

inter  
cooperation

Swiss Foundation for Development and  
International Cooperation



# Human and Institutional Development

A process of Capacity Development for  
socio-economic empowerment

The experience of Intercooperation in South Asia

**25**

Intercooperation  
1982–2007

25 years of inspiring change

## IC at a glance

Intercooperation (IC) is a leading Swiss non-for-profit organisation engaged in international development since 1982. We are registered as a foundation and are governed by 21 organisations representing development, civil society and private sector interests. Intercooperation provides resources and knowledge, using a professional approach with social commitment.

Intercooperation supports partner organisations in more than twenty developing and transition countries on mandates from the Swiss government and other donors. In South Asia, Intercooperation is present in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan.

Our working domains are:

- **Natural resource management**; soil, water, climate, plant and animal resources.
- **Rural economy**; promoting micro and small enterprises, financial services and linking the poor with wider markets.
- **Local governance and civil society**; supporting local bodies of governance that ensure full political rights and liberty for their communities.

In all our work, we seek to empower the poor and marginalised by supporting gender-balanced, equitable, rights-based development.

In 2007, IC celebrates 25 years of inspiring change.

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# Why HID

## Challenges of the Institutional Framework in the Context of Rural Development

The institutional frameworks in South Asia, though they vary from country to country, show similar trends. Over the past years, many organisations from the civil society have emerged and gained strength with an increased negotiation power, improved mobilisation skills, and better socio-economic strategies. Linked to this has been a start to the inclusion of marginalised groups in decision-making processes an initiative that has shown that people's organisations have considerable potential.

Despite these achievements, several issues need resolving in order to ensure a development that is equitable and contributes more directly to poverty reduction. These challenges include:

### **The inclusion of people's organisations in decision-making processes:**

People's organisations usually play a marginal role on the political scene and in local governance. In general, the organisations supporting them do not contribute much to their empowerment in fact, sometimes the reverse is true, in order to maintain dependency.



Including the poorest in development processes remains a huge challenge.

### **More decentralised and accountable government organisations:**

Bureaucracy and centralisation within government organisations prevent the role played by other actors from being recognised and also restrict participation and emancipation of people's organisations. Lack of flexibility and top-down approaches usually result in the interests of the poorest being neglected. Other recurrent problems include corruption, inefficiency, inaccessibility and lack of motivation.

### **The strengthening of local elected bodies:**

Local governance bodies tend to reflect the attitudes of government institutions, despite their role in representing the interests of the population. This problem probably stems more from a lack of skills and guidance than deliberate neglect. It does not necessarily mean that they would not be open to other approaches.

### **The strengthening of NGOs:**

With their pro-poor approach and promotion of people's rights, NGOs definitely try to compensate for the weakness of government institutions and play a major role in the development arena. However, this sector is in continual evolution, and has sometimes witnessed

shifts from the vision of founders who had strong value systems and behaved accordingly. While most NGOs remain key development partners, the level of professionalism can vary greatly from one to another. Weaknesses are common in the following areas of strategic orientation, project cycle management, organisational development, resources management and the flexibility required of participatory approaches.

### **The involvement of private sector in development issues:**

The private sector is a key player in the field of development as an input provider, outputs buyer - and in its capacity to invest and take risk. There is a perception that the private sector is only interested in development issues when direct profits are involved. Often, however, development organisations have made little effort to involve the private sector in their interventions or in the promotion of professional organisations and community enterprises. New approaches such as business development services and market development for the poor, although in initial stages, have shown the growing involvement of the private sector.

### **Projects: passing from a role of doers to facilitators:**

Projects, though by nature temporary, have had too strong a tendency to be involved at the operational level often as a consequence of a strategy of institutional survival. Their role should rather be that of a facilitator - aimed at strengthening the role of other stakeholders. Confusion of roles and responsibilities can lead to counter-productive competition and conflict.

### **Promoting dialogue and coordination between stakeholders:**

The institutional framework of rural development is generally marked by a lack of dialogue, coordination and collaboration between organisations. Power relationships (often reinforced by cultural or religious aspects), suspicion and weak social capital are some of the constraints faced in the leveraging of initiatives and building synergies.

### **Consideration of Personal Development:**

Initiatives which aim to strengthen the institutional framework usually concentrate on organisational development and tend to neglect the dimensions related to individuals: self-awareness, personal aspirations and self-confidence. Thus the human dimension (a prerequisite for equitable and sustainable development) is overlooked...

