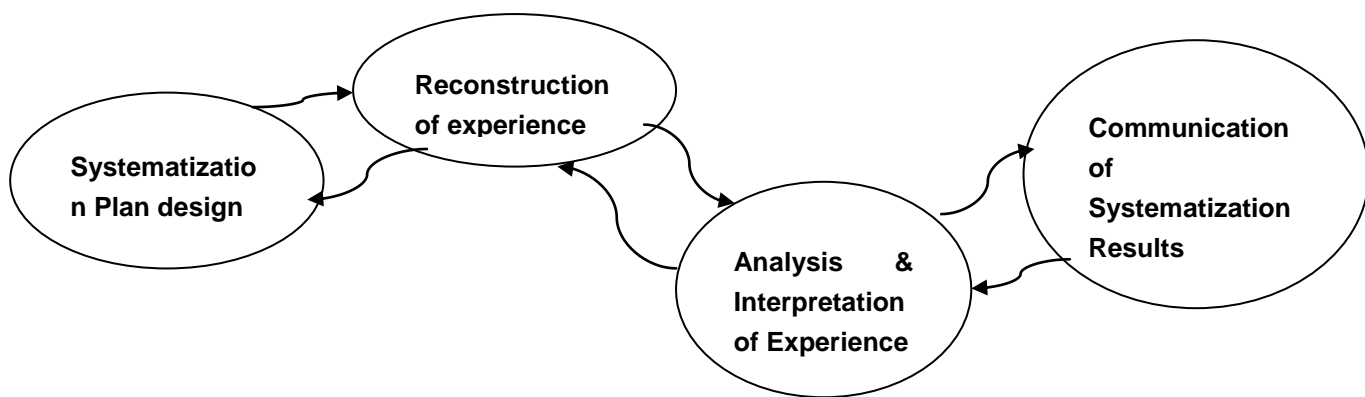**HORIZONT3000**

Training on basics of Systematization
Learning from Experiences / Critical reflection and learning

September 4-8, 2017

At Multipurpose Skills Training Centre,

Harmee Education for Development Association (HEfDA)

Facilitator: Daniel Keftassa (PhD)

DKA and HORIZONT3000 Technical Advisor, Ethiopia

September 2017

Qarssa/Arssi

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Objectives, Methodology and Timetable of the training

Objectives of the training

- To enhance the skills of senior projects staff on the content and methods of systematization process
- To help DKA and HORIZONT3000 partners to critically analyze, document and share the lessons gained from projects work and further enhance the quality of planning and implementation of projects
- To help DKA and HORIZONT3000 partners to adopt Systematization as one of the key knowledge management system

Methodology

- Orientation/reorientation on the concept, content and methodology of systematization
- Group reflection on the documents of systematization in HORIZONT$_{3000}$ and DKA supported projects in Ethiopia

Practical illustrations

- Reflect on the systematization experiences/documents produced in HoCS and HEfDA;
  - HEfDA   ICDP- **SILC**
  - HEfDA   GSP- **Tutorial classes**
  - HoCS   MICDP- **SHGs**
  - HEfDA   ICDP-**WSCAs**   (draft)
  - HEfDA   CBR - Inclusive development/**mainstreaming** disability (draft)

Groups for reflection and critical analyses of systematization documents

__Group 1__   SHG and inclusive development/ mainstreaming - Fekreab, Asaye, Dereje

__Group 2__   Tutorial classes and SILC - Getahun, Segni, Seble

__Group 3__   WSCAs - Dale, Nigusse, Hilina

Timetable of the training

Date	Morning Session	Afternoon Session
September 4.2017	**Systematization – definition and its purposes** Presentation on the justifications, process and lessons from the process of systematization SILC Tutorial Classes	Presentation continues SHGs WSCAs Mainstreaming of disability
Sept 5, 2017	**Systematization plan design** - define/develop a **framework for the systematization process** Subject, Objective and Central Points	Group reflection on **Subject, Object and Central points** for the systematization of SILC, tutorial classes, SHGs, WSCAs and mainstreaming of disability
Sept 6, 2017	Describe/Analysis/**review of the context** **Reconstruction of the experience**	Group reflection on the content, relevance and appropriateness of the content of the **analysis of context** - SILC, Tutorial Classes, SHGs and WSCAs and mainstreaming of disability
Sept 7, 2017	**Critical analysis of the experience** - Analysis and interpretation of the experience	Group reflection on the **critical analyses** of SILC, Tutorial Classes, SHGs and WSCAs and mainstreaming of disability
Sept 8, 2017	**Communicating the results** of systematization	End evaluation of the training Closing of the training

CLARIFICATIONS

Projects

Projects are usually the basis of institutional work. They are created in order to modify a determined reality and to improve interaction among the project's own participants. Projects are well-structured interventions that contain objectives, strategies, an action plan, a specific beginning and end, etc. As the word suggests, projects are projections towards the future that in reality (and fortunately) change and are adapted.

Practice

We understand practice as the action of undertaking a project. As we execute this "action", we also modify, adapt and enrich the project. We can therefore say that the practice is the project as it really happens.

Experience

Experience takes the project's practice one step further. It is not limited to the action; it also includes the personal perceptions and feelings of those undertaking the practice.

Experience can be what happens to us, like a child's first experience of fire, or what we learn during life, like the experience gained by a mechanic. What really happens (that is, not what we expected or wanted to happen) during practice and also what we learn during it.

Process

We understand process as the total of actions, activities, etc. that are related to one another and which have an internal logic. These actions influence each other and one action depends on another. They aim to influence reality in order to achieve the proposed objectives.

Knowledge

"We learn from experience", what does that mean?

The child touches the fire, it is hot, the child feels pain, it learns not to touch. The child touches the saucepan, yesterday it was cold, today it is hot, it learns to combine the fire and the saucepan and not to touch it when it is hot.

Implicit and explicit knowledge

"Produce new knowledge", what does that mean?

When you learn to ride a bicycle, you start off with some knowledge about the mechanical requirements, like turning the pedals, and maybe about the law of gravity, which can make you fall. That is **explicit knowledge**, you could say the hard facts. Then you try it out, you fall, you try again, you get a few meters further, you try again and again, and after many times of practice and learning, you get to know and succeed to ride the bicycle. But would you be able to describe that knowledge, that learning? - most probably not. We call this **implicit knowledge**, knowledge which is difficult to see or describe. In systematisation, through analytical reflection and interpretation, we try to turn implicit knowledge into explicit knowledge, so that we can understand and describe our learning and share it with others.

