of Project Activities

Learning

While providing the information services, we were trying to learn about the market for knowledge (Which knowledge is really needed and sought by people?) and the most effective methods of delivery/sharing of knowledge with diverse groups of target audiences. We also needed to know about the gaps in our collections of knowledge materials and sources of complementary information, e.g. market, suppliers, regulations.

The learning objectives (see the proposal to DFID) about demand of the Practical Answers project included seeking answers to the following questions.

Questions to be answered in demand assessment

(1)   What are the limits of our knowledge?
(2)   What other suppliers of knowledge exist?
(3)   What processes are required to form effective partnerships?
(4)   How can Practical Answers become sustainable?
(5)   How do we know what technical information is needed and what the gaps are in supply?

Questions to be answered in impact assessment

(6)   What sort of marketing can we use to promote the service to increase its impact?
(7)   How do we make mass - web based materials have greater impact?
(8)   Which of our client groups (enquirers) have the most impact on poverty?
(9)   What forms of "accompaniment" are most effective? What are the costs and benefits of "accompaniment"? Can accompaniment be achieved through partners? What support is needed so as to build the capacity to provide high impact accompaniment?
(10)   How can we improve our internal working to increase impact on poverty?

Additional questions related to demand analysis emerged during the implementation of the project:
(11)   Which formats of knowledge materials are suitable for delivery to different user groups (extension workers, farmers, researchers, and administrative staff)?
(12)   What delivery structures are most effective?
(13)   What can we learn about quality assurance?

Operational Model

Diverse needs and operational environments in different countries and regions of operation of Practical Answers required adaptive approach to provision of knowledge services. Country offices were using established channels and exploring new means of communication with enquirers.

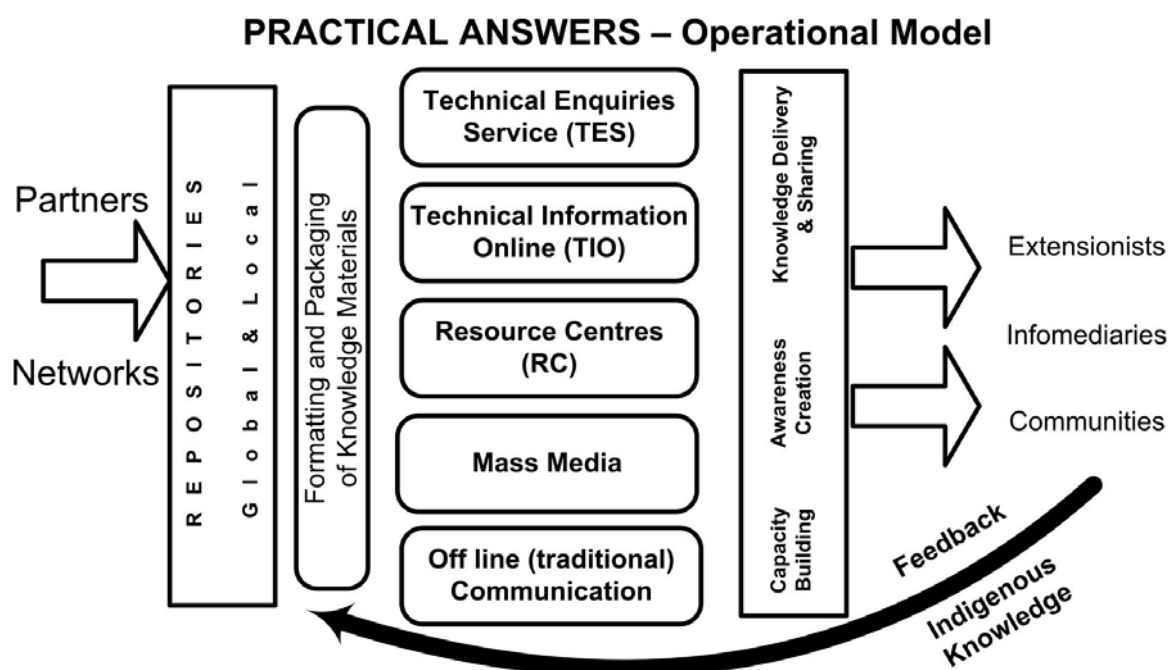The overall model of operations is summarized in the diagram below.

