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IFSP Exchange Programme Nepal - Sri Lanka

Visit to Trincomalee 9 - 24 October 2003

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Trincomalee

24 October 2003

RCIW/ GTZ-IFSP Team Nepal

Buddhi Kunwar, Senior Programme Coordinator, GTZ-IFSP
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1. Introduction

The exchange programme between IFSP Nepal and IFSP Sri Lanka commenced in March 1999 with an extensive training exercise on Food-for-Work in Nepal. Since then two visits from Nepal team members and two from staff of IFSP Trincomalee, Sri Lanka were organised¹. This is the third event of the exchange programme to Sri Lanka from Nepal. Experiences from the exchange programme from the past have positively contributed to fine-tune the approaches and processes of the various components of the IFSP Trincomalee and the Rural Community Works Programme (RCIW) Nepal to which GTZ-IFSP Nepal is providing technical assistance.

On the request of the IFSP Nepal, the management of the IFSP Trincomalee had organised a two week's visit from 10 to 24 October 2003 for two professionals from IFSP Nepal and one professional from the Ministry of Local Development of His Majesty Government of Nepal. In this exchange programme, two senior professionals from GTZ-IFSP namely Mr Buddhi Kunwar, Senior Programme Coordinator and Mr Shailendra Kumar Jha, Regional Coordinator and Mr Naresh Chapagain, Local Development Officer from the Ministry of Local Development had participated.

This report presents, among others, the outcome of the exchange visit and a summary of action plan for the lessons learned from Sri Lanka. Finally the team members have discussed some points for conclusion.

2. Objectives of the exchange programme

Following were the overall and specific objectives of the visit of the programme:

Overall objective:

- To familiarise with a range of efforts made by IFSP Trincomalee in conflict affected areas to address the problems of poverty, food security and malnutrition.

Specific objectives:

- To review the approaches, process, and best practices of IFSP Trincomalee done in the past to overcome poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition problems.
- To observe the development interventions (social and economic infrastructure, health and nutrition, and capacity building) of IFSP Trincomalee in the field both cleared and unclear areas.
- To learn and understand integration process of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).
- To understand the efforts of IFSP Trincomalee on the internalisation of programme activities by the existing service providers (government/NGOs).
- To share RCIW programme's experience of Nepal with the staff members of IFSP Trincomalee, and other partners of IFSP.
- To analyse the IFSP Trincomalee supported programme activities and identify the best practices/process/approaches in the context of RCIW Programme, Nepal.

¹ Technical Audit of Small-Scale Infrastructure, November 2001, Technical Paper 19; Documentation of the Visit to Trincomalee, October - November 2002, Technical Paper 25

3. Visited project sites and project activities

The team members visited project sites located the so called 'cleared' and 'uncleared' areas. 'Cleared' in this context meant that government security, services and overall structures of the civil society and the market economy are functioning. 'Uncleared' areas are those under the control of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, LTTE. The list of the major sites visited are mentioned in the Annex 1.

Major IFSP supported activities under the four strategies and results respectively that were observed by the team were:

Social and economic infrastructure development projects:

Rural roads, minor irrigation tank, school building, housing for IDPs, drinking wells.

Health and nutrition projects:

Mid-day meal for school children, school gardening to home gardening, food-for-work (diversified commodity support for food security including nutrition, sanitation and hygiene).

Service to promote employment and income generation of target beneficiaries:

Agriculture market centre, farmer's company for seed paddy processing, farmer organisation for development of minor irrigation schemes, goat rearing, banana farming, rubble making.

Capacity building initiatives:

Centre for Information Resource Management (CIRM), training support to staff from, supervision, monitoring and evaluation, staff development, community mobilisation, coordination.

4. Outcome of the exchange visit

During the course of the visit the team members interacted with IFSP staff members, target beneficiaries, reviewed IFSP documents and discussed with staff from government and non-government organisations regarding concept, progress, concerns and lessons learnt. Particular attention was given to the programme interventions in a conflict situation (in both "war" and "cease fire" situations). The outcome² of the visit is summarised below:

² The team has put their observations and suggestions only on the activities they visited/observed. Hence the project activities mentioned in the table of the outcome of the visits below do by far not include all activities supported by IFSP Trincomalee. However, the four IFSP strategies and major activities are structurally covered.

