



Chorlaví Group
Building a Social Learning Network
1998 – 2005

Summary of Outcomes and Impacts of
the FMC's Systematization Projects

Santiago, January 2005

Summary of Outcomes and Impacts of the FMC's Systematization Projects

Country/Case: Argentina. ¹
Institution/Year: College of Agricultural Sciences -Universidad Nacional de Córdoba/Secretary of Natural Resources and Soil Conservation and Development — 1999
Outcomes: Improved knowledge about desertification from a technical and academic standpoint. Quality of the outcome: relevant and innovative.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Impacts (changes and lessons): Some of the technicians who took part in the systematization process are more willing to use participatory methods, extending the range of stakeholders taking part in research and projects (for instance, with youth and other community-based institutions). ▪ Introduction of topics related to the systematization, for instance –animal transport management, selective logging, soil cover– in the training activities of the National Assistance Program for Small Agricultural Producers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Impacts (application of thematic conclusions and recommendations): The theme has not been introduced in institutions, nor among decision-makers or users. ▪ The main reasons are: (i) poor participation of local people in the systematization; (ii) poor inter-institutional dissemination tools; and iii) the lack of a knowledge transfer methodology with participatory tools targeting the rural population. ▪ Some rural inhabitants introduce improved natural resource management practices (as the result of other projects).

Country/Case: Bolivia.
Institution/Year: Centro Internacional de Cooperación para el Desarrollo Agrícola (CICDA) – 2001
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Outcomes: The coordinating institution developed project design guidelines for an area producing quinoa linked to ANAPQUI (the RO being studied). ▪ The RO studied did not acknowledge any benefits.

¹ As already mentioned, the Argentinean case study is *sui generis*, more useful as a “baseline” study than as a comparative example.

- **Impacts (changes and lessons):** Consultant capacity development (individual learning process)
- For ANAPQUI and CIOEC (the main RO), lessons learned involved the need to carry out systematizations with high RO participation, thereby reducing dependency on external consultants. The CG was recognized as a potential ally in the future.
- Certain international donors critiqued the relevance of funding these types of ROs.

- **Impacts (implementations of thematic findings and recommendations):** The consultant is implementing some of the recommendations in his consulting reports and Ph.D. thesis.
- ANAPQUI openly rejected the entire product, failing to implement any part of it.
- Introduction of some reflections within CIOEC that resulted indirectly from the systematization; for instance, the recognition of non-linear development processes of member ROs; caution regarding the tendency to look for success stories and good practices.

Country/Case: Bolivia.

Institution/Year: Agroecología Universidad Cochabamba (AGRUCO) — 2002

- **Outcomes:** Greater knowledge within the institution; insights on the concept and implementation of RTD and its relationship with social learning.
- Direct application of the lessons learned and systematized experiences: (a) in identifying the doctoral thesis topic of the project manager, a member of the institution; (b), as reference material for university professors and students; and (c) as a basis for developing the Municipal Soil and Agroforestry Conservation Program.
- Dissemination of a video among the communities that took part in the systematization process.
- Communities tended to mix the benefits of the systematization with the benefits of the two projects that were systematized.

- **Impacts (changes and lessons):** The institutional approach regarding a RTD/social learning relationship is maintained. Further insight is being gained on how to measure this relationship with the “innovation” factor.
- Introduction of this approach in the design of at least two known projects being implemented by the institution in two other areas of the Cochabamba district.
- Further use of the materials among university undergraduate and graduate students.
- The Municipal Government is reintroducing the idea of the municipal program, although this process is taking longer than expected due to internal problems in the Mayor’s Office.

- **Impacts (implementations of thematic findings and recommendations):** Assessments need improvements, but thematic applications seem to be better accepted at the level of production retrofitting, especially in soil recovery for pasture, forage, and traditional crops; decreasing intensity of produce production, which was very successful at the beginning but failed to maintain this high success rate.
- Greater implementation of some of the recommendations on behalf of youth and a gradual increase in the participation of women linked to produce cultivation.
- Weaknesses in applications related to municipal institutional development. Renewed perspectives can be observed, however, in a more favorable political context and with the support of farmers who are both council members and took part in the systematization process.

Country/Case: Bolivia.

