

**LESSONS LEARNED WORKSHOP
FARMER ADVOCACY CONSULTATION TOOL (FACT)
Bali, May 3-5 2015 at Hotel Santika Siligita Nusa Dua**

Day 2
Sunday, 4th May 2013

**SESSION 3A
From Theory to Practice**

Miriam:

Let's have brief introduction for the *new participant*. [Participants mentioned their names and organizations.]

Let's give her summary of what we did yesterday.

Participants:

Opening remarks; Agenda and expectations; Review of the previous event; Break; Shared experience – 6 presentations.

Miriam:

What do you remember from the presentations?

Sonde:

We explained the journey taken by each organization.

Miriam:

What impressions do you have? There are some things in common.

Participants:

Lack of budget, lack of time, some pillars are not done yet, there has been some empowering even before getting to the end of the steps.

Miriam:

What do you like about FACT?

Pochan:

I can use it for specific issues.

Alex:

My name is Aleksander – consultant, member of Kyrgyzstan youth organization, working on resources in the level of local communities. Our interest is to get acquainted with the approach for

our consulting capacity in our organization in Kyrgyzstan. I am also here as a translator for our leader.

Miriam:

Do you remember the last part of yesterday? Who can explain about the first part (4 pillars and 4 questions)?

Alex:

Let me try to explain what you did yesterday and you check. If I'm wrong just tell me.

[Alex tried but was not correct. Due to time constraint, another participant should take over.]

Lany:

Yesterday we looked at the four pillars: consultation, participatory research, writing SMART proposals, lobby and advocacy. First we looked at the memory aids and saw where they fit in those pillars. Next we answered four questions for each pillar.

Miriam:

This gives us an idea where we stand. Quick result we already achieved even if we have not done all the steps yet. What about the second part?

Sonde:

We explained the problems and spot the root issue that results in the following problems.

Miriam:

So we can see where we still need to work. Now each of your group take one mind map and work on what you can do to overcome these challenges. After ten minutes we swap to the next mind map so you will work on all pillars. Red cards are for problems and green cards are for solutions. You can combine solutions for some problems so there are not too many solutions.

[Groupwork]

Volunteers – who has not presented since yesterday?

Pillar 1:

Sugeng:

Here we explain about the lack of trust by farmers. The root problems are that programs are sometimes designed as a project, and a lack of cultural understanding. So to gain the trust, we need to develop a cultural approach. For example, if we refuse an offer of food from Madurese farmers, they will be offended and not trust you, so no collaboration will come of it. The cultural understanding could be a social capital, but the cultural approach requires time.

We also need capacity building within the organization. Or we can hire experts if there is an urgent issue and to focus staff on specific work.

Sonde:

Pre-consultation is also needed to understand the local context (geographical, cultural) and assess the consultation plan.

Cambodia:

Since the farmers don't understand the benefit of the project, they will suspect it. The solution is: we need to explain the purpose and benefits of the project to them. They need to have a sense of ownership, so we need to get feedback from them. Also, farmers are busy with their farming – so we need to find proper timing to consult them.

Lani:

We specify in the capacity building: facilitating skill, gender sensitivity.

Miriam:

That's part of FACT: You always feedback; you always validate.

This is done in Africa: you find strong farmer and build that capacity as farmers' facilitator. They don't cost much but they're used to train other farmers. They understand the culture because they're one of them and they live them. So it's a sustainable way in Africa to widen any program.

Sugeng:

We use triangulation in our consultation. First we try to see when the farmers have time to be consulted. Second triangulation is in data collection, participatory research following farmers in daily activities, documentation and photos. Third triangulation is targeting leaders, poorest, and middle-income farmers.

Pillar 2:**Vietnam:**

It's a very important pillar. You can see lots of difficulties and participants gave some solutions. We need capacity building for the staff and also the farmers. Training is important thing and we also need to learn from other countries. We also need to learn from the desk study in order to be able to write a SMART proposal. To solve the problem of research method knowledge we can collaborate with other parties such as universities. We could also develop farmers to do staff work. To solve lack of budget we can develop self-sufficient budget. We need to be serious in selecting the respondents, the right person to be consulted.

Miriam:

Is lack of budget a main issue?

