

## Programme Level Strategies

MIT members made deliberation on the various programme strategies during the state synthesis workshop, in April-05.

### **Networking:**

Networking is the key strategy of *Jharkhand* PACS, 15 out of 20 projects are network project with total 86 partners. The promotion of the networks was done due to two reasons one, for administrative purpose where administrative work is done with one lead CSO and PACS reducing time and complexities, two capacity building of the small CSOs whose managerial capacity and fund absorption capacity is less but they have potential to produce good work at ground.

The strategy seems working in the state as most out of 86 CSOs, are small and getting opportunity to transfer their ideas and express their feelings for community. Because of this strategy only, program has reached in to this many villages.

### **Challenges:**

Over the period of time some operational issues are also emerged as challenges in leveraging the initiatives

- **Transfer of learnings:** It was presumed that lead CSOs would be mainly responsible for capacity building of the partners CSOs but it is observed that there is a huge gaps between the capacity and information level of the staff of the lead CSOs and their partners. The challenge is to create and maintain environment where transfer of learning can take place.
- **Communication between partners:** There are instance when there was a problem of communication between the partners (particularly partner CSOs do not receive information related to project / administration in time and adequately). Due to the limited information they tend to work with task-based approach and peruse activities only. Emerging challenge is to use platforms like review meetings etc effectively and formulate proper policy of the sharing resources (other than financial) and opportunities like reporting, case studies etc partners get fewer shares.

- Coordination of large project areas: Many projects are spread in large areas like NBJK in 10 districts, NEDDS in 6 districts, Spar in 6 districts. It is a challenge at most of the time to manage large network and areas spreads in many districts / blocks which are away from the lead CSOs. Skills of project coordinators, resources and availability of the time are the influencing factors.
- Sharing of resources: It is informed by some partners that the common resources like motorcycles; computers etc are not shared judiciously with all project partners. Making services of support from special staff like documentation officers, research offices, and accountant available to all partners is a challenge.
- Organisation's head / chief functionaries as PACS project staff: This is the major issue, which is affecting programme delivery in many projects. Functionaries / secretaries have lot of work to do related to organization, and it is unrealistic expectation that they would devote full time for the project. As a result of this actual staff strength is reduced and project activities in field get affected. This also creates awkward situations when projects coordinators who are junior employee have to monitor /supervise to a very senior person/ key person of the partner organization.
- Commitment - rely more on funds: In some cases networks were formed for projects and commitment is more related to funds and not for cause or network synergy. Under such situation conflicts due to intra project monitoring are also emerged in few cases. It a challenge to inculcate sense of partnership among the CSOs.

## **Capacity Building:**

Capacity building of the civil society organization is one of the major outputs of the PACS programme. Multi level strategies are being used for capitation of systems, practices and human resources. Mainly there level capacity building efforts are taking place for CSO staff.

Project level as project budgeted component: This type of training are generally planned and carried out by the CSOs (mainly lead CSOs).

Programme level at state level: Initiatives like MEAL, PLW, and good governance workshop, cross visits are taken at state programme level. Facilitation skill for such event is available with ROs.

Apart from this Lead CSOs are expected to do capacity building of their project partners.

Central level trainings: PACS generally organize such trainings at SSK Lucknow and Taragram Jhansi. Topics of the trainings are related to management, project monitoring, accounts and skill development of entrepreneurship.

Resource organization: Perhaps the most impressive feature that makes this programme unique is ROs (SS and PD and other resource organization) as institutions to providing constant support to CSOs.

Non-PACS: PACS project staff also get opportunity of capacity building initiatives in the projects/ activities of other agencies at CSO level.

### **Capacity building Cycle**

**Identification of CB needs:** Identification of the capacity building needs is generally done at the time of proposal development by the CSOs. PDROs also provide some suggestions during the process of project appraisals. SS visits to the project areas also bring issues of capacity building. During the course of project reviews self-reflection CSOs identify needs.

**Methods and materials:** Resource persons and selection of the participants are made as per needs of the project / area. Many of the CSO chief functionaries are good trainers / resource persons. Many CSOs have good infrastructure and expertise for training.

**Delivery:** of the training vary from subject to subject but and person to person. However trainings are treated as important events but most of the focus is on logistics part. Planning and content get less attention. System for continues need assessment is not evolved and it is perception based in most of the cases. Many CSOs are using good resource/ study martial during trainings.

