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ABSTRACT

The Women in Development (WID) office of the Agency for International Development held a series of conferences and meetings inviting representatives from less developed countries, women's organizations, private voluntary organizations, and donor groups to discuss current activities and the future potential of women's organizations to implement projects, deliver services, and cooperate with poor women (the majority of the world's poor are women) in identifying, developing, and carrying out WID programs. Participants in these meetings supported the idea of working with women's organizations as one important WID programming approach. Conference proceedings, interviews, and additional literature review are used to present a synthesis in light of future donor programs. The first part of the report summarizes descriptions of expectations, activities and needs of users, of intermediaries, and of donor programming through women's groups and organizations. The second part explores ways the programming approach can be strengthened. An appendix reviews selected non-indigenous intermediaries representing six different organizational frameworks and strategies. (BRR)

WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT

VARIOUS PERSPECTIVES ON USING WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS IN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING

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VARIOUS PERSPECTIVES ON USING WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS IN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING

by

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INTRODUCTION

Developers repeatedly point to their frustrated attempts to involve the poor in designing, managing, and carrying out projects which address local needs. The problem is compounded when one realizes that the majority of the poor are women. There are few well-developed links from donor programs to women, and few women program designers or administrators to help establish these links. Often such programs require administrative and other support from intermediaries who are culturally sensitive. Issues concerning the potential of women's organizations to act not only as project implementers but also as coordinating or intermediary agents, therefore, are of vital concern to AID programmers.

With this in mind, the Women in Development office (WID) of the Agency for International Development (AID) held a series of conferences and meetings inviting representatives from less developed countries (LDCs), women's organizations, private voluntary organizations (PVOs), and donor groups. These representatives discussed current activities and the future potential of women's organizations to implement projects, deliver services, and cooperate with poor women in identifying, developing, and carrying out WID programs.* Participants in these meetings supported the idea of working with women's organizations as one important WID programming

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*"Indigenous groups" in this paper refer to groups with local, in-country leadership and control of decision-making. For the sake of clarity, those aspects of LDC groups which relate directly to non-indigenous organizations and leadership are discussed separately. Indigenous women's groups are divided into two types: the user groups, whose services are designed to benefit their own members; and the intermediary groups, whose programs are basically for other than their own membership. This distinction is made for analysis of their two separate functions though in reality many groups perform some of both functions. (Cont.)

approach. Their discussions generally focused on four main topics:

1. Information about ongoing indigenous user and intermediary programs and need for further documentation;

2. Information about non-indigenous intermediary organizations and need for further consideration of their potential roles;

3. WID project objectives as a base upon which to develop specific project goals and criteria, and the need to clarify these; and,

4. Issues involved in programming through women's groups and organizations, and the need to consider these further.

The WID/AID office asked the author to summarize information coming from these meetings, augment the conclusions with information from selected studies commissioned by WID/AID, collect pertinent documents, correspondence, and interviews, and present a synthesis from these sources in light of future donor programs.

This paper is written in two parts. The first summarizes descriptions of expectations, activities and needs of users, of intermediaries, and of donors programming through women's groups and organizations.

The second part is a further look at some of the issues raised by these representatives to see in what way this programming approach can be strengthened.

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*(Cont.) This manner of dividing groups is chosen for being more functional than the common terms "local" and "national." For example, an association of women poultry raisers may be spread across a number of localities or it may be only a small localized group, while in both cases members are active users of the services. Local groups can perform intermediary functions (For example, a small group of local teachers can run a hostel for homeless girls) as can large national associations.

PART I: EXPECTATIONS, ACTIVITIES, AND NEEDS

Indigenous Women's Groups

There were four conclusions about potential and current impacts of indigenous user and intermediary women's groups that generally were agreed upon at the conferences and by the researchers and developers cited in this study:

1. Indigenous women's user organizations can be a valuable tool for handling local projects. Intermediary women's groups can channel funds and materials to rural/urban poor women and can transmit information between the poor and government agencies, program organizers, and funders. Donors may be better able to reach the poor with culturally appropriate and responsive programs through strengthening women's groups at several levels.

2. Aside from the programmatic aspects of reaching the poor with relevant projects, working through women's organizations provides women opportunities for personal development, leadership and management skills, network building, and, information sharing, which comes through organizing and participating.

3. There are organizations addressing development issues, but women are not well represented in these, especially in leadership positions. Such programs generally offer little benefit to women or girls. There are also women's groups, but most are not strong or effective, partly due to lack of experienced leadership and management, and partly because existing groups have weak links, either with the government and donors or with the poor. Production programs that may carry organization-strengthening elements, such as agricultural cooperatives, are almost always seen as men's programs, whereas social welfare programs, usually without accompanying organizational aid, are considered the domain of women. For these and other reasons, women's organizations are becoming increasingly dis-

advantaged and will need help to gain the strength and skill necessary to participate actively in the development process.

4. There are a number of women user and intermediary groups that are eager to participate in development programs and want to become more effectively involved already. There are a number of on-going programs; however, their actual status is unclear, how they measure up to WID criteria is unclear, and what effective assistance donors may provide is also unclear. Some informants did, however, describe specific organizations and projects and made suggestions for types of assistance. These will be examined.

The two types of indigenous groups, A. User Groups and B. Intermediary Groups, play different roles, have different problems, and need to be examined separately.

A. Indigenous User and Potential User Groups

Indigenous organizational structures forming user groups or potential user groups, are found in both rural and urban areas and may be focused on social, welfare, or development objectives. They range from the temporary savings societies, work-sharing and emergency aid groups found throughout the world, to those more formally organized and sometimes legally established, such as cooperatives. They develop around specific objectives and last only as long as the objective is being addressed, the group efforts are felt to be helpful, or the leader has something to offer. Such spontaneous, informal groups are often fragile, and conference participants cited examples where groups were destroyed by imposed

structures, overly enlarged projects, or added outside demands on leadership. Other informal groups are long lasting but focus on one activity alone (such as beer making for local funerals) and are difficult to refocus into working with other projects. (See Perrett and Latham, 1980). However, when programs are well designed to work with these indigenous structures, they have been found to have many advantages, including a long-lasting impact. (See Germain, 1976 and Dixon, 1980). Because women are frequently only found in temporary, informal groups, the way to identify such groups and support their efforts was seen to be an important WID issue.

