

How to bridge local experience and international practitioner fora

Workshop on Local Learning Groups

13 December 2010, 2-5pm

Katalyst Office, House 20, Road 6, Baridhara, Dhaka

Organized by the Market Development Forum - Bangladesh

Background

The market development forum aims to establish local learning groups (LLGs) on market development topics with practitioners from Bangladesh. The idea of local learning groups is twofold. On the one hand, they serve as a platform to exchange experiences and lessons between the different members of the LLG, on the other hand, they allow to connect the local discussions with discussions on the international level.

The establishment of the first LLG was done in collaboration with the Market Development Initiative (MaFI), an initiative of the SEEP Network. The MDF-LLG was the first LLG established under the MaFI. In July 2010, a first LLG meeting was organized in Dhaka, discussing on the Lead Firms Approach. The result of this discussion was then fed into an online discussion forum at MaFI.

Inputs from the SEEP conference

MDF participated with Marcus Jenal in the SEEP annual conference 2010 in Washington DC. The following points were discussed during the SEEP conference and especially the MaFI session regarding LLGs:

- Local Learning Groups (LLG) are important vehicles for MaFI to root its discussions in field realities. It is therefore important that the LLG get support from MaFI and the information gained in the field is flowing back into MaFI in a meaningful way. Existing local networks like the Market Development Forum (MDF) in Bangladesh could serve as coordinators of different LLGs on national level.
- The organisational learning agenda of international development organisations are searching for low-cost learning systems and hence are looking to promote local face to face learning groups (LLGs). The LLGs should synchronise their agenda with the agenda on an organisational level, but also with local needs.

Purpose of the workshop

The purpose of the workshop is to advance the concept of local learning groups and make it an effective means of connecting local practitioners' experience with international discussion fora. As a pioneer, MDF already collected experiences in establishing an LLG in Bangladesh and now wants to bring this group forward for an effective exchange of experiences on the ground and online.

Questions for the workshop

The following questions will be discussed during the workshop:

- How can a system look like that enables field level staff to feed their experiences in discussions on international level, e.g. international conferences, online discussions, webinars, etc.?
- How can LLGs effectively channel learning from the international level to the field staff and use it as a means to develop their capacities?
- How to select topics that can be discussed by LLGs? What are currently burning issues that could be tackled by LLGs and how could this be approached?
- Based on the comparative analysis done by Practical Action on two LLGs (will be presented during the input presentation): Where do we see the MDF-LLG's strengths and why do we think it is working well and sustainably?

Program

Time	Topic	Facilitator and methodology
14.00-14.15	Welcome and introduction	Rajiv Pradhan, IDE
14.15-14.30	Presentation of the findings from the SEEP Annual Conference and MDF's vision for LLGs	Input presentation by Marcus Jenal, Intercooperation
14.30-15.15	Discussion on specific questions concerning LLGs	Breakaway groups
15.15-15.30	Tea Break	
15.30-16.15	Presentation of the group findings	Presentation by group moderators, 15 minutes per group including discussion
16.15-16.45	Plenary discussion	Plenary discussion moderated by Bakaul Islam, Save the Children
16.45-17.00	Conclusion and next steps	Rajiv Pradhan, IDE