

profile

Number 55, October 2008

Community-driven development for rural poverty reduction

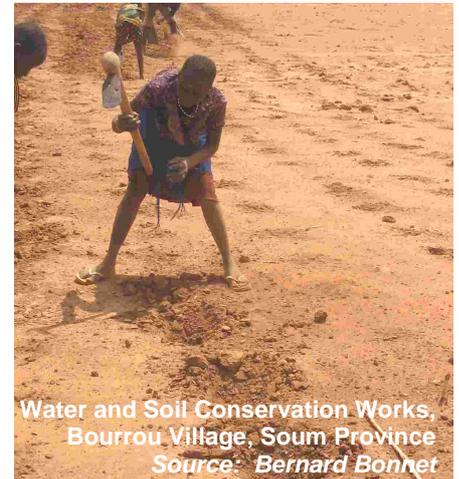
The aim of the Community-based Rural Development Project in Burkina Faso was to help reduce rural poverty and promote sustainable development, thereby breaking the spiral of destitution in the rural areas characterized by the degradation of natural resources, falling agricultural production and an ever-poorer quality of life. The project was designed by the World Bank, which, as the main cofinancier, provided an overall contribution of US\$66.7 million and, as cooperating institution, was responsible for loan administration and project supervision. Total project costs amounted to some US\$115 million, of which IFAD contributed US\$11.4 million.

Although nationwide in coverage, project interventions such as local capacity-building and community investments were concentrated in 26 of the country's 45 provinces, addressing the needs of approximately 3 000 villages. The largest share of project financing went into a local investment fund (LIF) that was used to finance village-level subprojects – mainly community investments – using a community-driven development (CDD) approach, with subprojects managed entirely by village communities. The LIF was combined with strong institutional and local capacity-building components. The project relied heavily on contractual agreements with national and local service providers from both the public and the private sector.

Main findings

The project supported interventions at the village, provincial and national levels that responded well to the needs of most of the rural people while remaining aligned with government policies and strategies. In addition, it successfully adopted innovative approaches at both the macro level (national programme for institutional capacity-building) and micro level (CDD approach), that were implemented by a highly efficient project team and skilled service providers. However, IFAD was unable to attract sufficient attention to its priorities of addressing people's vulnerability to poverty and ensuring adequate targeting of the rural poor, mostly because of its limited involvement both in project design, and in supervision and implementation support activities.

Project impact was most significant in three areas. Firstly, with regard to physical assets, more than one third of the country's villages were provided with some essential basic infrastructure, thereby increasing the rural population's access to potable water, basic health care, education and productive assets such as land and water conservation works, cereal banks and stores. Secondly, in terms of human assets, improvements were registered in literacy and school attendance rates, health conditions and awareness, and technical and local development management capacity in the villages covered. Thirdly, as far as institutions and services were concerned, the project made a substantial contribution to the country's decentralization process, mainly by strengthening development planning and management capacity at the village level. This is expected to improve the



PROJECT DATA

Project data

Estimated project cost: US\$114.85 million

IFAD loan: US\$11.4 million (highly concessional terms)

Cofinanciers:

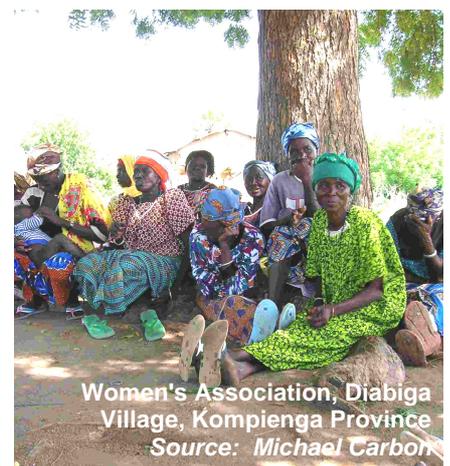
- Government (US\$14.3 million)
- Beneficiaries (US\$9.15 million)
- World Bank (US\$55.0 million)
- Denmark (US\$5.6 million)

