STREAM

Support to Regional Aquatic Resources Management

DFID NRSP Research Project R8100
Investigating Improved Policy on Aquaculture Service Provision to Poor People
March 2002 – May 2003

Progress Towards Policy Change and Lessons Learnt

In Association With
Gramin Vikas Trust (GVT)

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Acknowledgements

We are deeply grateful to our project partners – Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR), the Government of India and the NGO Gramin Vikas Trust (GVT) – for our continuing collaboration. In particular, we would like to thank:

- □ Dr Ayyappan, Deputy Director General ICAR; Mr Pattanaik, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture; Dr Nair, Fisheries Commissioner, and Dr Chauhan, Deputy Fisheries Commissioner, GOI, for their interest and support.

- □ Dr V S Tomar, CEO of GVT, for his continuing support.

- □ Mr J S Gangwar, formerly Project Manager of GVT East, now Additional CEO in Noida, Delhi, who facilitated arrangements for the project and enabled members of his staff to work with us.

- □ Mr Ashish Kumar, Deputy Director, Department of Fisheries, Jharkhand, for his support and valuable contributions to the project.

- □ Mr Rubu Mukerjee, for valuable contributions to the project.

- □ Mr Rakesh Raman and his theatre troupe, for interpreting, dramatizing and performing the policy change recommendations to communities and policy-makers.

- □ Participants from communities, governments, NGOs and other service providers in the states of Jharkhand, Orissa and West Bengal, and nationally.

We thank each participant for working with us in such a productive and collaborative manner, and look forward to continuing our association with these friends and colleagues.

Appreciation is also expressed to DFID and its Natural Resources Systems Programme (NRSP) for the support it has provided to do this work, and for their keen interest in its progress.

Background

The DFID-NRSP Research Project R8100 entitled "Investigating Improved Policy on Aquaculture Service Provision to Poor People" included:

- A Policy Review Workshop in Noida, Delhi in April 2003 with representatives of the Government of India; state governments of Jharkhand, Orissa and West Bengal; Gramin Vikas Trust (GVT) and recipients (fishers, farmers and *jankars*) from the three states; DFID-NRSP; Rockefeller Foundation and NACA-STREAM. Fifteen members of a theatre troupe also participated.
- A Review of Lessons Learnt in Enabling People's Participation in Policy-making Processes, published in April 2003
- A Consensus-building Process which ran from February to March 2003
- Six Case Studies carried out of from mid-2002 to January 2003 in Jharkhand, Orissa and West Bengal
- A Stakeholders Workshop in January 2003 in Ranchi, Jharkhand
- Three State-level Workshops in Purulia, West Bengal; Ranchi, Jharkhand and Bhubaneswar, Orissa in October 2002
- An August 2002 Planning Visit
- A Rural Aquaculture Service Recipients and Implementers Workshop held in May 2002 in Ranchi, Jharkhand, and
- An Inception Visit in March 2002.

The purpose of this document (and activity 3.3 from the project logframe) is to highlight progress towards policy change and lessons learnt. The assessment of progress has been done by considering progress against the project logframe and by looking at generic stakeholder domains that specify the beneficiaries (stakeholders) with whom the project can achieve either developmental impact or make progress towards developmental impact through research uptake. The emphasis of lessons learnt is on generic lessons in policy change, focusing on the investigation of improved policy on aquaculture service provision to poor people in India. In this way, this document is intended to present an assessment of the evidence – and an auto-critique by the project – for the potential for uptake, impact of research and utility of the research products.

Progress against the Project Logframe

Objective	Progress	Evidence
Purpose		
Mechanisms for the delivery of improved rural services critical to the development of rural livelihoods identified, tested and promoted, with emphasis on services in support of aquaculture objectives, strengths and constraints of marginalized groups and their complex diverse livelihoods	Through Case Studies in which the participation of service recipients and implementers of support were carefully facilitated, opportunities to improve the delivery of aquaculture support services for scheduled castes and tribes by government, including opportunities to improve research for these groups by ICAR and decentralized development through national-local government Fish Farmers Development Agencies) and non-government (including GVT) actors, taking account of the role for aquaculture in their livelihoods, have been identified and articulated to key policy actors. See the **Policy Review Workshop** report for details.

Priorities for institutional change to ensure cost-efficient delivery systems for the provision of aquaculture support services targeting scheduled castes and tribes (including financing, input supply, information-sharing) have been agreed by target institutions in India (ICAR, DOF/FFDAs, others including GVT) through presentation and discussion of Case Studies of service provision, and derived priorities for policy change from wide-ranging consultation using a Consensus-building Process. See **Case Studies** and **Indicators of Progress, Consensus-building Process and Policy Recommendations**. | The DDG ICAR has proposed for STREAM to collaborate with ICAR on further case studies of service provision to be partly funded by ICAR.

The GOI Fisheries Commissioner requested the project to recommend FFDA reform and created a slot in the 10th Five-Year Plan where reforms could be articulated.

The GVT of CEO has emphasized that the role of GVT in future should include the project recommendations for the development of "One-stop service provision", local training and increased communications, and has requested to work with STREAM to achieve these changes.

Priorities for institutional change derived from wide-ranging consultation were collated and presented to policy-makers and implementers. See **Stakeholders Workshop Report** (Appendix 7).

