Building bridges in PME

GUIDELINES FOR GOOD PRACTICE IN THE PLANNING, MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF COMMUNITY-BASED DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED BY SOUTHERN NGOs WITH SUPPORT FROM EUROPEAN ECUMENICAL AGENCIES

Contents

Foreword

A commitment to the struggle of poor and marginalised people for justice, and a readiness to translate this commitment into activities aimed at overcoming poverty and exploitation, are clear strengths of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) acting in development. However, it is also true that an over-activist disposition can be a weakness and that the effectiveness of NGOs is increased when measures are taken to ensure that they reflect on their work, learn from experience and feed this learning into future work.

The need for a greater 'learning capacity' was one of the main findings of the Discerning the Way Together study carried out at the initiative of several major ecumenical funding agencies in Western Europe in 1994. This led to the launch of a North-South action-reflection project, aimed at developing practical guidelines for NGOs to help meet this need.

Between 1996 and 1999 the Joint Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) Project was carried out, involving representatives of five ecumenical funding agencies and nine Southern development organisations from Latin America, Africa, the Middle East and Asia. The group met four times in annual plenary meetings to share and discuss their working PME systems and methods and to decide upon steps to improve these. This North-South collaborative project, unique within the Protestant churches' ecumenical framework, provided participants with valuable insights into how they could instil a capacity to learn in the working practices of their organisations. Generally both Northern and Southern participants believe that the use of simple, systematic procedures can increase the strength of their organisations, the quality of the work, and the communication with and participation of the organisations with which they collaborate.

Enthusiastic about their own learning experiences during the Joint PME Project, the participants decided not only to develop and refine their own PME but also to promote the application of their methods and tools among other NGOs in their countries and regions. This booklet of good practice guidelines is one step towards this. It represents a distillation of the key agreements made by project participants on what defines 'good practice' in PME, and sets out to share these with organisations interested in improving their PME and, ultimately, the quality and effectiveness of their work.

We all hope that this publication will stimulate sister organisations to reflect critically upon their own PME methods, systems and tools; and that the suggested guidelines will help towards the development and improvement of PME practice among organisations working for the eradication of poverty, for justice and dignity for all.

On behalf of the participants in the Joint PME Project
Coordinator *Date*

Bram van Leeuwen 1 August 2000 ICCO

The following participants were also involved in the preparation of this document: Henk Gilhuis and Audrey Kenter (ICCO), Mary Kleinenberg (AFRA), Christoph Mann (Bread for the World), Margaret Mwaura (CORAT), Alonso Roberts (CESE), Gobinda Saha (CCDB) and Aidan Timlin (Christian Aid).

Introduction

Motivation

When the participants met for the first time, they decided to take joint responsibility for the North-South PME project, with two objectives:

(a) To improve their internal working methods, so that limited human and financial resources could be used optimally in the struggle against poverty and injustice.

(b) To improve communication between Southern organisations and Northern funding agencies by harmonising their management information systems, orienting them towards learning and not just accountability, and ensuring the timely exchange of relevant information at the key stages of a project or programme. This should result in better co-operation between partners working together towards shared development goals.

In relation to the second of these objectives, the key questions concerned what information is required, when, and from whom:

- By the management of a Southern or Northern development organisation in order to be in a position to make the best possible use of its capacities and resources.

- In the communication between implementing and supporting Northern organisations, so that the latter are enabled to provide services to organisations that qualify for support, and to do so in a way that enables those organisations to become stronger actors in civil society.

The process

Assisted by a consultant, Frits Wils, a senior staff member of the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague, participants were introduced during the first plenary - in the Netherlands, January 1996 - to standard PME concepts and systems and how these are applied. All agreed to initiate PME experiments within their organisations as 'homework' during the period until the second plenary in Tanzania in February 1997. Discussions at this meeting focused mainly on the preconditions for partner organisations and supporting agencies to be able to communicate and co-operate on the basis of agreed PME systems. Southern participants argued that information generated through a PME system would make their organisations highly transparent to supporting agencies. They were concerned about whether agencies were sufficiently mature to deal with these insights fairly and whether there was enough trust and wisdom to interpret the information in a balanced way and use it constructively towards improved co-operation. Recognising the danger of jumping to conclusions, especially when supporting agencies look at Southern partners as (their) instruments for (their understanding of) development, participants affirmed that a common mission and common goals should serve as the basis and frame of reference for North-South co-operation. At the same time participants realised that the lack of appropriate information on projects and programmes could hamper and weaken a partnership relationship and negatively affect co-operation. This open debate about sensitive aspects of PME created a base for fruitful discussions about how PME systems could be installed and practised. Further experiments with the use of PME during 1997 prepared participants for an in-depth discussion of PME methods at the third plenary, held in Bangladesh in March 1998. This meeting agreed on a tentative set of guidelines for good practice in PME for both Southern and Northern organisations. Trial experiences with these guidelines during 1998 were fed into the final plenary in Honduras in April 1999.

An important part of each plenary meeting was a field visit, organised by the host organisation, designed to keep plenary discussions focused on the practical realities of PME application rather than its theory. Through the field visits with CCDB in Bangladesh and with CCD in Honduras, the host organisations demonstrated the way they used PME systems, methods and tools. Working in small groups, participants acquainted themselves with the application of PME in the projects and in local communities, reflected on their observations, and brought these reflections back to plenary discussions where guidelines for good practice were gradually formulated and agreed.

An outline of the booklet

This publication is a summary of the main results of these four plenary sessions. Chapter One offers some initial comments about the changing context of development co-operation in which the issue of PME is approached. Chapter Two puts forward general principles for North-South co-operation and then looks at PME as a methodological tool, at the logical framework approach, and at the characteristics necessary for a PME system to be relevant and useful. In Chapter Three, focusing on the work of implementing NGOs, guidelines are formulated for the planning, monitoring and evaluation of a project. Chapter Four considers the essentials of community-based PME and how it relates to the PME system of a supporting NGO. Chapter Five discusses how the implementing NGO's project PME system relates to funding agencies. Here, recommendations are made about the type of information that agencies require to fulfil their role responsibly, and about ways to avoid or minimise negative effects on NGOs' own systems. Finally, Chapter Six contains an introduction to the challenge of developing PME systems at programme and institutional levels.

Chapter 1

PME in the changing context of development co-operation

Interest in Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation has grown considerably among ecumenical agencies and partners over recent years, for several reasons.

Firstly, development concerns in the 1990s experienced a shift in focus away from ideology to greater emphasis on concrete, measurable results and iterative achievements. While previous expectations with regard to development co-operation were influenced by preoccupation with ideological motives and compatibility, recent debate has been characterised by increasing pragmatism and questions about effectiveness, impact, added value and attribution. More open, flexible attitudes also take into account the diversity of interests involved. Relations have begun to be built with other actors such as government institutions and international agencies, previously considered by many as monolithic entities more likely to constrain than to enable people's development. The non-governmental development community is showing greater modesty, and it recognises the need to identify and measure results that make a difference to the lives of poor people.

Secondly, the reduced role of the State in productive and social investment, and the failure of globalising markets to provide productive employment and income for the poorest, have prompted a strong expansion of the NGO sector in most countries. There is an increasing recognition of the potential of NGOs - through their close relationship with the poor, their adaptability to local situations, their capacity for innovation - so that expectations for the contribution of NGOs to poverty eradication and social development have grown considerably over the past decade.

Thirdly, despite the increasing visibility of NGOs in the development field, up to now the NGO community as a whole has largely failed to produce compelling evidence of the difference it makes to the lives and circumstances of poor people. Many recent publications point to the general weakness of NGOs in systematically identifying and documenting their impact. As a result, their overall contribution to development remains ambiguous and their capacity to learn from experience weak.

These factors affect the relations between Northern and Southern development NGOs which can suffer from an imbalance in several respects. Non-operational funding agencies, when questioned about the relevance of NGO interventions, are inclined to refer these questions to their implementing partners, often without seriously searching for themselves how best to present the results of their funding to their own supporters and donors in a more transparent and convincing manner. While passing the burden of these questions to their partners, some agencies generally remain rather vague as to what kind of information is required, why, when, for whom, and for what purpose. Often, uncertainty around this within agencies can result in an increase in the number of questions asked, not all of which are always relevant, and can thus create unnecessary workload for partners. Even when partners manage to respond, lack of adequate feedback from (often equally overburdened) agency staff inhibits a more in-depth dialogue with partners on broader policy matters.

The problems are aggravated by the fact that many Southern partners receive financial support from several agencies, each inclined to press its own particular information needs and interests. Partners are kept busy satisfying diverse agency requirements, which may have little relevance to the local context. This is particularly hard to excuse where a group of agencies, often with many interactions among them, has been co-operating with the same partner for some time.

In short, despite several decades of experience in development co-operation between Northern ecumenical agencies and Southern NGOs, we are still struggling with the flow of information related to the essence of our relationship - project and programme funding and support.
Three key questions facing us are:

- How do we improve our communication on issues related to the programmes and projects on which we co-operate?
- What kind of information should a Southern NGO be expected to make available to show it is acting as a responsible implementing agency?
- What kind of information should an agency be expected to make available to show it is acting as a responsible funding agency?

1.1 Stakeholders in PME

Within the ecumenical framework for development co-operation, planned development interventions commonly take the form of programmes and projects involving three kinds of actors: local communities of poor people and grassroots organisations; facilitating or implementing Southern NGOs; and Northern funding and support agencies. Each of these usually employs (to varying degrees of rigour and systematisation) a set of criteria, practices, methods, tools or instruments to plan its work, organise its efforts and allocate its resources, as well as (implicit or explicit) expectations and standards against which to measure and value the results. However, these actors are highly interdependent, since usually no one of them has at its disposal the necessary knowledge and human and material resources to pursue its development goals single-handedly. Development outcomes therefore depend to a large extent on the quality of the relations between these interdependent actors. Their PME systems and the degree of 'fit' between them must therefore be of concern to all, as information for decision-making and resources for implementation are expected to flow at the right time to the right point in this 'aid chain'. This section considers the perspectives, interests and concerns of each of these stakeholders.

1.2 Poor communities

The lives of poor and marginalised people are the common concern of most NGOs and aid agencies that share a commitment to the advancement and emancipation of the poor - in social, cultural, economic and political terms - and to development marked by equity and freedom. But poor people are not passive beneficiaries of externally devised interventions: they must be active participants in their own progress.

PME systems are essential in helping the various actors to define realistic objectives for their work, to select means and resources for achieving them and to measure their progress towards them while learning from experience. PME is also an indispensable means for ensuring that NGOs and aid agencies are accountable, not only to their supporters and donors - interested in efficient use of resources and value for money - but also to the poor, for whom PME may serve as a basis for self-reliance and empowerment. Indeed, in many cases PME can and should be related to an intervention strategy that, from the very start, envisages the transfer of responsibilities and resources towards the organised poor and the progressive withdrawal of the NGO. It is hoped that PME for the poor can represent an opportunity for learning and can enable them to hold accountable the organisations that aim to support them. In practice, however, difficulties arise.

Firstly, the better and more participatory the method for problem-diagnosis, the more likely that different aspects of poverty and inequality among the poor will appear, such as those of gender, age, class and ethnicity. The challenge is how to manage these differences and address the varying needs, interests and opportunities that come with them.

Secondly, poor people exercise a logic that may not always be mirrored in that of external organisations but which is intimately linked to their own perceptions and circumstances, sometimes with a limited margin for risk-taking, and with limited information, resources and time. The question then becomes: how to relate their versions of planning, monitoring and evaluation (the 'people's PME') to those of intervening NGOs and supporting agencies, which in turn are influenced by their own logic, time-frames, perceptions and constraints?

Applying a PME system at the grassroots which can be said to be 'owned' by the 'beneficiaries' is far from simple. Those working with and within a community often do not know how to manage the problems that arise there and those that arise between community and NGO. Appropriate methods are only just beginning to emerge.

1.3 Southern NGOs

While the perception of PME as an imposition by agencies remains strong among some Southern NGOs, many have come to see it as an indispensable instrument for their own self-determination and learning, as well as a tool for accountability to grassroots organisations and funding agencies, whether government, multilateral or private. Indeed, for some, NGO mission statements, development strategies and programme plans have become the point of departure in negotiations with funding agencies. For many, PME systems have evolved as an instrument for shaping an NGO's grassroots orientation and participatory approach, and for promoting the efficiency and effectiveness of its work.

However, methods are often inadequate, tending to be more oriented towards planning and appraisal (including participatory tools), than monitoring or reflection. Participatory Rural Appraisal, Planning by Objectives (ZOPP) and People's Action

Planning, for example, all focus strongly on the initial problem-diagnosis and the plans derived from it. Such exercises can be expensive and time-consuming, while the information generated is often difficult to use as a basis for monitoring and evaluation.

At the same time, the growing diversification of financing agencies poses problems for the PME systems of Southern NGOs, for some more than for others. The demands of agencies - in terms of preferred monitoring indicators and ways of accounting and reporting - vary considerably and are not always mutually compatible. This can confront an NGO with the problem of how to marry its agenda with that of agencies whilst remaining loyal to its own mission and goals; for instance when trying to juggle service delivery with an empowerment strategy, and handle two sets of corresponding indicators. This is exacerbated when an NGO's financing agencies differ widely in their fundamental approach - some with a closer ideological affinity or 'natural partnership' with the NGO, others more contractually driven.

