

Workshop on Knowledge Management in Civil Society Organisations

22-26 April 2008, Bangalore



Proceedings

prepared by

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Genesis and Process

LEISA India is a quarterly magazine aimed towards promoting awareness on ecological agriculture through sharing information and experiences on LEISA practices. It enables sharing of practical experiences on ecological agriculture. The magazine is being published by AME Foundation, Bangalore, India in collaboration with ILEIA, The Netherlands. Presently, it reaches more than 10000 subscribers in India, and few others in the neighbouring South Asian countries.

For enhancing information exchange on LEISA, a LEISA India consortium was forged. The partners of the consortium include *AME Foundation; Gorakhpur Environmental Action Group; LEISA Network, Tamil Nadu; MYRADA and few enthusiastic individuals.*

Being already involved in promoting LEISA in the field, the consortium partners got together to strengthen documentation and communication within their own organisations as part of a two-year programme. The two year programme included: Learning workshop cycles, inter workshop assignments, planning and review meetings resulting in several useful and tangible outcomes. (<http://india.leisa.info>).

This **Workshop on Knowledge Management** is an attempt to move a step beyond skill learning and practice. The objective of the workshop was to focus on Knowledge Management in civil societies, its importance as well as means to operationalise such intent. Civil societies by design and default are involved in knowledge generation, adoption and adaptation at field level, creating synergies between modern and traditional knowledge systems and feel socially responsible to share this knowledge widely in public domain. Therefore, knowledge management in this sector is more complex as well as crucial than in any other sector. Learning to share and sharing to learn within, as well as beyond the institution, requires enabling systems and processes, besides skills.

One of the most important means by which field learnings are shared is through preparing case studies. Therefore, the content of the workshop included dealing with case study methodology, analysis and preparation. The rest of the workshop was focussed on effectively capturing and communicating learning through various methods and media. Most importantly, most of the learning was based on participatory processes. This was both meaningful and useful as the participants included experienced as well as enthusiastic representatives from reputed organisations.

The *proceedings* is a small attempt to capture the learning process.

Front cover photo: Participants involved in Learning and Sharing processes

Back cover photo: Participants and facilitators

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Day I - 22 April 2008

10.00 – 10.15 AM

Welcome

Prasad welcomed the participants. He explained the purpose of the workshop –how to manage knowledge within the organization – what are the tools, methods available for managing knowledge and how do we learn from each other. He gave a brief background about LEISA India consortium, how they came together and how a two-year Capacity Building programme on documentation and communication was carried out. He said that this time we wanted to expand the scope of learning from documentation and communication to knowledge management and involve partners beyond consortium. The partners who have newly joined the process are representatives from BAIF, RASTA and RDT.

This was followed by a round of brief introduction by participants as a detailed one was scheduled later.

10.15 – 10.30 AM

Expectations

Participants were asked to write down one or two expectations from the workshop on cards. These cards were then displayed on the board. Broadly, the expectations were the following. See Box.

1. *How to write case studies*
2. *How to analyse cases*
3. *Documentation*
4. *Communication skills*
5. *Learn from each other*
6. *Improved writing skills*
7. *Consolidation of field experiences.*

Prasad and Radha shared the prepared programme. It was felt that the programme covered most of the expectations expressed by the participants.

10.45 – 12.40 PM

Pen Portraits

Participants were asked to do pen portraits in pairs. They were asked to interview each other. Besides making it an interesting 'story', they were asked to bring out from their partner at least one 'experience' which they are sharing in public for the first time.

Each participant talked to their partner for about 45 minutes. Then they introduced their partners in the plenary. This was done to make them comfortable in presenting orally, recalling interesting points from the interview. Later, each participant wrote about their partner and these write ups were displayed on the boards for leisure reading.

The entire exercise of pen portraits by talking to each other, introducing their partner orally in the plenary and writing about their partner helped the participants feel comfortable, get to know each other, shed inhibitions in sharing and displaying their oral and written communication skills.

12.40 – 01.30 PM

Knowledge Management in CSOs

Prasad highlighted the importance of Knowledge Management (KM) in civil societies. While KM was important to the private sector for its survival and competitiveness, in formal institutions for growth and recognition and in civil societies it is sometimes a mandatory obligation and a social responsibility. He touched upon various aspects like knowledge sourcing, maintenance and retrieval, managing knowledge within organizations and the necessary systems and mechanisms for doing so.

The presentation was followed by interesting discussion. The main points focused were:

- KM is very relevant to Civil Society Organisations, but, often not given necessary importance. It is good to take systems from other sectors and use it in our context (RDT).
- KM is relevant to all sectors. We need to share and benefit as a learning organization (GEAG).
- On the difference between sourcing and storing, it was clarified that even after sourcing relevant data from the field/secondary sources, it is generally stored in such a way that it is not easily accessible when needed. Hence, storing information systematically is as relevant as sourcing information.

