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AUTHOR	Wazir, Rekha; van Oudenhoven, Nico
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ABSTRACT

There is an increasing tendency on the part of international development players to redefine their relationships as "partnerships." This paper explores the concept of development partnerships, particularly those formed for the benefit of children. A discussion of the differences in the context, form and substance of the discourses and settings in which partnership is used provides a framework for fixing a more precise meaning for the concept in the domain of development partnerships. The concept of partnership in general and its features and dimensions are considered, and then the specific features and dimensions of development partnerships are detailed, with an exploration of the perceptions of various players. The paper then discusses practical implications of partnership building, and deals with the debate on whether children should be direct beneficiaries of development projects. The role of cultural differences in the forging and maintenance of partnerships is also considered. (JPB)

Action Research in Family and Early Childhood

Partnership : a Development Strategy for Children

Rekha Wazir & Nico van Oudenhoven,

International Child Development Initiatives

UNESCO Education Sector
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U N E S C O

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Foreword

UNESCO Activities in Early Childhood

Principle for action

Learning begins at birth. *(Article 5 - 1990 Jomtien World Declaration on Education for All)*

Early Childhood Care and Education is an integral part of basic education and represents the first and essential step in achieving the goals of Education-for-All. Recent world conferences testify to a growing appreciation of the crucial importance of the child's earliest years, and of the need to support families and communities in their role as the child's most influential educator. The learning capacity and value orientations of children are largely determined by the time the child reaches the age of formal schooling. For this reason, any sustained effort in Education for All must set targets and programmes for early childhood and attempt to raise the life-skills level of families.

Improving children's health and nutrition is necessary, but increasingly, in a situation where fourteen out of fifteen of the world's children survive until the age of one, governments and civil society are turning their attention to the psycho-social and cognitive development of children. Well conceived quality early childhood programmes help meet the diverse needs of young children during the crucial early years of life, enhance their readiness for schooling, have a positive and permanent influence on later schooling achievement. In addition, countries that succeed in mobilizing local government, municipalities, communities and voluntary organizations in the care and education of young children have been able to decentralise and innovate in their educational systems and, at the same time, make an important contribution toward population information and family education.

Goals and objectives

Within this context, UNESCO intervenes at various levels:

- at the interagency level, by participating in United Nations or other international initiatives in favour of children and families;
- at the intergovernmental level, by encouraging governments to integrate early childhood and family education programmes in their long-term social and economic planning;
- through technical assistance in the design, development and implementation of integrated early childhood programmes; as well as contributing to the improvement of the child development skills of parents and caregivers by encouraging child care information and education services, and community-based family support programmes;
- by acting as a networking centre and clearing-house on information about early childhood care and education systems, organizations, policies, programmes and activities.

UNESCO's Early Childhood and Family Education Unit

The *Early Childhood and Family Education (ECF) Unit* co-ordinates research, activities and initiatives undertaken by UNESCO in early childhood care and education, parent and family education, and early childhood research. It seeks to:

- improve access to early childhood care and education by making such programmes more widely available and accessible, and improving school-readiness;
- support family education and policy formulation by encouraging the participation and promoting the role of families and communities in basic education programmes;

- improve the content of early childhood programmes, in particular their design and quality.
- redirect and strengthen early childhood training programmes;
- strengthen the information base on early childhood by improving the availability and quality of information, research and data on young children and their families;
- promote legislation on behalf of children and families, in particular the Convention on the Rights of the Child, through awareness raising and advocacy;
- collaborate in artistic, intellectual and cultural events promoting reflection on childhood and family issues.

Early Childhood Interventions

With the help of its specialized services, its roster of consultants, its partnership with sister agencies of the United Nations - in particular UNICEF and WHO - and the co-operation of major institutes and NGOs, UNESCO provides various services to its Member States, UN Agencies, foundations, organizations and individuals working in favour of children and families. Some of its activities include:

- supporting early childhood development/family education programmes in the Middle East, the Pacific, Latin America and South East Asia;
- publishing information and research results on early childhood topics, such as:
  - *Enhancing the Skills of Early Childhood Trainers,* a training pack for the training of trainers produced with the Bernard van Leer Foundation, already published in Arabic, Chinese and English.
  - *Toward a Fair Start for Children: Programming for Early Childhood Care and Developement in the Developing World* by Dr Robert Myers, already published in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Hindi, Indonedian, Russian, Portuguese, Spanish, Thai and Vietnamese.
- sponsoring sub-regional training workshops for administrators in policy and organization of informal early childhood development systems in the Pacific, Africa and the Middle East;
- strengthening or establishing regional Early Childhood Co-operating Centres in Europe and Francophone Africa.

Family Education and Early Childhood Development

Systemic early child development programmes are an excellent investment for States, in that they raise significantly the health and educational levels of young children and allow women to enter the labour market. Children, however, always need the security and orientation which the home provides, nor should it be forgotten that societies are founded on the quality of the homes and families of which they are composed. Family education

- provides parents with the necessary knowledge and skills to raise their children successfully;
- builds up self-reliance, networking and social consciousness among parents.

Member States have much to gain from promoting family education. In situations where it is impossible to set up early childhood, centre-based programmes funded by the State, excellent child care and education can be provided through educating parents and supporting their initiatives at community level. UNESCO recommends State support for family education not only as a fruitful investment in children but also as a means of raising the educational level of a country as a whole. In a context dominated by rapid social change and by the expansion of scientific and technological knowledge, parent education is a first step toward supporting community development and education.

Early Childhood Research

UNESCO seeks to encourage the development and promotion of early childhood research by :

- promoting the development of dialogue and partnerships between researchers, early childhood professionals and decision makers.
- ensuring identification and dissemination of best practices in early childhood and family education programming.
- undertaking surveys of on-going research projects concerning early childhood issues.
- assisting those responsible for early childhood programmes in planning appropriate early childhood interventions and in improving the quality of early learning environments.
- providing advice and training on methods for collection, analysis and dissemination of early childhood information.

Early Childhood Information/Documentation Activities

To create opportunities for institutions and individuals to learn about each other's needs and actions, enhance information exchange on early childhood, and build up active relationships to benefit young children and their families, UNESCO:

- serves as a networking centre and clearing house for information on early childhood issues, policies, programmes and organizations, and as the lead agency for the *Inter-Agency Early Childhood Communication Strategy*.
- collects, compiles and disseminates basic information on early childhood care and education systems, organizations and curricula.
- maintains a data bank of early childhood care and education information.
- produces practical directories, publications, briefs and reports on early childhood care and education systems, organizations, curricula or policies.
- participates in interactive early childhood and children's rights activities on Internet, as a member of the *Children's House in Cyberspace* initiative (at http://childhouse.uio.no).
- provides input into, and support for, selected professional journals and reviews, such as the Interagency Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development's *Coordinator's Notebook*.

Further enquiries

Information on UNESCO's early childhood actions can also be consulted on Internet in UNESCO's site at http://www.education.unesco.org/ecf/index.htm.

For further information, contact:

Early Childhood and Family Education Unit,
ED/BAS/ECF, UNESCO
7 Place de Fontenoy
75352 Paris 07 SP, FRANCE
tel: (33) 01 45 68 08 12 fax: (33) 01 45 68 56 26

Contents

Partnership: a Development Strategy for Children

I. Introduction[1]

The word "partnership" is now commonplace in the vocabulary of development. It is encountered in a wide variety of contexts, and is used, and often misused, to describe various kinds of relationships between collaborating parties in the development field. However, there is seldom any precise or exact meaning attached to the usage of this word. Since the term is an accepted part of the literature and practice, and since there is an increasing tendency on the part of international development actors to redefine their relationships as "partnerships", it has become necessary to investigate what is meant by the term.

