

WIDENING THE SPACE: INSTITUTIONALIZING PTD

The focus on partnerships between women and men farmers and outside agents/professionals in the mid-1980s resulted in the wider acceptance of the notion of Participatory Pechnology Development (PTD). This process of interaction between local people and outside facilitators was expected to result in more sustainable, ecologically sound and culturally acceptable farming systems. The process advocated was invariably expected to start with a joint analysis of the situation and encouraged experimentation by farmers. These activities and methods are clustered in six themes that together form the "original" PTD framework (ILEIA, 1988). These are presented below so that the reader is reminded of these six original PTD principles:

1. How to get started.

Building a relationship of confidence aimed at cooperation with local network of farmers and other actors. Making a joint analysis of the existing situation, farming systems and problems.

2. Looking for things to try.

Identifying indigenous technical knowledge and relevant formal knowledge. Screening and selecting topics for further development, using criteria leading to optimal use of local resources and sustainable systems of production.

3. Design of the experiment.

Planning and designing experiments, based on farmers' criteria and measuring techniques, but improved with methodological suggestions of outsiders.

4. Trying out.

Actual implementation of the experiments and evaluation of the results.

5. Sharing results with others.

Communication of results with other local and scientific networks to scrutinize and interpret them, and to encourage others to adapt and test the results for their circumstances.

6. Sustaining and consolidating the process of PTD.

Creating favorable conditions for farmers' organizations, local institutions and support at policy level. Establishing physical infrastructure and educational facilities to strengthen local experimental capacity and local management of the processes of innovation.

The original proponents of the process always emphasized that the sequence suggested by the above list of activities was artificial because linear, stepwise processes did not occur in practice. To be effective, PTD activities depended on collaboration among farmers, field workers, researchers and others. New patterns of interaction and cooperation have involved. From the above framework it can be concluded that PTD is more than research: it combines the generation, testing and application of new techniques with the creation of the physical and institutional infrastructure to sustain the application and further innovation of the technology (Haverkort, Kamp, Waters-Bayer, 1991). The last element (in the listing above) emphasized "sustaining the PTD process." The ultimate aim is to leave communities with a capacity to implement an effective process of change. PTD programs must therefore also be concerned with organizational development and the creation of favorable conditions (Veldhuizen, Waters-Bayer, and de Zeeuw, 1997). This is where a discussion and an emphasis on institutionalization of PTD become immediately important. It is no surprise therefore, that more than a decade after PTD was documented and widely promoted, participants at the September 2001 workshop stressed that scientists, farmers and extension workers are showing that technology has to do with values and processes and that success in achieving wide impact can happen not out of domination but out of partnership.

Falling under the rubric of PTD, these innovations are marked by --

- the centrality of partnership in mutual and respectful learning among farmers, scientists and extension workers, the involvement of farmers in

- all stages of the development process, the focus on strengthening local capacities to experiment and innovate based on farmers' requirements;
- the openness to creating the organizational culture (norms, values and behavior) that supports partnership;
 - the readiness to create links between different types of knowledge, as well as between different sources of knowledge towards the integration of perspectives; and,
 - the expansion of PTD application beyond agriculture into marketing and other endeavors.

As a result of PTD, farmers' innovative capacities are strengthened. Empowered and supported by partners outside the community, they become more willing to experiment in areas where outcomes are unpredictable. PTD also strengthens farmers' organizations and other stakeholder groups. The diagram below shows how PTD interactions between researchers, extensionists and farmers could reach thousands of farmers through peer exchange and feedback mechanisms. The hope is that reaching thousands of farmers would give rise to autonomous spreading of PTD principles and processes even to larger numbers.

[diagram fn: scaling up-institutionalisation.ptd]
not supplied

After a decade of success in promoting participatory agricultural research and extension approaches, challenges still remain in efforts to institutionalize PTD within research and extension organizations and for that matter, even in civil society organizations.

Four major challenges in institutionalizing PTD

First, is the need to spread new ways of exchanging knowledge on sustainable agriculture practices not among thousands of farmers but to millions of rural households in every country.

Second, the wide gap between researchers and extensionists in such complex problems as with animal husbandry and common property resources, or with conservation, processing and marketing. Despite investments into research and large extension services, this hasn't led to effective systems for complex and diverse issues.

Third, is the need to develop structures that could marshal resources to carry out the constructivist, farmer-to-farmer exchange over wide areas and populations.

