

AQUACULTURE COMPENDIUM – CAB INTERNATIONAL

STREAM Initiative Case Study

TITLE OF CASE STUDY:	SI 2 <i>Facilitated advocacy</i> - Supporting farmers to have a voice in policy making and the development of service provision
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SUMMARY (150 words)

Listening to people, especially those who are poor, and involving them in policy making and decisions about service delivery processes are logical steps in building better services and improving policies aimed at poverty alleviation. This case describes a *facilitated advocacy* that helped to negotiate and support a role for poor people who farm and fish, to contribute recommendations for changes in services and policies that impact on their lives.

The national Government of India's Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying and the Indian Council for Agricultural Research, both in the capital Delhi, have been linking with farmers and fishers and state government officials in the eastern states of Jharkhand, Orissa and West Bengal, in partnership with the STREAM Initiative of the intergovernmental Network of Aquaculture Centers in Asia Pacific and with the support of the UK Government Department for International Development, Natural resources Systems Program – 'supporting farmers to have a voice'.

NON-ENGLISH SUMMARY

Bengali, Oriya summaries... to appear here.

BACKGROUND (500 words)

Three hundred and twenty million people in Indian (out of 1.027 billion), live below the Government's official poverty line, many in rural areas; the eastern plateau region is home to some of the poorest communities in India, often lacking the means to produce sufficient food throughout the year. Many livelihoods depend on millet and rice from small holdings of poor upland, and in the east, especially in tribal communities, fish where available are popular and important dietary components. Without food security, local laboring for better-endowed farmers and seasonal migration for other laboring opportunities are common coping strategies. However, power relations are often skewed against migrant workers who report exploitation and underpayment. The government already aim to canvas farmers opinion, and provide support through an array of schemes and services, but during the definition the 10th Five-Year Plan the scope for farmers and fishers to 'have a voice' in how these could work was again given life.

The national government Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying engaged with a process, co-ordinated by the STREAM Initiative and involving national and state government stakeholders, to promote poor people's voices in planning for policy and service provision. This involved first listening, discussion and then supporting farmers and fishers in remote rural communities to share an understanding of their lives, and their recommendations for changes to policy and service provision.

The listening process took place progressively through many meetings of stakeholders at village, state, regional and national level; many recommendations were elicited from farmers, fishers and their immediate service providers. Further engagement, and prioritization of recommendations, involved a specially designed Consensus-Building Process for local and state-level officials, and finally, interactions with national policy makers through facilitated meetings used drama, documentaries, statements from fishers and farmers, and sessions which specifically sought people's contributions to proposed, prioritized change recommendations, in total - a way of working which became known as *facilitated advocacy*.

Specific appropriate recommendations emerged from the widespread involvement of people at all stages in the process, each with a good degree of ownership by policy shapers. Several of the resulting change recommendations have already found their way into national government recommendations and state government policies and services.

DESCRIPTION OF ISSUE OR PRACTICE

This case study is about a process funded by DFID-NRSP [the Department for International Development of the UK, and its Natural Resources Systems Program] operated for 15 months, from March 2002 through May 2003, with tribal villages in the three Indian states of Jharkhand, Orissa and West Bengal, and culminated in Delhi, the capital. The project had a Logical Framework with a goal, purpose, outputs and activities. This Logframe changed as we worked together and learned about "contributing to 'giving people a voice' in policy-making processes that have an impact on their livelihoods".



Discussions with small groups of farmers in remote rural villages (photo Bill Savage 2002)

The project provided opportunities for people's voices to be heard as they talked about their experiences of state and central government service provision around fisheries, aquaculture and aquatic resources. The people were fishers and farmers in tribal communities, practitioners who work directly with them and government officials who make and implement policies which affect their lives.