Since the early 1990s, however, Northern ecumenical agencies have no longer played such a predominant role with regard to many of their Southern partners, with funding from other sources increasing.

Local and national governments are becoming more important for many NGOs, not only as sources of funding but also as allies or as targets of interventions. Many NGOs are now increasingly engaged in work at the 'macro' level, seeking to influence government policies, often in alliance with other groups in civil society. Such advocacy, lobbying and alliance-building has its own set of PME challenges, with the identification of stakeholders, the definition of indicators and the measurement of impact.

Thus the context for the work of NGOs becomes more complex, and their strategies and methods of intervention more varied, with implications for their approach to PME. There can be no blueprint.

The organisational fabric and culture, unique to a particular NGO, must be taken into account when developing and implementing any PME system.

On the other hand, PME systems often make insufficient provision for the empowerment of the poor during the implementation of a project. NGOs and agencies must consider when intervention should end and how to work towards self-reliant local communities. The question should be included in PME, in order to avoid the dependence that often results from operating an ongoing 'open agenda'.

No NGO system stands in isolation. Each must link up with community-based PME as well as with the systems of the often diverse funding agencies. These stakeholders demand transparency of an NGO's PME system, whilst the NGO may wish to protect its privacy of information, not just because of needing some room for manoeuvre to reconcile the often conflicting demands of different stakeholders but also because it might not wish - for political or other reasons - to share all its thinking with the outside world.

1.4 Funding agencies

The Northern ecumenical agencies, for their part, must respond to different specific constituencies (churches, government, the general public, etc.) all of which increasingly seek evidence of efficiency, effectiveness and impact. However, agencies' needs in PME differ markedly from those of Southern NGOs, because agencies mainly fund projects implemented by Southern partners rather than formulating and implementing their own. But agencies are concerned with the formulation and implementation of funding policies, be they general, regional, country-specific, thematic or sector-based. Thus an agency always has two perspectives in PME. One is related to accomplishments at project level and should be shared with the implementing NGO. The other is concerned with aggregation across projects and partners and how far these contribute to the achievement of programme objectives and ultimately of institutional goals. An agency may be able to provide evidence of the success of a particular project implemented by a Southern partner while failing to demonstrate its relevance the agency's wider goals. Agencies therefore need to define policy-relevant indicators. Few have such indicators in place or know how to collect and process the corresponding information. Agencies will have to develop PME systems at programme and institutional levels.

Chapter 2

Key characteristics of PME systems

As with most questions in development, the issue of 'good practice in PME' cannot be regarded as value free. To agree on a common frame of reference for PME systems requires a common understanding of the context of the relationships between Northern funding agencies and Southern implementing NGOs.

2.1 General principles of North-South co-operation

North-South relationships are marked by an interdependence in which there are differences in roles, resources and power. Not surprisingly, this sometimes leads to diverging perspectives between North and South on the scope and nature of the relationship itself. However, the following principles of North-South relationships have been teased out of debate and can be seen as stepping stones towards the Guidelines for Good Practice in PME which follow.

General principles of Nort-South relationships

- Our common purpose is to contribute towards struggles of people for a life in dignity, a more just and democracy society, and the empowerment of the poor and marginalised.
- We recognize the differences between Northern and Southern organisations and the consequent differences in ou rroles and responsibilities.
- We are convinced that joining the resources of South and North strengthens our contribution to achieving the common goal. Co-operation between North and South should be based on appreciation of each other's capacities, situations and cultures, rather than imposing predetermined policies. Northern agencies which implement projects of their own should, in doing so, take into account the views of Southern partners.
- A prerequisite for effective co-operation is open dialoque through which Southern NGOs can influence Northern agencies' policies.

A Southern organisation is accountable to those who 'own' it (be they individual members, affiliated groups or churches), to the people it aims to serve, and to the agencies which support its work. A Northern agency is accountable to its donors, churches and supporters, and to the partners it works with. Neither party can force the other to follow any course; each should respect the choices and the limitations of the other.

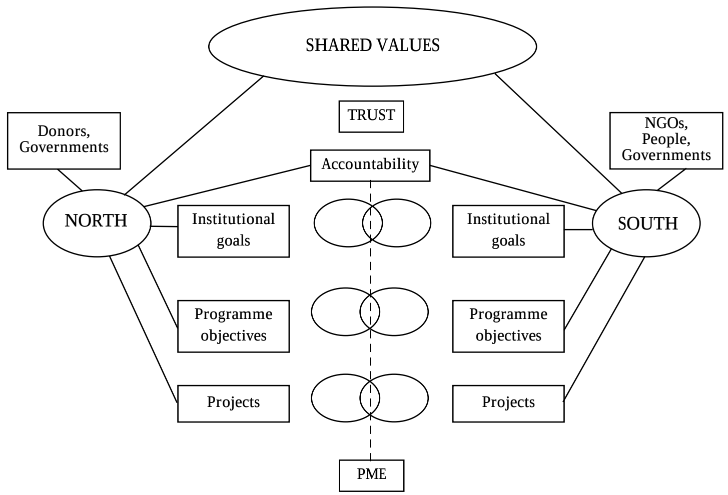
Northern agencies should actively seek the views of partners when they are developing policies. In particular they must take seriously the outcomes of National Platforms of Dialogue or other national consultations such as 'Round Tables'.

Southern organisations are generally the key actors in projects implemented in their region. Therefore the Southern organisation normally takes the lead in planning a project. The Northern agency, given its funding role, has the responsibility to assess whether the project is relevant, feasible, consistent with its own mandate and policies, and likely to contribute to the common goal.

In practice the relationship varies in distance and intensity. Usually, the Southern NGO undertakes the planning and implementation of a project and is responsible for decisions during its course; Northern agencies provide resources and eventually receive reports but are not involved in implementation. But, in other cases, the Southern NGO formulates a proposal that is discussed with the Northern agency to assess whether or not it is acceptable as a basis for co-operation. Then the implementation of the project, including problems and adjustments to be made, is discussed jointly, as well as plans for evaluation, so that NGO and agency are engaged in more of a joint venture. Collaboration may be even closer, with initiatives such as joint advocacy. What is essential is that both parties should be clear about the model they are operating under and their respective roles and responsibilities within it.

Trust is essential for meaningful co-operation. Trust has to be built, and sustained, through the sharing and discussion of values, needs and goals, as well as through consultation on agency policies.

Figure 1: Conditions for North-South co-operation



2.2 PME AS A METHODOLOGICAL TOOL

A PME system provides a methodological tool that can be used to improve an organisation's capacity to manage and implement planned change. Because outcomes of social development processes are to a large extent unpredictable, development organisations need methods and instruments for adjusting their interventions in line with real changes on the ground as well as for improving communication. Thus it is possible to identify a range of purposes which any PME system should serve :

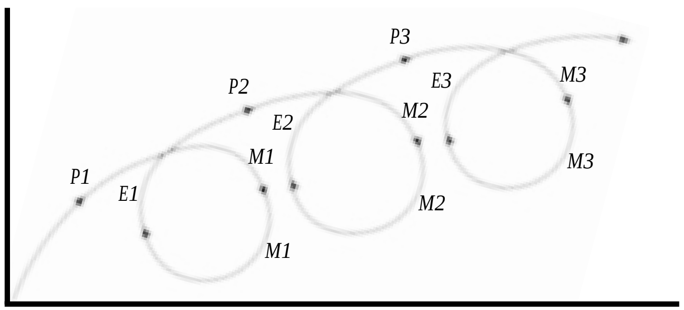
A PME system should promote	
- transparency	- learning
- accountability	- autonomy
- mutual understanding	- empowerment
- efficiency	- shared ownership
- effectiveness	- sustainability

Like most development interventions, PME systems are typically based on the following logic:

- After research and problem-diagnosis, a working hypothesis is formulated, that an intervention will produce certain hoped-for changes in line with the implementing organisation's development goals.
- This hypothesis is tested through action, reports on which provide feedback to those responsible, for:
  - a comparison between hypothesis and outcomes, with analysis of reasons for any divergence, followed by ...
  - adjustments of intentions, plans and objectives for subsequent activity.

The comparison between expected and actual outcomes puts in motion a further learning process, providing feedback for an adjusted working hypothesis. We change from actors back to researchers. Over time, this ongoing chain of action and reflection becomes what is intended to be an *upward learning spiral*.

Figure 2: The learning spiral - relating P*lanning to* M*onitoring and* E*valuation*



2.3 THE LOGICAL FRAMEWORK APPROACH TO PME

Much of the reasoning that underpins PME systems at the project level is encapsulated in the 'Logical Framework', a tool used by many organisations to help them think through the structure of a project and communicate this in a logical way. The

'Logframe' is not intended as a substitute for detailed plans but is meant to facilitate planning through the (usually, and ideally, collaborative) production of a clear, simplified representation of a project design. This design can then be used as a tool for explaining the project, and for reviewing its progress and making adjustments. It has considerable potential as a monitoring and evaluation tool, though most experience with it up to now has been at the design and proposal stage.

To be used effectively, the Logframe is best seen as a flexible tool to be adapted to specific project contexts, not as a mechanistic procedure for meeting funders' requirements. Different formulations of the Logframe exist, each with slightly different information requirements or terminology. Which form (if any) to follow will partly depend on the project funding source. The basic Logframe is as follows:

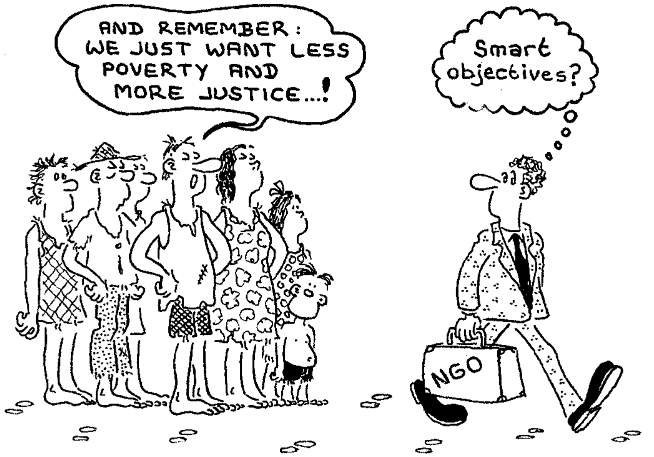
Narrative Summary	Indicators	Means of assessment	Key assumptions
Goal	of impact	sources of information on impact	
Specific objectives	of effectiveness	sources of information on utilisation	development hypothesis (objectives to goal)
Outputs (with indicators incorporated as targets)		sources of information on implementation	project assumptions (outputs to objectives)
Activities	list of key Inputs required to undertake the activities, including a summary of the budget		implementation assumptions (activities to outputs)

The *goal* is the wider developmental purpose to which the project is to contribute, relating to the change that is sought in addressing the key problem that is identified; it is called the *general objective* by some practitioners. The *(specific) objectives* relate to the more immediate changes that the project is intended to bring about among the target population.

Thus, a project can be seen to consist of *activities* (normally specified in annual plans, with the *inputs* they require) which should produce outputs which in turn are intended to achieve specific objectives which contribute to the realisation of the *goal*.

As far as possible, the definition of objectives (with their related effectiveness indicators) and of outputs should fulfil SMART requirements, being:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Relevant
- Time-bound



(See Appendix 1 for fuller definitions of the terms that are applied and Appendix 2 for further information on using Logframes.)

2.4 Essential qualities of PME systems

Certain qualities are essential in a PME system if it is to function well:

- *Tailor-made*: a PME system must be adjusted to the mission, vision, goals, strategies and resources of the organisation that owns it, and at the same time be relevant to the other organisations to which it relates.
- *Flexible*: a PME system should always be open to adjustment in the light of experience.
- *Clear and transparent*: the purpose, operation and products of a PME system should be clear to its users and other stakeholders and be readily understood by them.
- *Usable and sustainable*: a PME system should be simple and accessible, so that those involved feel motivated to use it, making it possible to harness the necessary discipline and enforce standards of accountability.

Note to the following chapters:

Appendix 3 reports on the experience in planning of one of the NGOs that participated in the Joint PME Project - Christian Commission for Development Bangladesh (CCDB) - and of a community-based organisation (CBO) with which it works, Nayantara Forum. While not matching exactly the version of the Logframe outlined above or the Guidelines in the next chapter (which are not intended to be applied rigidly but rather adapted to the needs of a particular organisation), the experience does provide a useful illustration of the approach. In the course of Chapters 3 and 4, shaded boxes are inserted with references to the corresponding sections of Appendix 3.

In fact, the Nayantara Forum PME system is relatively advanced for a CBO and illustrates not only Chapter 4 (a simplified approach for community-based PME) but also Chapter 3 (the guidelines for NGO projects). The CCDB system illustrates both Chapter 3 and the second part of Chapter 4 (linking community-based PME with NGO PME); it is also relevant to Chapter 6 (programme and institutional PME).

Chapter 3

Guidelines for good practice at project level for implementing NGOs

These guidelines are applicable to a rural or urban development context where interventions are focused on local communities and people's organisations. They would require adaptation to be relevant to other types of intervention such as advocacy or emergency relief and rehabilitation.

Preliminary Assessment Preparing the ground.

Planning (Charting the path.)