The Fisheries Commissioner GOI requested FFDA officials to take part in the project Consensus-building Process [Ministry of Agriculture Memo No. 31035/4/2000 FY(3)]. Twenty-one national and state-level policy-makers and implementers agreed priorities for institutional change to ensure cost-efficient delivery systems for the provision of aquaculture support services targeting scheduled castes and tribes. |

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Objective	Progress	Evidence
Purpose (continued)		
Mechanisms for the delivery of improved rural services critical to the development of rural livelihoods identified, tested and promoted, with emphasis on services in support of aquaculture objectives, strengths and constraints of marginalized groups and their complex diverse livelihoods	Policy change promoted by key actors within the government system	Based on multi-level consensus on modes and priorities for policy change, the Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture agreed to consult the GOI Secretary and Minister about implementing the proposed prioritized changes. The DDG of ICAR has asked if STREAM can play a role in policy change with state-level Planning Commissions (which he would actively support), the Annual Meeting of Secretaries and Commissioners of Animal Husbandry and Fisheries (around November 2003), to showcase the Policy Review Process and street-play at Fish Expo India, International Centre, Delhi, in September 2004, and to begin to change the way information is made available to farmers (a priority policy change). He is investigating the establishment of a possible Partnership Agreement between ICAR, GVT, DOF and STREAM to establish a Communications Hub, after obtaining official permission (Statement of DDG to NACA Governing Council Meeting, Yangon, 2003).
	NRSP impact assessment	The desired policy change has the potential to benefit many millions of poor people in the target states and throughout much of India. These people are not only poor but also come from seriously disadvantaged strata in India society. The route to policy change explored in this project could benefit many more beyond India (NRSP MTR February 2003).

Objective	Progress	Evidence
Outputs		
1. Understanding developed of current context of rural aquaculture service provision for specific groups of poor people	A process and specific geographic locations were agreed for Case Studies and recommendations for change from recipients of service provision in tribal areas of Jharkhand, Orissa and West Bengal states. Understanding was built of the strengths, resource use priorities and constraints of farmers and fishers described through media (such as film, PowerPoint and photos). A paper has been drafted to document Case Studies of recipients' perspectives for national multi-level stakeholders discussion of modes and priorities for policy change.	A **Planning Visit** report details proposed Case Studies. A **State-level Workshops** report details recommendations for change. **Case Studies** are presented as a published document and digitally as PDF, film, PowerPoint and photos. A **Stakeholders Workshop** report contains "Emerging Indicators of Progress Towards Transacting Policy Change". This project builds on groundwork in the research areas by R6759. The team has strengthened and extended those links with target institutions. The rigorous yet sensitive planning and efforts that they have put into the coherently-linked activities of this project suggest that it has a real opportunity to achieve policy change for the benefit of specific groups of poor people. Such a success could have specific and generic implications beyond the target areas themselves to India as a whole and beyond (NRSP MTR February 2003).
2. Understanding developed of processes whereby technical and institutional changes can be transacted to engender policy change that can give rise to rural aquaculture services that are inclusive of specific groups of poor people	"A Review of Lessons Learnt in Enabling People's Participation in Policy-making Processes" was compiled for stakeholder consideration in the context of rural aquaculture development and "Emerging Indicators of Progress Towards Transacting Policy Change" agreed with key stakeholders. Priorities for policy change were agreed by key actors through national multi-level stakeholders' discussion of modes and priorities for policy change using a Consensus-building Process. A paper has been drafted to document the process and lessons learnt.	**A Review of Lessons Learnt in Enabling People's Participation in Policy-making Processes** details similar efforts from elsewhere. **State-level Workshops** and **Stakeholders Workshop** reports detail indicators and process. **Indicators of Progress, Consensus-building Process and Policy Recommendations** with recipient, implementer and project suggestions for change incorporated. The project has brought together important information and enabled understanding of the processes whereby technical and institutional changes can be transacted (NRSP PVR April 2003).
3. Engagement achieved with key actors with respect to aquaculture policy-related information in such a way that it could stimulate policy debate and influence policy change	Recommendations were formulated for scaling-up (policy, infrastructural, institutional and funding) which highlight how policies in support of tribal and other disadvantaged groups can be enhanced to better support the livelihoods of those target groups with contributions and support, and indicative endorsement provided by key policy actors. A portfolio of multi-media products has been developed highlighting policy change issues and progress towards policy change and lessons learnt.	**Policy Review Workshop** report documenting process, policy-change recommendations and commitment to these from policy-makers. A portfolio of all project outputs and a draft paper documenting the process for publication. The project has made significant progress in formulating recommendations for scaling-up (policy, infrastructural, institutional and funding) which highlight how policies in support of tribal and other disadvantaged groups can be enhanced to support livelihoods with indicative endorsement provided by key policy actors (NRSP PVR April 2003).

Progress towards Developmental Impact among Generic Stakeholder Domains

NRSP has defined five generic stakeholder domains, named Domains V to Z, that specify the beneficiaries (stakeholders) with whom the Programme can achieve either developmental impact or make progress towards developmental impact through research uptake (NRSP's Conceptual Impact Model, 2003). Using these domains (defined below), this section looks at progress towards policy change (and any associated developmental impacts), highlighting evidence for twenty-five benefits among five stakeholder domains.

Domain V – Primary Stakeholders

Domain V are the primary stakeholders/ultimate beneficiaries of a project in the target site(s) of a project. The process of transacting policy change and giving people a voice in policy change processes has provided some immediate favorable change to the livelihoods of some stakeholders representing local developmental impact. These are highlighted below.

