

Sustaining Livelihoods in Southern Africa

Issue: 9 April 2003

**Theme: Community-based Workers as a model for pro-poor service
delivery**

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Editor's notes

The last newsletter looked at governance issues and the critical weakness of links between community (macro and meso) and governance services at meso level. This month's issue looks at how linkages and services can be improved, specifically the use of Community-based Workers in the context of delivering services to poor people and developing effective linkages between the micro and meso levels. Jo Abbot of CARE South Africa - Lesotho, Ian Goldman and James Carnegie of Khanya-managing rural change are the co-authors of this newsletter. The contents draw on previous work by Khanya, including work in Uganda on developing community-based models for forestry service delivery and CARE's work in Lesotho on promoting community based workers in the HIV/AIDS and Agriculture sectors. CARE and Khanya organised a Regional Symposium on "Para-professionals as a model for pro-poor service delivery" in November 2002 in Lesotho, attended by over sixty participants from eleven different countries in Southern and East Africa, with sectors including health, agriculture, HIV, literacy and legal fields. Details of the workshop are provided later.

Some background to Community-based Workers

How to deliver services to poor people is a question that underpins much current development debate. Despite continued investment in the privatisation and decentralisation of services, in practice the only government service which consistently reaches villages throughout Africa is primary schools. Without increasing the reach and impact of many services it is unlikely that there will be significant impacts on poverty reduction. In a climate of reducing public expenditure, one way this could be done is to develop community-based service delivery models, such as the paraprofessional or community worker/volunteer model, including village health workers, paravets, barefoot doctors, community agriculture facilitators, community business advisors, village-based home-based care workers for HIV/AIDS, or community forestry workers. While there are numerous examples of community-based workers in a range of sectors across the world,

this model has so far fails to make significant impacts on public services - except in a few countries, like Kenya, which in the process of institutionalising the paravet model.

A model for Community-based Workers

There are many forms of community-based service delivery. This newsletter focuses on the community-based worker concept where there are a number of roleplayers consisting of the community, a community-based worker, a facilitating agent (from the government or non-government sector) who supports and mentors the community worker, and other service providers. The community-based worker has particular and discrete skills - a para-professional; is based in, and is drawn from the community he/she serves and therefore understands the local context and is accountable to the community and to a facilitating agent - maintaining a balance to ensure quality service delivery.



In this model, the community refers to the direct and indirect beneficiaries or clients of the system, recognizing the diverse and complex nature of communities. The community worker is the main actor and is part of the community. He/she lives and works in the community, is able to demonstrate by practical example, and shares results of their experimentation at little cost. They provide technical information and advice, as well as being able to organise and animate community members. The Facilitating Agent is the organisation (NGO, government or private sector) that supports CBWs through the provision of resources, training, and management. This organisation is important as it should promote the CBWs, the community and the functioning of the system, and not itself, and therefore needs to be true to the ideology of participation and empowerment. The Facilitating Agent facilitates information flows between and among the different role-players, and linkages between and among a network of responsive service providers. These include the many organisations from a micro- to macro-level, formal and informal, government, private sector and NGOs that provide a range of services to community members.

Depending on the needs of the community and the type of services being provided, the CBW will engage in different activities with communities. These include:

- Being a conduit for information and technologies (and sometimes, inputs);
- Being a bridge/link person between the community and service providers/facilitating agent;
- Mobilising the community for learning activities and people into groups;
- Engaging in training activities with the facilitating agent, and training community members with follow up;
- Working on their own activities and with natural resources users, providing demonstrations from their own farm; and
- Animating the community by providing energy and enthusiasm for development activities and maintaining the momentum of development activities.

CBW models have often failed because of a lack of institutional support - CBWs are perceived to be at the "bottom" in the chain of resources. It is important to look at the CBW system as a whole to turn the service delivery system on its head, so that CBWs are recognised as front-line deliverers of services. There appear to be at least two types of CBW model in common usage. First a volunteer based on 3-5 hours worked a week with the community. Second, a remunerated CBW, also selected from the community, but working part to full-time, from 20-40 hours a week.

Training for CBWs is variable, ranging from 1 week for some of the volunteer concepts, to 6 months for some of the part-full-time paid workers, with the training often spread over 1-2 years. The community worker concepts appear to be cost-effective. Evaluation of different agricultural CBW models in Lesotho show that the cost to make a significant impact ranges from US\$200-450. This represented the cost of making families self-sufficient in most of their foodstuffs apart from cereals - a major achievement.