Lessons learned

Learning is an on-going, open and flexible process in which we reflect on and gain understanding about our experience. Life is a constant learning experience but many times we are not aware of what is happening. Systematisation allows us to become aware of the lessons that we have learned from our experiences.

> *Think of one of your projects – try to recall the problems you intended to solve, what were the purpose/objectives, what were the actions taken/activities and the strategies followed to implement the activities (what and how you did = practice), knowledge you gained from the practice which will help you to improve your [future] project planning and implementation (the practices)*

1   Introduction

Learning and knowledge management has become critical in enhancing quality and effective performance in organizational objectives. Learning and knowledge aims at influencing improvement and innovation in programming of development interventions and the ways of doing work based on lesson learned during implementation of different projects/activities.

Organizations are expected to be knowledge and learning based to be competitive and making a difference in what they do. HORIZONT3000 and DKA are committed to support their partners to be learning organizations. Partners should critically analyze their experiences, draw lessons and use the experience for further improvement of the quality and effectiveness of their projects

Systematization is one of the learning and knowledge management tools that is based on the experiences gained during projects implementation. Systemization is a participatory technique of **analyzing, understanding and documenting project processes/ experiences.** Systematization is a process-oriented tool and not objective-oriented.

Systematization of experience is a method aimed at improving practice based on a critical reflection and interpretation of lessons learnt from that practice.

The purpose of systematization is to **understand the process; learn from practice to improve** - understand the experience you have been involved in, to learn from it, and to make things better next time.

The prime focus of systematization is **retrieving the experience on how and why things happened**. The core issue is to understand the importance of systematization of the experience and how we use the new knowledge that comes out of systematization?

The organization's primary interest of systematization is to improve its capacity of planning/implementation, based on its own institutional practice, and to be able to share this with other like-minded institutions/stakeholders.

Systematization is **highly participatory** therefore, the points of view and reflections of all participants of the project experience are included (primary and secondary beneficiaries, project-partner, project staff, etc.). Systematization has gained popularity due to the positive results it has produced in documenting and disseminating of "learned lessons".

$HORIZONT_{3000}$ and DKA have been supporting systematization process since 2011 in Ethiopia through supporting the training of trainers in Uganda and providing technical and financial support to introduce the techniques of systematization.

So far three systematization processes were supported – two in HEfDA (SILC and Tutorial classes for girls) and one in Hosanna Catholic Secretariat in Self Help Groups). HEfDA tried to systematize the experience of Women Saving and Credit Associations, Functional Adult Literacy for women and mainstreaming disability in development work.

This training handout is prepared for training of development practitioners of $HORIZONT_{3000}$ and DKA partners in Ethiopia to learn the concept, content and technique of systematization and apply to improve the quality of planning and implementation in their projects.

The content of the handout is based on the documents "Action AID Resource pack on Systematization of experiences and Learning from our experience - A guide to participative systematization

This handout contains the major elements of systematization process – define the framework, plan the process, undertake the analyses, identify lessons and communicate the outcome to those who are engaged in similar development subjects/issues.

The experiences that are available at $HORIZONT_{3000}$ and DKA partners in Ethiopia are used for practical illustrations. i.e.

1.   ICDP[1]- SILC[2]   HEfDA
2.   GSP[3]- Tutorial classes - HEfDA

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[1] Integrated Community Development Project
[2] Saving and Internal Lending Communities
[3] Girls Support Project

3. MICD[4]P- SHGs[5]   Hosanna (HoCS[6])

4. ICDP-WSCAs[7]   HEfDA (draft)

5. CBR[8] - Inclusive development/mainstreaming disability   HEfDA (draft)

These documents are used for reflection[9] and practical illustration in each step of learning the systematization process.

The participants of the training are executive development coordinators, senior project coordinators and project officers from five DKA and HORIZONT3000 funded projects/organizations – HoCS, JBCS, NCS, HEfDA, SWDA

2   Basics about Systematization

2.1 What is systematization?

The following elements together define systematization

➢ to systematize is to organize the experiences that have resulted from a specific process.

➢ provide information about how these experiences are understood and interpreted.

➢ rebuilding what has happened to understand and interpret and to learn from our own practice

➢ to become aware of the lessons learned in an organized manner.

➢ It is analytical reflection that compares what we proposed to do, our initial knowledge, with what truly happened, which contains what we learned during the practice (critical interpretation)

➢ Share this information with other people and communicate the results.

Systematization is a process that intends to **produce knowledge** about action or practice, through the analytical reflection and interpretation about what happened. The understanding of the process allows us to not only improve practice, but also to communicate and disseminate the lessons and knowledge produced

First, we decide to do something, based on what we know about the problem/s we want to tackle and change (the purpose/s we set for ourselves), and we define the **actions** and strategies to achieve those purposes. Then we act, that is, we have **a practice**. The reflection about that practice produces **new knowledge** that leads to better practices (and achievements). And this process goes on again and again…

Systematization, then, is a process that intends to produce knowledge about action or practice through the analytical reflection and interpretation about what happened. The understanding of the process allows us to not only improve practice, but also to communicate and disseminate the lessons and knowledge produced.

Systematization is the **critical interpretation of the experiences** of the interventions. Systematization assists us to discover or **explain** the logic of the intervention process, the different **factors that influenced it**, and **how and why** the elements of the intervention related to each other.

Systematization explores how and why things happened. The purpose is to understand the process; learn from practice to improve it. Systematization is a tool that helps us to do something better or easier. The goal of a systematization process is **to improve and nurture our practice**

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[4] Mateyom" Integrated Community Development Project,

[5] Self Help Groups

[6] Hosanna Catholic Secretariat

[7] Women Saving and Credit Associations

[8] Community based Rehabilitation

[9] The contents of the documents might not be accurate – the participants review and reflect on the accuracy of the content vs-a-vs the concepts and theoretical understanding of systematization

History of systematization

The method originated in Latin America as early as the 1960s. It emerged out of an increasing desire to document and communicate lessons learnt in field practice, whilst the conventional approach at that time tended to be a linear transition from theory to practice with no regard for critical reflection of the practice. According to Oscar Jara, "A new relationship between theory and practice appeared: instead of applying to practice what had previously been formulated in theory, theoretical approaches are built having as a starting point the systematization of practices" Three disciplines contributed to the method: social work, popular education and development facilitation. What these disciplines have in common is that they are all practical rather than theoretical disciplines.

