

Summary of the PNRM Workshop held at the PRGA III International Seminar, 6-9 Nov, Nairobi:

The purpose of our workshop at the Nairobi meeting was to brainstorm the following issues and to produce an action plan around the output of the brainstorming.

Questions for Brainstorming:

- How might we act together to give more visibility to innovative work using participatory research in NRM within the CGIAR, to attract more donor and high level management support and broader recognition in the scientific community?
- What mechanisms and/or structures might we employ for focusing and organizing ourselves?
- How can we derive added value from collaboration and participation in the PRGA NRM Scientist's group?
- What could be the theme, objectives and goals for our next NRM Scientist's Meeting, which -- pending approval of funding -- will take place no later than November 2001.
- How should our membership be constituted in the future, and what should be the ground rules?

The first hour of the session was held jointly with the Participatory Plant Breeding Group. Louise Sperling provided us with an overview of the PPB group, including its objectives, evolution and what has been accomplished. (If there is a demand I can summarize this and circulate it in another message). I followed with a short summary of the history of the NRM group, covering the following main points:

- A Natural Resources Management Working Group was established at the the PRGA's inaugural seminar in 1996 with a 5 yr workplan designed around four major themes (stakeholder groups, impact measurement, learning and scaling up and deciding who participates)
- The NRM working group has initiated inventories and assessment of current participatory practice in NRM, contributed to the development of a typology of participation (circulated recently via the PRGA listservers, and presented at the seminar -- please request if you have not received this), and identified tools and methods for the online toolbox. There are also 5 NRM small grants in progress
- A review of progress in 1998 concluded that the group has had some difficulty in defining a common agenda -- mainly due to the diversity of focus within the group. The PRGA's Planning Group has recommended the formation of a

core group to provide opportunities for face-to-face contact to stimulate cohesion and the development of a critical mass

- In response to this recommendation, the "NRM Scientist's Group" was inaugurated in 1999 and met in September in Chatham, UK in a workshop co-hosted by the NRI. The participants in that meeting were nominated by the PRGA's Resource Group and consisted primarily of researchers from the CGIAR, several from NRI and a few others primarily from universities. The objectives of the Chatham meeting were to define principles of participatory NRM management at the landscape scale, identify common strengths, weaknesses and gaps in the practice of participatory research on NRM and to document successful methods for participatory NRM research.
- The products of the Chatham meeting included in-house proceedings (available upon request), the booklet entitled "Equity, Well-Being and Ecosystem Health," distributed at Center's Week 2000 as an overview of participatory NRM research in the CGIAR, and a book in progress based on the case studies presented in Chatham
- The present meeting is a continuation of the process initiated in Chatham

Following this overview, Cynthia McDougall gave a short update on behalf of the book committee formed at the Chatham meeting. The other members of the book committee are Barry Pound (coordinator), Maria Fernandez, Sieglinde Snapp and myself. (the book committee update is available upon request).

Following Cynthia's short presentation, we began to brainstorm around the set of questions posed above.

We briefly discussed the issue of new name for the group. Rather than calling ourselves the PRGA NRM Scientist's group, it was felt that we should have a name paralleling that of our sister group, the Participatory Plant Breeding Group. We settled upon "Participatory Natural Resource Management Group" (PNRM group) as our new name.

We began by brainstorming key words related to the mission of our PNRM group. The following key words were identified, and it remains to us now to fashion these into a mission statement for the group.

- methodology
- training
- focus
- linkage
- source of new ideas
- impact
- institutions
- in farmers fields
- equity
- act as resource group

We brainstormed the following ideas on how to create impact as a group:

- through group products such as publications, websites, listservers, training materials, courses
- scaling-up
- contribute to improved PNRM
- successful cases
- liason with NARES
- insitutionalization of PNRM
- development of participatory methodologies for NRM
- identify promising entry points
- share, consolidate, synthesize experience
- successful linkages

From this work on mission and ideas about how to create impact as a group, we asked ourselves what the PNRM group should be about, and we brainstormed the following ideas:

- provider of access to methods that have been categorized by resource area
- innovator of tools and methods and resource center for these
- link to outer world, bring in outside experience
- small group working on development of methods, with networking role and providing access to resources and contacts. May include focus groups; flexible, organic
- small, committed group investing in development and testing of methods that could be more broadly disseminated
- a network, but also working together to produce joint products
- methods applied to an area of research new to CGIAR, inherently participatory; we don't have the knowledge and experience to develop these individually, need to be able to draw upon the collective.

We further developed this list into the following synthesis about what the PNRM group should be and do:

- act as an information clearing house/resource center organised by thematic issues. As a resource center, we can contribute to networking and the mainstreaming and institutionalization of PNRM
- develop/adapt methodology collaboratively in gap areas identified via an inventory

The inventory could be organised as toolbox with examples of how different methodologies fit within particular cases, with a possible focus on institutional

innovations and methods to improve priority setting, methods to increase speed of technology evaluation and methods to enable scaling out of technology

We then discussed the need to identify some thematic areas or issues to help create focus, and we posed the following criteria for these:

- defined around natural resources and also methodological issues as social analysis, poverty, and research strategies
- should be fairly generic and dynamic
- should be outward looking and easy for CG centers to relate to

We spent a small amount of time brainstorming way to add value to our work:

- PRGA buying into products of individual centers
- PRGA commissioning products that draw upon the work of the PRGA group
- collaborative fundraising

At this point we had exhausted most of the time available, and we spent the remainder of the session defining some main points for an action plan:

- recruit a committee to assemble themes and get feedback on priorities (during the PRGA seminar)
- map experiences and working areas within the group
- use this map or inventory to identify areas of collaboration for joint proposals
- start this process with a quick inventory of methodologies
- analyse demand, expectation and opportunities with different stakeholders who are looking for outputs from this group
- over time, build a "living" inventory or library of methods, organised by themes
- start this process with ourselves, and drawing upon the PRGA liasons to access inputs from others
- the inventory could be organised/offered electronically in a database
- facilitator's TOR to be based on this action plan

A small working group (Michael Peters, Kit Vaughan, Barry Pound, Nicoline de Haan, Stephan Weise) met on the following day to brainstorm the themes around which the inventory of PNRM methodologies could be organised, and to further develop the action plan. As an input into their meeting, each participant provided a list of themes and areas of interest.

We were not able to cover in adequate detail the following other issues:

- linkages to other groups? Should we have them and what should they consist of (examples of other groups are the the CGIAR INRM initiative, the PRGA PPB Group, and other CGIAR systemwide Programs)
- an objective and themes for our next workshop in 2001
- the constitution of membership in the PNRM group and the ground rules for members

Addressing the issue of membership is an important one. On one hand there is a need to be inclusive -- on the other hand there is also a need to capitalize on the cohesion of a group that can meet periodically. Ways need to be found to accomodate both of these needs.

If you are posting a message to the listserver for the first time, please make a brief introduction about yourself and your interests.

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