# HID Values and Principles



Socio-economic empowerment allows women to have equal access to economic opportunities and control over their income.

Intercooperation's policies and principles reflect HID values and principles.

**Poverty reduction** is the over-arching aim that guides the entire approach of the organisation. The nature of poverty is understood in its multi-dimensional causes, namely:

- The *lack of economic opportunity* related to low or exclusionary economic growth, the level and distribution of physical assets (such as land, human capital and social assets) and market opportunities (that determine the returns to these assets)
- The *low human capabilities* related to levels of health and education, especially among disadvantaged socio-economic groups
- The *low level of security*, related to exposure to risks and income shocks, which may occur on any level and are due to a range of factors, and

- The *lack of empowerment*, related to the inability of poor people to influence state institutions and the social processes that shape resource allocations and public policy choices.

### **Community and social capital:**

Some authors cite “community” as a value in itself and IC considers the building of social capital as a necessary achievement of an HID process. “Social capital” was first defined as those intangible substances which are important to people, namely; good will, fellowship, sympathy, and social intercourse. This concept would also encompass solidarity, social cohesion, shared values, mutuality, trust, tolerance, reciprocity. Such features can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating co-ordinated actions. It is recognised that a strong social capital strengthens civil society, and is critical to socio-economic growth and the sustainability of development actions.

### **Equity and Gender Balance:**

While HID is aimed at poverty reduction in general, specific efforts need to be made to include the most disadvantaged. This is particularly important for women and the “poorest of the poor” for whom specific measures have to be implemented to ensure that they directly benefit from development initiatives.

## Promoting Gender Equity in Institutions

It is commonly believed that in Sikkim, India, women enjoy equal representation and respect in public decision making processes. Although that may be the case in the farm work sector, the reality is quite different elsewhere. Rarely did women feel free to openly express themselves. Usually a woman needed to be coaxed into offering an opinion or would only do so in private. This became a challenge for hosting productive events and delivering services to the communities.

In order to enhance the participation of women, IC promoted the concept of a “Core Group”. This body included 20 (male and female) mid-level officers, from several regional departments. The objective was to build the capacity of these representatives on development issues and approaches, including aspects of gender equality.

In the course of a personal reflection process on the kinds of changes experienced, it emerged that the women in the Core Group felt that they had greatly benefited from the capacity development programme. They were able to more confidently engage with the public and to demand equal consideration of their input. Initially the Coordinator of the group was a male. Later, a group decision was taken to promote a woman to replace him in this senior role.

Gender sensitivity developed throughout other levels of staff. This increased the participation of women in decision making and development activities. Women are now equally involved in selecting and participating in technology development activities.



Women **and** men are involved in technology development activities.



Women **and** men are involved in decision-making processes.

**Participative, demand-driven and empowerment processes** are the basis of HID. Disadvantaged members of civil society need a voice in any intervention to be able to take responsibility for their own development by representing and defending themselves.

**Sustainable development** has ecological, economic, social and institutional dimensions. IC believes in a holistic approach including all these dimensions which take into account long-term perspective alongside external costs and benefits.

**Linkage to a thematic approach** enhances the effects of HID. An appropriate “technical content” (such as natural resource management, local governance, exploitation of economic opportunities and markets, water sanitation) associated with HID is likely to contribute to rapid socio-economic returns.

**Validation of experience and knowledge management** strengthen and sustain HID, and have to be considered as accompanying measures and permanent processes. They help reinforce social capital, particularly the sharing of values.

**Accountability is essential if** sincere commitment for social justice and economic development is to be effective in the creation of an environment in which the disadvantaged can pursue their interests.

**Transparency** is required in all interactions between stakeholders. Clear rules must be followed, free from all forms of corruption.

**Respect** for other values, culture, traditions and knowledge is a prerequisite for establishing good relationships and does not require the compromise of one's own.

## Empowerment of Marginalised Groups

The Chhoto Khochabari tribal community of Bangladesh have always been victims of their isolation. Their basic human-rights had never been established since they lacked the knowledge of and access to administrative systems. IC supported the poverty pilot initiatives which taught them about their legitimate claim to rights and how to protect these.