The focus of this paper is primarily on development partnerships, particularly those formed for the benefit of children. However, it is useful to recognize the diverse discourses and settings in which partnership is used, and the manifold forms and variants that it takes in practice. An identification of these differences - of context, form and substance - will allow us to pinpoint its key features. This, in turn, will provide a framework for fixing a more precise meaning for the concept in the domain of development partnerships, particularly those forged by agencies working for the benefit of children.

This paper consists of six sections. Section I provides introductory remarks, section II unfolds the concept of partnership in general and explores its features and dimensions. Section III deals with one particular type of partnership i.e. development partnerships. Here again, the features and dimensions of this type of partnership - which form the central concern of this paper - are explored and the perceptions of various players are presented. Section IV is by far the largest part and deals with the practical implications of partnership building. Section V deals with the debate on whether children should be direct beneficiaries of development projects. Finally, section VI deals with the difficult subject of cultural differences and how they may affect the way in which partnerships are forged and maintained.

II. Exploring partnership

1. What is Partnership?

In real life we can see many different kinds of partnerships. The field of *sports* provides one example. Players enter into a partnership to play a game against other partnerships of players. Their shared intention is to win a game played within a specified set of rules. The application of these rules is monitored and supervised by a neutral third party: the referee. Such a partnership lasts formally for the length of the game, after which it is dissolved. This partnership is set in a competitive context where only one set of partners can win. It is short-term; partners have identical objectives and share the same information pool; the behaviour and performance of each partner is capable of direct observation and valuation. The referee is required not to mediate between players within one partnership, but between competing partnerships.

A close parallel to this is provided by *business partnerships*. In this type as well, the context remains competitive. The firm (of partners) views its success in relation to its market competitors. The behaviour of partners is governed by a mutuality of interests: making joint profits. Both trust and tight legal rules are required for ensuring fair sharing of costs and benefits. There is always a strong possibility for one of the partners to gain at the expense of the other partner(s). Therefore, regulations are strongly codified in commercial law where the rights and obligations of a partner are clearly set out.

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[1] *This paper draws on an earlier text prepared for Redd Barna-Asia (see Wazir & Van Oudenhoven (1997).*

The concept of partnership is also used is the realm of *personal relationships*. These are set within the framework of a household, a family, or a marriage. The marriage partnership is enshrined in the form of marriage vows which bear considerable similarities across cultures! There is a growing critical literature, particularly in the disciplines of feminist and gender studies, which refutes the simplistic idea of this partnership as the ideal cooperative. Instead, it is analyzed as resting on a complex, hierarchical, economic arrangement between the partners. Intra-household relations are held to reflect the same structural conflicts that denote society in general. Such critiques have led to a redefinition of the marriage relationship. They also question marriage as the ideal form of personal partnership.

The term partnership could also apply to an arrangement between parties which stand in structural opposition to one another. This is illustrated by the case of *patron/client* relationships. These are intrinsically hierarchical in character. Take the example of landowner-tenant ties. It has been argued that the flow of advantages is not all in the direction of the landowner. In return for labour provided at exploitative rates, the tenant obtains some protection and insurance from the landlord in seasons when harvests are bad. There is an element of reciprocity in what is essentially an unequal relationship.

Another example is provided by the term "*social contract*". This is often used in the political domain to refer to a compact between the representatives of capital and labour. Workers could agree not to take industrial action in exchange for assurances from employers that their wages would rise in step with productivity increases.

The term partnership is frequently used in the global context as well. In the early decades of post-war development, the notion of "*partners in development*" was introduced by the North to describe the economic relationship between the rich donor and the poor aid-recipient countries. The subsequent critique of "unequal partners" exposed the structural disagreements and inequalities that were being glossed over by the usage of this term. The rhetorical use of the term partnership is thus not new to the language of development and invariably leads to cynicism. Some non governmental organizations (NGOs) point out that while the talk about partnership increases, the demands put on them by donors get tougher all the time. The rules and regulations of some international NGOs are said to be so voluminous that one could actually *sit* on the accumulated manuals!

Prerequisites of partnership

- partners should have compatible goals and values.
- the primary focus of the expected results should be children.
- partners should know each other well.
- participatory processes should be encouraged.
- the relationship should be equitable, collaborative, voluntary, transparent, and mutually accountable.
- strategic management, planning, monitoring and evaluation should be intrinsic parts of partnership.
- partnerships should be established through negotiation of the respective roles and contributions of each of the partners, and.
- partnership should be viewed a dynamic relationship which can change over time.

Redd Barna, Oslo, *Partnership-A Discussion Paper for Redd Barna and Partners*. 1996..

2. Features of Partnerships

From the above descriptions we can extract some features or elements which are common to partnerships in general.

- a partnership is a relationship between two or more *parties* which are not necessarily of equal status. They may be drawn from different social and cultural backgrounds;
- they arise because of the recognition that joint action could achieve outcomes for each party that would not have been possible through independent action;
- the parties could have identical or shared visions and *objectives*. This is not a necessary condition since the parties could also collaborate with each other for the fulfilment of their own, separate, objectives. In this case identical interests are replaced by compatible interests;
- the partners could get together if they have:
  a) identical characteristics and objectives,
  b) complementary characteristics and objectives - the differences between them then become a source of mutual benefits, or when there is
  c) an advantage to be gained by strength of numbers as in networks which address joint problems or objectives;
- the realisation of objectives requires the formulation and implementation of a joint strategy.

Thus, the characteristics of the partners, the nature of their objectives and of the strategies employed by them form the three key elements of all partnerships. The question then is: when is a partnership "successful"? And following from this: what are the ingredients of a successful partnership?

3. Partnership: Some Dimensions

It is useful to first identify some of the major dimensions along which partnerships can be understood.

- formal/informal
- vertical/horizontal
- symbolic/concrete
- static/dynamic
- one-to-one/multiple
- one-off/longer-term

Formal/informal partnerships

In a formal partnership the parties come together in a contractual arrangement for reaching a shared objective. The objectives are well defined; the terms of engagement and mutual expectations are clear; the costs, benefits and risks are shared or apportioned. The behaviour of each partner is monitored by a contract and by an external code of practice - the law. This kind of arrangement is typical of the commercial, business culture, although it is not the only one to be found in this sector.

Informal partnerships, on the other hand, are governed by trust and are based on shared norms, shared culture and shared identity. They include arrangements between family, kin, caste, community, tribe and networks. The code of conduct is implicit and involves a system of internal rewards and penalties. The relationship between the partners is more holistic than in a formal arrangement and the costs of monitoring are fewer. Commercial relationships can also be guided by informal criteria: the East Asian economic miracle was attributed, in part, to the use of familial networks.

Vertical/horizontal partnerships

Horizontal, or lateral, partnerships are typically formed between institutions or individuals who have different interests and capacities but are relatively equal in terms of power or position. For example, an initiative that brings together local government and business or two or more international NGOs around an issue of common interest.

In a vertical partnership the players hold positions of unequal power or responsibilities. Such a relationship may exist between a grass-roots organization and a government agency. Both horizontal and vertical partnerships can be used to achieve shared objectives that none of the partners could have handled alone.

Symbolic/concrete partnerships

In some partnerships individuals may represent their own interests or they may speak on behalf of a well-defined group or institution. For example, in a business relationship individuals may represents their personal interests while the staff of an NGO can speak on behalf of their organization and are expected to safeguard its interests. Such relationships are tangible and the interests that individuals represent in these partnerships are concrete.

Other partnerships are more symbolic. It has become common practice for development agencies to invite representatives of target groups to join in their discussions. These may be children, youth, women or members of minority groups. The individuals involved are not expected to represent their personal interests but those of children, youth, women or minorities in general. Partnerships between them and concrete organizations are largely notional and maintained for political and symbolic reasons.

Static/dynamic partnerships

A partnership can be governed by a rigid code of behaviour which does not allow for changes or interpretations. Such static partnerships can be found when a grant is given under strict conditions and for a clearly laid-down purpose.