Examples cited showed two ways of strengthening informal groups, first, by giving them information, and second, by supporting popular projects around which groups form. Both techniques are useful in different situations.

An example of the first, where educational programs have been inserted into natural informal groupings of women, is Guatemala, where cassettes are played at well points to introduce new ideas to women as they wait to draw their water (Mody and Rogers, 1979). A WID/AID pilot project in Tanzania uses a similar method (Stanley, 1979). These projects should be followed to assess not only their educational impact, but whether this technique helps women develop future group activities. Women's secret societies formed the basic grouping for health education cassette programs developed by CARE, Sierra Leone. These discussion groups are now expanding into a variety of community-development and income-generating activities.

The second approach, to support a project of interest to local women (such as assisting efforts to develop adequate water), is a way to encourage participants to form an organization which they may later use to formulate

other projects (Kerr, 1978). Literacy classes run by Catholics in Kenya and by Foster Parents in Sierra Leone have formed the basis for more permanent development-focused groups. Korean family-planning associations developed from traditional informal saving societies have now taken up a variety of income-generating projects (Mody and Rogers, 1979; Stegall, 1979; Dixon, 1979). Senegalese women's informal work groups, aided by the forestry service, started a money-making program with tree nurseries and some, subsequently, have used their profits for grain mills and other communally chosen investments.

In a case-study collection of "successful income-raising activities," there are a number of examples of groups which voluntarily structured themselves into more formal associations in order to explore work possibilities or to improve working conditions (ESCAP/FAO, 1979).

Local women's user groups have been the most difficult groups for donors to identify and contact. When they are organized enough to ask for aid, they usually ask for help in starting specific income-generating activities. Developers reported that the few proposals submitted by local women's user groups are apt to address local needs, but reflect a lack of information on the macro and technical levels.

Local women themselves often recognize the need for outside help for market studies, technical know-how, assessing resources, and obtaining other information upon which to select the best potential solution to their identified problem (e.g., see SAED, 1978; Germain, 1976). However, these same local women complain that when either indigenous or expatrite outsiders come to their communities with programming advice, they often bring irrelevant and useless information, are overly directive, and above all, fail to listen (e.g., see Stegall, 1979).

In working with indigenous women's user groups the major issues raised by donors are:

1. How to contact potential women's user groups interested in development projects;
2. How to make appropriate technical information and managerial skills available; and
3. How to be sure the project increases instead of decreases local women's ability to function as a group, building up independence and self-help.

Information in this study indicates that there are many more potential women user groups than donors suppose, and that when supports for projects to address locally felt needs are available, women are often eager to participate. This is especially true when the projects are income generating (see Dixon, 1980). In the field, developers are frequently asked about potential aid for local projects. Flexible support responding to these types of requests could make the issue of locating women's groups in many regions a false issue.

Users request that intermediaries working at the local level consider themselves as resource and service agents. Intermediaries could help them establish networks, learn where to locate required information and expertise, learn of appropriate government services and resources, and finally, if needed, learn of potential donors.

Informants concluded there is a need for careful selection of intermediary groups. Donors must insist on clearly stated self-help objectives, and continual project evaluation with built-in potential for corrective re-programming, to be sure the capabilities of user groups are strengthened.

This is a new and more difficult approach and will require commitment by all participants.

The need for responsive and flexible support brings up the question of whether indigenous intermediaries are willing and able to fulfill this role.

B. Indigenous Intermediary Groups

Informants often stress the need to have intermediaries add flexibility and responsiveness difficult to obtain in the larger, more complicated donor organizations. A growing number of indigenous women's groups are interested in taking on this role.

Participants described local intermediary groups as formed around professional, religious, political, or other common interests. But it is not the origin of the groups but their objectives and the focus of their programs which indicate how they relate to WID criteria.

Many of the intermediary organizations described at these conferences or cited on donors' lists have all the trappings of formal organizations, including constitutions and written objectives. In looking at numerous groups' objectives, one finds the same types listed over and over again:

1. Consciousness raising or advocacy, often mentioning the use of mass media;
2. General development programs, such as "improving the life of the rural poor" or providing "outreach" programs;
3. Sectorial development, such as improving the nation's health, nutrition, or educational standards or addressing inequities in the law; and,
4. More specific developments programs, such as sponsoring income-generating projects, training poor women in technical or managerial skills, etc.

Many organizations list not one but several of these categories as objectives, though each is ambitious and demands a variety of professional skills. A number of organizations have projects which still appear to be based on immediate easing of current hardships or the welfare model. However, their spokesmen stress, and their goals reflect, a desired change to a development model. There is little evidence that many of these groups realize development projects require building self-help capacities by the user groups. The extent to which technical and philosophical changes in project design will be necessary to meet this end escapes most of them. A few indigenous groups, however, are actively analyzing development issues and their potential roles (SAED, 1978).

There are any number of supportive services that women's groups are successfully performing for user groups: getting political support for needed legislation, networking, obtaining and providing information, offering services requiring verbal skills, providing political pressure for getting needed local services, raising funds to support local initiatives, etc. There seems to be a new movement, however, for urban educated women to want to go beyond this into directing development projects. Organizations need to carefully evaluate their skills and resources and direct programs toward capitalizing on their assets. This is not an easy transition and has frequently not been successful. The most successful appear to combine professional staff and experts with volunteer support.

Almost without exception, when asked what types of help would be useful, intermediary groups list project funding as their biggest problem. When intermediary groups must spend a great deal of their time in fund raising, it distracts from other roles they might play, and in many cases is a poor time investment for educated, capable women.

Groups also list special requests for help that fall into four categories:

1. Proposal writing;
2. Leadership training;
3. Management training; and
4. Strengthening communications.

Proposal writing is usually seen in the more limited sense of finding terms to which donors will respond rather than the larger aspects of identifying resources, needs, and designing the project for the local context. Leadership and management training appear to be given different meanings by various groups. The term communications seems to cover such diverse things as transportation to project sites, obtaining specific publications, local and regional workshops for idea sharing and network building, and secretarial staff and stamps for sending out newsletters, etc.

Understanding the specific needs of indigenous intermediaries is further complicated when one realizes that identical terms are used by some indigenous and non-indigenous intermediary groups, both as to what they offer user groups, and what they themselves need for functioning more effectively with donors. These terms have become currently popular "buzz words" at all levels. They reflect real needs, but what these real needs are must be clarified in each specific situation.