The resulting empowerment of the group is highlighted in the following example; nine families had long been established on government land when a group of very influential people (led by local council members) forcibly occupied the land, built new houses, threatened to torch the existing homes and intimidated the residents. They sought help from neighbouring tribal communities and respected people in the area. A procession marched to the Deputy Commissioner's office where they submitting a memorandum informing him of their dire situation. He immediately ordered the respective Officers to take action in their defence. As a result, the newly built houses were removed and the tribal families were given legal documentation to prove their rightful occupation of the land. In another case in this community, a series of meetings with the local elite resulted in the return of cropland that had been snatched from four families.

Their awareness has enabled the tribal communities to claim admission to government schools, stipends, provision for sanitary latrines and tube wells amongst other benefits from government and non-governmental organisations. Now they are feeling confident in pursuing protecting their basic human rights.



Procession towards the District Administration Office.

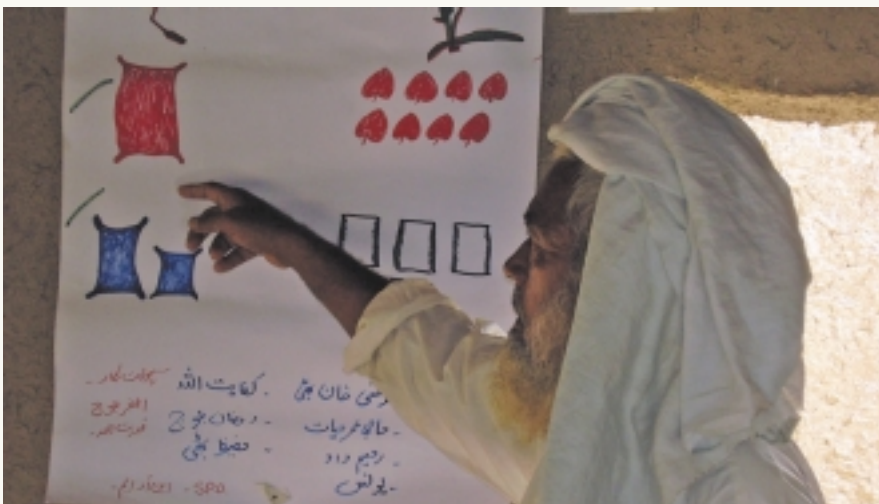
# What is our Understanding of HID?



HID endeavours to develop technical skills...

Intercooperation sees HID as a process guided by existing values and principles (particularly poverty reduction and developing social capital), which contributes to:

- Developing the skills and behaviours of individuals so that they can lead, manage, serve and strengthen their institutions.
- Strengthening institutions (social, economic, technical, political and religious) in order to make them more responsive, effective and efficient towards the individuals or organisations they serve.
- Promoting equitable and cooperative relationships between stakeholders and their institutions.



...planning skills...



...facilitation skills, etc.

## The various dimensions of HID

### Human

Self-awareness  
Confidence  
Self esteem  
Empathy  
Participation  
Internalization  
Communication

&

Analytical capabilities  
Creativity  
Flexibility  
Commitment  
Negotiation  
Autonomy

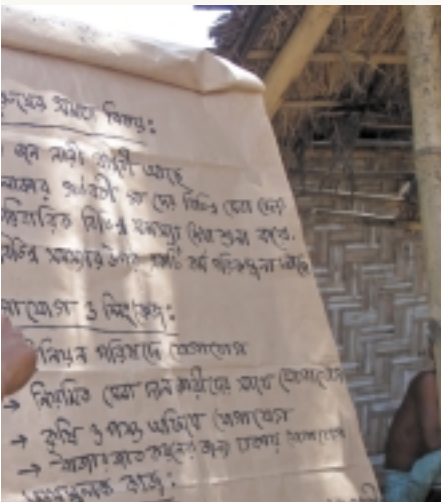
### Institution

Vision & Missions  
Approaches  
Strategies  
Methodologies  
Working method  
Organization dev  
Networking  
Project cycle mgt  
Resource mgt  
Knowledge mgt

### Development

Individual level  
Institution level  
Relations among the individuals

HID aims to establish the conditions that will allow for sustainable progress so that the process undertaken is paramount. HID has to be implemented systematically at the above mentioned three interacting levels.



Improving the relationship and power-balance between stakeholders is a priority condition for the socio-economic development of the poor and marginalised.