A dynamic partnership, on the other hand, allows for adjustments in means and objectives to reflect changing circumstances, if this is to the mutual benefit of both parties concerned. Such relations could also be governed by a legal framework but one which allows for flexibility. Both partnerships are quite common in development work.

One-to-one/multiple partnerships

Partnerships can be made on a one-to-one basis or simultaneously with a number of groups. When more partners are involved, either a "spider web" or a "matrix" model may be distinguished. In the first, one party positions itself in the centre and dominates the exchange as in the case of an international donor agency which has relations with a number of local NGOs. In the second, decision-making is the result of joint action as in the case of a network of like-minded organizations.

One-off/longer-term partnerships

Organizations or individuals may join forces for one occasion to achieve a shared objective. This type of partnership ends after the mission has been completed but may be resumed when needed. Others stretch out over longer periods of time. The activities they jointly undertake are usually connected. Partnerships may also lie dormant for a while and be resuscitated when the need arises.

The categories presented above are not mutually exclusive - in principle, a partnership could cover several dimensions - nor is the list intended to be exhaustive as it could be extended to include the dimensions of profit/non-profit, funding/non-funding, implementor/facilitator and imposed/voluntary, hands-on/hands-off. All these dimensions can come into play at any given moment, and partnerships can be rated in different ways along the same dimension. Thus extremely formal contracts can easily coexist alongside a dynamic, short-term arrangement. In fact, an understanding of partnership cannot really be capsulated by a single definition, but is rather created by the partners themselves.

III. Development Partnerships

The concept of partnership has been in vogue in international development practice for over twenty years. It stems from the belief that development is a complex process which involves more than merely transferring skills and resources and the development effort can succeed only when it is based on mutual respect for each others' autonomy and experience. These views involved a major ideological shift in the thinking of development agencies and found reflection in a new terminology whereby words such as paternalism, relief, service delivery, dependency, donor-driven, single project focus and unsustainable development were replaced by partnership, participation, cooperation, mutual training and education, self reliance, community directed, and sustainable development.[2]

This thinking has been encouraged by the progressive shift in the orientation of international organizations from relief and welfare work to sustainable community development and more recently to people's movements. A parallel transition is noticeable in the way donor agencies perceive themselves the position of banker or financial gate-keeper is no longer acceptable and is considered to be paternalistic. Partnership is considered a more appropriate description of their new role as "development" agencies.

Donor agencies have also come to realize that it is more expedient to work with local partners. Whereas the move towards partnership is generally justified in development terms, another argument that is often given is that it has the advantage of being more cost effective.[3] International donors can reduce their field staff or do away with them altogether. As partners, they can be more effective in fundraising and as international advocates when they have access to local knowledge and experience.

The parties involved in a development partnership are governments, international donor agencies, indigenous NGOs, local groups, grass-roots organizations, the community, and the beneficiaries (children, youth, women, small-scale farmers etc.). What brings these diverse units together is their shared common goal of catalyzing "development", defined most broadly in terms of emancipation from various forms of oppression. The alleviation of poverty and the guarantee of fundamental human rights remains at the core of this agenda.

There are several levels of development partnerships, with each successive layer nested within a larger entity:

- multilateral global partnerships for joint action on common issues and problems such as the environment, child rights, human rights;
- multilateral international partnerships involving a region or a group of countries, i.e., ASEAN, SAARC, NAFTA;
- bilateral arrangements between individual countries involving specific treaties and agreements;
- partnerships between international donor agencies and indigenous NGOs;
- within the south: partnerships between the NGO community and between NGOs and grassroots, community, and people's organizations;
- partnerships between these organizations and the ultimate beneficiaries of development, and finally,
- between the beneficiaries themselves.

Development partnerships do not operate in isolation. There is an interplay between the various levels mentioned above and partnerships are both facilitated and constrained by this interaction. They are influenced by the wishes of their constituents; by the mandate and constraints of their respective organizations; by government policy and economic interests; by local politics, interest groups and power balances, and finally by the overarching phenomenon of globalization. The concrete case of the partnership between a donor agency country office and a

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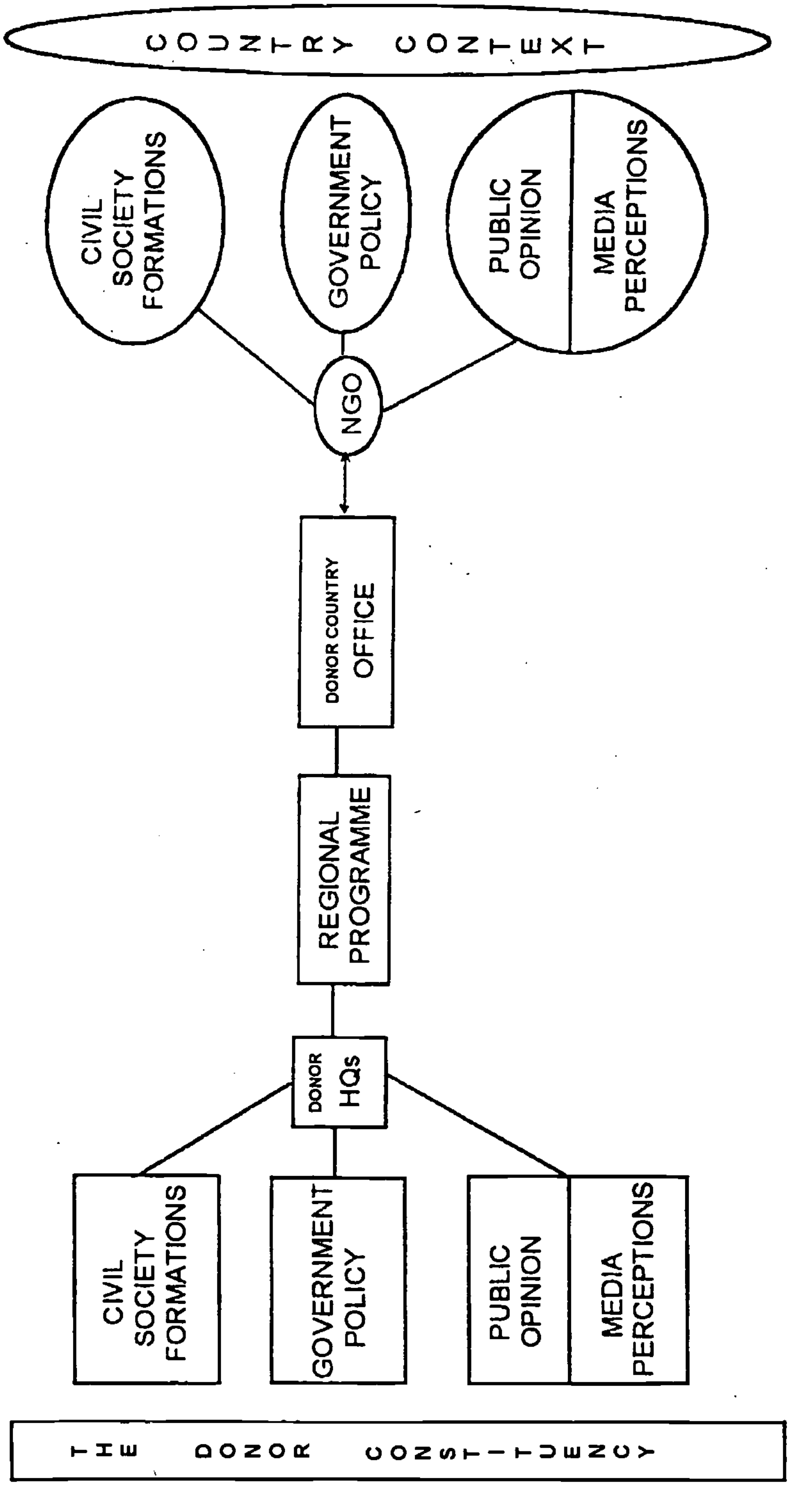
2 *For a detailed description of the paradigm shift, see Campfens (1966).*

3 *A caveat has to be made here. It is often overlooked that the donor agencies' administrative costs are now shifted to partners but are reported back to headquarters as programme support.*

local NGO is taken as an example to illustrate the multiple partners and interests that play a part (see Table 1).