Vietnam:

I don't agree because even for the farmer the income is not less than 50% of the national average (?) but we need to mobilize the farmers. For example, financial aid from the government is not that that

important for farmers, but capacity building is more needed. So how to mobilize the budget is more important.

Miriam:

In the map I only saw self-sufficiency but not really how to do it.

Sonde:

The main problem is limited budget. So we try to involve farmers in collecting budget to finance participatory research. In the first pillar the indicator of success is a consensus of issue. This could be the foundation to funding.

Miriam:

I saw somewhere in the presentation that you call it a FACT project. Is it right to call it a FACT project?

Lani:

I think for AFA's members it might be treated as projects, because AFA funded a part of the method implementation from Agriterra funding. But it's not really a project.

Miriam:

The characteristic of the approach is that you do it in your daily work with your farmers. FACT could help you reduce budget – you don't need separate budget for this.

Cambodia:

It's crucial that we talk about a lack of budget. But since we're doing our own project it's important to work on both. We need to avoid spending more money so we need to start with few serious farmers who want to do this and then extend training to other farmers leader to extend the training of fact to other so we reduce the cost. For example in Cambodia we have self-help saving groups. Some interest is used for funding and to extend membership so we don't depend on donors.

There is an issue with a lack of trust from farmers. We're building a rice mill cooperative. It is difficult to mobilize member s because they don't understand the purpose and they hesitate to join us. So we need to explain the purpose and benefit of the rice mill cooperative. Once they trust us, they contribute the project.

Miriam:

Do you think you will have more success if you start fundraising proposal by following the four steps? Why?

Sonde:

Because the proposal is specific and accurate.

Miriam:

You know and show that you know the need of your farmers.

Cambodia:

We have self-helping groups at the ground and combine those in the district level and then to the national level, so we get more money from the group. So in the national level we have a saving federation. District must deposit money to the federation. The money is separated into three parts: deposit, reserve fund, and capital. The deposit is used for training that contributes to the budget from donors.

Lani:

Donors will more easily give fund if you already have some funds. This is asking for leverage. You tell the donors: this is what we have, we could do more with your help.

Pillar 3:

Cambodia:

First we look at “not enough concrete data”, “lack of practical information”, and “proposal not specific”. The solution is we need to train staff on policy proposal writing, on documentation skill, and on making research and survey questions. We know how to do but not specific and clear yet.

So lack of dollars to get experts and difficult to find expert the solution is how to mobilize our resources from donors, members’ contribution, and partners, and write a SMART proposal to government agencies to get budget for that.

To make ourselves available, seen by others, we should attract support.

Miriam:

I want to hire proposal writer. What do you need to do? Could you explain more?

Mongolia:

Instead of hiring expert (which is expensive) we should attend training in policy proposal training.

Cambodia:

First, hiring should be the first step. But the purpose is to build self-capacity. So we need to have farmers and staff to do this ourselves.

Jun:

Maybe one idea to help organization writing smart proposal apart of hiring or capacity building you could also share with other AFA members especially if the problem has already tackled in another countries so you could get advice and feedback from other.

Lani:

In the contract, we usually have a clausal that says that the writer will be writing on the behalf of the farmers, in the farmers’ perspective. So like the case of NAMAC, we must sit beside the writer.

Miriam:

Thank you for bringing that up. You have to make sure that it's your proposal.

Cambodia:

The four pillars are not separate. We got the data from the consultation and research, we need all those information to be put inside the proposal to be presented in advocacy.

Miriam:

Sometimes you have to go back or check with your farmers (validation). This could bring you back so don't think of the steps 1,2,3,4 just to help you see the work to be done.

Mongolia:

First solution is training on lobby and advocacy. Next support farmer-friendly candidates. There have to be regional advocacy group so farmers could reach to the national level advocacy. Of Mongolia's 21 provinces, we have representatives working with farmers in 10 provinces. Build a strong alliance among farmers: cooperatives, CSOs, make them stronger.

Laos:

One thing that we can do is advocating through our network both in the national and regional levels. We can negotiate with governments in various issues. We can have training but it's not enough – sometimes coaching is needed. Sometimes we invite decision makers to join our meetings.

Sonde:

Training lobby and advocacy should not be limited to staff but also to farmers, so farmers could advocate directly. That's because closed governments are sometimes suspicious of organizations and trust farmers more. School for farmers means field school, instead of usual school. It could change their mindset, make them more critical of farmers' organizations and the local government.

