Lessons Learned In Post-Conflict Agricultural Development: Beating Swords into Plowshares

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Abstract
Professionals in international agricultural development find themselves in a new era ushered in by six global trends: population growth, impact of technology, environmental degradation, migration-immigration, and global terrorism (Barnett 2005; Friedman, 2008; Friedman, 2007; Kennedy, 1993; Naisbitt, 2006). Each trend poses special consideration for agricultural development—especially in post-conflict countries. There is a need for new paradigms, new mindsets, and blueprints to transition from conflict to development to sustainability.

The US military recognized a need for two very different approaches to bring stability to war-torn environments; kinetics and development. This poster focuses on nine lessons learned during the early transition from kinetics to a civil society for Iraq. The lessons move us one step closer to establishing a climate of self-determination for rural Iraqis and their counterparts in Africa, Asia, Europe, and South America. A collective vision among donors is highlighted.

This poster synthesizes lessons learned by Team Borlaug (TB) from May through December 2008 in four provinces in Iraq. TB is comprised of 12 agricultural and veterinary scientists and specialists intentionally providing the best agricultural science and technology solutions for the commanders of the Multinational Division Central in Iraq. The lessons evolved from quantitative and qualitative methods. This systematic inquiry examined theories, assumption, and data using document analysis, field observations, flow-chart analysis, focus groups, key informant interviews, opinion-leader identification, scenarios, and tribal interviews.

Seventeen pre-proposals spawn from deep engagement in four provinces in central Iraq. In such a complex environment, donor agencies—IFAD, UNEP, UNDP, USAID, USDA, USDoS, NGOs, PRTs & ePRTs, World Bank—tend to give priority to their own programs at the expense of contributions from others. Insufficient analysis of social capital, contexts, and institutional setting results in poor relations among donors and thus negatively impacts project effectiveness. Very often administrative structures are established to execute projects with little consideration given to synergy or consequences. Systems approaches foster a positive human network in a community and trust among the population.
This emerging environment, in turn, leads to collective action in support of integrated and sustainable rural development. A graphic describes the interactions among agricultural development, conflict, and self-determination (ownership).

Lessons learned include: 1) cultivating a common vision within and among groups—always open to dialogue; 2) using a systems approach within the agricultural sector that combines technical content and cross-cutting constructs; 3) using a step-by-step enterprise maturity model; 4) engaging all affected people using strategies that promote dignity and full employment; 5) investing in education and leadership activities for youth; 6) recognizing that land policy and land tenure are long-term development factors; 7) adapting new and old models for sector development; 8) deploying bi-cultural bi-lingual communication methods; and, 9) organizing accurate and open media events. A list of references is provided with the poster abstract.

Key words: (5) collaboration; integration; planning; post-conflict model; teamwork;