Table 1 Partnerships reflect multiple interests



International agreements and national policies often provide the parameters within which donor agencies operate. They may also define the geographical area in which they can work. But this is not always so and some agencies exercise a great deal of flexibility and independence in defining their scope and area of operation. Further, at the country level, the general public could also have a say in influencing the programme of the donor agency. This is particularly true in the case of agencies that depend heavily on fund-raising in their home countries. The local NGO is similarly influenced and constrained by its environment and country context. The partnership between the two is played out against this multi-layered background. While the objectives of the two principal players, i.e., the international donor and the local NGO may be identical, there could easily be a clash of interests between the players involved at other levels.

1. Defining Development Partnerships

While the term partnership is now commonly used by donor agencies, there have been few systematic attempts to define it. This may not only be impossible but also not desirable as a fixed definition may limit the scope of partnership. It appears that most organizations are satisfied with a superficial description and appear uninterested in its many implications. Equally underplayed is the code of conduct that the parties involved should use to guide this relationship. A few examples of attempts to define development partnerships are given below:

"Partnership means a joint commitment to common goals, namely the search for solutions to the structural problems of poverty and hunger and for participatory development models based on democratic decision-making and on social equality. This involves shared responsibilities and mutual accountability regarding successes as well as failures. A partnership relation must be based on mutual knowledge, respect, transparency and trust." (OECD, 1988)

> ... a positive North/South collaborative relationship should include: mutual respect, trust, and equality; transparency or reciprocal accountability; understanding of each others' political/economic/cultural contexts and of institutional constraints; openness to learning from each other; and a long-term commitment to working together." (Drabek, 1987)

> "The ideal CFA/NGO partnership ought to be one where both partners, on equal footing, willingly combine their abilities and resources for a mutual objective pursued in solidarity with the poor and their organizations." (Willi Kawohl, 1991)

CARE Sri Lanka argues that working through partnership has positive effects on sustainability, efforts to attain scale, costs, development vision, responsiveness to local needs, and the learning process (Care 1997). FORUT, a Norwegian NGO, also active in Sri Lanka, sees partnership as an intermediary step within a development process (FORUT 1995). Save the Children (UK), South Asia, speaks about "building alliances" for children (SCF 1996). Other agencies see partnership between international and domestic development operations as key to generating greater efficiency and results because they use resources effectively and allow for better sharing of practices (USAID 1996). It is also recommended that partnerships should be based on both needs and existing assets.

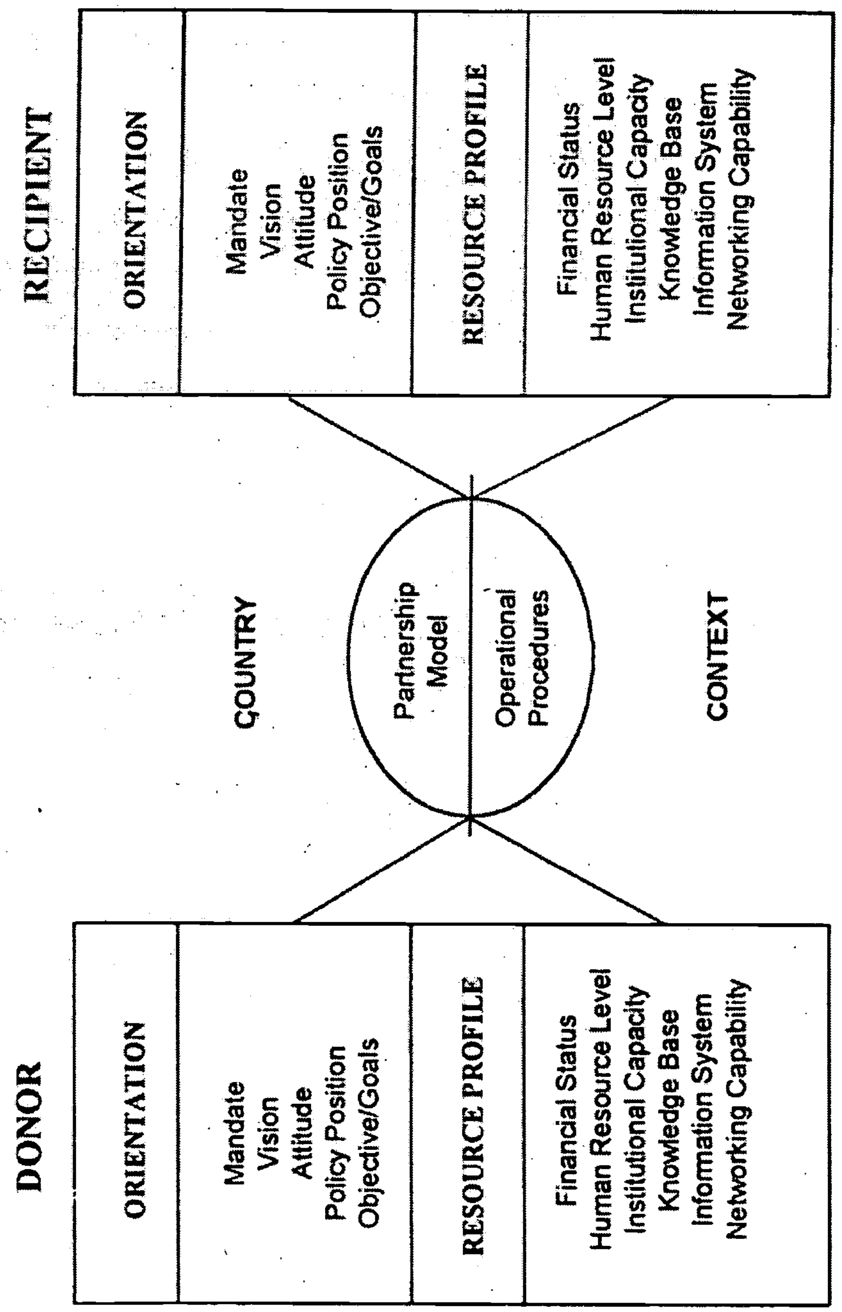
What is striking is the emphasis on the ethical or moral dimensions of partnership. Honesty, trust, equality, solidarity, openness, accountability, respect and collaboration are given prominence. But partnership is not an altruistic alliance - it will only flourish when there is a healthy dose of self-interest as well. All partners should benefit, otherwise no partnership would last long. Partners should be open about their gains and advantages, and not hide these behind a smoke screen of "good causes".

2. Features of Development Partnerships

The definitions provided above are, in the main, prescriptive and idealistic statements of how development partnerships ought to operate. They list the goals, features and principles that should make up a partnership between donors and local agencies. As with many other concepts that are popular in development discourse, there is a considerable gap between rhetoric and reality. Effective partnership remains a distant goal for the majority of development agencies. It is obvious from accumulated experience that partnership is a complicated business. There are no short cuts to it and no easy solutions. A development partnership is generally not a one-off event or a single transaction made between anonymous actors in an impersonal context. Rather, it is a process which takes time to unfold and which requires continual monitoring and adjustments.

So, what is common to the above definitions? What are the elements underlying a development partnership? Table 2 depicts the interplay of the three key elements that make up the partnership between a donor and a recipient agency. The qualities that the partners bring into the relationship have been characterized as orientations and resource profile. The arena of creating, managing and sustaining the relationship is referred to as the partnership interface.