Kyrgyzstan:

In the school we teach farmers how to do agricultural work. The farmers then train other farmers and work in groups.

Miriam:

Do you remember about the power-interest grid and how to influence actors? It is a very strong tool to see who have power and how to influence them.

Vietnam:

In Vietnam, usually we speak with parliament members who are farmer-friendly. We also talk with partners in the regional level so it's important to know the actors in the ground level. We succeeded in lobbying for extending land use period from 20 to 50 years and are now lobbying for unlimited period.

Sonde:

Farmers should not only support farmers-friendly candidates, but also choose from among them to be their political representatives, funded by the other farmers.

Sugeng:

The essence is educating farmers. Farmers should be able to communicate their needs to the government. For example, a successful banana farmer has become a farmers' organization's executive and is now politically active. He no longer works the land.

Cambodia:

We need to balance between the government and the farmers. In democratic countries we have election – so we should judge who should be in the government. This is a big opportunity for the farmers. The farmers should establish a formal agenda. We can advertise our agenda to candidates. Farmers would support candidate that support the agenda.

Miriam:

A clap for all of you. Now we have break for 10 minutes.

SESSION 3B

FACT SWOT Analysis

Miriam:

Jun will facilitate the next part, but to save time you can start looking at Participant's Workbook page 32 in English. [SWOT table]

Jun:

We have seen ways to overcome difficulties in implementing FACT. Now we look at other challenges and opportunities when you want to implement FACT. A good way is to look at them through SWOT analysis. Now you're looking at your organization to see what resources you have and what opportunities you have and what weaknesses you have as an organization and what treats you have.

Who knows about SWOT? Lany, could you give 1-minute explanation about SWOT?

Lany:

SWOT stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Strengths and weaknesses are internal – what are the strengths and weaknesses of your organization?

Opportunities and threats are external, outside your organization – good things and not-so-good things.

Jun:

You fill in the SWOT matrix, just use key ideas. The reason we're doing this is that we've seen many difficulties but we also want to see what strength we have. So we look at ourselves and also the environment. It's a little different from just looking at the on-going programs.

We have 15 minutes and then we go to next step.

[Group work]

You don't need to translate all of it – it's only for your own use. Just write one strength for any pillar on the blue card. Then write the pillar below the strength. You have one minute, and please hand it back to me.

Results (S):

- Training trainers from farmers (pillar 1)
- Know how to get real problems and issues (pillar 1)
- Strong network system from central to grass root (pillars 1 and 4) [participants agreed to put the card in pillar 4]
- Good partnership (pillar 4)

- Solid constituency (pillar 4)
- Existence of farmers and farmers' organizations (pillar 1)
- Internal network (pillar 4)

Now on the yellow card please write one weakness. We can do it more quickly and repeat it two more times.

[Group work]

Results (W):

- Not deeply trained staff – weak capacity (pillar 3)
- Turn-over of leaders and staff (pillars 3 and 4) [Participants agreed on pillar 3]
- Writing and doing advocacy (pillars 3 and 4)
- Lack of skills and experience in lobby and advocacy (pillar 4)
- Lack of budget (pillar 1)
- Lack of information for farmers (pillar 1)
- Feedback to farmers not conducted (pillar 3)

Now we go to the green cards. So you know the drill, what are you going to put here? Now we look at external things, outside the organization, that are opportunities for you.

[Group work]

Results (O):

- Existing networks that we can tap into (pillar 4)
- Gain better experiences from outside (pillar 4)
- Open space to meetings (pillar 4)
- Working with international organizations (pillar 1)
- Political situation (pillar 4)
- Governments' program that is in line with organization's program (pillar 4)
- Support from government (pillar 4)

Now we go to the last card. What is out there that threatens you?

