



NEWSLETTER 2009/1

INTRODUCTION

This is the first Newsletter since Zenete França and Associates (ZFA) began its activities in countries during its first year of work. The year 2008 was very productive for ZFA and brought unforgettable experiences in planning, implementing and evaluating learning and capacity building (L&CB) activities in collaboration with its associates. ZFA teams flew to different countries and enjoyed being again among friends and colleagues (old and new), who are committed to an agricultural innovation development system and want to see it improving people's lives, their communities and their natural environment.

ZFA is a network of specialists from Africa, Latin America and Asia which a vision of "a world in which effective learning and capacity building change people's lives and reduce poverty".

ZFA IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

With the support of Australian Aid, the Agricultural Research Support and Development Facility (ARDSF), invited ZFA to work in Papua New Guinea (PNG), a country in the Pacific with a population of 5.5 million people and six key organizations for rural development. PNG was the location for three learning and capacity building assignments carried out by ZFA in July and August 2008. The ZFA team comprised ZFA Managing Director **Zenete França** (Brazil) and Strategic Planning specialist, **Simba Sibanda** (Zimbabwe), with the technical support and inspiration of **Adiel Mbabu** (Kenya), Agricultural Research and Development Specialist at ARDSF and **Miok Komolong** (PNG), Program Coordinator, ARDSF. These colleagues share the principles for the creation of ZFA, whose goal is "to empower people in developing countries to institutionalize strategies and methods to sustain continuous L&CB in support of innovation systems".



The first workshop, on **Learning Needs and Organizational Constraints (LNA) Assessment** for NARI Program Level Management for thematic, regional center and project leaders, was held at NARI



Headquarters in Lae, the second city of Papua New Guinea, on 14–15, July 2008 for 25 NARI program level managers and researchers from other NARS. Hosted by **R. Ghodake**, Director General of NARI, and **Birte Komolong**, NARI Research Coordinator, this event was very much appreciated, mainly because of NARI's transformation into an Agricultural Innovation Center. Positive feedback provided by participants included "strong needs analysis and methodologies/tools used", "excellent appreciation of cognitive and affective relationship", "shaping of job description of thematic and R&D leaders".

The second workshop, on **Results-Oriented Program Formulation**, was held at NARI Headquarters on 16–18 July 2008 for the same group of 25 participants. It was designed to allow the participants to learn new approaches and develop new skills to reinforce NARI's capacity to manage agricultural research within an innovation systems context. This workshop was highly evaluated; participants commented: "relevant activities giving participants opportunity to participate by doing", "group sessions well supported by advice and guidance from facilitators", "the process or the tool is good and can be institutionalized".

The third workshop, on **Strategic Planning for Learning Organizations**, was held at the Gateway Hotel in Port Moresby, the capital of Papua New Guinea, from 29 July–2 August 2008 for a group of 26 NARS managers, researchers and ARDSF officers. It aimed to develop facilitation skills to multiply the effect of this event within the NARS. Participants discussed planning as an integral part of Agricultural Research for Development (AR4D), the innovation systems paradigm and the conceptual framework for planning, the various steps of strategic planning, and how strategic planning may be implemented and institutionalized. Participants were grateful for their learning and said “I would like to put into use what I learned because I learned a lot about planning stages to help me and my organization”, “this event highlighted the value of experiential learning or learning by doing, which led us to vision, mission and objectives”, “the content logically planned”; “deliberations concise” “it helped us to monitor and evaluate our learning outcome”.



All three workshops were based on learning modules adapted by ZFA to respond to the needs of PNG from modules formerly designed by Zenete França and colleagues, at the International Service for National Agricultural Research (ISNAR) of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).

The overall aim of the workshops was to improve the capacities of NARI and other NARS to implement the Agricultural Research for Development (AR4D) concept within an Innovation System perspective and to lay the foundations for further L&CB initiatives in the agricultural research sector in Papua New Guinea.

The workshops on Results-Oriented Program Formulation and Strategic Planning both adopted a learner-centered approach involving active experience, followed by a process of reviewing, reflecting, and applying what had been learned through the experience. This approach encouraged communication and group work. An integral aspect of both workshops was the ultimate application of the skills learned by the participants in their work environments, using the participant action plan approach (PAPA) and committing themselves to action through a written plan developed at the end of the workshop. This follow up program has been managed by the ARDSF office.



The ZFA experience in Papua New Guinea was excellent. ZFA congratulated the participants for their commitment and dedication to learning, as well to ARDSF, AusAid and the PNG government, which as a team supported the planning, implementation and evaluation of these successful events.