Community-based Workers & the Sustainable Livelihoods

Approach Ways in which the CBW system relates to the principles which underly the SLA are:

- people-focused/participatory/responsive/strengths-based - workers come from community and so they know the local situation. If locally accountable the system is more "bottom up";
- holistic - as local, CBWs understand the complexity of people's lives;
- partnership - should be community involvement in selection and management, often supported by NGOs or government, and with involvement of a range of stakeholders and service providers;
- micro-macro links - focus is at micro level, linked to meso support, and the macro enabling environment;
- sustainability - through community ownership, services provided in communities, cost sharing (volunteerism) - but they do need support; and
- commitment to poverty reduction

Good practices in Community-based worker systems to operate

Some of the issues around the CBW system include:

- Selection criteria - being a practitioner already of the skill, good communication skills and strong social acceptability (honesty, respect etc);
- Selection process - community must be involved in developing the criteria, involving existing institutions, and with clear roles and responsibilities;
- Appropriate tasks/roles - often a more specialist technical skill means more value to the community but they may also need animation roles;
- Targetting - need for adequate situational analysis and full participation of vulnerable groups;
- FA role - includes facilitation of entry process, linking communities with service providers, identifying suitable technologies, engaging policy makers and M&E;
- External support/training - need for continuous learning process, and hence on-going training and support process from FA. This includes sensitisation of the professions which CBWs may be seen to challenge;
- Accountability needs to be to both community and the FA;
- Management by the community - building on existing structures and committees, building their governance capacity and using the committee to provide support to the CBWs;
- Incentives - this is problematic - monetary incentives will often be needed if people are working half-time, other incentives are important to promote voluntarism;
- Financing of CBW system - traditional in-kind or monetary support is declining. Some fee charges may be appropriate if the service is valued, but it is important to look at mainstreaming CBW in national government budgets. Cost recovery, eg through sale of drugs by paravets, provides another model;
- Appropriate enabling environment - policies, guidelines, rules and regulations need to cater for CBW systems. The CBWs are working in isolation and may not be recognised by government institutions. There can also be professional backlashes against community-based worker models, particularly in specialised fields such as veterinary and law;
- Links to government - in some cases these exist (eg home-based care in South Africa, paralegals in Ecuador, paravets in Kenya) but often there is resistance from government to recognising CBW systems. It is important that Government provides a suitable enabling environment, plays a supervisory and monitoring role, and looks at emerging issues across sectors;
- Sustainability and replicability - it is important to share and demonstrate impact of work by CBWs and to influence government policies for service delivery to accommodate CBWs. Village to village sharing should be encouraged e.g. CBWs come together to share lessons or develop a federated organisation or CBO to provide mutual support

Building on these good practices and emerging lessons Khanya are hoping to start soon a 4-country action research project learning from best practices and improving CBW systems. We will be working with partners in South Africa, Uganda, Lesotho and a fourth country, including CARE SA-Lesotho. This will focus on HIV/AIDS and the natural

resources sectors. For further information contact Ian Goldman at goldman@khanya-mrc.co.za.

Key documents on Community-based Workers

Community-based animal healthcare. PLA Notes (Notes on Participatory Learning and Action): Issue 45. International Institute for Environment and Development (October 2002). Issue 45 of PLA Notes looks at community-based animal health care or participatory epidemiology. Discussions cover community participation, policy, and institutional change, and look at specific methodologies and impact assessments. The articles that are featured in the publication highlight recent exploration and adaptations of participatory approaches and methods that have been used to understand diseases in animal population as a means of improving disease control, such as through community-based animal health services. The PLA Notes Issues could be obtained from the International Institute of Environment and Development, 3 Endsleigh Street, London WC1H 0DD, UK, Tel: +44 (0) 20 7388 2117, Fax: +44 (0) 20 7388 2826, E-mail: pla.notes@iied.org, PLA Notes website: www.planotes.org.

Community Health Workers in South Africa. Health Systems Trust (1997), South Africa. Compiled by Denise Cruse. Drawing on international experience on community health worker systems, the document defines the roles, cost, effectiveness and necessity of community health worker in the context of the South African Primary Health Care system. The document aims to inform South African policy makers about the strengths and weaknesses of community health workers when planning the extent of their input in each province. HTS could be reached at: 401 Maritime House, Salmon Grove, Victoria Embankment, Durban 4001 Tel: 27 31 3072954 Fax: 27 31 3040775 Info: hst@healthlink.org.za. The document could be downloaded at: www.hst.org.za/pubs/other/chws.pdf

An Economic Analysis of Community Health Worker Programmes in the Western Cape Province. By Bupendra Makan & Max Bachmann (1997). Supported and co-ordinated by Health Systems Trust. The role and functioning of Community Health Worker (CHW) programmes in South Africa's health system requires clearer definition and evaluation. This report seeks to inform this process by providing information for CHW programmes, the national and provincial policy-makers and district level health managers involved in the debate. It provides information about CHW programmes in the Western Cape province and presents an innovative evaluation methodology. The report could be accessed at <http://www.hst.org.za/research/econ%5Fchw.htm>

Community-Based Service Provision: A Review To Develop Guidelines For The Forest Sector. April 2002. Khanya-managing rural change & Environmental Alert (Uganda). The Uganda Forest Sector Co-ordination Secretariat has piloted a process to develop district services that enhance the contribution forestry makes to people's livelihoods. The concept of community-based service delivery was proposed as one method for the delivery of commonly used services in the policy and institutional environment in Uganda. The Secretariat commissioned Khanya and Environmental Alert to design and pilot a community-based worker model for this purpose. This document draws from experience of "best practice" and lessons from Uganda and abroad, as well as from discussions from a workshop held in Kampala on the community worker concept and is a guideline and resource document for practitioners. This report can be downloaded from: www.khanya-mrc.co.za/cbw.htm