# Levels of Interventions in Rural Development

## The “H” and the “I” dimensions of HID

The HID process can be most effective when working simultaneously and systematically at the three key levels - individual, the institution, and between institutions. While there is often a tendency to concentrate HID support on organisational aspects, IC considers human capital development as a prerequisite for building social capital.

The “H” dimension (at the individual level) needs to emphasise self-awareness, confidence and self-esteem, empathy, participation, communication, personal organisation, analytical and critical capabilities, creativity and flexibility, commitment, negotiation and autonomy. Marginalised groups (women, ethnic minorities, religious minorities, extreme poor) are the most challenged in these areas.

The “I” dimension should focus on creating visions and missions, new approaches, organisational development, networking, project cycle management, resource mobilisation and management and knowledge management.

## Institutional and organisational development

One can simply define organisations as any group formed in order to address specific interests of concerned people. They are subject to the laws, policies and cultures of the institutions representing the common and public interests of a country.

Organisational development is understood to be the strengthening of management capacities. These include human resources capabilities, administrative and financial management, planning and monitoring capabilities.

Institutional development should then address higher level interventions with greater societal impacts, such as policy and laws reform, policy dialogue and governance.

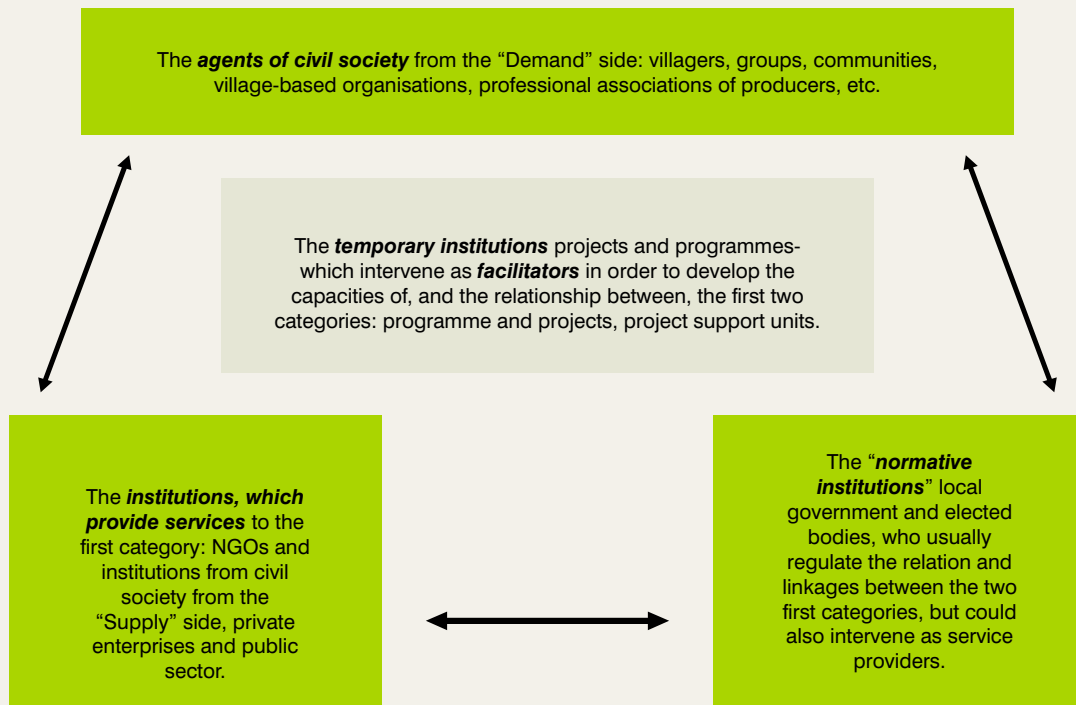
Organisations also need values, visions, objectives and strategies, not simply organisational tools. Many require improved ways of working related to organisational capacities. Hence, the development process encompasses both organisational and institutional issues.

## Stakeholders effected by HID

The four main types of stakeholders, each with unique support requirements, are:

- The **agents of civil society** from the “Demand” side: including villagers, groups, communities, village-based organisations, professional associations of producers.
- The **institutions that provide services** to the above category: NGOs private enterprises and the public sector.
- The “**normative institutions**”: local government and elected bodies that usually regulate the linkages between the two first categories, but could also intervene as service providers.
- The **temporary institutions**: programmes that **facilitate** the development of the capacities of the first two categories and the relationship between them.

