Participation in a CDM Afforestation/Reforestation Project in Himachal Pradesh: Success Stories and Shortcomings

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Clean Development Mechanism (CDM)
Flexibility mechanism under the Kyoto Protocol - countries with emission reduction commitments can contribute to emission-reduction projects in developing countries, thus "offsetting" their emissions
The projects are supposed to earn Certified Emission Reduction (CER) credits for each ton of carbon sequestered and thus earn revenues for the local communities that participate in the project.

Himachal Pradesh reforestation project

Part of Mid-Himalayan Watershed Development Program (MHWDP)

Aim: planting trees on degraded lands to sequester carbon

Study panchayats: Rishtavan, Upelakalhet, Ajnyapur (names changed)

Study panchayats: Rishtavan, Upekshakhet, Ajnyanpur (names changed)

Reforestation and Watershed Development

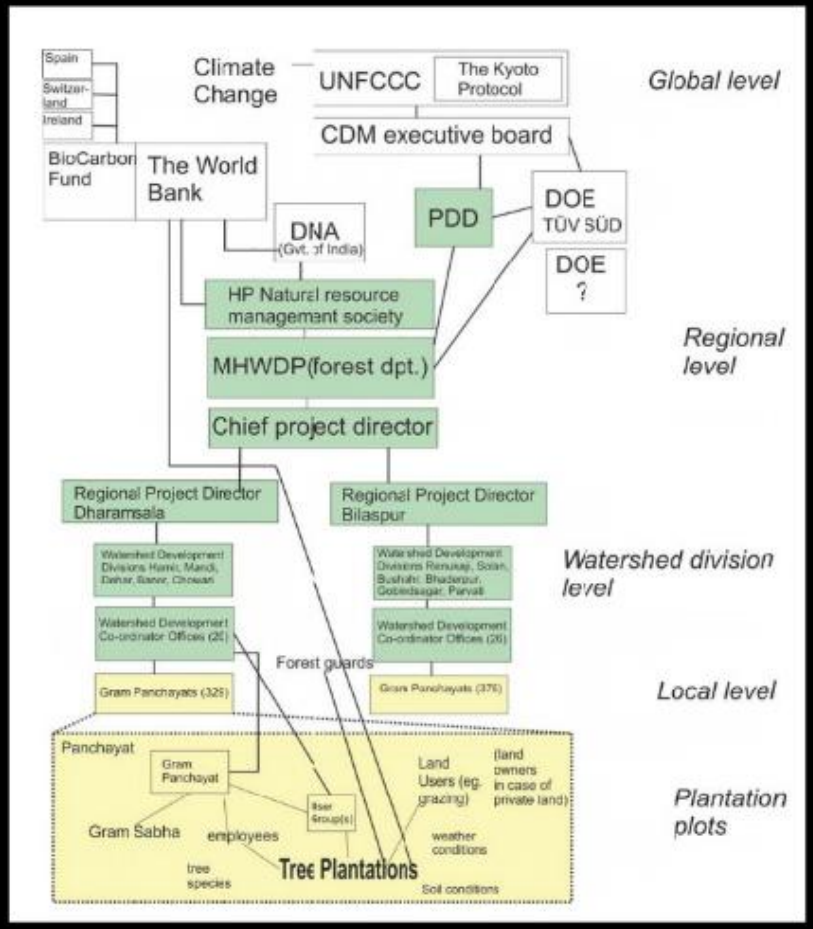
Carbon offsetting by reforestation?

Benefits of reforestation: prevention of erosion, ecosystem services

The idea of participation is emphasized in the context of watershed development in India and it has to be included in the project design of CDM A/R projects.

