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ABSTRACT

This document highlights some of the major accomplishments in early childhood care and development in the 1970s. Accomplishments noted include the following: (1) Practitioners were able to "sell" many people on the importance of early childhood care and development based on the economics of the investment; (2) Practitioners created an abundance of strategies for the provision of preschool education for children of 3-6 years of age; (3) Practitioners created a range of training and dissemination systems in order to make early childhood programing available to a wider audience; and (4) Practitioners demonstrated that the most effective programs are those which integrate health, education, nutrition, social, and economic development programs, and that younger children benefit from such interventions more than older children. Practitioners are just beginning to see movement toward greater collaboration between government, donor agencies, and nongovernmental organizations. The discussion raises questions related to the accomplishments of the 70s and articulates some of the challenges facing those with a stake in the 1990s. (RH)

DEVELOPING AN EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR THE '90s

by

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As for the future, your task is not
to foresee but to enable it.

Antoine de Saint-Exupery

The focus of this conference is on Childhood in the Twenty-first Century. While it is important to have a long-term vision of what we want to have happen in terms of supporting children's development, we also need to focus attention on what can be accomplished during the last decade of the twentieth century. In the next ten years we can strengthen the base for the work in the 21st century in much the same way that those of us involved in early childhood care and development seek to strengthen young children's base for all later learning. The purpose of this paper is to highlight some of the major accomplishments of the 70's, raise questions we now have in relation to these accomplishments, and present some of the challenges before us in the '90s.

Accomplishment A: We have been able to "sell" many people on the importance of early childhood care and development (ECCD), based on the economics of the investment.

Early childhood care and development (ECCD) has been promoted actively by practitioners for decades. Those of us who have taught young children are very much aware of the value of the experience for the child. Educational psychologists have also been advocates of attention to children's developmental needs during the early years. But neither the practitioners nor the theorists have been able to command national or international attention. What finally has made a difference is researchers who translated their findings into the language of the day - finance. By being able to discuss the benefits of quality early childhood programming in terms of cost savings and rate of return on investment, we have captured the attention of policy makers.

During the last decade we have seen governments develop policy guidelines in support of ECCD, and even include programming for young children and their families as a national priority. A leader on this front is India which, as early as 1972 created a blueprint for a national programme of integrated care for young children, and pregnant and lactating women. The programme was put into place in the mid-70's, and by the end of 1989 it is projected to be reaching 130 million children (CABE Committee Report, 1989, p.10). Although fraught with the difficulties any large system encounters, there is strong political will to reach those most in need, to provide them with a range of services to support the health, nutrition and education of children from birth to 6 years of age.

Early childhood care and education is also beginning to find its place on the agenda of major donor agencies. When the Child Survival Development Revolution (CSDR) was adopted by the UNICEF Board in 1983, those of us involved in child development saw the title as an indication of policy makers' awareness of the inter-relationship of survival and development. In actuality, however, development was only part of the

title; the focus of the effort has been on the promotion "of a group of interventions aimed specifically at the significant improvement of child health, with the consequent reduction in infant and child deaths",(UNICEF, 1987-1, p.3). And while there have been significant strides in terms of assuring children's survival, attention has yet to be given to issues related to the quality of a child's life once he or she has survived.

But there is hope. Major donors are beginning to give attention to children's overall development. For example, the World Bank is currently in the process of developing a programme with the government of India to strengthen the ICDS system in four districts, and have undertaken to support major child care initiatives in Colombia and Brazil. Further, recent UNICEF publications indicate that child development may yet get on the agenda.

> Stimulation of the pre-school-age child through health, nutrition, psycho-motor and cognitive development activities has a significant impact on the child's educational attainment and overall development.... Investment in such schemes has yielded such high benefits in health, nutrition and educatio. that early childhood development is emerging as the precursor to all other development. A major effort in this area should be a priority goal for the 1990's. (UNICEF, 1989, p.14)

Questions that arise:

There are at least two specific questions that have arisen in relation to the successful promotion of early childhood programming. One has to do with the relationship of the ECCD investment to other community services. The second has to do with the relationship between quality and cost.