Fig. 1 Operational model

Geographic Scope

Technical Enquiry Service based on direct contacts with enquirers is available in countries and regions covered by Practical Action's country offices – Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka (India, Pakistan), Kenya (Uganda), Sudan, Zimbabwe (Mozambique, Zambia), Peru (Bolivia). The office in UK responds to enquiries submitted from many countries via Internet, telephone, email, or regular mail.

Technical Information Online is available globally via Internet. People from more than 120 countries downloaded knowledge materials from websites maintained in UK, Peru, and Sri Lanka. The office in UK also responds to enquiries submitted from many countries by telephone, email, or regular mail.

Achievements of Goals and Outputs

This section presents a summary of project achievements in the context of goal, purpose and outputs as they have been stated in the logical framework

Supergoal
Dissemination of sustainable appropriate technology contributes to alleviation of poverty.

> ### *Indicator*
> Individual case studies in evaluation demonstrate that the poverty of an individual has reduced as a result of the intervention of technology

Mainly anecdotal evidence (see attached samples of stories, case studies and feedback messages in Attachment 3) indicates the contribution of Practical Answers services to poverty reduction. Hard quantitative evidence is very difficult and expensive to obtain. Knowledge services play only complementary (however vital) role in the poverty reduction programmes and we could not find an effective methodology allowing for precise attribution of knowledge sharing in such programmes.

The recent independent external evaluation (see Attachment 1) of Practical Answers concluded, inter alia:

 "…The evaluation found that the PAN project was accountable to its mandate. The achievements of the activities of the PAN projects visited are impressive because by and large the projects managed to achieve the results they had set out to and achieved beyond expectations in several cases. …"

"…The projects lacked methods and mechanisms to measure impact, a difficult task in the best of times, particularly if the impact has to be attributed to knowledge transfer. Therefore, the projects fell back on recording anecdotal information of impacts. A lot of anecdotal information exists to show that the information was reasonably user-friendly and that it led to awareness. Enquirers felt that the information had helped them to take better and more informed decisions and choices. People were able to use the knowledge to solve some of their problems, adopt technologies and even adapt some. It helped them to trouble shoot and overcome problems in existing technologies. They narrated how the information had reduced costs or increased incomes or improved wellbeing. There were even claims that the information and the interaction had given them a better understanding of their problems and their causes. Some even said that they felt empowered by the process. Good impact and obviously lots of it, and it would have been possible to conclude that the PAN project's efforts were relevant, effective and efficient, had the evidence existed to support the conclusion. …"

"…Given the similarities in the situations of the 2006 evaluation and the 2009 evaluation, it would be unfair not to conclude, exactly as they did, that it is still hard to imagine many other development projects that could provide such good value for money. … The potential of the Practical Answers project and the need for its services requires that the project be continued and serious efforts be made to grow it into a learning organization that improves the service and its impact. …"

"…The logical framework did not specify the expected outcomes relating to impact and the project's design and implementation did not provide for methodologies and metrics to measure or score the impacts. ..."

A general idea about the scope of Practical Answers' impact can be derived from the total statistics stated below and anecdotal evidence recorded in quarterly reports and case studies.

The total number of direct personal enquiries – **8,201** in all regions of Practical Answers' operations

The total number of downloads of knowledge materials:
Practical Answers websites – **374,790** total document downloads from over 200 countries; website visitors who downloaded the materials claim that over **1,000,000** people benefited from

them; it is impossible to verify the numbers provided by website users, but some corroborative information has been obtained from surveys, case studies and emails received from website users.

Goal
Information on technology is available and used for poverty alleviation purposes by development practitioners.

