



# Where there is no Participation...

Insights, Strategies,  
Case Studies, "Do's and Don'ts"  
in Regional  
Rural Development, Asia

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## Foreword

Even today, after having gathered more than 30 years of experience, many development cooperation projects and programmes are still not achieving the hoped for success. Multiple reasons for this are given in cross-sectoral analyses, evaluation reports, etc. One cause behind the lacking success in achieving sustainable project results is repeatedly stressed: projects which are not planned with the partners from the beginning, are not agreed upon with all parties concerned and are not understood to be a process, are doomed to failure.

When understood correctly, partner orientation means working towards equality of rights in development cooperation. This is not easy to achieve in view of the different positions of donors and recipients in practice. Dialogue is one of the most important inputs in a relationship between partners. Dialogue in a spirit of partnership extends beyond the formalized and project-related communication, both in regard to time and content.

Participation-orientation goes further than target-group-orientation in that it wants to let the people themselves take decisions and take on responsibility. Participation means development to independence and autonomy, hence it is not an instrument. Participation must not only materialise in the relationships between donor organizations in the North and partners in the South, but also in relationships between these and the population concerned.

The activities to promote such processes are based on the assumption that development always also brings about a structural change in society. This assumption requires a change in orientation: away from single-point, one-off support towards ongoing, parallel support to social organization and to learning processes. But this support and back-up to learning processes also means that we have to run the risk of failures. Unless we are willing to bear this risk, our work will not become process-oriented.

Only people who are or will participate can or will be partners in a development process. Participation is the key to success. It has not become one of the basic principles of programmes for urban and rural regions just by chance. Participation means becoming part of and taking part in the decision-making process, planning, implementation, the provision of resources, the evaluation of joint work, and in the sharing of the success. But participation also implicates ceding power. All concerned must, therefore, view and practice participation as a permanent process

in the course of a project. A new way of thinking and behaviour is demanded of those who are to be catalysts and promoters of development projects. Perhaps this is the more profound reason behind the considerable difficulties which have to be overcome particularly when implementing development projects.

The present book was prepared as a process. The interests and objectives were first discussed and set down in 1984 in Kuala Lumpur/Malaysia. In 1988, following a workshop in Chiang-Mai/Thailand, a working group was set up to systematically process the subject of "participation" in rural development. The basic work was completed in a further workshop held in Cebu/Philippines, at the beginning of 1990.

An attempt is made to explain the principles of participative cooperation using actual examples from every-day project work. Although the publication mainly draws on the experiences of our Asian and German colleagues from the countries of South and Southeast Asia, it is nevertheless highly significant for all other cultural circles. We are convinced that the contents will interest both experts in development cooperation, and politicians.

The brochure is drawn up in English as it was prepared by English-speaking authors. We would like to thank our Asian colleagues and head-office and field staff from the GTZ and the BMZ once again for working on this joint publication, which provides us with renewed evidence of the need and potentials for close cooperation between partners from developing countries and industrial nations and between colleagues from different institutions.

Dr. de Haas  
BMZ

Dr. H. Meyer-Rühen  
GTZ

# How to use this publication

Where there is no participation... Insights, Strategies, Case Studies, "Do's and Don'ts" in Regional Rural Development (RRD), Asia

- Insights** into what happens to projects that disregard people's participation in the development process and into the difficult undertaking of promoting just such a participatory development process;
- Strategies** for promoting participatory approaches to development within the GTZ framework;
- Case Studies** to learn from, giving both successful and not quite so successful examples of approaches to participatory development in programmes supported by the GTZ in Asia;
- "Do's and Don'ts"** comprising practical hints for whoever wants to try out participatory approaches within the GTZ framework - hints which are not to be mistaken for recipes;
- Chapter 1** deals with the basics:
- the principles of RRD programmes,
  - the understanding of "participation" underlying the subsequent chapters,
  - the reasons for people's participation being a must in a sustainable development process.
- Chapter 2** outlines policies and strategies promoting participatory approaches to RRD
- in country programming,
  - during programme appraisal, and
  - all through the project cycle; as well as conditions required, such as appropriate frame conditions and potentials for human resource development.
- Chapter 3** explains the role of an RRD project within the institutional setup in the partner country and shows how the RRD project staff can work towards a participatory management of RRD programmes in
- planning,
  - monitoring and evaluation,
  - budgeting and funding.

- Chapter 4** shows what the RRD project staff can do in order to involve beneficiary groups of the poor in the development process:
- conduct participatory action research,
  - build up their self-confidence and trust,
  - promote organizational development at all levels,
  - allow the beneficiaries to share financial responsibilities.
- Chapter 5** points out obstacles to participatory RRD programmes, and still insists that the poor can and must be effectively involved in the development process.
- If you think this is too much to read, please consider**
- that almost half of the following pages are taken up by case-studies;
  - that the publication is meant for both general reading and specific reference made easy by an index;
  - that participation as a principle to act upon touches very many aspects of development cooperation; some of these have already been cut to a minimum, e.g. human resource development, the role of women in regional rural development, and rural finance, with a view to separate (GTZ-)publications listed under references;
  - the supreme importance of the subject.

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# 1. The Basics: Regional Rural Development (RRD) not for but with People

"It is important that the beneficiary groups do not simply become the recipients of programme services of a dominantly material technical and financial nature. They must no longer be considered simply as objects of, or as the persons affected by, a development strategy prescribed 'from outside' or 'from above'. They must be regarded as responsible individuals..."<sup>1</sup>

The concept of RRD programmes as developed by GTZ in the 1980ies is being changed as further experiences have been gathered, new ideas arisen; but the four guiding principles underlying such programmes<sup>2</sup> have basically remained the same:

**poverty alleviation:**

the focus is on those parts of the population that are caught in a continued process of impoverishment (the poor);

**target group orientation:**

support and assistance are to be based on the requirements, available resources, and freedom of action of the defined social groups;

**sustainability:**

development activities shall be conceived in such a manner that the intended regional development process will continue after external support has been withdrawn (continuity of effects);

**participation:**

a process of communication and action shall be instigated to enable all participants in the development process to articulate their interests and to share in its realization (benefits and costs).

These four principles are closely interrelated: any development activities which are to be sustainable economically, institutionally or environmentally, for example, depend upon people's participation in the development process, on the social acceptance of measures planned and implemented. Only if people conceive development programmes and activities as reflecting their own interests are they

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<sup>1</sup> GTZ, Regional Rural Development. Guiding Principles. Eschborn 1984, p.36f.

<sup>2</sup> cf. *ibid*, pp. 36-42.

willing to become involved, to attend to their rights and duties, to commit their own resources.

"... but farmers are not taking advantage of this service -why?" A classical case of missing participation from Indonesia<sup>3</sup>

The key element in the agricultural extension service is the establishment and effective management of strategically placed Rural Extension Centers, with at least two experienced field extension officers and a number of field extension workers. The latter practice the training and visit system, distributing technology information among contact farmers, "hoping" that these, again, will spread the acquired information to their group members.

Some statistical facts on the programme's "achievements": In 1972, the average paddy rice harvested for the province was 1.5 t/ha; ten field extension workers worked with 15 recognized farmer groups. In 1989, the average harvest was 2.0 t/ha; 579 field extension workers worked with 2022 contact farmers/groups. The main problem was the general lack of willingness on the farmers' part to participate in the programme, but why was this so? In retrospect, it appears that

- the farmers lacked confidence in the advice of the mostly young and inexperienced field extension workers freshly graduated from an agricultural senior high school;
- lacking means of transport; it was not easy for the extension workers to regularly visit a large number of the widely scattered farms;
- the programme, like any other and especially governmental programmes, required certain planning deadlines to be maintained. Communication between the extension worker and the contact farmers being difficult to keep up, the extension worker, coming under pressure from above, tended to "guess-estimate" requirements, bypassing discussions with the farmers he or she was supposed to serve;
- the farmers lacked (spare) capital to risk on new technologies.

Experiences with integrated rural development projects all over the world show that a root cause of poor performances is the lack of participation by what is usually referred to as the "target population" or "target groups" -"poor performance" meaning that the projects failed to have a sufficiently broad and sustainable impact.

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<sup>3</sup> Abstract from B.Baraq, D.Boyce, E.Mugnidin, "The Case of Missing Participation in the Indonesia Mass Guidance of Farmers (BIMAS) Programme in the Province of East Kalimantan". Paper submitted to the "Workshop on Participatory Approaches in Regional Rural Development Programmes in the Asian Region", Cebu City, Philippines, March 1990 (subsequently referred to as "Philippines Workshop").

## "Unfortunately, the success faded..." in ADP, Indonesia<sup>4</sup>

The Area Development Project (ADP) West Pasaman/Indonesia is jointly planned and implemented by GTZ and the Directorate General for Regional Development in the Indonesian Home Affairs Ministry. The Provincial Development Planning Board has been given responsibility for the project, covering a region of over 4,000 sq.km located on the west coast of Sumatra, since 1980. To convert grasslands generally considered unusable waste land, to uses other than cattle grazing, ADP established a demonstration plot where 24 families from among the target group of shifting cultivators were gathered to be turned into permanent dryland cultivators.

They started to grow rice, vegetables and rubber. The project supported them by providing an electric fence against wild boars. The plot was envisaged to be very successful, and important visitors such as "big shots" from GTZ were taken there to see it.

Unfortunately, within a couple of years the success faded, and most of the farmers returned to their original farming habits. It became apparent that by only pursuing the objective of protecting the environment and better using the natural potential, one could not influence the farmers on a sustained basis....

To achieve participation from the beneficiary groups, especially the poor farmer, there has to be a prospect of quick returns which directly benefit his daily life.... An objective not too distant from the reality of his daily life will be more easily understood and accepted....

A joint problem analysis and involvement in the planning are essential. The project team should focus on showing the farmers how to identify the problems and indicate ways for the farmers to themselves tackle these problems.

While such insights are reflected in a lot of rhetoric on "participation", the actual level of local participation in decisionmaking, implementation, benefit sharing, and evaluation in RRD programmes is far from being satisfactory. "Top down" planned projects and blueprints for development to be implemented by organizations, which often are alien to the area and to people living there, still abound. Even the terminology addressing "target groups", instead of simply talking about "people in poverty" or "small farmers", is revealingly top down. Evidently, it is derived from the military sector - implying that rural development is to be regarded as a battlefield!? In order to avoid the terms "target group" and the rather unspecific "people in poverty" or "small farmers", in the following, for lack of a better term, "beneficiaries" or "beneficiary groups" will be used.

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<sup>4</sup> E.D.Pamuncak, G.Roelcke, "Aspects of Participation in a Regional Development Activity in the Area Development Project West Pasaman, Indonesia". Paper submitted to the Philippines Workshop. Padang, 1990, pp.2,9f.

## 1.1 "Participation": From Collaboration in Programmes to Political Empowerment of the Poor

The term "participation" is used in many ways, meaning different things to different people and agencies. Its meaning ranges<sup>5</sup>

### from

collaboration in project or programme implementation:

Participation shall encourage rural people to collaborate with programmes, that have already been planned without any committing consultations with the beneficiary groups.

Participation shall bring about active community involvement in local level projects to assure the survival of a project, which cannot be indefinitely supported from outside

### to

processes of political empowerment of the hitherto inarticulate:

Participation is a process by which the hitherto powerless rural poor are economically and politically empowered.

Participation refers to initiatives facilitating the formation of people's organizations at local levels, by which it is supposed that poor people will again have a say in local development efforts.

Most commonly, participation refers to people's voluntary contributions to projects in the form of labour, cash or kind. While this may be an important aspect of participation, the understanding of the term underlying this paper refers not only to the beneficiaries' duties but also to their rights:

participation means co-determination and power sharing throughout the RRD programme cycle. More specifically, it relates to participation in

- problem identification and ranking
- analysis of potentials
- decision-making
- planning
- implementation, including mobilization of resources
- benefit sharing
- monitoring and evaluation

of RRD programmes."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> J.Best, P.Oakley (eds.): "Rules to be rewritten?" Reading Rural Development Communications, 03/1987.

<sup>6</sup> J.M.Cohen, N.Uphoff: "Participation's Place in Rural Development: Seeking Clarity

Since RRD programmes are understood to be part of a wider development process, the above mentioned participation in such programmes may be regarded as steps towards political and economical empowerment of hitherto inarticulate people living in poverty.

## 1.2 The Poor": Who is Meant?

Poverty means deprivation, and deprivation leads to further deprivation: this is the vicious circle of poverty.

Participation means partaking in both rights and duties relating to the development process. It means action, which always needs resources - if only time and energy to attend a meeting. True, sometimes even sparing this little may unduly add to the strain suffered by "the poorest of the poor".

These, indeed, are hard to reach by any development programme.

If then, the "poorest of the poor" means the handicapped, the old, the dying, those who have no resources left whatsoever -yes, these are impossible to reach by RRD programmes because such programmes depend on people's resources; these people must come under the care of individual or collective social security systems, however organized.

The point is, that as long as people have some resources left they may be "reached" by an RRD programme, i.e. be in a position to take advantage of whatever support the programme may offer.

### Understanding Socio-Economic Disparities in CUP, Philippines<sup>7</sup>

The Philippine-German Cebu Upland Project is an integrated area development project undertaken to improve the living standard of marginal and small farmers in the upland barangays of Cebu.

At project start in 1986, the basic understanding was that all inhabitants of the southern Cebu uplands could be considered "poor", thus constituting the "target population". Consequently, most of the project activities in three pilot barangays were directed towards the entire community.

However, we gradually realized that the relatively better-off families were the ones mostly making use of the project offers. Even those three isolated pilot barangays were characterized by socio-economic disparities inhibiting the majority of "poorer" people to participate in and benefit from project activities. To learn and further understand about these disparities within the communities

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through Specificity". In: World Development, Vol 8. 1980, pp.213-235.

<sup>7</sup> E.Canoog, U.Kievelitz, V.Steigerwald: "Social Stratification Surveys: A Means to Achieve Participation, Poverty Alleviation and Target Group Orientation". Paper submitted to the Philippines Workshop. Cebu City, March 1990, pp.2f



became imperative. During 1989, CUP embarked on a series of social stratification surveys.

Social disparities are caused by unequal distribution of resources. Since in most societies it is more difficult for women than for men to gain access to resources, women make up the larger proportion of the impoverished. This must be taken into account when elaborating a development programme which is to serve the poor. The argument is that differing approaches, policies, projects and instruments are needed to reach different social strata of the population, of women and men, to promote their participation in the development process.<sup>8</sup>

### **1.3 Past: Failures - Future Chances: Some Experiences Concerning the Promotion of People's Participation**

Of course, the idea of promoting people's participation in the development process is far from being new. The most prominent participatory movements dominating agriculture and rural development thinking at various times over the last three decades were "rural cooperatives", "animation rurale", and "community development". In general, however, they have not succeeded in initiating self-sustaining development processes, in bringing the majority of rural people into the mainstream of social and economic development.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> The promotion of women has a position of its own within the RRD concept. The poorer the beneficiary population, the more important becomes the role of women in the programme which is to ease her work as mother and housewife, improve her productive capacities and capabilities, and to increase her social self-determination and political participation. For a detailed analysis of possibilities to address women within an RRD programme see R.M.Schneider, W.Schneider, *Frauenförderung in der ländlichen Entwicklung: ein Orientierungsrahmen*. GTZ Eschborn 1989.

<sup>9</sup> "The observed results of these programmes (i.e. rural development programmes in Pakistan) are that their efforts have reached mostly the few well-to-do, progressive and influential people who have generally occupied the key positions in different organizations and received all the benefits. The majority has remained outside the orbit of the organized effort and, hence, rarely has this majority participated in the planning and management processes. People's participation has also remained limited to one or a few aspects ...". M.Khan, "Problems of Rural Pakistan". In: Pakistan Academy for Rural Development (PARD) 1986, Reading Material for Training Workshop on Local Level Development Planning.

These movement's failed mainly because<sup>10</sup>

- they became vehicles to promote government- policies rather than instruments to build up self-help capacities and strengthen the self-organizing capabilities of rural people living in poverty;
- they stressed social services rather than enhanced productivity by augmenting productive investments;
- programmes were often technically inappropriate in view of the prevailing resource endowment and social environment;
- there was too much pressure on persons implementing programmes to achieve visible results; consequently, they relied heavily on responsive local elites instead of trying to integrate marginalized and poverty groups;
- they were mostly concerned with "social engineering" within villages, not tackling the structural problems of rural society.

Although development attitudes are changing, development planners and implementing persons, often unconsciously, still tend to fit people to projects rather than "fitting projects to people"<sup>11</sup>. Especially government-to-government projects (official bilateral projects) suffer from a paternalistic, often bureaucratic approach to development. Given the large amounts of money involved in many development projects, one can partially understand that donor agencies and recipient governments tend to support a blueprint rather than a process approach, because this seems to speed things up and to reduce the risk of wasting money in unprofitable ways and enterprises.<sup>12</sup>

However, top-down planning leads to coercion, which in turn results either in local passivity or even active resistance to the development envisaged; it is, in other words, counteractive to participation and, hence, to the promotion of self-sustaining development processes. There is convincing evidence that"<sup>13</sup>

- poor people are able to make economically rational decisions in the context of their own resource and social environment; they may, however, lack innovative technological know-how;
- people are best motivated to mobilize and organize themselves around problems which concern them directly, and around activities promising quick returns on investments;

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<sup>10</sup> D.D.Gow, J.Vansant: "Beyond the Rhetoric of Rural Development Participation: How can it be done?" In: World Development, Vol 11. 1985, pp.427-446.

<sup>11</sup> N.Uphoff: "Fitting projects to people". In: M.M.Cernea (ed.). Putting People First: Sociological Variables in Rural Development. New York 1985, pp.359-395.

<sup>12</sup> N.Uphoff, op. cit., p.5.

<sup>13</sup> D.D.Gow, J.Vansant, op. cit

- voluntary local contributions of labour, material and also money - if the economic situation at all allows - to a local project are necessary for creating a social environment where self-reliance is stimulated and confidence in individual as well as in group abilities reinforced;
- self-sustaining development demands local control over programme or project funds, especially over the distribution of benefits accruing from development activities.

## **1.4 "Development Cooperation": From Physical Objectives to Social Processes**

When talking about "development cooperation", most people think of the achievement of certain physical objectives: new water taps have been installed to improve the supply of drinking water, new health stations have been built, and so on. Certain technical problems have to be overcome, if needs be, with foreign assistance.

Experience in some thirty years of development cooperation, however, has shown that such a mere technical understanding of development falls short of addressing the problems encountered by our partner countries. The term "Technical Cooperation" has remained to describe the work done by GTZ but its meaning has changed considerably: it does not primarily mean identifying and solving technical problems but supporting people concerned by such problems to attack these themselves. Thus, development cooperation aims at mobilizing people's technical, economic, organizational and financial knowledge and skills, at transferring such knowledge and skills, and at improving the conditions for applying them.

Such an understanding of development cooperation turns people's participation in RRD (programmes) into a matter of supreme concern. It is based on the following insights:

- Decentralization, i.e. local control, is the key to any strategy designed to encourage participation.  
→ "See chapter 2: Technical Assistance Policy Promoting Participatory Development Strategies.
- Participation is a social process. Projects cannot be concerned only with fixed quantifiable physical objectives; they must aim at flexible forms of project organization to do justice to the process nature of development, which relates to the potential and the abilities of the beneficiary groups.  
→ See chapter 3: Participatory Programme Management.