1. What is the value of our investment in early childhood programming when children enter a low quality primary school? In some instances we have been so successful at promoting early childhood education that public and private agencies have implemented quality programmes that are "out-to-step" with the other services in the region. One consequence of a contextually disproportionate investment in ECCD is to bring into question the value of the enterprise. Even as programming for child survival cannot be completely successful in isolation, so focusing on programming for the needs of children from 3-6 cannot be done in isolation. For example, there is an interdependency between what happens in the pre-school and what happens at the primary level. Within India* there is an interesting example of what can happen if investment is made in one part of the system without adequate attention to the total context.

In Gujarat, a state in Western India, the Aga Khan Education Services operates a cluster of 50 day care centres which are half-day pre-schools providing children with education, health services and nutritional supplementation. Further, there is a high degree of emphasis on parent education and community control of the centres. Over the years these

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* Among the examples, there is a bias toward countries where the Aga Khan Foundation is involved in promoting early childhood initiatives, since these are the projects with which I am most familiar.

pre-schools have developed high quality programmes, providing children with a solid base intellectually, physically and socially as they enter the local government primary school. In recent years it has been possible to begin to track what happens for the children as they enter these primary schools.

While the expectation was that primary school teachers would respond positively to the fact that the children entering from the day care centres were well prepared for school, and would perhaps be motivated to teach better, that has not been the outcome. In some instances it is reported that the children are immediately advanced to primary 2 or 3, even though the children are not prepared to succeed intellectually or socially at that level. In other instances they are segregated from the other children and neglected until those without the pre-school experience have caught up. In neither instance is this an appropriate response. The strength of the pre-school experience is not being built upon; it is being set aside. Unless there are ways of working with the primary school teachers and providing continuity between the pre-school and primary school experience, the argument could quite legitimately be made that it is not worth investing in the pr -school.

While not going to the extreme and arguing that investments not be made in preschool if the primary school is not adequately prepared to receive the children, Myers (1978) in a review of the research on the relationship between preschools and primary school performance, concludes:

> Enrollment, progress and performance in school are influenced both by the cognitive and social characteristics a child brings to the school and by the availability and quality of schooling. Either or both of these sets of variables can favor or present obstacles to successful school enrollment, adjustment, progress, and achievement...Programme decisions about early childhood intervention and about improvements in primary schooling should be considered together, not separately. (p.2-3)

There is an emerging awareness that the issue is not just the child's readiness for school that needs to be the focus of attention; the school's readiness for the child is also a critical variable. This brings us to the second question.

2. What is the real value of our investment when low-cost models of pre-school provision are being implemented? It is clear we still have a lot of learn about the economics of early childhood education. On the one hand there is data to suggest that increased investment in quality early childhood interventions is economically valid. That is, the rate of return for investment in the early years is higher than rates of return at other points in the education system. Thus we argue that governments should increase their spending for such programmes. On the other hand we bend over backward to promote "low-cost" models -- implemented by paraprofessionals (hopefully with some training), paid less than minimal wages or expected to provide volunteer service, using locally made materials almost exclusively, operating in makeshift space. Can we really expect that these low-cost efforts will allow us to see the same yield on our investment as high quality programming?

Imagine talking with a stockbroker who says to you,"If you invest in this high quality company -- its professionally managed, the workers are well trained and remunerated, they have good equipment and they are committed to their work -- you will recognize a 40% increase in your investment." Then, in the next breath he proceeds to say, "On the other

hand, I have another company you could invest in that is doing the same kind of work, but its much cheaper -- the staff volunteer their time, they sometimes have a place to work, they make do with whatever equipment they can find, etc." Would you believe that you would get the same return on your investment? Not likely. Although one would not argue that high dollar investment is sufficient to guarantee quality, one might suggest that there is a minimum investment necessary to yield positive results.

