Assistance in synthesis and documentation of health, environment and development outcomes in urban Ecohealth project, Katmandu

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Background

The International Development Research Center's (IDRC) Ecosystem Approaches to Human Health Program Initiative (Ecohealth PI, http://www.idrc.ca/ecohealth) supports applied research for development that utilizes a complex systems approach to examine social and ecological dimensions of health and environmental problems and in designing and implementing multi-sector interventions to address these problems.

The National Zoonoses and Food Hygiene Centre (NZFHRC), a national NGO working in Kathmandu, is implementing Urban Ecosystem and Health Project in wards 19 and 20 of the Kathmandu city since 1992. The phase one of the project is (1998-2001) on Urban Echinococcosis/hydatidosis in wards 19 and 20 of Katmandu City established the links between poor urban sanitation and environmental hygiene (including, unhygienic open-air slaughterhouses and carcass disposal, poor hygiene in meat shops, restaurants and tea shops) and high transmission of diseases from animals to humans. This was followed by participatory action research using an ecosystem approach (phases I and II), based on the premise that improvements in ecosystem management through community initiatives could improve human health and well-being of local populations. These different projects differed in purpose and approach: an epidemiological investigative phase (1992-1998); a systems analysis phase focusing on the link between social, ecological, and health determinants using an ecosystem approach to health (1998-2001); and an action phase employing a variety of multi-stakeholder lobbying approaches to influence policy, as well as community organization and capacity building to influence, in turn, the implementation of policies and programs (2003-2006). The last phase or third phase of the project (2007-2009) aims to strengthen local organization, and enhance the capacity of local groups and local authorities in the project Wards to set in place processes for improving the health status of the population and the quality of their living and working environments.

The projects were successful in influencing different policies in Nepal and city programs of Kathmandu, resulting specifically in a new Animal Slaughtering and Meat Inspection Act, modification of the Nepal Food Act, modification of the Garbage Disposal Act, revisions to the Kathmandu Valley Housing Plan, and revisions to the Nepal Drinking Water and Sewerage Plan. The projects led also to the creation/ strengthening of 18 local stakeholder groups, the majority of which obtained legal status and gained the ability to influence local development programs and access local development funds.

Through these projects, NZFHRC was able to strengthen local organization, and enhance the capacity of local groups and local authorities in the project Wards to set in place processes for improving the health status of the population and the quality of their living and working environments. Important policies and programs were developed or modified, and local projects were implemented to facilitate the application of associated new regulations and new practices. Community-led actions included proper management of household and commercial waste, improvement of drainage systems and slaughterhouses; hygiene promotion in food stores and restaurants, protection of water sources; preservation and protection of public spaces including riverbanks, among others.

The political conflict in the country and city, however, weakened local governments, especially over the last years, slowing down and even preventing the registration as legal entities of the poorer stakeholder groups (street sweepers, street vendors, squatters, and small tea shop and restaurant services) in the project wards, also slowing down the implementation of their community development plans. Tracking and documenting of outcomes (development, health and policy) was also slow. This last project support is helping the research team diversify their funding sources of support to local community groups, and

analyze and document in a systematic manner the outcomes of the project and lessons in policy influence and policy implementation.

Realizing this IDRC offered consultancy to provide guidance to the research team in mapping, synthesizing and documenting the most relevant/ significant health, environment and community development outcomes of the work accomplished over the various project phases. One of the major task was to assist the NZFHRC team in designing a strategy and methods for mapping, synthesizing and documenting the most relevant/ significant health, environment and community development outcomes of the urban health project. The consultant was also responsible for planning and leading a 3-day workshop in Kathmandu with the NZFHRC research team and selected representatives of stakeholder groups to refine the strategy and methods, and prepare a 2-month work-plan, to carry out the mapping, synthesis and documentation work.