Institution/Year: Ayuda en Acción (AeA) — 2002

- **Outcomes:** Multiple benefits at the institutional level: (a) acquiring new knowledge and methods related to systematization; (b) developing a knowledge base for a three-year assessment; (c) validating the institutional development model linked to RTD; (d) strengthening the relationship among regional offices: Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru; (e) performing a joint comparison and analysis of experiences; and (f) promoting the development of a communications and dissemination strategy with several outcomes for different audiences (at least four types of outputs).
- Local beneficiaries have received feedback about the systematization process; they feel a sense of ownership over the process and use it as the basis for future analyses and projections (ongoing process).

- **Impacts (changes and lessons):** At the institutional level: (a) introducing the systematization as part of an ongoing learning and knowledge management process with institutional responsibilities and budget in the three regional offices; (b) strengthening the institutional profile and practice in RTD; all intervention areas work under this model, each one with specific features; and (c) improved institutional profile on the regional, national, and international level, measured by the amount of participation in events, dissemination of systematization outcomes, and number of applications received.
- Participation of graduate students in training RTD technicians from NGOs that implement projects from the institution and other institutions/networks.
- Increased interest and willingness of local ROs in developing their own spaces for discussion; most of them reflect periodically on the organization and its prospects at gatherings, conferences, periodic meetings, training workshops, FODA workshops, and informal events, among others.

- **Impacts (implementations of thematic findings and recommendations):** The institution's greatest thematic progress involved RTD institutional development, notably: (a) increased mutual trust between the institution and farmers; (b) strengthened ongoing accountability, and (c) inclusion and participation of previously excluded stakeholders such as women and youth.
- Areas still needing to be strengthened: (a) ownership of the transfer of local health and education services; (b) development and strengthening of farming associations; and (c) local inter-institutional partnerships.
- Links with traditional and niche markets are being strengthened to accomplish production transformation.
- For the ROs involved, changes resulting indirectly from the systematization's recommendations and linked with production transformation and institutional development are as follows: (a) housing improvement; (b) strengthening farmers' organizations; (c) reduced migration due to local income-raising options and greater market access for certain products such as coffee and fruit by-products; (d) progressive strengthening of a single local farmers' enterprise which merges several former farmers' groups; (e) improved transparency with institutions, for instance in public accounts; and f) greater inclusion of women and youth.

Country/Case: Chile.²

Institution/Year: Departamento de Acción Social del Obispado de San Felipe de Aconcagua (DAS) — 2001; SUR-Corporación de Estudios Sociales y Educación — 2003; Fondo de Cooperación al Desarrollo (FOS) — 2003

- **Outcomes:** Improved institutional approaches and systematization methods; increased comprehensiveness and higher participation compared to previous experiences, at least in DAS and FOS.
- Satisfactory outcomes in individual projects regarding methods implemented and comprehensiveness of resulting analysis.
- Useful outputs for the needs of the institutions involved; these outputs can also be shared with public institutions, international agencies, and donors.

² The outcomes of the analysis of the Chilean case study are considered jointly with the other cases due to the high level of agreement among the comments received.

- **Impacts (changes and lessons):** Overall, the institutions and technicians reap more benefits more from taking part in the competitions than the communities.
- Personal and institutional lessons that, according to the technicians, are conveyed to the communities through improved institutional work.
- Specific lessons: (a) relevance of institutional strengthening; (b) advantages of fostering specific abilities within communities; (c) comparison and critical reflection methods with the participation of local stakeholders; (d) value of environmental education; and (e) learning about other experiences that contribute to thematic learning: bottom-up and micro-macro learning.
- Similar systematization processes have not been developed since they go beyond the scope of the projects, exceeding donor requirements.
- Specific lessons can be identified at the community level, more so in the cases with participation in the systematization process. Notably: (a) valorization of analysis and reflection processes about the activities carried out with institutions and regarding the creation of previously nonexistent discussions spaces within the organizations themselves; (b) in some cases, improved organizational conflict-resolution skills; and (c) increased valorization of personal learning, particularly among youth, which could be further linked to systematizations with improved local ownership.
- The communities fail to identify important changes resulting from the systematization in the practices of the institutions working with them.