- Participation needs to be institutionalized. The project shall assist beneficiary groups to form viable organizations in order to sustain participation in the development process.
  - Beneficiary groups and their organizations or associations need to be self-reliant. Projects should do their best to reduce dependencies and promote independence without, however, cutting useful reciprocal relations unless viable alternatives can be established. Promotion of independence needs people's commitment, implying that subsidies be used sparsely in order to refrain from creating new dependencies.
  - Independence, among other things, means transfer of means: without assured access to resources, "participation" will remain an empty promise. Projects should try to influence the budgetary system towards allowing such resource transfers.
  - Independence also means latitude for autonomous decision-making and acting. Projects shall encourage beneficiary groups to plan and implement, monitor and evaluate initiatives of their own. The projects' role is that of a catalyst.
- "See chapters 3 and chapter 4: Ways and Means of Involving Beneficiary Groups of the Poor in the Development Process.

## 2. Technical Assistance Policy Promoting Participatory Development Strategies

This chapter outlines policies and strategies promoting participatory approaches to RRD in country programming, during programme appraisal, and all through the project cycle. For those policies and strategies to become active, however, appropriate frame conditions and potentials for human resource development are needed.

### 2.1 Country Programming

The objective of country programming is to obtain a more comprehensive view of a country's development problems and potential. This then serves as a basis for the design of programmes and projects which are to interrelate and complement each other, thus achieving a maximum impact on the envisaged development process. Country programming forms the basis for a regular review of cooperation policies, in the light of medium term priorities and long term perspectives.

The position of the partner government in country programming is generally determined by the national development plans setting physical targets; donor's contributions in the form of loans and grants, projects and programmes are to be arranged so as to contribute to target fulfilment. In Germany, the responsibility for country programming lies with the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation (BMZ). The BMZ position is determined by the Development Policy Guidelines.<sup>14</sup> One of its key-ideas is the promotion of decentralization, i.e. of local control over political power and economic resources as the basis to any strategy designed to encourage participation.

The Germans use various complementary instruments in country programming, e.g. BMZ enters into consultations and negotiations with the government of the partner country, and it initiates identification missions which eventually lead to country assistance papers. However, country programming up to now has not been done in a very systematic manner, even though actual commitments are based upon politically determined country quotas. Recently, discussions on aid policy started stressing commensurate political and economic structures as prerequisites

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<sup>14</sup> BMZ, Development Policy Guidelines. Bonn 1986.

for development cooperation. Among those, "participation" and "latitude for local self government" rank high.

No matter which specific instrument or technique is used for programming the development cooperation with a recipient country, local expertise is to be mobilized and used to a larger extent than hitherto. The question actually is whether it is necessary at all to have foreign experts flown in for the task or country programming: since GTZ, Kreditanstalt fuer Wiederaufbau (KfW) and other German development organizations are active already in so many developing countries the programming for these might be done from within, i.e. by local professionals and foreign experts working in the respective country, rather than from without.

## **2.2 Programme Appraisal**

### **2.2.1 Project Request**

The project cycle starts with an idea presented as a request for support by the government of a partner country to BMZ, channelled via the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in the respective partner country. All project ideas have to be screened with regard to the needs, demands and potential of people concerned and their organizations. They need to be substantiated with information to be collected and documented by

- local professionals fostering contact with potential beneficiary groups,
- GTZ-Project Administration Services (PAS), and
- foreign experts working in the country.

The information about, for example, the intended beneficiaries, about relevant aspects of the partner country's political and social system, about development problems and potentials of the proposed project area is then transferred to the GTZ-head-office in Germany where a first project planning workshop (Objectives-Oriented Project Planning: ZOPP I or "Pre-ZOPP") is conducted.

The Pre-ZOPP is usually done without any representation from the partner country - but this need not be so.

#### **"Do's and Don'ts"**

A resource person from the partner country should be involved in the Pre-ZOPP. This person could be nominated by the partner government, in close cooperation with the German Embassy, with projects already operating, or the GTZ-PAS.

At this stage, it might not yet be known which governmental organization or department will become responsible for planning and implementing the potential RRD-programme, and it is not advisable to push the question of who will be the lead agency so as not to predetermine the direction of the programme. Thus, a somewhat neutral resource person from the partner country could be selected from among potential governmental partners for cooperation, free-lance consultants or the staff of other projects.

This first: planning workshop is used to prepare a preliminary commentary to BMZ with recommendations for future procedure, including the proposal of potential actors both at GTZ and in the partner country, and an offer for the appraisal of the potential project. The decision is with BMZ.

## **2.2.2 Scenario for a Participatory Appraisal**

### **Proceedings of a Conventional Appraisal, Comprising a Number of "Don'ts"**

The GTZ-Department for Planning and Development recruits a number of consultants and defines their Terms of Reference (ToR) within the frame of a second planning workshop (ZOPP II or "Appraisal-ZOPP"). GTZ-head-office then informs the partner institution in the developing country about the arrival of the appraisal mission, asking them to nominate suitable local professionals to participate in the appraisal.

One or two staff members of this agency accompany the expatriate consultants on a "field trip" to the proposed project area, where the mission meets with local representatives of political and administrative line agencies and possibly, but not necessarily, members of the beneficiary population. The trip is concluded by the presentation of the mission's preliminary findings to the District Governor or Commissioner and his staff, who as a rule agree because the intended project has been proposed by central level agencies anyway.

On their return to the capital, the predominantly foreign mission prepares the appraisal report to be presented within the frame of a third planning workshop, the "Partner-ZOPP". Usually, the partner country is represented only by the agency which initially requested the bilateral cooperation hopefully, its representation is not be restricted to the national level but includes representatives from the regional or provincial levels. However given the hierarchical problems, the latter often restrain themselves from giving critical remarks. Besides, they are often not yet familiar with the ZOPP planning method; they are confronted not only with appraisal findings to be digested, but also with a new planning tool - which makes it difficult for them to react at all.

The presentation meeting concludes with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding considered to be the basis for the planning of the future project. GTZ-head-office comments the appraisal report for the BMZ, recommending to start a programme with a preceding "orientation phase", describing how to do it, or submitting a tender. If the BMZ considers the programme eligible for promotion, a project agreement is prepared.

Such an appraisal can hardly provide a solid basis for a programme which is to help people improve their problem-solving capacities. An "orientation phase" will be designed on the basis of the appraisal, and the people whom the programme is supposed to support should have a say in this already.

### **Preparatory Steps for a Participatory Appraisal**

In order to improve the participatory quality of the appraisal, a draft of the ToR for the appraisers might be prepared during the Appraisal-ZOPP (ZOPP 2) at GTZ-head-office, and then be refined in the partner country by

- representatives from this country, including local professionals
- an RRD specialist from the GTZ-Planning and Development Department,
- the desk officer from the GTZ-Regional Department,
- the GTZ-PAS, and, of course,
- the appraisers.

The team spirit of the local and foreign appraisers will be strengthened if they are included in such an extended ZOPP II conducted in the partner country before they leave together for the field; the GTZ-PAS might be asked for logistical support. A copy of the ToR defining the tasks of the appraisal mission should be made available to all parties involved in the identification process of the envisaged RRD programme.

Since RRD programmes aim at involving people in the development process, the ToR for RRD appraisers usually comprise the identification of beneficiary groups and the assessment of their needs and potential. Experience shows, however, that even if GTZ-PAS provides data on the region's socio-economic conditions, such an assessment cannot be done during four weeks, the time usually allotted to the appraisal mission.

### **"Do's and Don'ts"**

One solution to this problem lies in the preparation of the appraisal: prior to the appraisal mission a two-member team to be hired by GTZ, preferably one local and one foreign consultant, could be sent to the envisaged project area in order to



establish contact with the beneficiary population. Upon arrival of the main group, this "vanguard" unit can direct the other members and introduce them to the relevant social groups identified. The vanguard unit must be given enough time for a thorough preparation of the appraisal.

### **Sectors to be Appraised**

Roughly, it is the appraisers' task to

- assess the feasibility of implementing of an RRD programme under the given frame conditions, including findings on the beneficiary population and its perceptions,
- design a framework for planning an orientation phase,
- analyze the existing institutional structure and propose a suitable one for the future programme - independently of who initially put forward the request for support,
- estimate the material and manpower inputs to be expected from the partner country and from GTZ for the orientation phase and, roughly and preliminarily, for an implementation phase.

With regard to approaches promoting people's participation in the development process, key sectors to be appraised should comprise

- interests and procedures of existing institutions, organizations, and groupings: governmental and non-governmental, public and private, formal and informal;
- capacities and capabilities of potential project implementing agencies, of bilateral and multilateral organizations active in the area, of the private sector, of organizations and groupings formed by the beneficiary population, regarding their participation in the programme;
- the potential for human resource development, i.e. for realizing the abilities and capabilities embodied in people both individually and collectively;
- formal and informal communication links.

Unfortunately, the analysis and assessment of the organizational set-up of the future project are often neglected, maybe because they are time-consuming and it is just so much easier to obtain technical data, certainly because they affect the choice of a suitable coordinating agency for the programme - a touchy matter with political implications. Still, it needs to be done, and done thoroughly, because the organizational set-up has a deciding influence on the participatory nature of the future programme (see chapter 3.1.2).

Criteria indicating the suitability of such an agency are

- professional competence regarding RRD, readiness to accept RRD concept and principles, acknowledged conceptual lead role;
- sectoral versatility;

- acknowledged mandate to coordinate development- measures (not necessarily including the right to give orders);
- freedom and flexibility to communicate and cooperate directly with the beneficiary population and other development agents involved;
- exemption from routine implementation of development measures;
- registration as a body corporate;
- representation of a politically viable body with a broad and secure basis.<sup>15</sup>

Not all of these criteria have to be fulfilled even before project start, some aspects may have to be developed during the orientation phase ("promotion of development institutions").

### "Do's and Don'ts"

It might be a good idea for the appraisal team to start compiling an inventory of non-governmental organizations and self-help groups, working on regional and local level, with a critical check on their organizational structure regarding participation. This inventory will have to be continually updated during the orientation phase and dissemination phase.

Obviously, to those four key sectors the participation of local consultants in the appraisal team is an absolute necessity.

### **The Appraisal Team**

The GTZ-PAS could assist in selecting qualified local candidates free to work in the appraisal team on a full-time basis, and in briefing them with regard to the RRD concept and ZOPP procedures. In countries without a GTZ-PAS, the German Embassy and the staff of on-going GTZ-sponsored projects could provide assistance.

The foreign consultants will be selected by the GTZ-Planning and Development Department, preferably from a pool of field-experienced RRD experts.

The "curricula vitae" of all candidates should be endorsed by both GTZ and the Foreign Aid Division of the partner country or a similar coordinating agency.

Minimum qualifications for the group of consultants to be nominated are - knowledge and acceptance of the concept of RRD, including related instruments such as ZOPP;

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<sup>15</sup> See GTZ, "Träger von LRE-Projekten - Entwurf zu 'LRE aktuelle', in Materialien zum LRE Workshop in Bolivien. Eschborn 1990, p. 36 (translation by editor)

- in-depth knowledge of the partner country and the selected programme region, especially with regard to political and social structures;
- ability to communicate and interact with representatives of partner institutions and beneficiary groups.

The latter applies especially to the two consultants preparing the appraisal mission in the field: they must be particularly sensitive to people and their problems. Their professional background may be rural sociology, human communication, social geography or anthropology.

At least one of the consultants must be able to analyze the partner country's administration and its procedures, especially in regard to their scope for participatory approaches to development, and suggest an institutional set-up for the programme.

Since RRD programmes deal with rural areas, one of the appraisers should have experiences in agro-sylvo-pastoral systems. This person analyses the management of natural resources regarding participatory approaches to environmental protection and conservation.

One team member should be experienced in the appraisal of problems affecting rural women who otherwise tend to be subsumed under "poor farmers", regardless of their special potential and problems.

This team member should preferably be a woman because in many societies a man's access to women's groups is restricted while female appraisers (or project staff) mostly are admitted to both male and female groups. A purely male appraisal team all too often misses out on data and information about the women's situation relevant as a basis for women's development: such is the experience with, for example, Rapid Rural Appraisals.

### **From "Rapid Rural Appraisal" to "Participatory Rural Appraisal"**

"Rapid Rural Appraisal" (RRA) means a scale of techniques ranging somewhere between a superficial "rural development tourism" producing arbitrary results and full-scale, academically pure but expensive and time consuming research. Such techniques include "searching for and using existing information; identifying and learning from key-informants - social anthropologists, social workers, group leaders, university students doing field research, and so on; direct observation and asking questions about what is seen; guided interviews; and group interviews with selected groups"<sup>16</sup> as well as "DIY (do-it-yourself, taking part in activities), time

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<sup>16</sup> R. Chambers, *Rural Development, Putting the Last First*. London 1983, p. 200

lines (chronologies of events), stories, portraits and case studies, rapid report writing in the field".<sup>17</sup>

While RRA is used for extracting information, Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) goes one step further in letting people themselves investigate, present and analyze information "owned" by themselves, and identify priorities.

### "Do's and "Don'ts"

"With a questionnaire survey, information is transferred from the words of the person interviewed to the paper of the questionnaire schedule where it becomes a possession of the interviewer.... In contrast, with visual sharing of a map, model, diagram, or units (stones, seeds, small fruits etc.) used for quantification, all can see, point to, discuss, manipulate and alter physical objects or representations. The learning is progressive. The information is visible and public, owned and verified by participants.... To date, rural people have been found to have a much greater ability to create, understand and use diagrams and models than most outsiders are inclined to suppose"<sup>18</sup>

The idea of a participatory appraisal is to recognize the future beneficiaries, their organizations and representatives as partners in the development process. For this to come true, sufficient time to "listen to people" is needed: the first R in Rapid Rural Appraisal could better stand for Relaxed Rural Appraisal.

The pre-mission shall make sure that the representatives of, say, rural women's associations, religious leaders, youth clubs etc. who are to be met by the mission are reliable and not dominated by the opinions of powerful individuals.

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<sup>17</sup> R.Chambers, "Rapid and Participatory Rural Appraisal". Working paper, Hyderabad, Jan. 1990. Chambers quotes a number of examples where RRA methods have been used to identify priorities for agricultural research or key indicators for assessing poverty and wealth, finally saying, "The opportunity presented by RRA is, by avoiding lengthy methods, so to save and budget time that the poor are let in, as individuals and as families, to be learnt from and understood in more depth. If the tyranny of quantification can be held in check, there is more time to find out about relationships and processes. Techniques of RRA, carefully developed and used, can raise awareness and understanding of rural poverty, and improve actions to attack it." R. Chambers, Rural Development, op.cit., p.200.

<sup>18</sup> R.Chambers, "Rapid and Participatory Rural Appraisal", op.cit.

## "Do's and Don'ts"

This approach needs empathy - expressed, for example, in the choice of socially adequate means of travelling - and a lot of time. Time frames should be calculated accordingly, giving the pre-mission three to four months in the field before the arrival of the other mission members.

**The pre-mission might also mobilize potential services of NGOs operating in the area and learn about their strategies so as to avoid the planning of conflicting strategies in one area, such as giving grants to farmers for buying cattle when other organizations are giving loans for the same purpose.**

Discussing problems and solutions:

A preparatory workshop for GDP, Nepal<sup>19</sup>

The workshop, organized by the District Government Secretariat and sponsored by the GTZ, formally initiated the preparation of the Gorkha District Project (GDP), analyzing rural development needs and attempting to comprehend the capacities - organizational, human and natural resources - available to locally carry out activities satisfying these needs. Twenty-four representatives from the Gorkha District, such as politicians from the local and the national level, line agencies, the Women's and the Peasant's Organizations, from the Regional Planning Commission Directorate, from the Ministries of Finance and of Local Development, from donor-assisted projects including the neighbouring Dhading District Project (DDP) supported by the GTZ - those 24 participants had discussions in the Nepali language, focussing on

1. the definition of "development", the analysis of problems, of strengths and weaknesses in existing institutions and organizations, and on proposals for "solutions";
2. general GTZ guidelines for planning and implementing rural development projects such as the DDP.

### **Development Problems and Solutions**

Nine major problems and potential solutions were identified, for example

Problem: lack of programmes with specific objectives

Solutions: identification of people's needs; preparation of village profile data; involvement of local people in planning; coordination of different development activities. Problem: minimal people's participation

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<sup>19</sup> Abstract from a report by N.K.Rai, "Workshop on the Proposed Gorkha Development Project", held between March 22-24, 1989 at Pokharithok, Gorkha, Nepal.

**Solutions:** create awareness among people for local development; planning according to people's priorities; give training on implementation procedures; mobilization of local human and natural resources; adoption of effective methods to mobilize people's participation.

**Problem:** minimal mobilization of local resources

**Solutions:** inventory of locally available resources; rural electrification for the establishment of local industries; semi-processing of local products; promotion of small-scale industries based on local raw materials; training on appropriate technology to harness local resources.

Other problems and solutions discussed included underemployment in villages, the lack of land ownership among the poor, absence of marketing facilities for local commodities, the low status of women, the rapid population growth.

### **Development Agents**

Five primary development agents and their potential role in the rural development efforts were identified: the political institutions and organizations; the line agencies; external donor organizations; farmers and their associations; teachers and women.

### **GTZ will extend support to GDP with**

- a long-term plan that aims at self-sustaining and sustainable rural development;
- a plan realistically reflecting local development priorities and capacities, complementing rather than contesting running development efforts assisted by the government and foreign donors;
- a principle strategy to incorporate decentralization in organizing people into groups and to mobilize internal resources for programme planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation;
- the primary objective of having development benefits shared by all people, including women.

### **Sharing with the people**

The results of the workshop, which are to form the basis for the planned GDP approach, were presented to a wider audience of Gorkha people who were invited to comment and correct them.

### **Assessing Appraisal Results**

During ZOPP III ("Partner-ZOPP") the major conclusions and recommendations of the appraisal report are analyzed and processed into a project design for the orientation phase of an RRD programme as well as a rough design and cost-estimate for later project phases. The beneficiary groups, project executing agencies, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Planning and Development, local

political and administrative bodies as well as NGOs should all be represented - this may serve as an indicator as to how well the mission succeeded in contacting various groups and agencies and catching their interest regarding the future RRD programme.

### "Do's and Don'ts"

If the cultural tradition does not allow an open exchange of ideas between various hierarchical levels, the partner-ZOPP can be split into two steps. An initial workshop; at regional or district level with representatives up to the Governor (District Commissioner) could be supplemented by a second workshop with Government Agency personnel and the GTZ country desk officer at national level.

The results of the appraisal mission and the partner-ZOPP will flow into a "memorandum of understanding" summarizing the design of an orientation phase. This will serve as a basis for drafting the government-to-government agreement (verbal note, project agreement) regarding the forthcoming RRD programme. The agreement should specifically refer to the prevailing conditions in the partner country regarding the feasibility of a participatory RRD programme.

## **2.3 Throughout the Project Cycle: Same Principles, No Recipes**

Participatory acting is conceived of as people's willingness and capability to organize into groups and associations; to enter into a dialogue with each other, with representatives from line agencies, with project staff; to express their thoughts, to define their needs, to formulate demands; to share their understanding of finances and kind; to take decisions and responsibility for their actions.

How can we find out whether people want to become involved in this way?

### "Do's and Don'ts"

Initially, a comprehensive socio-institutional and socio-economic analysis, commissioned to an interdisciplinary team, should be undertaken. The commitment of the project staff to the report, reflected, for example, in their

making use of the information gathered, might be increased by involving as many project staff members as possible in the interdisciplinary team. This is reasonable also in view of project experiences, information and observations reflecting participatory aspects which later on are to be continuously collected, compiled and analyzed by the project team in cooperation with the beneficiaries.