**Utility and effectives:** Topics of the trainings are very relevant like on PRI, Orientation, PRA, Micro planning etc but content and delivery are the issues, which define quality of the programme. It is observed that when resource persons are not aware of the local context and background of the participants training inputs are less useful.

It is also observed that the trainings by one way or other benefit participants, but practice in the field depends on the overall environment.

Capacity building efforts are taking place other than training. Main of them is on job training where persons learn by doing the things gets skilled with the passage of time.

This is practiced in almost in all organizations. Other way participation in exposure visit and workshops and seminar, but this depends on available budgets in the project and traditions in the CSOs.

### **Challenges:**

- There are chances that grass roots staff is left out of capacity building events like trainings and exposure visits etc. as they are more in numbers and budgets are limited.
- Though lot of planned and unplanned capacity building efforts are taking place at CSO level but to create mechanism for tracking of CB efforts and information is challenge.
- Systematic need assessment is not practiced in all organizations due to various reasons and selection of topics and participants are done in casual manner.
- Delivery and effectiveness of the trainings seems area of the concern. In most of the cases there is no formal mechanism prevails to assess effectiveness of the capacity building initiatives. It is viewed that smart and motivated individuals try to grasp most but many participants are able to extract limited benefits from the CB.
- Sharing of experiences at training is happening in many places with other fellow staff but for the transfer of the skills learnt to the other more efforts is required.
- Exposure visits are made without adequate preparations and orientation hence there are less chances of new things learnt replicated.
- There is lack of formal systems to see that weather inputs received during training are utilized or not.
- In most of the project budgets for staff salaries is very low. This not only hurdles in getting trained staff but also affects the motivational level and performance of individual.
- Establish nodal agency by thematic area for training can be done from some agencies / CSOs, which are already part of the PACS and have expertise and infrastructure, but there is a risk due internal dynamics and other party issues.

- There are many cases where CSOs in same areas / cluster are organizing similar training / CB initiatives as part of their budgeted activities. CSOs can be asked to conduct trainings etc together for assuring quality. This can be a good strategy but issues like difference in PIPs, budgets and understanding on certain issue are the factors, which add complicity.

## **Communication:**

Communication plays a vital role for disseminating learning's and issues. At present there are following layers of communication in PACS programme.

*From CSOs to MC:* this communication is mainly related to administration and finance. CSO also submit their QPR to MC.

*From CSOs to MIT:* this is related to MEAL based Reporting and various issues related MEAL

*From MC to MIT:* Related to MEAL and administrative issues

*CSOs to partners and staff:* Related to project and routine communication

In Jharkhand SBCA has started it activities. SBCA (Manthan) had organized a workshop for media persons in which representative of MIT also participated. A presentation on the PACS Jharkhand was also made in the workshop. Orientation workshop was identified by the agencies for PACS partners where need assessment was done.

Due to efforts the efforts Case studies from various CSOs have started publishing in the district level and state level newspapers.

There are plans to train CSO staff for documentation skills.

### **Challenges:**

- Tracking good practices in field
- Attracting media for reporting of public issues /agenda
- Mechanism of information storing and flow
- Fact and analyzed information for communication to various stakeholders

## **Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEAL):**

MEAL is major capacity building initiatives at program level. Up scaling of the system in progress at satisfactory pace. Three organizations are

involved directly in the process (PDRO, SSRO and CMS -SMC) this is new system and will take some time to settle. However this system has produced some results in short period. A common reporting system for all, clarity on outputs, process guidelines at CSO for monitoring and quality reflection at CSO is the some of the major achievements. Apart from this meal has brought synergy in the functioning of the ROs and helping in state level initiatives.

