

Core Course: Community Based Natural Resource Management

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(Notation: The World Bank Institute was formerly called the Economic Development Institute (EDI), as reflected in some text)

The Environment and Natural Resources Division of EDI (EDIEN) conducted an International Workshop on *Community-Based Natural Resource Management* in Washington, D.C., from May 10-14, 1998. The 5-day workshop was intended for policy-makers, practitioners, and disseminators from developing countries and transition economies who are engaged in some aspect of institutional reform to improve the community-based management of natural resources. The workshop had 4 specific objectives: 1) to facilitate a learning dialogue among participants from all over the world; 2) to identify and promote awareness of key institutional issues; 3) to generate information and learn about viable institutional options; and 4) to enhance the capacity of participants to bring about positive institutional reforms. Two hundred participants from 60 countries attended the workshop, primarily from the public sector, private sector, and academic institutions.

The workshop was evaluated by the EDI Evaluation Unit (EDIES) using an end-of-workshop questionnaire. The questionnaire was completed by 93 respondents (46.5%). Twenty-eight respondents work for international organizations (30.1%), 41 (44.1%) for national organizations, 10 (10.8%) for regional/local governments, 7 (7.5%) for non-governmental community organizations, and 5 (5.4%) for other institutions. Two respondents' affiliations were unknown. Twenty-five out of the 93 respondents (26.9%) were women. The end-of-workshop questionnaire consisted of 2 sections. The first section asked respondents to rate the extent to which the workshop met its performance objectives. The second section asked the level of respondents' knowledge about the themes presented in the workshop, before and after completing the workshop. A 5-point Likert type scale that ranged from 1 = minimum to 5 = maximum was used to rate respondents' answer to each question. Following is a summary of the evaluation findings.

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- The relevancy of the workshop to respondents had the highest overall workshop performance rating (mean=4.17). About 78% of the respondents rated 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale for this question. Respondents from the regional/local governments (N=10) felt that the workshop was particularly relevant to their work, giving this indicator a mean score of 4.45.
 - The workshop presented a total of 20 case studies covering all geographical regions and 4 specific workshop themes. The overall mean score for the usefulness of the case studies was 3.90 out of 5.0. Respondents whose scope of work are at the national level (N=41) gave this indicator 3.79, while those who work at either the international (N=28) or regional/local and community level (N=17) had a mean score of 4.0. Results also indicated that the respondents who participated in the working group for the East Asia and the Pacific region (N=17) found the case studies more useful (mean=4.0) than the 6 respondents who attended the working group for the Europe, Central Asia, and the Middle East region (mean=3.67).

- Among the 4 workshop objectives, the workshop particularly helped respondents *identify key institutional issues of community-based natural resource management*. This objective received one of the highest ratings of the four objectives, 3.79 out of 5.0. Seventeen respondents from the regional/local governments and community organizations felt that the workshop helped them most in their *learning about programs that enhance community-based resource management* (mean=3.71).
- When asked about the overall usefulness of the workshop, 70% of all respondents rated 4 or 5 (mean = 3.78). The rating was particularly high among those from the regional/local governments (mean=4.0).
- Respondents' opinions about the workshop were mixed on two issues. These were the degree to which various options presented in the discussions could help alleviate poverty in respondents' countries (mean=2.95), and the usefulness of the field trip organized during the workshop (mean=2.78). These were the only items that fell below 3.0. The mean scores of the 41 respondents from national organizations were the lowest among all subgroups on these two indicators, 2.88 and 2.73, respectively. The content and delivery of these areas need to be reviewed as to how to increase their relevance and usefulness for future workshops.
- Pre/post self-assessment of knowledge showed positive increases in the level of respondents' knowledge about the 4 major themes of the workshop. The mean scores of the 4 issues were in the range of 3.0-3.61 before the workshop and the 3.62-3.94 range after the workshop. The percentage knowledge gains among all respondents varied from 9.3% (*the participatory process of organizing community-based groups*) to 20.6% (*alternative approaches to managing conflicts in the use of natural resources*).
- The theme on *effective operational linkages between public, private, and community-based groups in managing natural resources* had the largest post-workshop gains among respondents whose scope of work are at the regional/local or community level. The mean score increased from 3.28 to 4.06 (23.8%). Results indicated that women (N=25) also had the largest increase on this theme (17.6%). Men (N=68) had the largest percentage increase on the *alternative approaches to conflict management* (21.9%). Respondents working at the national level also learned most from the workshop on the *alternative approaches to conflict management* theme. They had a relatively low knowledge of the theme before the workshop (mean = 2.83). The post-workshop knowledge level increased by 25.8% (mean = 3.56), the largest percentage for this group.
- The information obtained from pre/post self-assessment should be interpreted with caution. It reflects the degree to which respondents *believed* they learned the issues, but does not measure how much they *actually* learned.