## The stakeholders of HID



Experiences in South Asia show that capacity strengthening priorities for **farmers' groups and communities** are:

- Development of local dynamics that takes into account values such as equity and inclusiveness, self-governance, gender and sustainability.
- Development and reinforcement of self-confidence and self-reliance processes leading to sustainable representation and defence of interests.
- Ability to identify development priorities and implement projects.
- Negotiating skills and decision-making processes.
- Identification and mobilisation of resources and services.
- Networking with other farmers' groups, organisations and service providers, leading to enhanced market opportunities.
- Establishing partnerships with support organisations (NGOS, GOs, etc).
- Development of visions and strategies for their organisation or community.
- Steering of development processes and management of funds, plans of actions, programmes of activities, etc.

## Economic Empowerment through Community Planning



HID supported milk production projects for poor households leading to valuable income generation for them.

A small Farmer Field School with only 25 members was established in 2000 in a rural area of Rajshahi, Bangladesh. Their initial attempt to run a savings program was hampered by the lack of capacity to manage the accounts. The programme became stagnant. The organisation evolved into a Community Based Organisation in 2004. IC assisted them in prioritising their problems and supporting members to find solutions. The results were immediately encouraging and attracted greater community involvement. Specific targets included; income generation (especially for the extreme poor) and improving organisational development.

Regular monthly meetings meant that issues could be dealt with in a timely fashion, maintaining the momentum and growth of the activities. Now the organisation was able to manage the accounts and the small weekly saving were accumulating. A decision was taken to invest part of the money in land and loans for income generating activities, ranging from poultry rearing to produce cultivation.

After the IC provided Marketing Extension Training, the group saw the potential for marketing milk outside of their local confines. They sought to develop a business plan. Joining efforts with a financial institute, the resulting plan attracted a large investment from a bank to support their scheme. The community has benefited from increased per litre income as well as the incentive to rear more cattle.

The activities of the organisation have been positively recognised by service agencies and local government, too. Improved sanitation, social assistance and grant money have been received. Their success is reflected in the fact that membership has more than tripled since the start.

HID support for **partners** (NGOs, GOs, professional organisations, service providers etc) generally has to be oriented towards:

- Aiding communities in their development and self-reliance process, in a supportive and respectful way.
- Offering relevant services of good quality.
- Development institutional vision and strategies leading to reduction of dependence on donors and to sustainability.
- The adoption and internalisation of relevant approaches, methodologies and development tools based on a demand-driven approach.
- Sharing and translating values (equity, inclusiveness, etc.) into practice.
- Encouraging and supporting the development of HID skills.
- The establishment of “core competencies” and the ability to maintain these resources.
- Steering and monitoring of development processes, management of funds, plans of actions, programmes of activities, etc.
- Networking, collaboration and synergies with other institutions.
- Local and good governance and responsiveness to communities and disadvantaged social groups.
- Validation of experience and promotion of exchanges of knowledge and know-how.

## Developing Financial Management Capacities in Partner NGOs



Training and workshops - vehicles for capacity development of partners.

In Pakistan, IC assists in project interventions with more than 30 NGOs partners. Over the years, there has been a growing trend towards working with local partners to reap the advantages of their unique competencies. These partners tend to be readily accepted, communication skills and local knowledge is an asset, and they show enduring commitment to the objectives. However, the drawback has been that these partners have limited capacity in retaining their staff and producing quality administrative documents. Although IC cannot be expected to police all the internal governance issues, their input into improving the administrative capacity of the partners has been very progressive.

In 2004, the Finance and Administration synergy group was formed including managers from all the projects to meet regularly to discuss common issues. The group realised that improving their administrative systems would enhance the quality of their work as well as reduce the pressure coming from IC finance managers. Introducing standard operational procedures and documentation in all areas; accounting, record keeping, legally binding partnership contracts, reporting, etc., was identified as a top priority. The synergy group was consulted in developing a training course to cater for these specific needs. Representatives of all of the IC partners attended the course in December 2005. It has been useful in raising standards.

The plan to extend support to more programme staff through continued in-house training and the provision of computers is currently underway. The investment in helping to improve the quality of their IC related work is sure to increase their chances at qualifying for other donor funded initiatives, too.