Systematization is used widely in development, mostly in Latin America but increasingly in Asia too. Use the method if you're looking for a systematic way of documenting lessons learnt in field projects, and with the intention of using those lessons to improve subsequent phases of your project. You should be prepared to communicate the lessons learnt back to the community in which you operate, so that they too can benefit from your project team's experience. The methodology is in particular useful in the following situations:

- Refine frameworks and working hypotheses for scaling up a pilot project or intervention
- Improve visibility of a successful initiative or project
- Learning for improvement or adjustment of ongoing projects or initiatives
- Refine and consolidate a standard based on evidence from multiple initiatives
- Facilitate transfer of models, experiences, lessons learned to contexts different to those where the experience originated
- Contribute to advocacy and policy debates

Benefits and added value

a. Learning and institutional reflection:

- Systematic and periodic analysis of project actions/practices.
- Inputs to decision making, strategic planning and continuous improvement of programs and policies.
- Dynamic knowledge sharing and use within the institution.

b. Knowledge sharing, transfer and use for effectiveness and innovation:

- Facilitate the capture, documentation and analysis of relevant knowledge in a particular subject.
- Facilitate scaling up of successful pilots
- Contribute to the refinement of models and standards

What is it good for?

A systematization process usually provides two important benefits:

- It allows us to understand what we have experienced and to explicitly describe what we have learned during the process.

Projects do not always develop just as they were planned. During the implementation of a project, many changes can occur for one reason or another. Systematization allows us to do the following:

- ➢ analyze the factors that have intervened and the way in which they have influenced the development of the process;

> ➤ analyze the relationships and the changes that happened at significant stages in the process; and,

> ➤ understand how the experience has developed and how we can improve upon it.

In short, why did the experience happen in a specific way and not in another way.

Participatory systematization allows us to obtain a common vision of the process we have experienced, the things that were done right and the mistakes, the limits and the possibilities. This allows for greater group cohesion and coherence and allows the systematization process to play a role in the groups' self-development. Additionally, it takes the lessons learned and uses them to help us overcome the tendency towards activities and mechanical repetition of procedures that were successful in the past.

- It allows us to share the lessons learned with other people and institutions.

Our experiences are full of lessons, some of which we are aware of and others of which we are not. Systematization can make these learned lessons "visible" or explicit.

When our learned lessons become visible, we can communicate them to others. So, then, systematization allows us to share our experience and its lessons with others who were involved in the process and with other institutions. This enriches the process, using our day-to-day practice as a starting point.

What we can say is that systematization helps to contribute to a collective learning process by publishing the information in books, booklets, magazines, videos, compact discs, radio programmes, and other media, which can also improve the practice of others.

2.2   Purposes of systematization

Why do we systematize? We want to **learn the <u>experiences and impacts</u>** of different activities (projects) have been useful (not useful) and helpful in changing the life of the people. And share the experience (the lessons learned) with other projects/environment/institutions

Systematization serves:

- To **improve the quality and impact of our interventions**. The lessons learned allow stakeholders, an in particular those closely involved in a project or experience, to step back far enough to reflect on trends, patterns, opportunities and warning signs. This learning contributes to improving future interventions.

- To **generate new knowledge** and test the assumptions behind the experience. It contributes to deepening our understanding of crucial factors that influence the project's life by reflecting on the experience and testing our beliefs about the nature of the problem and the assumptions about our interventions. We cannot expect different results if we keep doing the same thing.

- To **strengthen all stakeholders' capacity**. The more participatory the process is, the more likely it is that the systematization can contribute to encouraging stakeholders to adopt systematization as a methodology for learning, reflect on their own practice and improve it.

- **To share and disseminate lessons learned**. Sharing recommendations and lessons with a broader audience and not only with those directly involved brings new insights and new ways to see and do things. Disseminating systematization outputs to a wider audience than the project context facilitates new knowledge and new approaches.

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In general terms, systematization intends to answer the following questions:

- *What was the nature of the experience? What was the experience about? Who were the actors? How do they relate to each other?*

- *What was done, how, why, for what purpose and for whom?*

- *How did cultural, economic, geographic, institutional and political factors influence the experience?*

- *Which expected and unexpected processes and results occurred during the experience?*

- *What were the results and impacts of the experience or project and why did they happen?*

- *What were the problems the project had to face and how they were addressed?*

- *Which were the factors that facilitated or hindered the achievement of objectives?*

- *What lessons did the different actors involved in the experience come out with?*

- *Which lessons can be communicated or taken into account for future experiences?*

2.3   Relationship between systematization and other forms of knowledge production

Systematization is very closely related to other knowledge production activities, such as research and evaluation.

Differences can be found in their study **objects**, that is, what they focus on; and in their **purposes**.

Research focuses on understanding an aspect of reality about which we don't know enough; evaluation focuses on the results of actions; systematization is similar, but focuses on **how and why things happened**, putting special attention to the processes lived by actors.

Purposes are also different: research expects to discover something about that aspect of reality, either to use it immediately or just to increase knowledge about it; evaluation expects to 'rate' (assess) the action's success or failure; while systematization intends to **understand the processes in order to produce lessons that will improve future practices**. So, systematization does not 'rate' action's success or failure; it is interested in lessons learned from both success and failure.

Comparison of systematization with other knowledge producing methods

Forms of Knowledge production	Purpose	Object (what it focuses on)
Investigation/ Research	To discover something about a certain aspect of reality	Understand an aspect of reality
Evaluation	To 'rate' an action's success (achievement of its purposes, efficiency, impact, etc.)	The results of actions
Systematization	To understand the process; learn from practice to improve it	An experience: how and why things happened

Practical illustration using Self Help Groups (SHGs)

Forms of Knowledge production	Purpose	Object (what it focuses on)
Investigation/ Research	The role of SHGs in social relations and economic development of the minorities	Factors that contributed to the success of SHGs – its contribution to the social and economic integration of the Fuga minorities
Evaluation	Examine how much the activities of SHGs were achieved , how much the objectives of SHGs were met, its efficiency and sustainability	The achievements and attainment of the objectives, their contributions (of SHGs)
Systematization	Understand and reflect on the actions, methods and processes of establishment and operation of SHGs in order to improve the future planning and implementation of SHGs	Reflect on the experience gained on SHGs and explain how SHGs established and operate and why SHGs were successful

Systematization and other knowledge producing methods do not exclude, but rather complement and support each other. Even though systematization does not focus on results, it helps to know if action was successful or not, in order to understand how things happened and why. So, systematization does not 'rate' a project's success or failure, but is interested **in lessons learned** from both success and failure.