Indicator
Uptake of technical information from various outlets – and when followed up it can be demonstrated that the information has been used by development practitioners.

The technical enquiry service is managed from eight country and regional offices and a series of local information "nodes" in places as remote as Darfur, Sudan and Faridpur, Bangladesh. With more than 300 technical briefs and other materials in many languages (brochures, video presentations, manuals, guides, multimedia presentations) available on a range of technologies from wind turbines to food processing, Practical Answers has provided real content directly to enquirers and to networks of telecentres operated by governments and international institutions. Our enquiry service has been franchised to other NGOs in Latin America. Our websites and officers providing the service informed the users about links to additional sources of complementary information.

Quarterly country reports (available on request) provide evidence of usage of knowledge materials in all countries of Practical Answers' operations. For example, in Bangladesh over 1,000 extension workers acquire and use Practical Answers' materials, in some cases for services paid for by local population.

The table above showing the number of enquiries submitted by different categories of users tells us that of 8,201 enquires made during the duration of the project – 968 were made by National NGOs, 690 by International NGOs, and 64 by Community Based Organisations. 3342 enquiries were made by individuals who were mainly development practitioners and projects staff.

The evaluation and everyday practice in country offices confirm that there is a demand for technical information and that a great deal of unmet demand exists.

"…The demand for the TES is there and is as yet unmet, because every time it was publicized or made more accessible the numbers of enquiries increased. In an increasingly complex world, confronted with rapid and often difficult to predict changes, access to technological knowledge and a technological attitude could make the difference between adaptation and development on the one hand and deterioration and collapse on the other. …"

Purpose
An improved, sustainable Technical Information Service.

Indicator
Lessons from pilots will have been captured and translated into a coherent three year business plan for Practical Answers

The learning that will foster the development of tools, methods and processes for improvement of Practical Answers' services was the main trait of this learning project supported by DFID. The evaluation concentrated on this aspect of project implementation, and its main findings are summarized in the following observations.
"The PAN project generated a lot of useful learning:
•   Practical Answers can and does add a lot a value to Practical Action. Giving poor people access to technical knowledge is making a difference to their wellbeing and livelihoods, even if hard evidence is still lacking. There seems to be an unmet need for the service. Practical Answers is embedded in Practical Action and what 'positions' PAN in the minds of people is the Practical Action 'BRAND'.
•   Knowledge objects currently seem to be of three types in PAN repositories: Type 1 deals with short, attractive, relatively-less technical materials used to explain issues to enquirers and nudge them towards choosing and adopting particular technologies and information. Type 2 objects

deal with technical knowledge or know-how to transfer a technology. They are nor very easily usable directly by enquirers and may require technical people to help them. Type 3 is knowledge that PAN is generating from its learning, on how to do things better… a sort of 'meta' knowledge. Type 2 objects are abundant while Type 1 and 3 are as yet scarce.

• The type and nature of the enquiries will determine the type and nature of knowledge required and that in turn will guide the way in which knowledge should be codified and stored. Knowledge has to be codified, stored and managed, not as traditional documents but in 'fragments' or parts of documents that can be stitched together on demand to create particular knowledge objects. This requires a very different kind of codification system, more like those used in relational semantic search engines.

• Websites have large potential to reach out to people, enable them to access information and work together but are presently constrained because of poor Internet penetration in rural areas.

• Innovations like local knowledge centres and extension workers as infomediaries add value and need to be adapted to local conditions and replicated and upscaled. Partnerships for knowledge access and knowledge delivery seem viable and possible if the relationship is mutually beneficial to both parties and partners have the necessary technical competencies.

• PAN is focusing on taking knowledge out to people and little has been done to capture people's knowledge and innovations and make the flow two-way.

• The monitoring system and database that the PAN projects developed to track, monitor and learn from their efforts was an improvement over those in the past but failed to generate the quality and type of information useful for learning.

• PAN projects need to consider partnerships with mobile telephone service providers to converge Internet and mobile telephone platforms to benefit the TES, the learning system and better bridge across the first mile.