The Challenges:

Even as we are promoting increased attention to the development of early interventions programmes, the challenge for the 90's is to be cognizant of the context within which early childhood programmes are being created, and to plan accordingly. Further, the challenge for the 90's is to better understand the economics of early childhood programming and to be bolder in our statements about what is needed in terms of investment if that investment is going to pay off.

Accomplishment B: We have created an abundance of strategies for the provision of pre-school education for children 3-6 years of age, a subset within early childhood care and education programming.

In all corners of the world one can find pre-school programmes for the 3-6 year old age group. Some of these have strong theoretical foundations; others are based on the model for primary schooling which prevails in the country. Some are well known, documented and promoted; others are known only to those whom they serve. Many include high levels of parent involvement and/or are community-based. Almost all attempt to be culturally appropriate, particularly in terms of curriculum and materials used by and with children. Some have even successfully integrated traditional religious and cultural activities with more secular learning. Because of the variety of options currently available to a group or community that wants to create a pre-school programme, it is hard to imagine that someone could come up with a truly "innovative" approach to pre-school education, at least within the limits of our beliefs, values and assumptions about learning and the purpose of education.

Questions that arise:

One of the reasons we continue to fund new approaches is that we do not really know what can be achieved by the strategies that exist. This problem is not unique to the field of early childhood programming. Writing about the work of NGOs (non-governmental organizations) on income generation projects, Tendler (1987) described what she saw as a common phenomenon among them.

> Programs have difficulty achieving impact partly because they are plagued...with the syndrome of "reinventing the wheel". NGO's claim they are pioneering with a new approach when, indeed, they are not, project proposers allege that past efforts have not worked when, indeed, there is not enough of a record to know whether or not this is true....There is a lack of comparative knowledge about what has worked and what has not. (1987, p. vi).

The same can certainly be argued for NGO's involved in innovative curriculum development for the pre-school age group. Attention might more profitably be focused on testing the efficacy of various strategies and identifying those that might be combined to create an integrated programme, creating new, or at least more clearly defined, "models" that can usefully be disseminated.

That raises the question, "What is a model?" A dictionary definition of the word suggests that a model is "a preliminary pattern representing an item not yet constructed and serving as the plan from which the finished work, usually larger, will be produced." A further definition suggests that it is, "a tentative ideational structure used as a testing device." (American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 1969). From that definition we could derive the notion that an early childhood intervention model is a framework (plan) that provides the theoretical underpinnings for the creation of a programme that is built upon locally and tested for appropriateness.

If we were then to apply the word "model" to the various early childhood activities available, we would soon discover that most efforts are not in fact models. Rather, they are a set of strategies that may or may not be part of a larger whole that could be called a model. In supporting an innovative programme we may, in fact, be supporting only a piece of a model. For example, in Karnataka state in India there is a woman who has developed the Cognitively Oriented Preschool Programme for Children (COPPC), seen by some as a pre-school curriculum. In fact, it consists of a set of games and activities which teachers can use to engage children in the learning process. During COPPC training teachers are actively engaged in learning as they construct games and activities to be used with the children. Having experienced active learning themselves, they are better able to understand its value. And that is the primary learning they take into the classroom. Even though the COPPC approach is neither a model nor a total curriculum, it is valuable in that it is able to stimulate a teacher's thinking and behaviour, which, in turn, makes a difference in terms of how children learn.

While it is possible to observe the difference that the COPPC training makes in terms of teacher behaviour, it is difficult to know what the impact of this relatively short-term training has on the teacher's on-going skills and on children's development. An evaluation was conducted three years into the programme which suggested that, in fact, it made quite a difference in terms of children's development of language skills and on a range of cognitive tasks. But this effort, like so many others, lacks a rigorous on-going research component that could help clarify the relative value of such small-scale investments.

The challenges:

One challenge for the 90's is to make sense of the different approaches, techniques, and methodologies and determine what in fact can be disseminated as a strategy, curriculum, or model.