Benefit	Evidence
1. Reduced transactional costs of interacting with service providers	Deputy Directors and Assistant Directors of Fisheries as well as Fisheries Extension Workers have regularly visited case study communities during the project.
2. Settlement of pond leases with communities	Following on from 1 above, this season one small pond has been leased to fishers at Bundu Block, in the name of case study partner Bhim Nayak. It is planned that with the income from aquaculture, further ponds will be leased from the government.
3. Training with CIFA	Bhim Nayak and Ras Behari Baraik have been sponsored by the Fisheries Department of Jharkhand to receive training from the ICAR Central Institute for Freshwater Aquaculture.
4. A voice in policy-making processes	Following are excerpts about people's participation from evaluation responses at the Recipients and Implementers Workshop, State-level Workshops and Stakeholders Workshop. □ Without active participation of the community, rural development is not possible. □ I expressed my feelings with other fishermen, agriculture officers and the facilitator, so that we can become self-reliant. □ Highly satisfied with my participation and contribution, as I have learnt a lot from all those who are knowledgeable and I feel that I would be able to do something for my own people and share this information and knowledge with them. □ If this type of workshop will continue, then poor farmers can learn many things and can transfer the message to fellow farmers in the village. □ We get an opportunity to tell our problems in front of government and NGOs and we got a chance to participate in the policy change issue. □ I feel very good that farmers and experts put their views together to change policy. □ I have invested my valuable time here so that government can change some of its policies in favor of poor people. □ Simple and general Hindi language was used. I feel happy that I could understand the Hindi translation of the language of the facilitator from STREAM.

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Benefit	Evidence
5. An opportunity to see a street-play performance in their village	 Fulwar Toli Village, Bundu Block, Jharkhand, April 2003
6. An opportunity to see a film documentary about issues facing their village	 Chhota Changru Village, Silli Block, Jharkhand, April 2003

Domain W – Intermediate Stakeholders

Domain W are the intermediate/secondary stakeholders, located near or in the target site(s) of a project, who are well informed about a project and may (ideally) be partners in the project. Localized developmental impact can be achieved through these stakeholders during the life of NRSP, e.g., in an administrative district where project sites are located (NRSP's rainwater harvesting projects provide an example of impact in Domain V via research uptake in Domain W).

Benefit	Evidence
1. Opportunity for intermediate/ secondary stakeholders to engage with policy-makers	Following are excerpts about people's participation from evaluation responses at the Recipients and Implementers Workshop, State-level Workshops and Stakeholders Workshop. □ I could share so many things with others and I learned a lot and other fish farmers like me can benefit if they attend such workshops. □ I could learn from the farmers of Bundu and Silli blocks and I could know about the government policies. □ I have improved my knowledge by attending this workshop. Besides knowing aquaculture in my village, I could learn from the practices adopted in other places. □ I learned about the problems of aquaculture in this workshop. I'll take all possible steps to solve the problems faced by the farmers as an official of the government. □ Good participation, especially from the villagers. It is also a platform to increase the understanding of government officers. □ By attending this workshop at the grassroots level to bring about changes in policy matters, and expressing the problems of fish farmers of district levels, I am grateful. □ This workshop is not enough, the message of the workshop should reach all of my farmer friends and if some policies can change for the benefit of farmers then only I feel the workshop is beneficial for me.
2. Opportunity to give and receive feedback on service provision and to provide a range of perspectives on experiences of service provision	Case Studies of: □ Recipients' Experiences of Services Provided by NGOs in Support of Aquaculture for Poor and Tribal Groups (West Bengal) □ Service Providers' Perspectives on the Implementation of Government Schemes in Support of Aquaculture for Poor and Tribal Groups (West Bengal) □ Contrasting Case Studies of Service Provision and Participation (Orissa)
3. Increased NGO-local government links in development (a policy objective proposed by the policy development process)	There are only 243 fisheries staff in Jharkhand with 113 educated to fourth-grade, so they depend on NGOs to increase the impact of their work. Through project activities, Mr Rajiw Kumar, State DOF Director, Jharkhand, has begun interactions with the NGO Gramin Vikas Trust, and next fiscal year, the Jharkhand DOF wishes to collaborate with GVT.

Domain X – National-level Target Institutions

Domain X are the national-level target institutions (NTIs) in the target country where a project is located. They are less closely associated with a project but they are important for achieving wider use of research products in a target country. The DFID country desk of the target country is also a Domain X stakeholder. Commonly the NTIs are the apex bodies of the LTIs of Domain W; e.g., a Director of Extension Services relative to a District Agriculture Officer associated with a project, the Director of an NGO relative to a field officer or a national representative of a civil society institution relative to a local representative. Through communication and advocacy, undertaken by both a project team and program management, supportive actors in an NTI may formalize their intention to make use of research products (i.e., research uptake is achieved which may engender developmental impact in the longer term).