In some cases intermediary groups request training from local experts, or experts from neighboring countries, who are perceived to have more relevant experiences. Spokespersons for indigenous intermediary groups almost never suggest the need for outside help in managing projects, though they may request funds for training and salaries in order to establish

and maintain their own management staff. On the whole they appear to give much less emphasis to the need for technical support than either the user groups, or the non-indigenous intermediaries, and donors. They may need help to become aware of the complicated technical issues raised by some of their proposals.

Non-indigenous intermediary representatives point to a number of problems:

1. Local intermediary groups may not have designed programs in a way to attract funding;

2. They may be unrealistic in designing projects which are too ambitious for their available technical or managerial skills; and,

3. They frequently have problems relating to the poor, since foreign-educated indigenous elite may not be able to accept the traditional customs of their own background, and may lack respect and appreciation for values and needs of local poor.

Donors stress a continuing desire to locate intermediaries who have adequate technical expertise and who can help local intermediaries or user groups improve the condition of poor women and strengthen local capabilities.

It must also be noted that appropriate programming in various countries will reflect historical roles of women's groups, traditionally accepted women's activities, and the approach governments take. In some countries, private indigenous intermediaries hardly exist and extension services or governmental agencies may perform this function. When this is the case donors supporting WID projects may wish to encourage local governmental services to include women on their staffs, and they may work through non-indigenous intermediary groups with women field workers (see Dixon, 1980).

C. OTHER INTERMEDIARY ORGANIZATIONS

There are a number of intermediary organizations that are either non-indigenous or are a combination of indigenous and non-indigenous. Several generalizations about these intermediaries were given by donors, LDC women, and the intermediary group leaders themselves.

Donors stressed the roles of intermediaries working with LDC groups and their advantages in the following ways:

1. In countries where intermediaries can work closely with local governments or with donors, they can experiment with pilot projects and provide useful models for larger programs;

2. In situations where bilateral aid is politically difficult, intermediaries sometimes can work directly with the poor and thereby avoid political issues;

3. When programs that intermediaries sponsor are closely supervised in the field, they can be more responsive to local needs, and more flexible, than those run by larger donor agencies;

4. Where non-indigenous women's organizations or field staff work with indigenous women's organizations, there may be a sharing of problems, ideas, and experiences which is useful and which does not happen when programs are run by males;

5. When working with micro projects, outside intermediaries can offer a macro view to help place the project into a larger context;

6. Through helping local groups form national, regional, and international networks intermediaries can help strengthen women's programs;

7. When providing technical and managerial expertise not available locally, intermediaries can help assure project success; and,

8. By acting as a conduit, (especially where indigenous organizations need support, are not focused on development projects, or are non-existent), intermediaries can help donor's funds support grass-root WID projects in the field. This appears to be especially true when the intermediary groups involved are women's organizations.

LDC Women.

Spokeswomen for LDC women's intermediary groups were enthusiastic about the help these intermediaries could bring; however, they added strong qualifiers:

1. Intermediary non-indigenous groups must alter their project-identifying procedures to be more truly responsive to local needs;

2. Where possible, non-indigenous groups should concentrate on a supportive role, helping the LDC indigenous groups develop the skills to run their own programs, rather than developing competitive projects.

Intermediary Groups.

The comments made by spokespersons for intermediary groups were more diverse than those cited above, reflecting the vast differences in their structures and experiences and the size of their programs. However, some comments on what they need to be effective are as follows:

1. Most expressed a need for access to more flexible long-term funding. They pointed out that only with this type of funding could they do what they were expected to do—to be responsive, flexible, and supportive of local initiatives;

2. Some stressed the need to stay politically unencumbered by donor agencies;

3. Others requested access to training in leadership and management and strengthening proposal-writing skills for their own staffs;

4. A number of representatives requested workshops on WID programming for their staffs. They wanted concrete examples and case studies of successful projects. Several women working in male-run organizations also requested case studies of projects which impacted negatively on women when women's needs and problems had not been considered in the design. They needed these examples for consciousness raising within their own staffs;

5. Others saw the need for information: information on LDC women's groups and their activities, better information on projects being implemented by other intermediary groups; technical information on specific projects, i.e., simple how-to-raise-rabbit pamphlets, information on who has what films, lists of available short-term technical experts, and specific information on income-generating projects for women; and,

6. Many representatives of intermediary groups mentioned that their own strategies were changing from a welfare to a development model of programming and they were looking for support for developing the staff and techniques necessary for this new type of approach.

Six organizational frameworks and strategies used by representative intermediary organizations can be identified:

1. Local individuals trained as "change agents," who in turn help the poor organize themselves into user groups;

2. International women's organizations working with affiliated indigenous organizations or member groups;

3. International church groups and other organizations that respond to requests from the field, usually filtered through an indigenous staff;

4. Private voluntary women's organizations which work as partners with strong, or try to upgrade the capabilities of weak, indigenous women's organizations. Sometimes these groups use the strategy of twinning--matching a women's organization in a developed country with one in an LDC;

5. Organizations which specialize in technical services or training for women's organizations; and,

6. Consortia which have been developed to help member groups obtain and manage grants and project funds.

Examples of these six types of organizations are found in the appendix.

It is difficult to evaluate whether donor-listed expectations for intermediaries' programs are being fulfilled from program descriptions given by organizations. One can seldom tell such basic information as who originated the project idea, whether projects listed as income generating truly are, whether the programs are developing responsibility in local leadership, etc. This information gathering will require field visits and base-line data. Once again, the need to incorporate and discuss consistent WID objectives and criteria in project design becomes self evident.

In reviewing the donor expectations for intermediary programs, however, one can see that from the sample represented in the appendix of this paper, some expectations were supported better than others:

1) There were no examples represented in which the intermediaries stressed working to develop models for governments or donors. This had, perhaps, happened in the case of the Korean Mothers' Clubs, where programs

started by NGOs had been incorporated into the government program. The fact that model prospects are not more frequent, may relate to an absence of interest on the part of some donors in learning from PVOs (see DAI, 1978). It may also partly be due to a PVO reluctance to work with local governments in selecting priorities and to have governments and donors evaluating their particular projects, especially those run by indigenous field staff.

2) Only one occasion was mentioned where an intermediary funded a user group in a situation that would have been politically difficult for bilateral aid. It has been suggested that women's organizations are perceived as politically unthreatening to many governments and, therefore, the problem does not arise as often as it does with men's organizations.