- **Assessing Participation** (Knowing who should be involved.)
- **Situation Analysis** (Understanding the problem.)
- **Defining the Goal and related Objectives** (Where do we want to go?)
- **Developing Indicators for Objectives** (How will we know if we've got there?)
- **Defining Outputs, Activities & Inputs** (How do we get there?)
- **Preparing For Monitoring & Evaluation** (How will we check that we're getting there, and how will we know whether we've arrived?)

Monitoring (Checking that we are on track.)

Evaluation (Knowing whether we've arrived and what difference we've made.)

3.1 PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT - PREPARING THE GROUND

It is assumed that, before drawing up specific plans or projects, the NGO has agreed its overall mission, vision and mandate, development goals and policy priorities. This fundamental decision-making often included in a strategic planning process falls outside the scope of these guidelines.

See Appendix 3, section 1.1: mission statement

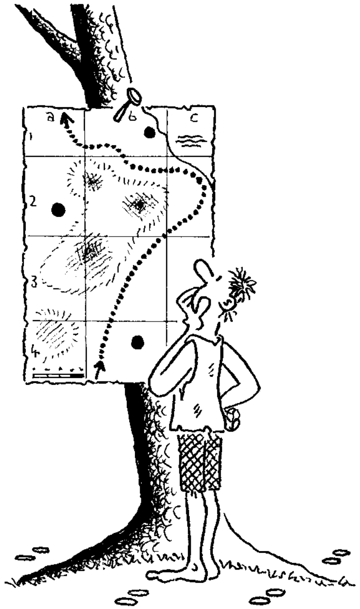
A preliminary assessment of any project intervention commonly includes:

- A general assessment of the prospective intervention area, taking into account the national and regional context.
- A preliminary identification of the people who would benefit directly from the project - potential 'beneficiaries' or 'target groups' - and their characteristics and concerns, their problems and possible causes of these.
- An analysis of the interests and concerns of those present in the area who may be affected by or may affect the project ('stakeholder analysis'), including consideration of the responses already being made to the problems and concerns of the target groups.
- A preliminary definition of the response that the NGO might give, taking into account its mission, vision and mandate, and its resource base.

At this stage the NGO usually decides whether, given its mandate, it is best-positioned and equipped to intervene in the area. It also forms a first view of possible priorities and limitations that will affect the planning.

3.2 PLANNING - CHARTING THE PATH

Having decided, in principle, that it should intervene, the NGO moves into the planning of the project, the first element in PME, when objectives are defined and strategies developed. But planning should not be seen as being quite separate from subsequent monitoring and evaluation: provision for these should be included in planning, and - as seen in the previous chapter - they in turn should feed into future planning.



3.2.1 ASSESSING PARTICIPATION - KNOWING WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED

See Appendix 3, sections 1.2 and 2.2: participatory planning process

NGO interventions at the grassroots require the active participation of the target group throughout the planning process. In planning community-based interventions, the following should be specified:

- Who is involved, clarifying particularly the role of women, but also the participation of other social groups or categories (e.g. youth, the landless.)
- For whom the benefits of the project are intended.
- Which methods and instruments are to be used in the participatory planning process (e.g. PRA, group discussion, semi-structured interviews.)

During the planning process, considerations of gender and environment and questions about the sustainability of project benefits should continuously and explicitly be kept in mind. Attention may also be paid to differences and influences of culture and faith.

Some projects that are not grassroots-based will not demand this degree of active involvement of local communities: for example, regional or national advocacy work, or service delivery projects aimed at individuals rather than communities.

3.2.2 Situation analysis - Understanding the problem

An essential element in a participatory planning process is the situation analysis, or 'baseline assessment', in which the key problems and possible responses are considered.

- A 'situation analysis' identifies:
  (a) priority problems, as locally understood and more widely defined;
  (b) their main causes, both local and wider - regional, national or international;
  (c) causes that can be addressed by a local intervention;
  (d) resources within the community, or from others, relevant to tackling the problems.

See Appendix 3, section 1.3 : context analysis ; and see the analysis of problems, causes and available resources in section 2.3

- A participatory baseline survey is the preferred vehicle of many organisations for obtaining detailed, reliable and validated information from the grassroots and for determining the problems and perspectives of the people concerned. At the same time, it helps increase awareness of the nature of the problems, their local causes, and the changes that are being sought. This makes possible the definition of specific objectives for an intervention and the identification of corresponding indicators, outputs and activities.

- The identification of problems and the baseline survey should help identify existing opportunities as well as obstacles.
- Grassroots representatives and NGO staff should together consult other key stakeholders to gain a better understanding of the problems, and of their immediate and root causes, and to consider the most appropriate actions to address them.
- Where causes and solutions are concerned, distinction should be made between those at 'micro' and those at 'macro' level; the possibility of combining analysis and action at both levels depends on the interest, awareness and capacity of the community and / or community-based organisation.
- It is important to identify those problems that cannot be addressed by the NGO involved. These may be referred to other organisations.
- It is, therefore, important also to identify what others are already doing or are planning to do.
- A risk analysis is needed to identify external factors that may jeopardise the production of outputs or the achievement of the effects and / or impact sought.
- Cost-benefit considerations and time constraints need to be taken into account in considering what problem or problems might be addressed, and how.
- A situation analysis is rarely complete before project start-up and should therefore be extended and updated through information and insights from monitoring, reviews and evaluation studies.

3.2.3 Definition of goal, specific objectives and indicators - Where do we want to go? How will we know if we've got there?

See Appendix 3, sections 1.4 and 2.4: definition of objectives

The goal and objectives for any intervention should be defined as statements of the changes to be brought about with the target groups. A clear distinction should be made between:

(a) The goal - often, though not always, long-term - which relates to the key issue or problem that needs to be addressed at a wider level, beyond the project.
(b) The specific objectives, which relate to what the project aims to achieve upon completion or soon after, perhaps addressing immediate causes of the wider problem, in order to contribute towards the goal.

As stated in the previous chapter, the definition of objectives should as far as possible meet SMART requirements. More particularly, the specification should make clear any boundaries for achievement in terms of location or target group. Indicators related to the goal and objectives should enable the measurement of change over time, relative to the situation at the outset of the project.

When defining the indicators, distinction should generally be made between:

- Indicators of impact, in terms of changes in the lives or circumstances of beneficiaries, usually related to the overall goal.
- Indicators of effectiveness, concerned with what the project is intended to achieve directly, upon its completion or soon after, and related to the specific objectives.

3.2.4 Definition of outputs, activities and inputs - How do we get there?

The next stage of planning is to determine just what needs to be done for those specific objectives to be achieved:

- The outputs that are needed to achieve the objectives should be specified.
- The activities to produce these outputs should be elaborated, making clear who will be involved in each activity, where and when.
- The necessary inputs (including human, material and financial resources) should be listed for each of the activities.

Like the definition of objectives (see above), the definition of outputs should, as far as possible, fulfil SMART requirements, with clarity about where and for whom each output is to be produced.

See Appendix 3, sections 1.5 and 2.5: versions of the Logframe approach

Specifying outputs helps define the levels of accountability of the project management. It is the outputs that, under given assumptions, can be guaranteed by the project and for which the project manager(s) responsible may be held to account. This means that outputs need to be clearly specified and achievable within the short run (for example over one year) so that they can be monitored. An output should be specified not merely as the delivery of some input but as the measurable product of activities (making it possible afterwards to express what is actually produced as a percentage of what was expected). That being so, there is no need to define separate indicators for outputs.

3.2.5 Preparing for monitoring - How will we check that we're getting there?

Monitoring in its most basic form aims to capture the extent to which the inputs are being made available, the activities are being carried out and the expected outputs are being produced; but it may also provide information that serves evaluation purposes. The foundations for monitoring are laid at the planning stage when the following requirements need to be fulfilled:

- A disaggregation of the project plan through time-bound, usually annual, specification of activities and related outputs, broken down to the level of NGO field staff and discrete community activities. Further specification in quarterly, monthly and sometimes weekly plans may be necessary for management purposes, depending on the length and scope of the project.
- A specification of the organisational arrangements for monitoring, including responsibilities, procedures, methods and

tools for the collection and analysis of information, and time schedules. These arrangements should be specified in accordance with level and location within the organisation.
- In addition, methods and procedures need to be incorporated to observe and report on unforeseen but relevant activities and outputs, and on changes in the context and within the NGO itself.

Special attention is required for monitoring the scope of the project - that is, whether it reaches the intended beneficiaries - and the actual delivery of benefits.

The quality of any monitoring system depends in large part on the usability, completeness, reliability and validity of the information submitted by communities or gathered by field staff. To ensure the quality of field data, special measures are needed which may include appropriate training as well as regular attention by field supervisors.

As already mentioned, monitoring may go beyond the measurement and reporting of input provision and activity completion against plans, beginning to gather information of a more evaluative nature. This information provides an indication (including judgements by staff) of whether the project as it is unfolding is on course to achieve planned objectives. Recent experience supports the inclusion of impact assessment in ongoing monitoring - gathering especially the views of beneficiaries - as an essential means of learning about real change and impact. Some agencies have already moved in this direction.

See Appendix 3, sections 1.6 and 2.6: preparing for monitoring

The collection of monitoring data will only be useful for reporting, learning and adjustment of plans if it allows for comparison between planned and achieved inputs and outputs.

Analysis of this should be kept as near as possible to field level so that responsibility for any adjustments is affirmed.

3.2.6 Preparing for evaluation - How will we know whether we've arrived?

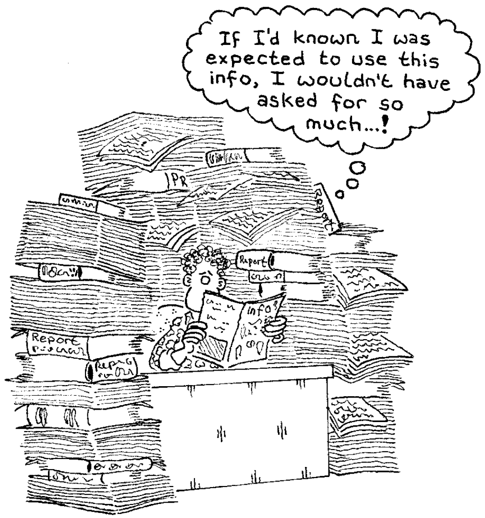
During the planning period arrangements need to be made for evaluation:
- The expected effects of the project in relation to specific objectives need to be listed, with effectiveness indicators; and also the expected impact, in relation to the goal, with its corresponding impact indicators. It should be made clear whether it is intended to evaluate effects and impact together or whether impact will be considered separately - perhaps as part of a long-term impact assessment (see section 6.3, below.) Recent experience suggests that better and more timely impact assessment may be made when consideration of impact is integrated into regular reviews and evaluations (and also into ongoing monitoring, as mentioned above.)
- Organisational provision must be made for evaluation, specifying responsibilities (such as for definition of the terms of reference and selection of the evaluation team), procedures, timing and instruments for the collection and analysis of data, and a budget.

See Appendix 3, sections 1.7 and 2.7: intended evaluations

3.3 Monitoring -Checking that we are on track

- Monitoring should be carried out as far as possible in accordance with time schedules agreed at the planning stage. The systematic gathering and analysis of information that is implied in monitoring requires disciplined effort and the commitment of time. The more that monitoring activities are foreseen and built into working routines, the more likely it is that they will not be postponed because of more pressing daily chores.

- Projects should be monitored not just from a retrospective but also from a prospective point of view. That is to say that a monitoring exercise has most value when its outcome is used to adjust, where necessary, the current phase of a project, or to revise plans for the next phase, or both.
- Planned inputs and expected outputs should be compared with employed inputs and achieved outputs, with explanations for any discrepancies; and indications should be made of necessary or suggested adjustments to the subsequent planned activities.
- In addition, information should be collected and analysed on changes in the external environment and within the organisation itself. Information should also be collected on qualitative, subjective factors such as the involvement and motivation of NGO staff and of grassroots participants, in order to check continuing commitment to the project.
- The process of monitoring should be carried out with the active participation of staff at all levels, and should provide for openness in the upward and downward flow of information and for learning and organisational development.



- Data collection should be limited to such minimum information requirements as are necessary for use by field staff and / or for management decision-making. This will need to be negotiated and may change over time.

To avoid unnecessary delay in the feedback that managers and agencies need, it may be determined that effectiveness and impact data should be captured during monitoring. If so, staff who are monitoring inputs and activities will need to be encouraged also to observe effects and impacts, including unforeseen ones; they should ask people in the communities what changes they are experiencing and to what extent these are caused by the implementation of the project.