Participation

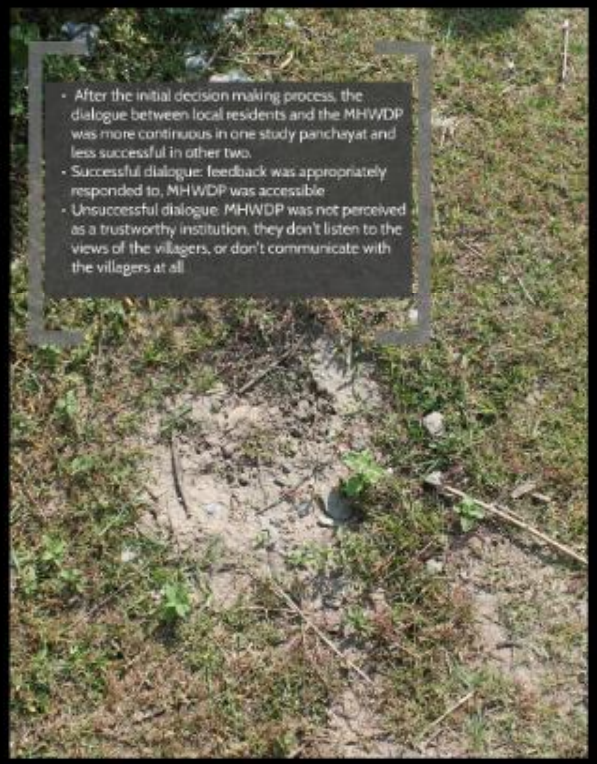
- Stakeholders' involvement in the project as decision-makers and in the implementation of the project.
- Participation is seen as a right of the local communities.
- Practical benefits: the project is better informed and the local communties might be more motivated
- Critique: project labelled "participatory" doesn't necessarily involve the whole community or challenge existing power relations, or genuinely empower communities in decision making
- The quality of participation may be improved


Spain
Switzer-land
Ireland
Climate Change
UNFCCC
The Kyoto Protocol
Global level
CDM executive board
BioCarbon Fund
The World Bank
DNA
(Gvt. of India)
PDD
DOE
TÜV SÜD
DOE
?
HP Natural resource management society
MHWDP(forest dpt.)
Regional level
Chief project director
Regional Project Director Dharamsala
Regional Project Director Bilaspur
Watershed division level
Watershed Development Co-ordinator Offices (26)
Forest guards
Gram Panchayats (325)
Local level
Panchayat
Gram Panchayat
Land Users (eg. grazing)
(land owners in case of private land)
User group(s)
Gram Sabha
employees
weather conditions
tree species
Tree Plantations
Soil conditions
Plantation plots