02.30 – 05.30 PM

Session on Case study Analysis

Generally, CSOs share the impact of their interventions as case studies. Also, often it is the only way the impact is presented. Often, organizations have limited understanding as how a case study needs to be prepared and presented, owing to which they miss out on some critical information. Case study analysis was therefore taken up as the starting point as well as the primary focus for learning.

Participants were informed to bring their own case studies which could be improved during the workshop through a process. As many of them either did not bring or were hesitant to share their own case studies, four sample case studies were shared for individual and group exercises. The case studies were incomplete in some aspects. This was done deliberately so that participants could analyse the gaps.

Case study analysis was carried out in two ways – **individually** and **in groups**.

Individual exercise

The objective of the exercise was to make each participant read, understand and identify gaps in the case study. They were asked to analyse the cases in terms of completeness of the content – clear objective, description of context and process, proper conclusion, relevance of title to the content and so on.

Each participant was given two cases. A format was given to the participants based on which they analysed the cases.

Group exercise

In this exercise, the groups of individuals had to do the analysis and arrive at a common understanding on the gaps. The objective was to know how each person looked at the case study, different dimensions and perspectives.

Fish bowl technique was used – While one group did the analysis, another group observed them doing the analysis.

Group I – Analysis of case - 'Farmers participation in the Farmer Field School'

Though participants were asked to follow their own path in discussions, they broadly followed the format given earlier for individual analysis. The discussions were interesting. As usual, in the group, some were silent and some were talking more. Coming to a consensus was difficult. Sometimes, they were trying to change the title which is relatively easier!!!

With little more help from facilitators on what is expected, the participants attempted to crystallize their observations and identify the gaps in each case.



Participants analyzing the cases

Day II - 23 April 2008

09.00 – 10.30 AM

Session on Case study analysis continued...

Group II – Analysis of case – ‘PTD bringing in new horizons’

Group 2 analysed the case. Group 1 was asked to read the case being analysed and observe the process.

The group felt that there were lots of information gaps. While MYRADA representative felt the gap as information on community participation, AMEF representatives were identifying the gaps on technical aspects like rainfall, yield etc. However, all felt that this case study was like a step by step manual rather than a revealing study.



Participants analyzing the cases

Radha made the following observations based on the process of analysis.

- Objective of the case study needs to be clear – We need to be clear on what message we want to give through the case study.
- Context – relevant to the problem being addressed need to be given and not a general background. This was observed in both the cases.
- Process – focus should be on the process that has happened in the field-not just describing a process, PTD or FFS, the way it should be. For example, in case 2 the PTD process was elaborated as a stand alone process, while in case 1, FFS was mentioned but not described. What is required is not just the steps involved but what happened, adaptations and learnings.
- Conclusions made in the studies were not linked to the facts presented.
- Regarding the exercise itself, the focus was on learning to identify the gaps rather than conveniently changing the title to suit the imperfect case!!!

Learnings

- *The need to look at information with different perspectives - every person has a different perception while going through a write up. While one requires more of technical information, some look for social aspects or economic aspects.*
- *Description of process needs to be relevant to the context – i.e., the process of the experience but not the process of a technique or methodology.*
- *Inclusion of some quantitative information should be useful.*
- *Case studies should have conclusions deriving from the facts already presented.*

10.30 – 11.15 AM

Case study methodology

Prasad made a presentation on the 'case study methodology' explaining the theoretical basis, linking with examples as well as to the case study analysis exercises done by the groups.

Prasad emphasized the 3 components of a case study – technical, process and human elements. He also highlighted the need for a hypothesis/objective, the need for collecting multiple evidences and multiple sources for data/information, triangulation of data through various methods etc. He stressed that for writing a good case study, it is necessary that systems and mechanisms are in place which aid in recording, retrieving and analyzing data to be included.



Prasad facilitating discussion on case studies

The presentation evoked an interesting discussion – especially aspects like triangulation. Discussing whether it was necessary to project failures, it was clarified that failures need to be presented with reasons. For instance, many times, failure of a stated hypothesis may lead to a new hypothesis; failures will also lead to a lot of unlearning.

On a question on how to do triangulation, the response was, for example, while yield data could be triangulated from farmers, dept records, farmer diaries etc., village data could have sources like PRA, village records etc. The authenticity of data source is based on the one which is closest to ground realities.

Learnings

- *Need for triangulation of data and methods.*
- *Using multiple sources of evidence for a case.*
- *The need to record systematically 'while it happens' (databases, diaries) so that it could be used for preparing case studies.*

11.30 – 04.00 PM

Session - Sharing activities in organizations

Participants were asked to share how they carry out sharing and learning across their organizations. This was to know how organizations share and learn within their own organizations as well with outside world. The effort was also to see if we could identify and pick up some of the best practices for organizational learning.

MYRADA: Mr.Madanlal highlighted activities such as website, publications, newsletters, user manuals, write workshops etc.

BAIF: Mr. Vishwanath illustrated the efforts in Eco tourism project. Most of the final documentation was being done with UNDP support. Mr. Sriprakash shared their efforts in documenting the impact of drinking water project.