- **Impacts (implementations of thematic findings and recommendations):** According to the institutions, the application of thematic conclusions and recommendations is the aspect with the least impact. Communities were not familiar with these results because the institutions did not distribute them within the communities, except for one case where the results were partially distributed.
- The following are the arguments to explain the poor / nonexistent application: (a) findings and recommendations made are extremely general and abstract; (b) they are difficult to implement, especially for institutions with varied projects that not always respond to the same systematized themes; and (c) the principles on which they are based exceed requirements set by donors and projects.

Country/Case: Honduras.

Institution/Year: Escuela Agrícola Panamericana El Zamorano. 2003.

- **Outcomes:** Excellent outputs, although the report was not disseminated among the population that took part in the study.
- Reflexive analysis of the people in charge of the systematization in concepts such as inclusive human development, community forestry, and decentralized environmental governance.

- **Impacts (changes and lessons):** Operational implications on the Corporación Hondureña de Desarrollo Forestal (CODEHFOR); introduction of community forestry in institutional work plans.
- Implications for legislation / policy framework; introduction of key systematization concepts in the current debate over the Forestry Act.
- Introduction of conceptual and operative adjustments for the execution of a new forestry development project supported by GTZ in the Olancho district.
- **Impacts (implementations of thematic findings and recommendations):** The systematization did not impact the systematized project because the systematization was completed after the project had finished. Additionally, the final report was not disseminated within the communities and the project team left the institution with which they completed the systematization.
- Although major technical and social achievements were identified, no ownership of concepts or operative applications can be seen today due to a lack of community reflection discussions. For instance, women's groups no longer meet; men are no longer involved in fighting forest fires, and the Foundation that was established is no longer operational.
- The greatest impacts in terms of institutional implications and thematic applications are external.

Country/Case: Nicaragua

Institution/Year: Fundación "Instituto de promoción social Mujer y Comunidad" (IMC) — 2001

- **Outcomes:** Improved knowledge of the set of systematization tools and of the integration of different criteria and visions; high quality outcomes.
- Aspects shared by the two Nicaraguan institutions: (a) main outcomes occur in the institution that carries out the systematization and reach the communities only indirectly; (b) institutions often analyze their own strategies –experiences of the applicant institution, component integration and operative issues approaches and methodologies, partnerships and alliances– instead of focusing on the experiences being promoted within communities, such as environmental management, income-raising activities, community organization, and others; and (c) the communities and ROs cannot clearly differentiate between everyday work carried out under the projects and systematization, and therefore, cannot distinguish between outcomes and impacts arising from both levels.

- **Impacts (changes and lessons):** The following learning themes are still relevant today: (a) ongoing critical analysis of the institutional strategy; (b) overcoming scattered efforts in different projects to focus on more comprehensive processes, focusing actions on female heads of household; and (c) assessing the usefulness of participatory strategies formerly implemented in communities.
- No other systematizations of this nature have been performed.
- The women's group from Pueblo Nuevo increased participatory capacity and formed a more integral vision of the working strategy with the institution.
- At the overall community level: changed livestock rearing and tree planting practices; increased participation of women, even in the decision-making process of the local government and participatory town councils.
- ROs are willing to participate in further systematization processes, but feel incapable of doing it without the assistance of facilitators, a common case in the communities where both institutions work.

- **Impacts (implementations of thematic findings and recommendations):** No changes in the objectives were registered, but other household members –husbands and sons/daughters– have become involved in projects led by community women; changes in power relations are evident in family businesses and the decision-making process.
- Changes in local participation: greater presence of women in local governments and in many local civil society activities.

Country/Case: Nicaragua.

Institution/Year: Fundación Nicaragüense para el Desarrollo Sostenible (FUNDENIC-SOS) and Programa Para la Agricultura Sostenible en Laderas de América Central (PASO-LAC) — 2002

Outcomes: The quality of outcomes is good, but could be improved by further influencing policy-making structures.

- **Impacts (changes and lessons):** Methodological lessons related to the documentation of all the processes being promoted and the establishment of an institutional memoir.
- Learning about Forest Reserve management and environmental service payment initiatives.
- No similar systematization experience was carried out, although the intervention process was periodically summarized and analyzed.
- Lessons learned by the members of the Municipal Council: analytical methods, perspective-based vision, analysis of strengths and weaknesses, useful elements of the Environmental Management Plan to be prepared by the local government.