3) How responsive the programs have been to local needs and how much real self-help activity is involved should be a topic for further investigation. However, examples such as the Lutheran centers which became self sustaining in only three years, would seem to suggest that these centers had successfully met a local need and that the implementers were using a self-help formula.

4-6) A number of women in the sample cited the benefits of working with non-local women in workshops, seminars and in management. Such contact had given them new ideas, had helped them form important networks, and had given them a view of their program in a larger context. This was felt to be true especially when the intermediary group was a women's organization.

7) A number of informants discussed training programs and technical supports provided by intermediaries. The effectiveness of training

programs is difficult to evaluate. Some organizers ask for the impressions of participants at the end of training sessions. However, little has been done to find if the training has been effective when the women are back in their locales, and who it is that really benefits from these programs. Because of the overwhelming number of requests for training which exist despite the plethora of training reported to be available, it is important to examine this seeming contradiction. It is urgent to discover how available these programs truly are, and if the contents are genuinely responsive to needs of LDC women. Evaluative criteria need to be built into future training programs, and perhaps the efforts in this direction currently being made by CEFPA could point the way.

8) The programs of intermediaries are quite diverse, but so are the situations in which they operate. This diversity is seen to be advantageous. Most of the WID programs focused through women's organizations are quite new, too new to give definitive feedback about the relative effectiveness of specific strategies. However, it is generally felt that organizations which specialize and can offer specific, well-developed skills to local groups are particularly helpful. There is a danger, especially for inexperienced groups who try to deal with diverse activities, to spread themselves too thin.

PART II: PROGRAMMING ISSUES

A. WID Project Objectives

One of the major issues brought out in this study by people with different perspectives, was the difficulty of clearly evaluating current and past projects and what they indicate for the future.

Evaluators have long decried the lack of specific goals and evaluation criteria in the design of most development projects, making it impossible to measure what has changed. Though this lack is true for all types of projects, especially small-scale grass-root activities, informants point out it is even more true of WID projects. Most WID projects lack adequately agreed-upon WID objectives for a basis of comparison and evaluation.

Local women's groups and intermediary groups complain that donors have not made their objectives and criteria for funding WID projects clear. Donor field representatives agree and say they also are looking for appropriate simple criteria to use directly or with intermediaries.

A basic reason for the lack of clear objectives for WID projects lies in the fact that women in development, as apart from general development, is an artificial division. Community development should encompass all the members of the community, male and female, young and old. However, a large body of literature has amply demonstrated that whereas even in traditional societies in which women have had well-respected social and economic roles within the family, women are losing ground. New forms of employment, mechanization, industrialization, and other elements of development, including those advanced by donor programs, are forcing women to the sidelines and are building an artificial barrier between men and women.

In order to address these special problems for women WID programs need to focus on the following two objectives:

1. To integrate (or reintegrate) women into all aspects of ongoing economic, social, and political development, especially in relation to the modern sector; and,

2. To improve women's skills to control their futures, including developing skills to organize and manage development programs.

These two WID objectives can be used as the basis upon which to formulate project goals in a local context and upon which to develop a measure of project impacts.

One researcher has put forth questions which help clarify the difference between general development and WID objectives:

> "General development objectives: Have human and financial resources been invested wisely? Has the project produced a change in social or economic terms?
>
> "WID objectives: Has anything been demonstrated about the abilities of women (e.g., participation in non-traditional activities, cooperation, management skills?) Has the project produced a change in the condition of (including attitudes about) individual women and/or the group of women?" (Helzner, 1980, page 7).

Developmental impacts on a group itself need to be handled as a discrete aspect of total project assessment. Informants pointed out that though little has been done to measure the effects of projects for women, even less has been done to measure the effects of participation on the women involved. In other words, women's organizations may work with WID projects or with projects which concern general development, but when women's groups manage a project, the act of participating may have a developmental impact on the group and its members.

WID/AID commissioned Judith Helzner (1980) to study evaluating small WID grants, including this activity impact on the participating group. She selected five organizational goals: task orientation, self-help philosophy, formal organization, internal motivation, and awareness by the members of women as participants in and beneficiaries of the develop-

ment process. She then formulated key transition criteria, elaborating on them by posing the key question for each:

1. Orientation - personal versus task. To what extent is the group involved in more than social activities; having a common goal more than simply being a friendship group?

2. Philosophy - social welfare versus self-help. What is the commitment to palliating present hardships compared to the commitment to finding means of permanently alleviating that hardship?

3. Structure - informal versus formal. Has the group recognized itself as a formal unit in some way?

4. Motivation - external versus internal. To what extent is the presence of an outsider necessary to the continuing existence of the group?

5. Ideology - group as end versus group as means. To what extent is the women's group committed to promoting women as participants in and beneficiaries of the development process? (Helzner, 1980).

If these five transition criteria are considered continua, an organization starts at some point and either moves or does not move during the course of the project. (It is not necessary for each of these five criteria to be addressed during any one project.)

Helzner gives an example of how this set of criteria could give an added dimension to evaluating user groups' activities. If a group established a rabbit project and a disease killed the rabbits, judged only in economic terms it would be considered a complete failure. However, if in the act of establishing the project, women gained new skills and confidence in themselves and their group and were able to

start another project, or solve other problems, it could be viewed as successful in terms of organizational activity objectives. Used as goals, these five criteria could help intermediary groups examine their own development as well as help measure the impact of a project on user groups.

A welfare project in itself is not usually a WID project, but women getting together to help others in an emergency could thereby formalize their own group. If they then focused on turning the project into supporting self-help efforts of those caught in the emergency, their program would have strengthening effects on both the user and intermediate groups. It is, however, easy to find examples where a welfare project strengthened the intermediary group, yet had a negative impact on the capability of those in the user group to organize and help themselves. It is essential to examine the impact at both levels.

Women at the conferences stressed the need for WID objectives to be clearly stated in the design of all future projects with WID implications, so that specific project evaluations as well as cross-project evaluations can be made. When projects are managed by women's groups, organizational goals should be clear from the beginning of the project design and be considered an essential element of the criteria for project evaluation.