The project activities were varied in purpose and place, with a range of stakeholders always involved. They started with an *Inception Visit* by the project implementers to Mumbai, Delhi, Ranchi and Purulia. Stakeholder representatives first

came together in a *Rural Aquaculture Service Recipients and Implementers Workshop* in Ranchi. A *Planning Visit* was made before *State-level Workshops* in Jharkhand, Orissa and West Bengal. Following these, everyone gathered again for a *Stakeholders Workshop* in Ranchi.

Central to the project's learning about service provision and policy were six *Case Studies* carried out with villages and documented in several media: text, CD-ROM film documentaries, photographs and PowerPoint presentations. We also learned from selected experiences through *A Review of Lessons Learnt in Enabling People's Participation in Policy-making Processes*.

These activity names are also the titles of the 11 publications we wrote to document the project's process and outcomes – the 'voices' of participants. *Indicators of Progress, Consensus-building Process and Policy Recommendations* described how stakeholder participants played an important role in defining indicators of the project's progress, how a semi-anonymous Consensus-building Process was designed and implemented with policy-makers and implementers, and then resulted in 13 recommendations for policy change, the ideas for which had grown throughout the project.

The project explored the use of communications media even further with a street-play written by a tribal playwright and performed by a 15-member theater troupe. Through dialogue, music and dance, *Mahajal – The Big Fishing Net* interpreted the stories told in the Case Studies and the project's policy recommendations. It was performed at the *Policy Review Workshop* in Delhi before an audience of project participants and policy-makers, with advance dress rehearsals in two Jharkhand villages.

Progress Towards Policy Change and Lessons Learnt was written as a discussion document for the Policy Review Workshop and as one of the final project reports for DFID, who later asked us to write a twelfth report entitled *Research Learning and New Thinking*.



Performing the street play Mahajal the big fishing net in Chhota Changru Jharkhand state (photo Bill Savage, 2003)

In March 2002, three NACA-STREAM project implementers came together in Mumbai. [NACA is the Network of Aquaculture Centers in Asia-Pacific, and STREAM is Support to Regional Aquatic Resources Management, a learning and communications initiative of the inter-governmental network.] The implementers had discussions with the then Director of the Central Institute for Fisheries Education (CIFE). Then they traveled to Delhi to meet the Fisheries Development Commissioner, whose support enabled the project to commence, and also the Deputy Director General (Fisheries) of the Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR), who is a member of NACA's Governing Council. Upon arrival in Ranchi, discussions took place with the GVT CEO and the Project Manager for GVT East, and a visit was made to a GVT-organized *kisan mela* (farmers' fair) in Purulia. [GVT is the Gramin Vikas Trust, an Indian NGO and the key non-government project partner.] This first round of meetings afforded opportunities for heads of agencies and organizations to become familiar with the proposed project, for us to begin learning "who was who", and for all of us to get to know each other as we began to build relationships.

The resulting Inception Report laid out the particulars of the project and served as the basis for its activities. Demographically, we worked with people known officially as "Scheduled Tribes" and "Scheduled Castes", who are among India's most socially and economically disadvantaged, and politically marginalized. Their livelihoods include raising fish in seasonal water bodies in and around villages. As representatives of fishers and farmers across India who would ultimately benefit from the project, they joined other stakeholders including national and state policy actors, local government and non-government colleagues, all of whom are involved in the provision of aquaculture services and support.

We had a lot to learn! Most importantly was to begin understanding the context and concerns of, and the means of working towards, policy change. We learned about the



Sharing and learning about policies and services in Jharkhand villages (photo Bill Savage, 2002)

background to current policy, how the need and time for change was being recognized by the Government of India, funders like DFID and NGOs such as GVT. We were then better positioned to think through possible project mechanisms for transacting change. At the Fisheries Commissioner's request, we drafted a Component Concept Note which explained how we saw the policy constraints and concerns to be investigated. As our first attempt at putting on paper the sorts of changes we understood at the time to be likely, we knew from the outset that we would take these initial ideas, commissioned by a top government policy-maker, to villagers and other stakeholders from whom we would be learning.