Objective of the workshop

- Designing strategy and methods for mapping, synthesizing and documenting the most relevant health, environment and community development outcomes of the urban health project
- Collaborative inquiry and social engagement of stakeholders for understanding problem, actor and option

Design of the workshop

The workshop was designed in such a way that the strategy and methods for mapping, synthesizing and documenting the most relevant outcome of the project is well internalized and owned by the stakeholders. The preliminary drafting of the strategy and methods by the research team and consultant were kept open and flexible in order to get wider perspectives of the stakeholders and their critical input in developing roadmap for the synthesis and documentation. Day one was focused on conceptualizing the project, its contribution and major outcomes. The day was also focused in refining the strategy and methods and developing action plans. Day two was focused on social enquiry and collaborative learning. The use of various social analysis tools helped in the understanding the social changes and major impacts among stakeholders, the contributing factors and other relevant issues and opportunities. Day two did not only help stakeholders internalize the learning, but also brought all together to a shared learning dialogue (collective learning and sharing process) with exchange of information and knowledge. It contributed in making stakeholder realize and be proud of the contribution each made in the process and outcomes.

Day One	Day two	Day Three
Mapping the synthesis and design plan - Agreeing on what to document, when, how and by whom	Understanding the social change and major impacts	Understanding the social changes and major impacts

Fig 1. Workshop framework

Facilitation and workshop procedure

The workshop was conducted in a participatory way using the Social Analysis Tools. More time was spent on group exercise, discussion and sharing in plenary. The facilitator only provided tips and guidance in the beginning by introducing the event and process. Participants themselves took lead in group facilitation, discussion and presentation. Several methods were used in group formation in order to mix different groups of stakeholders to that exchange of information and knowledge will be ensured. The table 1 below summarizes the key events and the tools used.

Table 1. Use of participatory tools and techniques facilitating the workshop.

Events	Tools	Mode of engagement
Mapping the design of the synthesis and documentation process	Pile sorting and clustering	Group discussion and presentation in the plenary
Finalizing work plan	Matrix ranking	Discussion and plenary
Historical trend analysis	Time line	Group exercises
Understanding stakeholder dynamics	Social Analysis CLIP	Group exercise, presentation
Understanding the communication and network dynamics	Network dynamics	Group exercise and presentation
Understanding the problem and effectiveness of interventions	Force Field	Group exercise
Understanding the effectiveness of major impacts	Social Domain, matrix ranking	Group exercise and presentation
Realizing the skills and competencies of stakeholders	Skill Profile/Wheel	Group exercise
Sharing best practices and learning	Story telling/role dynamics	Group exercise, presentation
Knowing each other	Face to face interaction	In pair
Recalling the 3 day workshop	Fun Quiz	Group

Major highlight of the workshop

a. **Participation:** There were more than 30 stakeholders from all the 18 organizations with good female representation. The group exercise and sharing was a learning opportunity for all to facilitate the group, communicate with each other and present to the wider groups. This fostered group cohesion, collective action and build the confidence of stakeholders.

b. **Knowledge sharing**: the workshop turned out to be a venue for stakeholders to express their feeling, perception and demonstrate their skills through various means. It helped

in exchanging of ideas, innovations, practices, stories and lessons related to project. Each participant learned the spirit of other and enjoyed the process. More over the rich knowledge and information among individuals were shared in the larger group making them realize their own strength.

c. **Ownership of the process**: All the participants left the hall with a smile on their face and feeling proud of their participation, engagement and contribution in the project. They felt more empowered and energetic after the 3 days workshop with more confidence and plans.

d. **Consensus and collective action:** The participants collectively concluded about the mapping and developed a joint plan for synthesis and documentation. During presentation and discussion, they respected each other's view and reached to consensus without much disputes and disagreement.

e. **Output:** The workshop was successful and achieved its output. The participants came with a framework, design and action plan for the synthesis and documentation work.