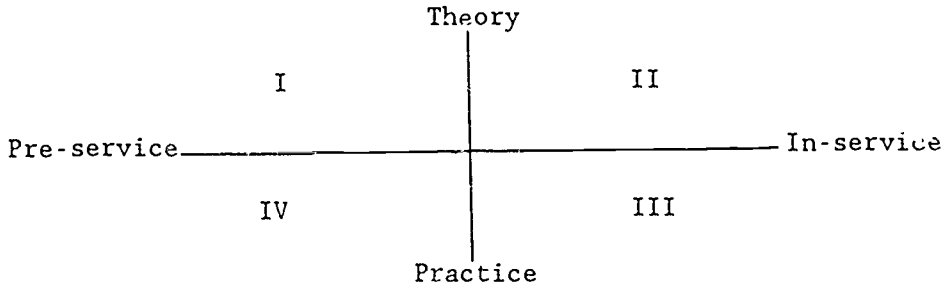
A further challenge becomes evident when we analyze the different strategies and methodologies that have been created in terms of audience. It is immediately apparent that the majority have been created for the 3-6 year old child. Little programming beyond custodial care has been done for the child from the point of "survival" to the age of 3. Children within this age group are relatively invisible. Yet, as research to be discussed later indicates, it is a critical period for the child in terms of health, nutrition and cognitive stimulation.

Accomplishment C. We have created a range of training and dissemination systems in order to make early childhood programming available to a wider audience.

For every intervention strategy developed, there is an accompanying training system. The multitude of training schemes can be compared by placing them on a grid (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Mapping of Training Schemes



On one axis is pre- versus in-service training. One end represents pre-service training only; at the other end is on-the-job training of untrained teachers. In between is every imaginable combination of pre- and in-service training. The other axis represents theory versus practice. The predominant model is preservice training with a highly theoretical focus (Quadrant I). But this does not begin to meet the needs or realities in most third world countries. In the 80's, the movement has been to Quadrant III where there is a greater focus on the practical skills provided through in-service training.

Training falling in Quadrant III is illustrated well by the District Centres for Early Childhood Education, developed by the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE). Within the last 15 years there has been a boom in the creation of community-based pre-schools in Kenya. The pressures of rapid population growth have meant that there are not enough places in Primary I for all the children who are age-eligible. Recognizing that pre-school education would give children a better chance of obtaining scarce places, parents have created their own pre-schools. Within the "harambee" tradition, these schools are built by the community, staffed by untrained teachers, and operated with sparse equipment and materials.

KIE began to address the issue of how to provide trained teachers for these community-based pre-schools in the late 70's. The existing 2-year pre-service course for pre-school teachers produced only about 200 graduates a year. Further, to undertake the course, teachers were pulled (1) from the classroom, forcing the schools to shut until teachers could return, and (2) from the rural areas to an urban setting with pre-schools quite unlike those they would teach in upon completing their training. As an alternative, KIE has created district training centres (DICECEs) where local teachers receive intensive training over a two-year period during school holidays. In addition, during the school year they receive on-to-job training through periodic visits by training centre staff. At the end of training, teachers receive a certificate in early childhood education.

After having been involved in the district training process since the early 80's, KIE is experiencing two demands. One is for additional practical courses for those teachers unable to attend the two-year course because of lack of space or lack of minimal academic requirements. And, from those who have completed the course, there is a demand for additional theoretical input. In essence, KIE designed a training system to meet a very specific set of needs; the system is solidly in place. Now attention can be paid to attendant needs.

While the DICECE training system in Kenya was developed quite consciously -- taking into consideration the academic level of most untrained teachers, the local cultural variations, the need for a balance of theory and practice, the need for on-going supervision -- some training programmes have been developed in response to external factors not obviously related to need. Again we turn to the COPPC programme in India, where Phase II training was determined more by administrative time and resource constraints than by need.