Table 2 Features of development partnerships



Orientations

Orientations refer to the attitudes and values of the partners and will be reflected in the mandate, vision, policy position and objectives of the organization. Some crucial questions about the orientations of the two partners would be: What motivates them? What is the extent and nature of solidarity between them? Do they share a common vision of social development? Are their objectives compatible?

Resource profiles

The two partners usually have sharply contrasting *resource profiles*. This applies to their financial status as well as to their respective levels of human, infrastructural, knowledge and informational development and to their networking capabilities.

Partnership interface

Their respective orientations and the resource profiles become the inputs into the construction of the *partnership interface*. This includes the operational procedures that guide the day-to-day management of the partnership. Decision-making, financial and accounting arrangements, evaluations, information flows, networking and modes of communication come into play. The partnership interface will also be influenced by the country and cultural context within which it is embedded.

Partnership model

The nature and interaction of these three components will define the *partnership model*. It could be vertically or horizontally structured, hierarchical or egalitarian, static or dynamic.

In reality there is a continuum of partnerships, with donor-client type relationships representing one end and more egalitarian relationships characterising the other. The following table presents the differing operational procedures that will characterize each model. These represent two extreme scenarios and will seldom be found in their entirety in real-life situations. However, it is useful to spell out the "ideal" in detail as it can serve as a yardstick against which partnerships can be measured. It can also provide the goal which organizations can aim to reach.

Partnership interface		
Operational procedures	Partnership model	
	donor-client	equal partners
strategic decision-making	top-down	participatory
project (re-) definition	donor controlled	consultative
financial control/accounting	one-way control	transparency; mutual accountability
evaluation	donor controlled	joint/mutual
information flows/networks	donor-controlled	open-access
organizational culture	top-down	empowering

3. Some Perceptions of Development Partnerships

It is an interesting fact that the term partner is used predominantly by international donor agencies, multilateral funders and northern governments. Recipient agencies usually use more prosaic and down-to-earth terms to describe their donors. Their perceptions of how partnerships work in practice also offer a different vision of reality and are in sharp contrast to the more idealistic notions presented by donors.

Quotations from different parts of the world are given below. In general, these statements represent the views of individuals and agencies who are at the receiving end of partnerships or who identify with them.

"In most cases the international NGOs ask us questions, which out of respect for their privacy and human integrity, we would never ask of them. Indeed, it is crucially important for us to identify true international friends and yet this process is more difficult for us than it is for the international NGOs." (Nyoni, 1987)

"... the legitimacy of NGO which are a creation of their First World counterparts depends on the quality of their programs and their approach to development. It also depends on what they are seen to represent ... Foreign NGOs can therefore be seen as a threat to local initiative and self-reliance unless mutual confidence is developed between the external and local agencies, and a real partnership is created for the common cause of the poor." (Nyoni, 1987)

"... international NGOs operate with a dynamic quite different from that of local NGOs. They are bureaucratic ... they put a high premium on Gladstonian concepts of accountancy: that is on the rendering of receipted accounts rather than on any form of program or output budgeting." (Elliot, 1987)

"... many donors put great emphasis upon `dialogue' with their `partners'. It is important to recognize two features of this dialogue. First, this is a dialogue of the unequal, and however many claims are made for transparency and mutuality, the reality is - and is seen to be - that the donor can do to the recipient what the recipient cannot do to the donor. There is an asymmetry of power that no amount of well-intentioned dialogue can remove." (Elliot, 1987)

"The relationships among NGDOs and IDCIs (international development cooperation institutions) ... express a set of tensions related to the interests, often contradictory, of power groups and governments. They are also related to the different interests of the IDCIs and the NGDOs and to the different points of view of their personnel on priorities, regional concerns and preferences, biographical backgrounds, and ideological options." (Padron, 1987)

"The language of `concern for effectiveness', `accountability', `efficiency', `professionalism', etc., masks the real language that in fact says, `We have the money, the know-how and therefore the power.' The southern NGOs are quite aware that money and know-how spell *power* in the hands of the northern NGOs." (Kajese, 1987)

"In the context of the relationships between international NGOs and indigenous NGOs, there is little doubt that the frame of reference for the division of labor has been dominated to a large extent by western priorities, sensitivities, and systems." (Kajese, 1987)

"... although we have been using the word partnership for a long time ... project implementation has been the main thrust, and funding the main link. And with one partner giving funds and another receiving them, all the inequalities enter the relationship." (Bhasin quoted in Smillie, 1995)

"[Northern NGOs] have an enormous amount of power. They are able to shape the lives of the organizations they support, not simply because they fund them, but also because of the processes and disciplines they require the organization to become involved in. The term `partner' only obscures what remains a very real power relation. The egalitarian label does not change reality." (Honor Ford-Smith quoted in Smillie, 1995)

"... foreign NGOs are a secretive lot. We do not know much about them ... we know little about how their hearts beat in Europe or America or Canada ... they work with such secrecy and opaqueness that it is right for an African to be suspicious about them." (Yash Tandon quoted in Smillie, 1995)

The message in these comments is loud and clear. Yet, such views are rarely expressed in the immediate presence of staff of funding organizations. Few recipient NGOs would be so unwise or so uncourteous. So long as there is a prospect of financial support, donors are warmly welcomed, listened to, and praised for their wisdom and insights. It is hard, if not impossible, for a donor to remain self-critical under these circumstances.

> "... donor `cherry picking', treating NGOs like a buffet lunch, taking what they like and leaving the rest; unclear priorities; frequently changing personnel; a refusal to countenance overheads or income-earning investments; delays in decision-making; delays in sending money. The result is not a *strengthening* of Southern NGOs; it is a life of constant apprehension and a process that contributes to destabilization. And it is not *partnership*; it is the same old paternalism the South started to know when Portuguese navigators first sailed down the coast of West Africa." (Ian Smillie, 1995)

> "If the rhetoric is stripped off many NGO-to-NGO `partnerships', what remains is mostly money. Direct funding, therefore, poses a threat to the very *raison d'être* of many Northern NGOs." (Ian Smillie, 1995)

Donor agencies are not the only ones to blame for the failure of the partnership; local NGOs do not stand up to scrutiny either.

> "It is as easy to mock the Weberian virtues [of bureaucracy] as it is to neglect the fact that if local NGOs are to become effective agents of change in their own environment, dishonesty, incompetence, indolence, excessive patronage and corruption are unlikely to be sources of strength." (Elliot, 1987)

> "The present argument from the South often looks like a plea for power without responsibility, power in terms of unconditional funding from the North without responsibility either to the donors or the real partners in development, the poor". (Pratt, 1988)

> "[NGOs preach] participation, partnership, democracy ... But internally they are strictly hierarchical organizations with dogmatic structures, often dependent on individualistic styles of management decision-making ..." (Pratt, 1988)

The concept of partnership is in itself not new and is rooted in notions of solidarity, mutual respect and collaboration. But the way in which development partnerships are promoted may raise some cultural eye brows:

> "... the Sinhalese word for partner is *havulkarya*. It has the connotation of somebody with whom you would indulge in a temporary, opportunistic business, with no intention on either side of its continuing. It is energized by mutual suspicion and distrust. It is also used in the context of a person with whom a deal, slightly illicit and short-term, may be made. On the other hand a donor is called a *dayaka sangvidhanaya* which translates as `compassionate organization'. There is an accepted inequality, but not at the spiritual level. So when a donor becomes a partner there is confusion. You repudiate the spiritual inequality; you call me an equal when I am not". (Sunimal Fernando, quoted in Wazir & Van Oudenhoven 1997)

Others take the view that partnership is not just a new word for the donor-receiver dependent relationship but heralds a new approach where there is an interdependent relationship between organizations:

> "... looking at this concept now with our hindsight, it seems surprising that RB-Nepal had taken so long to think of *partnership* as it could have expected to achieve its vision only in partnership with other NGOs and GOs, especially the latter ... Development, ultimately, is the process by which people empower themselves to improve their lives. From that perspective, *partnership for development* makes sense". (Redd Barna-Nepal, 1996)

The idea of interdependence is well understood and has been mentioned as the ultimate goal for partnership. Groups may start off in a dependent situation, become independent of each other's support for survival and then realize that they are part of an interdependent system, and are mutually indispensable to each other.