[Group work]

Results (T):

- Non-binding regional policies (on land tenure, forest, etc.) (pillar 4)
- Unsupportive government policy (pillar 4)
- Very few partners use this (FACT approach) so we can't share with them (pillar 4)
- NGO law (pillar 4)
- Weather (pillar 1)
- Wrong experts (that do not share our vision) (pillar 2)
- Not getting the right results of your work – the farmers do not apply or share the knowledge they have obtained (pillar 1)

We have strength and weaknesses. Now Miriam is going to give you some toys to play with. These are called stickers. Three green stickers and one red for each of you. For the next 5 minutes we ask you to stand up at the same time and put green stickers on the cards you agree with. You only have 3 stickers so you choose the ones you strongly agree with. So look first (come close) and then go together. So don't get influenced. You can spread and also put all three stickers in one. Make up your mind. You don't have to use the red sticker. I'll count from ten to one.

We have 6 votes on the strength, 2 on weaknesses, 4 on opportunities, 5 on threats. What can you conclude?

Sonde:

Our strength is greater than weaknesses and threats.

Lany:

We will be able to overcome threats and employ the opportunities.

Jun:

If you're a strong organization you can overcome this [wrong experts]. If you can remove this, there's only one dot in threats.

Miriam:

Also weaknesses are about capacity. You already have many ideas on how to solve this.

Sugeng:

Organizations often focus on weaknesses and ignore strengths.

Miriam:

The new trend is focusing on solutions. If you look for solutions, your weaknesses are no longer relevant.

Jun:

Why are there lots of cards in the 4th pillar and so few in other pillars?

Laos:

We have more experience in that aspect.

Jun:

Yes but remember that in the FACT approach it depends on the 3 other pillars.

Lany:

There's a strong need to have a strong organization.

Miriam:

[Threats on pillar 4] Isn't this what you want to change? This is why we are here. And look at the enormous opportunities and strengths you have, especially with inputs from your farmers? Isn't it something you can achieve?

Lany:

I didn't know we have common thing here.

Sugeng:

In my observation the threat stems from education. If we can educate farmers, they will voice their concern. The case now is that farmers are not educated – just their leaders and NGOs.

Miriam:

It's nice that you apply it in your situation. Think on your situation on how to apply it in your own organization. We can sit at 5 minutes before 2 so we can start at 2. [Participants agreed.]

SESSION 4A

Capacities Needed for Adopting FACT

Miriam:

Welcome back from lunch.

We are going to enlarge the mind map. So we have the four pillars. We already had red cards around the pillars that are challenges. We also had green cards as possible solutions to the challenges.

Now we are going to work with yellow and green cards. Use the yellow cards to identify what capacities are required to implement the solutions. And the green cards are about how you are going to build the capacities. So if we want to do pillar 1, what capacities are needed and how are you going to build it? Do you understand the question?

Here are extra flipcharts to enlarge the mind maps.

[Group work]

Icebreaker (Hira):

- Clap with spreaded fingers
- Take a deep breath, hold it, take it out.
- Try seven types of laughter

Miriam:

Who wants to present?

Pillar 1: Cambodia

Pillar 2: Vietnam

Pillar 3: Indonesia

Pillar 4: Laos

Pillar 1

We need capacity on community organizing and managing network. Who should have the capacity? Farmers, farmer leaders, farmer representatives – they can later extend the capacity to other members. We build the capacity that we need through small forums, personal approach, community organization training, develop farmers' facilitation course.

Pillar 2

It's important to have the capacity on research and also skills like data gathering skill, participatory research skill, and ICT infrastructure. The important capacity to address the lack of staff is training capacity and capacity of farmers to do research. For the lack of budget, we need to mobilize

farmers, so we need the capacity for developing projects. So we need a lot of training and farmer school.

Pillar 3

Sonde:

We try to present from the link of problems – lack of budget and expertise to write a SMART proposal. Farmers need training on mobilizing resources, organization management, and financial management. To address the three capacity needs, we could build a farmers' school. Because to facilitate the sustainability of programs, we should educate farmers that in turn educate other farmers.

Miriam:

That information should be captured somewhere in there, perhaps "ToT". [A card was added.]

Indra:

If we have the right skills we don't need to hire experts. So we need policy proposal writing skill, data analysis skill, research skills, documentation skill. For all need we need training.

Miriam:

So the previous skills are for farmers and this set is for the organization.

Jun:

It all focuses on the technical aspect. But what's missing is managing internal knowledge. As organizations are growing, they have more expertise on specific issues. The built knowledge should be tapped. We can form working groups between organizations like what AFA does.

Miriam:

The experts do not have to be external experts.

Jun:

If you write your own proposal, you could put in your own perspective better.