B. Other Basic Issues and Considerations

There seems to be general agreement among informants that working through women's informal and formal user groups is essential for broadly based development programs designed to permanently improve living con-

ditions of the poor. There was ample documentation that project impacts are greatly magnified where women organize and work together. There is also little doubt that women's intermediaries of different types are important to donors as channels through which to supply funding and material to women's user groups, and for opening up a two-way communication necessary in supporting locally directed self-help programs.

Rather than "if" or "why," women's organizations can be useful in WID programming questions arise on the level of "how":

1. Users.
   How can programs help women users get into the social, economic, and political mainstream of development?

2. Intermediaries.
   How can intermediary women's organizations become more effective in facilitating WID projects?

3. Donors.
   How can donors give serious support to WID programs conducted through women's organizations, as part of their overall strategy of building indigenous capabilities.

Users' Groups.

The observation was made on several occasions during the seminars, and was supported by the studies, that most small projects directed by women's organizations were focused outside the mainstream of development or had very little impact on the lives of participants. This led to the question of whether the emphasis should not be placed instead on getting women included in the larger development projects. Dixon found support for both sides in her evaluation of AID project impacts on women. Where

women were specifically identified as beneficiaries and where women's groups or bureaus directed the project, women were apt to take part in both decision making and benefit sharing. However, such projects were usually small, low budget, and low impact. The better-funded, more generally focused projects were less likely to allow women to participate in management and control, and when benefits for women were not disaggregated from the total group, women were apt either to benefit less than men participants or, in fact, to be disadvantaged by the program (Dixon, 1980). This finding suggests two concurrent strategies, both of which need the support of organized women.

First, women should examine small projects which they sponsor to be sure the activities are not dead end (i.e., training in traditional crafts without a convincing market study, etc.). Women organizers and programmers should be watchful that these activities not only improve the situation of women, but strengthen their capabilities to control future changes which affect their lives. Since national programs and environmental conditions vary, women need to develop sensitive mechanisms through which to respond to evolving problems and/or to direct change. At every level, but especially at the user level, this appears to indicate the need for women to organize and to be given options for a variety of types of support from flexible programs. Program activities need to be designed by experienced professional women programmers working with local women to identify needs and resources, and to do the necessary data collection, project implementation, and evaluations together. This approach would also suggest the importance of trying to tie the programs into available on-going governmental or other support systems, and designing them in relation to the local and national development priorities.

In dealing with fragile informal, inexperienced groups without outside contacts, developers will have to be content with a small, localized project. For outsiders, indigenous or not, to enter a rural community in which women have never been organized, to help women identify their needs and resources and develop a strategy to improve their lives is a slow, difficult process. But it does happen, especially where there are dedicated women and supportive governmental structures (see Jain, 1980). Examples discussed suggested that such programs are apt to be more successful when there is a volunteer or a development agent living in and working directly with the community, perhaps a paraprofessional from the community itself. Success seems to come more easily when the program works with women with desperate needs who are willing to try almost any idea to improve their situation. Informal groups may be crushed if hurried to formalize before starting projects. But if they are to formalize as the project proceeds they need socially, technically, and economically appropriate activities which can give sustained benefits valued by participating local women.

The most common complaint about women's projects by users was that they were inappropriate or mis-timed. For example, hygiene and nutrition were introduced before there was adequate water and food to allow women to apply what they had learned, or income-generating projects introduced before technical improvements enabled enough spare time for women to be able to participate. The other major complaint was that the project introduced a risk without a risk guarantee, a factor that excluded the poor from participating. These complaints can be partially overcome by being

sure the local women actively participate in project design, management and control. This may require patience of intermediaries and donors working in a flexible and supportive role while local women develop the needed confidence, group cohesion, and skills.

User groups need help from intermediaries to work for enabling laws, economic policy supports, network building, and lobbying for more adequate funding for these types of projects. The importance of these intermediary roles should not be underestimated.

The second strategy, that of pushing for women's interests and participation in the larger sectoral or generalized projects, is also important. As with the first strategy, this requires sensitive programmers and women field staff to analyze with local women their needs and potential participation and benefit sharing. Information on impact, on costs, on trade-offs, on labor, time, and money requirements, and on beneficiaries will have to be disaggregated by sex and compared with overall development objectives in the area. Organized indigenous women's intermediary groups can again perform an important role, applying political pressure to have women's issues addressed in the ongoing development programs of their countries.

Intermediary Groups.

Discussions of the capability of existing indigenous and non-indigenous women's organizations to adequately perform intermediary roles in WID programming raised interrelated questions:

1. Can existing intermediaries successfully shift from the welfare model to the development model?

2. Can volunteer groups develop enough expertise to fulfill roles required of the new model?

3. Can intermediaries define roles which they can competently play and which are based on their own resources and on local needs?

Information from the study indicated a qualified yes to these questions in that some intermediaries are performing some of these roles. These questions, however, are important to consider when selecting which groups have the potential for WID programming.

Many intermediaries are re-evaluating their resources and planning a new role in development. However, both they and the donors must become more aware of the complete difference in motivation and staff capabilities involved in the shift from welfare activities to managing development programs. In an afternoon a government official's wife can take bandages to a clinic and receive appreciation from those now able to be bandaged as well as from her social group. This is not at all the same as handling and accounting for local or donor funds, slowly learning of the needs of poor women, and becoming their advocate (which is sometimes against the current power structure). Finally, the development model defines success as user group being able to run its own programs. Developing this independence frequently includes an adolescent stage of rejection of the intermediary. One description of qualities of a grass-roots organizer even includes the ability to take insults (Jain, 1980).

If conducting development projects is the role donors expect of a limited number of intermediary groups and their staffs, if it is the role some intermediaries expect for themselves, the full impact of the change must be realized at all levels. For this role volunteer groups will have to strengthen themselves by developing professionally trained staffs, and

by building links to supporting technical expertise and local, national, and regional services. Donors will have to be willing to select carefully the strongest groups in various areas and to invest sizeable amounts of funds in staff development, and in adequate equipment and transportation to make these programs functional. Most volunteer groups attempting development programming are finding some professional staff essential.

Since projects administered by women's bureaus or groups have proved to offer women more voice at both the staff and beneficiary levels than do similar projects directed through general male controlled PVOs or government agencies, women's organizations should be selected for special support (see Dixon, 1980). The majority of PVOs or women's groups which do not have the trained personnel or resources to manage total projects should be encouraged to consider specific roles they could perform coordinating their efforts within the total program.