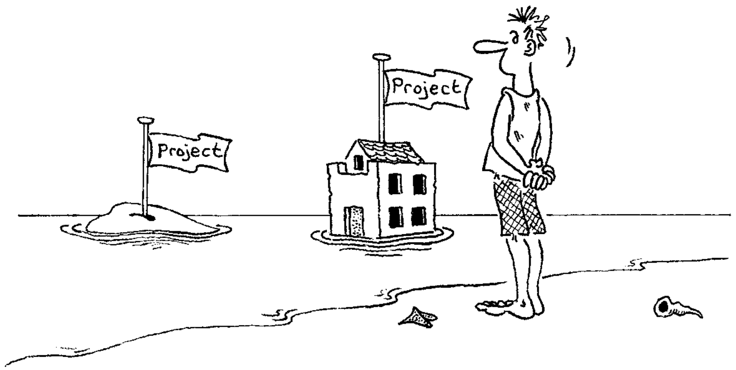
See Appendix 3, sections 1.6 and 2.6: process and impact monitoring

3.4 Evaluation - Knowing whether we've arrived and what difference we've made

- Periodic project evaluations are generally carried out in accordance with time schedules and procedures that are determined, and agreed with funders, in advance. Such evaluations usually involve a systematic effort to test the linkage between outputs and effects, and between effects and impact, in the light of realities on the ground. They use as reference points the corresponding indicators, formulated during the planning stage, which may have been revised during monitoring. Based on these indicators, comparison is made between intended and achieved effects and impacts, with discussion of the causes of any discrepancies. In addition, unplanned outcomes are identified, and a rationale is provided for any revision of project plans.
- Evaluations should primarily serve internal management and learning needs within NGOs (and within CBOs and agencies too). Indeed, an evaluation can be a convenient starting point for the consolidation of an organisation's PME system. More

particularly, evaluations are crucial for management decisions about the revision of ongoing plans or the formulation of new plans. They should not be seen as 'instruments of control' or the basis for funding decisions by donors. External accountability should be considered a secondary, though important, function of evaluation.

- Evaluations should be carried out increasingly as exercises in self-evaluation by implementing NGOs, although this will partly depend, in each case, on the particular purpose of the evaluation and on the maturity of the organisation and its PME system. Even if mainly internal, it is generally helpful if an evaluation is accompanied and shared by one or more experienced external evaluators, since a purely internal evaluation may not be sufficiently objective, may overlook important external developments and may lack a comparative perspective.



- Instead of including impact assessment within the evaluation, or in addition to this, evidence of significant or longer-term impact may be sought in other ways. In some cases it may be appropriate to carry out an evaluation that considers the impact of several projects, perhaps of the interventions of several NGOs. Such an evaluation may be focused on a region, a sector (such as education or health), or a theme (such as gender or environment).

Chapter 4

Guidelines for good practice in relation to community-based PME

4.1 Community-based PME

Community-based organisations (CBOs) engaged in projects also need to have PME systems, though these may be simpler and less formal than those of NGOs. In the case of a CBO the key purpose of a PME system is to facilitate participation, which must be based, at least implicitly, on a shared vision of development goals. In turn, participation contributes to the confirmation or extension of that shared vision by ensuring that the community owns the project. Local self-management should also enable the people to learn from the experience and equip them to take a fuller place in the wider society.

The PME process should:

- Build on existing ways of working together, applying local knowledge and terminology.
- Consider the culture and capacity of the people, their natural pace and the time they have available.
- Consider differences within the community such as gender, ethnicity, age and literacy.
- Favour sustainability by minimising dependence on external inputs.

Serving the information needs of the community itself should be the primary function of the PME system. But, in addition, a facilitating NGO will need to derive information for its own monitoring from the CBO's monitoring and evaluation. Connections between NGO and CBO systems are discussed in section 4.2, below.

While the nature of a CBO's PME system must depend on the particular context, it should generally include the following elements:

- A shared view of the problem and some understanding of its causes (*situation analysis*).
- The changes desired and a way of knowing about success and failure (*definition of objectives and indicators)*.
- The actions to be taken and by whom (*definition of activities*).
- The resources needed, from the community and from outside (*definition of inputs*).
- Regular checks and by whom (*monitoring*).
- Reflection about how far the desired changes have been achieved, conducted with wide participation and in such a way as to promote learning for future projects (*evaluation*).

A simple PME system based on these six elements can meet the needs of many community-based organisations. Others, of course, may wish to elaborate more and may be comfortable with more technical language. Some larger people's organisations may work with PME systems similar to those of well-established NGOs.

The terms in brackets after each of the six elements are added only to bring out the correspondence with the way concepts are described elsewhere in this document.

See Appendix 3, second part: The Nayantara Forum planning exercise includes a quite elaborate situation analysis (2.3); followed by definition of objectives (2.4) and of activities, inputs and outputs (2.5), and provision for monitoring (2.6) and for an evaluation (2.7).

4.2 Linking community-based PME with NGO PME

The co-operation between a CBO and an NGO should count on the willingness of both parties to share information. The CBO should be informed about the NGO's mandate, mission and policies, and be aware of the NGO's interests and priorities. The scope and character of their relationship depends on the expectations, limitations and priorities of each and eventually on the responsibilities that each is able and willing to assume.

See Appendix 3, section 1.1: NGO mission based on CBO organisational development

Local communities of people are active subjects, not passive objects, of a development project; they should be active subjects of the associated PME system. Therefore an NGO should seek, as far as possible, for CBOs to take the lead in planning processes, facilitated by local NGO staff.

When a CBO is ready to plan a project, NGO staff should use this opportunity to help it develop its own planning, monitoring and evaluation capacity and procedures. In doing so, and through PME training, NGO staff should ensure an optimal space for communities to articulate their own concerns and determine their priorities.

The interconnections between a CBO PME and an NGO PME are ideally established through a bottom-up and participatory planning system involving the communities, in which CBO proposals are presented to the NGO and pass through a process of negotiation and eventually consolidation - locally, then by sector or region and perhaps nationally. When working with poor and marginalised communities, however, NGOs may need to behave in a more pro-active way.

In general, the NGO aims to consolidate diverse CBO plans from the perspective of its own mandate, resources and priorities. The consolidated version is, in turn, shared with each community, with particular attention to the planned activities relating to that community and to the inputs due from the two parties, together with a time-frame and budget. In this way the community is informed of the kind of services and other inputs it can expect from the NGO and on what conditions. This process establishes the basis for mutual accountability.

See Appendix 3, sections 1.2 and 1.3: participatory planning process involving CBOs with NGO facilitation and consolidation

When an NGO is monitoring, its regular field reports should include information on the CBO's monitoring and evaluation results, based on the CBO's own indicators. In turn, the NGO should inform CBOs of relevant findings from its monitoring and evaluation, including information about the steps proposed to adjust its plan so that it can be articulated with the CBOs' activities and inputs.

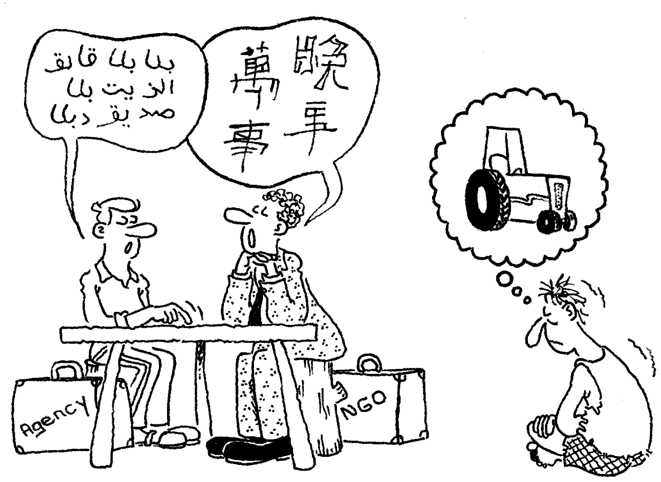
See Appendix 3, sections 2.6 and 1.6: links between CBO monitoring and NGO monitoring

Organisational arrangements that might further the connection between the respective PME systems include:

- Formal participation of CBO representatives on the NGO's board.
- Formalised working agreements such as memorandums of understanding, co-operation agreements or service-delivery contracts.
- Provision of information to the CBOs, at an early stage, about available budgets.

Chapter 5

Making PME systems talk to each other: Guidelines for integration across co-operating organisations



5.1 From NGO to Agency

Central to the work of a funding agency is the allocation of resources to partner organisations to implement development projects proposed by them. Thousands of funding requests from different organisations may be handled by an agency each year, only some of that can be approved for funding. The decision-making process within the agency typically involves project-by-project assessment against the agency's policies, priorities and available resources, using standardised formats and procedures. For monitoring and evaluation purposes, agencies generally need a steady and formalised flow of information about progress in implementation of activities, the achievement of outputs and effects, and the use of resources (financial and other), alongside contextual information.

At project level the information needed by agencies should be consistent with the information generated by an NGO's own PME system. When a funding agency is supporting a wider programme - or perhaps the NGO's work as a whole - its information needs will naturally reflect this. Agencies may also require specific information connected with particular aspects of policy, or useful for development education, or relevant to lobbying, advocacy or campaigns in the North (or, sometimes, in the South).

5.1.1 PLANNING

At the planning stage, information submitted by an NGO should enable the agency to assess the relevance and consistency of the NGO proposal in relation to its own policies and priorities. The Logframe approach is often used to facilitate communication about the basic structure of a project.

ELEMENTS FOR ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT TO BE FINANCED

- key information about target area(s) and target group(s)
- summary of the situation analysis
- overall goal, with indicators of impact
- specific objectives, with indicators of effectiveness
- activities and intended outputs
- key input requiremenbts
- implementation strategy
- assumptions and risks
- finances: project period, total cost, local contributions, contributions from other donors requested contribution

Besides project information, the NGO should also submit information to enable the agency to make an assessment of the NGO's implementing capacity.

ELEMENTS FOR ASSESSMENT OF THE ORGANISATION

- identity, foundation date, constitution, formal registration, organisational structure, internal regulations
- main activities and track record
- networks and alliances
- composition and role of board (and gender balance)
- staff composition, professional qualifications of key staff (and gender balance)
- internal decision-making systems
- participation of stakeholders, including beneficiaries, in decision-making processes
- Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation procedures and systems
- strengths and weaknesses as perceived by the organisation itself
- overall financial information, and accounting systems

5.1.2 MONITORING

Regular and timely reports are an important instrument for an agency's monitoring. The information generated by the NGO's own monitoring system can provide most of what the agency needs, provided that planned inputs and expected outputs are compared to employed inputs and achieved outputs, with explanations for any discrepancies; and that adjustments to the subsequent planned activities are described, with the reasons for them. (See section 3.3, above).

Financial information should be presented in accordance with accepted auditing and accounting standards. Explanations should be provided for any significant differences between planned and actual expenditures.

In addition to this monitoring information, two other aspects should be mentioned explicitly in NGO reports to agencies:

- Changes in the NGO organisation and in the project context.
- Periodic evaluative assessments made by NGO staff on whether the project, as it is unfolding is likely to achieve its objectives: is it on track?

5.1.3 Evaluation

The NGO and the agencies concerned should agree during the planning stage of a project on when and how evaluations are to be carried out. An evaluation may well be approached as an NGO's accompanied self-evaluation (see section 3.4, above). Agencies may or may not participate directly, depending on what has been agreed.

Such periodic evaluations tend to focus on effectiveness and efficiency concerns rather than on impact. This is partly because it is methodologically difficult to capture some impacts at one point in time (e.g. empowerment) but also because it is difficult and not always necessary to attribute changes to the activities of any one project or even to the work of a single NGO. However, consideration of impact should wherever possible be included in the terms of reference of an evaluation and methods should be sought for capturing evidence of impact, including participatory methods that enable the perspective of beneficiaries to be registered alongside any external judgements about impact.

5.2 From Agency to NGO: Ensuring consistency and feedback

The adoption and use of PME systems and practices within agencies has inevitable implications for the information requirements placed on the NGOs that they fund. Typically, efforts to systematise project and partner information needs within agencies (such as standard criteria, formats, schedules and procedures for partner proposals and reports) implicitly - if not explicitly - exert pressure on NGOs to do the same, since the integrity of partnership-based agency systems depends on the quality of information that NGOs are able to provide. This can compromise the independence of NGOs' own PME developments. Confusion is added when information requirements differ in substance and detail across a number of supporting agencies.

To minimise distorting effects on NGOs' approaches to PME, agencies should ensure that the development of their systems is done in such a way that they can be consistent with those of NGOs. Partner NGOs may be consulted when an agency's PME system is created or reviewed; at the very least they should be informed about what happens to the information that they submit at key stages of the project cycle, including who uses it, how and for what purposes. Such 'co-operation' not only increases the likelihood of success with PME systems; it is also an important means of the agency being accountable to partners.

There are a number of practices and determinations that agencies should adopt:

- Ecumenical agencies should use a common set of reporting requirements and agree upon a common terminology. This document is one step towards the latter. Agreement on common information requirements for project proposals and reports has been made between participants in this Joint PME Project (see Appendix 4) and is now under consideration by the Agency Directors.
- Agencies should inform partner NGOs of their receipt of monitoring and evaluation reports, and provide feedback including analytical comments. Where an NGO is in partnership with several funding agencies, this can be done via an agreed 'lead agency'.
- If an agency is interested in commissioning an unplanned evaluation or impact assessment, this should be discussed in advance with the NGO concerned. NGO staff could be invited to help define the terms of reference for any such work.
- An agency should inform its partners promptly about any changes - in its policy, programmes, priorities or resource-base - that might affect an NGO's projects and PME system.
- Agencies should 'institutionalise' their PME systems - integrating them into working procedures, practices and culture - and share them with each other and with their Southern partners. The lessons learnt from the development and use of such systems

should also be shared as they arise, to enable the spread of good practice and the avoidance of bad.

- As with NGOs and all organisations developing PME systems, agencies should maintain a balance in PME between accountability and learning purposes. It is crucial that these twin purposes of PME are communicated to all those involved in the generation or use of PME information, including both agency and NGO staff.
- Agencies should use PME systems not only for assessing the integrity of NGO project proposals, but also, and perhaps more importantly, to help identify strengths and weaknesses in NGOs and their projects for the purpose of directing capacity-building support where it is most needed. In this way, PME information can be used collaboratively between agencies and NGOs as a basis for dialogue on project and programme development and on institutional support.