After having trained teachers in the COPPC approach in Phase I, it was determined that the 650 supervisors within the state ICDS system should be trained in the approach within Phase II. Given staffing, time constraints, and the basic framework of the model which calls for intensive group training with follow-up training in the field, administration decided that there could only be 8 days of intensive training, and eight days there has been. Over time the actual training content, in terms of the balance of theory and practice, has been worked out, but it it not ideal to create a training scheme out of administrative constraints.

Questions which arise:

From KIE and related training experiences we are learning that when training systems can be determined by the needs of those to be trained and the systems they will serve, it is possible to create effective training. When there are too many constraints, the effectiveness of the training is more in question.

Still other experiences have stimulated questions about the appropriate mix of theory and practice, and the limits of in-service training if teachers lack minimal skills. Further, questions are being raised as to whether or not we are limited to in-service models in some areas, such as in the north of Pakistan where women are not allowed to leave the village.

Even with many questions still unanswered, we do know that all training systems need to build in on-going support, and that training (learning) is a life-long process.

The Challenges

One challenge is to continue to experiment with the more flexible in-service training models, the substance and form of which should be developed from needs and sound educational practice rather than constraints. Another challenge is to try and establish the threshold between theory and practice that gives teachers the practical skills they need to get children actively involved in the learning process, while at the same time giving teachers a solid enough theoretical base from which they can invent new activities that support children's learning.

Accomplishment D. We have demonstrated that the most effective programmes are those which "integrate" health, education, nutrition, social and economic development programmes, and that the younger child benefits from such interventions more than older children.

Current research is demonstrating the effectiveness of (1) programmes that provide integrated services, i.e. those that meet the multiple needs of young children, and (2) providing programmes for the younger child. The basic premise of integrated programming is that one-dimensional interventions are not likely to have significant nor lasting effects. The reason that integrated programmes are more effective is that they are based on a premise that the child is a whole organism and needs to be treated as such in any intervention effort. The reason that programmes for young children are more effective is that the child has greater "plasticity" during the early years. Research within one discipline - nutrition - illustrates the thinking that has helped move us from unifocal to integrated programming, and which suggests that efforts focused on the young child are the most effective.

Within the past decade there has been a marked increase in our understanding of the interactive relationship between health, nutrition and education. For example, in a review of research looking at nutrition and educational achievement, Pollitt (1984) concludes that "malnutrition in infants and children is a potent contributor to school wastage." (p.7). He then examines a series of studies designed to provide nutritional supplementation. The results of these studies were disappointing. Pollitt concludes, "the remedial or preventive effects of monofocal nutrition supplementation intervention programmes during early life on the intellectual deficits associated with early chronic malnutrition are questionable." (1984, p. 31)

If that conclusion is valid, then what kind of intervention is appropriate? Research data would suggest that a multifocal approach is most effective. An elaborate intervention research project was conducted in Cali, Colombia in the early 70's. Children's experience in the programme differed in relation to the age at which they entered the programme and the type of interventions they received. The interventions included supplementary foods for the family, regular health monitoring, a full-day child care and education programme, and some parent education. This multifocal effort yielded positive results in terms of children's health and nutritional status as well as academic achievement. Pollitt concludes, "It is apparent...that nutrition interventions per se, as monofocal programmes, are not as successful as those multifocal interventions which add educational and health services to a good diet." (1984, p.26)

Another finding highlighted was that the younger the children were when they entered the programme and the longer they were involved, the greater the total benefit to the child. The Cali Colombia study, and others reviewed by Pollitt, suggested to him that "there is strong evidence of the plasticity of the organism among young children. The course of their growth and development was heavily determined by the nature of the experiences that the children had." (1984, p. 25) Thus, there would appear to be a strong argument for looking at the multiple needs of young children and programming accordingly rather than focusing on only one aspect of development. Further, there is a strong argument for providing an enriching environment for children at a very early age.

Questions that arise:

The research cited is but one example of the range of studies currently suggesting both the efficacy of integrated programming and intervening early in a child's life in order to make a significant difference. The questions that arise are in relation to the nature of integration and what "early" intervention means.