Benefit	Evidence
1. Opportunity to understand service provision from recipients' viewpoints	Case studies of: □ Recipients' Experiences of Services Provided by NGOs in Support of Aquaculture for Poor and Tribal Groups (West Bengal) □ Service Providers' Perspectives on the Implementation of Government Schemes in Support of Aquaculture for Poor and Tribal Groups (West Bengal) □ Contrasting Case Studies of Service Provision and Participation (Orissa) Performance of a street-play interpreting issues
2. Opportunity to propose recommendations for institutional and policy changes	Recommendations proposed by recipient, NGO and DOF stakeholders (during fieldwork, workshops, case studies and comments by stakeholders)
3. Opportunity to share the experience of DFID, KRIHBCO and the EIRFP, NRSP research project "Integrated Aquaculture in Eastern India", work of GVT, STREAM and NACA	These were drafted into a Component Concept Note requested by the Fisheries Commissioner.
4. Opportunity for non-hierarchical policy debate among national-level target institutions	Participation in a Consensus-building Process by ICAR, national-level DOF policy development and implementation stakeholders (Deputy Fisheries Commissioner and relevant ICAR Fisheries Institute Directors), state-level policy-makers and implementers (including Secretaries of State for Fisheries, State Fisheries Directors, Assistant Fisheries Directors, District Fisheries Officers and Managing Directors of the State Fisheries Development Corporations)
5. A voice in policy-making processes	Participants (in state groups) suggested issues which need deeper understanding, the groups whose "voices" would be documented, the organizations and agencies which could conduct the studies, and the methods and media which could be used [Appendix 10 of Rural Aquaculture Service Recipients and Implementers Workshop – May 2002].
6. Opportunities identified to improve the delivery of aquaculture services and support by government and non-government actors	Understanding built of the strengths, resource use priorities and constraints of farmers and fishers Recipients play a role in defining the services and support they need Feedback from recipients and implementers effectively communicated
7. Priorities for institutional and policy change agreed by key actors	Recipient, implementer and project suggestions for change incorporated Recommendations formulated for scaling up: □ Capacity-building in participatory and livelihoods approaches of fisheries officers □ Awareness-raising of poverty-focused aquaculture options among fisheries officers □ Development of innovative extension and communication approaches, including the use of mass media and links with other service providers in Asia-Pacific □ Development of a STREAM National Communications Hub
8. Policy change promoted by key actors within the government system based on multi-level consensus on priorities for change	Joint Secretary of the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying agreed to consult the GOI Secretary and Minister about implementing the proposed prioritized changes. The DDG of ICAR has asked if STREAM can play a role in further case studies (co-funded by ICAR), policy change at state-level Planning Commissions (which he would actively support), the Annual Meeting of Secretaries and Commissioners of Animal Husbandry and Fisheries (around November 2003), to showcase the Policy Review Process and street-play at Fish Expo India, International Centre, Delhi, in September 2004 and to begin to change the way information is made available to farmers (a priority policy change).

Domain Y – International-level Target Institutions

Domain Y are the international-level target institutions (ITIs) to whom a project and the Programme can readily disseminate (i.e., passively communicate) research findings and products through publications and media channels. These include sub-regional organizations (such as ASARECA in eastern Africa and NACA in Asia-Pacific) and sub-regional consortia (such as the Rice Wheat Consortium), that have objectives and ways of working that fit well with NRSP, are "better bets" for research uptake and the nearer-term conversion of uptake into developmental impact than other ITIs.

Benefit	Evidence
1. Research findings are disseminated throughout Asia-Pacific	Documents are promoted through the intergovernmental agency NACA and through the publication *Aquaculture Asia* <www.enaca.org>
2. All research outputs about policy change are brought immediately into the public domain via hard copies, the Internet and an E-Bulletin	During 2003, there have been 1,815 downloads of project documents (PDF) from <www.streaminitiative.org/india> and India project documents have been distributed to 66 subscribers to the STREAM E-Bulletin <www.streaminitiative.org/Subscribe.html>. (Statistics on downloads and subscriptions are available from the STREAM Regional Office.)
3. All research outputs about policy change are provided in "plain" language publications	Through the quarterly publications, *STREAM Update* and *STREAM Journal*, information and findings are distributed widely in English, Ilonggo, Khmer, Nepali and Vietnamese.
4. Sharing lessons from the progress towards policy change with other sectors through international conferences	Haylor G and Savage W 2002 *Facilitating a Diversity of Voices to Influence Policy*. South East Asian Ministers of Education International Conference on Issues of Culture, Context and Choice in Development, 28-30 November 2002, Bangkok, Thailand.
5. Project partners regularly input their experience from this project into forums linking Asia-Pacific service providers	Inputs to semi-monthly meetings which link Asia-Pacific service providers (line agencies and NGOs) via the Internet in facilitated netmeeting discussions relating to livelihoods, institutions, policy development and communications through the STREAM Initiative.
6. Sharing lessons from the progress towards policy change through inputs into a strategic planning framework developed for APEC economies	Haylor G, Briggs M R P, Pet Soude L, Tung H, Yen N T H, Adrien B, O'Callaghan B, Gow C, DeVantier L, Cheung C, Santos, R, Pador E, de la Torre M, Bulcock, P and Savage W 2003 *Improving Coastal Livelihoods through Sustainable Aquaculture Practices*. A Report to the Collaborative APEC Grouper Research and Development Network (FWG/01/2001), STREAM Initiative, Bangkok. APEC Publication Number: APEC#203-FS-01.1.

Domain Z – Primary Stakeholders in Non-project Sites

Domain Z are the primary stakeholders/ultimate beneficiaries located in non-project sites in target and non-target countries. The products of NRSP's research could lead to developmental impact in this domain but only via the research uptake that may occur with the stakeholders in Domains X and Y and, in most cases, only in the longer term.