Participation in the project

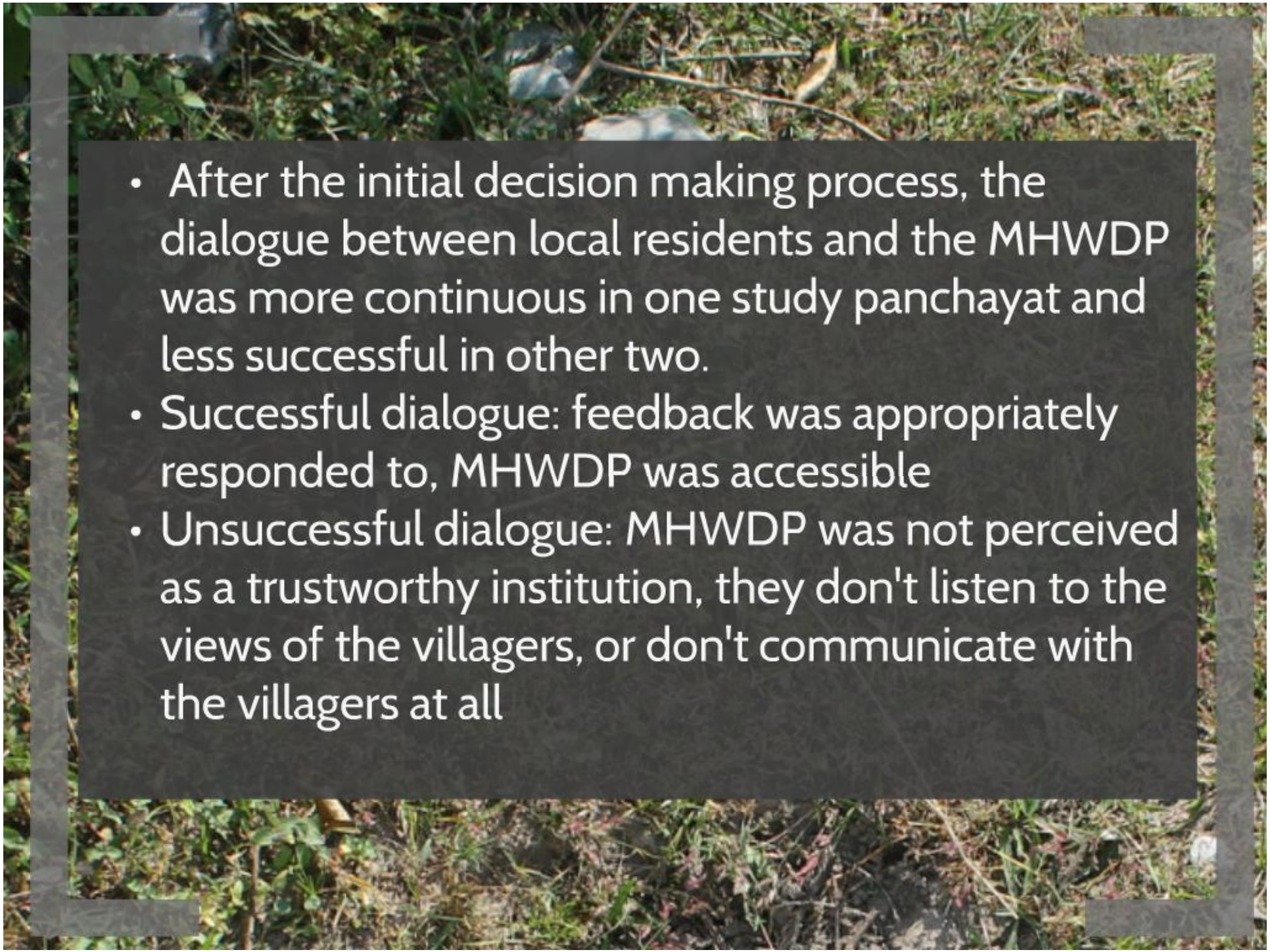
- The local communities were informed about the project in the Gram Sabha or by going to houses to tell about the project.
- Residents of panchayats decided in a Gram Sabha whether to take the project in their panchayat or not.
- Panchayat residents also could influence to which tree species should be planted.
- Decisions about land areas dedicated for the project were partly done by the communities, but not in all study panchayats.
- The local residents had also the possibility to participate in the implementation of the project. User Groups, formed of local villagers, have the responsibility to guard and maintain the plantation plots. The User Groups are supposed to receive their share of CER revenue.
- There were also paid employees.
- --> in principle, there are good opportunities to participate

How were the processes of participation played out?