Kudumbam: Mr. Lakshmikantan spoke about the network. The network started in 1982 in 12 districts is presently working in Tsunami areas in Nagapattinam. The network carried out relief packages, trainings. Has been promoting organic agriculture through SHGs, organic certification through INDOCERT, and promoting local livestock. Talking about documentation processes, Parthasarathy shared that a documentation coordinator takes care of documentation for the kudumbam organization, farmers records are maintained facilitated by NGO staff. Sakthivel spoke about kulinji farm, its history and PGS systems.

Accion Fraterna-RDT: Mr. Khaleel shared about their activities. They are presently working in 240 villages in 8 mandals covering around 60000 families in collaboration with ICRISAT and CSA. Programmes are focused on SA, EDP and value addition. Also, promoting skill based employment to rural youth. Policy advocacy is being done for scaling up at the State level.

At the village level they have inter village processes. This apart, there are half yearly reports, annual reports, brochures etc., to showcase their activities. Website is under development. Area meetings and central meetings (twice a month) are organized for both programme review as well as learning.

GEAG: Ms. Ekta presented a case on adaptive strategies. The cases detailing the indigenous practices have been documented in both Hindi and English with well planned video documentation of the best practices. This required rigorous planning and devoted time for producing the publication and videos.



Ekta sharing GEAG's experience

Best practices

Based on the presentations, participants were asked to list practices which they felt were the best for sharing and learning.

*The following **best practices** were identified by participants. They also felt that most of these could be adopted in their organizations for better learning.*

- *Farmer level record keeping, farmer note book –Internal Control System (Kudumbam)*
- *SHG database (Myrada)*
- *Maintaining Visitors opinions record in agro-eco tourism project (BAIF)*
- *Integrating video; meticulous long term planning; video as advocacy tool (GEAG)*
- *Capacity Building of communities on video documentation (GEAG)*
- *Learning through manual presentations; naming the venue as 'learning hall'; recognizing knowledge exchange as a value (RDT)*
- *Identifying intricate cause and effect mechanisms in project impact analysis (BAIF)*

04.15 – 06.00 PM

AMEF- Documentation & Dissemination

Radha shared about the D&D activities of AMEF. She highlighted both products as well as processes. Highlights of the presentation are:

- From cases to data bases – how the need for doing a complete case study led to the realization of the need for databases, using the database for identifying case studies as well as a means for triangulation of data.
- Things which helped in producing periodical publications like House Magazine and AME Info, a quarterly newsletter are: simple and short templates, clear timelines and team's adherence to deadlines.
- Clear documentation of the guidelines for production processes of different products – the steps, the decisions, the timelines etc., so that anybody who is entrusted the task of documentation could understand the process involved.

Information Systems

Farmer Databases

Radha demonstrated the Farmer Database of AMEF which she has designed using ACCESS software. She explained the features of the database. The database enables storing of data on farmers' practices. The training data can also be stored in the database. She also gave a glimpse of the types of reports that could be generated from this database.

Radha also presented the types of products and the purposes they are expected to serve. The discussion focused on the need and the target group of two newsletters – House magazine and AME Info. It was explained that House magazine (monthly) was a publication for internal sharing where staff had the opportunity to share some news too – both location specific as well as personal. AME Info is a product which is a quarterly going to outsiders giving a glimpse of AMEF activities as a whole.

Clarifying on the difference between Database and Excel sheet, Radha said that while Excel accommodates linear relationships, database enables multiple relationships. Prasad added that with one time entry, multiple viewpoints could be addressed, relationships made and diverse reports generated. Database management systems are designed to avoid both redundancy as well as updating anomalies.

Introduction to ISIS

While farmer database was a system to maintain the primary data, Prasad spoke about the importance of having a system for secondary sources – reports, documents, papers, articles, photos etc. He gave an overview of the ISIS system and explained its advantages.

Learnings

- *Awareness on best practices of various organisations on sharing and learning.*
- *Understanding case study methodology – what it is and what it is not.*
- *Importance of templates and deadlines for bringing out a product regularly.*
- *Databases for storing, retrieval and analysis of primary data.*
- *Systems like ISIS for storing information on knowledge sources.*

Day III - 24 April 2008

09.15 – 09.30 AM

Importance of Knowledge Sharing - a short talk by R Dwarakinath

Dr. R. Dwarakinath, Chairman, AMEF graced the session. He shared his thoughts on the importance of sharing knowledge within agricultural context.

Though we all know how to communicate, still the present situation requires us to communicate more and well. In rural situation, on one side resources are degrading and on the other side, farmer's aspirations are rising. A part of their aspirations could be met if those who have knowledge could share what is possible and available. Apart from DoA and University, the CSOs are born essentially to serve the communities. There are different types of communication. Prasad and Radha as part of DD unit are making a lot of efforts in communicating organization's work. All of us here are not only making a professional living but also are being useful in serving communities.