Table 1: Outcome of the visit

SN	Proj. Activities	Observations	Suggestions
1	1. Social and economic infrastructure improved and used		
1.1	PNA	A very effective tool to focus development Participation of poor and IDPs Easy to focus activities through prioritisation. Community as a whole taken as entry point (inclusive approach followed) Targeting criteria clarified to all Helped minimise pressure from elites/politicians	None
1.2	Rural roads	Improved accessibility Improved mobility of target beneficiaries for using services (agriculture, health, education etc)	Rural road operation and maintenance (O&M) strategy should be developed and operationalised at DS level. Undertake plantation along road for stability and income.
1.3	Minor Irrigation Tank	Improved marketing food commodities and agri-inputs Increased profit margin of farmers An effective intervention for food security Creation of employment opportunities Increased land value of farmers Fish farming opportunities increased Local environment improved Helped in crop intensification and diversification Contributed to arrest out-migration	Plantations (trees, shrubs, herbs) along dikes can be introduced for erosion control and additional income. A benefit cost ratio need to be analysed before intervention. A "participatory benefit assessment" should be done after the operation and use of the irrigation facilities.
1.4	Well	Improved access to clean drinking water Improved community environment Improved personal hygiene and sanitation Contributed to promote kitchen gardening	None
1.5	Agri-market centre	Motivation to farmers for commercial production Opportunities to buy agricultural inputs (seeds, tools, equipment, pesticides for growers)	Follow up of the market centre facilities by target beneficiaries should be monitored
1.6	School building	Improved learning and teaching environment Creation of community assets	
1.7	Housing support for IDPs	Immediate relief to IDPs and Increased confidence of IDPs Helped IDPs for their integration into society Increased utilisation of abandoned farming land	A concerted efforts of different service providers needed to improve IDPs' livelihood
2	Village health care and nutrition related services improved and used by the people		
2.1	Baseline survey	An excellent basis for working/intervening A clear health messages designed and applied to remedy problems indicated by baseline survey in health and nutrition	Impact of project intervention should be monitored for e. g. improved weight f. new borne children

SN	Proj. Activities	Observations	Suggestions
2.2	School gardening to home gardening	An innovative approach to involve students and teachers. An effective medium of technology transfer from student to parent A complementary source for mid-day meal Practical learning opportunities for school children Contributed to the adoption of vitamin rich vegetables and fruits	It is little early to withdraw the support because it could not be fully / institutionalised / internalised by the participating schools
2.3	Mid-day meal	A good incentive to attract all students in general and students from poor families, in particular Increased school attendance rates. Buying of locally available materials. Skills on preparing nutritious rich foods among parents	
2.4	Food for work	Emphasis on use and utilisation of food Diversified food item Soap provision proved good for sanitation Direct benefit to poor Create employment opportunities for poor	
3.	Additional employment and income generating opportunities facilitated		
3.1	Goat rearing	A good source of income generation provided fodder/forage are ensured	Judicious use of pesticide need to be promoted
3.2	Agriculture market centre	This is under construction but visualised for service promotion to target beneficiaries plus income generating of NGOs	
3.3	Farmers Company	Quality seed supply service at local level Farmers as owners as shareholders Invest on farmer's welfare Ensured agriculture services through Farmers Organisation Linkage developed with Farmers' Company and government service providers. (Assistant Director of Agriculture Extension, Irrigation Department)	
3.4	Banana cultivation	Supported for crop diversification Availability of fodder to animal	
3.5	Rubble making	Quick income generation for poor and women	
3.6	Rehabilitation of minor irrigation tank	Extra crop (Yala season) could be possible as result of minor irrigation tank rehabilitation	

SN	Proj. Activities	Observations	Suggestions
4	Institutions (GO/NGO/private sector) are supported at the various levels (village through to province level) in providing project related services & target group mobilisation efficiently		
4.1	Human resource development activities (training, orientation, observations)		
	CBOs	Increased awareness on service receiving capacities of target beneficiaries Observation tours opened their thinking and improved their skills Skills enhanced as a result of training	
	NGOs	Local NGOs helped the target group for accessing services on regular basis Partnership approach with NGOs strengthened their capacity. Supported NGOs institutional development (transportation, logistics, communication accessories) NGO is provided income-generating opportunities through agri-market centres for better service delivery to target group and income generation for itself	
	Government level	Observation tours broadened their vision and knowledge which helped in improving their working style. Coordination improved because of project support Helped government staff in internalising programme /process initiated by the project Government in particular learned from IFSP approach for addressing poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition in conflict area	
	IFSP	Exchange programme plus professional training within country or abroad on thematic issues increased staff motivation, skills and efficiency	
4.2	Establishment of CIRM	Basic information collected, analysed, documented and shared which helped in planning, monitoring and evaluation on food security, health and nutrition GIS maps produced and they are being utilised by the project and its govt and NGO partners Initiated new institutional set up within the framework of Provincial Secretariat A new organisational structure proposed and is forwarded for approval	Information available at CIRM can be utilised for long term perspective plan (Periodic planning of 5 years or 10 years) at provincial level.
4.3	Communication and coordination among stakeholders	Documentation and production of appropriate programme extension materials (news, reports, posters) for better understanding among stakeholders Publication of working manuals eased stakeholders for the operationalisation of approaches/activities in a uniform manner IFSP successfully internalised institutional ownership of its programme to government and NGO partners	Duplication and irregularities (donations, subsidy, allowances, support) among donor agencies could be improved through promoting a donor coordination forum in Trincomalee district