Systematization is not to evaluate whether something went right or wrong or whether or not we met our objectives and expectations. Systematization is learning **how and why** the process occurred as it did.

2.4   Basic guiding principles of systematization

The following set of basic principles can be used to guide a systematization process:

- It is a process of analytical thinking and critical reflection on experience. It focuses on **what** was done, **why** it was done, why it was done in this specific way, **what** were the results and impacts, why these results were useful or not, how sustainable the results are and the likelihood of the experience being replicated.

- The purpose is **to learn from the successes and failures of the project**. The conclusions drawn from the experience should contribute to generating new knowledge that could be useful for other interventions.

- Emphasis is given to the **process.** Systematization is a structured and focused way of capturing the process of change that a project aims to bring about, the activities and interactions between stakeholders, the issues and contextual factors. Results and impacts are important, and their analysis is part of the systematization, but they are not the central focus of the analysis. Rather, it is more important to explain 'why' we obtained the results.

- Systematization tracks the process of an intervention: what happened, how it happened and why it happened.

- As a systematic and analytical process, systematization involves organizing information in such a way that different stakeholders have an opportunity to reflect and learn about the process. The whole experience has to be organized by identifying different elements connected with the experience. No only does the project have to be explored but, for instance, the context, project objectives and results, activities, etc. Systematization is a systematic way to reflect, analyze and discover patterns that help or hinder change.

- The more pluralist and participatory the process, the better the result. It should involve as many stakeholders as possible, not only to get different points of view but also to widen the angle of analysis and bring in various dimensions (political, economic, cultural social, etc). Knowing that different people have been involved in the experience and that each one of them will have different viewpoints and interests, it should be expected that there will be different opinions regarding what was done and achieved. Rather than aiming to achieve a consensus, it will be easier to identify lessons learnt, and generate knowledge if that diversity of opinions is taken into account and it is fully represented.

- Systematization distinguishes between **conclusions, lessons learned** and **recommendations.** A 'conclusion' is a synthesis of confirmed facts that relate to a certain situation (e.g. project 'A' did not fulfill its objectives). A 'recommendation' is a specific idea about how to deal with concrete problems or take advantage of concrete opportunities in a given situation (e.g. to improve the quality of water supply, technological innovations should be adopted). Finally, a 'lesson learned' is a generalized statement of what is likely to work and/or what has to happen to achieve (or prevent) a certain result

- Systematization focuses on lessons learned.

2.5   Participants of Systematization

Who should undertake systematization?

Systematization is done by the people who lived the experience (those who have participated in the process). The systematization team/group should be curious, interested to reflect on the experience, and discover new things that will help to improve what they do. It is also necessary that they develop critical and self-critical attitudes (abilities that are generally learned through practice), as well as the capacity to interrogate beyond what seems evident. The desire to do things better; the intention to innovate new and better strategies and methods; the courage to explore new ways; and to risk being wrong.

In most projects there are three groups of participants:

1. Project facilitators or implementers (staff)

2. Direct beneficiaries

3. Indirect beneficiaries

We take the example of a project for establishment of women self help groups:

First group: the social workers who organize and train the women

Second group: the women who are organized in the self help groups

Third group: the families of the women organized in the self help groups

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Bear in mind!

Systematization must be done by those who have participated in the process; you cannot systematize an experience if you have not been directly involved. Systematization cannot be done by outsiders or people who didn't directly participated in the implementation of the project

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2.6 Laying the ground (who and how) for Systematization process

Basic questions

1   What part of the experience will be systematized?

2   Why do you want to systematize this experience? to learn by doing it? What product do you expect to develop (a written report, a video, a play)?

3   What do you want to know through the systematization process – what motivates the systematization processes

4   How will the systematization be carried out? This includes: the method that will be used, the activities and who will carry them out, costs, etc.

Conditions

It is important to create some basic conditions necessary for systematizing an experience: we need a facilitation team, an agreement with the institution, access to information, etc. These conditions are indispensable for our work. Yet, if they don't exist, they can be created. What is important to understand is that it is impossible to begin the systematization without having laid the groundwork.

Facilitation team - A team of three to five people who are the staff of the project/institution

The task of facilitation team is to carry the process forward - to plan and facilitate work sessions and to write the preliminary and final reports.

The role of the facilitation team is not to direct the process, but rather to create the space and environment in which participants' work and reflection can happen such that they are able to flush out the lessons learned.

They make sure that participants don't get lost in the vast array of the experiences, and stick to the subject. And they animate participants to ask all the questions needed to finally understand the experience and draw the lessons from it.

Institutional support

Systematization implies work time and the expense of human (working time) and economic resources. The institution must free up the participants from some of their responsibilities so that they can dedicate the necessary time to the systematization.

Records, access to information

Systematization means, among other things, the retrieval of information about what happened during the experience. To retrieve this information we must have the records that were generated during the project's implementation: reports, workshop proceedings, minutes of meetings, planning worksheets, etc.

The first building block

How do we start the systematization process? What is the first building block? How do we go about laying it down?

Previously we mentioned that one of the initial conditions for systematization is the presence of a facilitation team. Facilitating the placement of the first building block is one of the team's most important tasks.

Internal workshop for the systematization team

The participants must understand the importance, purpose and scope of the systematization process. They should be informed about the time and work that will be required to participate in the process.

Points to be addressed during the first workshop:

• What do we mean by 'systematization of experiences'?

• What are the benefits of systematization?

• How is it done? What are the steps involved in the process and how do we go about taking them?

• What is the framework for the systematization that guides us through the process?

• What is the general plan of activities for this process?

Develop a general plan

A general plan for the systematization process details the steps included in the process, the general activities, a list of resources, and tentative dates on which the systematization will take place. This plan should answer the following questions:

• What are the activities that will be included? The process

• Who is in charge of each activity? Task sharing

• Who will participate in each activity?

• What resources do we need? Costs

• When will we do each activity? Action plan

Systematization planning worksheet

Objective: ....

Subject: ....

Central aspects: ....