ZFA WITH CTA IN MOZAMBIQUE

ZFA designed, implemented and evaluated a L&CB workshop in Portuguese on the **Production of Extension Materials and Agricultural Communication** at the Instituto de Investigação Agrária of Mozambique (IIAM) from 22 September–3 October 2008, with financial support from the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA). The workshop attracted 17 extension workers and researchers from institutions in Mozambique, Angola and Guinea Bissau. The ZFA team comprised ZFA Managing Director **Zenete França** (Brazil) and agricultural extension specialist **Waldir Marques Giusti** (Brazil), both former researchers of the Brazilian Corporation for National Agricultural Research (EMBRAPA). The ZFA team produced its first learning module in Portuguese, entitled ‘Produção de Materiais para Extensão Comunicação Agrária nos Países de Língua Oficial Portuguesa: Módulo de Capacitação de Facilitadores’.



IIAM Director General **Calisto Bias**, IIAM Technical Director **Paula Pimentel** and **Rodger Obubo**, CTA, attended several sessions of the event and participated actively. The course enabled participants to identify sources of agricultural information and acquire skills to develop materials in

formats appropriate to the rural population they serve. The workshop was designed to improve the capacity of future facilitators to lead similar events in their countries.

The workshop created and used a theoretical cycle which was participatory by design and comprised seven phases as follows:



Phase 1: participants conducted the participatory needs assessment among a specific rural community (near Maputo) through an adapted PRA process.

Phase 2: under the guidance of the IIAM researchers, participants identified appropriate technologies generated by the Institute to respond to the needs assessed.

Phase 3: participants developed draft extension materials.

Phase 4: participants validated the draft extension materials through discussion with members of the same rural community.

Phase 5: participants incorporated the comments provided by the community, colleagues and facilitators.

Phase 6: participants produced final versions of these materials.

Phase 7: CTA provided support to distribute these materials to the rural community which participated in this learning exercise. Participants were guided by an extension materials designer and by a senior specialist in extension to produce the extension materials.

The ultimate application of the skills learned by the participants in the work environment is to be monitored through the Participant Action Plan Approach (PAPA), which facilitates participants' efforts to transfer what they learned in the workshop to their jobs. IIAM is kindly managing PAPA through its researcher, Marta C. Francisco, who was an outstanding participant of the workshop.

Participants were happy with the results of the 11-day workshop and provided encouraging feedback saying that "the PRA method was excellent to identify the profile of small producers – I liked very much to meet with the farmer community"; "the workshop psychological and social environment was very pleasant, relax, cheerful and sincere", "the facilitators presented explanations very clearly and greatly facilitated my learning" "the cycle (step by step) to produce the extension materials facilitated our understanding on how to go about producing quality and effective materials to respond to the needs of farmers when I return to my own environment".

ZFA and IIAM are very grateful to CTA, which plans to continue providing support to bring together the five Lusophone countries in Africa to participate in L&CB events to improve the performance of their agricultural organizations and improve the lives of people in their countries.



ZFA MANAGING DIRECTOR IN MOZAMBIQUE AS AN FAO TEAM MEMBER

ZFA, represented by Zenete França, returned to Mozambique on 14 November for 12 days, as an external consultant on behalf of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The mission in Maputo, Chimoio and Manica was the first of several country missions designed to contribute to the development of **FAO's corporate capacity building strategy**. In Mozambique, the team was expected to review issues related to capacity building in the broader agricultural sector. The team was composed of three members, including an FAO staff member and two external consultants. The mission involved interviews with government and non-government actors, international and intergovernmental agencies, private partners and country-based donors in Mozambique. ZFA will continue being part of a new FAO team which is visiting Peru in January 2009.

ZFA OUTPUTS IN 2008 AND THE WAY FORWARD

ZFA is very pleased to share with you its satisfaction with the results achieved during 2008. ZFA not only promoted opportunities to enhance knowledge, attitudes and skills among workshop participants in several areas of knowledge, but also contributed to increasing interaction among NARS managers-leaders in PNG, and to improving the relationship between extension-research organizations in Mozambique, Guinea Bissau and Angola.

In 2008, ZFA prepared and distributed five learning modules in hard copy and on CD-ROM among the participants of the workshops in PNG and Mozambique, in addition to contributing to the production of samples of extension materials validated by the community in Mozambique, adapting the Guideline on how to conduct learning needs assessment among program managers of NARI and other NARS in PNG, recording all the process, content information and the participants' evaluation in several workshop reports.

2009 looks very promising for ZFA, which has been approached to implement several L&CB programs in Africa and Asia. This is encouraging. ZFA plans to continue responding to these requests with pleasure and gratitude to those who trust in the quality of L&CB which ZFA offers.

Please send comments and feedback to Zenete França at zpfranca@gmail.com



The learning materials produced for Papua New Guinea.



Workshop participants, Lae, Papua New Guinea



Workshop participants, Maputo, Mozambique



The learning materials produced for Mozambique

Effective Learning – the Way Out of Poverty

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