Lany:

It's knowledge management skill – deriving from stories to present data. [A new green card was added: "system and exposure".]

Pillar 4:

Indra:

We need facilitation, communication, negotiation, networking skills. We also need translation and equipment. To build those capacities we need training, exposure – exchange visits, active participation.

Sugeng:

For the solution of farmers' school we need funding, teachers, curriculum, and learning media.

Miriam:

Is it not yet done?

Sugeng:

Not yet structured and institutionalized. If it can be realized, this can be basis for farmers' development.

Miriam:

You seem to have thought long about it. Let's try FACT with it.

Vietnam:

Many of you said you don't get the support from the government. You often protest your government's policy. With advocacy you can try differently. You can have more skills on constructive engagement knowledge and skill. When we write the SMART proposal, after doing the Participatory Research and consultation we should know how to document all the data and make some manuals.

Miriam:

So you know your challenges, the skills needed to deal with them, and ways on how to fill those gaps. Now sit with your organization and we make a plan. Make a list of ideas of things you could do, let's say between now and December. Then you sit together per organization and share the ideas and take 3-4 most important ideas to make FACT work. Then you take a flipchart and write for each issue the steps and what support you need to do the steps. These 4 maps could help you to come up with an action plan. First we give you 5 minutes to have ideas to make FACT work. Then you sit together and pick 5 ideas at most.

[Group work]

[Break]

SESSION 4B

Projecting the Use of FACT

Miriam:

We don't have time to present everything. We see that not all groups have worked in the same way. That is okay. So there are issues that you want to do yourself as an organization and issues that you need to do to finish this trajectory that you have started. And then there is institutionalization of FACT. Of course there is overlap on these. Among your plan we would like to see which of these things help you to institutionalizing FACT in your organization even after you finish with this project.

For instance, this one for Cambodia. Can you pick up the aspect that you really need to happen to continue with FACT in a regular basis?

Cambodia:

We need technical support so we need training in management and leadership.

When we do advocacy we need cooperation from decision maker. If we have capacity but no collaboration, then we can't succeed.

Laos:

I think all of these are needed because our organization is still weak so we need to include many things.

Mongolia:

We need lobby and advocacy training. First we need training from AFA, etc. Then we will train farmers. We plan to meet the ministries but not succeeded so we have to organize the meeting and then we will have two lobby plans: for national and local levels. Farmers live far away from one another and from us. So we want to organize computer or online training to farmers. Only 53 farmers have attended the online session. There are more farmers behind them.

Vietnam:

We need awareness-raising for leaders on FACT. After that we could have deep training of staff on FACT and advocacy skill. Then we can do the piloting of fact in two selected provinces. Then we can have sharing like this event.

Indonesia:

We need community organizer skill, SWOT analysis training. If we learn that we could continue using FACT even after this project.

Miriam:

End of this year Agritererra will have a visit to know whether you want to continue using AFA and what supports you need. You have seen aspects to improve. Which of you wish to continue with FACT?

The suggestion is to write to Agritererra on how you feel about the workshop – does it help you? Is it an eye-opener? Do you think you need to continue? Take the plan and put FACT in it. Agritererra is now supporting you with FACT. You have other dreams but they're now supporting you on FACT. So it's a win-win situation. Write a good proposal to Agritererra.

Lany:

Can I also share AFA's plan? [See slide deck of "AFA Action Plan for Institutionalizing FACT".]

Some of these are already a proposal (like number 4). We are just waiting for Agritererra's approval, perhaps in May.

[There are concerns about timeline among participants, because some are not yet finished with their current FACT implementation.]

You have worked with women before so you don't start from the beginning. There is a decision to have a women committee that will have a greater push. That's one facilitating factor.

Miriam:

You might feel a bit overwhelmed with this. But perhaps this information could help you plan because you think you don't have capacities. What would you need to continue with this also? AFA members are here. You can discuss with them. To leverage, you can tell them what have been done and what you have as results, but also what you need in order to participate in this.

Lany:

The common need could be communicated through the regional level. [AFA's plan will be sent to participants.]

Miriam:

There's another aspect from Agritererra. In September Agritererra will sit with the trainers of FACT methodology to get inputs to move forward. There might be certain needs and we have to adjust the tool. So your inputs would be crucial for Agritererra. They're your partner in development. You can ask feedback from AFA before you send the letter.