Activities	Responsible person/team	Who participates	Required resources	Time frame
Step 1 **Develop the methodology** **Start up workshop** Explanation on systematization, methods, checklist, etc.				
Step 2 Context analyses (could be at office level) • Local, regional and national • Institutional context • Description of the participants				
Step 3 **Field work - data collection** Description/Analyses of the process and description of the product	Program officer Dale	6 farmer groups	Facilitation for group visits Reports,	November 25, 2017
Data validation workshop (2 days) Review workshop				
Step 4 Critical analyses				
Final workshop and production of the report				
Step 5 Production of final document				

3   Steps of Systematization process

The following five broad steps are followed for systematization process

1   Define/Develop a framework - Systematization plan design - orienting the systematization process

2   Describe/Analysis/review of the context and history of the experience - Reconstruction of the experience

3   Telling the history or reconstructing the experience

4   Critical analysis of the experience - Analysis and interpretation of the experience

5   Communicating the results of the systematization

These steps are linked but not necessarily followed strictly one after the other. When finishing one step you may discover that you have to go back and review a previous part of the systematization process, before continuing.

3.1   Defining the Frame-work (step 1) – "three lighthouses" sometime said "three landmarks"

The framework

A systematization of experiences starts with the definition of its boundaries. In the framework, three questions are answered:

a.   Which parts of the experience will be taken into account in the systematization process?

b.   What is the objective of the systematization?

c.   What are the central questions/points? Under which perspectives do we want to look at the experience?

The three lighthouses/landmarks are the **Subject, Objective and Central point** of systematization

Lighthouse one: the <u>Subject</u> lighthouse/landmark. What part of our experience do we want to systematize?

The subject is **the concrete experience that we want to systematize**. We choose from the total practices the significant experience that we want to systematize and we narrow it down to the **physical space and time frame** in which it occurred.

We may select a representative part of the whole operational area and reduce the time-frame to a particular period that interests us most. We may also reduce it **to a particular group of the participants**, maybe the women beneficiaries.

Example: Establishment and operation of 30 Women Saving and Credit Associations (WSCAs) in Munessa woreda from 2010 to 2016

We are looking into our practice by looking on how WSCAs contributed to social and economic empowerment of women

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Examples of the **<u>subject</u>** lighthouse/landmark for systematization

HEfDA ICDP   Saving and Internal Lending Communities <u>(SILC)</u>

HEfDA Girls education   <u>the tutorial classes</u>

HoCS "Mateyom" Integrated Community Development Project, (MICDP)   <u>Self Help Groups</u> <u>(SHGs)</u>

HEfDA ICDP   <u>Women saving and credit associations (WSCAs)</u>

HEfDA Disability Inclusive development (CBR)   <u>mainstreaming</u>

Lighthouse two: the Objective - Why do we want to systematize?

The "objective" lighthouse/landmark - Why do we want to do systematization of the experience? We have to specify **the reason** why we want to do systematization – the benefits we gain from the systematization process

Few examples

- To learn **why** the practice is popularly accepted/perceived and **how** it is understood

- To identify the benefits gained from the practice/experience – includes why the objectives of the project/practice are met

- To **improve** the practice/**methodology** of the practice for future scaling up

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Examples of the **objective** landmark for systematization- from the systematization documents

SILC   To understand <u>how</u> SILC was perceived by the beneficiaries, its implementation process and the <u>benefits members gained</u>

Girls education   improve <u>the methodology</u> of the tutorial classes and share the experience with others

SHG   <u>learn how</u> the establishment and operation of Self Help Groups (SHGs) contributed to <u>social and economic integration</u> of Fuga/Gafat and scale up the establishment and operation of SHGs in the future projects

Women associations   <u>learn how/why</u> the establishment of saving and credit associations contributed to <u>social and economic empowerment of women</u>

Inclusive development   <u>to understand how</u> the mainstreaming is implemented, benefits gained, analyse, document and share the lessons/experiences,

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Common denominators in all

1   Review and improve the methodology of implementation

2   To understand how the <u>subject</u> [for systematization] contributed to achieve the <u>objective</u> of the project

3   To use the findings/information to refine the project implementation and subsequent planning

4   To draw lessons on what worked well (success stories) and what haven't (gaps and challenges)

5   To analyze, document and share the lessons/experiences with other stakeholders

Lighthouse three: the <u>Central aspects/points</u> lighthouse/landmark - What central aspects of the experience most interest us?

The central aspects specify the part of our practice that are of greatest interest to us. Where do we want to look deeper into our practice, understand better **how exactly we did and why things happened the way we did?**

To define the most important and significant aspects of the experience, it is important to define/determine the prime interest of doing systematization

- The <u>methodology</u> of doing – establishment and operation of SILC, SHGs, methodology of tutorial classes

- The <u>knowledge</u> we (the organization) generated from doing the work/practice (positive or negative)

- Learn <u>how the practice contributed to meeting the objective</u> (economic and social empowerment, enhance integration, improve academic performance)

Examples of the **central aspects** of systematization

Girls education how (methodology) were the tutorial classes conducted? Why were tutorial classes were effective to improve the performance of female students?

SILC "Why (justifications and benefits) was SILC popularly accepted by the communities and the process the project and the beneficiaries have undergone to make SILC operational/successful.

SHG the role SHGs played to ensure the social and economic integration of the Fuga minorities or Why are SHGs most effective in ensuring the social and economic integration of the Fuga minorities? The methodology of establishment and operation of SHGs (What did we do to establish and smoothly run SHGs?)

Women associations What did we do to establish and smoothly run WSCAs? Why are WSCAs most effective to achieve the social and economic empowerment of women?

Inclusive development what did we do to mainstream disability in social and economic activities? why does mainstreaming contributed to the social and economic empowerment of persons with disabilities?

Example of formulation of the frame-work of the Systematization of Experience

Subject: Farmers´ adoption of the preparation and use of organic manures in 14 groups within 10 districts from 2011 to 2016.

- *Key Question: What motivated the farmers to adopt and use organic manures?*

Objectives

- *Improve _____'s approach in introducing organic manure to farmer groups.*

- *To share / replicate / promote the improved practice of introducing organic manure to other areas.*

- *To share systematization results with relevant stakeholders*

Central points

- *Which approaches did we use to introduce organic fertilizer practices?*

- *What role did the animators play?*

Reviewing the framework in each step during the systematization process is essential for performing the process

Choose the experience [of your project] you propose to systematize.