• PAN needs to evolve from being a collection of national projects to being a Global Project with many national contexts. The challenges PAN faces requires putting research to use and using action research to learn, which will require partnerships with researchers and research organizations. Practical Answers' most valuable asset is its human resource."

A comprehensive view of learning process and its results from the project staff perspective is presented in the document 'Practical Answers: Report on Learning, Practical Answers International Team, March 2009' (attached).

Based on experiences of over 40 years and learning outputs of this project, the international team developed a vision of Practical Answers and produced a 3-year business plan (attached).

Outputs

Output 1
Practical Action has improved understanding of the demand for technical information for poverty reduction and the effectiveness of different marketing approaches.

> ***Indicator***
> Lessons from work throughout the group have been captured, discussed and written up. The experience has been translated into a coherent three year business plan for Practical Answers.

We will understand what the limits are of our knowledge and who we can work most effectively with to fill gaps and how we should work with them; How a technical information service can become more sustainable; What sort of marketing most effectively promotes the service and increases its impact on poverty. We will know more about the demand for technical information and gaps in supply.

All country offices reported monthly the number of enquiries concerning specific subjects. The conclusions from these reports are presented in the 'Report on Learning'. The most popular subjects were Agriculture, Energy Technology Use, Agro-Processing – Foods, Livestock, Water and Sanitation, Energy Sector, and Construction.

Practical Answers staff and infomediaries having direct contact with enquirers and beneficiaries learned and documented demand for information going beyond the offer of technical information mandated to Practical Answers. People enquire about materials concerning the health care, markets, employment opportunities, education, and other subjects. This unmet demand for knowledge cannot be directly addressed by Practical Answers, but we try to provide links to the sources of information needed.

Practical Answers conducted 2 comprehensive studies on knowledge needs and knowledge gaps in poor communities of Bangladesh and Sudan. Other offices in addition to recording data about enquiries conducted surveys of users of knowledge service to learn more about demand for technical information. Reports from Sudan and Bangladesh studies are attached (Attachments 4 and 5).

Learning about production of effective knowledge materials that could be distributed directly to communities was an important factor in developing the business plan (Attachments 6 and 7). We learned that in order to meet the demand for technical information of disadvantaged and geographically isolated communities we must develop knowledge presentations that use voice, video, images, animations. It means production of multimedia materials that can be distributed via telecentres or schools.

There is a need for diversification of formats of delivered knowledge materials including materials suitable for people with little or no formal education, or even for people who are illiterate. The process of developing these knowledge materials should include local community members through the various stages from identifying the needs, creating material and assessment and evaluating the results.

The 3-year plan is based on the outputs of the ongoing analysis of demand conducted during the project implementation.

Output 2
Practical Action has greater understanding of the **impact of technical information provision**

> *Indicator*
> Practical Action has in operation an agreed methodology for prioritising the demands made on the Technical Enquiries Service based on the scale of expected impact.

We will understand how web based materials can have a greater impact; Which of our client groups have most impact on poverty; What forms of accompaniment are most effective, what the costs and benefits of accompaniment are and what the capacity building needs are to achieve high impact accompaniment; How we need to organise ourselves internally to best increase our impact.

The purpose of impact assessment is to improve Practical Answers' services from the perspective of their contribution to poverty reduction. We collected data and evidence in the form of case studies and stories that would allow for qualitative assessment of impact. Quantitative assessment of impact and attribution of knowledge services to poverty reduction is very difficult and expensive. Practical Answers staff developed a draft framework for impact assessment (attached). The framework needs further work. We are looking for cooperation on this matter with development researchers and larger organisations.

Each quarterly report included a section concerning the impact of Practical Answers' activities and lessons that could be learned in a short period of time. Generally, the assessment of impact requires longer period of time and analysis of variety of corroborative data and narrations.

The assessment of impact of Technical Enquiry Service was based on feedback received from infomediaries, surveys of beneficiaries, and in selected case on direct interviews with beneficiaries of knowledge acquired through our services.