Regarding the *private enterprises*, HID would particularly target the development of the following capacities:

- Organisation of groups in order to identify, assess and better exploit markets, with their existing or new products.
- Interaction between groups in order to access greater market shares .
- Promotion of local services provision, including business development services.
- Improved business management and business development planning.
- Sensitivity to poverty, social and development issues.

The *normative institutions* generally would require quite strong HID support in the following themes:

- Accountability and transparency towards communities.
- Ability to document and ensure the flow of information.
- Capacity for planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating activities identified with the participation of the communities.
- Effective integration of the gender dimension in their activities.
- Identification and mobilisation of resources (e.g. effective revenue system) and services.
- Establishing local development plans in conjunction with local stakeholders.
- Implementation of formal procedures and instructions given by the government.
- Establishment of partnerships with support organisations and private sector.

## Strengthening Local Governance



Regular meetings between elected bodies, communities and line agencies helps to promote good governance.

In 2003, the government of Sikkim (India) initiated the transfer of functions and funds to local government bodies in the state. The Indo-Swiss Project Sikkim was asked to assist this process by preparing the workers to develop the necessary skills to meaningfully perform their new roles.

Attention was focused on the lowest tier of local government. In collaboration with the state training institute, intensive sessions were conducted with elected representatives, officials and active community members. Lessons took the form of group problem solving activities on issues like “how to improve local services”. This would be followed by a group reflection of the learning process. The second tier of local government also received some training, but on more specific issues.

The state training institute found it a challenge to independently develop the curricula and the session plans. They had been used to relying on external resources to do this. However, the faculty members who took part gained valuable experience and markedly improved their skills. Also, going out to deliver training in the villages was a useful way to expose the teachers to the realities of local governance. As a result, the training institute gained a reputation for competence in this field and played a key role in developing state guidelines for local government planning.

The **project structures**, which have to support HID as above, will need:

- Strengthening of conceptual and analytical capacities, enabling the growth of relevant development strategies that can effectively contribute to poverty alleviation.
- To develop their facilitating role to effectively coach partners in HID.
- Ability to develop coaching capacities within partner organisations.
- Development of a capacity for evaluation and monitoring of partnerships and approaches
- Promotion of multi-stakeholder collaboration and regional dynamics.
- The use of project dynamics for the development of partners rather than entrenching one's own institution
- Encouraging partners to consider the needs of the underprivileged.

### **HID: empowerment without dominance**

HID is an empowering process but one which requires equitable balances to be established. Complicated power games are standard in South-Asia. For instance, the interpretation of civil society is quite diverse and is regularly understood to be groups of NGOs (which may not actually represent community interests), local elites and intellectuals. Limiting support to these groups would further marginalise the vulnerable.

# Promoting HID - Tools and Processes



Accompaniment is a sustainable approach in strengthening the capacities of individuals and groups.

## Accompaniment for capacity building

An effective method for developing skills at individual and group level is to accompany the process throughout the learning and implementation stages. Many training programmes have produced poor results because trainees were abandoned before they felt confident in using new tools. They need guidance, advice and encouragement, especially when trying to master non-technical themes such as facilitating a meeting. Accompaniment is, in effect, a more subtle form of 'coaching' - placing more emphasis on 'being there just in case' rather than directing.

There are several interlinked levels of accompaniment:

- an NGO will have to accompany farmers and village-based organisations in the promotion of self-help processes or technical skills development

- project support units will have to accompany NGOs in developing technical, organisational and managerial proficiencies
- programme structures will have to accompany project units

All the processes would need to be monitored to make the whole system coherent.

## Institutional Analysis and Organisational Development

Intercooperation (IC) has extensive experience of using institutional analysis to strengthen all kinds of institutions. Its approach is to guide a process of self-analysis, starting with defining the vision and institutional objectives<sup>1</sup>.

Organisational Development (OD) logically follows the institutional analysis and leads to the definition of how an institution has to organise itself in respect of its institutional mission, objectives, activities and resources. It includes the structural set-up, management of resources, relationships and communication, working methods.

The involvement of IC in South Asia has contributed towards making a large range of institutions more effective. Success stories include the Nursery Associations in Bangladesh, which have reached an impressive level of self-reliance and self-multiplication and are now considered partners and no long just project beneficiaries (see box).

## Participatory Approaches

Participatory approaches enable communities to own their development processes.