We also revised the Project Workplan and Logframe submitted with the original proposal to DFID, as we did whenever required, and drew a Project Flow-chart to visualize its activities. We paid much attention to the documentation of the work, primarily for recording people's contributions to the policy change process. Reference was frequently made back to statements, information, processes and follow-up actions in the reports. They turned out to be well-read, well-thumbed and well-received histories. There is a CD-ROM compilation and the boxed set of project documents (available from NACA STREAM).

In May 2002, the first all-stakeholder activity took place in Ranchi. In advance of the workshop, we carried out fieldwork in five Jharkhand villages, assisted by two women co-facilitators from GVT, to gain an initial understanding of people's experiences of aquaculture service provision. In the workshop, groups of participants provided feedback on the elements of the project which had already been drafted in the Inception Report. Along with government officials and GVT personnel, important contributions were made by fisher and farmer representatives and *jankars* – village aquaculture specialists trained by GVT. This workshop was our first experience at managing communication across four languages: Bangla, English, Hindi and Oriya. This was made possible by highly capable multilingual co-facilitators, language considerations in participant grouping and transcription in four languages.

On the Project Workplan, participants strongly advised that, to realize any policy change, we had to engage with colleagues in the states; thus three State-level Workshops were added. Participants also gave invaluable comments on the policy recommendations in the draft Component Concept Note. We were relieved that our struggle with how to define project indicators was eased when we asked people to respond to the question: "How will we know if progress is being made towards people's participation in transacting policy change?" – and they responded with significant contextually-specific contributions.

Participants then suggested the sorts of issues which needed deeper understanding, the groups whose “voices” would be documented in the Case Studies, the organizations and agencies which could conduct the studies and the methods and media which could be used.

To set up the three State-level Workshops to be held over five days in three locations at some distances from each other, a trip was made in August-September 2002 to Jharkhand, Orissa and West Bengal. Colleagues were visited in government and GVT offices and villages. Six Case Studies were outlined – three in Jharkhand, one in Orissa and two in West Bengal. Discussions took place on the State-level Workshops, especially to involve state and district government officials and members of tribal communities. These workshops were seen to be essential, since it was perceived that constraints to aquaculture service provision primarily lie in implementation processes at district and state levels, although it was acknowledged that efforts towards policy change at central and state levels were also important. Finally, a briefing document for the Consensus-building Process was prepared in consultation with colleagues.



*Presenting case studies in state-level workshops
(photo Bill Savage, 2002)*

From Purulia to Ranchi and then to Bhubaneswar, three one-day workshops were held in October 2002. As we would see on several occasions, the wisdom of the May 2002 workshop recommendation – that there needed to be these state-level workshops – was borne out in the constructive feedback on the six Case Studies in their various stages of progress. The local Principal Investigators presented their Case Studies – in three translations and English – and an update on their work.

On Mahatma Gandhi’s birthday, the traveling workshop team met for planning discussions before the first workshop in Purulia. They reviewed and discussed the outcomes of previous project activities, with reference to the various documents. They then drafted a statement of “Emerging Indicators of Progress Towards Transacting Institutional and Policy Change”, which incorporated the original policy recommendations in the draft Component Concept Note. Participant responses and reactions to the “Emerging Indicators ...” were compiled through a review of the data – feedback from the discussion groups.

In January 2003, all stakeholders gathered again in Ranchi. The six Case Studies were presented in their current formats. Participants gave lots of feedback on these and also on the drafts of “Lessons Learnt ...” and “Emerging Indicators ...”. Suggested policy changes were included in a document called “Proposed Changes for Consensus-building Process”, for initial discussion in the Consensus-building Process which began after the workshop.

Throughout the project, the six Case Studies grew in concept and content, each different in focus and format. It was interesting (and fun!) to trace the progress of the studies, and of participants’ contributions to them, throughout the project documentation. Written texts of all six appear in one of the publications, with descriptions, illustrated film documentary scripts, text, photographs and maps, which – along with respective Case Study PowerPoint presentations and film documentaries – are also included on the project CD-ROM.