The vast variety of organizational frameworks and methodologies used by intermediary groups is a rich resource for programs working in countries with diverse political, social, economic and physical environments. It is important to retain this diversity while encouraging groups to specialize in appropriate activities that they can handle in a knowledgeable way.

Each type of non-indigenous intermediary approach has its strengths and its limitations. Intermediaries working through extension services will succeed only where extension services are strong. Those non-indigenous groups working through indigenous groups will have effective programs only when the indigenous intermediary is sensitive to local users' needs and interests. Groups which are strong in technical input often are weak in

grass-roots follow-through, and vice versa. Here is where donor sensitivity can encourage complementary groups to work together. For instance, a technology group developing and introducing a cook-stove can be encouraged to work through a local women's organization, which could provide feedback by checking with users of the stoves. This teamwork could offer technicians a sensitivity to local conditions almost impossible for them to obtain alone, and offer local intermediary groups the needed technical inputs.

It is difficult for non-indigenous groups to both channel funds through indigenous intermediaries and at the same time run other comprehensive local development programs without seeming competitive and without compromising their ability to evaluate impartially. This dual organizational role should be discouraged. Non-indigenous intermediaries need to become more aware of the sensitivities of local intermediaries and stress their own role as being supportive, not competitive.

Some intermediary group spokespersons suggest that strengthening and coordinating intermediaries' activities will require help from the donors. Donors must more strongly insist on WID objectives, especially the self-help and local-control basis of all projects they fund. They must help groups become aware of the variety of types of roles they may play in relation to their resources and local needs. They must provide flexible and responsive funding and allow time for local communities to develop skills to control the programs. They should actively work with and learn from intermediaries taking advantage of the pilot project potential of PVO programs.

Two projects have been suggested to build up the skills of international women's groups, selected NGO and strong indigenous intermediary women's

groups. The first is to establish a project manager in charge of a sizeable umbrella fund. The goal of this exercise would be not only to identify and manage a number of small effective projects in a way to allow flexible and responsive funding, but also to develop solid skills in program identification and management among these organizations--something not always attainable in limited workshop situations.

A second possibility is to give year-long regional workshops which build capabilities of local women to work with development programs. The workshop staff would be composed of local technical and managerial experts augmented by any needed outside expertise and representatives of donor countries. After coming to a central point for an initial training phase on project identification, group process, etc., participants would return to work in their localities and the staff would make periodic visits and be available for extra help upon request.. At the end of the year the participants would come together to exchange ideas and get support in completing proposals and in program implementation and evaluation. This project would work only if donors were committed and funds were forthcoming. This model has been useful in upgrading agricultural and conservation project designs in the Sahel.

A final suggestion for locations where there are no women's regional training centers is to give extra support to groups which show promise. This is not only for local activities but for an enlarged role such groups could play in the region. For example, the Federation of Voltaic Women (FVW) includes women from various socio-economic and language groups, and from rural as well as urban areas. It has handled several projects and workshops effectively and is desirous of using a self-help development

approach. The FVW might be a good candidate for staff development and support funding in the hope that the group could eventually be a training and resource center for women's groups throughout the region.

Investment in the long-term capabilities of able intermediary women's groups, both indigenous and non-indigenous, is an investment in the long-term capabilities of donors to "do more with less."

Donors.

How donors can give serious support to WID programs has become an especially timely question for AID programmers. Now that Congress has earmarked funding for improving the condition of women, it is up to those interested in WID programming to come forth with appropriate programs and evaluation criteria. The suggested two-pronged approach of working on local women's specific projects as well as focusing on the WID implications of larger, more generalized programs, would appear to be most useful.

Obviously, it is not possible to design WID programs as broadly applied blueprints. Women's needs vary not only sector by sector but region by region. A program to organize women around a credit scheme would differ in an area without previous credit possibilities from one in which credit has long been available to men, or to the rich, but not to women and/or the poor. Women's programs would be conceived differently in areas where husbands try to support families but lack jobs, or where husbands have jobs but take poor care of family needs, or from where husbands have gone, leaving large numbers of women-headed households. Organizing women would have a different time frame where women have found temporary security through being quietly submissive within the household from those where women have found strength in unity.

The structured flexibility called for in WID programming does, however, require overall focused and constant goals/evaluation criteria. The two WID objectives and the five Helzner organizational criteria can offer the first step in defining this focus. Ongoing projects can also be examined by using the perceptions of participants and by establishing current base data to measure future changes. For developing specific programs, WID criteria and objectives will have to be viewed in light of local priorities (in the case of AID these include the CDSS).

Beyond the directive and programmatic support discussed above, there are several research activities suggested as useful for future programming efforts. They include:

1. Training. What training is really available and how does it relate to training needs? How can it be evaluated for its effectiveness? How can training be strengthened? (The new Experiment in International Living grant to strengthen capabilities of indigenous groups may be helpful here.)

2. Income Generation. What income-generating projects have been effective and why? When were projects exploitive or dead end? How can women get help judging appropriate economies of scale? By what mechanisms are projects helping women to enter the mainstream?

3. Market Research. What market research techniques are available for such items as cottage industry products for local consumption? How can we tell how long specific traditional items may compete with modern products? Who has this service, and how can it be made available in different national or regional areas?

4. Other Supports. What are other technical, etc., supports that have been weak in project design? How can these supports be upgraded?

5. Case Studies. What are good examples (case studies) in areas where we have little information on WID projects run by women's organizations? What are

some of the local, national, sub-regional and regional machineries that are working? What are their specific strengths and assets as well as their sectoral and area limitations? In what regions do we need stronger intermediaries and in what fields?

Directories and information sharing should be encouraged, both at the donor and intermediary levels. (The OEF program will probably contribute to this effort. The WID/AID proposal to exchange materials with other donors is a positive step. The WID/AID documentation center is frequently cited as being helpful.)

In summary one could say the main task for donors is the same as the main task for intermediary groups. The task is to select and make known goals, priorities, resources, strengths and needs. Next, to capitalize on strengths and to work with complementary groups focused on the same objectives. Donors should coordinate their efforts and encourage intermediaries with complementary expertise to do the same. Funding joint projects in which various intermediaries need to collaborate would be a positive step.

The second challenge for donors is to find a way to move more flexibly and quickly when requests are made from the field for small-project funds. Umbrella funds or contracts with competent intermediaries are possible approaches. Donor efforts should include research to identify and develop needed technical support, and to find ways to facilitate funding.