The evaluation report noticed:
"…A lot of anecdotal information exists to show that the information was reasonably user-friendly and that it led to awareness. Enquirers felt that the information had helped them to take better and more informed decisions and choices. People were able to use the knowledge to solve some of

their problems, adopt technologies and even adapt some. It helped them to trouble shoot and overcome problems in existing technologies. They narrated how the information had reduced costs or increased incomes or improved wellbeing. There were even claims that the information and the interaction had given them a better understanding of their problems and their causes. Some even said that they felt empowered by the process. Good impact and obviously lots of it, and it would have been possible to conclude that the PAN project's efforts were relevant, effective and efficient, had the evidence existed to support the conclusion. …"

The assessment of impact of online services (websites) is based on statistics collected automatically by the website monitoring software and information provided by the users of the website - email surveys of website visitors, and emails (short stories) received by the webmasters.

The summaries of impact assessment can be found in global quarterly reports submitted to DFID, and evaluation and learning reports attached to this document.

Regarding the accompaniment the main conclusion is that all forms of accompaniment are useful and desired by enquirers. The most important are: supplementary non-technical information (for example, concerning markets and suppliers of materials and equipment), demonstrations, training, and facilitation of knowledge sharing at the community level (for example, providing venue and materials for meetings of local communities). Exploration of diverse accompaniments is one of the most important learning outputs of this project.

Websites

Considering the potential of websites to reach large audiences via rural telecentres and in convergence with mass media and telephone services the Practical Answers team explored Internet technologies and developed website-based services, namely the download of knowledge materials – technical briefs, technical drawings, and manuals; video presentations; on line reviews and commenting on provided materials; community of registered users (over 30,000).

The analysis of the website data is improving as staff becomes more expert in such analysis although lack of universal approach to web information makes comparisons of different websites and their facilities difficult.

An example of website analysis could be the investigation into the *Practical Answers – English* website that recorded around 60,000 visits a month with the 43 percent coming from search engines while 28 per cent coming from referrals from other websites. Google Analytics provides details on the websites that refer people to Practical Answers, for example 1,250 sites generated referrals to Practical Answers for the month of September 2008.

Practical Answers realized the importance of developing websites in vernaculars in order to expand the population of online services and reaching people who speak only their native languages. We developed pilot Practical Answers websites in Arabic and Bengali.

Output 3
Practical Action will continue to deliver an ever **improving Technical Information Service** with a measurable impact on poverty.

> ***Indicator***
> Number of enquiries answered: 8,201 (Global)
> Number of technical briefs downloads: 324 735 (UK only)

An external company developed a database application TESDB has been installed in all country offices and will be used for registration of all enquiries in a standard format. Country offices will also use additional software for recording specific data not covered by TESDB application. Attached document 'Practical Answers – Data Collection' provides an overview of the scope and content of data that are used for the analysis of demand and impact of Practical Answers' services and taking decisions on improvement of services.

External Evaluation provided very important findings about the learning process and operations of Practical Answers in diverse environments. The method of scoring the impact of Practical Answers services proposed in the evaluation document will be adapted and used across all country offices.

A successful delivery of Practical Answers' 3-year business plan depends on the integration of the International Team and development of expertise and management and technical skills across all offices. In addition to regular electronic communication and teleconferences with country office Practical Answers team organized workshops and supported individual training and participation in international conferences of project staff. Main events included:

Workshop 1: Global Reach – Local Impact through Technical Information Services
30 January – 2 February 2008, Sri Lanka
Practical Answers International Team
The 4-day workshop has been designed to learn and understand more about Practical Answers operations in all offices, exchange experiences and opinions on lessons learnt and generate ideas for improvement of information services and development of an operational model for technical information services.

Meeting 2: Concept and Operations of Practical Answers, Nepal Country Office
7 – 14 February 2008, Nepal
Zbig Mikolajuk and Nepal office staff
Presentation and discussions about Practical Answers with all staff of Nepal office.