A member of the project team might be introduced to the programme area live with the people. His or her information may not be perfect from a methodological or scientific point of view, but it will probably be very valuable regarding potential points of conflicts, the distribution of power, communication channels, people's aspirations, problems and potentials. If, however, the beneficiary population comprises very heterogeneous groups the information from just one quarter must not be overvalued.

And how can we promote their continued involvement throughout the project cycle - and even after?

The initial analysis is important but by no means exhaustive. Project planners and implementors shall have to look continuously into the actual and potential latitude of local organizations and associations for "bottom-up" planning and implementation, regardless of the stage a project or-programme has reached:

- the orientation phase, resulting in a long-term project plan,
- the innovation phase, during which technical and institutional solutions to specific problems are identified,
- the dissemination and integration phase, resulting in beneficiary groups' and institutions' application of suggested solutions,
- the consolidation and institution development phase, during which the application of certain techniques and procedures become routine, successfully kept up without external planning and management support
- the follow up phase, resulting in financial support becoming superfluous.<sup>20</sup>

People's participation is desirable at all stages but sometimes project activities tend to overburden the poorer sections of the population. Any input (time, labour, money) asked of them may negatively affect their already low standard of living.

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<sup>20</sup> For an overview of a RRD project cycle, including the project's functions and expected results, see GTZ, "Thesen zur Weiterentwicklung des LRE-Konzepts", draft. Eschborn, June 1990, p. 13.



## "Do's and Don'ts"

Therefore, self-help potentials and constraints should be carefully - and continually - analyzed with respect to

- traditional division of work,
- gender discrimination,
- labour availability,
- cropping calendars,
- capacities for saving,
- risk-taking capacities.

In order to avoid compiling too much information which then will not be used, such analyses should be restricted to small areas where project activities are actually planned and implemented.

All principles and "Do's and Don'ts" concerning the promotion of people's participation in the development process are valid at all stages of a project or programme, although the emphasis given to a particular aspect may differ at varying times.

This means, in the final instance, that it is not possible to develop a model of a participatory pilot project during an orientation phase which can be replicated in a wider area and concern larger numbers of people during a dissemination phase. Participation is a process to be formed and gone through by individuals. Such personal experiences are difficult to convey to other people, they have to be gained individually, anew, again and again: there are no recipes.

There are no recipes, but there are organizational frameworks and programme designs (see chapter 3), there are instruments with which to stimulate and foster people's participation in the development process (see chapter 4). There are experiences to be learnt from, and, pervading all, there is the concept of Human Resource Development.

## **2.4. Pervading All: Human Resource Development (HRD)**

"... The Bundestag parties, in this resolution, make the individual the focal point of all development policy efforts of the Federal Government. The individual is not to be the object of technical assistance; rather, he should support the development process by active participation. It is only through this taking-on of responsibility that self-supporting development processes can originate, i.e. development processes

that function independently of continual governmental subsidies or the assistance of external, supporting organizations, and are adapted to the given natural, economic and ethnological conditions. They are to supply all sections of the population with the basis for dignified living conditions."<sup>21</sup>

HRD is the process of realizing the potentials embodied in people both individually and collectively. HRD programmes create and provide opportunities for people to develop and to use their potentials, the focus being on knowledge, skills, attitude, motivation and behaviour, taking into account social, cultural, economic, environmental and political factors.

HRD aims at enabling people involved in the development process - all people, ranging from officials at the BMZ through to the small farmer - to more effectively deal with these determinants of human living conditions, in accordance with the concerned people's own interests and requirements. Thus, everyone concerned in the attainment of RRD programme objectives is involved with HRD, namely the staff of projects and counterpart institutions; beneficiaries; desk officers from GTZ head-office and from the BMZ; staff from other aid agencies and project visitors; the general public, particularly school teachers, administrators and workers in non-formal education.

HRD is part of any development process reaching beyond the immediate fulfillment of mere physical targets. Consequently, its basic features must be evident throughout all RRD programme phases<sup>22</sup>, possibly - but not necessarily - in form of a project unit for "communication and training". Such a unit's fields of operation comprise project external and internal communication support, formal and non-formal education and training, personnel planning and staff development, institution development and HRD planning. However, since communication and training are an integral part of all development measures, especially in a project with little staff, the relevant tasks should be incorporated in all the planned activities of a "sectoral unit".

The "communication and training" unit's staff<sup>23</sup> - which should include at least one female member - would be broadly responsible for identifying HRD training needs, designing and conducting appropriate training programmes, providing communications support by acting as facilitators or moderators for meetings, seminars and workshops concerned, for example, with the project's management function - and with the promotion of people's participation.<sup>24</sup> What is more, it would be responsible for inducing an awareness of the importance of HRD into

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<sup>21</sup> Resolution of the Bundestag of the Federal Republic of Germany, March 5, 1982.

<sup>22</sup> For a list of check points providing guidance for the time and place of appropriate HRD activities during the RRD project cycle see D.Boyce, A.Del Vecchio, Human Resource Development: Guidelines for Regional Rural Development Programmes. GTZ Rural Development Series, Eschborn 1989, chapter 3, pp.25-28.

<sup>23</sup> For job profiles see *ibid.*, chapter 4, pp.33-57.

<sup>24</sup> For a survey of operational features of HRD in RRD see *ibid.*, chapter 3, pp.22-24; chapter 5 comprises a series of individually bound "How to ..." booklets, among those being 5.5 "How to Employ Participatory Approaches" focussing on the organization of participatory field workshops.

the partner organizations, ranging from counterpart institutions to associations of beneficiary groups, and a willingness to invest in HRD activities: only then, will a "communication and training" unit of a temporary project set-up will have sustaining effects and be in a position to confine itself to its original catalytic role (see chapter 3.1).

### 3. The Project

## Working towards Participatory Programme Management

In order to avoid confusion arising from the indiscriminate use of the terms "RRD programme" and "RRD project" let us clarify<sup>25</sup>:

RRD as a programme

means the contribution of all governmental and private actors to the economic and social development process in rural regions. This includes, of course, the implementation of measures. Responsibility for RRD programmes lies with the country's national government.

RRD as a project supported by GTZ makes a partial contribution to an RRD programme with respect to the key sectors of research and development, planning, and advisory services. As a temporary unit coming under the responsibility of a regional organizational unit with coordinating functions, it is not to implement development measures.

The goal of both programme and project is to enable the rural people, especially the poor, to sustainably improve their living conditions

- by striving for economic self-reliance based on open access to necessary information, services and markets,
- by making use of local resources in a way compatible with ecological requirements,
- by getting involved politically, shaping their own future on the basis of social justice, and to work towards frame conditions allowing them to do so.

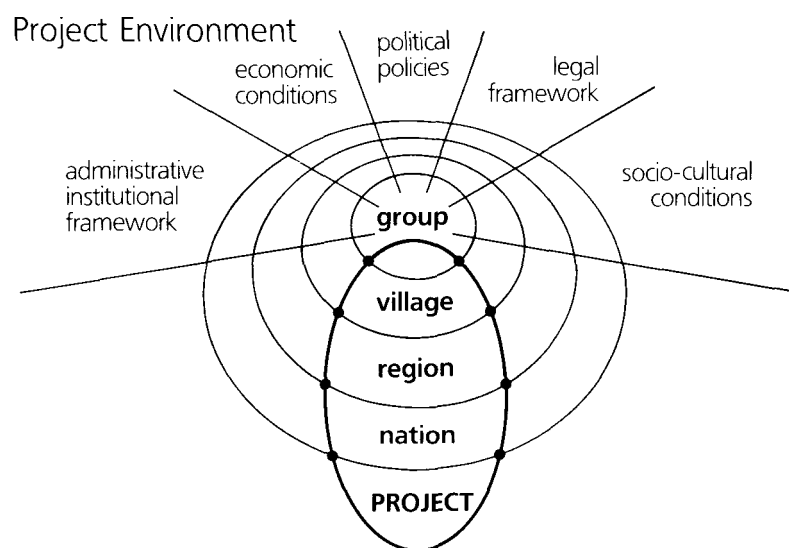
### 3.1. The Organizational Set-Up

Basically, RRD projects follow the same broad principles of management and organization as described in the GTZ-publication "Managing On-Site Project Implementation"<sup>26</sup>. In any particular case, though, the organization of a RRD project depends on the specific goals to be achieved and on the given framework conditions constituting the project environment.

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<sup>25</sup> See GTZ, "Thesen zur Weiterentwicklung-des LRE-Konzepts", op.cit., pp.11f.

<sup>26</sup> GTZ, Managing On-Site Project Implementation - A Guideline. Eschborn 1989.



### 3.1.1 The Role of an RRD Project: Catalyst, Facilitator, Mediator, Lobbyist

If a sustainable development process is to be promoted by an RRD programme the project team - meaning the local staff of the project executing agency and other (foreign) professionals - must not act in place of the beneficiary groups or the staff of line agencies but prompt the acting of those who are going to stay on after the temporary support of GTZ has phased out. The project should give subsidiary support only.

On the one hand, the project team is to strengthen the beneficiary groups of the poor, e.g. by promoting their groups and organizations and thereby increasing their bargaining power and improving their access to governmental inputs and services; on the other hand, it is to strengthen the governmental delivery and support system in becoming more responsive to the demands forwarded by the beneficiary groups.

A little piece of philosophy from CUP, Philippines<sup>27</sup>

The project should play an intermediary role by facilitating the group formation process at the local level and, at the same time, lobbying for technical and resource support by government agencies and NGOs/the private sector. By temporarily creating linkages between them, the project's two-pronged approach

<sup>27</sup> L. Manila, V. Steigerwald: Evaluation of the Cebu Upland Project (CUP), Sept.-Nov. 1988, Annex C: Aspects of organizational-institutional Development. Cebu City, Nov.1988, p.l.

will help to gradually increase local problem-solving capacities. In a mid-term perspective, with strong community-based groups and organizations on the one hand and a responsive functional support system on the other, the importance of the project's role will decrease, and its functions can be taken over by either side.

### **3.1.2 Consequences for the Project's External Set-up**

RD projects usually are part of a public sector organization which all too often is characterized by a fairly rigid top-down structure with marked hierarchical relationships. This is counteractive to the RRD-goal of promoting participatory processes; a certain latitude for flexibility in the framework is essential for an RRD programme, and it is one of the supreme tasks of the appraisal mission to find out whether this exists. The external set-up, i.e. the position of the project executing agency within the governmental network and its standing among non-governmental partners in the development process, depends to a large extent on whether the government promotes a policy of decentralization and devolution.

What if the institutional framework is not favourable to people's participation? The Kurigram Case, Bangladesh<sup>28</sup>

The "Marginal and Small Farm Systems Crop Intensification Project, Kurigram District", short: Kurigram Project, is located in the northeast of Bangladesh. The project, started in 1989, co-financed by IFAD and BMZ, is designed with the ultimate goal of slowing down the marginalization process affecting small farming households. Its more specific purposes are

- to increase on-farm yields by promoting strategies of diversification and intensification;
- to promote off-farm income generating activities; and
- to link beneficiary groups to the district's commercial banking sector.

An NGO is involved in group formation, motivation, training and a continuous process of backstopping the groups of small farming households. Most of the

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<sup>28</sup> Abstract from W.Akonda, R.F.Steurer, "Local Development Planning versus Informal Groups: The Kurigram Case". Paper submitted to the Philippines Workshop. Kurigram, 1990, pp.1-13.

groups the project intends to cooperate with have existed for several years and seem to be well qualified: there is an excellent basis for beneficiary groups' participation, taking decisions and demanding project services, communicated to the project by numerous group organizers and agricultural extension staff. Meanwhile, the Kurigram Project is trying to actively support the decentralized set-up of the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) in the planning and implementation of development activities at sub-district level, regarding this institution development process as one of its basic tasks.

### **Formal Project Implementation Unit versus Informal Beneficiary Groups**

The present organizational set-up, as per project documents and governmental instructions to the local administration, includes a Project Implementation Unit (PIU) at each of the nine sub-divisions of Kurigram District and a Project Planning Unit (PPU) at district level. The present Letter of Instruction from GoB gives the "responsibility to implement the project as per set guidelines" to the PIU. These PIUs are headed by elected chairmen of the sub-districts with a traditionally strong political, economic and administrative position, some of them having contacts reaching as far as to the capital Dhaka. Other PIU members are representatives of various institutions involved in project implementation, including NGOs, some local administrative staff, and - again as per Letter of Instruction - "representatives from the target group and three women".

However, the PIUs are dominated by very power-conscious core members against whom the farmers' and women's representatives and the beneficiary groups for various reasons are not considered to stand a chance. Thus, the grass-root environment of the project is excellent, but the institutional set-up is not at all favourable to people's participation.

### **Redefining the Rules of Cooperation**

The Kurigram project staff's idea is to redefine the PIU's role and responsibilities. On the one hand, the beneficiary groups' need to be guaranteed space and responsibility for action, protecting their independence of the local power structure. On the other hand, the local power holders must be granted a certain responsibility and executive role in overall project operations. The Kurigram management unit has prepared new Terms of Reference for the PIUs and the district-based PPU:

- instead of being responsible for project planning and implementation, the PIU should merely assist the PPU in this work. The PIU's planning tasks concern agricultural research: where to set up how many demonstration plots; training of the technical and administrative staff at sub-district level; details of marketing infrastructure; and the investment of the Sub-District Development Funds;
- while monitoring project implementation remains with the PIU its members

should acknowledge that planning and implementing development activities is to be done by the respective groups and institutions, and that the beneficiary groups are only liable to the banks: they need not submit their loan applications and investment plans to the PIU's decision.

**Such things need time...:**

Presently, the local bodies are busy with the forthcoming elections; and even when they may have agreed, GoB will still have to issue a new Letter of Instruction to the local level.

**... and should have been considered earlier,**

during programme appraisal and the first planning sessions. An institutional framework beneficial for the effective articulation of the beneficiary groups is of basic importance to the planning process of RRD programmes. Rules for participation cannot simply be fixed by Government Orders.

The project, in other words, interferes with the power structure, acting as a temporary advocate for the beneficiary groups and trying to strengthen them in their representation of interests.

The crucial question is whether the project executing agency is willing and capable to provide a decentralized organizational set-up permitting the elaboration of a system of rules and relationships generating a maximum of participation. If the appraisal shows that this is not the case, there are several options:

- Not to start a project is a rather drastic step to be seriously considered if the frame conditions clearly do not allow a participatory approach to the programme.
- The start of the project might be postponed until the project environment has become more favourable towards participatory approaches.
- The project executing agency may not be in a position to master its coordinating role right from the start of the project; the question is whether it has a potential for learning, i.e. motivated and capable staff, and latitude for pushing participatory development approaches within the given structures. Supporting the project executing agency in its learning and its pushing is part of the desired organizational development process (see chapter 2.4).
- The project might take up a position outside existing institutions.<sup>29</sup> It should not, however, be turned into a "parallel structure" competing with existing institutions by taking over routine implementation tasks and Fulfilling them,

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<sup>29</sup> GTZ, "Thesen zur Weiterentwicklung des LRE-Konzepts", op.cit., p.8. See also BMZ, Querschnittsanalyse von Projekten der "Ländlichen Regionalentwicklung". Bonn 1990, pp.63 and 69f.



possibly, more efficiently; instead, it should provide complementary functions in the fields of research and development, planning, and advisory services, acting as a kind of consulting organisation. The advantages of this approach are in the project's being free from financial bottlenecks and restrictions which may refrain the government from spending more inputs on these tasks, and in its being free to work directly with beneficiary groups and the private sector.

For the project to take over the role of a mediator between national government departments, line agencies, NGOs, beneficiary groups, local administrators and politicians, banks and other actors in the private sector, it must be accepted by the parties concerned. Only with their consent and cooperation can the project assume the part of coordinator in

- establishing and promoting lasting relationships among the major cooperating groups, agencies and institutions,
- enabling them to participate in the process of planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating, and
- promoting structures which allow the beneficiary groups of the poor to participate in the development process.

### **Potential Management Tasks of a Project with Catalytic Functions**

The following table is to be read in a zig zag from the left top down and up to one of the next columns, for example:

- "Project management involves beneficiary groups in exchanges of information by establishing contact to local leaders, ...", or
- "Project management involves line agencies in programme planning by inviting them to ZOPP workshops, arranging area consultations ..."

| Project Management involves                       | in exchanges of information by   | in programme planning by  | in monitoring + evaluating by  | in financing by  |
|---|--|---|--|--|
| beneficiary groups' associations/ representatives | establishing contact to local leaders;<br>organizing baseline and social stratification surveys;<br>organizing village meetings etc. | inviting them to ZOPP workshops:<br>introducing socio-culturally adapted ZOPP approach for operational planning   | giving them responsibility in all these tasks;<br>promoting self-monitoring of beneficiaries' organization   | promoting village saving groups etc. in order to pool resources<br>linking support to be given with local resource mobilization;<br>establishing revolving funds to be managed by beneficiary groups:<br>linking beneficiary groups to banks |
| line agencies                                     | arranging coordination meetings in a neutral environment;<br>inviting them to see beneficiary groups' development activities         | inviting them to ZOPP workshops:<br>arranging area consultations and municipal planning meetings:<br>promoting decentralized planning approach by promoting line agencies' turntable function:<br>matching top down with bottom up planning<br>intermediary level | promoting their assuming their assigned tasks;<br>promoting political decentralization:<br>establishing links between line agencies and beneficiary groups | promoting budgetary decentralization and (hidden) flexibility  |

| Project Management involves         | in exchanges of information by   | in programme planning by  | in monitoring + evaluating by  | in financing by   |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|--|---|
| banks                               | inviting them to see beneficiaries' development activities; discussing rural-poor-oriented saving and lending strategies | inviting them to ZOPP workshops   | providing incentives for establishing rural-poor-oriented saving and lending schemes   | persuading them to accept group liabilities and collaterals; persuading them to support group risk insurance, risk sharing and loan guarantee funds |
| NGOs                                | asking them to serve as an information resource base (paid services); discussing strategic alternatives                  | inviting them to ZOPP workshops; involving them in local planning tasks | cooperating with them regarding intermediary functions, e.g. group and community organizing or local level monitoring  | involving them in intermediary functions, e.g. link between beneficiaries and banks, intermediate credit agency                                     |
| other parties in the private sector | inviting them to see area potential and development activities under the programme                                       | inviting them to ZOPP workshops   | inviting them to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- invest according to spatial planning,</li> <li>- provide working places, marketing outlets</li> <li>- ensure fair profits</li> </ul> |   |

## "Do's and Don'ts"

Time spent on discussing and clarifying given conditions and expectations concerning the organizational set-up among all parties involved - beneficiary groups<sup>30</sup> project staff, governmental and private sector agencies - is well spent: it helps to avoid misunderstandings and unnecessary frictions.

### **3.1.3. Consequences for the Internal Project Management**

How can we organize such complex forms of cooperation? The crucial task lies in organizing not only the structures but also the relationships among the partners in the development process - without ever neglecting the power structure among them. The basic idea is to counterbalance "top-down" influences in order to enhance "bottom-up" approaches.

This requires

- a "process approach": how and by whom something is done is just as important as what the results are, and
- a highly flexible internal project management to cope with the fact that there is almost no direct line of command to the different actors involved: "management by persuasion".

First, the project staff needs to learn about participation, as in CBIRD, Thailand<sup>31</sup>

The NGO "Population and Community Development Association" (PDA) is the implementing agency of the CBIRD programme supported by GTZ since May 1988, "CBIRD" (Community Based Integrated Rural Development) being PDA's term for its rural development approach.