This is at the heart of every IC intervention - including those who typically have no voice in consultation and decision-making processes.

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) is a proven and often utilised approach in the case of diagnostic and planning processes. Unfortunately, there is often a tendency to use it more as an extractive method, or to implement it very mechanically. For this reason, IC prefers to promote a form of Participatory Action Research (PAR) which puts more emphasis on the quality of the process and the internalisation of the values encompassed in it.

Prior to 2001, nursery associations were loosely organised under a variety of NGO's throughout the north-west region of Bangladesh. IC intervened to strengthen the ability of the individual associations to grow independently. Initially more than 130 support staff were needed to support them in this process. The associations' management capacity and service provision functions have developed significantly under this new system. Over time, they have achieved a high level of professionalism, self-reliance and sustainability functioning at the district level, and hence became partners of IC. Now, only a single project staff is required to support further capacity development by linking these successful nursery associations to national organisations.



PRA

1. Based on those developed by the Small Enterprise Education and Promotion Network

Participatory Technology Development (PTD) and Participatory Innovation Development (PID) are supported by IC to give farmers an opportunity to have their accumulated knowledge recognised and valued by research institutions and extension agencies. The latter are encouraged to consider the local context and the situation of small producers. Farmers are also encouraged to contribute to the development of technologies and innovations, and be involved in the research and extension system.

Participatory approaches also concern market aspects and aim to bolster the competencies of farmers to better exploit economic opportunities. Many tools have been developed. A very innovative and effective approach, called marketing extension, has been implemented in Bangladesh based on an FAO initiative.

## Square Mandala Tool

The 9-square organisational format is used extensively by IC partners in India to guide development plans which represent the perspectives of individuals, households and communities. It is a tool that enables a holistic understanding of the drivers of change where individual perceptions are as important as skills or physical assets. Interventions often focus on the latter failing to recognise individual aspirations. The role of individuals, family and community is central to the development process as opposed to maintaining the perception that the poor are simply passive beneficiaries.

### Rural Livelihood System Analysis

IC has used several tools to analyse rural livelihood systems of which two were particularly simple and efficient - the "*well and ill-being analysis*" and the "*livelihoods strategy diagnosis*". Both contribute to developing analytical

skills by communities tailored to their own circumstances. The first helps rural groups create their own definition of poverty - out of which comes a specific vision for

improving their situation. The second tool allows them to analyse the particular constraints of, and opportunities for, their livelihoods. Three levels of influence are studied; household, community and the lowest tier of local government. This analysis leads to the definition and prioritisation of activities in order to improve their livelihoods. The 9-square mandala is another tool used by IC in India (see box).

### Planning and Monitoring

Planning, monitoring, (self-) evaluation and steering must be present in every institution. Successfully implementing concrete activities provides momentum and cohesion for the members of an institution. IC has a long history in strengthening organisations with appropriate and differentiated support.

### Empowering Leadership

IC recognises that key individuals play a critical role as agents of change in the development and steering of any institution. Clearly the development of the qualities of good leaders needs to be done while respecting the principles of participatory and demand-driven approaches leading to the growth of the capacities of others within their institutions.

### Communication

Good communication is needed to maximise the impact of any action. Misunderstanding, suspicion, oversights or ignorance are terribly counter-

productive effects of poor communication. IC emphasises the importance of developing communication capabilities for diverse purposes: organising and moderation of events, creating dialogues, fair negotiations, empathy etc. IC supports adult education as part of this endeavour.

### Multi-stakeholder Synergies

The effectiveness of one institution is often limited by the ineffectiveness of another. Thus, HID has to consider strengthening relationships and collaboration between institutions in order to help them to work as one system. One way to support this process is to conduct multi-stakeholder analysis using the RAAKS method, Rapid Appraisal of Agricultural Knowledge Systems (developed by the Royal Institute of Tropical Agriculture of the Netherlands) that IC has utilised in India for developing collaborative forest management (see box). Promoting and facilitating platforms which gather key players creates dialogues which often lead to coordinated strategic planning, better understanding and constructive exchange of opinions amongst the various stakeholders.



HID processes use appropriate ways of communication and adult education.