Major Outputs of the workshop

a. **Design framework for the synthesis work**

The participants reached to the consensus on the design framework presented by the project team. Stakeholders gave more emphasis to apply participatory processes in the synthesis work and documentation. They strongly felt that the impact and changes should be well documented and shared with other stakeholders including government. They also requested to project to prepare the outcome document in Nepali, publish and have wider circulation. The final design framework is reflected in figure 2.
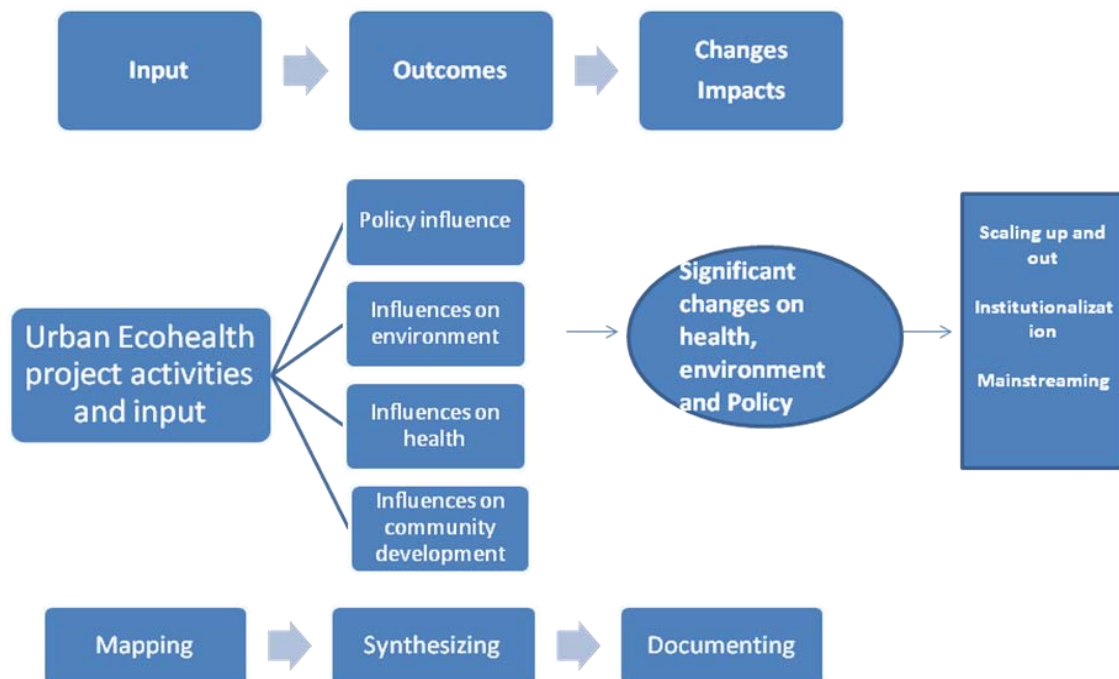
Fig 2. Design framework for synthesis

Mapping Outcome indicator

Participants were divided into four groups and each group identified major changes and impacts in their surrounding, health and society. They discussed among the groups and presented their outcome in the plenary. The changes identified by all the groups were focused on: improvement in health of people and animals; ii) improvement in the environment and surrounding; iii) improvement in their social life; iv) improvement in policy making process; and v) changes in institutional development and community mobilization. The group also identified outcome indicators for each of the changes (table 2).

Table 2. Major changes/impact and the indicators identified by stakeholders.

Major changes	Indicators
Health	Development of infrastructure Health consciousness among people Decrease in outbreak of major diseases Improvement in community sanitation Improvement in food hygiene and quality Decrease in child and women mortality rate
Environment	Awareness on environment management Improvement in waste disposals Clean and green corridors Establishment of biogas plant Closure of open slaughter houses Recycling of waste
Community empowerment	Environment friendly society Development of we feeling Improvement in sanitation of public places Healthy live
Community Development	Increase in knowledge, skill and capacity of communities The organizations are capacitated and functional Confidence building of community members Increase access to services like clinic etc.
Social changes	Increase in income of the targeted beneficiaries The skills, knowledge and capacity of targeted beneficiaries has improved People are self reliant and self dependent Development of communal feeling
Policy	Policy advocacy and influence to the government Communities ownership on drafting policy and submitting to the government

Methodology and tools
Discussion among stakeholders reviewed and finalized the key methodology and tools for the synthesis and documentation. The four groups presented group findings and discussion was held to consolidate and develop coherent set of methodology and tools in carrying out the information collection and documentation (Table 3).