This literature-based study looked at services and support, participation and livelihoods in the context of policy-making processes, in agriculture and other sectors, with a focus on contemporary thinking in Indian agriculture policy.

This document included the revised indicators and a statement of “Proposed Changes for Consensus-building Process”. A brief was prepared for the Consensus-building Process participants, who included 21 national policy development and implementation stakeholders, and state-level policy-makers and implementers. They were asked separately, in isolation, to rank the 42 policy change recommendations made by project participants. The collated (still anonymous) outcomes was then shared in a second round, when participants, still in isolation were asked to agree the outcome and prioritized recommendations or suggest changes in the ranking. Finally, consensus was reached, resulting in 13 policy change recommendations. These were then related to milestones in the “Vision Statement” of the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Ministry of Agriculture of the Government of India.



Performing the street play back to Chhota Changru village Bundu Block (photo Bill Savage, 2002)

A street-play was written in Hindi as an interpretation of the six Case Studies. Act One sets the scene of fisherfolk’s livelihoods and the difficulties they face in a tribal village. Act Two places the project’s policy change recommendations within the context of the characters’ lives and aspirations. Before *Mahajal’s* performance at the Policy Review Workshop in Noida, Delhi, the theatre troupe traveled on two days to Fulwar Toli and Chhota Changru villages in Jharkhand, where Act One was performed and the respective Case Study film documentaries – “A Proactive Village” and “A Progressive Farmer” – were also screened using a lap-top, projector and generator.

Finally the time arrived to take everything we had learned – if not everyone we had learned from – to the culminating activity in Delhi, the April 2003 Policy Review Workshop. We watched the two Hindi film documentaries (with English captions) from Jharkhand, saw two PowerPoint presentations from Jharkhand and Orissa and then two more PowerPoint’s and a film documentary from West Bengal. Following each Case Study session, we heard statements in turn from three representatives of fishers, farmers and *jankars*, four from GVT state offices and positions, and three representatives of state Departments of Fisheries – each of these statements reflected people’s perspectives on the policy change recommendations.



Performing the street play back to policy makers in Delhi (photo Bill Savage, 2002)

The workshop’s first day ended with Act One of the street-play, which set the context of situations commonly found in tribal communities and in

particular the livelihoods of fisherfolk. The next morning, a presentation was made on how the indicators of progress had developed throughout the project, followed by a similarly-focused presentation on the development of the policy recommendations. Then Act Two of *Mahajal* was performed, incorporating the project's 13 policy change recommendations into the interpretation.

Participants expressed their views on the project and its policy recommendations, at times engaging in lively debate around issues of fisher and farmer livelihoods and how they are affected by government policy. People also began talking about different stakeholders' perceptions of the issues and how "trust" needs to be gained through relationship-building.

We then talked about the sorts of commitments that could be made to follow up the project and to consider the project's policy recommendations. This was done by posing a two-part question: "How can we commit to taking forward the work? What kind of commitments could be made?" The statements of commitment, the first step in response to listening, have formed the basis of a continued interaction. The project has contributed to national government directives, to changes in policies and services of state governments and NGOs, further support from donors including DFID NRSP to the process. Of course, the widening reach of these services and then the carry through to impact on livelihoods of people who are poor will take time.

As the project concluded, we wrote a 12th document at the request of DFID-NRSP, who encouraged us to build further on our lessons learnt by reflecting on the way the project had planned, worked and actually happened. We came up with a conceptual matrix which suggests – with hindsight – the steps which guided the process as it emerged.

What lessons have we learned about policy change and people's participation? The first is about the importance of taking time to build trusting, on-going relationships among all stakeholders. Essential to this was our determination to continue working with the same people, villages, agencies and organizations – in the words of one of the fishers from Jharkhand: "You came back, no one ever comes back".

