Community based approach for Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation for the C3P Banana Xanthomonas Wilt activities in Uganda

Caroline Nankinga Kukiriza
National Banana Research Programme-Uganda

1. Introduction

Banana *Xanthomonas* wilt (BXW) was reported in Uganda in 2001, though it was long-known as a disease affecting Enset in Ethiopia. The disease has now spread to the D.R. Congo, Tanzania and Rwanda, Kenya and Burundi. Disease incidence has reached levels of 70-80% within the space of a year in Uganda and yield losses of 100% are recorded mainly for juice banana (Kayinja = Pisang Awak). It has been estimated that, by 2010, losses of up to US$ 4 billion could be incurred by the banana industry for Uganda alone, if no action is taken to rectify the situation (INIBAP, 2006). The spread of BXW can be significantly reduced by increasing farmers' and stakeholders knowledge about how it spreads and the measures to prevent its introduction or further spread. Although low cost BXW management technologies are available, transferring them to affected and threatened farmers has faced limitations, mostly due to insufficient resources alongside other factors. Experience in Uganda has shown that even where the some farmers have put in practice the control measures and control the disease, a major challenge has been to ensure that the whole affected community take collective action in putting into practice the recommended practices.

Field observations show various weaknesses in the traditional extension approaches of technology dissemination and communication. In Uganda whereas the conventional sensitization approach through public media and Radio, has been instrumental in swiftly raising awareness of stakeholders about the disease, it has not been appropriate for triggering actions aimed at controlling the disease at community level. On the other hand, the contact farmers who normally have access to extension services through public extension and NGOs have a lot of knowledge which in many cases is not effectively communicated to other farmers in the same area or beyond. This knowledge most times remains within the targeted farmers groups or individual contact farmers and there are various reasons and factors that lead to this lack of knowledge diffusion. There is need for an approach, which empowers farmers and other members of the community to enhance communication and dissemination of technologies, monitor and evaluate the use of these technologies at community level. A participatory approach is being deployed in Uganda in creating BXW awareness and control and encouraging farmers in the community who require persuasion or coercion to act.

Participatory Development Communication (PDC) was identified as appropriate for enabling small-scale farmers to access and share knowledge on improved technologies. PDC uses a specialized communication methodology, which empowers various banana stakeholders and farmers to disseminate the technologies among themselves in order to fill the gap created by inadequate extension services.

The National Banana Programme team in Uganda chose to deploy the PDC approach as adopted from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada (Guy Bussette 2003). This approach centres on action plans developed by communities to address specific problems facing them. A development worker trained in this approach can facilitate the community to develop the action plan based on consensus of activities.

2. Participatory Development communication (PDC) experience from Uganda

A community action plan is developed through some or all of the following steps:

- Promoters of the PDC methodology, approach the community to introduce it through their leaders and development workers at all levels. This action helps to bring on board all stakeholders for training in preparation for subsequent scaling out.
- Banana stakeholders that include Political and community leaders, extension, NGOs, CBOs, Religious and Cultural leaders and learning Institutions such as University, Colleges and schools, are brought together to share information on a problem to be solved. This step ends with farmers identifying solutions they wish to try to solve the problem.
- Community members are grouped according to the solution appropriate for their situation.
- Each group identifies actions required to implement the solution to be tried, resources required, technical needs, partnerships required and who will do what.
- Each group develops a communication plan. This will enable sharing lessons learned with the wider community.
- Finally, the community develops a monitoring and evaluation plan, a schedule of activities and agrees on performance indicators that will be monitored to show the impact of the promoted technologies on the community.

Using previous BXW control activities in Uganda, the National Banana Programme team learnt that the community can define Monitoring and evaluation indicators and also appreciated the value of the monitoring exercise. Through monitoring, the stakeholders can evaluate how the strategies set for BXW control in their area are performing, identify the success and failures and with this background can be used to either modify the strategy to improve the control or devise new strategy to tackle the problem. This type of monitoring is different from the conventional survey methods where scientists develop monitoring tools in their offices, go with questionnaires to ask farmers questions, which in most cases they are not interested in. The questionnaire type of monitoring is analysed by the scientists and informs the scientists/extension how his/her methods are working but in most times the farmers where the information was collected never receive a feedback. Participatory monitoring and evaluation for BXW enable the farmers and other stakeholders in the community to appreciate the efforts put in fighting the disease. The M$E reports produced by the community are used as testimony of success to train and encourage reluctant farmers in the community to take up control measures for BXW.

