

Findings

Africa Region · Number 150 · July 2008

Good Practice
Infobrief



Findings Infobriefs reports on Good Practice in ongoing operational, economic and sector work carried out by the World Bank and its member governments in the Africa Region. It is published monthly by the Knowledge and Learning Center on behalf of the Region. The views expressed in Findings are those of the author/s and should not be attributed to the World Bank Group.

Zambia

Social Investment Fund Project (ZAMSIF)

The Zambia Social Investment Fund (ZAMSIF) is part of a two phase Program (over 10 years) intended to support two of the objectives outlined in the Government of Zambia's (GRZ) National Poverty Reduction Strategic Framework & Action Plan (1999-2004).

The specific project objectives were to (i) achieve sustainable improved availability and use of quality basic social services by beneficiary communities and specific vulnerable groups; (ii) contribute to the building of capacity for improved local governance; and (iii) strengthen the capacity to provide timely information on poverty and social conditions and facilitate its use in policy making.

Impact

- The project contributed to the increase in the stock of community assets, improved access and use by the beneficiary communities. In the project impact areas, increased use of facilities has been in education, where the dropout rates have been reduced from 1.8 in 2002 to 1.5 in 2005, signifying increase in school attendance; in health, there has been a 28% increase in attendance to maternal and child health clinics and a 138% increase in the number of trained personnel attending to births; and access to clean water has been recorded in both rural and urban areas.
- By providing the requisite resources and facilitating training, ZAMSIF managed to develop community and district capacities. The capacities developed translated into accountability at the community levels as the committee members accounted for resources, and submitted reports and delivered completed subprojects to the constituents. At district level, there is increased coordination in planning and service delivery, including positive change in attitude and behavior towards communities (Impact Evaluation 2008). The same report has confirmed community satisfaction with the district administration, particularly in areas where the subprojects were completed.
- Performance under the three outcome indicators was varied: (i) three consultations were held with regards to the annual public consultations or review of poverty and

social conditions, (ii) eight districts against a set target of five, were using information from the Monitoring Management System in planning; and (iii) a functioning Strategic and Operating Planning Unit (SOPU) in MOFED managing the Study Fund was not achieved by the close of project. Although the first two indicators were met, there is no evidence to demonstrate the impacts in influencing policy.

Lessons learned

- The implementation of the Decentralization policy was a pre-requisite for the project activities to have its intended impact. The ZAMSIF implementation experience demonstrates that failure in public sector management can pose a serious constraint to achievement of intended project outcomes.
- Clear guidelines and procedures are a prerequisite for facilitating community development and ensuring accountability of resources. Adherence to guidelines and processes ensures that subprojects supported meet the standards and sector norms and are addressing community priority needs.
- Diversification of subproject portfolio achieved through improved facilitation for participatory rural appraisal (PRA) processes and implementation of the information, education and communication (IEC) strategy leads to improvement in the sector spread of subproject portfolio – from the traditional dominant sectors, such as education and health, to non-traditional sectors of roads, HIV/AIDS and income enhancement in order to improve beneficiaries’ livelihoods.
- A well-defined communication strategy is key for building social accountability within communities and with district authorities.
- The capacity building ladder provided an objective guide for assessing district performance and laid the foundation for capacity development in the future.
- Overall partnerships with key GRZ sector ministries, provincial administrations, district administrations, NGOs and cooperating partners, such as DCI, SNV and GTZ, provided a unique opportunity for sharing mutual experiences and minimized duplications in processes, procedures and resource allocation. Equally important was the need to partner with the private sector in delivery of training modules or facilitating planning processes at community level.
- Experience during implementation of ZAMSIF showed that it is critical to design projects on the basis of existing policy framework.

This *InfoBrief* is based on “World Bank Implementation Completion Report No. 565,” from which more detailed information can be obtained.