Training/Workshop 3: Knowledge & Communications Management
24 – 28 August 2008, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh
Zbig Mikolajuk, Bangladesh office staff, invited representative from UNDP and CARE
To update participants' knowledge on contemporary concepts of knowledge management and its tools and roles in knowledge management. To improve participants' knowledge and skills about knowledge materials production and operations of knowledge centres so that they will be able to prepare effective knowledge materials and establish useful knowledge centres in their working areas.

Conference 4: UNESCO Conference & Exhibition on Knowledge Parks
29-31 March 2008, Doha, Qatar
Attended by Shadia Abdelmoneim (Sudan) and Zbig Mikolajuk (UK)
The conference overall objective was at bringing together:
 - Policy makers
 - Experts in the fields of knowledge management and innovation\technology parks
 - Representatives of the private sector and donor organizations including development banks to share views and experiences and to map such experiences for the benefit of developing countries.

Meetings 5: Country Office, Sudan
1-8 April 2008, Khartoum, Sudan
Agenda:
- discussion about Practical Answers and the concept, scope and feasibility of   community-based knowledge centres in Sudan
- visit to the Sudan University of Science and Technology to explore the potential for cooperation
- discussion about design and development of the Arabic version of the Practical Answers' website

Training/Workshop 6: Development of Multimedia Knowledge Objects
26 - 29 January 2009, Dhaka, Bangladesh
Bangladesh office staff, invited representatives from UNDP, CARE, Action Aid, and the Ministry of Agriculture
The 4-day training course has been designed to learn basic skills needed to develop multimedia knowledge presentations.

Training/Workshop 7: Development of Multimedia Knowledge Objects
2 – 5 February 2009, Khartoum, Sudan
The 4-day training course has been designed to learn basic skills needed to develop multimedia knowledge presentations.

Developing knowledge products

Our vision of Practical Answers is that poor people will have access to appropriate knowledge they need to improve their livelihoods. The realization of this vision requires a network for knowledge sharing, pulling knowledge and skills from around the world, and then localizing (language, context of the problem) and packaging knowledge materials in the format (text, images, animations, voice, video) that allows people with little education or illiterate to access and share knowledge. Multimedia technologies allow for production of such knowledge materials.

Practical Answers team explored in cooperation with developing country specialists the tools for production of multimedia knowledge materials in diverse languages. We also established cooperation with a small Canadian company (Solanta Technologies Inc.) that provided a software package in English, Bengali and Arabic for generating multimedia multilingual presentation.

Attachments

1) An Evaluation for Practical Action of the Practical Answers Project 2007-8, March 2009, Rathindra N. Roy
PANEvaluationReportFinalVersion2009.pdf, PANEvaluationReportAnnexFinalVersion2009.pdf

2) Practical Answers: Report on Learning, March 2009, Practical Answers International Team
Report on Learning Practical AnswersFinal.doc

3) Practical Answers Impact – Case Studies, Feedback, 2004-2009
Practical Answers Impact.doc

4) Knowledge Gap Survey, Sudan, Dr. Abdelaziz Karamalla Gaiballa, Khartoum, September 2008
Final26thOctKnGapsReportSD.doc

5) Knowledge Management in Communities – Bangladesh, technical Report, 2007
KMreportBD.doc

6) Practical Answers Work Plan: April 2009 - March 2012, Tasks Description
PracticalAnswersTasks2009-12V2.doc

7) Practical Answers Work Plan: April 2009 - March 2012, Schedule
prAnsWorkPlan2009-12Timetablev2.xls

8) Practical Answers: A platform for knowledge sharing, Robert Cartridge, Neil Noble, Zbigniew Mikolajuk, Waterlines-International Journal of Water, Sanitation and Waste, V.27, No.2, Apr.2008
waterlinePaper.pdf

9) Practical Answers Strategy, June 2008

SharePoint:
http://portal-group.itdg.org.uk/IGS/TES/Practical%20Answers%20References/Forms/AllItems.aspx