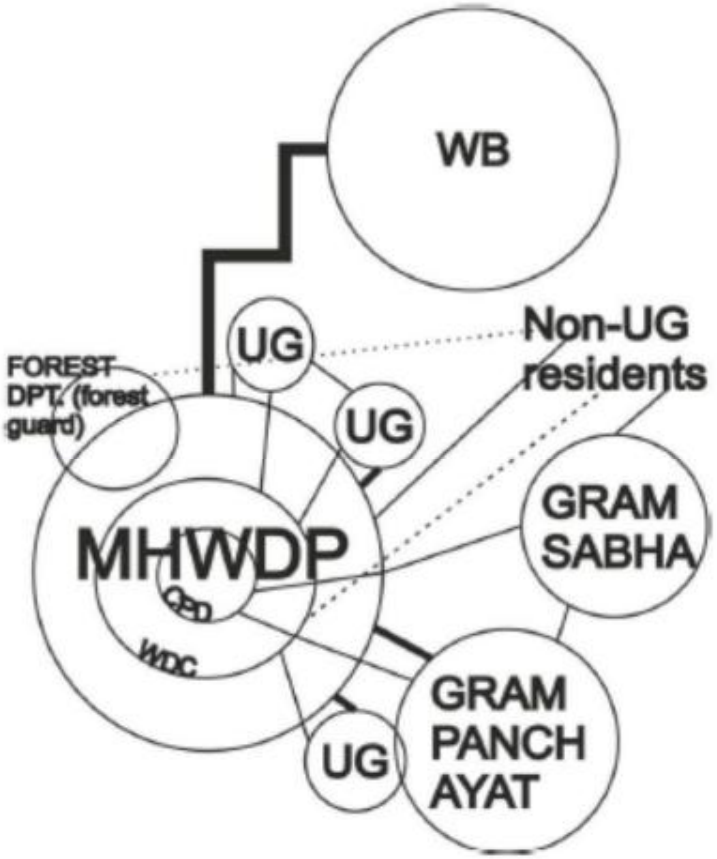


Informed decisions?

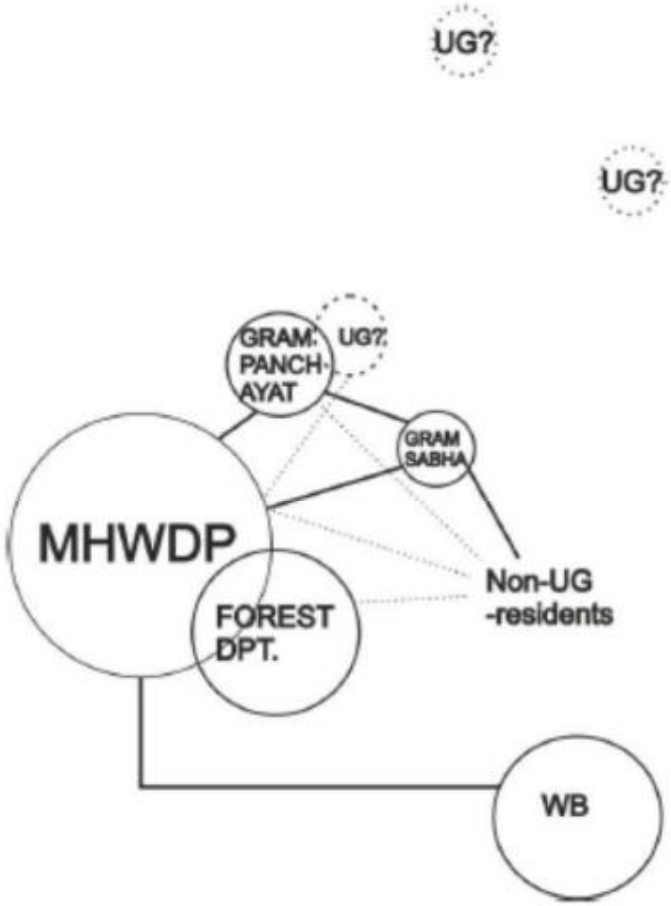
- Only one of all the respondents knew that the project was related to climate change mitigation
- The information about CER revenue was scarce among the respondents although the User Groups should receive 80% of the CER.
- In one study panchayat, majority of respondents did not even know about the existence of plantations
- Although the decisions were made with a "common agreement" in Gram Sabha there were competing claims on the land.


• After the initial decision making process, the dialogue between local residents and the MHWDP was more continuous in one study panchayat and less successful in other two.
• Successful dialogue: feedback was appropriately responded to, MHWDP was accessible
• Unsuccessful dialogue: MHWDP was not perceived as a trustworthy institution, they don't listen to the views of the villagers, or don't communicate with the villagers at all

Connections between actors in the project



a) Rishtavan



b) Upekshakhet

Condition of the plantations

Conclusions

"Tool kit participation" is not enough. Attention must be paid to the continuous process of interactive participation and dialogue.

Sufficient information is needed.

- can we talk about participation in a CDM project if the participants are unaware of CER revenue and climate change mitigation?
- Information is the basis for fair decisions and it might also bring about motivation to paricipate actively

Motivation also depends on the responsiveness of the project institution.