Benefit	Evidence
1. The products of this policy change research could lead to developmental impact in non-project sites in India	For the last five years, *jankars* in villages associated with GVT across Jharkhand, Orissa and West Bengal have received a bulletin called *Rural Aquaculture* in Bangla, English, Hindi and Oriya, initiated by DFID-NRSP Project R6759 (80 editions in total). Requests have been received from ICAR (Dr Ayyappan, DDG) and GVT (Dr Tomar, CEO) to support communications through similar means linked with experiences from other parts of the region.
2. The products of this policy change research could lead to developmental impact in other Asia-Pacific countries	Requests from other Asia-Pacific countries for support with policy development have been received from: □ Nepal to support the 10th Five-Year planning process (Dharaniman Singh, DDG Fisheries) □ Vietnam to support the development of the Sustainable Aquaculture for Poverty Alleviation strategy (Dr Le Than Luu, Director, Research Institute for Aquaculture No. 1, Ministry of Fisheries) □ Cambodia to support the reformulation of policy on community fisheries (Mr Nao Thouk, Director of Fisheries)

Lessons Learnt[1]

Although this project refers to work in support of aquaculture service provision, there are generic elements of policy change processes which might hold lessons for similar processes in other sectors. These include:

- The importance of relationship building
- Empowering less-heard voices
- Transcending hierarchical structures in policy review and the mediating role of "outsiders" in the India context
- The importance of drawing and sharing lessons from elsewhere
- The importance of behavioral change towards "learning" not "telling" (especially where disadvantaged groups are concerned)
- The need to set "pro-poor policy" development in the context of understanding complex livelihoods strategies, the role of participatory approaches to understanding livelihoods (giving a voice to "recipients of service provision"), and associated facilitation and language issues
- The role of rich case study information approaches versus reductionist knowledge-gathering mechanisms such as surveys and aggregated resource statistics
- The importance of understanding, engaging with and building on existing policy-making processes, and
- Rights-based approaches to development.

Relationship Building

To achieve agreement of change priorities, we believe it is necessary to build shared understandings of government services provision among recipients, implementers and policy-makers, through the facilitation of an equitable dialogue towards policy change. This necessitates bridging between different "discourse communities" and aiming specifically to contribute to "giving people a voice" in policy-making processes that have an impact on their livelihoods. In short, this highlights the importance of building relationships. Facilitating such a process involves:

- Being *people-focused*, which means taking all steps as close as possible to (in this case) fishers and farmers, remembering that relationships among people often determine any initiative's outcomes, always being aware of the diversity within a group, and focusing on how fishers and farmers themselves define improvements in their livelihoods and well-being.
- Being *participatory*, which compels us to involve as many people and partners as possible, to share decision-making and responsibility for carrying out the work, and paying attention to how processes and practices are being facilitated so that every person has opportunities to participate, and
- Being *practical*, which means making decisions and taking actions that are possible to implement; starting small, learning and growing; and being realistic about the sorts, levels and degrees of changes in policy that are possible.

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[1] The lessons learnt are being developed into a paper for submission to the journal *World Development*.

With notable exceptions, but in common with most other countries, the participation of poor people from rural areas of India in policy change has been limited at best. In 1989, while the Eighth Five-Year Plan was being debated, a seminar at the Institute of Economic Growth in Delhi gave rise to a book (Chambers et al., 1989) which began to look at the cruel paradox of mass poverty coexisting with vast resource potential in much of rural India. The authors were driven to conclude that official and professional misconceptions of the priorities of poor people hindered seeing how to help them. In addition, they asserted that the approaches of policy-makers, analysts and development practitioners to reduce poverty, spring from their ideological principles (Marxist, socialist, Gandhian, humanist, or neo-classical, among others) or their professional specialist stances (scientists, engineers, economists, educators or others).

Today, as the Tenth Five-Year Plan is being debated and composed, the STREAM Initiative has been encouraged by the Indian Government's Fisheries Commissioner to play a role in recommending policy reforms, since, in spite of efforts, the aquaculture development needs of tribal groups are still not being adequately addressed (Haylor et al., 2002). This involves gaining an understanding of the perceptions of policy-makers, officials and professionals, and more particularly, of the perceptions and priorities of tribal people, and uncovering any misconceptions that may exist. One approach to this could be advocacy, which literally means "to speak for someone". The Latin verb *vocare* (to call or summon) is the origin of the English word *voice*. To advocate has come to mean to plead on behalf of another, to represent a client in court or more generally, to raise awareness and gain support for a cause. Advocacy in its most basic form aims to change an existing situation that is unfavorable to a group of people by applying sufficient pressure on those who control the situation so that they cannot afford to maintain the status quo (Mansfield and MacLeod, 2002).

The process and practice which is building relationships among representatives of tribal communities in three Indian states (Jharkhand, Orissa and West Bengal) together with district, state and national government officials, around the issue of aquaculture services provision, is not advocacy in the literal sense. It may be thought of as a facilitated advocacy. The term *facilitation* literally means "to make the process easier" (Webne-Behrman, 1998). We are not advocating to speak for people but to make the process easier for them to "speak" for themselves, through relationship-building that gives potential recipients of service provision a voice in shaping development processes from which practical support can flow.

Bringing together diverse groups of stakeholders means that each person will come with their own set of preconceived notions and expectations of each other. With few exceptions, there will be issues of power and control in decision-making, roles of women and men, positions of government officials and villagers, the places of people from different societal classes, and levels of education. These are roots of the very "prejudices" that must be overcome if, in this case, there is to be any chance for tribal people to have a voice in policy-making.

Through thoughtful, principled facilitation, people's experiences of each other can be mediated, different understandings communicated and common ground found. Those who would exercise control from a position of power, can learn that sharing some of that does not have to be threatening, and in fact, can lead to outcomes that shed favorable light on their own work. More highly-educated people can learn that the knowledge they have acquired through schooling and employment, has also been gained by others through experience and their own livelihoods. Other examples of changed expectations could be stated between men

and women, government and non-governmental professionals, nationals and expatriates and those from different castes.

In short, our expectations will change when we have successful experiences engaging with people who are different, in such a way that we feel secure about ourselves and others' perceptions of us, and rise to the challenge of learning opportunities. The resulting trusting relationships that can be built between and among diverse partners is often a key to the success of policy change processes, or any development initiative, for that matter.