Table 3. Methods and tools identified by stakeholders for the synthesis and documentation

	Methods	Tools
Health outcomes	Generating both qualitative and quantitative information on issues, and outcomes	Documenting key policies and plan, community development practices, good practices and key learning related to outcome and impact
Environment outcomes	Collecting secondary and primary information on most pressing environment changes such as water, air, sanitation (in door and outdoor), community disposal system, awareness and community actions	Participatory methods (before and after changes, comparative study)
Social outcomes	Collecting primary information on the social changes, the contribution to livelihoods, social processes, community development, institutional growth	Stakeholder consultation Policy dialogue Questionnaire survey Key informant interview Video documentation Consolidating project information
`Policy outcomes	Generate information on policy influences, policy outcomes, implementation of policies, strategies taken by local government body, community support	Policy dialogues, Policy workshop, Key informants interview, Policy review

Stakeholder engagement
The group discussion also focused on who should be involved in what and how. The emphasis of the group was on involvement and engagement of all the stakeholders in the synthesis and documentation of the project outcomes and changes. All the 18 stakeholder presented in the workshop showed commitment to provide support by directly involving and facilitating the documentation team during data collection. The specific contribution of stakeholders identified during the workshop is listed in table 4.

Table 4. Area of engagement and stakeholders interest

Key areas of engagement	Stakeholders interest
Policy assessment	Ward level authority and NZFHRC
Social change	Clubs, and beneficiaries, NZFHRC
Environment change	All the stakeholders including Ward level authority, NZFHRC
Health changes	Clinic, all the beneficiaries, NZFHRC

Action Plan

The stakeholders came up with action plan listing major activities, the time line for its accomplishment or implementation and stakeholders responsible for leading the specific activities. The plan is expected to be completed 10 weeks time. The project team will seek support from stakeholders in collecting, consolidating and documenting most significant changes and impacts due to project interventions (Table 5).
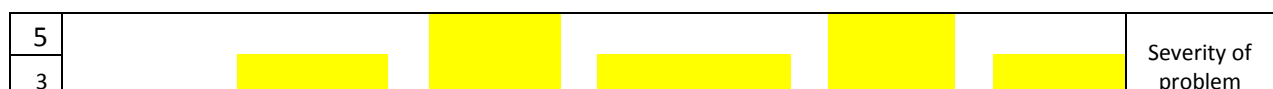
Table 5. Action plan for the work

Action Plan	June				July				August		Who
	1 week	2 week	3 week	4 week	1 week	2 week	3 week	4 week	1 week	2 week	
Synthesis design workshop	■										Stakeholders
Compilation of workshop outputs		■									NZFHRC
Group discussion on identifying synthesis and documentation time		■									NZFHRC, Consultant
Data collection (interview, discussion, policy workshop etc)			■	■							NZFHRC
Compilation of the data, synthesis and analysis					■	■					NZFHRC,
Prepare preliminary draft						■					NZFHRC
Produce at least 4-5 technical papers on each of the impact theme							■				NZFHRC Consultant
Sharing with stakeholders							■				NZFHRC
Review the papers								■	■		Consultant
Publish and submit to donor and stakeholders									■	■	NZFHRC

Outcome of Day Two

a. Perception on effectiveness of the project

Social analysis tool named force field was used to understand the stakeholders view on the factors that cause the problem and those that are supported by project to counteract the problems and stop it from becoming worse. It will help in assessing whether the proposed activities are sufficient enough to address the problem or not. Group exercises were done and plenary discussion was organized to map this effectiveness of the project. The outcome shows that majority of the problems were solved by the project except the policy gaps (see figure).

|	Lack of institution and leadership	No management of slaughter househouses and unhealth sale	Weak policy and gvt support	Improper waste disposal	Lack of health awareness	Pollution	
3	Lack of institution and leadership	No management of slaughter househouses and unhealth sale	Weak policy and gvt support	Improper waste disposal	Lack of health awareness	Pollution	
2							
1							
1	Formation of ICC, formation of institutions, capacity building	Slaughter houses, training, awareness, policy support	Workshop on policy drafting, submission	Training, awarnessCleanign around river	Training on food hygene, estb of clinic, vaccine, various test	Collection of waste, compost training, awareness, Kitchen gardening, plantation	Effectiveness of project
2							
3							
4							
5							

b. Perception on major outcomes of the project

Majority of the stakeholders perceive that the major outcomes of the project was on health, environment and social changes. They have rated these outcomes as high. But with regards to the outcome on policy, majority feels that the policy feedback is good, policy recommendations were drafted and provided to the government, but the implementation part has been very weak. Stakeholders strongly perceive that due to the project people's awareness, knowledge and skills have drastically improved. According to them this has raised health consciousness, improved in door and outdoor sanitation, improved waste disposal and management, improved the condition of Bishnumati river and the corridors and changes communities practice and habit in consuming food. Major changes were also reported by the group on institutional strengthening, internal governance of the group, inclusion of members, empowerment of vulnerable and marginalized groups and mainstreaming development partners for community actions.