As now phase one is completed and phase two is almost in its half way there are many operational issues, which need attention

### **Challenges:**

- It is observed from QPR of last two quarter that there is need of some changes in formats related to MEAL. There should be columns to generate information related to convergence, resources mobilized by CSO etc.
- Review meetings are organize at CSO level but it is challenge at CSO level that focus during such meetings remains on problem solving and quality reflection on are happens.
- Skills and habits of documentation related to process and field in of the process is required at all level.
- Although the MEAL promotes self-monitoring and reflection process but periodic capturing of details progress on field and understanding ground reality is required by MIT/ROs.
- In the MEAL up scaling phase SMC is also involved in the field intensively. Many of the expected roles demand his more presence in MIT office / Ranchi. He is also supposed to track MEAL Up-scaling tracker and communication flowchart.
- Most of the projects are network projects and information generation for MEAL principal based reporting is issue of capacity building for them partner CSOs and they need some time. Same way at Lead CSO level coordinators finding it difficult to compile the information due to lack of appropriate MIS at project level.
- MEAL related and other events are planned on short notice and changes are made all of a sudden.
- MIT as expected to act as information hub for all for the purpose also needs a good library etc with backup data to feed in to decision-making process at all level.
- A new good practice by PACS is initiated to thought starting presentations of the new proposals in MIT before the PSC. This provides opportunity to all to understand project and give inputs. But the process of the proposal appraisals and finalization before the presentation to PSC is very time taking and there is hardly

- any time left for MIT members to get the final proposal and comment on in.
- SCG is supposed to play an important role at State programme direction level. But due to MEAL up scale phase and elections in the state it could not be expanded / activated. Due the situation expert consultations is not happening on regular basis.
  - MIT's role is also to provide analysed and classified information to all stakeholders, for these regular reflections on thematic issue and finding should happen. This can help in regular analysis and consolidation. But human resources required for information compilations and availability of the ROs is the challenges for playing MIT this role, effectively.
  - There is less clarity / common understanding on the issues like feedback on QPRs, follow up visits to CSOs, synthesis reports in future and SS / PD functions.
  - MIT members are busy in MEAL up-scale right now, but there are other deliverables also, in individual organization capacity. State programme focus is also on advocacy of initiatives. This also increases workload on MIT members.
  - Deliverables related to communication flowchart are not followed strictly.
  - Communication RO (SBCA) is inducted which for supporting and capacity building for CSOs and other stakeholders. Now challenge is plan all the initiatives so that they are not seen as hurdle in routine project activities and untill the capacities generated for better programme delivery.
  - In most of the cases baseline study of the project area is area of concern, as this work is not done in the manner useful for monitoring or impact assessment. This is either in raw form or irrelevant as far as project activities / outputs is concern.

## **Advocacy:**

AS PACS believes in rights based approach advocacy is major thematic area. In the programme it is on three levels.

*State level:* LSG and PRI elections in the state are the main issue, which are addressed by CSOs at state level. There are event like state level meetings, workshops and Rallies as project components. Many CSO are publishing new letters etc for mass awareness on the issues. There are component of interface meetings and dialog at higher-level state officials for policy influence.

*Jharkhand swashahan Manch* is a forum formed by PACS partners to address the issue of governance. Initially this forum is taking up issues of postponement of PRI elections in the state but it is also focusing on issues related during election and post election. This forum is also including non-PACS partners at district level and trying to collaborate with other likeminded networks in the state. Recently forum has decided to take up issues of food right as per SC verdict. The forum will cover schemes related to Public distribution system for study and advocacy.

*Regional level:* The JSM has also adopted cluster level approach and CSOs in that region are taking part in the active of the forum.

*CSO level:* In most of the project some or the other activity is design in advocacy mode. Issues of LSG, women are addressed are on priority however, women property rights, access to entitlement & governance, environmental degradation and child rights also part of the advocacy by various CSOs. Apart from awareness generation on the issues among the various stakeholders, CSOs are also organizing events like Dharnas, Rallies etc.

#### **Challenges:**

- Right mode advocacy is linked with temperament of the organization. Advocacy is beyond organizing certain events like Dharna, Rally etc and needs a lot of research study.
- Network management is skill and full time activity. Management body of the JSM is quite experienced and qualified. But in long run it will require permanent support structure.
- A lot of events are taking place in project, at programme level and now through JSM, which will keep CSO busy all the time.
- Many times networking means giving up your space and ideology for the reason there is tendency to play alone. Differences on approaches to address issues are major bottlenecks for effective advocacy.
- Though the PACS believe in right base approach in advocacy mode but convergence with government agencies is also given sufficient emphasis. It may create situation of confusion at village level and block level as advocacy related activities like Dharna; Rallies etc are also organized at the level.