Empowering Less-heard Voices

The objective of empowerment is to support people to feel secure about new ways of working, and introducing facilitation methods that support equity and inclusion in decision-making. Such practices include:

- Consistent attention to sharing understanding and meaning across different language and discourse groups (e.g., by transcription techniques in all participants' languages)
- Providing space for non-hierarchical debate and analysis for national, state and local-level policy actors, and negotiating space for people to share their perceptions and priorities about service provision (e.g., through appropriate grouping of participants in a workshop, the use of semi-anonymous processes that can help with consensus-building), and
- Creatively using a variety of media (e.g., film documentaries, photographs and drama).

The lesson here is to hold ourselves accountable to the degree and nature of people's participation in influencing policy, and maintain our humility about how achievable this may be. A starting point can be documenting how representatives of tribal communities are physically engaged in the process, the contributions they make to the outcomes of workshops and meetings, how much learning from fieldwork with them in their own villages actually makes it into policy change priority statements, and how "close" policy-makers, officials and professionals interact with the people for whom their policies and projects are intended. In this regard, an "evolution of policy change recommendations" from this project is presented in Appendix 3 of the Policy Review Workshop report.

Transcending Hierarchical Structures

In reality, policy-making often involves a relatively few actors at national and state levels, within hierarchical bureaucratic structures and little expectation of equal roles or recipient participation. There are often discourse gaps between service providers and recipients and also between professionals up and down the government hierarchy.

Senior policy-makers in Delhi and Mumbai could see a clear role for relationship-building and learning with others about the process and practice of facilitating people's participation in policy change. Within this context, "outsiders" from this project's team began to negotiate a mediating role with key Government of India policy actors within the Ministry of Agriculture and the India Council for Agricultural Research. Both organizations accept the need for policy change to better support poor people's livelihoods and both were willing to

consider a role for outsiders and new ways of working. Three of these were proposed by the project team and accepted by government stakeholders:

□ A facilitated advocacy (see above), empowering people who are recipients and implementers of service provision to contribute their critique of the current policy context and to suggest policy change options. This was to be undertaken by the regional STREAM Initiative together with the NGO Gramin Vikas Trust, which together had the required experience and skills.

□ A mediating role undertaken by the "outsider" researchers and the use of a semi-anonymous Consensus-building Process for the prioritization of policy change options among state and national policy-makers and implementers. Anonymity and controlled feedback can help to transcend professional hierarchical structures (because participants know who is involved with the process and what the group outcome is, but not "who said what"). Consensus-building tools are particularly appropriate when decision-making is required in a political or emotional environment, or when the decisions affect strong factions with opposing preferences. Such tools can work formally or informally, in large or small group contexts, and reap the benefits of group decision-making while insulating the process from the limitations of group decision-making, including over-dominant group members and deference to seniors. The technique has four distinguishing features: anonymity (in order to transcend hierarchy), iteration with controlled feedback (to facilitate participation), statistical group response (to aid decision-making) and expert input (to source recommendations). This was successfully undertaken by neutral outsiders, strongly supported by the Government of India and heavily recommended to state-level officials.

□ Using a variety of media and mechanisms to help policy-makers understand the interaction of policies and people's complex livelihoods strategies, and the potential impacts of proposed policy changes. This was supported by outsiders through facilitating recipient statements in policy review processes in state and national workshops, the use of film documentaries, presentations and drama to describe people's livelihoods and policy change implications. Live visual media can be both entertaining and engaging, and can deliver livelihoods and policy impact understandings to national policy-makers who may be unable to visit remote communities.

Lessons from Elsewhere

"Reinvention" is often a consequence of limited communication and increasing information exchange commonly reduces the transaction cost of development, and in this case, of policy change. Of particular importance (and the overall aim of all project activities) has been to give poor people "a voice" in policy-making processes. Through an examination of case studies from around the world, drawing on Goetz and Gaventa (2001), the major types of available services and support in "giving a voice" in policy-making were collated and debated by stakeholders in "tribal" states of India.

Another broad area where valuable lessons are available from elsewhere is the examination of the importance, meaning and mechanism of participation, and the challenge for poor people to find the time, energy and appropriate forums to participate in processes conducted

in far-off places or dominated by richer, more-influential local residents. The hierarchies of participation and the importance of continuous interaction (rather than one-off token interaction) are especially valuable existing analyses. In particular is the need for recipients to monitor and evaluate policy. Throughout this project, indicators of progress in achieving policy change were continually debated and revised by stakeholders.

The need to set "pro-poor policy" development in the context of understanding complex livelihoods strategies (see further) is an important lesson from this project. However, there is much learning about livelihoods analysis approaches and their use in poverty reduction strategies that can be drawn from elsewhere (see "A Review of Lessons Learnt in Enabling People's Participation in Policy-making Processes). There is (as yet) far less practical learning that is being shared about livelihoods and the language and resource issues that surround understanding complexity in the lives of recipients of service provision.

Behavioral Change – Learning, not Telling

The objectives and indicators set by service providers do not always closely match those of potential recipients of service provision. In this regard, three institutional constraints appear to be common:

- The perceived role of a service provider as teacher not learner
- The persistent "resource focus" of development – "In my country we have many fish ponds, therefore we should promote aquaculture."
- The focus on production targets and the limited understanding of poor people's livelihoods – "We tell farmers to maximize production, but they don't follow our instructions."

