The Reaching Agents of Change (RAC)

Lessons Learned & Reflections on the RAC Experience

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... Introduction

- The RAC design was innovative in many respects e.g.:
  - Funded to raise funds!
  - Linking three innovation areas critical to upscaling technology:
    - policy change
    - capacity development (individual & organizational) and
    - access to technology (OFSP)
- The design was also risky!
  - Relying on unpaid advocates and partner organizations to deliver project objectives
- In retrospect, having successfully managed the risks and delivered expected results – we now can share lessons learned
Introduction

- Given ambitious RAC objectives and an elusive delivery process, RAC had to consciously integrate learning processes to decision making at all levels
  - Biweekly reports – activities
  - Quarterly reports – outputs
  - Six-monthly reports – objectives
  - Annual reports – contribution to goal

Lessons Learned
recognize mistakes
observe what works
document them
share them

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Project Design: Observations and Key Lessons

- **Observation 1** – RAC design tended to combine policy engagement and programming (resource allocation) – tending to confuse two related but different processes

- **Lesson 1** – Need to separate policy engagement e.g. support to biofortified crops for nutritional impact from programming decisions e.g. resource allocation to specific crops (e.g. OFSP)
  - Policy to national governments and programming to regional governments and donor projects
  - This has staffing implications – two different competencies.
Observation 2 – RAC design anticipated creation of a web-based database to document advocacy processes.

- First attempt failed because the promotion experts (PEs) did not appear to need it
- Second attempt had modest success

Lesson 2 – databases should be designed to respond to specific user needs

- The need changes with context & experience
Observation 3 - RAC design anticipated a Small Grants Scheme to tap **innovative advocacy approaches** from cutting edge innovators

Lesson 3a – The design should have anticipated both **promotional and advocacy innovations** – depending on how widely exposed OFSP was in the respective contexts

Lesson 3b – Given that advocacy is a relatively new area of specialization, need to **embed capacity building** in similar designs in the future
• **Observation 4** – RAC design focuses on advocacy for policy change, resource allocation and capacity building for OFSP multiplication and distribution to combat VAD.

**Lesson 4** – To address sustainability, the design needed to link these two objectives with **access to markets and agro-processing** to drive demand for OFSP.
Project Design: Observations and Lessons

• Observation 5 – RAC advocacy assumes active involvement of unpaid high level specialists, supported by lower level PEs

  - Lesson 5a – High level professionals are highly committed, with little time to spare for unpaid activities
  - Lesson 5b – Presumption to expect that lower level PEs can manage high level professionals to deliver expected results
  - Lesson 5c – Need for full time high level advocates
Observation 6 – Advocacy for policy change and resource allocation was expected to be carried out without an investment guideline

Lesson 6a – Need for carefully targeted investment guidelines to help investors (e.g. governments/donors) to visualize what it takes to turn ideas into programs and projects

Lesson 6b – Like other learning manuals, requires specialized inputs, time and resources
• **Observation 7** – The design assumed availability of water for dry season seed multiplication

- **Lesson 7a** – with the prevailing climate change conditions, where short rains are increasingly unpredictable, irrigation is necessary to produce clean planting materials at the on-set of rains

- **Lesson 7b** – This has resource implications
... Project Design: Observations and Lessons

- **Observation 8** – The design anticipated a relatively easy and short term preparation of learning modules (TOT & Project Management)

- **Lesson 8** – developing & delivering effective learning modules in multiple languages is a complex process requiring:
  - Multidisciplinary & multi-organizational involvement
  - Time and adequate resources
• **Observation 9** – The design anticipated that trained trainers would mobilize resources for step-down courses within their organizations and partner organizations

- **Lesson 9a** – Resource mobilization within participating and partner organizations is a time consuming and unpredictable process
- **Lesson 9b** – In the context of short-term projects (e.g. RAC) & considering the significance of step-down courses – seed money should have been incorporated into the project design
Observations 10 – The design assumes active involvement of partner organizations to deliver key objectives – e.g. step-down training; decentralized seed multiplication; high level advocacy

Lesson 10 – Complex partnerships assumed in the design require **time and resources** to organize, develop and maintain
... Host institutions and Implementing Partners: Observations and Key Lessons

• **Observation 11** – Advocacy appeared to work better where RAC activities were co-hosted by a legitimate national policy forum. e.g. in Mozambique, OFSP was adopted by SETSAN as an example of how to roll out a food based approach to combat Vitamin A deficiency

☐ **Lesson 11** – Need to focus on legitimate policy forums at national level – to facilitate both effective policy advocacy and programming decisions

☐ Where they don’t exist, need for capacity building
Host institutions and Implementing Partners: Observations and Key Lessons

- **Observations 12** – RAC design was based on regional coordination/backstopping and country level implementation structure.

  - **Lesson 12a** – In reality, country management structures tend to be relatively independent (consider competing bilateral country programs)

  - **Lesson 12b** - Need to involve country level leadership in the design of regionally coordinated programs to ensure buy-in and support
Reflections on the RAC Experience

- As assumed in the design, RAC was a complex innovative initiative – focusing on policy and institutional innovations necessary for widespread adoption of OFSP technology.

- With the increased focus on up-scaling of promising innovations, the need for policy and institutional innovations will become increasingly important.

- Thus, lessons learned in this pioneering initiative (RAC) could be valuable in future designs addressing upscaling issues.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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