Chapter 6

Programme and Institutional PME

The preceding chapters considered PME at project level, focusing on the NGO as the actor responsible for a piece of work or series of actions carried out over a given period. This 'project PME', we argued, should ideally be connected with, and compatible with:

a) PME processes of the community-based organisations involved.
b) The way the funding agencies process their information requirements during the various stages of the project cycle.

Although project PME took up most of the time of the Joint PME Project, we further considered the fact that projects were often grouped in 'programmes', also requiring PME; and that, ultimately, an organisation would wish to plan, to monitor and to evaluate its work as a whole.

6.1 PME at programme level

Some organisations take into one programme the projects in a certain geographical area such as a province or a region or - in the case of a funding agency - a country. Others define a programme for a specified section of the population - a women's programme, a programme with indigenous or tribal peoples. Yet others focus on a sector, such as health, on a theme, such as gender, or on a particular problem area - a programme concerned with sustainable agriculture, with literacy, or with AIDS. The same organisation may have programmes defined in different ways - for example, a rural development programme, an urban development programme, and a leadership training programme cutting across them and serving other organisations as well. A funding agency may define a programme according to a particular type of partner. Whatever the basis, a programme should be more than a collection of projects: the responsible organisation normally aims to take a co-ordinated and strategic approach towards them.

However a programme is identified, the organisation should define programme objectives and the wider development goal to which the programme relates. It should be clear about how to monitor progress and about how and when to evaluate success at this more strategic level. In sum, it needs a 'programme PME' system.

In this system, the component projects will be included among the activities and outputs. But there may be other activities - for example, networking actions that bring together people involved in different projects, or joint advocacy interventions. The organisation will be seeking an 'added value' over and above the sum of the separate project achievements captured in project PME. This applies also to the funding agencies that are increasingly specialising so that - through a focus on a geographical area, a sector or a theme - they can do more than merely fund an unconnected collection of projects.

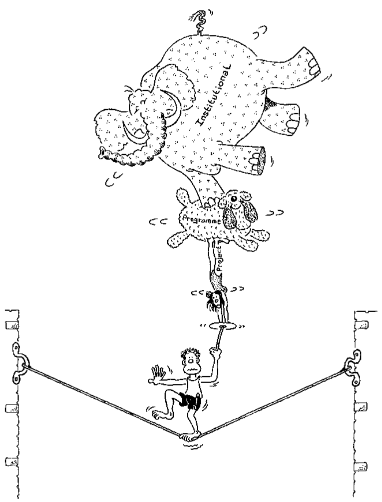
There appear to be few if any established examples to provide guidance in the construction of a programme PME system. Although its essential features must be the same as those of a project system, the process will tend to be more complicated. For a start, the planning will naturally be more difficult, even the definition of objectives more challenging. The subsequent monitoring must consider not only the progress of component projects but also how they fit into the programme. In the case of a funding programme, in particular, the monitoring needs to ask to what extent the funding of projects is consistent with the criteria and priorities determined for that programme. And any evaluation of the effectiveness of a programme must also cover two aspects, the effectiveness of the projects and the effectiveness of the

programme as whole and how it contributes towards wider institutional goals.

Participants in the Joint PME Project did share some experiences, but these were in the nature of 'work in progress', presenting systems still being developed with the difficulties already encountered. It was agreed that efforts in this direction should continue and be extended.

6.2 PME at institutional level

There is also little guidance available on how to construct an institutional PME system - one that refers to an organisation's whole operation in pursuit of its goals . At this level, additional difficulties arise. Even more elements must be considered, including the internal structure of the organisation as well as its external interventions: the PME must look inward and outward at the same time. The internal aspect may embrace relations with those who 'own' an NGO - whether individual members (who



may coincide, in part, with the beneficiaries of projects) or churches or other organisations in civil society. The meaning of accountability is multiple, as is the need for learning.

For smaller or more specialised NGOs, both the organisational structure and the PME system can often be simpler. Where it is not found necessary to define programmes, only the institutional and project levels will need to be considered for PME.

In general, both Southern and Northern development NGOs are placing increasing emphasis on long-term strategic planning, usually providing for specification or revision in annual plans. This creates a need and provides the basis for regular monitoring. In the case of funding agencies, monitoring is the most essential function: it depends largely on the quality of information from partners, as was discussed in Chapter 5.

Apart from the evaluation of individual projects, and perhaps of individual programmes, an organisation may need at a particular point (such as when reviewing strategy or preparing to embark on a new strategic plan) to ask how effectively it is fulfilling its intentions through the entirety of the activities that it carries out itself and those of other organisations that it supports. Such institutional evaluations are necessarily complex; outside help will generally be needed.

6.3 Assessing Impact

It has just been observed that, at both programme and institutional levels, organisations seek to monitor whether what was planned is being done and to evaluate its effectiveness. But the most fundamental question remains: what is the impact of all this, what difference is being made to people's lives?

As was suggested in Chapter 3 in relation to the project level, monitoring and evaluation can usefully embrace evidence of impact, including the views expressed by participants and beneficiaries, even if some of the evidence may be impressionistic, anecdotal and unsystematic.

However, it may also be useful to make separate and more deliberate assessment of impact over a longer period. Such a study may look at the impact of a programme or of an organisation as a whole, but this can be difficult to isolate from the work of other NGOs. It may be more useful to study the impact of the work of several organisations in a given field, whether geographical or thematic.

6.4 An Integrated PME System?

It may be argued that a reasonable procedure for an organisation would be to start with its institutional PME; then to develop the programmes, each with its programme PME; and finally to develop and implement - and/or to identify, appraise and support, in the case of a funding agency - the component projects, each with its project PME. The three levels should be linked together in a logical hierarchy, with the success of projects building the success of the programme of which they form part, and the success of programmes building the success of the organisation as a whole. The monitoring and evaluation of projects should contribute to the revision and development of programmes, the monitoring and evaluation of programmes should contribute to the revision and development of the organisation's strategy.

In practice, few organisations, if any, can yet establish such a coherent, integrated system. Most, pragmatically, prefer to start at project level, in the way outlined in earlier chapters of this document. Nevertheless, the idea of the three levels of PME, and of the logical relationship between them, should always be kept in mind.

6.5 Concluding remarks

We hope that the above considerations will stimulate NGOs and agencies to take up the challenge of elaborating further the concepts and viability of programme and institutional PME. Workshops and seminars are already taking place which provide occasions for sharing experiences about PME 'beyond project level', but we recommend that more effort be invested in this area. We believe that a systematic sharing of experiences about progress made and problems encountered will help to develop guidelines for good practice in PME at programme and institutional levels and for an effective integration between the three levels.

Appendix 1: Glossary of key terms

Activities:

Actions or series of actions undertaken in order to produce the planned outputs and thus achieve the intended objectives. They are processes and not - as is the case with outputs - states to be achieved.

Assumption:

An event which must take place, or a condition which must exist, if a project is to succeed, but over which the project management has little or no control. Conversely, a risk factor refers to the possibility that an assumption will not hold.

Baseline:

The situation or conditions before an intervention starts. Baseline data can be compared with the findings of a later study of the situation/conditions to see what has changed, and can be used as part of a monitoring system.

Beneficiaries:

The people whose situation the project proposes to improve. It is often useful to distinguish between direct beneficiaries (those directly assisted by a project) and indirect beneficiaries (those who indirectly benefit from a project).

Benefits:

The positive outcomes of the project in the personal, material, economic or social development of the beneficiaries or in the increased capacity of the target group, wider community or implementing partner.

Cost-effectiveness:

Simply, 'value for money'; or, the degree to which the project will benefit the largest number of people at the lowest reasonable cost. Thus cost-per-beneficiary measure: the total cost of the project divided by the number of direct beneficiaries. At its simplest, cost-effectiveness means being able to achieve objectives at a reasonable cost if not the lowest possible cost.

Effects:

Changes that a project may bring about, during the project period or soon after, usually at the level of its specific objectives.

Evaluation:

Measures designed to assess the outcome of the project in relation to its stated objectives and intended impact. Traditionally, this assessment is seen as an external, retrospective activity at one point in time. But it also includes 'on-going evaluation', built into the project, and 'self-evaluation' (continuous or 'once off') by the implementing organisation.

Gender:

Refers to the roles which a society assigns to men and women. Gender roles define who does which work, both inside and outside the household. Gender affects the share of power and influence that men and women have in decision-making at all levels of society.

Goal or overall goal:

The wider development purpose to which a project or programme should contribute. The goal is expressed as a statement of intended or hoped-for change in relation to the key issue or problem that is addressed. The time frame is usually longer than the project period. Indeed, successful completion of the project may not be sufficient to ensure that the goal is attained. Another term that is sometimes used for goal is general objective (see 'objective', below).

Impact:

Changes that the project may bring about or contribute towards within the target group and others, usually at the level of the overall goal. Impact assessment: the systematic analysis of the lasting or significant changes - positive or negative, intended or not - in people's lives brought about by a given action or series of actions.

Indicators:

The quantitative or qualitative evidence which will be used to assess progress towards an objective. An objective may have one or more indicators. Indicators should be important, plausible, sufficient, independent and verifiable; and precisely defined in terms of nature, quality, quantity and timing. Impact indicators are needed to assess what difference the work has made to the target group, usually at the level of the overall goal.

Inputs:

The set of means necessary for carrying out activities (money, equipment, materials, technical support, etc.).

Logframe (Logical Framework):

A tool to reflect on programme/project goal, objectives and activities and the connections between them. In its most simple form it is a matrix with four rows and four columns.

Monitoring:

The systematic and continuous assessment of the progress of a project over time in relation to its planned inputs, activities and outputs. It is known as participatory monitoring when it involves beneficiaries and not just project staff. Impact monitoring includes assessment of progress towards hoped for impact within the target group.

Objective:

What the project is intended to achieve. Objectives are expressed as statements that describe in concrete terms the intended or hoped-for effects to be achieved among the target population, within the project period or soon after it. The term **specific objective** is sometimes used here, to stress the distinction from 'general objective' (see under 'goal', above, for which this is an alternative term). E.g. "To reduce infant mortality (rate per thousand live births) in the Sierra District from 70 to 40 over the next 3 years."

Outputs:

The specific results, during the life of a project, of successful implementation of activities. Specifying outputs in advance helps define the accountability of management, for it is outputs that can be guaranteed by the project and for which the manager(s) responsible may be held to account (unlike objectives). They should be achievable in the short term (e.g. target for one year) so that they can be monitored; over longer periods, beyond the time-frame of an intervention, management is essentially unaccountable. An output should be specified as a measurable product, not merely as the delivery of some input. If outputs are specified in detail the targets are already clear (e.g. 15 oxen trained to plough by the end of June) and there is no need to have separate indicators for outputs.

Participation:

Involvement of staff and of people affected by a project in planning and carrying out the activities of a project or in monitoring, reviewing or evaluating the project.

Programme:

A collection of projects that are executed or supported by an organisation - usually identified in terms of a geographical area, a section of the population, or a theme - to which a co-ordinated approach is adopted. This may also involve other activities, complementary to the projects. A programme, like a project, may involve collaboration between several organisations.

Project:

A discrete piece of work undertaken by an organisation or by a group of collaborating organisations, usually with a defined target group in a particular location.

Qualitative:

Refers to defining characteristics (e.g. indicators) which cannot be quantified. Implies use of perceptions and judgements.

Quantitative:

Refers to something measured or measurable by numbers and expressed in amounts or quantities.

Review:

The assessment at one point in time of the progress of a project or programme or of a particular aspect of a project or programme. Generally more informal than an evaluation, it is often internal and periodic.

Stakeholders:

Those individuals, organisations, categories or groups of people with an interest in a project (e.g. beneficiaries, paid and voluntary workers, donors, partner and other agencies, local government). They include both those who may be affected by the project and those who will be involved in making it work. Hence **stakeholder analysis**: an analysis of the interests and concerns of those who may be affected by a project or may affect its outcome.

Sustainability:

The capability of maintaining through time the benefits obtained for the target group or of continuing the generation of benefits.

Appendix 2:

FURTHER INFORMATION ON USING LOGFRAMES (SEE CHAPTER 2)

The Logical Framework (Logframe) is a tool for systematically thinking through the structure of a proposed project, describing it in a simple, logical manner for communicating the project to others, and for reviewing its progress and adapting it.

2.1 PROCESS FOR CONSTRUCTING A LOGFRAME

While a completed Logframe is of particular use to project managers, it is often the case that the *process* of construction is what is most valuable. This may be carried out with the involvement of project staff, managers, partners and communities affected by the work, or in some circumstances (e.g. in emergency work) with a consultant. Once a plan of work has been prepared, the Logframe can be used to analyse its structure and components and present it in the form of a matrix. The ZOPP method emphasises a participatory approach and the importance of pre-planning research such as participation analysis and problem and objective analysis, usually through workshops involving key stakeholders, *before* the construction of a Logframe.

The basic principle is to move from the general to the specific. Begin with the narrative summary and several key assumptions, then try to put indicators and targets to the objectives and outputs.

The steps to construct a Logframe are as follows:

- Define the overall goal.
- Define the objective(s) as SMARTly as possible.
- Define the outputs for achieving the objective(s).
- Define the activities for achieving each output.
- Verify the 'vertical logic' with the 'if ... then ...' test (working upwards).