The above ideas and suggestions are made to help answer the "how" questions. However, it is clear from information given by people involved in all levels of programming that development-oriented programs for women and run by women are new. We still have incomplete feedback. It has even

been difficult to look at overall programs to see their individual or comparative impact on women (see Elliott and Sorsby, 1979). Donors need to cooperate in establishing evaluation criteria for all future projects with WID implications. We must begin to learn from the past to be better able to answer the "how" questions and chart a clearer course for the future.

APPENDIX

Selected Non-Indigenous Intermediaries

Representing Six Different Organizational Frameworks and Strategies*

1. FAL's Rural organization Action Program (ROAP) works directly identifying and training local "change agents" to help the poor organize themselves into participatory groups. In order to avoid the "standard" organization structure run by local power elites, they work with groups composed exclusively of the poor. Though their program is not designed especially for women, ROAP programmers find women are frequent participants, and are most in need of this aid, especially since they are often barred from participating in other available organizations. ROAP coordinators also find existing women's organizations ineffectual in income generating for the poor, even though some governments are beginning to encourage and support the growth of women's groups. The ROAP program uses participatory action-research to get local poor to identify problems and local resources. They then make small grants available to begin locally designed programs to address these problems. They have helped women begin a number of small-scale purchasing and marketing cooperatives, and they are flexible enough

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* There are problems inherent in this method of describing a selected number of intermediary agencies representing different types of organizational approaches. First, one necessarily omits a multitude of other projects and organizations. Second, it is impossible to obtain a total understanding of any project without field research. Third, it is even difficult to learn of all projects sponsored by organizations which have different offices uninformed about each other's programs. In some situations women are made available to discuss WID issues only because they are women, even when they may be new to the organization and unaware of the total program.

even to aid a group of impoverished women that collects and sells salvage washed ashore along the sea coast.

The organizers of ROAP say the main advantage of their approach is the responsiveness to local needs and the ability to really reach the poorest of the poor. Once started, this strategy elicits active support of members who find themselves empowered to make decisions for the first time. The main disadvantage is that the program is not easy to implement in all environments. Requirements for success are not only an extremely skillful staff, but also political backing and enabling laws at the national and local levels; cooperation between participatory organizations and other rural organizations and supporting government agencies; special training for group organizers, civil servants, and the poor; a risk-guarantee fund; and, special arrangements for the landless (van Heck, personal interview; also, van Heck, 1980, 1977, 1979a, 1979b; also see Bhasin 1976, 1978).

2. Women's international non-governmental organizations (WINGOs), such as the Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW), work with member organizations in numerous LDCs. Others such as the International Alliance of Women (IAW) have affiliated LDC women's organizations. These are not mutually exclusive, as some indigenous groups belong to two or more WINGOs at the same time.

The ACWW has a membership of over 8.5 million women in 68 countries, 48 of them in developing areas. It originated with an interest expressed at the U.N. to consider the conditions under which rural women's organizations work. It functions through volunteer staff and with support contributed by member organizations in more developed countries, and by U.N.

and bilateral donors. In relation to WID programs in LDC women's groups, the ACWW leaders describe their program as helping affiliated groups with: proposal writing; training programs in leadership, management, and technical skills; obtaining funds; and in communications through conferences and a newsletter. Examples of some of the programs their member organizations run are: a day care center in Freetown, Sierra Leone; a project in Indore, India which provides material and technical support for dairy cattle and other agricultural projects; and, a handicraft-income-generating program with a group of housewives in Gachanciapa, Colombia.

The International Alliance of Women grew out of the suffragette movement, but is now involved in supporting a variety of women's equity issues and has started working with WID projects in a number of developing countries. The IAW has 65 affiliated societies in 51 countries. It works closely with a number of U.N. agencies and one time received funding from AID in the form of expenses for several delegates to attend a workshop. The formula which organizers of IAW have adopted, one which they find quite successful, is to give seminars, conferences, and workshops leading to follow-up projects which the IAW funds for two to five years. Projects, which develop as an outgrowth of the discussions at these meetings, include: a day care center in Mauritius; courses in family planning, nutrition, budgeting, laws, etc., in Trinidad and Tobago, and poultry and hatchery project in Botswana, and a cooperative for ready-made garments and knitware in Egypt.

The great advantage of WINGOs is that they have local indigenous groups to provide continuity and follow-through for projects. The organization also gives women the chance to share their experiences with not only those

of their own country, but with those of other countries. The limitation in this type of approach tends to be that through working solely with volunteers, the necessary technical expertise, consistency, and continuity necessary for development programming are difficult to assure, and the ever-present effort to obtain funding for projects is frustrating and time consuming.

Leaders in several of these organizations stressed the desire to strengthen their programs by improving communications between WINGOs so their various skills could be better coordinated. Some of these officers also felt their own staff members could profit from leadership and management skills training and from help in writing project proposals.

As with indigenous groups, these WINGOs find that donors have reporting and funding procedures inappropriate to their type of micro-projects. In describing the difficulties with accountability in these small projects, one representative explained, "We can prove a group got their 100 chickens, but we cannot always prove who eats the eggs." In one identified program, the nomadic group concerned had disappeared before funding arrived. Funding cycles are too short for true WID projects. Often, five years are needed to assure time for a recipient group to develop management capacity and then to wind down the funding as the recipient group gets on its feet. Donors work with programs in their infancy but do not want to support them in their adolescence. Spokeswomen plead for strengthened communications between donors and WINGOs and for more personal contact which would allow a build-up of realistic expectations and trust.

3. International church groups range considerably in size of commitment to women's programs and to the self-help element included in the design.

Some examples of the Lutheran World Relief programs are: a village health care program in which village women are given short-term training and then return to work and to be paid by their villages; a program in Brazil which offers vocational training to former prostitutes and small loans for starting new businesses; financing the materials for a women's agricultural cooperative grain-storage facility in Togo; and, helping women in Bangladesh create five women's activity centers, three of which became self sufficient within three years. The Lutheran World Federation has a program of skills and leadership training available to women's organizations. Project documents do not indicate how the ideas for projects originated; however, some of these programs work through existing women's organizations, and other groups have formed around successful programs.

The American Friends' Service Committee stressed that it neither had funding from government agencies nor wanted it, since it strives to maintain an identity separate from governments. Its programs training women in leadership and management skills located in Mali and Guinea-Bissau have been cited by other church groups as being especially effective. The Unitarian-Universalists also have been cited as managing effective workshops for women.