Dr. Dwarakinath sharing his views

09.30 AM – 05.30 PM

Session on Writing

Prof. Madhu took a session on effective writing. He explained why CSOs need to write though they consider themselves to be implementers. He also said that given similar conditions, a person who communicates well is better off in moving forward.

Good writing is that which moves you – make you take action. Following were some of the questions from participants and the responses from Prof. Madhu.

- Can quotes be used as titles? – Yes, *very often but not always.*
- How to integrate primary and secondary data? – *Secondary data can be used for the intro – but not all, be selective. Primary data should be weaved into the text.*
- How to make our guidelines interesting? – *Use short sentences and short paras and include experiences.*

Dr. Dwarakinath added – There is a difference between technical articles and newspaper articles. Newspapers articles are read and forgotten, but technical write ups are for usage. They need to be clear and probably pictorial.

Session on Anecdotes and Quotes

Madhu highlighted the importance of using quotes and anecdotes. He said that they add spice to the text.

Individual exercise

Participants were asked to write anecdotes which come to their mind and display them on the board for others to read and enjoy.

Plenary Exercise – An approach to writing an article

Prof. Madhu facilitated an exercise on writing with the participants. The objective was to help participants understand on how to approach writing on a given topic. The topic selected was Bangalore City. Participants listed out what all needs to be covered about a write up on Bangalore.

Madhu said that it was important to identify aspects for which there are secondary sources and for primary data, we need to talk to people. The importance of spicing up the story with anecdotes was highlighted. He explained most of the popular magazines depend on this technique for sustaining interest as well as readability. He emphasized the need for conducting lot of interviews.



Prof. Madhu facilitating discussions

Similar exercise was done for the topic, *Tsunami rehabilitation programme of Kudumbam*.

It was also clarified by Prasad that we need to combine facts and data, the processes as well as the humanistic elements. Even our technical reports which are most of the time filled with plans and results, could include more learnings and outcomes, besides humanistic stories (as anecdotes in boxes) to make reports interesting and compelling reading.

02.30 – 03.30 PM

Session on Newspaper journalism

What makes news was highlighted by Prof. Madhu - number and magnitude; proximity; calamities; money; big achievements; development landmark; crime; women & children. The suggested web sources for news are: www.aldaily.com; www.samachar.com; www.livemint.com

03.30 – 04.30 PM

Session on Press and publicity relations

Madhu spoke on the importance of having cordial relationship with the press. He suggested the following strategies for maintaining good relations with the press.

- Have one staff doing the role of a journalist maintaining relations with the press on a continuous basis.
- Invite Press for a special workshop for them as a learning event for press, rather than asking them to cover an event, just for news coverage. Always try to involve senior press persons.
- Organise Press conference during an event, if you are able to manage and sustain their interest.
- Have a press release during the conference.

Participants were asked to share how their respective organizations managed press relationship. Following were the responses.

- *RDT invites about 100 press people for New year celebration*
- *AMEF built linkages with Deccan Herald representative who visited the field areas. Now she writes regularly on AMEF.*
- *GEAG has a person dealing with press. This apart, GEAG also provides training for agri-journalists.*

04.30 – 05.30 PM

Session on Magazine journalism

Prof. Madhu spoke about magazine journalism taking various magazines, both Indian and foreign, as examples. He stressed that research, time management and authenticity of information were essential ingredients for the success of a good magazine. Responses to specific questions included the following:

Magazine articles are well researched and written than a newspaper article.

Writing comes by writing...not by reading or listening about writing.

Keep your first draft aside for a week and look at it. Then you may find gaps to improve.

Learnings

- *Importance of Research in writing*
- *Content first, style next*
- *We need to focus on a combination of results, processes and stories in our type of work*
- *Concept of 'base text' – very interesting*
- *Importance of using quotes and anecdotes*
- *Jotting down points before writing – the building blocks essential for writing*
- *Cutting down the write up, self editing, seeking other's feedback*
- *Integrating primary and secondary data – cross checking*
- *Inclusion of live examples*
- *Importance of first/lead para – making it interesting*

Day IV - 25 April 2008

09.30 – 05.30 PM

Session - Photo documentation – some do's and don't's

Participants summarized previous day's sessions. **Mr. Jayaraj**, the resource person for the session was introduced.

Jayaraj stressed on 5 Cs while taking a good photograph – Colour, Composition, Contrast, Closeup and Camera angle. He explained each element with an illustration of photographs.

Colour and **Composition** play an important role in the making of a good picture. The picture should be framed in such a way that the composition reflects the photographers intentions.



Participants during practice session

Camera angle: This helps in adding a dramatic effect to the photograph. There are three levels at which the camera could be placed to capture a shot.

Close ups can be used when the photographer wishes to capture emotion, for example.

Contrast: Extra life is given to a picture if there is a good contrast between the colours in the composition.

After the presentation, doubts on various aspects of photography were clarified.

Practice Session

The participants were organized into four groups. The digital cameras helped in looking at the composition instantly. Each one was asked to shoot **individually** for 2 hours keeping all the points discussed earlier.