- Define the key assumptions at each level (working upwards).
- Check that the vertical logic still holds given these assumptions - 'if ... and ... then ...'
- Define indicators for the objectives, then for the outputs (or check that these are specified with targets), then for the goal.
- Define the means of assessment at goal, objective and output levels.
- Check the 'horizontal logic' across each row.
- Put inputs and costs to the activities in the bottom row - the budget summary .
- Review the Logframe design in the light of historical experience with similar efforts.

Questions to ask yourself when constructing the Logframe:

Project Structure	Indicators of achievement and value	How indicators can be quantified or assessed	Assumptions, risks and conditions
Goal What are the wider problems that project will help to resolve?	What are the quantitative ways of measuring or the qualitative ways of judging whether this Goal is realised?	What sources of information exist or can be provided cost-effectively?	
Objectives What are the intended short-term effects on the project area or target group? What are the expected benefits (or negative effects) and to whom will they go? What changes will the project bring about?	What are the quantitative measures or qualitative evidence by which achievement and distribution of effects and benefits can be judged?	What sources of information exist or can be provided cost-effectively? Does provision for collection need to be made under Inputs and Outputs?	What conditions, outside the control of the implementing organisation, are necessary if the achievement of the project's Objectives is to contribute to the realisation of the project's overall Goal?
Outputs What outputs (kind, quantity and by when) are to be produced by the project in order to achieve the Objectives? [Note 1]		What are the sources of information?	What external factors must be present for the Outputs to be likely to lead to achievement of the Objectives?
Activities What activities must be carried out to produce those outputs?	Summary of key inputs, with costs What materials, equipment, etc., are to be provided at what cost over what period, by implementing organisation, other NGOs, donors or beneficiaries? [Note 2]		What external factors must be present if implementation of the Activities is to produce the planned Outputs on schedule?

NOTES:

1) Outputs should be specified in detail, with targets; thus, generally, no separate indicators are required.

2) Since no indicators are necessary for the realisation of activities, the second and third boxes of this row are used to list the key inputs and summary budget.

2.2 TIPS ON DESIGNING A LOGFRAME

2.2.1 GOAL

- Remember that the goal is wider in scope and/or longer-term than an objective. Thus the goal may not necessarily be reached until well after project completion; indeed, successful completion of the project may be a necessary but not sufficient condition for attaining the goal.
- Beware of the danger of specifying over-reaching goals. This may lead to specifying assumptions linking objectives to goal, which would be so wide-ranging as to be unusable by those managing the project.

2.2.2 OBJECTIVES

- Limit the number of objectives to that which can realistically be managed. Experience suggests that multiple objectives diffuse project efforts and weaken the design.
- Remember that the objectives relate to changes that it is hoped to bring about among the project beneficiaries. Their realisation is outside the control (and therefore beyond the managerial responsibility) of the project implementation team.
- Specify objectives in the infinitive form - "To increase ... To reduce … To enhance ..."

2.2.3 OUTPUTS

- Remember that it is for the outputs that the project team can be held accountable, having been given resources to produce them.
- Specify outputs in the past tense - "... trained ...completed" - as this will make assessment easier.

2.2.4 ACTIVITIES

- List activities in brief - just enough to outline the strategy for producing outputs and achieving objectives and to provide the basis for a separate, more detailed work plan.
- Specify activities in the present tense - "Construct ... hold ... develop ... distribute ... train ..."

2.2.5 ASSUMPTIONS

- Select assumptions by asking "what conditions, outside the implementing organisation's control, must exist in addition to the activities (or outputs, or objectives) in order to reach the next level?"
- Check validity of vertical logic, in the form "*if* (activities) *and* (activities-to-outputs assumptions) *then* (outputs)"; and so on up the Logframe.
- Generally, the significance of assumptions and the degree of uncertainty increases as you move up the Logframe. There should be fewer uncertainties about whether activities will produce outputs than about whether outputs will lead to objectives.
- There are likely to be many uncertainties influencing the achievement of the overall goal and it is usually not necessary to analyse these in detail beyond specifying the existence of major constraints within the project context (e.g. political instability).
- Check for 'killer assumptions' that are likely to derail the project - that is, those which are very important for project success but unlikely to occur. Where these are identified, project design will need to be re-assessed.
- Include only those assumptions/risks which have a reasonable chance of occurring but which are not almost certain to occur.

2.2.6 INDICATORS

- The basic principle of the indicators column is 'if you can measure it, you can manage it'. Indicators tell us not only what achievements are necessary but also what will be sufficient to make it possible to reach the next level. It is best to begin with setting indicators for objectives, for difficulty experienced here may lead to revision of the objectives and so of the outputs needed to achieve them.

- Limit the number of indicators to the minimum required to clarify whether the stated objectives have been achieved.
- Begin with describing the nature of the indicator (qualitative or quantitative), ensure it is numerically quantifiable (even if qualitative, e.g. 50% of participating women's group leaders feel more confident on speaking out at project management committee meetings) then add quality and time dimensions.
- Remember to use proxy (indirect) indicators where necessary (e.g. assets as an indication of income).
- Remember to disaggregate indicators by gender and other significant differences among beneficiaries (such as age, ethnicity or socio-economic group) where relevant and feasible.
- Goal-level indicators may include changes beyond the scope of the project, such as improved standard of living. Such changes may be brought about by the combined efforts of several projects.
- Indicators corresponding to objectives and targets for outputs must be reviewed continuously, during the project, in response to project developments and changes in the external context.

2.2.7 Means of assessment

- If the indicators chosen are not assessable by some means (or too costly to assess), find other indicators or develop proxy indicators.
- Remember to add to the project budget the costs of collecting, analysing and presenting information on indicators.

2.2.8 General

- Cross-cutting themes such as gender, environment and sustainability should be incorporated where appropriate. These considerations should be tracked at all levels of the Logframe

regardless of the overall priority to which the project responds.

2.2.9 Advantages

The Logframe:

- Allows the feasibility of a project to be checked by setting out explicitly the internal coherence and the external plausibility of what is planned.
- Provides a focussed summary by forcing tight use of language.
- Facilitates communication about the project among stakeholders.
- Promotes objective-led rather than activity-led planning.
- Facilitates linkage between micro-planning and macro-planning.
- Highlights the limits of control, predictability and therefore responsibility by specifying key assumptions.
- Forces negotiation of consensus among planners by seeking simple statements of a limited number of objectives.
- Facilitates management of diverse activities unified by common objectives.
- Forces those involved to be explicit about the implications of carrying out planned activities, in terms of resources, assumptions and risks.
- Forces planners to think from the outset about how they will monitor and evaluate a project.

2.2.10 Limitations

- Over-attachment to a Logframe can turn it into an inflexible blueprint.
- The Logframe assumes hierarchical cause-effect logic. It cannot cope with mutual causation.
- The Logframe is neutral in relation to gender and environment issues and may allow planners to ignore them.
- The Logframe emphasises assessment of effects rather than understanding the process of change.
- With participatory approaches to Logframe construction, the inexperience and broad base of participants may lead to the

setting of unrealistic targets or to valuable activities being overlooked.
- The Logframe only seeks indicators for planned/expected effects and ignores evidence of unexpected effects or of events or processes that may threaten the success of the project.

Useful sources for further information:

Gosling, Louisa: *Toolkits, Development Manual 5, Save The Children UK*, 1995

gtz: *An introduction to the ZOPP method*, 1988

Hersoug, Bjorn: *Logical framework analysis in an illogical world*, 1996

Price, Neil: *The Project Framework Approach to Population Project Planning and Management*, 1991

Wiggins, S & Shields, D: *Clarifying the logical framework as a tool for planning and managing development project*, 1995

Appendix 3:

PME in practice for NGO and CBO - the case of Christian Commission for Development Bangladesh (CCDB) and Nayantara Forum

3.1 Context analysis and planning by an NGO

This is an account of the planning process of CCDB.

On the basis of the contextual realities of the poor and their vulnerabilities and keeping in mind the overall vision of CCDB, the following *mission statement* was formulated:

- To empower the poorest of the poor including tribals and aboriginals and their organisations as effective actors in sustainable and participatory development.
- To capacitate Small Local Organisational Initiatives as facilitators in sustainable and participatory development.
- To maintain gender equity at all levels.
- To enhance human and organisational potential at all levels.
- To take care of disaster victims and extend services to them.
- To lobby and seek co-operation for its objectives with partner agencies, government organisations and NGOs.

3.1.1 Planning process

Since 1992 CCDB has been practising a People's Participatory Planning Process (PPP) based on local reference groups such as the Nayantara Forum (see the account given below in section 2).

The reference groups carry out the process with CCDB's co-facilitation. They analyse their past and present situations and consider the priority needs and the activities to address them, taking into account their own resources and those available from CCDB and other sources. These community-based plans are then scrutinised, reviewed and consolidated at CCDB field level with representatives of the reference groups. The final consolidation of the project planning takes place at CCDB, centrally, with representation of projects. Here the CCDB plans are finalised, reconciling the needs and priorities of the reference groups and with CCDB's mandate and capacities. The plans are then be sub-divided into yearly and monthly operation plans.

3.1.2 Context analysis

A crucial element in the planning exercise is to analyse the broader context, national and global, in which CCDB operates, with its challenges, opportunities and threats, looking at the various actors in development - local organisations, NGOs, governmental bodies, bilateral and multi-lateral agencies. The main concerns are the social changes, the struggles of the people, empowerment and justice, and CCDB's role. Views from the local reference groups and people are also considered. CCDB seeks to form a picture of the existing context, the processes of change at work and the trends for the future.

A) Trends

The following trends were identified from the contextual analysis:

- Increased poverty.
- Increases in literacy and girls'education.
- Gender discrimination continuing but awareness raised.
- Dowry problem has increased.
- Foreign media threaten local culture.
- The rate of population growth is declining.
- Increased health awareness, immunisation, use of safe drinking-water and slab latrines.
- Arsenic contamination of water has become a silent disaster.
- Quality of life slightly improved.
- Lawlessness, anti-social activities and drug abuse are increasing.
- Tribal and aboriginal people have become further marginalised.
- Increased political violence.
- Globalisation, free market economy and structural adjustment and domination of aid agencies are adversely affecting socio-economic development.

- Rural credit flow has become controversial, victimising the poor.
- Unemployment and income insecurity are increasing.
- City bound migration is continuing.
- Natural calamities have increased.
- Awareness of disaster mitigation and preparedness has increased.
- Tree plantation rate has increased.
- Continued environmental degradation.
- Increased proliferation, competition and duplication of NGO work.
- Uneven conditions of NGOs in credit operation are hindering people's empowerment.
- Genuine and sustainable people's institutions are not emerging.

B) Process and changes in the context

Both positive and negative changes can be seen. Despite development efforts by diverse actors, pauperisation continues. The government is subject to outside influence. For example, structural adjustment undercuts employment in a labour-surplus economy, while the free market reduces the supply of essential commodities instead of luxuries. The gap between poor and rich increases; there is growing frustration and unrest. The application of agro-chemicals has damaged soil fertility. Deep tube-wells and excessive extraction of groundwater have caused arsenic contamination; the flow of water has decreased. Environmental degradation has increased the intensity of natural disasters.

Despite difficulties, NGOs have been working with poor people where the government does little for their development. Women are becoming more visible because of NGO interventions. NGOs are challenged over oppressive terms of credit. Since most NGOs in Bangladesh do not practise people-based development, their efforts do not promote people's empowerment or sustainable development.

C) STRATEGIC ISSUES

From this contextual frame of reference CCDB has derived the following *strategic issues*:

- human and organisational development
- environment
- gender equity
- economic empowerment
- health, nutrition and food security
- people's organisations
- natural and social calamities
- tribal and aboriginal people

In deriving the strategic issues CCDB has applied the following *criteria*:
- relevance to the present development understanding, mission, role, programme and organisation of CCDB
- relevance to the strengths, opportunities and capacities of CCDB
- relevance to situation and development perspective of reference groups
- synergetic impact
- potential for successful intervention
- issues not properly addressed by others

3.1.3 PROGRAMME AREA OBJECTIVES

In connection with the above mission the following *programme area objectives* were formulated for the next three years. They should not be considered as discrete and unrelated areas of activity; each should be seen as a component of a holistic development approach:

- To capacitate reference groups and their organisations to be self-managed actors in development with particular focus on participatory planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

- To improve the level of functional education among reference groups and to strengthen the literacy movement.
- To create opportunities for reference people to develop their livelihood skills or enhance skills they already have and to support alternatives in income-generation.
- To enhance food security and increase the satisfaction of basic health and nutrition needs among reference groups and to promote safe motherhood.
- To satisfy more of the basic credit needs of reference groups, for income-generation, through their own institutions.
- To promote environmental conservation and to integrate community-based disaster preparedness into development, as well as to respond to major disasters.
- To empower tribal and aboriginal peoples, with particular focus on upholding their rights and preserving and promoting their culture.
- To bring a contrast to the domination by big NGOs in Bangladesh through the improvement of management and organisational capacities of small local organisations run by women.
- To improve gender sensitivity at all levels.
- To raise awareness and mobilise public opinion in favour of specific priority issues.
- To develop groups of competent facilitators/trainers within CCDB and sister organisations.

To make the objectives operational, CCDB develops a plan of action using the logical framework approach. An example is given below for one programme area.