Discuss and create consensus on the **Subject, Objective, and the Central aspects** of systematization – in groups of three

Present your findings on flip chart and discuss

3.2 Analysis of the Context (step 2)-

> The description of the characteristics of our environment/context
>
> *Local, regional and national context in relation to the issue for systematization*
>
> *Description of the Institutional context -* Who are we? How do we work (as an organization)? What do we do?
>
> *Participants – information on the* people who are part of the process, to know who they are and their role in the project – the staff, direct and indirect beneficiaries
>
> *Description of the product – a concise brief overview of the practice*

Our environment plays an important role in influencing whether or not we achieve our objectives during the course of our work (undertaking the project). When we understand what is happening around us we can understand and analyze our experiences. The description of the characteristics of our environment is what we call context.

It is necessary to describe the geographic, political, economic, social and cultural characteristics as well as the region and community in which the experience has been developed.

We must set limits and choose the part of our environment that is directly related to the experience.

Local context

Description of the local and national context in relation to the subject of systematization

The context includes local (specific location/setting), culture, the socio-economic situation, the history, political/policy aspects, resources, etc. as they relate to the project's objectives

One guiding question could be "Which national/regional policies have had an effect on the project?" that has relevance to the issues, for example marginalization of minorities or social and economic empowerment of women and formation/operation of saving and credit associations

Description of the Institutional context

The organizational framework that motivates the work on minorities, women, etc. This description should briefly and concisely respond to the following questions:

Who are we? How do we work (as an organization)? What do we do?

What is the approach (theoretical base) of the organization to address issues of minorities, women empowerment, etc.?

It is important to define the focus of the project and shortly explain the theory behind why it is done that way.

Profile of the organization

History, status of registration/identity, governance structure, human and financial resources capacity, vision, mission, values, principles, objectives, strategies, projects, major achievements, history of the project, overview of marginalization, women empowerment, WSCA, etc.

Participants - people who are part of the process, to know who they are and their role in the project.

The participants are

1. The project staff – members of the systematization team
2. The representatives of the direct beneficiaries of the project intervention, (minorities, women, etc.)
3. The representatives of the families of the members of the direct beneficiaries

Identify the participants of the systematization of
1   Girls education   female students, teachers and project staff
2   SILC   selected members of SILC groups
3   SHG
4   Women associations
5   Inclusive development

What are we interested in knowing about these people?

Information on the staff who participate in the systematization process

- Name of project staff
- Education background
- Position in the organization/project
- Work experience in the organization and other organization
- Qualification /knowledge and work experience in the components of the project
- Work experience in the project and SWSCAs

Example: Information on members of WSCA who participate in the systematization process

- Name
- Age (Date of birth)
- Family size (male and female)
- Occupation
- Educational level
- Years as member of WSCA
- Function in WSCA
- Formal and informal training they have taken on WSCA

Information on family of WSCAs who participate in the systematization process

- Age (Date of birth)
- Educational level
- Family background (occupation, educational level, no of male and female siblings) To carry out the systematization, the organization's primary interest was to strengthen their educational-preventative proposal, based on their own institutional practice, and to be able to share this with other like-minded institutions.
- Occupation
- Years as member of WSCA (his/her family member)
- Function in WSCA (his/her family member)

Description of the WSCAs (the product) – a concise brief overview of the WSCA (History of WSCAs)

- Number of WSCAs and members (sex, occupation),
- Governance structure
- Their financial assets/property they own

Group reflection on <u>content of the context analyses</u> in the systematization experiences

Take the systematization documents on SILC, Tutorial class and SHG

Discuss on the content of the context analyses (information gathered) during the systematization of the three experiences

Reflect on the quality, relevance and applicability of the information contained in the context analyses

Most of the information gathered during context analyses might be irrelevant or not sufficiently reflected on or not sufficiently linked to the analyses

3.3   Retrieving information about what we have experienced - telling the history (step 3)

Rebuild the history – helps to be aware of _what_ happened and _how_ it happened - <u>what really happened not what we planned or hopped for</u>

The content of the history is defined by the framework of the systematization; its objective, subject, and central aspects.

Particularly the central aspects will help us to focus on the amount and kind of information we need, to understand and visualize the process of what has happened.

The central aspect is **"What did we do to establish and smoothly run WSCAs? Why are WSCAs most effective to achieve the social and economic empowerment of Women?**

Questions for analysis/reflection

Systematization questions do not intend to "measure" or to "assess" what was done – but rather to explain (and to understand) _**why and how**_ things were done.

a. The intention.

The identification and analysis of the objectives of the project over the short, medium and long term is needed. The following questions can guide this step:

- (Why) What was the need for organizing WSCAs?

- Where and when did the WSCAs formed?

- What were the problems prioritized by project participants and why?

- What were the beliefs about the nature of the problem and the assumptions that guided the project intervention?

- What were the changes that the project expected to obtain? What were the initial objectives and intentions?

b. Nature and characteristics of the project

This level includes all those aspects that will help us to describe and analyze how the project was organized and formulated. Some key questions to consider are:

- How did the idea of the project come out? Who had the initial idea for the project (SWSCA) and when did this happen? What were the sources of Information to start the WSCAs? Who participated? (including direct and indirect actors) What are the motivational force to attract the participants in WSCAs?

- What was the orientation, approach or strategy followed by the project? (How) What were the methodologies used in forming WSCAs?

- What methodologies were used to design and formulate the project? What actions or steps (processes) were followed to form WSCAs to reach the purposes or goals of social and economic empowerment of women

- How did people participate in the identification of the main problems and the formulation of the project? What facilitated (favorable conditions) to start the WSCAs?

- What types of activities and strategies were designed to assure the sustainability of the project?

- What costs/resources (human and financial) were used for the WSCAs?

- Major achievement and cause of the achievement of the WSCAs

- What were the outcomes (positive and negative, expected and unexpected)?

- How do WSCAs contribute to social and economic empowerment of women

c. Project implementation

The systematization of an experience is mainly based on the description of the project's cycle and life. The main aim here is to look at and reflect on the experience. This allows for a description and analysis of the project in order to learn from its dynamics and results.

In this stage we identify the activities and achievements during the selected period of time including unexpected results, difficulties faced, and unmet objectives.

- What Important things happened during and after formation of the WSCAs

- The challenges (major obstacle) in forming and running WSCAs

- What are the lessons learnt during running/operation of the WSCAs

- What are the Impacts of WSCAs on empowerment of women, family income, food security

- What are the unintended (unplanned) but happened?

Sources of information

To retrieve information about the process we must rely on two important sources:

- Records that describe the experience: reports, workshop minutes, notes, meeting minutes, field logs, photos, videos, etc.