The participants selected 4-5 photos for group assessment. Various aspects of the photographs were discussed. Tips were given by Jayaraj who was keen to share the 'trade secrets'.

Participants thanked the resource person, enjoyed encouraging each other, and also the lighter moments of some 'outstanding' compositions.

Jayaraj also said, in videography, along with 5Cs there is one more C, i.e. Continuity, which is important.

Learnings

- *Importance of composition*
- *Being clear on the purpose/objective*
- *Understood the importance of colour – richness and contrast*
- *Understanding on the usage of lighting – avoiding shadows.*

Day V - 26 April 2008

09.00 – 09.45 AM

Anecdotes – Ranking the prepared anecdotes

The participants displayed on the board the anecdotes they have prepared. Every one was given a copy of all the anecdotes prepared.

Radha requested participants to read the anecdotes and rank them. They ranked the best in their view. A chart was prepared and participants marked their preferences against an anecdote on the chart.

Anecdote by RDT got the highest ranking by the majority (see annexure 1).

09.45 – 10.30 AM

Media and Methods - Radio and Video

Prasad introduced the major activities involved in civil societies which lend themselves to reporting – What we intend to do – We Plan; What we have done – We review; What we do – We share. We share our work, activities and learnings through various means and methods (Reports, Case studies, PR products etc.) – also through audio visual media, like radio and video. He explained the strengths and limitations of each medium.

Participants shared as to how they have been using Videos in their organizations.

- *RDT uses videos of other organizations for spreading awareness. They did not invest much on producing their own videos.*
- *BAIF uses videos for community mobilization.*
- *Kudumbam shows videos in group meetings for creating awareness and also in trainings.*
- *GEAG has produced several videos. Recently, it has documented 100 ITK practices for various crops on video. Farmers are using them. It is an awareness building process.*

10.30 – 11.30 AM

Consolidation and Contextualising KM in organizations

Prasad made a presentation summarizing the workshop sessions with a focus on Knowledge Management - the link between Knowledge Sourcing (case studies, secondary sources), Knowledge Maintenance (Records, databases), Knowledge Exchange (Internal and external) and Knowledge Sharing through information products in public domain.

There was an interesting discussion on office systems, for mails storage, contact databases. Discussions included how to maintain them, sharing and transparency within the organization as well as using common server systems.

12.00 – 01.00 PM

Participants' summary

Radha and Prasad shared what they could do to help the participants with regard to practicing KM in organizations – the tools, systems, and methods. Also, requested the participants to 'review' the best practices within each organization and decide for themselves what they could propose within their organisations.

Participants discussed in groups (organizational groups) and presented their ideas in the plenary.



Discussion on learnings

GEAG

- Databases of AMEF – Contacts database, resource databases
- System of sharing knowledge within organization in RDT – try to formalize this system with fixed timings, setting clear agenda
- Sharing information (material/presentations) more widely to all in the organization

RDT

- BAIF's exit strategies from villages
- Farmer records – Farmers diary
- Preparing Annual reports – support from AMEF
- Grey areas-theme based participatory research for 2008. With AMEF's support, we can prepare some base texts from this research.
- Working with 60000 farmers but lagging behind in using IT. We want help from AMEF on designing a database, on a small scale initially.

LEISA Network

- We will apply what we have learnt here in preparing the case studies. We will prepare case studies on SRI, Bio- Inputs, FFS field days, Livestock management. Previously we used to prepare cases. Now, we propose to seek LEISA India team's suggestions and later request Madhu to help us. Madhu has agreed to help in suggesting ways of publishing them in newspapers. We want to publish them in local newspapers.
- We were using photos and videos in training events only. Now we plan to display photos and videos during field meetings.
- We would like to publish our Annual report in newspapers. Newspapers like Dinamani and Dinathanthi bring out a separate booklet for NGOs once in a year.
- We do not have a database system- We would like to seek help from Radha/ Prasad through our Director and Suresh Kanna to design databases.

AMEF – Dharmapuri, Chintamani and Mahabubnagar

- Strengthen Farmers diary, database, crop guidelines.
- While producing Video, we will take care to plan ahead.
- Monthly meetings – we will focus more on learnings like RDT.
- We will collect anecdotes and quotes.
- Weekly one/two hours should be allotted for sharing within staff – apart from review meetings.
- Cause and effects – we will try to do it more seriously in our cases like BAIF.
- ITK collection like GEAG.

MYRADA

- Many systems learnt here are in place in MYRADA. I am very much interested in preparing quality case studies. I will share about case studies with field staff and explain them how it should be.

BAIF

- Record keeping – we require such systems as we are taking up many projects.
- Database management - we have reporting formats which keep changing-very difficult to manage at present – too many variables (physical and financial).
- BAIF, though ISO certified, has inadequate e-recording systems (emails and systems).
- Knowledge exchange meeting of RDT is an interesting 'practice'.
- We will modify our tourist visitors information diary to collect more details.
- We will share case study materials with our colleagues.
- If we can apply the principles and tools discussed here, then we can get ISO for KM too. We can include that in the next workshop.

