SAFE-World Project/Initiative Summary

Country: India

Project / Initiative Title: PIDOW Project Karnataka State
1986

Nos. farmers: 20,000 Hectares: 30,000

Agro-Ecological Zone: II

Improvement types

1x	2	3x	4	5x	6x	7x	8	9

A. Key Impacts

A1 – Productivity

	Before / Without	After / With	% change
Ragi	350 kg / ha	640 kg / ha	83
Rice	405 kg / ha	815 kg / ha	101
Sorghum	430 kg / ha	741 kg / ha	
Groundnut	420 kg / ha	695 kg / ha	65

A2 – Impacts on natural capital

?? Increased water supply for agriculture and domestic
?? Water availability in the dry season (soils and in wells)
?? Fodder and biomass productivity increases
?? Land values up after treatment (20 – 50% increase)

A3 – Impacts on local community (social capital)

Self-help groups formed

A4 – Impacts on households and individuals (human capital)

Credit and savings programmes set up

A5 – Key changes in farm / regional system

?? Fertilizer use 25% of former level
?? Before the project 65% of farmers used pesticides after only 11% used pesticides
?? Increase in incomes
?? Increased diversity of crops

B. Types of Sustainable Agriculture Improvements

Type 1: Better use of available renewable natural capital
Type 2: Intensification of single sub-component of farm system
Type 3: Diversify by adding new productive natural capital and regenerative components
Type 4: Better use of non-renewable inputs and technologies
Type 5: Social and participatory processes leading to group action for making better use of natural capital

Type 6: Human capital building through training-learning programmes
Type 7: Access to Finance
Type 8: Add value by processing to reduce losses and increase returns
Type 9: Add value by direct or organised marketing of produce to consumers

	Yes / No	Narrative
Type 1	x	
Type 2		
Type 3	x	
Type 4		
Type 5	x	
Type 6	x	
Type 7	x	Credit and savings groups
Type 8		
Type 9		

D. Contact Point for Project/Initiative

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E. Project Narrative

The PIDOW Project, Karnataka State, India

Participative and Integrated Development of Watersheds (PIDOW) is a collaborative project between the Dryland Development Board of the Government of Karnataka, the NGO Myrada, and the Swiss Development Cooperation. It began in 1986, and now covers 29 watersheds in drought-prone Gulbarga District. The project has had be experimental and flexible, as not only were these partners unaccustomed to working together, but local people expected government to act as they always had in the past. Attitudes and values have had to be challenged in order to ensure the participation of local people as effective stakeholders.

The starting point of the process of watershed regeneration is the establishment of relationships of mutual trust. Staff live in or close to the watersheds, and visit people regularly in places and at times convenient to them. Project staff organise traditional street plays, making special efforts to relate to all local groups during the plays. Meetings are then held with each of the groups within the village, the main objective of which is to establish an organised pattern of group discussions. These help project staff to get further insights into village dynamics and interrelationships between the various groups, and whether these are conducive to mutual cooperation for resource management. One or more problems that are common to the groups then become the subject of group analyses through a PRA exercise, the focus of which is to work out a strategy for tackling common problems. After implementation, PRA methods are again used to review and evaluate the experience.

Local people are exposed to credit groups working well elsewhere. Small farmers and landless are deeply dependent on traditional sources for credit, and so the development of local credit management groups can have a profound impact on their livelihoods. It is only now that trust and cooperation have been established that the project begins to work specifically on watershed management. They introduce various simple concepts at group meetings, including the importance of protecting a single drainage system; the notion that local people can take charge of any work in their watershed; and that institutions are needed to support these changes. A wide range of PRA methods are used to develop and construct a treatment plan satisfactory to all. A Watershed Development Association is then formed to oversee the plan.

The process has had a substantial impact in these watersheds. Agricultural yields have increased by 50-100% for sorghum and millet, and 100-200% for rice. Local people have shown their capacity to save money; with project staff they have developed resource-conserving technologies appropriate to their own conditions, including earthen bunds, boulder bunds, land reclamation, diversion drains, gully checks, silt traps and farm ponds. They have formed self-sustaining village institutions, many of which are now federated into higher-level apex organisations.

Data for this project is in hard copy format and is not currently available electronically. If you would like further information please contact Rachel Hine