The views of a Nepali NGO underscore these principles:

> ... equality, respect to each other and shared vision are essential things ... we learn form each other and teach each other". (CWIN, quoted in Wazir & Van Oudenhoven 1997)

However, there is also awareness of new forms of contradictions that may emerge between North and North, South and South, and North and South. One of these is the perception of some local NGO staff that the move to partnership is a ploy to rid itself of staff or unwanted projects. Partnership is also challenged as the umpteenth fad of the development establishment to stay in business:

> "... after basic needs, self-reliance, sustainability, empowerment, and now partnership, what's next?" (Sithuwama, quoted in Wazir & Van Oudenhoven 1997)

There is also the uncertainty, if not suspicion, that the distribution of rights and obligations will be stacked unfavourably against local organizations. It is common practice for international donor agencies to check the accounts of local partners, but would they be prepared to open their own books to public scrutiny?

It is clear that the picture of partnership that comes to the fore is as diverse as the region itself. Local NGOs are evidently capable of speaking the partnership language and may act according to the script. Their main worry is whether, at the end of the day, donors really mean what they say about partnership.

IV. Making Development Partnerships Work

As a general observation it can be said that the progression from a donor/client-type to a partnership-type relationship does not emerge of its own accord. Much work and reflection is required to translate aspirations into practice. The organization has to go through "partnership building measures" which have implications for the entire organization - from headquarters to country offices. An active policy decision from headquarters, coupled with a common understanding within the organization on the reasons for this move form a crucial first step. The various stages and instruments involved, the location of responsibility for their execution and monitoring, channels and structure of responsibility for decision making and back up would also need to be clearly understood and established.

1. Setting the Scene

The following sets of questions help to clarify the different elements that have to be kept in mind in establishing a partnership. They help set the scene for reviewing partnership-building.

What are the benefits of partnership?

What is the added value? Can the same objectives be reached in other ways; with other partners? What do children stand to gain? What are the risks? Could autonomy, fundraising-niche, perks be lost? Do all parties have something to offer? Is this financial support, international expertise, local knowledge and experience, entry to networks, access to the target audience, resources, or management, programme development and advocacy skills?

Is there a genuine commitment to partnership?

Is there a long-term commitment to it? Are the partners prepared to invest the time, staffing and additional resources required? Is there sufficient clarity about mutual expectations, roles and responsibilities? Is there a willingness to change, to learn from each others' successes and failures, to share information, networks and decision-making? Does the organizational culture facilitate this arrangement?

Is there a shared vision?

Do the partners share common goals, beliefs, values and principles? What do they understand by "development"? Do they have a track record? Do they share views about the "rights of the child"? Is there a shared organizational culture: is partnership, empowerment, participation, respect for diversity interpreted in the same way? Is there an understanding of each others' political, economic, cultural and institutional constraints?

Is there sufficient institutional and human resource capacity?

What are the implications for staff? Will it require a change in their roles and responsibilities? Will it call for additional skills? Have they been adequately prepared to take on new assignments? Do donor agency staff have an in-depth knowledge of the country and region? Do they have skills in processing, relaying and brokering information? Can they plan long-term programme scenarios? Are NGO staff ready to take on new responsibilities such as fundraising and self-evaluation? Do the partners have complementary and supplementary skills?

What are the operational procedures?

How is information communicated between partners? Is there open access to this communication? What is the importance given to written records and institutional memory? Is there flexibility in reporting requirements and agreement on evaluation indicators. Is joint or mutual evaluation possible? Is there openness and mutual accountability in financial reporting? Is decision-making transparent and participatory? Who controls networks and information? Is it possible to have informal partnership arrangements?

Do the partners have a "learning agenda"?

Are there mechanisms for problem identification? How can partners learn from each other and share their respective experience and expertise? Are successes, failures and sensitive issues honestly reported? Is there a capacity to learn from untapped knowledge and experience at field level? And to inform the field? Is there an institutional memory? Is it recorded in a manner that it leads to organizational, as opposed to individual, learning? Is evaluation used as a tool for mutual learning and for redefining strategies and priorities? How can we, international staff, stay in touch with local communities?

Can partners be different and equal?

Is it feasible to maintain a productive relationship between unequal partners? What is the difference between equality and sameness? How will inequalities be dealt with? How should you relate to a partner who is more powerful, has better resources, has more prestige and is better connected? Or the reverse: how to relate to a partner who is weak, poorly resource and working in isolation? Should the partners be empowered so that they can sustain a relationship as equals? Is capacity building a necessary precondition? Are flexible and longer term funding arrangements more empowering? Is there an understanding of the consequences of empowering and participatory practices? Can donors empower and create self-reliance without creating clones?

How will the partnership be maintained?

Are there any mechanisms for evaluating the quality of the partnership? How are conflicts resolved and diverging interests dealt with? Is there a capacity to respond to the internal and external dynamics of the partnership? Does long-term investment in one partner lead to "clientism" and favouritism? Can this be balanced by involvement with new partners and new networks? Can partnerships change as a result of changes in contractual agreements? Is it sometimes necessary to break or end a partnership?

This long list of questions is not complete and could easily be expanded. Some agencies use check lists to assess their partnership building efforts. Lists of this kind can serve as reminders of how complicated the formation of partnerships really is. Every individual and organization is likely to have a different opinion on what partnerships should entail and how they should be built. These views may also vary across countries and regions.

The issues raised above show clearly that the move to partnership has several far reaching implications for programme activities as well as for staff and organizational development. The following sections present these issues in a framework that will facilitate programme and policy development with partners.

2. Programme Development

In addition to moving away from self-implementation of projects to working through partner agencies, there has been a policy shift away from an "activity" orientation to an "issue" orientation. The rationale for focusing on issues is that this will enable donor agencies to take a more direct approach in implementing their child-focused mandate and concentrate on a few priority areas. Moving from a situation of sets of disparate projects to a coherent and focused programme would require a new approach to project support and programme development. It will call for different kinds of planning and grant-making procedures. Some existing projects may have to be discontinued, modified or reinforced and others newly developed. Staff will have to change their orientation and may have to acquire new skills and establish new professional contacts.

Features of a programme

What is a programme? A programme may be defined as a series of events created to attain clearly formulated goals at a country or global level. It should consist of a coherent set of interrelated, well described activities, a plan of action with concrete objectives, strategies and tangible outcomes. A programme should follow an anticipated time path and operate within a pre-determined financial framework. The discrete activities within such a programme could be manifold, short or long-term and could be carried out by distinct, but collaborating, organizations or individuals. In addition to activities benefiting children and their families undertaken by child and family workers, a programme could include initiatives by others which could lead, for example, to extensive networking, documentaries, training courses, seminars, monographs, or new lines of educational materials. Within the terms of a programme, these various interventions should mutually reinforce each other and work towards shared goals.

Ideally, a country programme should draw on a country study providing general information about the country as well as specific details about the needs of children. It should include information on legislation, policies and practices with respect to children and families; map out the programmes of other child-focused international and local agencies; identify existing "good policy and practice" as well as gaps in existing interventions and policies for children. After an intensive dialogue with partners and independent resource persons, and based on a situation analysis of children and their families, a central theme or focus can be identified around which to develop programme activities. It should include a statement of overall objectives, areas of emphasis, implementation strategies, expected impact on children and the human and financial resources available to implement this.