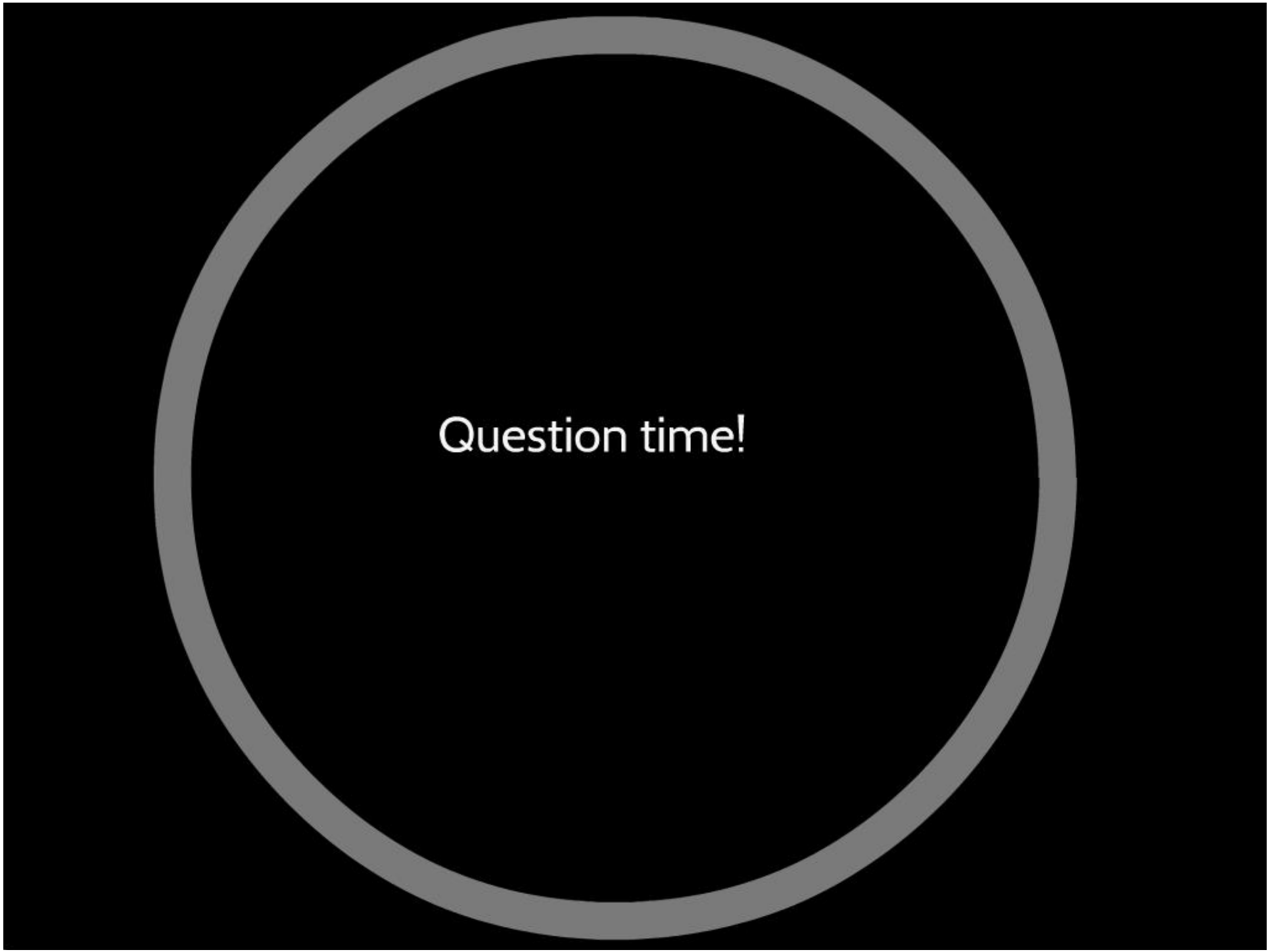
Influence of different project levels

- The MHWDP is the bottleneck institution in the dissemination of information. Different actors in the MHWDP handle their task as informants in very different ways.
- Motivation of the project staff is reflected in the residents' motivation

Local-local and local-regional connections are important in local participation. Also connections to the global level play a crucial role in local participation.

The successful panchayat was a showcase, where the funding institution, the World Bank paid regular visits.

--> importance of telling success stories, their effect on project implementation


Question time!