Changing behavior is therefore necessary so that more service provision comes from organizations and individuals that listen and learn about recipient's lives and objectives – that service provision is built on people's objectives and not based primarily on the existence of a resource, and that the indicators used to monitor success in service provision reflect people's criteria for success, not institutional productivity targets.

The promotion of behavior change involves capacity-building in terms of awareness-raising and training, but also in terms of capacitating people to work in new ways. This might include greater use of participatory livelihoods approaches to understand poor people's livelihoods objectives, and to monitor and evaluate service provision though mechanisms which capture significant changes in people's lives, rather than, for example, "percentage of derelict ponds" or "average production of fish per unit area".

The persistence of the "resource focus" and the desire to see production maximized, the temptation to teach rather than listen, and the early stages in the understanding of approaches to livelihoods analysis, and monitoring change and process rather than production or area-based targets, are significant challenges. Processes which support this kind of behavioral change require being significantly resourced by donors interested in scaling up poverty alleviation within national policy change processes.

"Pro-poor Policy" Development and Complex Livelihoods Strategies

Germaine to the behavioral changes highlighted above is the need to understand livelihoods contexts prior to embarking on policy change. Such an approach is founded on the negotiation of a commitment from policy-makers to build an understanding of the aspirations of recipients, i.e., poor women, men and youth, including tribal and other marginalized and disadvantaged groups.

Contemporary aquaculture development objectives should be concerned with maximizing opportunities and choices, especially among disadvantaged groups, within the context of the relationships among commodities, services and people. The Government of India and state governments are aware of the potential of aquaculture to support the livelihoods of poor people through improved food security and income generation[2]. In addition, they are aware of the need to empower local communities, including disadvantaged groups such as Scheduled Tribes, to manage their own affairs and attain the ownership and sustainable management of their natural resources, including water and fish resources[3]. However, initiatives which encourage development of commodities and services in support of aquaculture have largely failed to provide the opportunities and choices upon which people can act. National directives, such as in Five-Year Plans – which are often technically complex, require substantial investment to maximize production and introduced as target-based programs where the DOF objective is to raise production – have failed to meet local aspirations (which deal with risk-management, and diversified, often integrated, production systems).

Some conceptual clarity around the factors which underlie this failure can be borrowed from the field of welfare economics, especially Gorman (1956) and Lancaster (1966) on commodities and their characteristics, and Amartya Sen (1999) on commodities and capabilities. The existence of a commodity, such as water resources for aquaculture, only holds development promise if, in this case, tribal people can secure entitlement to it and thus exercise command over the corresponding properties of the water resource, e.g., that it can support fish culture. However, the characteristics of the water resource to which there is secured entitlement still does not tell us what tribal people will be able to do with it. What they succeed in doing with the water resource and its corresponding characteristics at their disposal are what Sen (1999) refers to as a "functioning", reflecting the actual pattern of use and comprising both opportunity and choice.

Understanding and taking account of the livelihoods opportunities of tribal people and the choices that they make, we would argue, is the key lesson to addressing the failure of initiatives which aim to support their development. Understanding the realities of other people's lives, livelihoods, priorities and choices, demands us to consider the expectations we have of others and of how we work with them. Importantly, the principle of tolerance, which

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[2] The Eighth Five-Year Development Plan (1990-94) paid particular attention to rain-fed farming systems, especially their accelerated growth in the eastern areas of India. The Plan called for a systems approach and the diversification and intensification of small-holder agriculture, including aquaculture and specifically initiatives to expand and intensify freshwater aquaculture.

[3] The 73rd Constitutional Amendment (1992) re-introduced the ancient concept of the Gram Sabha – a combined assembly of all voters in a village – and the direct election of a representative to a Gram Panchayat – an executive body with powers over many matters affecting the lives and livelihoods of villagers. This was extended to tribal and scheduled areas in 1996 when parliament extended the 73rd Amendment to tribal areas (Act 40/96). This gave certain additional powers to Gram Sahbas (not Panchayats) in tribal areas, including executive rights over natural resources.

underlies the full consideration of the opportunities open to others, and appreciation of the right to exercise choice, can lead to the incorporation of diversity into support initiatives.

Case Studies

The origin of the use of case studies can be found in the disciplines of law, medicine and business. Law as a discipline is essentially composed of criminal and civil cases. New decisions, cases and laws are built upon old decisions. Students learning the profession must study the cases of the past and use them as examples of judicial reasoning (Herreid, 1997). Similarly, a physician's work is a succession of cases of particular examples of general physiological systems gone awry. His or her job is to reason deductively from general principles to reach the solution of a particular problem. Thus, in both law and medicine, cases are real stories dealing with people in trouble. In business, Harvard professors introduced cases for the first time to give students practical experience for use in the real world. For instance, businesspersons were invited into the classroom to tell students about actual problems. The students held discussions and offered solutions, thus the start of the "Case Method" now commonly in use.

As well as a rich source of knowledge, it has long been acknowledged that learning from case studies also helps to develop analytical and decision-making skills and higher-order skills of learning (Gragg, 1953). Looking at Bloom's (1956) taxonomy of cognitive learning, the focus is less on "knowledge" than on comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation, the very skills required for "pro-poor policy" development in the context of understanding complex livelihoods strategies.

Therefore, case studies are ideally suited to illustrate the relevance of policy in society and to highlight the need for and direction of policy change. In addition, case studies are equally well suited to the collaborative learning format of small or large group discussions. The use of case studies of service provision provided a rich source of material for policy debate and offered "entry points" for thinking about policy change. The common tendency to work with aggregated resource and production statistics at the national level does not provide this opportunity.