3. A Participatory approach to initiate Monitoring and Evaluation tools for the C3P BXW control activities in Mukono and Kayunga districts.

A participatory approach disseminated during the C3P Regional BXW training workshop held in October 2006, was used during the community based training (CBT) workshop held in Kayunga district (13 – 15TH December 2006**)** with Caritas Lugazi, the C3P partners in Mukono and Kayunga district. Thirty three (33) participants attended the workshop and these included Community Based Trainers that were selected by farmer groups and extension workers from each sub-county of C3P project area. The participants were drawn from the sub-counties of Busana, Kangulumira, Nazigo in Kayunga district, and Nyenga, Nama, Nabbale in Mukono district. The objective of the workshop was to enhance the knowledge of Community based trainers in the disease identification, management, control and eradication of CMD and BXW and also impart practical skills on cassava multiplication techniques and macro propagation. The workshop was also meant to facilitate CBTs to develop and apply M and E indicators for control of BXW.

Before the training workshop, the NARO-National Banana Research Programme and BIOVERSITY/INIBAP harmonized participatory monitoring activities for BXW and the scientists from the 2 institutions proposed objectives, which were to be further, discussed by the participants in the training workshop. The participatory monitoring and evaluation exercise was initiated with the following four objectives:

(i) To facilitate stakeholders to develop and apply M and E indicators for control of BXW
(ii) To evaluate stakeholders' competences with respect to the knowledge and skills for diagnostics and management of BXW
(iii) To analyze the extent to which acquired skills and knowledge have affected BXW incidence and distribution
(iv) To assess the institutional learning and change as result of increased public awareness (research allocation, participating Institutions, by-laws or policies enacted or operational as result of this input).

A training session was conducted where the trainees were facilitated to plan how the C3P project activities in their sub-counties were going to be monitored and evaluated. Suggestions were made on how the communities would be mobilised to implementing the BXW control measures and monitor the performance of the control measures being disseminated at farm level in controlling BXW and overall benefits of the project at community level. The initiated activities through the community based trainees need closer monitoring and evaluation so that the strengths and gaps in activities can be unveiled, and improvement sought. It is important that this monitoring and evaluation is done by farming community, documented in user-friendly way and reports produced through this exercise used to inform other stakeholders both at community and national level.

4. Key outputs for initiation of Participatory Monitoring and evaluation exercise for Community Based Training (CBT)

Participants in a participatory manner were facilitated by Dr Caroline Nankinga to discuss and suggest approaches for community action on BXW and participatory monitoring and evaluation of the initiated project activities. Prior to the discussion a participants profile was derived which was used as a baseline for discussion. Of the 33 participants from 8 sub-counties, 80% reported that compared two 3 years ago, BXW is now seen to be decreasing in bananas fields and this was attributed to increased public awareness together with training and some farmer putting into practice the recommended control measures such as de-budding, destroying infected plants and avoiding infected tools. 90% of the participants reported that BXW was a problem especially on the Kayinja type of bananas. The profile also showed that these trainees had leadership roles in the community and therefore useful players in the mobilization exercise if well sensitized.

4.1 Suggested approaches to be taken to mobilize people for community action on BXW and monitoring

- Trainees from each of the 8 sub-counties to constitute a committee that will meet the sub-county political leadership and inform them the deliberations of the training workshop and work with them to spear head the community mobilization through the local council leadership (LCs)

- Inform the district leadership about the C3P project initiative of fighting the cassava and BXW disease and seek their support to write official letters to inform lower political cadres to mobilize the community to rejuvenate the fight.

- Get recording sheets that will be signed by recipient of the BXW fight notification message and subsequently be an indicator of the number of people that will have been informed or trained.

- The trainees will work together with the sub-county agriculture extension staff to train people of BXW and CMD

- Formulate by-laws or guidelines that will lead the community to destroy all BXW infected plants and gardens. These guidelines should run from the district, Sub-county, parish down to village level

- Trainees of this workshop should lead the community where they come from by putting into practice what they have learnt.