1. What does integrated programming mean? There are few that would argue for a single-focus programme; integrated services is the buzz-word today. For many, integrated services is seen as a panacea. Commonly heard phrases include: We could use day care centres as a vehicle for offering integrated services to the family... Programmes would be more cost-effective if they could provide integrated health and education services....Children are already getting an education, why can't we add a health component.... We should develop a child care programme in conjunction with the women's income generating activities..., etc. In various ways people have been attempting to stimulate cross-sectoral discussion, with the goal of creating integrated service programmes.

One of the problems has been that no one has defined what "integration" means. The dictionary sheds some light. According to the Oxford Concise Dictionary, (1987), the word "integrate" has two meanings. (1) complete by addition of parts; combine parts into a whole, and (2) bring or come into equal membership. If we were to take the first definition, integrated programming might be accomplished with relative ease. What tends to happen, however, is that people assume that the second definition obtains; there is the implication of "equal" partnership, and no one is quite willing to be equal with another. In the final analysis, it comes down to who will really be in charge, be responsible, have decision-making power, be held accountable? Perhaps a less threatening term should be used. The word, co-ordinate, for example, which means to bring parts into proper relation, cause to function together. Perhaps that is more easily accomplished.

However, rather than struggling for a definition of integration or looking for a word to replace it, it makes more sense to look at the nature of the relationships that actually occur as two or more sectors attempt to work together. Doing that, we find that a variety of words are needed. For example, liaison (connection) could be used when groups are at least meeting together to learn more about what the other can provide. Co-operation (working together toward the same end, mutual reinforcement of messages and practices) would describe instances where sectors work together to reduce duplication of services, perhaps jointly identifying gaps in services that need to be filled and deciding who might best address the gap. Coalition (temporary combination of parties than retain distinctive principles), a stronger word, could be used when two or more sectors actually work together toward some common goal, but the coming together is goal specific and/or time-limited. A federation (forming a unity but remaining independent in internal affairs) suggests that separate sectors actually accept each others goals and together focus on the best way to meet community needs. The approach is consciously planned rather than "ad hoc", even to the point of agreement on budgeting and organization of services. Federation appears to be necessary to formulate national policy/guidelines. The ultimate in integration is unification (reduce to unity of uniformity) which occurs when there is a single administrative system for the delivery of all services.

At this point we have some guidelines as to how child care and education programmes might cooperate with the health sector to introduce maternal and child health components (Evans, 1985 a), and questions have been raised about how a federation can be created which links the intersecting needs of women and children (Evans, 1985 b), and we have examples of unification where child care is used as an entry point for community development (Macy, 1985). However, it is quite evident that the potential of truly integrated programming has not begun to be explored.

2. What is the optimal age at which to introduce integrated interventions? As cited above, Pollitt noted that in the studies he reviewed, children who were receiving services from a "younger" age benefited more from them than older children involved in the same programme. The children in the studies he reviewed were no younger than 3. One of the problems is that little longitudinal research has been undertaken to look at the impact of multifocal programmes for children 0-3. This we are left with questions such as, should services be offered earlier than age 3? Would there be an even greater impact if they were? Further, what is the appropriate way to intervene? Should provision be made through centre-based efforts of through home interventions? What are the relative costs and benefits of such programmes?

The challenges

By becoming aware of all the possible ways for sectors to come together, it is unrealistic to expect that there is going to be one model of "integration"; in different situations it is going to mean different things. Thus, as we look toward the creation of integrated projects, the challenge is for all actors involved in any one project to agree upon a definition of the term as it is to be used in that context. Perhaps over time we can create clusters of programmes that exemplify the various ways sectors can work together and have a clearer understanding of the impact of different models of linkage.

Further, the challenge is to address the potential and nature of interventions appropriate for young children below the age of 3, in terms of the sectors that should be involved, and the range of provision that can and should be provided by non-familial agents.