Cost-effectiveness of Community-based Worker Systems: Examples from Lesotho. (February 2003). CARE-Lesotho-South Africa. Over the past five years, CARE has been working in two districts (Mohale's Hoek and Quthing) through a DFID-supported project called TEAM (Training in Environmental and Agricultural Management) using an extension approach that promotes self-reliance and problem solving amongst poor farmers. The project ended in June 2002. Khanya studied the cost-effectiveness of the TEAM approach, comparing with other agencies in Lesotho using related approaches, and the extension undertaken by the Ministry of Agriculture, Cooperatives and Land Reclamation. The objective was to give indicative cost ranges for the different types of

extension systems and some idea of cost-effectiveness, although effectiveness was very difficult to assess. A copy of this report can be downloaded from: www.caresa-lesotho.org.za or www.khanya-mrc.co.za/cbw.htm

Report on Regional Cost Effectiveness of Community-based Worker Systems - examples from Lesotho: Symposium on Community-Based Workers, Maseru, 11-14 November 2002 CARE Lesotho-South Africa. In December 2002, CARE and Khanya organised this Regional Symposium to share experiences with practitioners of community-based concepts of service delivery in the region. The Symposium drew on a wide array of community-based worker concepts of service delivery including home-based health care, agricultural extension, forestry services, privatisation of government service delivery, and the emergence of para- and barefoot professionals in the animal health, legal and literacy domains. This report can be downloaded from: www.caresa-lesotho.org.za. or www.khanya-mrc.co.za/cbw.htm

Useful Internet resources on Community-based workers

1. Eldis: www.eldis.org/cf/search/index.cfm
2. Health Systems Trust: www.hst.org.za/pubs/chws.htm
3. American Public Health Association: www.apha.org/sections/newsletters/communityhealth.htm
4. NGO Networks for Health: www.ngonetworks.org/pubs/index.html
5. UNAIDS (Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS): www.unaids.org/bestpractice/index.html
6. Population Council: www.ngonetworks.org/pubs/index.html
7. Population Council Newsletter: www.popcouncil.org/horizons/newsletter/horizons_report.html
8. Khanya-Managing Rural Change: www.khanya-mrc.co.za/cbw.htm
9. CARE Lesotho - South Africa www.caresa-lesotho.org.za for documents on TEAM project

SL activities/programmes

1. Marcus Evans Conferences will host an international conference on The African Planning Conference: Entering the Urban Millennium. The conference will be held on 14th - 16th April in Sandton, South Africa. For information contact the Marcus Evans Sales Team at tel: +27 (0) 11 516 1000, Fax: +27 (0) 11 516 1149.
2. A Round-Table-Workshop on Mitigation of HIV/AIDS-impacts by Agricultural and Rural Development - looking for success stories! will be held in Pretoria, SA; 27-29 May 2003. The workshop will offer an opportunity to: 1) debate approaches of HIV/AIDS mainstreaming activities, 2) share knowledge and experiences on HIV/AIDS mitigation work in rural areas and 3) exchange and, where possible, display all kinds of information on lessons learnt. For more information, please contact: Vera Boerger (FAO, Harare) at Vera.Boerger@fao.org; Dan Mullins (Oxfam, Pretoria) at Dmullins@oxfam.org.uk and Klaus Pilgram (GTZ-SNRD, Pretoria) pilgrim@gtzpsdp.co.za.
3. The International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) will be running an International Course on Sustainable Agriculture Training of Trainers from July 14 to August 1, 2003 For more information, or to receive an application form, please contact: Course Coordinator Education and Training Program International Institute of Rural Reconstruction Y.C. James Yen Center Silang, Cavite 4118, Philippines Tel: (63-46) 414 2417 * Fax: (63-46) 414 2420 Email: Education&Training@iirr.org Web site: www.iirr.org
4. The research project 'Goodbye to Project? The Institutional Impacts of Livelihood Approaches on Development Interventions' will have a workshop in South Africa in July 2003 to share learning and experiences. This is a DFID-funded project that looks at how sustainable livelihoods approach are actually being used in a range of development interventions, and aims to identify and clarify challenges to the design, appraisal and implementation of development interventions and changes required from the adoption of a livelihoods approach. To express interest in the

workshop contact: Tsiliso Tamasane at tsiliso@khanya-mrc.co.za.

Feedback from our survey

Our survey showed that readers pass the newsletter to an average of 4.1 people, as well as newsletter circulated to 1500 people. This implies a readership of over 600. Approximately 30% of respondents were consultants, 21% NGO employees, 15% academics and 13% government employees.

On average, readers found the quality of writing as good, the content of publication informative, length of publication is about right and the themes covered are relevant.

Approximately 57% of readers said the newsletter should be published bi-monthly as at present. Several suggestions were made on how we could improve the newsletter. We are considering how to take them forward.

We will be following up with some of you to co-produce newsletters on the topics you suggested. THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE!!

Future topics

We welcome feedback, ideas and contributions for upcoming topics. Future topics will include Artisanal Mining, a follow-up edition on Community-based Planning and Community-Based Natural Resource Management.

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