The project is managed by PDA headquarters in Bangkok; the Center Manager working in the project area of Chakkarat is supposed to take only very limited decisions. This structure reflects the typical hierarchical structure of many Thai organizations.

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<sup>30</sup> Actually, all actors concerned in the development process in some way "benefit" from a project in the above mentioned sense; nevertheless, the term will continuously be used as before, meaning the beneficiary groups of the poor, because these groups are the focus of the development efforts supported by GTZ, while the other actors are being supported in their tasks to serve these groups.

<sup>31</sup> Abstract from E.Hauser, "Local Participation in the Planning of CBIRD-Chakkarat Project". Paper submitted to the Philippines Workshop, n.p., Feb.1990, pp.3, 8f.

The idea of conducting village meetings to enhance people's participation in the programme was new to all C-BIRD colleagues except those who had been trained to moderate the meetings. Most staff members were suspicious of proceedings that deviated from traditional hierarchical structures. Especially for the subject matter specialists and area managers it was a new experience to ask the farmers about their problems and, more important, to take their answers seriously, to think of farmer-centered solutions.

A typical situation: a farmer writes down on a card his experience regarding a new and supposedly higher yielding rice variety which did not fulfill his expectations, and actually yielded less than the old variety he used. The subject-matter specialist protests, telling the meeting that he knows this variety to be one of the best in university trials, so there must be another cause for the farmer's insufficient yield. Together with his colleagues from the project staff he insists that the farmer's card be not put on the board.

Feeling insecure about the method by which results were obtained, not knowing how to work with farmers' groups except by telling them what to do, and not believing in the advantages of villager' participation, most of the project staff was not in a position to work productively with the results of the village meetings and with the communication process initiated there. Setting up a project takes a lot of time, especially if none of the staff is familiar with the area and if "new" approaches are used. The project staff needs to be about participation in two ways:

1. to encourage active participation within the project, in the day-to-day work, through a democratic structure; and
2. to encourage and accept the beneficiary groups' participation, even if it is not comfortable. For this to happen, the staff's immediate superior has to believe in and encourage participation at all levels.

Most important: before a new idea - in this case the planning of activities with the villagers - can successfully be taken to the beneficiary groups, it must be fully understood and believed in by all the project staff involved.

Particular emphasis must be given to the establishment of a project management system in which decisions are taken jointly by the project's local and expatriate staff or, better still, in which the expatriate staff take the role of advisers only.

Some of the many steps towards a participatory management system are

- discussion of the project approach among project staff, expatriates (advisors), representatives of beneficiaries, line agencies and other actors concerned. This includes the elaboration of a common set of goals during ZOPP IV ("Take-Off ZOPP" for the planning of the orientation phase).

- elaboration or management: guidelines and a management- structure for the project by the local project staff and the expatriates (advisors), and getting the structure endorsed by the relevant authorities regarding
  1. the process of decision-making which needs to be made transparent and comprehensible for beneficiaries and other cooperating actors, e.g. by introducing
    - regular staff meetings (once a week),
    - regular meetings with representatives of the beneficiaries, the implementing agencies, the local administration and politicians (once a month),
    - minutes and memos on meetings, workshops and important discussions;
  2. an information policy on the project approach and activities;
  3. rules, procedures and standards for planning, implementation and monitoring of activities;
  4. the designing of work plans by the cooperating partners and the assignment of responsibilities;
  5. setting up a Project Steering Committee comprising representatives of beneficiaries, implementing agencies, local administration, politicians and the responsible ministry. Its main tasks should be to
    - discuss project policies and important project issues,
    - take the final decision on operational plans,
    - control the project management and project progress.

The mere enumeration of steps indicates that the establishment of a participatory project management system is an ambitious and time consuming task. Immediate results are scarce, set backs frequent and the pay off will only be seen after a long period of cooperation between the partners. Nevertheless, the introduction of such a system in RRD constitutes a stepping-stone towards long-term sustainability of the development activities.

### "Do's and Don'ts"

RRD programmes, especially in their initial phase, are often criticized for their "lack of efficiency and slow progress" The pressure from decision-makers and technicians to speed-up activities can lead to the project's gradually complying, by creating an implementing structure of its own, thus becoming an efficient "parallel structure". - This must be avoided, because it ultimately leads to the difficulty of having to reintegrate the newly-formed parallel structure into the existing ones; this has all too often proved to be impossible, resulting in the complete breaking up of the project, the only somewhat sustainable left-overs being useless buildings, broken machinery ...

Project organization has the tendency to become an end in itself, fulfilling internal administrative requirements and following its own preferential value system instead of serving the beneficiaries. Consequently, mechanisms should be introduced to counterbalance this tendency and maintain organizational flexibility.

### Basic Decisions taken by the DDP Team, Nepal<sup>32</sup>

For the planning and orientation phase, the DDP team set themselves the task of designing a project in which the beneficiaries themselves took their own development in hand. Even though the government of Nepal was not wholly committed to such an approach, the responsible Ministry of Panchayat and Local Development, under which DDP would function, felt that such an attempt should be made. This approach was further supported by the strong stress placed on popular participation by the bilateral agreement establishing the project. The DDP team, consequently, took the following decisions:

They did not want a separate project office in Dhading District. Some sort of liaison office would be required in Kathmandu, but as far as possible, all activity in Dhading District would be directed from the offices of the district administration. The project budget would be channelled through the normal budgetary channel of His Majesty's Government (HMG)/Nepal. Development funds would be disbursed according to HMG/Nepal regulations. Under the Decentralization Act, this meant that district plan formulation committees would be involved in preparing DDP programs, the District Panchayat would have to approve those plans, and the District Assembly would have to approve the budget required to fund these programs. The team also asked the MPLD to empower the Local Development Officer to serve as the Project Coordinator rather than appoint a separate Project Coordinator. These were all radical departures from the accepted practices of Integrated Rural Development (IRD) projects in Nepal. ... Whereas other IRD projects had focussed on extension activity through various line agencies operative at the district level, the DDP set its focus on the villages at ward level. This is the very bottom of Nepal's administrative tree. ...

The DDP team also decided to create development situations that forced villagers to interact in a wider arena than they had traditionally done. The team assumed that economic development would be conditioned by social structures. The team felt it would be wise to force villagers themselves to search for the knowledge required to execute village level projects rather than attempt to introduce new technology or new technicians as a preliminary to project activity.

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<sup>32</sup> Abstract from L.F.Stiller, *The Dhading Project. A Case of Confidence-Building Measures*. Kathmandu, n.d., pp.4-6.

Lastly, the team decided that they had far more chances of discovering agents of change within the village than of successfully persuading agents of change to go to the villages<sup>33</sup>

### 3.1.4. As to Personnel

Implementing a participatory approach to management requires not only some of the classical RRD-related knowledge about agronomy, economics and the like but also a highly developed social competence. This holds true for both the local project staff and expatriate advisors whose job profiles and qualifications should be elaborated and agreed upon by GTZ and the partner agency in the RRD programme.

Social competence in the form of communication skills is to be given equal importance with to other subject matter knowledge, and every project team may (and should) be trained in this respect.<sup>34</sup> The entire team, plus the desk officers from GTZ and BMZ, should come together before the project starts in order to develop a common understanding of the philosophy and procedures valid in a RRD programme.

It must be clearly understood from the start that the expatriate staff will have advisory status only, that the programme responsibility is with the local staff.

## 3.2 "Rolling" Planning

Plans tend to have something definite about them: once they are done it seems easiest to stick to them, using them as a blueprint. A process approach to development, however, demands perpetual rethinking about intentions, and flexibility to continuously adjust to a changing project environment. This does not turn planning into a superfluous activity ("since our plans are going to be changed again, why bother?") - quite the contrary. Planning is to be done together with people whose life will be affected by the project-to-be; consequently, the plans made in previous ZOPP workshops need to be revised, and the revised plans may have to be revised again if circumstances change (which they tend to do all the time), leading to a process of "rolling planning".

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<sup>33</sup> For some of the results of these plans and decisions taken see chapter 4.2.1 "Confidence Building Measures and Self-Help Mobilization: The DDP Experience, Nepal".

<sup>34</sup> See Kwan-Kai-Hong, B.Lecomte, Überlegungen zur Ausbildung ausländischer und einheimischer Führungskräfte für Projekte zur Förderung der eigenständigen Entwicklung. Gemeinsame Arbeitsgruppe "Armutsbekämpfung durch Selbsthilfe", Arbeitsschwerpunkt 3. Bonn 1989.



The question really is to what extent a participatory planning process can be launched at a time when the project agreement defining the objectives of the programme as well as the material and personnel contributions has already been ratified.

In RRD, planning is done at three different levels, i.e. at the project goals and activities level, at the operations level, and at the level of overall regional framework into which the RRD project needs to be fitted. The resulting set of planning documents makes the intended development process more transparent for the groups involved: beneficiaries, project staff and advisors, representatives of implementing agencies or line agencies otherwise concerned, political decision makers from the partner country's various administrative levels (village, district, province, nation) and from GTZ/BMZ, other parties from the private sector including, for example, NGOs and banks. Participatory planning is a constituent element of decentralization. However, the delegation of planning authority must be in line with the delegation of budgeting, funding and implementation powers.

### 3.2.1 Programme Planning

Programme planning means the planning of individual projects and activities necessary for their realization. In the case of an RRD programme which starts with an "orientation phase"<sup>35</sup> this is done during the fourth ZOPP workshop ("Take Off"-ZOPP) and leads to a Project Planning Matrix which indicates the goals and results to be achieved, activities necessary to reach them, and the costs of materials and personnel needed to execute the activities planned.

The ZOPP IV workshop offers good opportunities for involving representatives not only of political and administrative institutions but also of other local organizations and groupings as well as of the intended beneficiaries, in the planning process. Since it is usually conducted in the early stages of the orientation phase when the RRD programme staff is not yet fully cognizant of the social environment in the programme area, the selection of beneficiaries' representatives may pose a problem.

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<sup>35</sup> The orientation phase of an RRD programme is characterized by the following activities:

- identifying beneficiaries and assessing their needs,
- analyzing potentials and the willingness of beneficiaries, line agencies, NGOs and administration to participate in a RRD programme,
- implementing confidence building measures with the beneficiaries,
- spatial framework planning for the programme area.

## "Do's and Don'ts"

The selection of beneficiaries' representatives in the "Take Off-ZOPP" could be done together with representatives from organizations and agencies working in the programme area.

The RRD concept is designed to respond to the expressed needs of beneficiary groups. At this stage, these groups neither will be completely identified nor may their needs and ideas be fully declared. Consequently, programme planning must permit flexibility. ZOPP IV should concentrate on the results level, and not on planning activities and sub-activities in too much detail. It seems advisable to conduct ZOPP IV only at a time when the project team has reached a common understanding about the programme approach and the project infrastructure has reached a standard that will facilitate the organization of the workshop.

From ZOPP to surveys to village meetings:  
data collection for planning in CBIRD, Thailand<sup>36</sup>

### **The ZOPP Workshop - where participants refrained from contributing**

The project started with a planning workshop in which some of the project and of the PDA management staff participated as well as representatives of many governmental agencies at provincial level. Thus, PDA-CBIRD presented itself to the provincial authorities and introduced the ZOPP method. The planning session started in a traditional way, but finally became out less formal, maybe due to the method. Still, many participants hesitated from skipping their shyness and "respectfulness"; although the workshop was held bilingually in Thai and English, even participants who were later to manage the project refrained from contributing their ideas. The others very carefully expressed ideas and opinions to be written on cards.

The result was a general planning document well suited for an overall project framework but lacking district-specific aspects and concrete project activities. Since this shortcoming had become evident as early as the workshop, a baseline survey was proposed.

### **The Surveys - to which the project staff never felt committed**

This baseline survey was conducted by PDA's Research and Evaluation Division. It turned out to be a conventional survey with a strong bias on family planning

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<sup>36</sup> Abstract from E.Hauser, op.cit., pp.4-7.

and health aspects that will hardly be of importance to the project. None of the project staff ever felt committed to the report and the results of the survey. Recognizing the CBIRD project staff's unfamiliarity with the project area, an independent situation-and-need assessment was proposed. The field staff was to visit all the households in their respective area with a very simple questionnaire, get to know and get to be known by the villagers. Thus, they were to gain a sound knowledge of the potential beneficiaries and their situation in the villages. Due to communication problems, this was not understood properly, and some of the staff just gave the questionnaire to village leaders, asking them to fill in the paper. Thus, the needs assessment failed in its purpose of introducing project staff and villagers to each other; but the staff showed a considerably higher degree of commitment to the results of this survey than to the first one.

### **The Village Meetings - where people felt taken seriously and yielded valuable information**

Finally, in order to let the villagers participate in the planning of project activities, village meetings were conducted. Despite the poorness of the district, the rate of literacy is high, and the project decided to tentatively use parts of the metaplan method in some villages. In this way, it was hoped the villagers might overcome the attitudes of shyness, silence and "obedience" vis-à-vis outsiders and village authorities. Besides, it would be a change from other meetings, it means activity for all which can be fun - and fun is an important element to participation in Thailand. In six villages, a first round of meetings were arranged for the early evenings. The project staff brought along three soft boards, a flip-chart, cards and pens. Two people from the project introduced the idea behind the meeting; explained that everybody was invited to write their ideas on cards or have them written, anonymously; that the cards would be pasted on the boards for discussion; that the posters produced in this way would remain in the village for further discussion, and that some points might be brought forward to subject-matter specialists during the next meeting in order to jointly find out about potentials: which problems might be tackled by villagers, which by the project staff?

There was hardly a villager who refused to take cards and pen. Cards of different colours were issued to men and women so as to make visible whether these two groups had different problems or priorities. Most wrote what they thought; reading out all cards while grouping them on the softboards caused enjoyment and good humour but also surprise at some problems and embarrassment at sensitive village issues.

The well attended meetings received positive feedback from the villagers who participated actively in the discussions and felt that their contributions were taken seriously. The meetings yielded valuable information not obtained from the surveys and brought into discussion such village problems as thefts, mistrust and lack of cooperation among the villagers.

Participatory planning is a learning ground for both

- the outsiders, who should be prepared to accept possibly unexpected outcomes, and
- local people, who may have been rarely asked their opinion regarding anybody's plans.

### "Do's and Don'ts"

Any learning takes time. The value of the ZOPP IV workshop is that it familiarizes decision-makers, line agency personnel and project staff with the needs and ideas of the beneficiary groups' representatives. Participants may learn to listen to other peoples' points of view and to perceive each other as partners in development. To allow this to happen, sufficient time must be allocated.

## 3.2.2 Operational Planning

The Project Planning Matrix thus elaborated serves as a basis for more detailed work plans, i.e. "plans of operation", stating results to be achieved and procedures, calculating personnel, material and financial inputs required, assigning institutional and organizational responsibilities for implementing the measures. The intended beneficiaries may be more intensely involved in this, than in any of the foregoing planning steps because here the planning of activities and sub-activities is more concrete than ever. If the beneficiary groups are convinced that the planned activities meet their needs, that they can exercise control in its implementation, that they will reap the benefits - then they, too, will be interested in participating in the operational planning.

### "Implementation Plans" for Community Development Schemes used in PG-SHP, Pakistan<sup>37</sup>

The Pak-German Self-Help Project for Rural Development (PG-SHP), Balochistan, aims at improving the socio-economic living conditions of the rural population through better utilization of local resources. One of the instruments developed to reach this goal is the "implementation plan" for community

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<sup>37</sup> Abstract from A.H.Buzdar, C.Feyen, "Planning the Implementation of Community Development Schemes through a Dialogue between Village Organizations and Social Organizers". Paper submitted to the Philippines Workshop. Balochistan 1990.

development schemes. Such plans are to ensure the villagers' participation in planning and organizing their own scheme and to increase their implementing capacities.

### **An Irrigation Channel for Mundoo Khan**

Having completed the construction of a lined water tank in mid 1989, the 55 members of the VO Mundoo Khan identified the construction of an irrigation channel for agricultural purposes as their next priority. The engineers of the project's technical section visited the site, discussed possible ways of implementation and finally came up with the proposal for an implementation plan, suggesting responsibilities and calculating the total expenditure. Shortly afterwards, two social organizers went to Mundoo Khan to discuss the engineers' feasibility report and the division of tasks between the villagers and the project. The total expenditure for the scheme was estimated to be 280,000 Rs. Out of this, 30,000 Rs were required for materials and skilled labour; the remaining 250,000 Rs were to cover the labour to be given by the villagers:

|   |       |                    |
|---|-------|--------------------|
| labour-wage for villagers                                 |       | +250,000 Rs        |
| expected self-help contribution                           | (20%) | - 50,000 Rs        |
| compulsory saving into account of<br>village organization | (30%) | <u>- 75,000 Rs</u> |
| villagers' cash income                                    | (50%) | +125,000 Rs        |

The villagers agreed to form a project committee consisting of one representative each from the four village sub-groups; these were to purchase bullocks and watch over their distribution to the four village sub-groups. - The maulvi being the only literate person at Mundoo Khan was to be elected financial manager in charge of handling money and keeping accounts. - A sub-engineer was to submit a work sheet to the project engineers who would, after inspection, issue the final check certificate.

Responsibilities being thus assigned, the villagers, with good reason, suggested a different procedure for depositing the compulsory savings, which was accepted. - As to training, the maulvi requested the social organizers' assistance in financial management, and the villagers asked for the project's horticulturists to select suitable trees to plant along the irrigation channel. Finally, the social organizers handed over the implementation plan, indicating estimated expenditures, required materials and assigned responsibilities, to the chairperson of the village organization Mundoo Khan.

## Achievements and Problems

All in all, the approach has led to an increase in training activities and, subsequently, to a larger number of village specialists with technical skills needed for maintaining infrastructural projects. However, there is a widespread "receiver mentality" which makes the villagers expect physical infrastructure schemes to be implemented for them: "Why should we contribute to fulfilling the government's duty?" Sometimes they try to shift the entire burden to the village leader; sometimes it is hard to even identify villagers interested in attending a training course.

However, the organizational and managerial training given to members of the project committee or the financial manager increases their sense of responsibility and strengthens their leadership capability. Being in charge of finances given directly to the village organization, the manager is able to minimize common leakages on the way from project headquarters to the local level.

The open discussions about the scheme allow the villagers to control their leaders to some extent, but the intended transparency of the systematic planning process and delegation of responsibilities is in fact blocked by the limited capability of most villagers to read and understand papers.

Conducting a dialogue rather than giving instructions makes room for adjusting the individual plan to local conditions and raises awareness about matters previously not considered. Since, however, the dialogue between social organizers and villagers is extremely time consuming, the social organizers need to be supervised and guided so as to avoid their doing a "quick and easy" job.

The project's future emphasis will be on qualifying the engineers to make proper proposals, and the social organizers to flexibly apply the instruments at village level.

A first dimension in participatory operational planning concerns the sustainable involvement of beneficiary groups in the planning process:

- The more homogeneous the beneficiary groups are with regard to needs, interests and access to resources, the easier the joint planning of measures will be. It is the project staff's task to identify such homogeneous groups among the beneficiary population in the RRD project area, e.g. by analyzing existing socio-economic data and doing surveys supplemented by village consultations.
- Beneficiary groups generally have very clear perceptions on how to change their situation. However, since they have been seldom asked, their representatives tend to be reluctant to voice their opinion in a planning session - the more so since representatives from the local government, line agencies, banks etc. may also be present. The RRD programme staff and the workshop moderator may have to encourage them to overcome their shyness, for example by starting the workshop with a free brainstorming.