Fourth, is the need to organize a way to learn and interact with each other across all hierarchies, at all levels from experimenting groups of households to global partnerships, in a field where there are no teachers.

Ueli Scheuermeier

Institutionalization

Institutionalization is a process in which new ideas and practices are introduced, accepted and used by individuals and organizations so that these new ideas and practices become part of "the norm" (Sutherland, 2000). Compared to scaling up, which refers to the dissemination of technology or idea over a wider area and to a larger number of persons, institutionalization refers to the transformation of norms, attitudes, behaviors and organizational structures so that a new idea becomes an integral part of the organization. Workshop participants differentiated the two. They came up with the following distinctions.

Differentiating Scaling Up and Institutionalization

Scaling Up	Institutionalization
<p>To promote or disseminate a technology or idea horizontally or vertically (i.e., in a wider area, a larger number of beneficiaries, larger number of NGOs and other partners, higher up in a research institute) to achieve bigger impact.</p> <p>Is made possible through self-help groups, federations, networking NGOs and district working committees.</p> <p>Scaling up could be the result of institutionalization, but it does not necessarily lead to institutionalization.</p>	<p>To sustain the links and structures developed during the PTD processes, institutionalization seeks to ensure that technology development and scaling up continues beyond project frameworks by becoming part and parcel of the regular work of the key actors involved. The process may incorporate elements of scaling up.</p> <p>To change organizational culture by enhancing a set of "rules of the game" so all the institutions in development (government, non-government, farmer organizations, etc.) effectively collaborate in a system. Institutionalization is said to have been achieved only when all groups of actors involved in agricultural research and development at all levels in the institutions have become willing and capable of making the joint quest.</p> <p>Institutionalization of PTD calls for gradual changes in attitude, norms, capacities and behavior (including specific tools and methodologies) that support participatory approaches as standard in agricultural research for sustainable development. These approaches are reflected in planning, implementation, and M&E.</p> <p>Institutionalization can be at grassroots or on higher level.</p>

To have recognizable effect, the new "rules of game" need to be adopted at strategic points in institutes and large groups. Ann Waters-Bayer, workshop participant and member of the organizing committee points out,

"all groups of actors at all levels in the institutions have to become capable and willing to make the joint quest. It does not mean that every researcher has to do PTD, but it does mean that every publicly funded agricultural research organization regards PTD as a legitimate and necessary part of its work. Otherwise, the scaled-up PTD activities among farmers and NGOs will have to battle with constraints in formal research institutions to yield what farmers and NGOs require".

Since institutionalization entails engagement with government agencies, farmer organizations, NGOs and the private sector, one is immediately faced with problems inherent in working with a range of sectors with vast differences in nature, management systems and interpersonal dynamics. Box 6 lists key issues in PTD institutionalization;

Concerns in the Approach to Institutionalization

Basic Overall Institutionalization Issues

- When should institutionalization begin?
- What is institutionalized? Technologies or approach?
- Can there be dualistic PTD-conventional approaches?
- Is there a need to create new PTD institutions? Should their creation be prevented?
- Who owns research results? Does public good override intellectual property rights?
- Can implementing guidelines be set up for institutionalization and still keep PTD dynamism?

Lobbying Campaigning

- How can research institutions be influenced?
- What will show that PTD really leads to technology development and that the costs translate into better results?

Policy Formulation and Planning

- Who must be involved in planning institutional change?
- Can there be too much structuring of the PTD process?
- How will the long timeframes be handled?

Institutional Change/Development

- With the diversity in crops, environment, organizational culture, logistical capacities and other factors is it possible to standardize procedures in institutionalization?
- If there has been no experience with wide-ranging extension work, why bother institutionalizing?

Monitoring and Evaluation of Institutionalisation

- What criteria for success may be used for institutionalization? How is quality control ensured when PTD is scaled up?

External Conditions

- Can PTD be a sustainable alternative to globalization and regional integration?

For PTD to be consistent, the mutuality and transparency, which mark cooperation in local partnerships, will need to be replicated in these wider settings. Breaking the old bureaucratic cultures, changing attitudes, exploding myths about other actors and PTD itself, and adjusting behavior will take time, painstaking work, financial investment and other transaction costs. The interface of research and extension will imply that actors must learn new roles or be wise enough to evolve them.

The road to institutionalization is marked by other issues, new tasks and challenges in lobbying, policy formulation and planning, and operational systems. Those who take its path recognize the external context of globalization and regional integration of trade, finance and communication. The succeeding chapters show how these issues are manifested in different settings and may be resolved.