## Using RAAKS Methodology

With the expansion of Joint and Collaborative Forest Management practices in India, there are often serious conflicts between livestock (sheep and goat) herders and those responsible for forest protection. Fodder from forests is in high demand but blanket bans on grazing or extraction may have tragic impacts on the livelihoods of the poorest groups who depend on this for their only income. IC used the RAAKS methodology to bring together the various groups responsible for natural resource management (forest, soil conservation department, watershed development projects) and livelihoods (agriculture, animal husbandry). Together they developed a pilot project for improved and sustainable fodder management with the participation of all stakeholders. This experience was used to develop new approaches for up-scaling such collaborative management systems.

## Regional Coordination Forum



Stakeholders take ownership in building regional platforms.

Pakistan has experienced a considerable change in the political climate since 2001. An ambitious devolution and decentralisation process has been undertaken with many new institutions becoming established. Their process and principles greatly resemble the approach taken by the IC's resource management project. Both groups endeavour to shift the responsibilities to locally-based stakeholder groups. It's imperative that good coordination and communication exists for these people to effectively take up their new roles. For this to happen, opportunities for regular dialogue between the service providers were necessary. IC helped establish a platform for information exchange and participative decision making on natural resource management issues. Forums were created in the different districts to meet to exchange information, analyse projects and resolve conflicts.

Since March 2003, the forums have been meeting on a quarterly basis. Men and women have been in attendance. More than 45 small scale projects have been proposed, revised and approved by the forum. They also developed a number of multi-stakeholder monitoring committees which are performing well in the field. Due to the improved linkages with communities and government service providers several sector activities have been initiated with public funds. There are plans to involve more women and develop the capacities of the forum members to take complete control of the administration and direction of the meetings. The ultimate aim is to create self-sustaining mechanisms to maximise the effectiveness of local government bodies on behalf of their communities.

### **Programmatic and Systemic Approach**

IC is aware that a sector approach does not sufficiently take into consideration the various dimensions of poverty which get overlooked when communities set their development priorities. The integrated project concept, in which a single institution wants to address all the needs of the community has also shown its limitations and is no longer promoted.

IC finds it more effective to promote a programmatic approach which encourages specialised institutions to collaborate and synchronise their poverty alleviation interventions. These activities are identified using a systemic approach to decide which areas could result in the greatest impact on livelihoods. IC can contribute to this by developing, strengthening and monitoring such approaches.

### **Private-Public partnership**

IC strongly believes that the private sector and public sector can complement each other in a synergic mode of collaboration. To overcome the atmosphere of sterile competition and negative criticism that often exists between them, IC is promoting public-partnerships. One successful example of this in Bangladesh has been the distribution of quality planting material that has involved extensive collaboration between research institutions, government extension agencies and professional nursery owners' associations.

In Pakistan, Forest Department, local communities and tobacco industry collaborate to reduce the consumption of wood needed for tobacco curing, which has an impact on environmental degradation of forest resource in Chamla Valley.

## Collaborative Management of Forests



Community participation in State-owned forest management generated additional incomes for them.

IC managed programmes have a good reputation in Nepal for their financial and technical contributions towards developing the community forestry sector. In response to the demands from local communities, district officials returned control of many forest areas to them. Now, almost 80% of the population are involved in protecting nearly half of the district forest land. Their efforts include holding regular meetings. Open discussions are followed by collective decision making regarding all the issues raised. More than one third of the participants are women.

In one area, three furniture and two paper making enterprises have been established. Poor people are gaining employment and community funds are increasing. A portion of the profits are being loaned to group members, whilst the remainder is saved for future “emergencies”.

IC has assisted in building the community leadership skills needed to competently manage their programs. By building positive relationships with officials, together they make plans and progress has been steady. With continued support, this momentum is sure to be maintained.

### Gender Mainstreaming

Discriminatory practices against women are a general feature of South Asia. To confront this problem IC has developed Gender Mainstreaming approaches. The process may involve local specialists conducting gender audits, the training of female mentors in villages, participatory gender analysis at the community level, etc. The latter consists of facilitating discussions between women and men to identify the gender inequalities that cause problems in their communities. They can then collectively decide what measures to take to resolve such issues.

### Institutional Governance

Institutional Governance is the way an organisation manages its working practices. There should be clear principles and regulations, transparent information, members' participation in decision-making processes, and personal accountability for actions. Many tools can be used to guide these objectives, such as staff codes of conduct, institutional certification, performance agreements with local government and organisation grading instruments.

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Human and  
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The Experience of Inter-cooperation in South Asia