- The ideas and proposals as to what, when, how and by whom something should be done, as articulated by the participants in the planning session, require careful cross-checking by the programme staff of the capacities and capabilities or the parties to be responsible.
- The identification of activities corresponding to the needs of the beneficiary groups requires special attention. All members of the groups should be present at an open discussion (village meeting) highlighting why the groups wanted to implement a certain measure and could not do so on their own. "Bottlenecks" such as lack of materials, skills or funds have to be overcome by means of "external" inputs, preferably those of locally responsible organizations and institutions; the RRD programme shall give support only if this is not feasible. In case of "structural bottlenecks" it is the task of the RRD programme staff to work towards changes in the related framework. Applying the principle of subsidiarity in this way again makes a careful analysis of the beneficiary groups' potential contributions - their rights and duties - an absolute necessity.
- The planning may result in an agreement specifying a time schedule, the quality and quantity of goods and services to be delivered, of responsibilities and rights.  
The beneficiary groups assisted by the RRD team will have to organize into formal structures (chairman/woman, treasurer, working committees) so as to be able to implement the planned measures. The RRD programme staff will continue to assist the beneficiary groups in the implementation of their activities as well as in the monitoring and evaluation of the work in progress.

The second participatory dimension in operational planning is the integration of line agencies and third parties, the more so since the role of an RRD project is that of a mediator among the various parties involved in the development process (see chapter 3.1).

- In order to see whether external inputs can be provided by line agencies or NGOs, their representatives must obviously be present at the planning sessions, pledging the delivery of expected services. Again, the RRD team has to check the organizations' capabilities and capacities.
- Especially line agencies must be assisted in learning to accept beneficiaries as partners and their own role as service organizations responding to requests initiated from "bottom up".

The functional organization of most line agencies is still "top down" oriented, especially with regard to planning and funding, and the integration of line agency personnel into programme planning and operational planning can only contribute

to a change of behaviour in individuals. Hopefully, in the long run, these individuals will be able to influence their respective agencies towards a participatory "bottom up" approach. Such reorientation of line agencies can be supported by strengthening the beneficiaries in requesting the services of line agencies and governmental departments and by the RRD team working towards changes in the respective framework.

### Local participation in rural road construction

#### The case of DDP, Nepal<sup>38</sup>

Road building in the rugged mountains of Nepal is a relatively recent phenomenon which started in 1950, when the country was first opened to the outside world. The roads built by the Government and foreign donors are expensive and lack sufficient environmental considerations necessary to address the fragile mountainous eco-system. The small roads built by local people with little or no technical planning, supervision and external financial support are relatively cheap initially, but due to technical defects they are expensive to maintain; and in many cases they proved disastrous to the environment.

Road building arouses local enthusiasm, because it brings about visible changes in village life and hence is a most dramatic sign of development. Consequently, people applying the cheap but environmentally unsound cut-and-throw technique accept the environmental after-effect as the price they have to pay for local road access.

#### **Support on condition that...**

The support by DDP (Dhading District Project) to the local road programme in Dhading District aims at introducing an alternative technique which is neither as expensive as the Government and donor funded roads nor as uneconomical and environmentally unsound as local roads.

DDP, with its professed philosophy of working through local organizations and local resource mobilization, began its homework in 1988 by looking for local organizations that could provide the leadership for such an undertaking. The District Panchayat and the Village Panchayat both had the interest and support of local people to carry out the road programme, particularly since it directly addressed a majority's felt need. Thus, the DDP team entered into discussions with these organizations about the way in which the rural road programme might be planned and implemented.

DDP agreed to support the rural road programme in Dhading on condition that

- the road was constructed by the people themselves with the help of their local organizations;

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<sup>38</sup> Abstract from B.N.Acharya, "Local Participation in Rural Road Construction". Paper submitted to the Philippines Workshop. Kathmandu 1990.



- the road construction was technically sound and ecologically sustainable;
- the local people accepted the responsibility for its future maintenance.

The responsibility for the construction of two roads proposed by the District Panchayat was placed with this institution, and it immediately commissioned feasibility studies and technical surveys. The funds required were channelled to the District Panchayat through the responsible Ministry of Panchayat and Local Development. The District Panchayat and DDP agreed on some

**major policies:**

1. the road should be constructed according to the technical alignment and design, under proper technical supervision;
2. it should be constructed by mobilizing local labour to be coordinated by a local organization; the latter was to train its own low-skilled manpower and not to employ outside contractors;
3. problems arising such as land acquisition and compensation should be solved by the concerned people themselves;
4. the road was to be constructed by the environmentally-sound cut-and-fill technique for mass balancing; it should have proper and, as far as possible, natural drainage; the use of explosives was to be avoided;
5. parallel to road construction, an innovative road maintenance strategy was to be developed and agreed upon by the concerned parties.

The District Panchayat formed Road Committees to enforce these practices and to coordinate the implementation of the road programme. These Committees, the District Panchayat, the road construction labourers, the general population and the DDP continuously interacted to further improve the planning and implementation of the road programme.

The rural roads that are now being constructed will not see heavy traffic in the coming ten to fifteen years. Chosen by people themselves, these roads will, however, open up large areas of Dhading which are now inaccessible for motor vehicles. The Dhading Besi - Sallyantar - Kintangphedi Road with a proposed alignment of 52.5 km will open up northern Dhading where nowadays many of the Government's services do not reach and which has a vast potential for livestock and horticulture development. The Bhimdhunga - Lamidanda Road, with a proposed alignment of 42 km, will open up the vegetable and fruit pocket of south-eastern Dhading for transport to the markets of Kathmandu.

**Reliable partners in the development process**

During the first two and a half years of the road programme 14 kilometers of technically and ecologically sound earthen road were constructed at a cost of only NRs 200,000/km.

It is too early to judge the socio-economic and environmental impact of the programme, but it has already been proved that the participatory approach and resource conservation technique of road construction are not mutually exclusive. The local people and the politicians are reliable partners in the development process, and the image of DDP has improved.

In this programme, contractors who have no love for the local people and their environment have been done away with. Almost 75% of the budgeted funds were used for paying daily wages to local labourers. There was no gender discrimination in the wages. Poorer villagers utilized the additional income earned during the off-farm season to repay outstanding debts and to purchase essentials, including food. The institutional and financial arrangements and procedures were fully transparent, which was highly appreciated by the local people and the politicians. The people and their representatives were involved in all phases of the programme which offered opportunities for developing a local organization that may serve as a vehicle for future development activities.

The participatory approach allowed work to be started without establishing an elaborate project infrastructure. The local people and the politicians themselves provided the necessary logistics, thus avoiding waste of resources on unproductive items. Local financial contributions, obtained indirectly, were very large. The local farmers gave land for the roads.

The local politicians, naikes, supervisors, government officials and district technicians understood the resource conservation technique of road construction and responded to it. They have effectively applied the lessons learned from the trainings and workshops organized in their respective fields, and the district politicians and administrators now advocate the technique for constructing other roads in the district.

#### **Support to the process of institutionalization**

Road construction will be continued, but no specific physical target for completion is set. DDP will give support as long as the approach is effectively followed: support not to the construction of roads as such but to the institutionalization of the process - a message which has been clearly understood in the district.

### **3.2.3 Regional Planning**

A framework plan for the development of the region covered by the RRD programme allows the activities to be matched with the area's potentials and with the efforts of other parties involved in the development process. However, the elaboration of a regional development plan as part of the RRD project should not be misunderstood in that only the RRD project is to be held responsible for its implementation. Quite to the contrary. A framework plan is a reference document

for all development agents in the region: government agencies, NGOs and the private sector. The RRD project team is only one of many such agents.

Generally, area development plans are formulated either on a sectorial basis by the line agency's local planning officers or on the basis of administrative entities like municipalities charging their planning officers to list desirable development activities. The documents are aggregated at the next higher level in the hierarchy without any inter-sectorial coordination taking place. No wonder these documents resemble "shopping lists" reflecting the interests of the "ordering" institutions rather than plans.

Focussing on a coordinated social and economic development of the planning area, the RRD concept calls for the interests of all actors involved in the development process being integrated into the framework planning. This process may be initiated and promoted by the RRD project planning staff. A regional or provincial planning and coordinating body - with subcommittees on municipal level in vast planning areas - needs to be formed, staffed by existing institutions which may invite participation from all institutions, organizations and groupings interested in the region's development, for example women's and youths' associations, churches, NGOs and non-formal groups, commercial associations of fishermen, farmers, small traders. The delegates might form a planning committee with the initial task of writing Terms of Reference for consultants to collect information and do regional potential analyses, and of selecting suitable consultants.

Regional planning, like all other planning, needs to be done via a "bottom up" approach. Village consultations are one method of gathering "grass roots level" planning information (see chapter 3.2.1), others are the rapid/ relaxed rural appraisal (see chapter 2.2.3) and social stratification surveys (see chapter 4.1.3). It is part of the RRD project staff's task to see to it that "grass roots" ideas reach the next senior level and are integrated into the spatial planning documents.

Assisted by the RRD project staff, the planning unit might spread information on planning techniques such as ZOPP. Having discussed the results of the consultants' regional potential analyses and the ideas collected from interested groups, the planning unit could coordinate the findings in consultative meetings and finally decide upon a regional framework plan fixing mid- and long-term development goals as well as strategies for achieving them.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> For a detailed description of tasks, subjects and methods in regional planning see M.Schmeisser, Rahmenplanung für Projekte der ländlichen Entwicklung. Commissioned by GTZ. Berlin, Okt. 1990.

Towards the end of the RRD project orientation phase, these planning documents might be endorsed by the political decision makers, turning them into compulsory guidelines for the planning or the region's development.

Initiated by an operational planning unit independent of the RRD project, the plans can be continuously adjusted, even after the project's support to the RRD programme has phased out.

### **3.3 Monitoring and Evaluation**

Monitoring and evaluation (M+E) usually refers to a system providing the project management with relevant information about the progress and impact of planned and ongoing activities forming the basis for decisions to be taken in order to reach an envisaged goal.<sup>40</sup>

If no information system is established, the project management has to rely on information the staff happens to be able to gather, often depending on informal sources, or by employing consultants making a study of specific aspects. The former method is rather sporadic and often too inaccurate to serve as a decision taking basis: the latter tends to be rather time consuming, expensive and, therefore, impractical.

M+E is often considered an instrument for the project to monitor and evaluate its activities according to the requirements of the funding agency. It is very rarely understood to be what it should be: a device which ensures the adequate management - i.e. planning, implementing and progress controlling - of development activities of all parties involved in the process, even after the funding agency's support has phased out. A sustainable M+E system serving all management levels must be adapted to local conditions rather than the requirements of, and options open to the funding agency; it should be simple and low-cost.

#### **3.3.1 Centralization of the Information Flow Means Centralization of Power**

In RDD programmes, at least three management levels are involved in the development process:

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<sup>40</sup> For an orientation regarding M+E in development projects GTZ has commissioned a study: Orientierungsrahmen für Monitoring und Evaluierung (M+E) von Vorhaben der Technischen Zusammenarbeit im Partnerland, draft. Eschborn, Sept. 1990.

- the RRD project management,
- the management of the implementing agency,
- the management of the beneficiary groups.

All too often, the beneficiary groups and the implementing agency are assigned the role of collectors of information to be utilized only by the RRD project management, thus centralizing not only the information flow but, consequently, power: only the (seemingly) well-informed may take decisions, using a top-down approach.

No wonder that the implementing agency and beneficiary groups tend to regard monitoring tasks as tiresome and rather unnecessary paper work, a waste of time and money. Besides, since they do not get to make use of the information they do not know what it is collected for; consequently, they gather all kinds of information, both useful and useless, which easily leads to an information glut at the RRD project management level. To cope with the information flow, more personnel and better equipment are introduced, meaning increased - unjustifiable - administrative costs.

### "Do's and Don'ts"

To escape this vicious circle it is necessary to

- improve the planning procedures. Planning in most organizations is done in an input oriented way, without giving information about intermediary outputs and results needed to monitor the progress of a project, to eventually re-plan and follow up the activities;
- establish a M+E system that actively involves the different organizational levels of beneficiary groups, the implementing agency, the project management and other concerned actors;
- continually evaluate the information collected, and to do so together with the actors involved in the data collection: they know best about weaknesses, strengths and latent potentials of the programme; supporting these actors to develop their critical judgement and self-confidence in voicing their ideas is an intrinsic part of organizational development;
- qualify beneficiaries for M+E tasks; this definitely comes under human resource development (see chapter 2.4).

### Standardized formats for all: used in Kandy IRDP, Sri Lanka

Kandy IRDP has developed a standardized format which is used for everything, planning, monitoring and reporting, without transferring the information from one

format to another. It follows the ZOPP logical framework from the output level downwards.

**All parties involved** in planning and implementing a certain project jointly elaborate a project implementation plan along the lines of the given format: representatives from the concerned beneficiaries, the implementing agency and the project office. By the end of these "mini planning workshops" each participant knows how the project is going to be implemented and who has to do what in order to reach the planned result. Every person who signs as responsible for a certain sub-output receives a copy of the plan. He or she will report on a certain day, using the same planning sheet, thus updating the mapped out plan. For this, a **photostat copy of the plan** is produced, and the figures are adjusted to the actual situation in the following columns:

- starting date,
- ending date,
- reporting date,
- sub-output (quality and quantity given numerically),
- achievement in percent.

If the actual situation corresponds to the plan, only a short note is made in the remarks column. The balance remains the same. If the actual situation deviates from the plan, the numerical values are adjusted to the actual situation, and a short note inserted in the remarks column shows why it was not possible to achieve the set objective. In both cases, the text of the plan remains the same. **Progress report:** Whenever action is demanded, but at least every three months, the updated plan is forwarded to the management at the various project levels or to the project's M+E unit. The updated plan sent in after three months serves as progress report.

**Computerization:** Up to now, the system is operated in a manual way. Relevant software is being developed. It shall improve the efficiency of monitoring on project level and of reporting to the implementing agency and to GTZ-head-office. For the dissemination phase, the introduction of the computer based system on the level of the implementing agency is planned, in order to ease the data flow and to give the agency a chance to apply this monitoring system to the activities funded by themselves or other agencies.

**Advantages** of the system described are that

- people at all levels who are responsible for a certain output or sub-output are fully involved in planning, implementing, monitoring and reporting;
- the system is simple and relatively low-cost;
- it helps to prevent an information glut at the highest management level and provides information needed for action at the various intermediary levels;
- it can be easily computerized;

**Note:**

- this planning and monitoring approach shakes old habits and proves to be time consuming at the beginning;
- intensive on-the-job training on the job is necessary while introducing this method at the level of beneficiaries and the implementing agency. This is part and parcel of Human Resource Development.

### 3.3.2 Impact and Process Monitoring

If RRD projects aim at: supporting a development- process, it: is the process which needs to be monitored: the impact: of development: activities determine whether they can be rated as successful or unsuccessful. The impact of activities must be sustainable, not necessarily the on-going project activities themselves.<sup>41</sup>

Experiences with monitoring impacts and also with monitoring a process rather than plain results are very limited as yet. How, for example, can we monitor an increase in the beneficiaries' self-confidence or trust in partners, which are necessary for them to cooperate in an RRD programme (see chapter 4.2)? Indicators need to be developed; an indicator for increased self-confidence, for example, might be the decision of a group that has planned and implemented one development measure, to continue as a group in order to address another common problem.

Process-oriented monitoring: A qualitative approach taken by IRDP Mardan, Pakistan<sup>42</sup>

The overall goal of IRDP's work with village committees is to enhance their self-help potential through more effective organization and more efficient management of village development. The hypothesis states that IRDP can contribute to this goal if it facilitates a "learning by doing" process for village groups which is based on the formation of community groups, training inputs for human resource development, practical implementation of schemes and promotion of capital formation and income generating projects.

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<sup>41</sup> Thus, the question. "Who shall keep up this expensive advisory service once *we* withdraw our support?" does not hit the nail on the head. It should rather be, "How to make sure that when all external support is withdrawn the farmers will continue to be in a position to make use of new practices or techniques introduced, and to improve them if needs be? What kind of advisory needs will they have, and how may this be financed from internal sources?" See BMZ, Querschnittsanalyse von Projekten der "Landlichen Regionalentwicklung", op.cit., p.64f.

<sup>42</sup> A.Steiner, Process-Oriented Monitoring System for Village Organizations. Pak-German Integrated Rural Development Programme Mardan. Draft, Mardan, n.d.

While these activities can be monitored in terms of immediate implementation, monitoring of the hypothesis - i.e. that the above mentioned activities facilitate a socio-organizational process with certain results - is rarely done satisfactorily. Qualitative monitoring requires an objective assessment of what, at times, can only be judged through observation based on personal and therefore subjective assessment by, for example, the social organizer. The aim of a process-oriented monitoring (POM) system is to utilize the subjective assessment in such a way that it can be used for both monitoring and management of the IRDP village level programme.

**Objectives** The POM system attempts to provide

- a framework of categories and objectives which reflects the development hypothesis:
- a positive/negative value scale which facilitates a uniform POM by different staff members:
- a quantitative dimension which transforms an otherwise complex array of personal judgements into an easily comprehensible and manageable (e.g. computer) monitoring of results.

The major objective of POM is to provide an effective management tool which can be used on three levels in the project:

1. Project Management
  - regular monitoring of the social organization section;
  - regular monitoring of the hypothesis in the field;
  - collection of information/data for evaluation purposes.
2. Head of Social Organization Section
  - same functions as for project management;
  - regular monitoring of individual village organizations;
  - regular monitoring of individual social organizers;
  - identification of recurrent weaknesses and successes;
  - identification of training needs and inputs required.
3. Individual Social Organizers
  - same functions as for head of social organization section, except those concerning the project management;
  - systematic observation of his/her village organizations over time;
  - identification of village organizations' weaknesses and strengths as well as topics to be dealt with during next visit.

### **Methodology**

There are four principles underlying the POM system.

1. The major objectives underlying IRDP's development hypothesis are categorized.



To achieve the project goals the village organizations must be assisted in developing procedural functions, improving the quality of their leadership, getting the participation of village people, developing an ability to interact with external agents and departments, ...

These categories of actions define the parameters within which POM is to take place.

2. In order to monitor these categories, a series of proxy indicators has to be defined for each category which reasonably reflects a qualitative process. This was done by planing a positive and a negative statement for each indicator at opposite ends of a continuous scale.
- 3 The two "extremes" are linked by a quantified scale to enable the field staff to make accurate and differentiated assessments. 0 to 6 proxy indicators for each category have been defined to ensure a balanced assessment.

#### Interaction with External Agents

|  |           |   |
|--|-----------|---|
| Village Organization is supported by Union Councillor and actively cooperates with him | -6-4-2-0- | There is no interaction between Village Organization and Union Councillor |
|--|-----------|---|

4. While each proxy indicator may be relevant, they need not be equally important. For this reason, a system of quantitative weighting was introduced among the categories as well as within them.

### 3.3.3 Participatory Evaluation

The hallmark of a participatory evaluation is its being carried out as far as possible by those working on a process of change in form of a development measure. This naturally includes not only the RRD project- staff, the personnel of all development agencies involved, including an external evaluator sent by the commissioning agency, but also the beneficiary groups.

Not only is this logical in a development approach which tries to involve the beneficiaries in all the foregoing steps of planning and implementation it also actually enriches the results and impact of the evaluation.

## Evaluation experiments with villagers in the Dhauladar Project, India<sup>43</sup>

Past experience has shown that the local people often differ with external evaluation teams about whether a programme or a particular measure is a failure or a success. The differences of opinion are even more pronounced when people's participation is being evaluated.

Basically, people's evaluation is a feed-back process about the real state of development activities. Indeed, when given frankly, it is the best and most precise feed-back a development agency can get.