Accomplishment E. We are just beginning to see movement toward greater collaboration between government, donor agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Not only are attempts being made to create programmes which are cross-disciplinary, but there are moves for greater collaboration between governmental ministries, bilateral donor agencies, and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This move toward greater collaboration has come about for a multitude of reasons, among which are an awareness that (1) models developed by non-governmental agencies are beginning to be adopted nationally, (2) non-governmental organizations are more in touch with what is going on at the grassroots level and thus have a wealth of insight and experience that would be helpful in national programming, (3) NGOs have greater administrative flexibility and can implement new initiatives more rapidly than governmental agencies, and (4) governments cannot deliver all the services required.

This move toward collaboration has taken several forms. For example, within the World Bank, an NGO Division has been created whose purpose it is to educate World Bank staff about how NGO's operate, what they can offer, and how they might be utilized. In future projects, ways will be sought to increase NGO involvement in project development and delivery of services.

Since the dialogue between these three groups is relatively new, there are few accomplishments to date. but enough has begun that the questions are emerging and the challenges becoming clear.

Questions that arise:

Primarily under question is the nature of the relationship that can and should be established between the three groups. Answers to that question come partly from a better understanding of NGOs. While the general belief has been, the more NGOs the better, the validity of that belief is currently under discussion. Significant questions about the proliferation of, need for, appropriate size, and role of NGOs have been raised in several development sectors. These exemplify questions that have not as yet but should be raised in terms of early childhood provision as well.

Rural development is one sector where there is considerable discussion about collaboration. A good example comes from Bangladesh, home of one of the world's best-developed and well known NGO's, BRAC (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee). For years BRAC has been receiving funds from donor agencies to implement a full range of rural economic development and education programmes. For each agency BRAC has had to generate proposals and write reports (all with different formats and timelines). To facilitate its work, BRAC has organized a Consortium of donors whom BRAC will work with as a group rather than as individual agencies, greatly simplifying their administrative responsibilities while assuring results for donors. While some have questioned whether such sizeable funds should be committed to one NGO, others have argued that there is such a proliferation of NGOs already that it is much more valuable to provide adequate backing to those NGOs which are working well rather than supporting numerous small, untried NGOs (Smillie, 1988).

A recent review of income generating projects indicates that similar questions about the nature of NGOs are being raised within that sector (Tendler, 1987). Smillie's and Tendler's work suggests some of the issues currently under discussion. Those that have also been raised in the Aga Khan Foundations' work in early childhood programming are discussed below:

1. To what extent does NGO strength, often derived from its smallness and homogeneity, get lost when the NGO tries to expand to reach a larger number of people?

Within the AKF experience, there are examples of creative people who have needed to become NGOs in order to receive funding. Because of this they have been shifted from creative workers and trainers to administrators of organizations. This has not always been a successful shift. Unless the individual is willing to give up some measure of control (i.e. let someone else run the organization while they continue to do what they do best), there is likely to be a struggle between further developing the ideas which were funded and devoting time to the maintenance of an organization which may, in fact, get in the way of the

message. The challenge is knowing when people should be supported to do what they are currently doing best, and when they are ready to take on new challenges. It is not always obvious.

2. Do NGOs see each other and the public sector as competitors for scarce donor funding? If so, then it may be inherently difficult for them to cooperate with each other or imitate each other's successes.

Since the early 80's AKF has been funding a number of early childhood initiatives in India, all of which were focused on developing curricula for the 3-6 year old age group. From the donor perspective it is possible to see ways in which the models that are being created come from a similar theoretical base, and what the various grantees might learn from one another if they would come together and share their thinking. Several meetings were set up for such an exchange, but each time they fell through. Each time grantees had legitimate "conflicts" that meant they could not attend the meeting. Soon it became apparent that there was no interest on their part in learning what others were doing; each had determined their own focus and course of action and wanted to carry it through. It was not until each of the various projects were near completion that there was some interest in meeting together. When their own materials and training processes were developed, the idea of sharing was much less threatening. In retrospect, their position is quite rational. Each grantee had developed their own innovative approach which they wanted to maintain as theirs until those chose to "go public". Foundations and donors need to be in a position to assess what can be shared, with whom, and when.