Impacts (implementations of thematic findings and recommendations): Modification of power relations between the local government and local water company since the communities are responsible for maintaining water production.

Country/Case: Peru.

Institution / Year: Centro de Investigación, Documentación, Educación, Asesoría y Servicios (IDEAS) — 2001

- **Outcomes:** Greatest benefits take place at the level of the implementing NGOs, notably: (a) strengthening institutional working methods; (b) conceptual expansion and update; (c) contribution to the definition of new institutional and personal approaches and strategies; and (d) consolidation of reflection processes as an institutional practice through the systematization. These benefits occurred in the four cases.
- Local coordination and planning committees envision tourism as a development option for the area and its coordination as a strategy to be considered by public management.
- No specific benefits are identified for ROs; perhaps some indirect benefits such as a growing awareness about landscape values, strengthened sense of territorial identity, and identification of new tourism-related business options.

Impacts (changes and lessons): The institutional systematization practice is maintained, although with different characteristics than the one promoted by the FMC; there is a quasi-synthesis between former practices and those learned from the FMC. A conceptual interest in the systematized theme is maintained. These statements are true for the four cases, even when the continuation of the systematization has different goals, such as political influence, mobilizing resources for projects and consultations, and experience replication in other ongoing projects.

- **Impacts (implementations of thematic findings and recommendations):** All recommendations are in force, but not completely implemented.
- Three recommendations were implemented only partially, without an obvious impact from the systematization: (a) local skills development; (b) building strategic alliances, especially among local NGOs and some universities- and c) the municipal policy-making process.
- The other recommendations –as well as main findings such as the need to rebalance the predominant role of NGOs and external actors in local coordination and planning as well as the need for local coordination strengthening– are not being taken into account.
- There is no explicit evidence that recommendations are being implemented in other areas / municipalities.

Country/Case: Peru.

Institution/Year: Centro de Investigación, Educación y Desarrollo (CIED) — 2002.

Outcomes: Improved professional capacity among systematization coordinators and in the institution.

- **Impacts (changes and lessons):** Individual and institutional learning translated into consulting for public and private organizations such as the Ministry of Women's Issues and Social Development (MIMDES), CARE International, NGO networks such as the Rural Peru-Bolivia Secretariat, and district municipalities.
- There is certain confusion between changes and lessons learned from the systematization and outcomes from the institution's previous projects.
- Introduction of different themes with a territorial approach in the institution's training activities.

- **Impacts (implementations of thematic findings and recommendations):** Partial and specific implementations are taking place regarding systematization (Cajamarca), mostly influenced by the country's decentralization process.
- These implementations are as follows: (a) the need to overcome criteria governing the prioritization of municipal infrastructure projects to promote institutional strengthening and alliances; this is being implemented by certain NGOs and the district's municipalities; (b) promoting new non-agricultural activities; the development of agribusiness and territorial products are specifically being carried out by women from smaller towns and some urban areas of the city of Cajamarca; and (c) preparing more participatory development plans, which is taking place in two municipalities.

Country/Case: Peru.

Institution/Year: Asociación Kuraka — 2003; Grupo de Investigaciones Económicas (ECO) — 2003³

- **Outcomes:** Institutional strengthening occurs in assisting mining-related conflict management processes.
- Greater information dissemination within local –the defense front, the mayor's office, ROs involved in the conflicts– and international stakeholders, aligned with international agencies.
- Appropriate products for ROs to distribute, such as booklets, natural resource maps, conflict maps.

Impacts (changes and lessons): Ongoing lessons: a) more appropriate ways to disseminate information about the source of the conflicts and potential solutions; b) questioning, in some cases, the efforts of RO leaders in terms of their effectiveness, skills, and faithfulness to the cause and local demands; c) considering, in some cases, that the area's poorest groups are affected stakeholders due to their own demands for living.

- **Impacts (implementations of thematic findings and recommendations):** It is still too early to identify thematic applications because the reports have been submitted only recently.
- Some lessons were identified, however, that could be appropriate and disseminated: (a) using neighborhood survey tools; (b) promoting greater participation of municipalities in conflicts; and (c) developing a Front to solve conflicts.

³ The two cases are considered together since both systematizations pertained to mining conflicts and the comments received show a high level of agreement.