There are several advantages to having a coherent programme clustered around a specific theme. The most obvious one is to do with the scale of the organization. Instead of making a small contribution in several fields, scarce resources could be used to make a significant impact in selected priority areas. Specialization would also allow a relatively small staff group to deepen their knowledge, experience and skills around specific issues and thereby develop high-quality interventions on behalf of children.

Thematic specialization would allow cross-country sharing of experiences, provide substance to inter-project networking activities and promote "learning by doing" at the organizational level in a more systematic way. It also stands a better chance of contributing to policy formulation, rallying public support and increased funding. Having said this, it is vital to remember that the selection of a thematic focus should not take away the flexibility to respond to novel and experimental proposals and to newly emerging needs of children.

It is likely that the familiar, longer-term, grass-roots intervention projects will remain a mainstay component in the majority of country programmes. These interventions can demonstrate the immediate relevance of innovative work, test out strategies, train specialists, and influence policy and practice. The focus could be on a single target group, i.e., child prostitutes, street children or rural children; it could be on a single strategy, i.e., child-centred community development; or it could have more than one target group and follow multiple strategies to achieve its objectives.

Country programmes may also contain smaller, short-term, "support" projects. Typically, these would be one-off activities that would contribute to the overall objectives of the country programme and could include activities such as a documentary on the project made by an independent producer, a survey carried out by a university, a training course developed by a college, or materials developed by a publisher.

Thinking along these lines, a country programme could consist of a multitude of "partners". Their common denominator would be that they would contribute to attaining the objectives of the programme. The personal aspects of partnership may get even more diluted when programmes take on the features of, or are incorporated into, "movements". In movements, partners are essentially like people playing their own instruments but using the same sheet of music.

Going to scale

The issue of increasing the coverage and impact of programmes is not a major issue for discussion in most agencies. Any agency that takes the child as its target, rather than children in a particular community, should assess its efforts in this wider context. The programmatic implications of not working in, or being unaware of, the larger context are profound and may even turn out to be counter-productive. One of the main hazards is that the model or methodology followed may turn out to be unsuitable for dissemination or replication because it may be too expensive or too uniquely financed, too complicated, requiring too much training, or inapplicable in other contexts.

> Moving programmes to scale and sustaining them requires special managerial and administrative skills. The funding arrangements are also completely different from those of smaller projects. People involved in experimenting, developing or exploring new ideas are motivated in a different manner from those who have to promote a proven methodology. Another factor to reckon with is that large endeavours may be seen as threatening as they have a bearing on local and national policy and impinge on activities traditionally delivered by the government.

The processes of going-to-scale are beginning to be understood and a few lessons can already be drawn from the experience gathered during the last ten years.[4] The most important lesson, perhaps, is that dissemination and replication of small pilot experiences is not an easy and straightforward activity. It is all too common for the significant features of the original project to get distorted, or to disappear altogether. Insensitivity to situational variables, ignoring local participation and mechanical replication are some of the reasons that cause programmes to lose their effectiveness.

The interest in replicating and disseminating programmes is also motivated by economic arguments. It is reasoned that since there are already sufficient "models" or illustrations of "good practice" there is no need for further experimentation or piloting. It would be far better to use scarce resources to help good practice expand and replicate than once again start up a so-called "innovative", "alternative" project.

The majority of local NGOs are too engaged in coping with the immediacy of their situation and are, therefore, not in a position to take sufficient distance or to place their activities in a wider perspective. Such an approach leaves the situation of the large majority of children at risk unaltered. Programming for children can be effective only when the dimensions of the

[4] *For a detailed review of these issues, see Van Oudenhoven & Wazir (1998).*

situation are taken into account and attempts are made to develop appropriate strategies that have a wider relevance.

Donors and NGOs committed to meeting the needs of large numbers of children at risk should, therefore, address the issue of programme expansion from the onset. They should jointly reflect on these considerations if they are to reach a larger number of children in need. NGOs should make the issue of going-to-scale a separate plank in their programme development strategy. This would give their current work with children an additional dimension as their activities would also have to be assessed in terms of their potential to grow. This is a totally new approach and it challenges, in particular, those NGOs that are restricted to offering services exclusively to children in their own constituencies. Often, the facilities offered to a few takers have to be reoriented completely when larger numbers have to be reached. For example, expensive centre-based child care in slum areas may have to give way to lower cost and sustainable home-based care.

The assignment for programme developers is to combine quality with quantity, to reach out to as many children as possible and yet offer good care in as short a time as possible. This is a complex task and not many examples of effective, large-scale programmes for children are available. The experience so far suggests that a decentralized approach that involves collaborating GOs, NGOs, grass-roots organizations and private initiatives holds the most promise. Large-scale programmes flourish best in a climate where the government assumes a policy formulating, facilitating and overall monitoring role; the professional input of NGOs is recognized; and local groups, including parents, exert control and bring in "local expertise".

As increasing regional and international experience, donor agencies are well placed to enact a catalyst role. They could document examples of "good practice" internationally; highlight the pros and cons of the various dissemination models; organize training and information workshops; or develop other fora for bringing NGOs and resource people together.

Sustainability

With international donor agencies going to partnership, the question of the sustainability of the projects takes on an important dimension. The majority of development programmes list the attainment of sustainability as one of their main objectives. However, even a cursory evaluation shows that only a few succeed in achieving it. Most externally-sponsored programmes collapse or have to be substantially reduced when funding dries up. This phenomenon is as common in the North as it is in the South. Programme developers of donor organizations as well as local implementers tend to overlook the long-term implications of their interventions. The complexities involved in making a programme sustainable are not fully appreciated from the outset or are given attention only at a later stage.

> In poor countries, there are just not enough resources around and it is an illusion to believe or make believe that any self-reliant scheme will alter this. Striving to sustain an externally-led intervention is, in essence, shifting the burden from the donor to local bodies.

Any earnest discussion should start with the observation that sustainability is often not possible without outsider support. Accepting this statement may make the debate more realistic and focus the attention on other ways of making interventions durable. The target groups of development programmes are there because they are poor, or do not have the means to improve their situation by themselves. They are also there because mainstream society does not find it important enough to improve their condition and because the state and society have other priorities. Even if the people in the slums or remote rural areas would organize themselves, health and child care would only improve up to a point.

Sustainable development is usually understood to refer either to the survival of the organization and its staff or of its programme activities. Although these components are interrelated, they call for different strategies. A well-managed organization is known to be a critical factor in the success of large-scale development programmes (Paul, 1982). Skills in administration, bookkeeping, personnel development, training, planning, filing and documentation, organizing meetings, reporting, and fundraising are crucial in enabling organizations to deliver programmes successfully. Similarly, an array of "tools" may be used to ensure the sustainability of programme activities. The most productive are community involvement, advocacy, fundraising, and coalition-building with governmental and non-governmental organizations.

A third form of sustainability refers to the continuation of ideas, vision and skills. For example, the "social energy" that is developed by programmes dealing with child advocacy, child rights and improved policies and services for children will continue to benefit children long after the termination of the project. The new approaches developed, the insights gained and the invaluable lessons learnt in the course of their working for children, their families and the community will not necessarily be lost. In this case sustainability will be measured in terms of the continued impact on the lives of children.

External donors have a moral obligation that goes beyond the rules and regulations of the contractual agreements that they sign with their partners. They have the obligation to ensure that their actions do not have a detrimental effect on the constituency that they attempt to serve. It is also well accepted that the cause of development is not served by creating undue dependency. Keeping these general principles in mind, donor agencies could enhance their efforts at making their NGO partners stronger and financially secure. The first step would be to draw up a sustainability plan outlining clear objectives, strategies, and specifying the responsibilities of both parties.

The donor could play a key role in providing access to training and expertise in areas such as proposal writing and in seeking alternative sources of income. It could encourage NGOs to document and publish their project experiences and stimulate their networking activities.