c. Changes in skills and competencies of stakeholders

Participants identified communication, facilitation, taking leadership, social mobilization, community development, analytical as their core competencies where the project has contributed. Individual exercise was done to map the skill and competencies of stakeholders. The individuals were then suggested to form of group of other individual who have the similar type of competencies. It provided the opportunity for all the participants on identifying their core competencies and knowing people of different competencies and level. The outcome shows that the project contributed in developing facilitation, community development, social mobilization skills of participants. With regards to communication and information analysis, participants realized that they have to improve on this. They also realized that they do not have much practice in sharing information and knowledge with each other and they should focus on this in future.
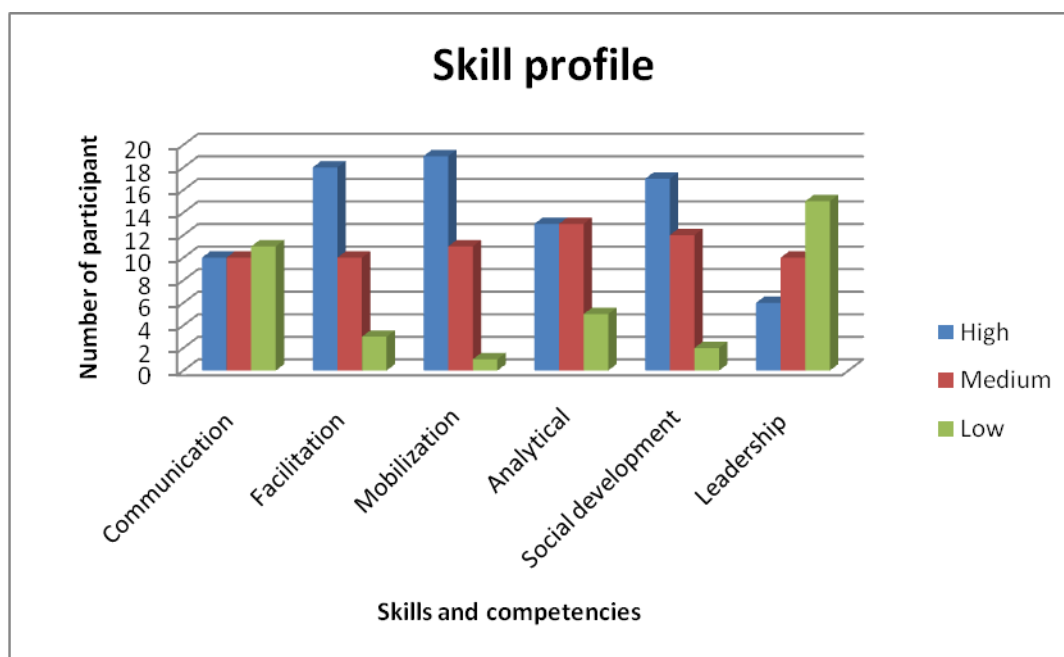
Conclusion

The design workshop was useful in identifying framework, strategy, methodology and tools in documenting in a systematic manner the outcomes of the project and lessons in policy influence and policy implementation. It brought all together 35-40 individuals representing 18 major stakeholders and key beneficiaries together to discuss the outcome mapping and plan for future course of actions. It was also a way of fostering collaborative inquiry, social learning, and stakeholder engagement in identifying the most significant changes, exploring the indicators and recommending process led approach for synthesis and documentation.

The action plan is now inclusive and owned by all the stakeholders. The emphasis was given in participatory processes and documenting major social, environmental and policy changes as an outcome of the project implementation. Good practices, lesson learned will be systematically documented using both quantitative and qualitative information, case studies, success stories and documents.