As far as we are aware, locally-written and performed drama to interpret and illustrate case studies in policy-making forums has not previously been used in India. Its utility in "giving a voice" to recipients of policy to "talk" to time-restricted policy-makers about the impacts of policy on livelihoods may have been overlooked. Recent advances in hand-held video technology provide a further opportunity for drama to be captured and relayed in a cost-effective format that can be sub-titled or dubbed in other languages to increase access.

Existing Policy-making Processes

It is important to recognize that policy, whether *de facto* or extant, is usually the current expression of evolving efforts to manage conflicting agenda of a variety of stakeholders. It is unlikely to begin with a blank sheet of paper, but rather involves engaging with existing policy-making processes. Every effort should be made to understand the processes that are in place. All stakeholders should be encouraged to engage with policy-making in a spirit of tolerance. According to Vogt (1977), tolerance can be defined as "intentional self-restraint in the face of something one dislikes, objects to, finds threatening or otherwise has a negative attitude towards, usually in order to maintain a social or political group or to promote

harmony in a group". The provision for diversity in policy and the need for equitable policy outcomes are fundamental. Tolerance, Vogt argues, is necessary for diversity to peacefully coexist with equity.

It follows, therefore, that facilitating a diversity of voices in policy formulation requires a process to promote equity and minimize conflict, and thereby provide conditions conducive to tolerance. The inequity in this case is in terms of inclusion of proposed recipients and their expression in the policy process. Expression that is "active, free and meaningful" (UN Declaration on the Right to Development) requires facilities to bridge divides between policy-makers, recipients of services, and other discourse communities.

One of the inherent conflicts, not only in the Indian context, is the diversity of ideological principles and professional stances of a range of stakeholders. Therefore, to promote tolerance amid diversity requires professional services and resources for coping with difference. The process to promote equity and minimize conflict must also attempt to break down the hierarchy of power relations among different policy actors.

Another source of inherent conflict are the necessarily diverse components of the livelihoods of people who are resource-poor, where diversity serves a strategic function for vulnerable individuals and groups. This sits uncomfortably with a tendency in policy formulation to simplify and homogenize. Formulating a clear, concise policy that can tolerate a necessary range of approaches pursued simultaneously by those who are vulnerable, represents a substantial challenge. Rights-based approaches enshrined in the Indian constitution have an important role to play here in establishing the principle of recognizing and working with diversity.

Rights-based Approaches to Development

The World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993 (UNHCR, 1996-2002) enshrined minimum rights based on elementary human needs and bestowed them on all people. Each country has an obligation to provide to individuals the rights contained in two covenants on civil and political rights and on economic, social and cultural rights.

Essentially, a rights-based approach integrates the norms, standards and principles of the international human rights system into the plans, policies and processes of development. The norms and standards are those contained in the wealth of international treaties and declarations. These include rights to education, information and a decent standard of living. The principles include equality and equity, accountability, empowerment and participation, and involve express linkage to rights, non-discrimination and attention to vulnerable groups.

Rights-based approaches require a high degree of participation from communities, civil society, minorities, indigenous people, women and others. According to the UN Declaration on the Right to Development, such participation must be "active, free and meaningful" so that mere formal or "ceremonial" contacts with beneficiaries are not sufficient.

Rights-based approaches give due attention to issues of accessibility, including access to development processes, institutions, information and redress or complaints mechanisms. This also means situating development project mechanisms in proximity to partners and beneficiaries. Such approaches necessarily opt for process-based development methodologies

and techniques, rather than externally-conceived "quick fixes" and imported technical models.

In India, indigenous people are referred to as *adivasis* (meaning literally, first settlers) and under the constitution, they have been specified as Scheduled Tribes (Thakur, 2001). Human rights are provided for by the Indian constitution and specified in the Protection of Human Rights Act (1993) which makes the constitution and international covenants enforceable by Indian courts (Khaitan, 2001). National development processes have often failed to include the "active, free and meaningful" participation of *adivasis*. As a result, national development objectives and policies, as conceived by national-level officials and processes, have not always been consistent with the perceptions and priorities of indigenous people affected by them. Some have had a serious negative impact on indigenous communities, including displacement, loss of livelihood, destruction of local environments, damage to sacred sites and, from the perspective of indigenous people, an intrusive, unsustainable and unplanned influx of outsiders into traditional territories. These are what may be thought of as some of the underlying causes of poverty and social injustice which rights-based approaches attempt to address.

Indigenous people are often wary of programs offered in the name of development, perhaps even those which claim to be rights-based. While not necessarily opposed to development policies that bring improvements nationally and locally, indigenous people have consistently insisted that they be empowered to affect decisions that have an impact on their communities and rights. Recognition of and respect for land and resources are fundamental to many indigenous belief systems. Experience has shown that conflicts arise when development projects take place without an understanding of, or respect for, indigenous people's strong spiritual attachment to and traditional association with their lands and territories.

Emerging international and state standards and practices are increasingly recognizing that indigenous people should have rights over their lands and development projects that affect them. Article 30 of the draft "United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples" states that indigenous people have the right "to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands, territories or other resources".

The STREAM Initiative, which is mandated by the governments of 15 countries in Asia-Pacific, embodies a response to Chapter 26 of Agenda 21 of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, which calls upon inter-governmental organizations such as NACA to establish a process that empowers indigenous people and their communities through, *inter alia*, recognition of their lands, support for alternative environmentally-sound means of production, and arrangements to strengthen indigenous participation in the national formulation of policies, laws and programs relating to resource management and development that may affect them. This is a powerful rationale for the STREAM Initiative and a goal to which this project has aspired.

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