However, just asking the views of a few people here and there once or twice is of no use. If people's participation in evaluation is taken seriously, an institutionalized process has to be established. In such a process all the people in a village should be given the opportunity to put forward their views. Evaluation experiments with villagers showed that they evaluated the different programmes of a project in a holistic view, correlated the results and included the human development factor. External evaluators looked at the different programmes and measures from a subject-matter viewpoint only, ignoring the human development factor. Whereas departmental delegations were often interested in the fulfillment of their subject matter targets, the people's concern was always expressed in qualitative terms.

The difference between a conventional evaluation undertaken solely by the commissioning party, an external appraiser and the management of the project in question, and a participatory evaluation involving beneficiary groups is found in the underlying principle.<sup>44</sup>

A conventional evaluation is clearly pre-structured, it has a definite place within the project cycle with prescribed procedures: comparison of actual situation and targets, measuring and explanation of deviations, checking the use of funds, judgement and recommendations given by the external appraiser later commented by the project manager, final decisions of the commissioning party.

A participatory evaluation basically includes the same steps but follows different rules, taking on the character of a learning process for all involved. Criteria and indicators for the evaluation are not prescribed in advance by the commissioning

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<sup>43</sup> H.I.Czech, *The Truco Concept. A Concept for the Development of Mountain Regions in the Himalayas through Involvement of Social Organizations and by Integration of Traditional Elements of Socio-Cultural Village Structures.* GTZ, 4th ed. 1986, p.29.

<sup>44</sup> Douet.H., Lecomte.B., *Die partizipative Evaluierung - Eine Bestandsaufnahme.* Überarbeitete deutsche Übersetzung v. G.Baum. GTZ/ Eschborn 1988, pp.2f

agency or the external evaluator, but fixed in cooperation with beneficiary groups during the evaluation. The steps to be taken and their order gradually evolve during the open work process. Thus, the participatory evaluation is not only an instrument for checking and improving the quality of a development measure but for promoting the beneficiary groups' ability to critically review their own doing and its impact. Up to now, experiences with such participatory evaluations are scarce, but some trials by NGOs and the International Labour Organization (ILO)<sup>45</sup> show that the participatory approach

- basically gives more reliable results than the conventional one, because it allows a parallel presentation and comparison of several interpretations regarding the information gathered;
- needs more time than the conventional one and in this may become slightly more expensive; but this cannot fairly be held against such an approach because it follows a twofold goal (quality check and learning process ultimately enhancing the beneficiaries' self-reliance) instead of just one (quality check);
- has an impact that stretches beyond the potential change of a project teams' management, by opening up possibilities for action to other people involved in the development activities, thus stepping up the development process.

However, the participatory evaluation, being a learning process for those involved, is more difficult to carry out than the conventional one, and it is not always suitable, for example if

- the project duration is less than three years, i.e. time is too short for gradually improving monitoring and evaluation methods;
- a rigid project management does not really allow the results of the evaluation to be taken up;
- excessively financial support stifles the participation of local beneficiary groups;
- the project team has a technical bias and no ear for the beneficiary groups' interests<sup>46</sup>

### 3.4 Flexible Budgeting and Funding

In order to be able to react to the beneficiary groups' expressed needs and wishes with regard to the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of

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<sup>45</sup> For case studies and literature see *ibid.*, annexes 1-6.

<sup>46</sup> For details as well as (limited) possibilities of combining the ZOPP planning method with participatory evaluation see *ibid.*, pp. ISff.

development activities, the project management needs some budgetary flexibility. However, all government agencies, including the GTZ, have to follow rather strict budget regulations because the funds used are derived from public money. Project costs have to be estimated and specified even before the GTZ forwards a tender to BMZ, for example.

Consequently, government agencies are tempted to use a top-down approach in spending their funds. Budgetary regulations demand, for example, an advance quantification and specification of requests for materials and equipment; the use of materials thus granted has to be accounted for in periodical accomplishment reports; what is easier than pushing the beneficiary groups into using the materials in the preconceived way? In response to the flexibility required for the beneficiaries' participation in, say, RRD programmes supported by GTZ the instrument of "open funds" was introduced:

1. "Local grants" (subsidies: bookkeeping account no.9): "Contractually agreed payments to third parties (institutions, funds) may be made against a certificate of receipt, whereby the recipient must furnish proof of the use of the subsidy for the stipulated purpose (settlement is thus not to be effected with the project manager as part of the project accounting).<sup>47</sup>  
The subsidy to any one single institution or fund shall not exceed DM 100,000. If the amount is higher, it is classified as a "financial contribution" and must then follow different regulations without the flexibility of an "open fund".
2. Funds for confidence building measures: The funds are designed to motivate the beneficiaries to undertake initiatives of their own. Initially, the funds may be given as grants; the activities financed require contributions from the beneficiaries.
3. Credit Funds or Credit Guarantee Funds: These funds provide means to rural financial institutions or serve as guarantee funds for loans extended to the beneficiaries by the formal financing sector.<sup>48</sup>
4. Funds for the Promotion of Self-Help. Since this is an instrument explicitly designed for the organizational development of the poor and consequently surpasses the mere question of flexible budgeting, it will be dealt with in another chapter (see 4.4.1).

However, the flexibility of an RRD programme cannot be restricted to the budgetary procedures followed by a supporting foreign agency like the GTZ; it is

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<sup>47</sup> GTZ. Guidelines for Project Accounting, as of January 1, 1988, p.72.

<sup>48</sup> For details see R.H.Schmidt, E.Kropp (eds.), Rural Finance: Guiding Principles. Published by BMZ, DSE, GTZ, Eschborn 1987

the task of the partner country government to introduce respective procedures in their own system.

It is certainly beyond the tasks of a bilateral project of technical cooperation to initiate the required dialogue with representatives of the partner government. This may be done in bilateral negotiations within the framework of a "policy dialogue", emphasizing the fact that the RRD process will produce sustainable results only if there is sufficient flexibility in the partners' budgetary system, allowing people's participation. This is all the more important since the inputs originally contributed by the German government may be channelled into a revolving fund which, with the repayments of its users, can turn into a partner-country fund.

### Do's and Don'ts"

In order to prepare this dialogue the GTZ-PAS or the German Embassy might be asked to analyze the situation and give recommendations with respect to the institutionalization of "open funds" within the partner government's legal and administrative framework.

## 4. Ways and Means of Involving Beneficiary Groups of the Poor in the Development: Process

"Participation begins with the project doing nothing. ... Participation is strongest where it is most selfish and where no fast solutions from outsiders are to be expected.<sup>49</sup>

### 4.1 Participatory Action Research

Action research, more precisely referred to as Participatory Action Research (PAR), is a methodology concerned with discovering and testing the most effective ways of bringing about desired social, economic and technical changes. Its basic hypothesis is that the directions of change are best determined locally, making people's participation a prerequisite.<sup>50</sup>

" PAR is a problem-solving approach, combining research and action so as to ensure that scientific discoveries and technological innovations assumed to be useful in overcoming problems as perceived by beneficiary groups, are field-tested by actively involving these groups in all phases, from problem identification to research, from the joint evaluation of research results to devising dissemination strategies.

#### 4.1.1 Identifying Beneficiary Groups of the Poor<sup>51</sup>

A social stratification survey is an investigative process showing how households in a community vary from each other with regard to

- resource endowments such as land, labour, capital, goods, education and skills,
- constraints that hinder them from fully utilizing their resources,

<sup>49</sup> H.-C. Voigt ParhzipaHon in der Technischen Zusammenarbeit. Zehn Thesen und der Fall Dalifort, Dakar. Dakar 1990, pp. 9 and 14 (translation by the editor).

<sup>50</sup> Many articles on action research and participatory technology development are contained in ILEIA (Information Center for Low External Input Agriculture) Newsletter Vol.4 (Oct.1988), No.3.

<sup>51</sup> The chapter, including the case study, is an abstract from E.Canoog, U.Kievelitz, V.Steigerwald, "Social Stratification Surveys", op.cit.

- their needs, aspirations, and development potentials.

These basic features are to be related to

- the households' behavioural characteristics and social relations,
- institutional and administrative structures within and outside the community, and
- the prevailing ecological conditions.

Thus, information searched for ranges from the natural conditions to social structures, from needs and problems to the characteristics and abilities of the individual household, from the socio-economic situation of women to that of men. One of the keys to opening up access to women is in defining beneficiary groups not only along socio-economic criteria but according to gender: otherwise, the economic importance of women and, consequently, their role as development agents is all too often neglected.<sup>52</sup>

On the basis of this information it is possible to identify relatively homogeneous beneficiary groups towards whom the project orientates its particular interventions. The method is founded on the concept of rapid/ relaxed rural appraisal (see chapter 2.2.2).

### Social Stratification Surveying by CUP-Tandems, Philippines

**Prior to the survey proper**, available information on the survey barangays, such as aerial photos, maps, statistics, baseline survey, land resources evaluations, marketing studies, and the area development plan, were screened in order to establish a common understanding about the community among the members of the survey teams who then met to discuss the further investigative process. **Information was gathered** by an interdisciplinary group that who was daily divided up into different pairs ("tandems") for interaction with the respondents. The tandems shared their experiences and observations during the evenings in feedback sessions. New questions kept arising, and new areas of analysis were identified and incorporated in the ongoing survey.

**The rural respondents were interviewed** along topical guidelines instead of a formalized questionnaire, thereby starting an open dialogue, not an interrogation session.

**All households in a barangay were visited** and their information noted on index cards. The tandems visited about four to five households per day. The actual time spend in each barangay ranged around two weeks, including a day for courtesy calls, familiarization and setting up of the procedures at the start and another day for coming to an end of the survey process.

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<sup>52</sup> See Schneider, Frauenförderung, op.cit., pp.95ff.

**Additional information** - besides the dialogues with individual respondents - was gathered through direct observations, spot mapping and photographing as well as talking to informal community leaders and to groups of villagers.

**After the survey proper**, a one-day group evaluation was carried out during which all information and insights were shared and analyzed. This formed the basis for the survey reports which were discussed with all CUP personnel.

**Highlights and important results** with regard to barangay priority problems and needs were presented for feedback to local government units, the barangay councils and municipal line agencies. The information gathered rendered insights into technical and physical aspects, such as the agricultural land resource potential, health services, and people's individual skills, as well as into social matters, for example:

- Relatively better-off households are regarded as leaders in the community, not only because of their credibility but because they were able to provide financial assistance in case of need and emergency.
- Marginal households generally do not hold leadership positions in the community and in most cases are difficult to integrate into project activities. This stratum significantly outnumbers the relatively better-off.
- Breaking mutual relationships between better-off and marginal families in order to improve the lot of the latter will be at the expense of a strained personal relationship and will probably not be welcome. In order to generate and analyze this information, a number of **conceptual devices and practical instruments** were applied, e.g.
  - stratification of society",<sup>53</sup>
  - indicators of inequality.
  - guidelines for daily evaluation,
  - topical guideline for social stratification,
  - social maps,
  - life stories of individuals.

These devices and instruments were adapted to the specific conditions of the respective survey area and proved to be very helpful to generate an in-depth understanding of the structure, interdependencies and underlying dynamics in rural communities.

**The results are further utilized at various levels, e.g**

### **1. The tandems**

- present results to the villagers for validation and feedback:
- use the results for ranking the beneficiary groups' needs and for planning development activities:

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<sup>53</sup> The social stratification originates from unequal access to resources: information and education, capital, goods, land, labour. It is perpetuated by the socio-political order: ideology and value system, socio-political regimes and structures, local history, spatial residence. It manifests itself in the relations among people and in their behaviour: habits, behaviour, risk-taking, group organization.



- share the data and information with other interested governmental and nongovernmental institutions involved in rural development work:
- use the data for a self-monitoring device to ensure that the facilitated activities include the poorer sections of the local population.
- 2. Subject matter specialists and the farming systems unit
  - develop appropriate extension messages and adapted farming technologies:
  - backstop the tandems' activities.
- 3. The monitoring and evaluation unit
  - lays the foundation for an impact monitoring system:
  - facilitates continuous assessment of CUP'S reaching the intended beneficiary groups:
- 4. The planning unit
  - utilizes the findings as baseline information about newly covered barangays:
  - updates existing barangay profiles:
  - uses the social stratification reports during area consultation and municipal planning meetings.
- 5. The CUP management
  - uses the surveys as basis for policy decisions and regular corrective action:
  - develops responsive CUP intervention strategies:
  - proves to Philippine line agencies that it is possible to reach the beneficiary groups of the poor.

### **4.1.2 The Poor as Partners for the "Experts" to Learn from**

Rural people, especially the poor and, among those, women, have for too long been treated by both their governments and donor agencies as passive clients rather than active agents in development. In diffusing innovations or transferring technology usually the western type specialist was identified as the source of knowledge and of technology development while the rural people were categorized into "early" and "later adopters". While traditional research methodologies rely heavily upon external expertise, capital, know-how and equipment, action research is conducted together with the intended beneficiaries. Such an approach not only helps outsiders to gain a better understanding of local people's problems and needs, it also strengthens the rural people's role in developing technology. While traditional research with its diffusion and transfer strategies render the rural people dependent upon outside know-how and assistance, PAR stimulates their innovativeness, makes use of their problem

solving capabilities, thus turning them into fellow professionals and experimenters.

To make PAR a successful exercise in participation, the outside agents (national or foreign experts) have to assume the role of facilitators and catalysts in development - and, before this is possible, even take on the role of learners giving up the rather paternalistic approach of the old colonial type expert:

"The litanies of rural developers include 'We must educate the farmers' and 'We must uplift the rural poor'. These can be stood on their heads. Outsiders have first to learn from farmers and from the rural poor. But many outsiders are hindered from such learning by their educational attainment, urban status, and roles as bearers and dispensers of modern knowledge. Staff working in rural areas distance themselves from the rural people, showing their separate style and standing through clothing, shoes, vehicle, office, briefcase, documents, and manner and speech. Hierarchy, authority and superiority prevent learning 'from below'. Knowledge of one sort perpetuates ignorance of another.<sup>54</sup>

The litanies of rural developers also include "We must do something for the women" - but then they usually stop short of getting down to it, continuing their work on the hypothesis that development measures are neutral with regard to their impact on women and men, trusting that the good part of measures directed at "beneficiaries" in general will, in due time, trickle down to the women, anyway. Experience shows that this is not true;<sup>55</sup> - and, incredible as it seems to some people, it might be possible for (male) experts to learn from (poor) women - particularly with regard to their specific situation, their problems and aspirations.

### "Do's and Don'ts"

The reversals in learning "from below" comprise, for example,<sup>56</sup>

- sitting, asking, listening;
- learning from the poorest;
- learning indigenous technical knowledge (by making up glossaries of local terms, by playing games, quantifying and ranking);
- joint research and developing;

<sup>54</sup> R.Chambers, *Rural Development*, op.cit., p. 201.

<sup>55</sup> Schneider, *Frauenförderung*, op.cit.. p.31. - The question actually is to what extent the impact of planned development activities on the situation of women can be anticipated and action be taken accordingly. The GTZ-publication on the promotion of women tries to find answers with regard to the most important sectors in RRD. See *ibid.*, pp.31-90.

<sup>56</sup> *ibid.*, 202 ff.

- learning by physically working with the farmers, men and women:
- experiencing the world of the poor by going and being a poor person: simulation games (why not let male members of the project team for once view the world through the eyes of a poor rural woman?).

### Linking access to credit and social organization: Action Research in DDP/SFDP, Nepal<sup>57</sup>

In 1985, the government amended the Decentralization Act, changing the nature of user's committees, thereby destroying the possibility of transforming them into more permanent production-oriented self-help committees (see chapters 4.2.1 and 4.3). Consequently, the team of the Dhading District Project (DDP) looked for other channels to promote self-help groups.

Their search brought them into contact with the Small Farmers' Development Programme (SFDP), a credit programme for farmers with a per capita income of less than NRs. 1250 per year, implemented by the Agricultural Development Bank, Nepal (ADBN). Both the DDP team and the ADBN management felt the need to promote the rural people's self-help potential on a larger scale, at a faster rate, and in a cost-effective way. They agreed to cooperate in undertaking field-oriented action research in Dhading.

#### **First Stage of Action Research:**

##### **Small Farmers' Leaders to Promote the Formation of New Groups**

In January 1987, ADBN/DDP formed a joint task force whose members visited the four SFDP groups then existing in Dhading. They consulted the farmers and the responsible ADBN group organizers on how to strengthen the groups and to increase their number with local efforts. After several consultations, the task force decided to ask the small farmers to select twelve group leaders to be given a ten day intensive field training, thus turning them into SF promoters who were to support the ADBN group organizers in promoting the formation of new groups. The SF promoters' performance was monitored at regular intervals for over a year. They were able to do a lot of good work but their limitations as volunteer workers also became clear. Most of the promoters were at best semi-literate: they needed a helping hand by somebody literate. In order for SF promoters to gain credibility in the farmers' eyes, new groups wishing to form had to be recognized faster. These observations led to a

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<sup>57</sup> Abstract from L.J.R. Dhakwa, "Participation and Self-Help Mobilization". Paper submitted to the Philippines Workshop. Kathmandu 1990.

### **Second Stage of Action Research:**

#### **Youth Workers as a Link between Small Farmers and ADBN Group Organizers**

In winter 1987, ADBN authorized its field offices to recognize new groups formed by SF promoters and provide them with loans. The SF promoters were given the opportunity to recommend a literate young school leaver from among the small farmers' families to be hired by ADBN. These small farmer youth workers were to

- work 50% of their time with the ADBN group organizers as apprentices by helping them in their daily work:
- spend the rest of their time with SF promoters and SF group leaders, helping them, participating in SF group and inter-group meetings, learning from the small farmers.

Besides, DDP with the approval of the District Government, established an SF support fund, to be channelled through ADBN, for quick support to SF groups' initiatives in the field of economic, environmental and social services. As a result, during late 1987 and early 1988, the small farmers started many small-scale activities under the leadership of SF promoters. Existing groups were strengthened, new groups formed. A number of groups informally joined to form "inter-group organizations" of small farmers. The SF youth workers helped the promoters to bridge the gap between the farmers' way of doing things and the bank's procedural requirements. At the same time, they got first hand opportunities to learn the art of village leadership from the SF promoters and about official bank procedures from the group organizers. The SF promoters proved that with proper training and support, they could multiply the number of SF groups in their respective villages. Consequently, the DDP team came to think that the promoters together with the youth workers could pave the way for expanding SFDP throughout the 50 village panchayats in the district within five to six years - while with the traditional approach this was estimated to take at least another 20 years.

### **Third Stage of Action Research:**

#### **Institutionalization and Action Research Continued**

In spring 1988, ADBN and DDP each agreed to start a programme: more SFDP offices would be opened in new areas of the district, more small farmers would be selected, trained and deployed as SF promoters, new SF youth workers would gradually be employed. DDP support for expanding SFDP activities would be institutionalized and channelled through ADBN. The District authorities should include the programme into the overall District Development Plan and provide the necessary support.

The process of institutionalization was started simultaneously at three levels: at that of the farmers and their groups, at that of District Government Committees, and at the level of the ADBN management.

The results of a one year programme package in 1988/89 were largely positive: 22

new SF promoters started working in their respective areas: nine additional youth workers were hired. Under the leadership of SF promoters, various production-oriented activities as well as some community development activities were started. The experiment is still going on. The experience from each year is being used to improve the programme for the following year.