- Individual memories: the memories of those people who have participated in the experience.

Organizing the information

You are free to use your own methods to organize the information gathered and narrate the findings in a logical/chronological manner

The following table can be useful to organise the information obtained in the retrieval of the project's history and to facilitate creation of a complete and "schematic" vision of the experience. However, we can adjust the table to the specific experience that is being systematised. We can include additional columns, modify or change the order, etc.

Dates	What was done	Why	Who	How	Results	Observations

Group reflection

A)	Develop the set of questions to retrieve (reconstruct) the history for systematization and
B)	analyze if the documents contain/answer the sets of questions?
1	Girls education
2	SILC
3	SHG
4	Women associations
5	Inclusive development

3.4   The critical analysis (step 4)

Up to this point of the systematization process we have established the context and have put together a detailed description of our experience. This has been a descriptive effort that included the different participant groups. Now, the decisive step in the journey is to *go beyond the descriptive, find the coherence and critical explanation of what has happened. To not only know **what happened** but to know **why it happened and** how it happened.** Now we enter the chapter of critical analysis.

The *purpose*, in this step, is to **reflect on the experience and identify the lessons and new knowledge it holds**.

This is a key moment in the systematization process: creativity, curiosity and criticism are particularly important now.

All knowledge production processes start from questions. This systematization method is also based upon questions. We need to agree on a main question when designing the systematization plan. Questions indicate what we want to know about the experience. We use questions as the main tool for the analysis of the experience we are systematizing.

Systematization questions are answered through discussion and reflection processes involving all relevant actors in the experience. These processes help participants to reflect on the experience and its context, uncover theoretical assumptions and approaches, bring in new information, and access the memories of the participants.

TAKE NOTE!

This is not the time to evaluate whether something went right or wrong or whether or not we met our objectives and expectations. What we want to learn is how and why the process occurred as it did.

The critical analysis has three main "lines of work" or "fields":

1. Interpretation of the experience
2. Analysis of significant elements
3. Conclusions

a)   Interpretation of the process

Why **the changes occurred and** *what* **were the consequences**

Why and how the process of formation/operation of WSCAs occurred,

What have changed to the social and economic situation of the women?

Why were WSCAs successful in contributing to social and economic empowerment of women?

What was successful (worked well) and what did/is not?

While you are answering the questions, always relate the experience to its context: it would be impossible to understand how and why things happened without considering external events.

Is there a time/point when the processor the methodology changed/adjusted? Why?

When we come across one of these changes or breaks we start to ask ourselves some questions, for example:

> ➢ Why did we change/adjust at this point? What made us change? Who took the decision?
>
> ➢ What did these changes mean for our project?
>
> ➢ Was the outcome different after the change?

Or whatever else you need to know, to understand how and why this has happened.

> ➢ It is important to dig deeply into this modification of the process from how it was initially planned, to really look behind the "change" – to try to profoundly understand why this change happened.

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b) **Analysis of significant elements** – different steps in the process of implementation, the activities involved in the process

In systematization we are interested in the elements that directly relate to the systematization's central aspects,

The central aspect is **"What did we do to establish and smoothly run WSCAs? Why are WSCAs most effective to achieve the social and economic empowerment of women?"**

Description of the significant elements include analyses of the major aspects of the experience

- **Participants** of the WSCAs Who/Category (economic religious, ethnic background), are the members? Why are the women opted to be organized?

- **Methodology** used in organizing WSCAs - What are the process/procedures used to organize the women?

- **The process** of running/operation of WSCAs – the **major activities** at main stages – awareness raising, registration, training, saving, credit, IGA,

- **The achievements –** the contribution of WSCAs to the socio-economic empowerment of the Women

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c) **Conclusions** (may include lessons and recommendations) – what can we conclude from the practice, results, experience

Systematization distinguishes between **conclusions, lessons learned** and **recommendations.**

A **'conclusion'** is a synthesis of confirmed facts that relate to a certain situation (e.g. project 'A' did not fulfill its objectives).

A '**lesson learned'** is a generalized statement of what is likely to work and/or what has to happen to achieve (or prevent) a certain result

A '**recommendation'** is a specific idea about how to deal with concrete problems or take advantage of concrete opportunities in a given situation (e.g. to improve the quality of water supply, technological innovations should be adopted).

The ultimate goal of a systematization process is to improve and nurture our practice. It is not enough to analyze and interpret the process; we must reach conclusions about **what was learned during the experience**. These

conclusions point to a **new knowledge for an improved practice** which is nourished and enriched by the lessons that we learned from the experience.

Some of the questions that may help us to draw conclusions include:

- What would we do differently if we started the project afresh?

- What part of the experience would we replicate, where would we make changes, what would stay the same and what would be adapted?

- What suggestions would we make to others who want to start a similar project?

- What were the difficulties, mistakes, good ideas, agreements, disagreements, generalizations, perspectives, etc. that we think are important to share?

- What made it possible to overcome the difficulties – what were our strengths in that moment? How did we cope?

Participants of the facilitation process draw conclusions and develop recommendations (from the critical elements) for internal use and other stakeholders working in the same field of the subject of systematization. The conclusions and recommendations are highly valuable as they show successful strategies in introducing the subject to others who want to introduce to their work areas

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Brainstorm on the conceptual understanding of what **conclusion and lessons** are in project work

Review the documents in terms of the critical analysis – 1) Interpretation of the experience 2) Analysis of significant elements and 3) Conclusions from the systematization documents

SILC

Girls education

SHG

Women associations

Inclusive development

Keep in mind

- Systematization is a process, not only a product. Because the process (in particular the reflection workshops) involve various stakeholders from the start, you are capturing their collective knowledge (not just the thoughts of one consultant), which in itself is a collective and participatory learning experience.

- When you embed that collective knowledge into an attractive, modular and user friendly product, you can reach audiences beyond the main project stakeholders with more effectiveness.

- If incorporated into the project cycle, the systematization becomes part of a daily reflection and learning process where we are learning before, during and after our work, rather than an additional effort.