3. Foreign monies account for a large share of NGO funding in some countries. Does this place the NGO sector somewhat at odds with the state, thereby blocking the path of real NGO governmental cooperation?

There is clearly the potential for clashes between NGOs and governments as large donor agencies with bilateral funds are attempting to channel some of these monies to NGOs. Governments that have been in control of how these monies are spent are understandably reluctant to lose access to these funds and, in response, are establishing governmental committees to control how and to whom these funds are allocated. This will not make it any easier for donors to provide grants directly to NGOs.

4. Though NGO projects may have small budgets in comparison to the public sector, their costs per beneficiary are often high. Does this means that even successful projects are not necessarily feasible as models for serving large populations?

For the past three years AKF has funded a group called the Centre for Learning Resources (CLR) which has produced excellent materials for early childhood educators. There is a strong theoretical base underpinning the curriculum, and appropriate techniques and materials have been developed for use by teachers of the 3-6 year age group. A complete set of materials was mass produced at what appeared to be a relatively low cost (INR 240 - $ 16 - per set), which would be adequate for a teacher's use for one year. Only some of the materials would need to be replaced in subsequent years.

While all who reviewed the materials rated them as high quality, it was clear that if the materials were to be adopted on a large scale, (i.e within the ICDS system which was noted earlier will serve 130 million children by the end of 1989), the costs to the government would be prohibitive. So, a compromise was made. CLR has now produced another

set of materials at about half the original costs. Although still costly in government terms, this brings the costs within a manageable range and they are being made available to training centres. However, even that compromise does not get the materials directly to teachers.

The COPPC project, described earlier, also includes a set of materials, known as the COPPC kit. The kit is produced by teachers and/or supervisors during their training. The basic cost of the set is INR 50 (about $3), since the kit is made from locally available materials. This is about as low cost a kit as can be produced. Once costs get to this level there is a real question the durability of the "kit . Games made from newspaper, cardboard, etc do not last long if they are used as teachers are trained to use them.

One of the real dilemmas facing any NGO is the fact that even though cost is taken into account as materials are being created, there is a minimum that must be invested. A legitimate question being asked is, how low can the cost per beneficiary be and still have a project that is worthwhile. Perhaps we also need to look at the issue of "scale". Not all projects have to be adopted nationally, particularly in a country like India. We might better ask, what is the appropriate "scale" to which a project can legitimately be taken?

The challenges:

In building a case for consortium support for BRAC, Smillie (1988) summarizes the NGO discussion by using the words of Annis (1987),

> In the face of pervasive poverty...'small scale' can merely mean 'insignificant'. 'Politically independent' can mean 'powerless' or 'disconnected'. 'Low cost' can mean 'underfinanced' or 'poor quality'. And 'innovative' can mean simply 'temporary' or 'unsustainable'. (p.6)

What do these terms mean in relation to early childhood initiatives? The challenge is to examine current efforts to determine their real value, now, and in terms of future growth. Further, the challenge is to be aware of some of the limitations of working with NGOs and seek ways of working with both public and private sector enterprises to achieve desired outcomes. The challenge is to build on strong ngos, but not over-extend or overwhelm them with the donor's agenda, and create linkages between the private and public sector whenever possible. In essence the challenge is to determine an appropriate balance between supporting new grassroots efforts and building on what is already proven.

In sum, during the 1980s we have seen tremendous growth in our understanding of the needs of young children and their families. We have been persuasive in our arguments to policy makers and have sold many of them on the necessity for early childhood provision. Further, there have been real inroads in terms of understanding the inter-relationship of children's needs and programming appropriately in relation to the whole child; dialogues have begun between governments, NGOs, and donor agencies. We can truly be proud of these achievements. But, as in many other aspects of our lives, the more we achieve and learn, the more we see the need for greater achievement and learning. So, as we enter this last decade of the 20th Century, the challenges ahead are abundant. And, while we are not in a position to foresee the future, we are in a position to enable it.