Lany:

This is why we present this, so we complement instead of replicating Agritererra. So we will approach Agritererra as a group.

Miriam:

What is happening among you determines your way forward. If you remember AFA's presentation, the last bullet on their list is: Is FACT imposed on you?

Lany:

That is also a question AFA asking, because every time we want to submit proposals, we must discuss with the executive committee. Is this what we need? Will this be supported?

Miriam:

We don't provide you with answers. We give you materials for thought and to discuss with AFA. So there's no deadline but the passing time is also important.

Lany:

We also have to be careful to deliver, to show that we are capable.

Miriam:

You have got many ideas to deal with constraints. But you yourself could come up with the conclusion of what you can do.

Final Plenary Discussion

Jun:

We have sent you the plan. So where are we now? We only have two more tasks before we finish.

We have talked about your plans in capacity building needs; you want to apply FACT further; you want to build capacity in FACT; you want to have proposal with AFA; and you want to send proposal to Agriterro for further implementation of FACT. One area that we have not discussed is how to support each other as farmers' organization doing the same thing. We have exchanged experiences, but not yet talked on how to support each other and how to build a support system. Please write an idea on how to support each other to exchange knowledge, share, inspire, etc. so we could all better use fact. Can you do it in five minutes? You can focus on two points: information exchange and strengthening.

Participants' ideas:

1. Share information monthly
2. Regular training session on lobby and advocacy
3. FACT information sharing
4. Continue training on FACT
5. Online group or Google group (sharing information through the Internet)
6. Exchange workshop one time per year
7. Experience sharing
8. Knowledge sharing
9. Web site on FACT activities

So we have four groups of ideas: regional training, regional lessons-learned workshop, sharing information and experience online and offline. Do you think they're enough to support each other.

Miriam:

There are lots of aspects that have been included in the plan.

Jun:

Could you give more specific ideas? Like, online group and web site are specific ideas, knowledge sharing is still general.

Cambodia:

It's good that we talk about monthly discussion. But we have AFA as the facilitator. AFA already has web site. So we can send information to AFA to consolidate and then share through AFA's web site.

Miriam:

Nobody will read long stories. So: short, to the point, good pictures. AFA probably has experience with that.

Cambodia:

We can also use social media such as Facebook.

Miriam:

We need commitment from all sides.

Jun:

We can update our web site, twitter, etc. We need you to keep sending to us. At first we will ask you, pull the information, but in the future you have to commit to push the information to us.

Lany:

We do this back to back with the GA for the purposes of consulting you and getting information from you.

Jun:

So I am going to take a picture of this [the list of ideas] and send it to you. This is our first information sharing.

[Participants agreed on the sharing mechanism with claps and laughter.]

[Participants filled in evaluation form.]

Miriam:

You are a very special group. It's been a pleasure to facilitate this group.

Sugeng:

There have been ideas to upload activities on FACT into AFA's web site. I think products information could also be uploaded for opportunities of exporting and importing products. AFA and Agriterra could facilitate to build trust among members in performing transactions.

Miriam:

Put that in your action plan. It is good to bring in real advantages to the farmers. You might get more ideas and generate more ideas.

Lany:

It has been raised and there has been a working group set up for that.

Miriam:

We need young people like you who have good ideas. Don't sit back and let AFA do it because you are AFA.

Sonde:

We need help and ideas in developing this further.

Lany:

Loji coordinates for API so we can discuss through him.

Mongolia:

I'm responsible for training at NAMAC. We have training online once or twice every month where the time is usually divided between teachers 50% and participants' activities 50%. But here the teacher is only 10% explaining how to work, and all problems and results come from us not from teacher, so it's very useful. You also encourage all participants to participate. I like it very much.

Cambodia:

I have trained many teachers, trainers, about 200-300 training. I still learn from you about facilitation. To provide training to the participants, substance and contents and entertainment should be aligned so no one gets bored. This is what I continue to learn.

Vietnam:

I don't want to repeat all the thanks, but after two days of training it's like getting one-week of training. And the contents are very useful for us. Actually I want to repeat the thanks. I am very impressed with FACT. It's very useful and very potential. I'd like to ask all members to help us with FACT.

[Group picture]