## **4.2 Building Up Self-Confidence and Trust**

Considering the average situation of the larger part of the rural population, which is characterized by its dependency on persons such as private moneylenders and landlords, the self-confidence of beneficiary groups and their degree of trust towards external agents, like government or bank employees and sometimes also the staff of development projects, tends to be extremely low. This holds true especially for poor rural women living in societies dominated by men, i.e. almost all over the world. . However, both self-confidence and trust in partners are needed for the beneficiaries to have the courage to commit- themselves in the development process, to request the services of line agencies and the like. Both need to be fostered by an RRD project team charged with catalyst functions.

### **4.2.1 From Self-Confidence to Self-Reliance**

Without self-confidence, a person hardly dares to rely on his or her own resources; or, to put it the other way around, growing self-confidence is a pre-condition to increased self-reliance. The beneficiaries of an RRD programme need to understand their own importance in the development process: they are able to contribute to this process, and they have a right to challenge institutions and organizations to do the same. It is the RRD project team's task to promote such an understanding among all partners concerned, but for the moment the focus is on the beneficiary groups of the poor: how can their self-confidence and, consequently, self-reliance be fostered? How can they be helped, especially the women, to perceive their own strengths, their potential, their limitations - and their rights?

A first step towards increasing the beneficiaries' self-confidence is in making them understand and feel that they, both women and men, are accepted as equal partners in the development process. Since the objective is the development of their economic situation, their environment, their lives, they should indeed have a stronger say than any external support agent. (The argument against this is, of course, that outside development agents know better, whatever the subject ...; see chapter 4.1.2)

A second way to boost the beneficiaries' self-confidence is to give them chances to identify what they know, what they do not know, and what they need to know. "Learning by doing" is one of the fastest and most effective methods to be applied in participatory planning, implementing and evaluating of development measures; it demonstrates the beneficiaries' capabilities to others and, sometimes more important, to themselves. Since in many developing countries, women are excluded from public life or, at best, admitted as silent and passive participants, they often need special support in learning to loudly voice their interests and opinions, demanding to be heard and included in the development process - not only as labourers or accidental beneficiaries but as decision-makers in, for example, the management of self-help groups, village organizations and other local government institutions.

In this context, impact monitoring (see chapter 3.3.2) is extremely important - not so much because the RRD project staff's time spent on inducing self-confidence must be accounted for, but because there is a lot to learn with regard to the task of inducing as well as gaining trust and confidence. In viewing the progress of their group-activities the beneficiaries may gain self-confidence and trust in each other as well as in the supporting agencies; these, again, will gain a clearer picture not only of the beneficiaries' growing capabilities but of the degree to which their own support and services are accepted by the intended beneficiaries.

### "Do's and Don'ts"

The beneficiaries, supported by the RRD project staff and other agencies, might start with planning and implementing measures according to the needs expressed by beneficiary women and men: priority should be given to activities that produce the most direct benefits with quickly visible results. The complexity of the measures should not surpass the beneficiaries' capabilities: it is an illusion to think that responsibilities, initially taken over by the RRD project staff wishing to "help" the beneficiaries and "improve" the measure by adhering to (technical) standards imported from outside the region, can later be "handed over". little by little, to the beneficiaries. The beneficiaries should feel - and be held - fully responsible for their own activities at all stages of a project.

What kind of support, to be given by the RRD programme staff, may be appropriate can be found out by conducting training needs assessments in regard to the beneficiary women's and men's knowledge, skills and attitudes. Support in form of training may range from value orientation to the practice of teamwork and inducing commitment, from analyzing the situation in terms of problems, needs and potentials to visiting other groups or projects working under similar conditions. Other kinds of support needed may be the opening up of access to finance (revolving funds; credits and loans with group collateral) or marketing channels for the farmers' produce.

### "Do's and Don'ts"

In all events, innovations should always be based on existing practices and, if at all possible, on local resources.

Naturally, the formal and informal leaders tend to be the first to be considered for training - but it is the less well positioned and the less articulate members of the rural community - and, among those, the women - who are most in need of self-confidence building measures: their involvement must be given special attention.

### Confidence building measures and self-help mobilization: the DDP experience, Nepal<sup>58</sup>

In order to contribute towards initiation of a self-sustaining development process, the Dhading District Project (DDP) team felt that it must look beyond purely physical target achievement and towards community development, focussing on the ward level - a ward, normally consisting of two to four villages, being Nepal's "lowest" political unit.

#### **Immediate Objectives**

1. To contribute towards the confidence-building of the local people so that they are encouraged to take the lead role in rural development.
2. To help operationalize the "Users' Committee" concept of the Decentralization Act in order to contribute towards fostering self-help organization at the grass-root level.
3. To help implement small scale community development activities perceived to be of priority need by the local people.

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<sup>58</sup> Abstract from two articles by D.P.Ojha: "Confidence Building Measures and Self-Help Mobilization", in: Participation and Self Help Mobilization. DDP's Approach and Recent Experiences. Kathmandu 1988; and "Community Development Programme". Paper submitted to the Philippines Workshop. Kathmandu 1990.

**Guidelines**

The following guidelines for the Ward Level Projects (WLP) were ratified by the District Assembly:

1. NRs 11.300 (about DM 2,000 at that time) would be allocated to each of the 450 wards... with which the villagers of a ward could undertake some project that they themselves wanted. The choice of the project was left entirely to the villagers.
2. The villagers of each ward were to elect a Users' Committee to plan and implement their project.
3. The Users' Committee must submit their plan to the District Technical Office (DTO) for an official cost estimate of the project and approval of the plan. The DTO would also have to certify that the project had been completed within the estimated cost. Both these points were required by Nepalese law.
4. The Users' Committee would have to keep accounts and submit their accounts to the District Panchayat (i.e. the District Government) considered their project complete. ...

Everyone agreed that absolute transparency in decision-making, funding and reporting was essential to the scheme's success. To secure this transparency in funding, members of the team held large gatherings of village officials in four separate areas of the district. DDP team members explained the purpose of the confidence-building measures, the steps necessary to get the money released, project criteria, and the means of gaining official approval. Since these meetings were held in the open, interested villagers could and did sit in on the discussions. The team also profited immensely from these meetings.

**Assessing Achievements ...**

(From 1983 to 1988, some 900 projects were implemented in 450 different wards in Dhading District. Substantial funds, about NRs 14,000,000 have gone to the wards, equitably throughout the district, to finance locally perceived needs - such as drinking water - at a relatively low cost. Women were not specifically included in the programme at decision-making level but they ultimately profited from the many drinking water schemes).

... The key was the fact that the projects enabled people to organize themselves to work together and to implement projects which satisfied needs they themselves perceived. The outside funding was, in the end, only the core around which people could organize themselves in their own way, for their own purposes. To this core, people added their own efforts and their own resources ... In carrying out the work, people learnt how to organize and implement projects. They learnt how funds were transferred and what paperwork had to be done. how to purchase materials and organize labour for transport and construction. In the end, however, the most important lesson was that they gained confidence in their abilities to help themselves.



### **... and yet: Phasing Out**

Despite the success of the WLPs, the DDP team felt that the scheme should not be continued in the second implementation phase for the following reasons:

1. The first amendment of the Decentralization Act (passed in 1982) limited the possibility of making the Users' Committee a viable local institution for self-help (see chapter 4.3).
2. One notable shortcoming of the WLPs was the nature of projects identified and implemented. Practically all projects were of the public works type - very much the same as those implemented in the past under regular grant-in-aid. Except for a few projects, none were directly productive.... Given the decision-making process in the panchayats - primarily determined by men's equity and electoral considerations - projects in the directly productive sectors could hardly be expected because they are bound to benefit relatively fewer households - compared to public-works-type communal projects - and, therefore, difficult for the elected leaders to prepare and justify.

A most important element in institution development, namely internal resource mobilization of a continuing nature, was perceived to be lacking. Consequently, a new Community Development Programme stressing internal resource mobilization was started.

## **4.2.2 Trust in Partners**

The beneficiaries' "learning by doing" should include their demanding services from line agencies, other government institutions or NGOs - and this takes a lot of self-confidence. It is usually even more difficult for poor women than for poor men to confront representatives of governmental agencies with their ideas and demands, because not only do they face somebody higher up in the hierarchy but, mostly, a member of the opposite sex. The RRD project staff may motivate and support the beneficiaries in obtaining due contributions from support agencies, but this needs to be done discretely so as to avoid the beneficiaries' growing dependent on the project team's advice.

The acceptance of beneficiaries, both women and men, as equal partners within the development process contributes to a climate of trust between support agents and beneficiaries. Mutual respect is the basis of mutual trust which will develop if beneficiaries and support agents can learn about and from each other - for example in participatory planning workshops. Participatory planning is a prerequisite to developing trustful relations among the parties involved.

## "Do's and Don'ts"

Part of the RRD teams' task is to ensure adequate women's representation in the respective workshops or, if this is completely impossible in the given socio-cultural context, to find other means of ensuring that the women's interests flow into project planning.

Trust is founded on personal relationships which may be difficult to develop solely during official meetings such as a planning workshop. The RRD project staff and other interested development agents might try to develop such relationships outside official programme functions, e.g. by attending village fiestas and events personally important to the beneficiaries, such as birthday celebrations and weddings. And, of course, they may invite beneficiaries to their own events. A good way for establishing personal relationships with the beneficiaries is via the rural youth who always seem to be a little bored and eager to meet new people. Often, it needs a woman to win the women's confidence.

Last but not least, "trust in partners" means trust among the beneficiaries who, more often than not, are a heterogeneous assembly of individual people nursing their individual dreams. It is important for the RRD project staff to foster a group-identity among the beneficiaries, a sense of belonging to the ones undertaking a specific activity, leading them to understand that

- they have a stronger say in the development process as a group than as individuals;
- they are expected to share among themselves the rights and duties, benefits and responsibilities with regard to the planning, implementing and evaluating their development schemes, and to contribute to the scheme in cash or kind;
- the idea and the wish for the scheme undertaken originated from among themselves - that it is their own development they are taking in hand.

## A "Feeling of Belonging".

### Lessons learnt in TAD, Indonesia<sup>59</sup>

In 1977, the Governments of Indonesia and Germany established the project "Technical Cooperation for Area Development, Kutai District, East Kalimantan" (TAD) with the overall goal of raising the standard of living and welfare of the community, especially the rural population, by improving income generation and familiarizing people with appropriate technologies. ...

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<sup>59</sup> Abstract from B. Baraque, D. Boyce, E. Mugnidin, "The Case of Two Irrigation Pump Programmes at Penyinggahan Ulu and Teluk Muda, Kutai District, East Kalimantan Province, Indonesia". Paper submitted to the Philippines Workshop. East Kalimantan 1990.

**Irrigation equipment given**

The annual weather cycle brings a rainy season with floods between October and May, to the Kutai District followed by a dry season from June to October. Combined with the poor soils in Kutai District, this results in the farmers growing only one crop of rice per year. The TAD project staff suggested to the staff of the Department of Agriculture's Food Crop Service at provincial level the idea of providing irrigation equipment to selected areas within Kutai in order to enable farmers to produce a second annual crop. The approach initially taken was basically top-down. The idea was for Departmental staff to select six potential locations and for TAD to provide a floating platform on the river, complete with engine pump, and on-shore ducting infrastructure to convey the raised river water to farmers' rice fields as and when required according to crop husbandry practices.

**... first to the village of Teluk Muda**

Teluk Muda was the first location thus provided for, and being the first, the measure was implemented in some haste. Only selected people were consulted in the village before the plan was implemented with approval of the village chief. Of course, initially, everybody was grateful for such facilities being given, but this was soon followed by problems regarding their cooperative usage. The participants quickly lost interest in the scheme which had utilized five hectares of formerly unproductive land. By 1988, three years later, there was just one man left-and he was a member of the family of the village chief who had seconded the installation of the pump engine - farming just one hectare, and doing very well from just that.

**... last to Penyinggahan Ulu**

By the time the programme reached the village of Penyinggahan Ulu, both the Departmental staff and the TAD project staff had learnt some lessons: they were careful to discuss the proposal and its implications, before implementation, with the entire village community and also with the sub-district chief. The latter proved a real asset because later he was able to actively support the young field extension worker handling the production of the extra crop. The farmers actually got their second rice crop in 1986, but the following year they lost the entire crop due to early floods. Subsequently, some families participating in the scheme moved to other sub-districts: some of the vacated land was taken over by the remaining farmers, who up to now are doing very well on a family basis while cooperating with each other and reaping the benefits of their coordinated farming practices.

### The Differences in the Achievements of the Two Villages

can be accounted for as follows:

| <b><u>Relevant Factors</u></b>             | <b><u>Teluk Mud</u></b>   | <b><u>Penyinggahan Ulu</u></b>  |
|--|---|---|
| <b>Planning</b>                            | Only selected persons, e.g. village chief and head of farmer group, were involved.  | The community was involved from the beginning, and also the sub-district chief.   |
| <b>Determining the Form of Activities</b>  | The farmer group was not sure whether the pump was actually needed, and therefore did not fully share operational responsibilities. | Activities were decided upon during discussions and in accordance with the farmers' needs. Besides, the on-site field extension worker was actively involved. |
| <b>Motivation</b>                          | Lack of regular attention and guidance from any one source demotivated the farmers.   | Motivation was cultivated by all concerned, and efforts coordinated by the village chief with support from the sub-district chief.                            |
| <b>The Feeling of Belonging to a Group</b> | ... was not strong enough. The leader did not keep the farmer group together.   | ... was very strong because of motivating leaders being present.  |

Even in the case of Teluk Muda, community support initially had existed, and it might have materialized as a community force had there been a feeling of "being involved in" the activity and "belonging to" the group planning and implementing it. Building up such feeling requires a participatory development process with coordinated instructions by responsible parties.

## 4.3 Organizational Development

People only cooperate if they profit from it, and long term cooperation requires continuing benefits to all partners. On this basis, different forms of cooperation can be developed anywhere at any time. While forming self-help groups for social activities has a long tradition in many societies, similar organizational structures providing services and promoting economic activities comprising, for example, village organizations and cooperatives are a comparatively new phenomenon.

In most- parts of the world, men can and do form such organizations more freely than women, but even then, only few such organisations have been able to both fulfill their objectives and, at the same time, survive as independent political entities: initially organized by the rural people themselves, they all too often end up as semi-governmental organizations having to follow the government's rules and regulations.

### Struggling under Governmental rules and regulations: Users' Committees in DDP, Nepal<sup>60</sup>

Despite all the success of the Ward Level Projects (WLP), the DDP team felt that the scheme should not be continued in the second implementation phase for two reasons, one of them being the first amendment of the Decentralization Act (passed in 1982) which limited the possibility of making the users' committee a viable local institution for self-help:

From 1985 onwards, the chairperson of the users' committee could no longer be elected from amongst the potential beneficiaries; this position automatically came to the ward chairman, i.e. the elected political representative, no matter whether he was a beneficiary or not. Thus, control of the project did not automatically come to the beneficiaries, which is necessary for the success of any communal or group development activity. With their status as independent self-help groups controlling their own project being endangered, the users' committees lost credibility and people's trust.

Since sustaining community development depends to a large degree on the combined efforts of local people, of both women and men, support to respective groups and their network as well as encouraging the formation of new groupings represents a big challenge to everybody wishing to equitably share responsibilities and benefits among partners in the development process: the RRD programme staff, governmental staff from line agencies and the like, local politicians, NGOs, and business people from the private sector.

Not only do groups foster a sense of belonging, giving the individual confidence and security in the community; in unifying individual efforts, they are able, to address common problems more effectively by either organizing for themselves whatever they may need, e.g. agricultural inputs or access to credit, or by pressurizing those supposedly providing for their needs, e.g. the governmental supply and service structure, into actually doing so.

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<sup>60</sup> For the full story of the Ward Level Projects see chapter 4.2.1, "Confidence Building Measures and Self-Help Mobilization: the DDP Experience, Nepal".

Both informal self-help groupings and formal associations at any level -ward, village, sub-district, district, province - often face economic, managerial and organizational obstacles: how, for example, can we go beyond temporary groups formed ad hoc in view of one specific goal, towards building up a sustainable economic basis for further group activities? how can we master the transition from a successful self-help group to an association or another entity with a legal status? how can we ensure that the organization remains flexible and able to answer the requirements of its members, be they male or female?

It is in the wide field of organizational development that such groups tend to need external support. The support to be given throughout the RRD project cycle depends on the project environment: it may range from initiating new groups or reviving traditional ones, to consolidating existing groups and easing their process of formalization, which may lead to their gradually gaining a voice in the formal sector.

### **4.3.1 As Self-Help Initiatives Grow Bigger ...**

As informal initiatives and groupings grow bigger and more powerful they usually require legitimization as an organization by attaining a legal status. This may be a problem in itself; but even if they manage to avoid coming under governmental control they often face serious organizational problems: the manpower needed to successfully organize and run a bigger and more complex body sometimes can no longer be provided by the group members on a voluntary basis; the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization tends to drop; and as the services provided grow insufficient, the members lose interest in continued participation.

"Later on, the initiative assumed such proportions..."  
Support to a private initiative by ADP, Indonesia<sup>61</sup>

In 1986, an informal local leader in one of the villages in the region covered by the Area Development Project, ADP, in West Sumatra, a Mr. Sukirman who earned his money mainly as a trader of groundnuts and other agricultural commodities, started an initiative to rehabilitate wasteland covered by alang-alang grass in order to increase agricultural production and to raise the local population's standard of living.

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<sup>61</sup> Abstract from Pamuncak, Roeleke, op.cit., pp.2ff.

His idea was to plough the waste land. have it cultivated by local farmers to whom he would pay a living allowance as a loan. then buy the harvest and recover his loan. He undertook to finance the initiative out of his own funds, at least in the beginning. Later on, the initiative assumed such proportions (150 families, 400 ha land) that he could no longer single-handedly tackle the problems of technical know-how, of economic management (cash flow problems), and of group management.

Thus, the scheme developed so as to come to rest on three pillars,

- i.e. Mr. Sukirman himself and his management abilities:
- the local farmers: and
- various public agencies, the ADP team, and also the Provincial Development Bank.

The project team came to act very much as a catalyst or mediator between Mr. Sukirman on the one hand, and the bank and other government agencies, such as the land office on the other hand.

### **4.3.2 Supporting Self-Help Groups**

Wherever possible, projects should try to work with existing groups and organizations, formal or non-formal. It is much more difficult to initiate a group from scratch than consolidating a group which has already developed an identity; and an identity is absolutely necessary for an informal self-help grouping of people to grow into a formal group, or for formal groups to connect into an association, or associations into a self-sustaining organization.

#### **"Do's and Don'ts"**

Still, in case there are no self-help groupings, traditional or modern, in the region (which is unlikely, because there are some forms of organization everywhere: it is more a matter of finding out about them) group building processes might be initiated. Although many groups may form only for ad hoc purposes, just to benefit from whatever the RRD programme seems to promise, and although such groups tend to disappear after having served their one purpose, this approach is not to be entirely neglected: even a one-time effort, if it turns out to be a success, may boost people's confidence in their own capabilities and potentials and strengthen their bargaining power towards development agencies.

How, then, can such "group-building be facilitated"? There are lots of ways described in many a book<sup>62</sup>, but here are some suggestions:

- in order to improve communication among the villagers, provide forums for discussion, e.g. by calling for village meetings, conducting workshops, arranging visits among different villages;
- conduct an awareness campaign with regard to the advantages of group building among community members ("united we are strong");
- identify and train village representatives, formal and informal leaders, and social organizers in team building, communication skills, conflict management, problem analysis, ZOPP or other appropriate planning methods;
- facilitate the clarification of roles and responsibilities in a group; make sure that all members have a role in attaining the goal jointly decided upon; support the evolution of sub-committees and working groups for special, limited tasks and projects;
- support groups with appropriate means, such as training for all members regarding planning, implementing and evaluating common actions; provide seed money for a revolving fund, incentives for generating income in form of dances, raffles, competitions, exhibitions.