- Because you start with the demand for the knowledge, the process and the end product are more relevant and has more potential of real impact

3.5　Communication/sharing the lessons learned (step 5)

There is a two-fold objective to sharing information about the systematization:

1. First, it creates a document to share with those who didn't participate in the experience. We must reflect again on the results of the systematization, clearly write up the text, explain the significant details of the process and context, and describe the experience and its results in a precise way. Those who write the text (the systematization team) should fully understand and study their individual processes and the general experience

2. The results of a systematization process are valuable and enriching because they are based on what happened in practice. It is important to share the results with a wider audience. It is a process that nourishes and enriches the practice of those organizations and persons who work in a similar field. It will allow them to do the following:

- Learn about the experience that has been systematized

- Understand the reflections we have drawn from the experience

- Incorporate some aspects of our practice into their work,

Communicating the systematization experience – comprehensive report of the background information, analysis of the participants, the product, process, critical analyses

- You should communicate the **new knowledge and lessons** obtained through the systematization of the experience, not only the story of what happened. The story will mainly be used to explain the lessons learnt.

- Your challenge is to ensure that your targeted audience understands your message. Choose different kinds of communication products (written reports, etc. depending on your target group, and adapt your language to each one of them.

- The systematization product should get the audience to think, make them question themselves, or see an issue in a different way.

- The key idea is: we want people to read (or listen to us). So, the systematization product must be **short, simple and, above all, appealing and attractive**. Think about what you would have liked to know before engaging in the action you have systematized, and try to communicate that, because that is probably what will be most useful to others.

- The first step is to decide the content of the systematization report or communication product with the participation of all the members of the leading team.

The foundation document

In communicating the results it is very important to create a document detailing the systematization process. What should this document contain?

1. Introduction

- The motivation for participating in a systematization process

- The need for the systematization

- Introduction of the facilitation team

2. The systematization process

- Briefly describe the systematization process (we are speaking just of the systematization, and not yet addressing the experience itself)

- Share significant anecdotes that provide insight into the systematization process

- Mention all of the people, organizations or groups that participated (other than the facilitation team)

3. The framework of the systematization

- Describe the landmarks - subject, objectives and the central points

4. The context

- Summarize the different contexts related to the experience – local, regional and national (technical, political, economical, social, etc.) context in relation to the subject of systematization,

- Describe the people who participated in the experience – the facilitation team/staff, direct and indirect beneficiaries

- Be explicit about the approach

5. The information that was retrieved about the experience

- Detailed description of our experience - Share information on ***what happened, why it happened and* how it happened** – the intention, the nature of the project/subject, implementation process, achievements, impacts of the experience – be guided by the checklist for the analysis

6. The critical analysis

- Express and describe in a precise and understandable way the significant elements, interpretation of the findings,

7. The conclusions

- Write a summary of the conclusions, lessons and recommendations based on the results of the critical analyses

8. Closing

- Evaluate the systematization process

<mark>The foundation documents is usually in the range of 20-25 pages but the sharing document is often **five to seven** pages</mark>

Example of the content of Sharing Document - (seven pages)
(taken from *Experience in Detail "OPen University Systems - OPUS"* Released in Vienna, August 2014 by HORIZONT3000) -

Table of Contents

Table of Charts

List of Abbreviations

1. General Information

2. Context of the Experience

3. Main Characteristics of the Experience

4. Stakeholders and Partners – Roles and Responsibilities

5. Resources

6. Impact of the Experience/ Practice

7. Lessons Learned and Recommendations

8. Challenges

9. Sustainability

10. Experience Sharing/ Up-scaling

11. Bibliography

Summary of the systematization process- example from SILC/HEfDA (appears after Table of Contents)

1	Country	Ethiopia
2	Implementing partner organisation:	Harmee Education for Development Association (HEfDA)
3	Type of organization	Local NGO (Ethiopian Residents Charity Organization)
4	Address:	Harmee Education for Development Association, Munessa district, Arssi Zone, Oromia Region P.O.Box 23001 code 1000, Addis Ababa
5	Funding agency of the project	H3 - co-funded by DKA-Austria and Austrian Development Co-operation (ADC)
6	Budget	Total project – 250,000€ (component cost – 3,000€)
7	Sector	Rural Development
8	Project period	2010-2012
9	Project period for systematization	2009 (including pre-project period experiences) to June 2011
10	The project for systematization	Integrated Community Development with particular focus on Women, project no P-10-202
11	Systematization topic	Adoption of Saving and Internal Lending Communities / Village Saving and Loan Associations (SILC/VSLA) in HEfDA operational areas
12	Geographic scope	10 SILC groups from Anno (3), Gujicha (2) Koji (2) and Coopha (3)
13	Facilitator of the systematization process:	Dr. Daniel Keftassa, Consultant/technical advisor
14	The facilitation team	1. Darara Molle – project coordinator 2. Getahun Kebede – project officer 3. Nigusse Shundhiye - Technical facilitator 4. Mamo Hedato– Technical facilitator 5. Qassim Nadhisho – Community facilitator 6. Dawit Gadda – Field supervisor 7. Tolla Keftassa – community lead advisor
15	Participants of the systematization process	Representatives of the 10 SILC groups 1 Coopha 3 SILC groups 6 representatives 2. Anno 3 SILC groups 6 representatives 3. Gujicha 2 SILC groups 4 representatives 4. Koji 2 SILC groups 4 representatives **Total 10 SILC groups 20 representatives**
16	Target group:	Male and female farmers of 20-40 years of age
17	Period of the systematization process	August 15 to December 23, 2011
18	Costs of the systematization process	travel costs, food and accommodation to the facilitation team and participants of the workshops and field studies (about Birr 36,000 = 1,500€) plus external facilitator's fee and transportation costs

One last word about the Systematization (Sharing) Document. Its aim is to share our experience with other organizations so they can enrich their practice with some of the lessons we learnt and were able to analyze and visualize through a systematization process. But, and this must be clear, reading someone's systematization document cannot replace having the experience.

"There is a big difference between the person reading this [systematization] document and the person who did the systematization process. It is like the difference between knowing the path and walking the path"

So, in essence: Use systematization documents like you use a map - they give you an idea of the path you have to walk - the walking itself is up to you.

Carrying out the systematization process is highly valuable to the organization. The "special time for reflection" during rebuilding the history, creating time lines and reviewing what has happened and how did it happen is maybe the most essential part of the whole process. Systematization created a base on which to build on our learned experiences. The recommendations give a good way forward not only to the organization but also to other stakeholders sharing the responsibilities in repeating or scaling up the experience

Systematization is neither evaluation nor research. It is to understand the process; learn from practice to improve it. Systematization is not to evaluate whether something went right or wrong or whether or not we met our objectives and expectations. Systematization is learning **how and why** the process occurred as it did.