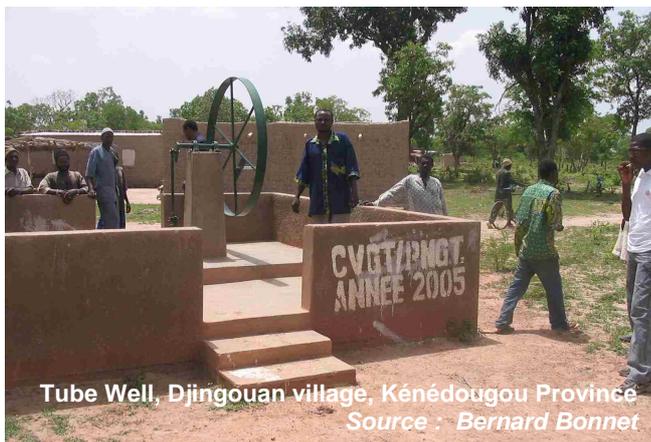
Key Dates

Executive Board approval: May 2000

Loan effectiveness: May 2002

Project completion: 30 June 2007





Tube Well, Djingouan village, Kéné Dougou Province
Source : Bernard Bonnet

quality of public administration and service delivery in rural areas through more effective people's participation in decision-making processes and enhanced accountability on the part of the Government and service providers. However, the sheer number of villages covered by the project meant that quantity often prevailed over quality, and highly standardized approaches were favoured over more flexible and adaptable mechanisms. Capacity-building efforts to ensure operation and maintenance (O&M) of community infrastructure were basic and uniform, regardless of the type of infrastructure to be managed. As a result, the evaluation found that probably less than half the community investments have a functional and sustainable O&M arrangement in place.

The project had some impact on social capital and on the empowerment of rural communities inasmuch as it strengthened village-level capacity for participatory planning and implementation of subprojects. It also moderately contributed to empowering rural communities in their relationships with public and private service providers. The evaluation found, however, that participation in local decision-making, project activities and benefits fell short of expectations for the more vulnerable population groups, including women, youth, herders and immigrants, who should have received priority in accordance with IFAD's mandate and focus. In fact, the project lacked a clear and effective targeting strategy, and therefore its participatory local planning approach did not effectively reach the most marginalized and disadvantaged groups.

Soil fertility and agricultural productivity were significantly improved at the individual field level, where soil and water conservation works were successfully carried out or compost pits put to use. However, the areas concerned were too dispersed to have a substantively positive effect at the watershed level. More importantly, few solutions were found to land tenure issues concerning productive land (fields, pastures and forests).

The impact on shared natural resources management (NRM) was unsatisfactory, despite the fact that access to natural resources – in particular land – is fundamental to the livelihoods of most rural households. This is because NRM activities were not usually accorded priority in local development plans, for two reasons: (i) subprojects were confined to individual villages and to one-year periods, which is often not appropriate for NRM initiatives; and (ii) rural communities gave preference to hardware investments (such as infrastructure) that required relatively less time and effort on their part.

Key recommendations

- Considering the project's good achievements, the evaluation supports the opportunity for IFAD to finance and participate in a second phase, but with greater involvement in project supervision and implementation support. The Fund should also ensure that there are opportunities to promote learning across IFAD-supported projects in the country, including the project under reference.
- To ensure that the poorest, most marginalized and vulnerable among the active rural population fully participate in project interventions and derive benefits from the next phase, it would be useful to:
 - (i) improve the project's understanding of the mechanisms of social and economic exclusion affecting the most vulnerable social groups;
 - (ii) develop approaches for local planning and monitoring and evaluation that ensure full participation by vulnerable or marginalized groups and assign unequivocal priority to reducing vulnerability among such groups; and
 - (iii) provide incentives and earmark resources for specific subprojects aimed at reducing the vulnerability and exclusion of the rural poor
- To ensure wider sustainability of project investments, the next project phase should contribute to:
 - (i) developing appropriate and equitable mechanisms for cost-sharing in the construction and O&M costs of community infrastructure; and
 - (ii) promoting rural people's access to the means (inputs, technical advice, etc.) of maximizing returns on investments.
- The CDD approach should be adjusted to accommodate community NRM subprojects that go beyond the geographic boundaries of one village or one rural commune, and take longer than one year to implement.

Further information:

Burkina Faso, Community-based Rural Development Project, Report #2010-BF, October 2008, Office of Evaluation, IFAD, Via Paolo di Dono 44, 00142 Rome, Italy. The full report and profile are available online at www.ifad.org/evaluation; email: evaluation@ifad.org.