The United Methodist Church has a women's group which has helped programs in 80 countries by playing a linking role. Responding to requests of indigenous women's groups, they help women design programs, locate local resources where possible, and get in touch with outside resources and donors where needed. Many requests which this group supports are for workshops. They occasionally give scholarships for further

training. One specific project was to help establish an agricultural school in Ghana which has 250 girls.

The Church World Service (CWS) has a program beginning in Niger, where a staff member will work through the newly formed women's federation to introduce wood-burning stoves into local households and help monitor successes and needed changes.

A Catholic Relief Service (CRS) spokesman reported that their organization works directly with small user groups on projects that originate with local leaders (both men and women) and with their local staff. An example of this type of project is one organized by the wife of a school teacher in a relatively isolated minority-populated area of Upper Volta. This woman helped over 1,000 women organize themselves into small groups which have requested help in establishing an income-producing program. In response, CRS has helped by supporting agricultural projects and wells development. The time saved in carrying water can be used to raise sesame and other oil seed plants and to extract their oils with a press provided by CRS. This activity produces a nutritious food for children as well as a salable product. Although CRS is not focused especially on WID projects, some of their newer self-help activities have evolved from groups of women formed at CRS maternal and child health care centers.

Because most church groups have local church organizations, these groups feel the requests they receive are carefully screened and monitored by their indigenous field staff. Other than indigenous staff, technical support is provided locally when possible, and otherwise by expatriate advisors. Some groups avoid government funding in order to keep from

having political affiliations or dealing with complicated paper work. Those with a long-established working relationship with AID feel that AID should require project reports but not involved procurement procedures and other unnecessary paper work which hampers flexibility and effectiveness.

4. Two examples of American women's voluntary organizations which have designed special programs to work directly with indigenous women's organizations are: Overseas Education Fund of the League of Women Voters (OEF), and the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW).

The OEF is over 30 years old and has a long history of work with women's organizations. In the 1970s, OEF helped support the change of focus from social welfare to self-help community development. Their approach to dealing with LDC groups is to support women's groups by giving seminars and conferences, and by sending field representatives who help women get information and develop contacts. Their interests are also in supporting effective development projects, and improving institutional capabilities and participatory-leadership skills for women. They have a new program which will allow them to collect, catalogue, and disseminate information useful to women's organizations on projects, activities, and technical support.

NCNW is also a long-established organization with experience of many domestic women's income-generating programs. Working mainly with a volunteer staff, it has started building a program and strengthening its capability to identify, to fund, and to manage projects in foreign countries. Examples of programs NCNW is starting, or planning to start, are a crafts program in Honduras, and a fish-raising program in Ivory Coast.

Both of these groups have been funded by AID. Further analysis of their programs will soon be made available by a WID/AID consultant.

5. There are many organizations which offer specialized training or technical services to women's organizations. A few examples ranging from United Nations agencies to small consulting firms are listed here.

The United Nations Special Voluntary Fund, established for the Decade of Women, works through local UN offices which forward requests from organizations in member countries. The main thrust of its program is a revolving fund, which spokeswomen say works well when there is a cooperative spirit within the requesting group, an activity which is financially viable, and requisite business skills. Before giving funding, and as an aspect of the loan, the program organizers require the requesting group to obtain any needed technical information or support. The Voluntary Fund has also used some indigenous women's groups, such as one in Ghana, to act as umbrella organizations to monitor a number of small projects. Spokeswomen for the Fund believe this has worked quite well.

The International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), has worked not only in family planning activities, but also with development programs. This is done in the conviction that family planning is intimately linked with the status of women. IPPF support is given not only to indigenous groups, but also to international women's groups such as ACWW and IAW in an effort to strengthen the programs of other intermediary groups. Two other family-planning agencies, Pathfinder and the Center for Population Activities (CEFPA), are also working with broadly based WID projects. The former is an organization which manages both the distribution of

funding and some training. The second is not a conduit for funding, but is reputed to have a well-run management training program, and is one of the few groups to be interested in evaluating the effectiveness of their training.

The African American Institute uses the strategy of localized and regional workshops in which women identify their problems and resources. The information developed at these workshops could be of use to organizations and donors alike who wish to have responsive programming. The AAI also does training and works with women's organizations to help them develop effective contacts.

Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG) is a non-profit organization which specializes in technologies suitable for LDCs. Frequently field staff give the technologies to the extension service, which in turn introduces them to informal groups of women in the villages. Representatives of ITDG say the problem they frequently face is how to formalize the groups to take control of the new technologies. This approach is only effective when the extension service is sensitive to local needs, is strong, and can provide continuity and follow-through at the community level.

Consultants in Development is a small consulting firm which specializes in working with both indigenous women's organizations and with intermediary groups, in management training, in evaluations of project potential within the context of local resources, and in sectorial training. Organization for Rehabilitation Through Training (ORT) and Partners for Broductivity (PFP) are both groups with well-respected training programs, and though not focused on training

through women's organizational structures, could be useful to these groups in vocational or small-business training.

6. There is no consortium focused on women's projects. Two types of U.S.-based groups have formed consortia. PACT helps fund projects that originate with their member private voluntary organizations. It has no policy to sponsor women's projects, but it does have a policy to see that projects do not impact negatively on any part of the population, including women. PACT receives requests from women's groups for various programs and for institutional costs, which they support whenever those costs relate directly to a project. Their member organizations have a multitude of projects, some of which deal with women's organizations. An example of this is a Save the Children project which sponsors an Indonesian woman's cooperative and gardens and makes soybean curd. ACORD is a similar organization of European-based NGOs. MATCH, a Canadian organization helping to locate NGOs with strengths and interests which correspond to the local group's needs is another consortium model.

CODEL, a consortium of religious organizations, asks specifically if the request for each project comes from the local people. As with PACT, they do not initiate programs, and they have no special policy to support women's programs, but they coordinate requests coming in from member groups.

Representatives of consortium organizations feel there are several advantages to working through a consortium mechanism:

1. Groups having different skills can work together to improve project impact,
2. By coordinating efforts, funds can accomplish more; and,

3. By providing a number of administrative functions and an overall forum for ideas and evaluations, member groups are better informed and are better able to concentrate their efforts of effective programs.

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