3.1.4 Logical Framework Analysis Project Component:

Health, Nutrition and Food Security, Project Period: July 1999 -July 2001

Goal: To develop improved and sustained health and nutritional status and ensure food security of CCDB reference groups.

OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	IMPORTANT ASSUMPTIONS
To enhance food security and increase the satisfaction of basic health and nutrition needs among reference groups and to promote safe motherhood.	Infant mortality rate reduced by X%. Mother mortality rate reduced by X%. Protein Energy Malnutrition reduced by X%. Morbidity rate reduced by X%. X% People practice health and nutrition knowledge gained from training and workshop. X% Pregnant mothers using the services of trained health workers including TBAs for antenatal, prenatal and postnatal care. X% People with access to proper medical treatment facility. Malnutrition rate among the under-fives reduced by X%. Food production increased by X%. Protein and calorie intake increased by X%.	Evaluation report. National statistical data. Impact monitoring report. Half-yearly report Annual report.	Impact sustained in the life of poorest reference groups. No major outbreak of epidemic. Reference groups willing to participate fully. Survey reports govt. co-operation will be available. Favourable weather will prevail for good yields. No devastating natural calamities.

OUTPUTS	INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
1.Increased functional awareness of health and nutrition.	1.1 % of people who following norms of primary health are and hygiene 1.2 incidence of diarrhea, intestinal and water-born diseases down by X % 1.3 % of families growing vegetables round the year and rearing poultry and livestock for consumption and sale 1.4 % of people with access to safe, arsenic-free water sources 1.5 % of children immunised 1.6 % of eligible couples using contraceptives 1.7 % of people with changed food habits 1.8 % of children and mothers provided with supplementary food	Quarterly report. Half yearly report. Impact-monitoring report. Monthly progress report. Trend analysis report.	Necessary support will be provided in time. Full community support will be received. Proper use of training knowledge and support by the reference group.
2.Increased awareness of STD/HIV/AIDS.	2.1 Mass gathering on World AIDS Day 2.2 % of reference people with greater awareness of STD/HIV/AIDS	Unspecified at time of going to press.	Unspecified at time of going to press.
3.Increased rate of safe deliveries.	3.1 % of deliveries conducted by trained TBAs 3.2 Number of TBAs trained	Unspecified at time of going to press.	Unspecified at time of going to press.
4.Increased availability and accessibility to food round the year.	4.1 % of reference families who can have at least two full meals a day 4.2 % of families able to store at least 7 days' food	Unspecified at time of going to press.	Unspecified at time of going to press.

ACTIVITIES	PROCESS INDICATORS	PRODUCT INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
1.1 Training in health, food and nutrition. 1.2 Workshops on reproductive health and MCH.	1.1 Number of training events and number of trainees. 1.2 Number of workshops and number of participants.	1.1.1 X% trainees able to recall fully what they learnt after 3 months and X% practice it in their day-to-day lives. 1.1.2 X% people using slab latrines. 1.2 X% workshop participants aware of the issues and sharing what was learnt with others.	Monthly progress report. Training register.	Selection of participants appropriate. Necessary efficient staff can be recruited.
1.3 Training and support in horticulture. 1.4 Training and support in poultry and livestock care.	1.3 Number of training events and number of trainees who received support. 1.4 Number of training events and number of trainees receiving support.	1.3 X% participants growing fruit and vegetables round the year for consumption and sale. 1.4.1 X% participants rearing at least 10 chickens, 2 goats or 1 cow. 1.4.2 X% participants consume eggs or milk and earning at least Taka 100 per month from poultry and livestock.	Forum report. Trend analysis report.	Appropriate training and follow-up ensured. Necessary fundingavailable in time.
1.5 Training and support in fish culture. 1.6 Support for community health-care service centres.	1.5 Number of training events and number of trainees receiving support. 1.6 Number of new health centres and number of old health centres with extended support.	1.5 X% participants successfully undertaking fish culture and earning at least Taka 300 per month from it. 1.6.1 X% people have access to a community health-care service centre. 1.6.2 X number of people consulting trained personnel for health advice.		Necessary support provided in time, adequate in quality and quantity.
1.7 Awareness training in arsenic contamination and long-term effects.	1.7 Number of training events and number of trainees.	1.7 X% people using arsenic-free water sources for drinking and cooking purposes.		

ACTIVITIES	PROCESS INDICATORS	PRODUCT INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICA-TION	ASSUMPTIONS
2.1 Observance of World AIDS Day nationally and in communities. 2.2 Workshop at national and community level.	2.1 World AIDS Day observed in X number of project areas. 2.2.1 Number of workshops at national level; number of participants. 2.2.2 Number of community workshops; number of participants.	2.1 Active participation of masses at national and in communities. 2.2 X% of participants aware of STD/HIV/AIDS issues.	Unspecified at time of going to press.	Unspecified at time of going to press.
3.1 Training of TBAs. 3.2 Distribution of safe delivery kits.	3.1 Number of TBA training events and number of TBAs attending 3.2 Number of safe delivery kits distributed and number of TBAs who receiving them.	3.1 X number of TBAs trained and X% of them conducting safe deliveries.	Unspecified at time of going to press.	Unspecified at time of going to press.
4.1 Livelihood skill development training. 4.2 Credit support for initiating IGAs.	4.1 Number of people who receiving livelihood skill development training. 4.2 Number of Forum members in receipt of credit support from people's institutions for IGAs.	4.1 X% trainees engaged in occupations related to training. 4.2 X% of those supported utilising credit for intended purpose and X % of them achieving benefits.	Unspecified at time of going to press.	Unspecified at time of going to press.

3.1.5 Monitoring

CCDB considers Monitoring as a systematic and continuous assessment of the progress of a project over time in relation to its planned activities and inputs. Indicators identified in the Programme Planning Matrix are used for monitoring. The monitoring framework of CCDB includes both process monitoring and product monitoring, with their corresponding indicators. Process monitoring considers only whether the planned activities were implemented; product monitoring analyses the trends as well as the impact of the programme on the life of the reference people and organisations in relation to the stated objectives, outputs and activities.

A) Monitoring tools for process monitoring and product monitoring

Process monitoring
- Forum performance report
- project performance and monitoring report
- field visit
- monthly Forum meeting
- monthly project meeting

Product monitoring
- trend-analysis report
- impact-monitoring report
- half-yearly report
- annual report
- issue-based study report
- field visit
- coördination meeting
- zonal meeting

B) Process monitoring issues
- progress of planned interventions
- arrangement and utilisation of inputs
- process and quality of interventions
- performance of CBOs and staff

Product monitoring issues
- effects of interventions in people's empowerment processes
- changing trends of the reference groups in relation to knowledge, attitudes and practice.

3.1.6 Evaluation

In order to assess the overall effectiveness and impact of programmes on the lives of the reference people, CCDB plans to mount participatory evaluative studies from time to time, based on the needs of the reference people and organisations and of other stakeholders. This will be done internally and externally with the support and co-operation of the agencies concerned. The indicators identified at the purpose/objective level are taken into consideration for evaluative studies. CCDB usually plans for a formal evaluative study in the event of the termination of a project.

Generally the evaluation issues are:
- To assess the overall impact of the development interventions in the lives of the reference people
- To assess the sustainability of the changing trends.

3.2 Baseline assessment and planning with a CBO

This is an account of a baseline assessment and planning exercise conducted in May 1999 with a CBO called Nayantara Forum in CCDB's People's Participatory Rural Development Programme (PPRDP).

Nayantara Forum is one of the 205 CBOs attended by CCDB's PPRDP. This particular CBO was founded in 1994 in Mathurapur village of Tanore district. All 105 members are women. It consists of 19 small functional groups and has a seven-member Executive Committee elected for two years. The Forum members have been introduced to the “People’s Participatory Planning Process” (PPP). Therefore, members of the Forum were already exposed to the PPP concept and for planning they followed the ‘Action - Reflection - Action’ process.

A) The baseline assessment and planning exercise and its outcome

This required a six-day exercise, held at the Nayantara Forum centre with 28 participants. At the beginning the chairperson of the Forum explained the objectives of the exercise as well as the expected role of the members. One moderator and one facilitator were selected from the Forum. One member of the CCDB field level staff acted as co-facilitator and two record keepers were selected; one was a staff member of CCDB and another was a paid employee of the Forum. Before the exercise CCDB provided training for Forum members on how to moderate and facilitate a session. Training on documentation had also been organised for Forum workers.

B) Situation analysis

In order to know the past and present situation of the village, participants were divided into two groups. One group was asked to discuss the past situation (10 years before) and the other group the present. After some discussion both the groups proposed to draw pictures of their village. It took about five hours to complete these pictures which were amazingly beautiful, not only in how they looked but also because of the volume of information contained. One could easily see the differences between the past and present situations of the village from those drawings.

C) Comparative pictures of the past and present situation

Past	Present
Most houses with mud walls and thatched roofs.	Some houses with corrugated iron sheet roofing.
Availability of safe water.	Arsenic in water.
Ill health.	Awareness increased but still poor health.
Low literacy.	Continuing low literacy and school drop out.
	Landlessness increased.
Poor sanitation.	Awareness increased but sanitation still poor.
Low numbers of poultry and livestock.	Moderate numbers of poultry and livestock.
Low agricultural production.	Low fertility of land and crop failure.
Child marriage, dowry, women in veils.	Dowry problem has increased.
Sick mothers with malnourished children.	Family sizes falling but malnutrition still a problem.
Green surroundings.	Diminished green surroundings.
Fewer devastating flood and droughts.	Frequent devastating floods and droughts.
Dependence on money-lenders.	Dependency on NGO credit.
Practice of traditional culture, age-old rituals.	Traditional village culture and values disappearing.

Then an open discussion took place. Participants said that, overall, the present is gloomier than the past. Some new problems were noticed, such as arsenic pollution: about 90% of the village population now have access to tube-wells, formerly a source of safe drinking-water, but it is no longer safe because most of the tube-wells in this village are contaminated by arsenic. The vegetation is gradually disappearing as people cut down trees for fuel or timber. Drought has become more severe and the level of groundwater has fallen. Canals and rivers have lost their navigability and there are devastating floods. NGO credit has taken over the role of traditional moneylenders but is no more friendly. People are more aware of health issues and have cleaner surroundings; intestinal diseases are decreasing. But diseases like hypertension, diabetics, RTIs and STDs are present. Malnutrition is still a big problem.

Participants also identified the existing classes in their village and which people belong to each. The poor are exploited: they must hand half of the crops they grow to the rich landowners. Leaders of religious institutions come from the richer group. The poor have inadequate access to education since they lack the money to send their children to school. Most women are oppressed. The rich and the elite are always the arbiters and they can manipulate justice in their favour. An alien culture is gradually replacing indigenous culture. Day labourers are being denied fair wages. They are used as a vote bank and can seldom exercise their voting power freely.

D) Baseline information

Baseline information of each of the Forum members was recorded at the entry stage. The same is updated every 2 years. Information is collected on the following points:

- marital status
- religion

- age group
- family size
- literacy level of the family
- occupation
- job opportunities in a year
- main source of income
- secondary source of income
- annual income and expenditure
- livelihood skills
- land ownership
- farming equipment
- total debt and to whom owed
- status of housing
- holding of poultry and livestock
- number of fruit and timber trees
- sanitation facility
- source of drinking-water
- disease pattern, access to treatment
- immunisation status
- use of contraceptives
- past training
- gender sensitivity
- association with any institution
- participation in social activities
- utilisation of leisure

E) Problem identification & prioritisation

The above discussion and analysis brought to light a long list of problems. Considering the nature of the problems participants identified five major issues that are influencing their livelihood and which need to be addressed.

- employment and income
- health, nutrition and food
- education

- women's rights
- environment

After clustering the problems under those five major issues, the Forum members prioritised the most serious problems that required a quicker response. In a matrix ranking exercise, following a group discussion, numbers from 1 to 10 were allocated (the higher the number, the higher the priority). In problem identification and prioritisation CCDB staff had to do more facilitating. For instance, initially, arsenic pollution was considered a low priority, as its effect was not immediately perceived, but after discussion Forum members understood the problem better and gave it a high score.

PROBLEM	PRIORITY	PROBLEM	PRIORITY
EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME		**EDUCATION**	
- Low income	10	- High drop-out from primary school	9
- Lack of capital for starting IGA	9	- Inadequate access to formal education	8
- Unemployment	8		
- Marketing products	7		
HEALTH, NUTRITION AND FOOD		**WOMEN'S RIGHTS**	
- Food insecurity (especially in lean season and after disasters)	10	- Dowry	10
- Malnutrition.	9	- Lack of knowledge of women's rights	8
- Arsenic pollution	9	- Violence against women	7
- Ill health	8	- Wife beating	4
- Lack of good seeds	7	- Polygamy	3
- Poor housing	6		
- Lack of storage facility	4		
		ENVIRONMENT	
		- Deforestation	9
		- Drought	8
		- Flood	7

F) CAUSE ANALYSIS

The highly rated problems were analysed further, in another open discussion, and their causes were identified.

