Operationalizing Alternative Livelihoods for Resilience

Discussion highlights and conclusions

**WHAT** did we learn about approaches and interventions/activities? (all speakers consolidated)

* Contextual analysis to understand markets, social dynamics are key.
* While SABAL pre-earthquake alt. livelihood approaches took into account structural, economic and human factors to identify appropriate interventions, post-earthquake SABAL was asked to expand its interventions which initiated SABAL to re-examine its approach and adjust to context. Expansion included expanding and adapting alt livelihoods focused on building alt livelihoods as part or recovery context. This changed original thinking on targeting and approach.
* Post-earthquake, SABAL adjusted alt. livelihoods to support government led reconstruction efforts, included alignment to ensure more earthquake resistant infrastructure. Included monitoring tools to help ensure the quality of reconstruction efforts.
* SABAL’s alt development approach included vocational and life skills training component, increased market knowledge, facilitate linkage with private sector, and provide startup capital. This link to microenterprise development directly complemented the vocational/skills training component.
* Two and a half years into the PAHAL, the program reexamined it’s alt. livelihood approach to address budget, gender and contextual factors. Skills training was an early focus of the program, but at this point PAHAL evolved its’s alt. livelihoods strategy adopting a more facilitative approach with stronger linkage to the private sector.
* Early in the program, PAHAL found it was very difficult for women to leave homes to attend trainings. As a result, PAHAL adapted to bring training closer to people home communities. However, market demand in specific locations was limited in smaller rural areas.
* PAHAL facilitation approach include direct linkages to existing service providers to help facilitate and link benefices with private sector and government skills training programs.
* Limited access to markets and limited demand for skills training provided were obstacles in rural communities. As a result, PAHAL also adopted more livestock oriented activities.

What did we learn about **HOW** to implement and manage projects? (all speakers consolidated)

* SABAL focused on strengthening livelihoods of PVSE, households and individuals and improve economic risk management capacity.
* Innovative gender specific alt livelyhoods through SABAL included engaging women in nontraditional livelihoods activities such as A/C fridge repair and auto mechanics.
* SABAL implementation period for vocational training started early on in the program prior to farm groups being established.
* PAHAL shifted to linking financial cooperatives to financial skills trainers and work with larger financial participant base, which brought down cost of financial service providers.
* PAHAL financial cooperative membership expanded and menu of service training provided expanded as the program matured. This maturity progressed significantly in year four or five on program.
* PAHAL stepped away from a more direct delivery of alternative livelihoods to a more demand driving facilitation approach. The return on investment and cost of directly providing skills training was a factor in this transition. Direct provision of technical skill training was not sustainable over time.
* PAHAL pivot to the facilitation approach was a significant shift for government counterparts since they were accustomed to relying of dev programs to provide these government services, or were accustomed to dev programs providing funding for such programing.
* PAHAL identified high value skills training (such as technical constructions skills) as a need. However as a program was unable to fund and provide such skills training. PAHAL approached the private sector to see if they could fulfill this particular need, but could not find a costing model that was attractive to the private sector. Their were linkages with private sector (such as agric inputs, animal husbandry) that were more successful.

What do we RECOMMEND based on our learning (WHAT and HOW)? (all speakers consolidated)

* Challenges connecting to other actors to provide complementary programming to layer, sequence and integrate with both programs.
* Involve cooperatives early in the program to help ensure sustainability.

Key learnings (3-5) – *to be elicited by moderator during the last few minutes of the session*

* Targeting most vulnerable with highly customized and appropriate programming to ensure social inclusion was key.
* Connection to financial literacy and service providers is effective, but can be expensive.
* Need to adapt approaches to make it financially feasible, operational. Linking/sequencing with other donors, programs and government may help overcome financial/funding barriers. Linkage with other dev actors is a cornerstone of resilience but difficult to put in practice.
* Alt. Livelihoods need to be tailored specifically to targeted communities and households incorporating the most vulnerable. This is particularly relevant to ensure social inclusion of all targeted groups. Make the program inclusive and keep programming close to home for beneficiaries.