Listening to voices, especially those of people who are poor, and involving them in policy making and decisions about service delivery processes are logical steps in building better services and improving policies aimed at poverty alleviation. We all work and live within organizational, political and social structures which largely determine how people at different structural locations interact with each other. *Facilitated advocacy* enabled people to express their views in a supportive and constructive atmosphere. It is not possible for anyone to "give people a voice" as such, whether or not people can be "empowered" by others is also debatable. What we may be able to do is to address issues of power and its use, through activities which enable equitable participation.

Equitable participation can be: taking time to listen (scheduling it, budgeting for it), providing anonymity and space outside of hierarchies (and reducing the impact of hierarchies on *hearing*); providing space and props to share meaning (like well presented statements, drama and video film documentaries); taking people away from their usual places and working together in "neutral" spaces to share each others perceptions.

There is a common comprehension that people working with government agencies, non-governmental organizations and development projects are "experts" whose job is to tell people living in villages "what to do and how" to improve their livelihoods. In reality, it is fishers and farmers who have the "expertise" – through their own life experiences – about their situation and what they think needs to be done to change it. We will learn from them, when we adopt a listening role, and perhaps that requires us to reconsider how we behave in our relationships and how well we understand the livelihoods contexts of others. Related

to these behavioral changes is the earnest practical need to embark on policy development approaches which are founded on the negotiation of a commitment from policy-makers to build an understanding of the aspirations and complex livelihoods strategies of “recipients”, i.e., poor women, men and youth, including tribal and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups. Told through the lives of fishers and farmers, case studies allow us to have this deeper understanding of the realities of people’s lives, providing a rich source of material for policy debate and offering “entry points” for thinking about policy change.

It is important to recognize that policy is usually the current expression of efforts to manage conflicting agenda of a variety of stakeholders. Every effort should be made for all stakeholders to understand the existing policy-making processes that are in place and to engage with policy-making in a spirit of tolerance. An inherent conflict is the diversity of ideological principles and professional stances of a range of stakeholders, of languages and life experiences. Therefore, to promote tolerance amid diversity requires services and resources for coping with difference. Rights-based approaches (in this case, enshrined in the Indian constitution) have an important role to play here in establishing the principle of recognizing and working with diversity.

The practice of *facilitated advocacy* involves simple steps, each with deeper underlying issues. These include: understanding the importance of relationship building and empowering less-heard voices; the requirement to transcend hierarchical structures in policy review, and the mediating role of “outsiders” not only in the India context, as well as the importance of drawing and sharing lessons from elsewhere. They include the importance of behavioral change towards “learning” not “telling” (especially where disadvantaged groups are concerned) and the need to set “pro-poor policy” development in the context of understanding complex livelihoods strategies.

Further Information

For more information on facilitated advocacy visit the STREAM Initiative’s Virtual Library India page under Project R8100, ‘Investigating Improved Policy on Aquaculture Service Provision to Poor People’

<http://www.streaminitiative.org/Library/India/india.html>

CONTEXT

COUNTRIES

India

CULTURED SPECIES

<i>Aristichthys nobilis</i>
<i>Catla catla</i>
<i>Cirrhinus mrigala</i>
<i>Ctenopharyngodon idella</i>
<i>Cyprinus carpio</i>
<i>Hypophthalmichthys molitrix</i>
<i>Labeo rohita</i>

AQUATIC DISEASES

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ECOSYSTEMS

Tick	Ecosystem
✓	Field crops and vegetables
✓	Floodplains
✓	Lowlands
✓	Pig farms (ducks, fowls, turkey)
✓	Rural areas
✓	Small ruminant farms (sheep, goats)