01.00 – 01.30 PM

Wrap up and feedback

Prasad wrapped up the workshop by saying ' we have just made a beginning' – a long relationship building rather than participation in a workshop. As all of us are committed to enhancing sharing in public domain, he added, we shall explore together into 'putting into practice' our joint learnings from the workshop.

Participants Feedback

Participants were asked to give their feedback on the workshop content and process. They were given colour cards to indicate (suggestions as well as reactions). Following was the feedback from the participants as appeared in each card (without clustering).

- It was an excellent workshop. I have learnt lot of things which I was not aware of earlier. The methodology, the language, the atmosphere were best and exemplary. Hats off to Prof. Madhu and Mr. Jayaraj for their excellent training and tips on each of their subjects.

- The AME Training team is very good. They taught us many things on documentation, case studies, storing of information etc. I will carry forward the learnings and share with my colleagues.
- I have learned that content is more important than the style – ‘Don’t try to impress but to inform’.
- Learned the technical aspects of Photography.
- Planning of the workshop was good - including programme schedule, time management, accommodation, food, involving participants into the sessions and reading material.
- I have learnt that case studies should be researched thoroughly and the use of triangulation method.
- Good learning on Knowledge Management – source, store, search and share; Case study – writing and analysis; Photography – Photo documentation and Writing articles for resource programmes.
- Great Beginning !!! Good tips on Knowledge Management; Good Writing; Photography. Please continue the good work.
- Very useful for my organisation and myself, so thanks to AMEF and trainers.
- I am impressed with the practical oriented photo documentation session.
- Programme timing is good.
- It is good and a rare initiative.
- Learning from each other for the betterment of civil society organisations (because people don’t want to disclose their secrets).
- Excellent resource persons and good food and accommodation, especially the atmosphere of training centre.
- It was an excellent workshop. I have learnt many things from these 5-day training. Learnt some best practices from other organisations.

Points for improvement

- Include some group games, energizers and more group exercises.
- Duration of training could be reduced to 3 days.
- More clarity on participatory research and developing case studies based on the collected data.
- Participants need to be communicated with directly on programme matters rather than sending it to the organizations.

Annexure 1

Anecdotes by Participants (as shared by the participants...unedited)

My Mother fed me, but this mother (cow) feeds my daughter

Myself and one field staff went to his working area and met one widow who has received milch animal. In an informal conversation with her, we asked her 'are you getting any benefits by the cow?' She replied yes and went inside her home. She showed her mother's photo (who had passed away) on the wall and told "My mother fed me but this mother (showing the cow) feeds my daughter".

Bagavathiraja, Kudumbam

Nature tried to divide us but RDT tried and united us

Gangavaram is one of the villages situated in Kalyandurg area of Anantapur District. Venkataramana and Obulapatti are the two brothers residing in Gagavaram happily with their family members. They have 6 acres land with black soil on which they cultivated Bengal gram. A stream started flowing across the middle of their land. In the beginning, they were happy to get additional water which helped crop growth. But as the years passed by, the stream became very large and the field was separated into two parts. It started eroding the cultivated land. The two brothers were worried and approached RDT in the year 1993. RDT staff went to the village and verified the situation. They decided to construct a check-dam. The construction was completed within 3 months and within one year the land became leveled. The brothers felt very happy and said that "Nature tried to divide us but RDT united us"

A Karuna Devi – RDT

My husband deserted my life but KUDUMBAM saved my life

In Poraiyur Panchayat working area, a destitute who received milch cow said in a meeting – 'my husband deserted my life but KUDUMBAM saved my life'.

M. Parthasarthy – Kudumbam – LEISA Network

We are always providing our expertise to rural people to improve their database and records. For this we are providing formats to all. Once I visited a farmer and he showed me his small diary in which he was recording all his data. He said it is for me only. I maintained the records for the convenience of all the staffs.

Ekta Bartarya - GEAG

Income generating activity carried to Award

Recently, Ms. Lalitabai of Halakurki, Tumkur District, Karnataka state was awarded for the best women rural entrepreneurship for environment protection by the Government of India. She is famous for the making improved chulha (stove). She got trained by BAIF, promoted chulhas and is being recognised as trainer for making improved chulha. She made more than 5000 chulhas in Karnataka villages. Her contribution towards popularizing and protection of environment was appreciated by the government and gave her the award.

Sreeprakash, BAIF – Tumkur

My border may restrict within my family if AME had not entered into my life

I went to one exposure visit to Tanjore, which was organised by NABARD farmers club. There, I had interactions with scientists, farmers from various regions and shared my experience. Though illiterate farmer, I shared my experience without fear and hesitation. I want to tell you one thing, that I feel very happy and proud to be part of AMEF farmers group and family, because they have extended my border without limit.....'(as shared by Sivalingam, a farmer from Veppanatham, Dharmapuri)

Kuttimani, AMEF, Dharmapuri

Panchagavya is precious than anything

In our working area we were conducting Farmer Field School. As per our advice, a group of farmers prepared panchagavya mixture. One farmer sprayed panchagavya to his cotton crop and got good results. The remaining panchagavya was stored in his storeroom for future use. After 4-5 days he went to the storeroom and observed that the panchagavya mixture was stolen by some body. He was surprised and visited our office and expressed his displeasure over the stolen panchagavya mixture which he had prepared 5 days back. He also told 'Panchagavya was not only ordinary mixture, it was like gold to me'.