ILL HEALTH:
- inadequate knowledge of reproductive health and MCH
- environmental pollution
- inadequate access to government health facilities
- poor income
- poor sanitation
- superstition
- lack of trained midwifes and health cadres
- poverty
- illiteracy

MALNUTRITION:
- lack of functional knowledge of nutrition
- gap between knowledge and practice
- superstition
- Childhood diseases
- worm infestation
- insufficient and badly-balanced food
- poverty

FOOD INSECURITY (SPECIALLY IN THE LEAN SEASON AND AFTER DROUGHT OR FLOOD):
- seasonal fluctuation
- low production, increased price of food grains
- low income, less buying capacity
- unemployment
- lack of knowledge of crop diversification
- lack of good seeds
- insufficient storage facility
- poor income
- natural disasters

ILLITERACY:
- too few educational institutions

- lack of awareness of education
- children working for money due to poverty
- inadequate access to the existing institutions
- poverty

Dowry:
- unfavourable attitude towards women
- lack of social awareness
- male-dominated social system

Low income:
- lack of capital to start IGAs
- lack of opportunity for alternative income
- lack of self-employment and vocational education
- exploitative NGO credit
- difficulties in marketing products
- unjust wages
- landlessness
- lack of employment opportunity
- poverty

Arsenic pollution:
- too much use of surface water
- unscientific use of modern technology

Drought:
- deforestation
- less flow of water in summer
- environmental pollution
- destruction of ecological balance

While analysing the problems, the participants found that both the micro and macro level systems were responsible for poverty, exploitation, and environmental degradation. One example is drought. The construction of the Farraka barrage in India reduced the flow of water in summer so drought is experienced almost every year and there are signs of desertification.

G) Resource identification

At this stage, the Forum members analysed through participatory discussion the resources, capacities and opportunities in their village, first listing them all and then identifying to which they had access.

Village, Forum
- cultivable land - 10 acres
- fallow land - 3 acres
- ponds - 8
- grazing land - 5 acres
- ditch (Bil, Doba & Haor) - 4 acres
- bullocks - 20, buffaloes - 8
- agricultural equipment
- organic manure equipment
- family poultry farms - 10
- paddy harvesting machines - 4
- shallow machines - 3
- trees and bamboo gardens
- sewing Machines - 4
- educated and like-minded persons - 6 ◊
- forum centre 1
- forum capital - Tk 456,000 (revolving)
- tailors - 3
- persons skilled on Embroidery - 14
- municipal commissioner - 1
- forum members - 105
- volunteers - 11
- various kinds of need-based training support

CCDB, other NGOs, government institutions
- financial and technical support
- emergency and rehabilitation support
- good seeds

- support for education
- matching-funds support
- support to mobilisation of resources and facilities from government
- credit facilities
- relief services
- various kinds of training
- eEducation facilities
- medical facilities
- irrigation facilities
- poultry and livestock vaccination
- immunisation facilities
- MCH clinics

3.2.1 Definition of objectives

The Forum members then moved on to the actual planning. Keeping in mind the problems and their causes, and the available resources, they defined objectives, activities, expected outputs and output indicators. This took a lot of time and debate and meant adjusting their requirements to the limited opportunities and resources available. The following objectives were defined:

- To improve health and nutrition.
- To increase food production for consumption and sale.
- To create awareness of arsenic contamination of water and its long-term effects.
- To reduce the practice of dowry.
- To create environmental awareness.
- To create employment opportunities and sources of income.
- To create opportunities for children's education.

3.2.2 Activity plan of Nayantara Forum (July 1999 to June 2001) [for illustration of the first two objectives only]:

Objectives	Activities	Outputs	Indicators
To improve health and nutrition.	Training in health care and nutrition. Motivation on hygiene & sanitation. Training of traditional midwives. Providing loans for slab latrines. Participating in immunisation programme.	2 Training courses in MCH and nutrition conducted for 30 members. 3 Traditional midwives trained. 24 Members receive loan to install slab latrines.	Forum members with increased functional knowledge about MCH and nutrition. 55% trainees sharing knowledge with others. 70% Forum members keeping their homesteads clean and using slab latrines. 95% infants immunised. Less incidence of diseases. No bad smell in the neighbourhood. People keeping food covered. Children looking healthier. Mothers in better health. People washing their hands before eating and after defecating. Fewer children with pot bellies.
To increase food production for con-sumption and sale.	Supply of good seed. Utilising government services for vaccination facilities. Training and financial support in livestock care.	15 Members completed training successfully and shared their learning. 15 Members received financial support to start family-based livestock farming. Members received good seeds in time and planted. Increased availability and accessibility of food round the year.	60% Forum members able to afford at least two meals a day. 55% Forum members rearing at least 10 chicken/ducks or 2 goats or 1 milking cow and consuming eggs, milk and meat. Decreased mortality of poultry and livestock. 50% People with changed food habits. Majority of members planting some vegetables in their yards for consumption and sale. 40% of the people storing at least 60 kg of rice.

After making the list of activities, a budget was prepared taking into consideration the availability of resources from their own means, CCDB and others. The Forum also planned the timing of each activity and the key person who would be responsible for ensuring its completion. Several committees were formed: a purchase committee, an implementing committee and a monitoring committee.

3.2.3 Monitoring

A four-member committee was formed including chairperson, secretary and cashier. In addition, the group leaders were assigned to monitor and supervise their own groups.

A) Monitoring tools

It was decided that all group members would get together once a month and report to the monitoring committee about progress made. The monitoring committee would also undertake home visits from time to time. All of this would be done informally, but the Forum worker would document relevant information for the monthly monitoring meetings.

One copy of the monthly monitoring report would be shared with CCDB. In turn CCDB would give regular feedback to the Forum on the monitoring reports.

B) Focus of monitoring

Process monitoring focused on:
- progress of implementation of different planned activities
- utilisation of inputs
- financial transactions

Product monitoring focused on changing trends in people's lives due to the interventions

3.2.4 Evaluation

The Forum also planned for a participatory evaluation after two years, to be done in co-operation with CCDB. The following issues were identified for evaluation:
- contribution of the planned activities to their lives
- sustainability
- capacity of the women and their organisation

Appendix 4:

The key information requirements of Funding Agencies

4.1 Introduction

The requirements of funding agencies include the information that an organisation is requested to provide so as to enable the supporting agencies to assess a proposal and to assess its implementation (including the utilisation of funds made available by these agencies); but they are not limited to this. In fact, requests for information by funding agencies serve several purposes:

- To take responsible funding decisions.
- To learn from programme experiences.
- To account for programme expenditures, internally and externally (to back donors and the public).
- To be in a position to act on behalf of partner organisations;
- To take up lobbying and advocacy issues.
- To help identify capacity-building needs.

4.2 Information necessary to process requests for funding and decide about them

All agencies require information about the proposed project (or programme) and information about the implementing (or responsible) organisation.

a) Project information

1. Key information about target area and population.
2. Summary of the situation analysis (understanding the problem).
3. Goal and objectives:
   - description of overall goal (or general/long-term objective), with indicators of impact.
   - description of specific objectives, with indicators of effectiveness.

4. Activities, required inputs, and intended outputs with targets.
5. Approach to the work, strategy for implementation.
6. Assumptions or risk factors.
7. Financial information - project period, total cost, local contributions, contributions from other donors, requested contribution.

B) ORGANISATIONAL INFORMATION

1. Identity, date founded, formal registration details, constitution or statutes, organisational structure.
2. A brief 'C.V.' indicating major activities and experiences in various fields.
3. Strategic networks and alliances of which the organisation forms part.
4. Composition and role of board.
5. Staff composition, professional qualifications of key staff.
6. Internal decision-making systems.
7. Participation of target population in decision-making processes.
8. Systems and procedures for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation.
9. Strengths and weaknesses as perceived by the organisation itself.
10. Overall financial information.

4.3 INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS DURING IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

Agencies need to receive at least once a year both a narrative report and a financial report.

a) The narrative report should make clear which of the planned activities have been carried out, how the outputs produced compare with those intended, and what progress has been made towards achieving the specific objectives and overall goal.
b) The financial report should compare actual income and expenditure to the budget, explaining any discrepancies; with audit attached or following afterwards.

4.4 OTHER INFORMATION NEEDS

Each agency also requires agency-specific information to be able to report on the extent to which funding decisions and implementation of projects relate to policy priorities and/or to be able to provide information for lobbying or advocacy work. For example:

- Most agencies require information about effects of the project with regard to gender issues.
- Some agencies ask for information about environmental aspects.
- Some agencies ask to be informed about progress in relation to other topics that are seen as highly relevant from a policy point of view (e.g. self-reliance of people's organisations).
- In certain circumstances, an agency may ask for specific information in connection with advocacy work in the North and/or with the agency's public relations needs.
- Sometimes a partner organisation is requested to co-operate with an evaluative study initiated by an agency: this may be one of the conditions of the agreement between the agency and its back donor.

4.5 CONCLUDING REMARK

Where there is joint funding by two or more of BfdW, EZE, CA, DCA and ICCO, partners should not accept different formats for standard reporting requirements. If faced with such a demand, a partner should raise the matter with the desk officers concerned, requesting them to come up with a common reporting requirement, considering that these agencies have agreed to the same standard information needs and, more generally, have expressed a serious intention to intensify their co-operation at the institutional level. If the desk officers are not able to arrive at a solution, the matter should be referred to the management of the agencies concerned.

Appendix 5:

THE PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS (1996-1999)

AFRA
Contact person: Ms Mary Kleinenberg
P.O. Box 2517
Pietermaritzburg 3200
South Africa
tel.: + 331 457607/458318/943732
fax: + 331 455106
e-mail: Afra@wn.apc.org

BROT FÜR DIE WELT
Contact person: Mr Alois Möller
P.O.Box 101142
D-70010 Stuttgart
Deutschland
tel.: + 49 711 2159210
fax: + 49 711 2159100
e-mail: bfdwentwicklung@brot-fuer-die-welt.org

CCD
Contact person: Ms Noemi Espinoza
Apartado Postal 21
Colonia Kennedy, Tegucigalpa
Honduras
tel.: + 504 2328223/2320792/2325135/37
fax: + 504 2323189
e-mail: noemiccd@sdnhon.org.hn

CCDB
Contact person: Mr Gobinda Saha
GPO Box 367
Mirpur-10, Dhaka-1216
Bangladesh
tel.: + 880 2801971/972/973
fax: + 880 2 803556
e-mail: ccdb@bangla.net

CESE
Contact person: Ms Eliana Rolemberg
Caixa Postal 041
Salvador-Bahia 40001-970
Brasil
tel.: + 55 71 336 5457
fax: + 55 71 336 0733
e-mail: cese@cese.org.br (eliana@cese.org.br)

Christian Aid
Contact person: Mr Aidan Timlin
P.O. Box 100
London SEL 7RT
United Kingdom
tel.: + 44 20 7 620 4444
fax: + 44 20 7 620 0719
e-mail: atimlin@christian-aid.org

CORAT
Contact person: Ms Margaret Mwaura
P.O. Box 42493
Nairobi
Kenya
tel.: + 254 2 890165/6/7
fax: + 254 2 891900
e-mail: Coratafrica@maf.org

DanChurchAid
Contact person: Mr Kristian Pedersen
Norregade 13
DK 1165 Copenhagen
Denmark
tel.: + 45 33 152800
fax: + 45 33 153860
e-mail:danchurchaid@dca.dk
PKP@dca.dk

ELCT
Contact person: Mr Rogate Mshana
P.O. Box 3033
Arusha
Tanzania
tel.: + 255 57 8855/7
fax: + 255 57 8858
e-mail: ELCTHQ@habari.co.tz

EZE
Contact person: Mr Matthias Wollers
Mittelstraße 37
D-53175 Bonn
Deutschland
tel.: + 49 228 8101163
fax: + 49 228 8101160
e-mail: eze@eze.org

ICCO
Contact person: Mr Bram van Leeuwen
P.O. Box 151
3700 AD Zeist
The Netherlands
tel.: + 31 30 6927811
fax: + 31 30 6925614 / 6927987
e-mail: policy@icco.nl

Kansanyangan Foundation (before NFL-ARD)
Contact person: Ms Xenia Ruiz
Rm 9, Ramon Tan Bldg., Campaner corner Nunez
Zamboanga City
Philippines
tel.: + 6362 9930480
fax: + 6362 9930481
e-mail: xbr@jetlink.com.ph

MMR
Contact person: Ms Victoria Villanueva Chavez
Apartado 05-0069
Lima 5
Peru
tel.: + 511 4238840
fax: + 511 3321280
e-mail: vvillanueva@manuela.org.pe

PARC
Contact person: Mr Ahmed Sourani
P.O. Box 25128
Shufat, Jerusalem
via Israel
tel.: + 972 2 5833818
fax: + 972 2 5831898 or 9952650
e-mail: tsd@pal-arc.org

Colophon

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Visit address	Zusterplein 22 A, 3703 CB Zeist, the Netherlands
Telephone	+31-(0)30 692 7811
Telefax	+31-(0)30 692 5614, +31-(0)30 692 7987
Website	http.www.icco.nl

In memoriam

While this document was being prepared for publication, we were greatly saddened to hear of the death of Enilson Rocha Souza, at the age of 59. He was Executive Secretary of CESE for the first 26 years of its existence and made a notable contribution to the ecumenical movement and its struggle for justice, not only in Brazil but internationally, especially through involvement with the World Council of Churches. Enilson participated directly in the Joint PME Project, only prevented by illness from travelling to Honduras after taking part in the first three plenaries where he earned the respect and affection of his colleagues. We hope that this document – and the bridges we have built – will serve to take forward the work to which Enilson devoted so much of his life.

This publication is also available on the Internet as Adobe Acrobat Reader file.

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