- Mobilize the community based groups they lead e.g Village bank to put into practice what has been taught in managing and fighting banana pests and disease

- Sub-county councillors that have been trained to give a report of this training workshop to sub-county and mobilize the LC3 leadership to taken action on the diseases

- Use the different community based groups that the trainees work with as communication pathways for delivering messages on BXW and mobilizing people for community action on BXW. Examples of these communication pathways included churches, schools, women groups, Nigiina, Muno Mukabi etc.

- Sub-counties of Nazigo, Nabbale, Nnama, Nyenga, Busaana, Kangulumira, Kayunga to constitute by-laws that will convict people who will have been trained but fail to put into practice BXW control measures and refusing to destroy infected plants

- The trainees from the 8 sub-counties resolved to put their resolutions from the training workshop in writing and drafted a letter to this effect requesting the leadership council of each sub-county to mobilize the community leaders to spear head community action of BXW. This letter was taken by all the participants as a supporting document to initiate control activities in the community.

- The trainees will collaborate with other initiations such as the National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO), National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADs), Uganda National Farmers Federation (UNFFE-MDFA) to training people in fighting the diseases

4.2. Participatory Monitoring and evaluation indicators solicited and discussed with the community based trainees.

These performance indicators will show that the trainees and farmers in the community have put into practice what they have learnt in the fight of BXW and CMD

1. Number of BXW free banana fields in the village
2. Seeing no BXW disease plants in 'Kayinja' fields in next 6 months
3. Number of people in the community putting in practice the BXW and CMD control measures
4. Increased number of well-managed and de-budded kayinja banana fields in the community
5. Increased harvests of dessert bananas such (Bogoya and Ndiizi) in the next 12 months
6. Increased number of newly planted banana fields in the villages and per household
7. Seeing no diseased plants in cassava fields in the community
8. Increased number of cassava gardens per household
9. Commercial vehicles to Kampala will not only take banana leaves but will start transporting banana bunches from Mukono and Kayunga

10. Start seeing bananas ripening in the markets of Mukono and Kayunga as a result of bumper harvests
11. Start seeing the main meal as matooke in the community functions for example at the last funeral rites and burial
12. Change in diet of schools- Pupils meals will start to constitute more 'matooke' and cassava other than maize flour or 'posho'
13. Trainees' names reflected in bananas and cassava. This means that new banana and cassava fields will be named after the trainees' name as result of this trainer's hard work and interaction with community
14. No commercial vehicles from Mbarara (south western Uganda) bringing matooke to Kayunga and Mukono by 2009
15. Increase in the offerings given in churches in terms of cash, banana and cassava foodstuffs
16. Increase in number/volume of the Uganda banana export to other countries
17. Factories that make animal feed such Sekalala Enterprises and Ugachik to start buying cassava from Mukono and Kayunga

4.3. Stakeholders identified to take roles in the monitoring and evaluation exercise

- C3P trainees of this workshop
- Farmers
- CARITAS
- Community leaders and religious leaders (from sub-county-parish-village)
- NARO-National Banana Research Programme and Cassava Research Programme
- BIOVERSITY/INIBAP
- IITA
- Catholic Relief Services (CRS)-participants indicated that CRS should specifically monitor to evaluate whether the funds released have been put to proper use and benefited the community

5. Summary

It is observed from the monitoring indicators derived through a participatory process with the trainees who are also farmers in the community, that initiating monitoring and evaluation at community level brought out a farmer perspective of the expectations on the impacts of the C3P project at community level. The community in Kayunga and Mukono have been importing bananas from South Western Uganda due to low production and combined reduced yield due to pest and diseases and poor management. Community based trainees who are also farmers hope that by taking up the technologies promoted under the C3P project and implement the BXW control measures and plant new bananas fields through the clean planting material supplied by the C3P project, they will be able to boost production and improve food security and income in the area by the year 2009. The project however runs out in 2007. The community based derived project performance indicators outlined from this C3P training, suggest that it may be possible to see the impact of the BXW control practices on the existing bananas fields that will undergo rehabilitation.

However, it will require more time to monitor and evaluate whether the community have observed the long term effects expected from the new fields that will be established in 2007 (which in the period within which the C3P project will be completed) and also the improved yields and income from the rehabilitated banana fields.