### "Do's and Don'ts"

It is much more effective to let the rural people form their own organization and identify their own local, perhaps informal, leaders rather than trying to guide them through formal representatives or officials from the extension service or other organizations.

Women require special support in group building, in gaining adequate representation as well as access to lead functions in mixed groups. The evaluation of a group cannot be limited to the assessment of the outcome of some development measure but has to take into account how the result was brought about: how were decisions taken? how many group members participated in which way in planning, implementing and evaluating the measure?<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> A particularly interesting description of various possible stages for a self-help group to go through and many ideas about appropriate external support is given by B.Lecomte, Überlegungen zur Förderung von Selbsthilfeprozessen. Gemeinsame Arbeitsgruppe "Armutsbekämpfung durch Selbsthilfe, Arbeitsschwerpunkt 3, Dokument 24. Bonn 1989.

<sup>63</sup> For "A Set of Standard Variables for Group Analysis" as well as "A Yardstick for Measuring the Growth of a Group" see Boyce, Del Vecchio, op.cit., chapter 5.3, PP.24-27.



## Organizational development of a self-help group backed by Kandy IRDP, Sri Lanka

The project area is characterized by over-population, small land holdings, lacking employment opportunities, high unemployment rates ... People might fight poverty by generating income through intensification and diversification of agriculture production but...

It was definitely not that they lacked good will, not even the lack of access to credit which hampered them: it was missing or malfunctioning support services such as input supply, marketing, extension, which formed the decisive bottleneck. People were aware of this and willing to organize these missing services themselves. The establishment of a cooperative was out of the question because there are numerous such organizations in the project area which do not function. Besides these, though, there were small self-help groups with 201025 members fulfilling social tasks.

With the support of an external advisor the farmers analyzed the situation and developed an organizational concept: they established a limited company owned by themselves. The farmers are represented in the organization by ten members elected annually as Board of Directors. This Board is responsible for the organization's strategies and for the appointment of a manager-. The manager, presently a former local business man, is responsible for the entire management of the company as well as for appointment of staff, presently consisting of six field officers, a store keeper, a truck driver, an accountant and a secretary. The field officers, all of whom have an agricultural background, are responsible for providing services such as extension, input supply and marketing to all farmers in the six villages of the project area. The motivation of field officers and the company manager for their respective work is increased by a performance oriented payment system: for all inputs supplied to the farmers and all produce marketed they get a commission. The ceiling for the input prices as well as the floor for the marketing prices, fixed monthly by the Board of Directors and the company manager, depend on the average retail price at the next local market. The company was established six years ago, providing services to a group of only 50 farmers. Today, the organization serves 1200 farmers. It runs on a profit making basis, i.e. all depreciation costs for fixed assets, initially financed with external support, are covered.

### **4.3.3 Supporting the Intermediary Level: GOs, NGOs, Private Initiatives**

To some people it may appear more "noble" and "rewarding" to work directly with self-help groups at grass-root level, but in order to achieve broader effects the RRD project staff needs to engage intermediary organizations as multipliers of development efforts. What is more, the RRD project team should strengthen the intermediary level between the rural poor and the government, meaning NCOs, private initiatives, also semigovernmental institutions, which may be in need of training or other inputs in order to better serve their clientele at village level. The coordination of project activities with other organizations in the regional setting often is widely neglected - but then, this is the prime task of an RRD project staff acting as catalysts (see chapter 3.1). The question is how to best utilize all available potentials.

## **4.4 People's Funds**

### **4.4.1 Funds for Community Development**

The lack of financial means to sustain people's development efforts looms largely in theories concerned with sustainable development processes. In practice, ways have been sought to open up access to credit for groups of poor people (see, for example, DDP/SFDP's linking credit and social organization, chapter 4.1.2), or to mobilize people's internal resources which are to be complemented temporarily by external ones. What is called, then, a "ward level project" or "community development programme" in Nepal (see chapter 4.2.1) and a "community development scheme" in Pakistan (see chapter 3.2.2) carries the name of "village development fund" in Thailand. The programmes resemble each other in that they provide the inhabitants of a ward or village with funds for a specific project. The villagers themselves may decide about its nature and its implementation as long as they adhere to certain rules of cooperation agreed upon with the supporting project's staff. More than the others, perhaps, the Thai name draws attention to the financial side of the programme, but a closer look reveals that here, like in the other programmes, the funds are used not only for improving the villagers' living conditions by means of a particular development project but as an instrument for motivating people

- to organize themselves around a specific project,
- not to passively rely on some external agency to plan, implement and evaluate it for them, but
- to become actively involved in the development process by unfolding existing and gaining new skills, learning how to deal with the project environment, and, hopefully, gaining the self-confidence needed
- to insist on participating in the development process in future.

### Village Development Fund for building up people's participation in TG-HDP, Thailand<sup>64</sup>

The Royal Thai Government and the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany have been cooperating since 1981 in the Thai-German Highland Development Programme (TG-HDP) covering three areas of the northern hills around Chiang Mai. The overall aim "is seen as a process by which the rural people organize themselves, and through their organizations are able to have some say in local development efforts."...

In order to help the beneficiary population to better realize their ability to help themselves, TG-HDP introduced Village Development Funds (VDF), providing cash in the amount of 5,000 to 6,000 baht (approximately DM 330 to 400) directly to village committees. The money is to be used for solving the problems or fulfilling the needs of the community rather than those of individuals.

#### **Contact Teams Living in the Project Area**

TG-HDP staff has selected, trained and deployed social workers as "contact teams" acting as mediators between villagers and the governmental body concerned. Living and working for a limited duration in the project areas, they help villagers to understand their role in the development process and involve government field staff in the process from within the village set-up to assure the continuity of programmes.

The contact teams introduced the VDF in discussions with villagers, thus giving people opportunities to learn about the importance of village development and organizations. The team members repeatedly provide training on the roles and functions of village organizations until villagers may gradually decide to set up a "village committee".

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<sup>64</sup> Abstract from A. DelVecchio. S. Numtapong, "Village Development Fund: A Tool for Building-Up Participation". Paper submitted to the Philippines Workshop. Chiang Mai 1990

**Criteria for Setting up a VDF**

If such a committee is interested in receiving a VDF, it must agree to the following criteria:

- the villagers' must be willing to participate in village development activities, volunteering labour and local materials as well as contributing 10% of the total VDF:
- the village committee is to reserve 70% of the VDF for loans to self-help groups and 10% to individuals, while 20% must remain as a permanent reserve (savings):
- the borrowers must show to the village committee that they already have 10% of the total loan requested, this can be in form of cash:
- the village committee must determine the soundness of proposals to ensure that the borrowers can make repayment:
- the village committee signs an agreement with TG-HDP that the fund will be managed according to the set criteria and that they will be responsible for fund continuation, i.e. for revolving funds and savings.

**Responsibilities of the village committee****regarding fund management:**

- to inform the villagers about VDF and explain its objective:
- to consider and approve proposals, and allocate funds accordingly;
- to follow-up the use of funds to ensure that they have been deployed for the specified purposes:
- to control the repayment of funds according to the obligation agreed upon by individuals or groups involved.

**Responsibilities of the Contact Team:**

- to provide cash to the village committee as soon as the agreement has been signed and the 10% contribution is assured:
- to play the role of advisor to the village committee:
- to train the village committee on how to manage the fund;
- to support the villagers in contacting governmental bodies and in asking their assistance, in facilitating the contact between the two parties, and making the latter understand about VDF; and
- to regularly report on the progress and obstacles in the use of VDF, giving feedback to the villagers.

**Achievements ...**

From 1986 up to now, 39 VDF were established in the project area. The village committees have used the money for establishing rice banks, for pig raising activities, loans for crop seed or seedlings, medical funds, community stores and others. The village committees and other self-help organizations have gained

confidence and experiences regarding their role in and their ability for local development. TG-HDP has produced a manual entitled "the Effective Management of the Village Development Fund", to be used for training field staff and for the field staff's reference in assisting the village committees.

### **... and Problems Encountered**

When VDF were first introduced, criteria for assessing a village committee's readiness to fulfill its responsibilities were too general. Consequently, the contact team's assistance was frequently required during implementation until, in 1987, the team members put more emphasis on preparatory steps before assisting villagers to request funds.

The majority of the villages in the project area have only an insignificant cash economy. The villagers lack experience not only with regard to running a village committee but also with regard to maintaining and using funds for development activities.

The contact team initially over-looked including government field staff who are planned to continue assisting the village committees on fund management once the contact teams are withdrawn from the project area.

## **4.4.2 Funds for Promoting Self-Help Efforts of the Poor as an Instrument for Organizational Development**

Organizational development" as used here covers both beneficiaries' associations and development agencies supporting them. The instrument was designed on the basis of insights gained by one of the nine groups working with the BMZ special unit ES 31, "Fighting Poverty through Self-Help", and tailored to measure the potential and limitations of GTZ as a governmental organization and its procedures.<sup>65</sup>

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Beneficiary Group: | the poor (defined according to the actual living and working conditions of the lower sections of the population, including especially women, in a specific partner country) |
| Overall Goal:      | the beneficiary group of the poor participates more strongly in the development process   |
| Instrument:        | a project or a component of a project, namely   |

<sup>65</sup> LJ.Müller-Glodde, G.Urban. Orientierungsrahmen "Fonds zur Förderung von Selbsthilfe" - Beschreibung eines Instruments. Entwurf, GTZ Eschborn 1990. The following is the translation of an abstract.

## Promoting Self-Help Efforts of the Poor

### used for financing

#### measures

aimed at providing project executing development agents and agencies with the capability to support the poor in their efforts

#### beneficiary groups:

all development agents willing to promote the poor in their self-help capabilities, i.e.

- self-help groups (SHG) and their associations (SHGA);
- intermediary organizations such as NGOs, consultings, (semi-) governmental institutions and organizations

#### goal:

- development agents qualified
- capacities of SHC/A strengthened;
- private and governmental development agents strengthened in their capacities to promote the efforts of the poor

#### results are, for example:

- the number of (in-)formal SHG/A increased
- representatives and service personnel elected
- "rules of cooperation" agreed upon by SHG/A and intermediary/ governmental organizations

#### a fund

for the poor

#### beneficiary groups:

self-help groups of the poor and their associations

#### goal:

the free space for developing and strengthening the target groups' self-help capacities is expanded by means of providing a fund; the use of the money is decided on by the target groups together with the project staff

#### results and activities

are to be determined by the beneficiary group: in this sense, the fund is "open" (to the beneficiaries' ideas, needs, wishes and potential)

**activities** are, for example:

- campaigns for awarenessbuilding and information regarding passive self-help potentials
- training, exchanges of experience, technical studies and other measures qualifying the organization and strengthening social structures

This part of the project or project component may be planned, calculated and controlled like any advisory project

The open fund will be steered on the basis of "rules of cooperation" to be negotiated among GTZ as foreign development agency, the partner (GO or NGO) and the beneficiary groups of the poor.

Objects of negotiation for the open fund are

- the purpose of the fund and fields of activity;
- criteria for the use of funds;
- procedures for usage (grants, credits);
- approximate ceilings for the maximum value of a single measure;
- long term strategies for the usage of the fund
  - on beneficiary group level;
  - on the level of supporting agencies (GO, NGO, autonomous legal body).

Indicators for an appropriate use of the free space offered by the open fund are, for example, the amount of the beneficiaries' own inputs, the repayment rate of credits (preferably into a revolving fund), or the beneficiaries' keeping to the rules of cooperation agreed upon.

This part of the project can be controlled by SHG/A group liabilities for credits and repayments, by intermediary organizations checking that SHG/A's keep to the rules of cooperation, and by officially recognized auditors.

Special aspects of the beneficiaries' fund to be financed out of the overall fund for promoting self-help efforts of the poor are that:

- responsibilities and the authorization to operate the fund are transferred to the beneficiary groups;
- consequently, the designated purpose cannot be planned in detail in advance; in this sense, the fund is "open" to the users' ideas and potential;
- a misuse of the fund's basic openness is counteracted by the involved parties' agreeing to a set of "rules of cooperation";

- adherence to these rules can be controlled by the members of self-help groups and their association, by intermediary organizations and by the GTZ and the partner's involving recognized auditors.

The beneficiaries' fund basically operates in the informal sector, providing seed money for the establishment of revolving funds to be ultimately run by the beneficiaries. Not only does it facilitate the build-up of community saving funds for internal lending and borrowing, it also promotes the formation of micro organizations such as "credit and farming" or "credit and saving" groups, and of networks which may lead, for example, to the formation of people's "village banks".

### **4.4.3 Rural Finance: Saving and Credit Opportunities for the Poor**

In most developing countries, nonformal saving and credit opportunities exist, usually in form of small saving clubs<sup>66</sup> or private money lending within the family, among friends or neighbours. Where this does not suffice, there are professional money lenders demanding exorbitant interest rates of up to 100% p.a. - but not requiring collateral and the bureaucratic procedures of formal financial institutions. This type of credit is popular among the illiterate and poor but it leads to increasing obligations and dependencies on the money lender. The question is, how can RRD programmes support the rural poor in organizing their own saving and credit opportunities.

The main problem for the rural poor regarding the formal financing sector is the question of whether saving in monetary form and depositing the savings at financial institutions is to their advantage. This is so only if the real rate of interest (interest rate minus inflation rate) yields a profit. It is the RRD project team's task to provide information to the rural poor regarding advantages and disadvantages of monetary saving and credit, of pooling resources in a saving and credit scheme; about the support offered by the project. On the one hand, the project staff should directly support the formation of credit and savings groups by preparing, for example, preliminary "rules of cooperation" describing the kind of support to be provided by the programme as well as the commitment expected from the groups. Project support to groups might include training in administering, accounting and

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<sup>66</sup> In Pakistan, they are called "committee system", in Indonesia "simpan-pinjam", in West Africa "tontines". The members save small sums of money which are, at the end of a month, dealt out in a revolving basis



auditing group budgets, funds and savings. Group internal rules and regulations deciding, for example, the amount of regular savings, schedules regarding saving and repayment of loans, how to utilize the savings and credits, should be designed by the group members themselves. If requested, the project staff might advise the groups on these matters and support them in introducing mechanisms for self-sustained financing within the group, i.e. internal lending, use of collaterals, emergency funding, credit fee or interest. On the other hand, the project staff will have to work towards the creation of framework conditions required for the establishment of savings and credit groups and for their acceptance by the formal financial sector. Formal rural financial institutions in developing countries tend to simply ignore the poorer sections of the population as potential customers: transaction costs in serving the individual with only small deposits or credits are high, collateral for credits are insufficient or missing altogether - in short, much work and little profit are to be expected. The question to be asked by an RRD project team working as catalysts is, "how can we, on the one hand, support the rural poor in gaining access to formal financial institutions and, on the other hand, support financial institutions in developing appropriate services for the rural poor?" The idea is to take the banks to the people and to make the poor bankable. This is not easy. "The credit business of every financial institution, which is oriented to the target groups, regardless of whether this institution is a formal bank, a self-help group, or even a special promotion programme, must observe three sets of requirements:

- The types of loans and, if possible, their volume and terms, should correspond to the needs of the **borrowers**, otherwise they will either do more harm than good, or will not be accepted by the intended clients.
- The awarding of credit should be profitable for the **credit-granting entity** (the precise definition of profitability may vary according to the type of institution) in order to help cover operating costs, and thus provide for the long-term availability of credit.
- If it is supported directly or indirectly, the awarding of credit should lead to the **desired development effects** for the target groups, for rural areas and for the economy as a whole.

In order to meet these requirements, four problems must be solved in the planning and implementation phases of a credit programme, especially if the programme is directed towards borrowers who would otherwise have no access to formal financial institutions:

- The **access problem**: how can a financial institution reach the target groups and how can it activate their demand for credit? Or, seen from the opposite perspective, how can the target groups gain access to credit?

- The **utilization problem**: how can an efficient utilization of funds be attained for both the economic unit and the economy as a whole?
- The **repayment problem**: how can repayment, and thus the continued existence of the fund, be ensured?
- The **cost problem**: how can a financial institution limit its costs and risks so that its existence and independence are not endangered?<sup>67</sup>

Much has been written in answer to such problems.<sup>68</sup> However, the route of rural finance need not necessarily lead to linking the rural poor to existing formal finance institutions - it may also lead to founding special financial institutions for the poor, independent of conventional banking procedures, like the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh.

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<sup>67</sup> E.Kropp. R.H.Schmidt (eds.). Rural Finance. Guiding Principles. Rural Development Series. Eschborn 1987. p. 57f.

<sup>68</sup> see *ibid.*, pp. 58-69. Also: E.Kropp et al., Linking Self-Help Groups and Banks in Developing Countries. Edited by APRACA and GTZ. Eschborn 1989: and, of course, the abundant literature on schemes such as the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh

## 5. Perspectives: “The Poor will be effectively reached if...”

"Compared with others, the poor are unseen and unknown. Their deprivation is often worse than is recognized by those who are not poor."<sup>69</sup>

Participation of the rural poor in the development process, this means that they are seen, that their voices are heard - not only by professional development agents willing to try hard to see and to listen, but by those people who do not seem particularly interested in doing so. Of course, there are many parties with multiple interests involved in the development process. All of them will have to be considered and dealt with by an RRD project team trying to integrate the rural poor into the mainstream of development, not only with regard to financial institutions but also to political representation, economic enterprises and organizations, social security networks...

Basically, there are four big obstacles to people's participation in RRD programmes as part of the overall development process:<sup>70</sup>

1. prevailing local and regional power structures often obstruct extending the legitimate claim for participation to the poor, to women, to marginalized groups;
2. both the interest in and the abilities of the respective partner institutions, of programme and project staff to use participatory approaches need to be developed - which takes a long time (Human Resource Development);
3. the problems of methodology and instruments arising from systematically involving large numbers of people in the development process have not been solved; possibly, RRD programmes will have to be designed with view to smaller regions and be considered rather as pilot approaches to participatory development;
4. promoting participatory approaches for the project staff often means that they have to moderate political and social conflicts. For this, local or foreign advisors usually possess neither the necessary political mandate nor an adequate definition of their role nor a safeguard allowing them to incur risks.

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<sup>69</sup> Chambers, Rural Development, op.cit., p. 25.

<sup>70</sup> See GTZ, Materialien zum LRE Workshop in Bolivien, op.cit., p.24.

The approaches to participatory development as described in the preceding chapters are meant to tackle such obstacles; the description may have shown where further probing is necessary. Nevertheless, "the world is quite thorny for the poor. No one will voluntarily make room for them. The scope of maneuvering for the poor ultimately depends on the organizational efforts of the poor. How quickly they can build up their solidarity and hence the countervailing power ... determines the extent of benefits which will accrue to the poor."<sup>71</sup> For this, they need support in form of (RRD) development programmes with a clear concept of what is to be developed, by whom, and or whose benefit

Says an optimist (a successful one):

"... the poor will be effectively reached if the programmes are designed exclusively for the poor, implemented through specialized delivery mechanisms with specialized people, designed by people who know what they are doing and for whom, implemented within a national policy framework which is supportive of Poverty Focussed Programmes."<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> A.Rahman, Impact of Grameen Bank Intervention on the Rural Power Structure. Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, Dhaka 1986, p. 3.

<sup>72</sup> M.Yunus. 'On Reaching the Poor'. Paper presented at the Project Implementation Workshop by IFAD. Dhaka, April 1984. Quoted in Rahman, op.cit., p.3.

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