B Nageswara Reddy, AMEF, APO, Mahabubnagar

Beneficiary become Resource Person

The visitors who are coming to Mailanahalli, ICEF watershed project never forget impact of series of farm ponds, check dams, farmers participation in agro forestry and agro-horticulture along with explanations given by Mr. Thimmaiah. The non-stop discussions make the watershed project memorable and return back with inspiration. Thimmaiah one of the beneficiary became guide, trainer and lecturer to visitors, farmers organisation and also government departments. His involvement in project activities improved his abilities and with the help of his farmers group and BAIF rural Development Karnataka (NGO) he formulated his personality to become a good speaker. His talks in the local language using quotes and has gained expertise in vermicompost, organic agriculture and animal husbandry. Now, he is a live example for people who want to seek livelihood developments through project interventions. Farmer name: Thimmaiah, Maragondanahalli, Tiptur Taluk, Tumkur district, Karnataka.

BAIF – Tumkur

Motivation solved the problem

In my cluster village, I came to know that since 6 months, group meetings and activities were not going on properly due to problem created by few members. I identified those members (two) who were problematic. One day I called them to our office and appreciated as if they are the lead farmer / progressive farmer in the village. I convinced them and gave group responsibilities. I asked them to share about their family and activities, which were used for the preparation of case study. I also told them that once the case study is shared with others they will also become more popular. I also gave them azolla, which was stocked in the office. Then they were very happy and agreed to continue the group activities by taking lead responsibility. After a few days I saw the group activities and meetings were going on nicely without any complication. Like this I solved the problem due to problematic persons by motivating and giving group responsibilities.

Jamkhandi K A, AMEF – Chintamani

SHG woman's love towards Officials

In one of the visits to village, I went to an old woman's house. After asking about her saving and credit details in SHG, I asked why don't you buy a T.V. She told in our village there is no cable provision and I have to fix an Antenna on a height. I saw a coconut tree just behind her house and told her - you buy a TV and I will fix the antenna during my next visit (jokingly). This happened about one year back. Recently, for a women's discussion she had come to our office. Seeing me she rushed and told 'Sir, you might have forgotten me. You had promised to fix the antenna for my T.V which I bought and kept long back. Do not forget. Please do come to my house, if not for fixing Antenna, but atleast to see us'.

Madan Mohan Lal – MYRADA – Gulburga

Kudumbam did the wonder, we escaped from money lender

In the earlier days small farmers were borrowing money from the moneylenders at an interest rate of 12 paise and more. But after Kudumbam entered we are forming SHG and issuing the loan to prepare bio-inputs and other agricultural activities and gave training to use less inputs. One farmer named Venkatachalam said this in our field day function.

P. Lakshmikanthan – Kudumbam

Kudumbam is not an organisation, it is our family name

Kudumbam is working in 12 panchayaths of Pudukottai district. We are working for farmers, women, widows, landless people in the field of organic farming and self development activities. The people's lives changed. So they told that 'Kudumbam is not an organisations name. It is our family name'.

K Sakthivel - Kudumbam

Fighting Drought with Rain Water Harvesting – anecdote of P Yeleru Village

P. Yeleru is located 30 kms away from Anantapur District head quarters. There are 250 households in the villages. Between 1984 and 1994, all the 70 wells (Irrigation borewells) dried up due to erratic rainfall. There were severe droughts during these years and people suffered due to lack of food, fodder and water. At this juncture, RDT entered the village and implemented Integrated Watershed Programme from 1995 to 2001 with its own funds and also with DDP funds. It was a participatory watershed development programme wherein people were the main actors. The main activities included soil and moisture conservation, Rain water harvesting, horticulture afforestation, fodder forestry, agriculture and house based activities. The programme was implemented very effectively with people's participation. Women SHGs were provided a revolving fund for livelihood development. The total land was treated with soil conservation measures, 35 checkdams were constructed, wasteland was planted with plants, 60% of the families raised horticulture, 3 old tanks were renovated and lot of change in agricultural practices had taken place. The rainfall was normal and all the water bodies got filled with rainwater for 4 consecutive years during the implementation period. As a result, all the 70 dried up wells are recharged / rejuvenated and farmers started cultivating the land under the bore wells. Now they are getting good crop yields and sufficient water for irrigation and drinking purposes is available. "Now, drought will not visit our village" said Mr. Peddireddy, the WDC Chairman.