GROWOUT PRODUCTION SYSTEMS

Tick	Growout system
✓	Ponds
✓	Ricefield aquaculture

PARTICIPANTS

Organizations

Organization	Address	Web Address (URL)
STREAM Initiative	c/o Network of Aquaculture Centers in Asia-Pacific (NACA) Suraswadi Bldg., DOF Complex Kasetsart University Campus Ladyao, Jatujak, Bangkok 10900 THAILAND	http://www.streaminitiative.org
NGO Gramin Vikas Trust	192 Kanke Road, Ranchi, Jharkhand India	-
STREAM Communications Hub	at streamindia@sancharnet.in	http://www.streaminitiative.org/india

Individuals

Mr Bhim Nayak	Farmer, Fulwar Toli, Bundu, Jharkhand
Mr Ras Behari Baraik	Farmer, Chhota Changru, Silli, Jharkhand
Mr Md Rushtam Khan	Jankar, Lakhnu, Hazaribagh, Jharkhand
Mr Pabitra Mohan Baral	Pradhan, Batagaon, Dhenkanal, Orissa
Mr Ashok Kumar Sahoo	Jankar, Khajuria, Dhenkanal, Orissa
Mr Kuddus Ansary	Jankar, Khawasdih, Purulia, West Bengal

Theatre Troupe

Mr Rakesh Raman (Director and Technical Official), Ms Meena Raman (Production Manager), Mr Shankar Oraon (Male Narrator), Ms Rankita Raman (Female Narrator), Mr Kisan Prasad (Old Man), Mr Rajendra Mirdha (Machua), Ms Gauri Das (Sugni), Mr Ramesh Kumar (Raghuwa), Mr Ashok Kumar (Nandu), Mr Pawan Kesri (Tena), Mr Mayank Raman (Jitu), Mr Parmeshwar Sahu (Kaku), Ms Nira Oraon Machali (Rani), Mr Manish Kumar (Government Official), Mr Chotu Panda (Drumist and Singer)

For more information contact Rubu Mukherjee at the STREAM India Communications Hub streamindia@sancharnet.in

Individuals

✓ Development Agents - Government and Non-Government

- ✓ Agriculturalists/Agronomists
- ✓ Aquaculturists
- ✓ Extension officers
- ✓ Development specialists
- ✓ Funding agencies
- ✓ Planners
 - ✓ Local
 - ✓ Regional

- ✓ Policy makers
 - ✓ Local
 - ✓ Regional
- ✓ Research, Education & Training
 - ✓ Researchers
- ✓ Producers, Investors, Consumers
 - ✓ Small-scale producers

ISSUES

- ✓ Production systems: technology and its management
 - ✓ Seed
 - ✓ Species availability and seed supply
 - ✓ Feeds
 - ✓ Fertilizers
- ✓ Monoculture/ polyculture
- ✓ Suitability for use in integrated systems
- ✓ Production systems, best management practice, social aspects, economic/financial aspects
- ✓ Integrated systems
 - ✓ Integrated agriculture aquaculture systems (IAAS)
- ✓ Resource requirements and allocation
- ✓ Food security
- ✓ Farming systems research and extension
- ✓ Extension
- ✓ Sustainable Development
 - ✓ Sustainable environmental development
- ✓ Livelihood issues
- ✓ Poverty alleviation
- ✓ Scientific versus local or indigenous knowledge
- ✓ Success in R & D
- ✓ Ecosystems: Environment and resources
- ✓ Integrated resource management and coastal zone management (CZM)

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ILLUSTRATIONS

Photo 1. Discussions with small groups of farmers in remote rural villages (photo Bill Savage 2002)
Photo 2. Performing the street play Mahajal the big fishing net in Chhota Changru Jharkhand state (photo Bill Savage, 2003)
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Photo 4. Presenting case studies in state-level workshops (photo Bill Savage, 2002)
Photo 5. Performing the street play back to Chhota Changru village Bundu Block (photo Bill Savage, 2002)
Photo 6. Performing the street play back to policy makers in Delhi (photo Bill Savage, 2002)