SN	Proj. Activities	Observations	Suggestions
4.4	Supervision and monitoring	Demonstrated PNA as powerful planning tool and able to influence it's application in planning and decision making process Government office and NGO have recognised the tool and are adopting it in their project cycle Regular field visit of IFSP and concerned government staff contributed for timely completion and quality work Monitoring indicators are well defined.	
4.5	Local staff hiring	Hiring of local staff ensured project acceptability at community level Experiences gained and skills developed by local staff would be valuable asset for dissemination of IFSP best practices at GO/NGO/private sectors in Trincomalee	

5. Other observations / suggestions

5.1 Emphasise greater focus on gender

The team observed the need of IFSP Trincomalee to introduce and improve gender sensitive project interventions since this issue is not adequately reflected neither in project documents nor in the field. How women in particular participate ? What would be their role as participants and as decision makers? How will women benefit from IFSP's interventions? These questions need to be clearly spelled out.

5.2 Increase coordination among donor agencies

A working coordination forum is suggested to form for addressing irregularities and duplication of donor agencies support, activity, allowances and working approach. This forum can also be useful to share and adapt working experiences in conflict situation and also for sharing learning from each other. Moreover, the forum can provide policy feedback to government officials so as to tune government support in favour of poor and IDPs. For productive coordination, a focal person on behalf of donor agencies is required for the forum. Government Agent in the district can facilitate the entire coordination process.

5.3 Follow-up support for certain interventions

A follow up support is required to sustain and to develop the full confidence of target beneficiaries and support providers especially in those activities, which are not in a position of self-sustainable. For example, though the irrigation tanks were completed, farmers still require technical support for crop intensification and crop diversification, which, however, may not be the prime mandate of IFSP but needs to be addressed by the department of Agriculture and other service providers. Similarly, the seed paddy processing farmer's company is also at crossroad. Since, this is the apex level business company of farmers in a particular area, it needs constant and intensive support for sometime. Considering the level of support available from government departments, the company should be given follow-up encouragement from time to time until they feel confident. The IFSP should not ignore this issue. A satellite support programme from the new IFSP project for Batticaloa could perhaps be provided to the farmer company.

5.4 Prepare periodic plan at the province and district level

The IFSP project can advocate for the preparation of a periodic development plan at the provincial level. Based on the framework of a periodic plan for the province, districts also need to develop their own plans. The plans should be prepared in participatory way with the involvement of government development offices, NGOs donor supported projects and private sector organisations that are involved in development. The plans could be tied up with the on-going national plan and policies. More information on this could be collected from the experiences of Nepal. With the development of periodic plans, the programmes supported by development agencies could be mainstreamed to achieve higher impacts.

6. Lessons learned and action plan for replication in RCIW programme, Nepal

After the completion of the exchange visit, we identified a number of good practices / approaches / processes and are committed to replicate them to the RCIW Programme Nepal. The timeframe of starting the best practices learned from IFSP Trincomalee and the responsibility of the team members in internalising certain lessons in the RCIW Programme is summarised in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Lessons learned from Sri Lanka and action plan for replication in Nepal

SN	Key lessons from IFSP Trincomalee	Timeframe to start replication	Responsibility
1	Pilot PNA tool application for micro-projects of IFSP Nepal	December 2003	SPC/RC
2	Scale up of water harvesting (rain water harvesting) for irrigation in micro-projects of IFSP Nepal	January 2004	SPC/RC/DPAs
3	Piloting of supporting agri-market centres to NGOs/cooperatives	January 2004 onwards	TL/SPC/RC
4	Preparation of concept paper to integrate and support IDPs as a result of conflict	February 2004	SPC
5	Inclusion of health and nutrition issues in the on-going IFSP supported PLA Groups in consultation with DHOs and GTZ-Health Sector Support Programme	January 2004 onwards	SPC/RC
6	Pilot school gardening activity to supplement the mid-day meal at school in WFP supported Food for Education Programme	January 2004 onwards	RC will discuss with World Food Programme (WFP) sub office, Dadeldhura and forward the proposal to TL
7	Explore idea of diversifying food commodities in Food for Work	December 2003 onwards	SPC/RC