G. Bheemappa – AF/RDT – Anantapur

Result of Awareness

Sangeeta, now a resident of Yadgir is originally from Kerala. She is from a very poor family. She got married in Kerala and settled in Mumbai. But due to bad habits and poverty, her husband sold her to a brothel keeper in Mumbai. Sangeeta was pulled to sex work by the brothel keeper against her wishes. In the mean time she came into contact with Sharnappa; and developed intimacy and became her partner. Sharnappa, promised farm work to Sangeeta in Yadgir and brought her to Yadgir. They worked together as farm labourers and settled down in Yadgir. But due to some serious illness Sharanappa died, leaving behind Sangeeta and one child. The farm work also become dearer for Sangeeta due to draught in the area. There was no regular income for her. Due to ill advise from her friends she was forced to do sex work for livelihood. MYRADA took HIV/ AIDS prevention programme and opened an office in YADGIR. The staff of MYRADA tracked Sangeeta and gave extensive awareness on safe sex, regular health check ups etc. The staff also sent her for VCTC test where she was diagnosed as having HIV. She was again sent for advanced check up to ART centre who found that she has reached danger level as her CD4 came down considerably. Due to extensive advise and awareness she changed her life style and did regular exercise (Yoga, meditation) and food habits. She is fine now and in one of her CD4 count gone up to that of normal level. All this was possible because of her steadfastness desire to live long. She thanks MYRADA for all the guidance and help. MYRADA took her on their rolls as Peer Educator; she is giving awareness to Sex Workers on safe sex, regular check ups etc.

Vishwanath, BAIF – Tumkur

The top ranked anecdote

“Mango Plants are my children who don’t desert me”

Nagaratamma is a widow from P.V. Puram village of Settur Mandal from AF/RDT’s project area. Her husband Mr. Lakshmanna, a poor farmer, passed away about 7 years back leaving behind a son, a daughter and about 2 acres of infertile dry land. After his death, the family mainly survived on physical labour, as they had no money to invest and gamble on the rain-fed land. The son acquired some skills in masonry, married and finally deserted the family 6 years back. The old widow had herculean task of making the ends meet and marrying the daughter off!

In these dire consequences Mrs. Nagaratamma contacted AF/RDT staff for help. She planted about 60-70 mango trees in her land. She used to water them and received an incentive amount of Rs. 150 every month for 3 years. Now, after 6 years down the lane, she is a proud owner of a small mango orchard. Last year she married her daughter off! This year she has leased out her mango orchard for Rs. 10,000/-. When contacted Mrs. Nagaratamma, commented with joy in her heart and tears in her eyes – “These are my children who don’t desert me”.

Khaleel Ahmed – AF /RDT – Anantapur

Annexure 2 Programme

Day 1 – 22/04/2008

10.00 – 10.15 AM	Welcome and Introduction <i>KVS Prasad</i>
10.15 – 10.30 AM	Expectations
10.30 – 10.45 AM	Tea
10.45 – 12.40 AM	Participants introduction through 'Pen Portraits' exercise
12.40 – 01.30 PM	Knowledge Management in Civil Societies <i>KVS Prasad</i>
01.30 – 02.30 PM	Lunch
02.30 – 05.30 PM	Analysing draft case studies <i>Facilitators: TM Radha and KVS Prasad</i>

Day 2 – 23/04/2008

09.00 – 10.30 AM	Case study analysis Contd...
10.30 – 11.15 AM	Case Research Methodology <i>KVS Prasad</i>
11.15 – 11.30 AM	Tea Break
11.30 – 01.30 PM	Organisational experiences in documentation – An Informal session
02.30 – 04.00 PM	Presentations continued...
04.00 – 04.15 PM	Tea Break
04.15 – 06.00 PM	AMEF Documentation and Dissemination <i>T M Radha</i>

Day 3 – 24/04/2008

09.15 – 09.30 AM	Importance of sharing knowledge – a short talk by <i>Dr. R.Dwarakinath</i> , Chairman, AMEF
09.30 – 05.30 PM	Sessions on writing – facilitated by <i>SR Madhu</i>

Day 4 – 25/04/2008

09.00 – 05.30 PM	Photo documentation – facilitated by <i>S.Jayaraj</i>
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Day 5 – 26/04/2008

09.00 – 09.45 AM	Presentation of anecdotes by participants
09.45 – 10.30 AM	Media and Methods – an overview <i>KVS Prasad</i>
10.30 – 11.30 AM	Consolidation and contextualizing KM in organisations <i>KVS Prasad</i>
11.30 – 12.00 Noon	Tea Break
12.00 – 01.00 PM	Participants summary – ideas worth practising
01.00 – 01.30 PM	Wrap up and Participants Feedback

Annexure 3
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About the programme

Development organizations are deeply involved in generating lot of field knowledge. Often these learnings are not adequately captured and shared widely. Building a necessary understanding, the systems, processes and skill sets required for managing knowledge within institutions and sharing widely in public domain therefore becomes crucial. This requires integrating principles and approaches from multiple disciplines.

The programme of Knowledge Management in Civil Societies is a new programme being initiated by LEISA India team. The programme looks at what could be done as well as what is being already done in various organisations.



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