8	Introduction of CIRM concept at Information and Documentation Centre of District Development Committee.	January 2004	LDO/Kavre District
9	Regular publication of RCIW news and reports on thematic issues.	December 2003 onwards	SPC/LDO
10	Develop working strategy in conflict situation with lessons from Sri Lanka	February 2004 onwards	SPC/RC

Note:

TL = Team Leader, SPC = Senior Program Coordinator, RC = Regional; Coordinator, DPA = District Program Advisors, LDO = Local Development Officer of Ministry of Local Development, PLA = Participatory Learning and Action Groups = non-formal education group of rural poor), DHOs = District Health Officers

7. Conclusion

The exchange visit programme of the team members became very useful for the following reasons:

- The visit provided an opportunity to familiarise of IFSP Trincomalee project concept, approaches, activities and impacts.
- The visit provided in-sight understanding of the application of livelihood approach to address poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition.
- The team learned the ways to coordinate programme activities with government partners from the design phase to the end of the project period.
- The team members learned the ways to deal with IDPs through quick impact projects.
- The team realised the different approach of delivering development based on the degree of conflict (i.e. which is extensive support approach (RCIW Programme, Nepal) vs. intensive support approach like IFSP Trincomalee.
- The team members learned different tools for project planning and impact monitoring.
- The team learned the efforts of IFSP Trincomalee regarding the phasing-out / exit strategy of its activities by the target beneficiaries and service providers.

Annex 1: Programme schedule

Date	Time	Name / Area & guide	Vehicle	Programme
09. 10. 2003	1.45 p.m.	Naresh, Buddhi, Shailendra	Flight	Travel to Colombo via Bangkok from Kathmandu
10.10.2003	4.30 a.m. 11 a.m.	Driver Dr Dedo, Ms Rohini	Hired	Arrival to Temple View Hotel Introduction, discussion and concept paper study of IFSP Trincomalee
11.10.2003	9 am–1 p.m. 4–6 p.m.	IFSP office Bhavan		Reviewing village data sheets
12.10.2003	7 a.m.	Sathees	Site viewing: Hot well, Konesvaran Kovil, Nilaveli Island	
13 10.2003	8.30–9.30 a.m. 10–12 a.m. 3–5 p.m.	IFSP office 2 Rohini Buddhi, Shailendra Emmanuel Suthan		Presentation IFSP- Trincomalee Presentation RCIW/IFSP- Nepal Discussion about IFSP S/L
14.10.2003	9–1 a.m.	Chandrakala IFSP office – Deva, Maran	Richmond N. 5	Visit to ADA, DATC & Uppuveli Community mobilisation & Infrastructure development.
15.10.2003	9 a.m.–1p.m. 2–5 p.m.	Thampalagamam Kandee, Kadachini	Delon N 6	Review of health activities Mid-day meal programme Discussion with MOMCH, MOSTD
16.10.2003	8 a.m.–9 p.m. 9 a.m.–5 p.m.	Muthur, Nimaladas	Auto, Ship Delon N 6	T. harbour to Muthur Road construction, minor tank, Banana farming, rubble making as IG activities
17.10.2003	7 a.m.–4 p.m. 4 a.m.–7 p.m.	Eachchilampattai, Suthan	- do -	How GOs & NGOs integrated with IFSP developmental works. Farmers' Company, Mid-day meal discussion with Virutcham Peoples Dev. Org NGO Return to Trincomalee
18.10.2003	9 a.m.–1 p.m. 3–5 p.m.	Kuchchaveli Kandee IFSP office Bhavan	- do -	Polio - programme Office management system & studying reports and working papers.
19.10.2003	9 a.m.	Hired	Site viewing: Anuradhapura historic city	
20.10.2003	9 a.m. –1 p.m. 2 – 5 p.m.	Kuchchaveli - Kadachini IFSP office Chandrakala	Sathees	Mid-day meal programme Seed paddy programme & Farmers' company
21 10.2003	9 a.m.–12 p.m. 2–5 p.m.	Gopalapuram Haritharan Office	Richmond N 5	Discussion with IDPs, QIP, Micro finance & small scale employment. Preparation for presentation
22.10.2003	7 a.m.–1 p.m. 2 –5 p.m.	IFSP Office	DB 4	Lesson learnt: Presentation Nepal team Travel to Kandy, Colombo
23.10.2003	11 a.m.		DB 4	Travelling to Colombo
2410.2003	1 a.m. 9.30 a.m. 12.30 p.m.		DB 4	Flight to Bangkok from Colombo Flight to Nepal from Bangkok Arrival at Kathmandu airport

Note:

Medical office for aids awareness programme, CDB = coconut development, IDPS = Internally displaced persons, QIP = quick impact programme, GO = Governmental organisations, MOMCH = Medical office for mother and child health care, MOSTD