More recently, endowment funds are being given attention as one way of ensuring the sustainability of local groups. The advantage of an endowment is apparent: it can provide the programme with a steady flow of income. Yet, very few international donors see endowments as a means to securing the sustainability of a programme and Redd Barna is no exception. The establishment of endowments is not even an issue for discussion.

> While donors generally prefer long-term financing over the setting up of endowment funds, it is not uncommon for recipients to come to the conclusion that if all the monies spent on a programme had been put up-front in an endowment, the programme could have continued from the interests gained on this capital.

From what can be gathered internationally, endowments are looked upon with suspicion as they can be easily abused or mismanaged by the recipient, seem complicated to establish and discourage programme staff from looking for local funding. As all these objections can be countered other reasons may play a role, albeit in less outspoken ways. One such reason may be that by allowing recipients to draw on an endowment fund, donors lose their control over the recipient. Under regular funding conditions, recipients have to approach donors for project extensions, send in reports for approval, welcome them on field visits, and consult and listen to them. These are powerful tools in the hands of donors and the reluctance to give up these privileges should not be underestimated.

> Endowments have the potential to lessen the dependency of recipients on outside donors and, with this dependency out of the way, lay the foundation for a true partnership.

Endowments can be installed in many ways and codes of conduct can be worked out by mutual consent. Endowment funds will work best for mature, democratic and open organizations. Recipients could only be allowed drawing rights, or auto-destruct mechanisms could be installed to prevent deviation from agreed-upon rules. The ramifications of endowment funds have not yet been fully explored. A fresh look is required into what is essentially an old idea.

Can sustainability be attained without the collaboration of local partners? This question can only be answered positively if the donor is prepared to finance the activity permanently or to set up an endowment arrangement. Local partners will be needed to root the programme in society, to ensure that it is flexible as well as responsive to new needs and to keep it relevant. Longer-term financial support can only be expected when the local partners and stakeholders join in.

Networking

Without exception, local NGOs value the networking opportunities provided by international donor agencies who are part of an everextending matrix of contacts and linkages which include specialists at all levels from many parts of the world. They also have free communications with a wide gamut of organizations and groups as well as the institutional capacity and the credibility to expand their networks and to include others in it.

Local NGOs, on the contrary, have more difficulty in developing, updating and maintaining their networks. It is not uncommon for them to work in isolation or to be unaware of developments in their own region. Their efforts to reach out are impeded by technical and resource limitations. Actively reaching out to new or unfamiliar contacts requires a range of social, communication, language, diplomatic, and even administrative skills which are not always present in NGOs. Their staff are primarily action-oriented, interested in working directly with children. They have not come to their job with the intention of moving around in increasingly widening circles. Some NGO staff are not aware of the advantages of extending their professional contacts. They feel that they have enough, or even too much on their hands. They are "overwhelmed" by their own work and do not see how they could make time for such an activity, or how networking could relieve their work pressure.

Networking has become an indispensable activity for NGOs, and like their counterpart organizations in other parts of the world, local NGOs need stronger networks. It is mainly through improved networking that NGOs can firm up their financial base, impact policy, expand their outreach, and, most importantly, learn from others. More significantly, networking creates the conditions for self-generated learning. If brought in touch with the right mix of contacts, avenues for improving their work, accessing training and other resources and possibilities for coalition building can all be explored. The one-sided dependency on the donor agency gives way to autonomous and joint action.

It is tempting for most donor agencies to invite NGOs to participate in networks that are controlled by the agencies themselves.

Horizontal and vertical networking, i.e., the development of links with similar organizations as well as those up and down the hierarchy, has been identified as an essential feature of successful NGOs. This implies that NGO staff need to acquire the skills to relate to people and organizations belonging to different interest groups and organizational cultures. It also entails that NGOs need access to quality networks. Although networking is now an indisputable part of development jargon, the processes involved in it, its pitfalls and the skills for it are described only in vague terms, if given attention at all.

NGOs may attend a meeting organized by the donor and meet other agencies and individuals who are linked in some way to the donor. NGO staff may be sent on field trips to see projects or to training courses selected by the donor. This kind of networking may initially help an NGO to get started but it should not stop there. From a development perspective, it is far more effective to encourage NGOs to go over and beyond the donor's "own" networks.

In the main, local NGOs are not in a position to carry out an ongoing and close study of networking possibilities at various levels. The facilitating potential of international agencies, especially in the area of networking, is vast. they could fulfill a vital role by surveying the national, regional and international situation. Another option would be to bolster existing networks. There is a growing body of evidence that pleads for strengthening approaches that are already in place and building on these. There is, indeed, a global trend to look closer at "what works" rather than to invest in finding "new" solutions.

Partnership with local NGOs should find a growing expression in the assistance provided to them in developing and sustaining their own independent networks. In addition to financial inputs, young NGOs should also be offered training on how to go about networking.

Selecting partners

Who should be a partner? The partnership between a donor agency and children is a symbolic relationship which cannot be formalized by a legal contract. However, individuals, loosely-formed groups, community organizations, NGOs, universities and government agencies are concrete entities and it is possible, in principle, to enter into formal or informal relationships with them. A legally-binding contractual arrangement can be drawn up with individuals or with unregistered local organizations, just as it can with a registered NGO or government department. Experience shows that flexibility is required in making this decision as there can be no blanket recommendations which suits all countries.

The desirability of entering into partnerships with unregistered entities is best assessed individually for each country. There could be political reasons for doing so, as in the case of dictatorial regimes, like Burma, where civil organizations are banned. The decision could also be justified on developmental grounds. Support to grass-roots organizations, community formations and parents' groups could then be seen as part of a longer-term strategy of capacity-building. This would be the case in Laos and Cambodia where non-governmental organizations are a relatively new phenomenon.[5]

Selecting the right kind of partners is a first step in ensuring the success of partnerships. Time spent in getting to know the organization to make sure that there are no serious incompatibilities can save considerable disappointment and frustration in the future. It will also enable both sides to become aware of each other's strengths. It is not necessary for organizations to be identical. While recognizing diversity, there should be agreement around a core set of values. This is all the more important when the partnership concerns two inherently unequal parties (donors/recipients) and when the dependence is perceived as being one-sided.

> Equality should certainly not be used by donors to hide their embarrassment at having financial power and resources which are unavailable to the local recipient agencies.

There is general agreement that it is feasible to maintain a productive relationship between partners who are not identical. Equality should not be equated with sameness, or with having similar responsibilities, objectives or motivations. Instead of using equality as a starting point, it is often more useful to see the partnership as an inter-dependent relationship that is given direction by a joint vision and trust. The donor's financial power is counterbalanced by the local knowledge and hands-on experience of recipient organizations.

[5] *It could also be required by the organizational mandate: when the objective is to give scholarships or sponsorships to individuals.*

> Organizations may not be fully prepared for the consequences of empowerment. For example, indigenous NGOs could ask to see the financial accounts of their donors; they could ask for mutual evaluations and for participation in strategic policy decisions. In order to be truly participatory and empowering, donors would have to be prepared to open themselves to the same scrutiny to which they subject NGOs.

The attainment of the status of equality comprises many components and includes such vital attitudes as trust, self-confidence and respect. It also includes more prosaic elements such as a clear understanding of mutual rights and obligations; transparency and accountability on both sides; an organizational vision with clarity about goals, strategies and priorities and clear and open lines of communication. Finally, before embarking on a partnership which is mutually beneficial, it is crucial that both parties should have the capacity to implement such a relationship. Thus, both would need to be empowered before they could sustain a partnership as equals. Donors would bear the major responsibility of assisting in building up these capacities by providing financial support and access to training, networks and other non-material resources.

3. Organizational Development

The change over to partnership adds a new dimension to the work of donor agencies. It has consequences for organizational structures and will impact the staff who make up the organization. Concepts such as participation, empowerment, interdependence, access to information, and decentralization of power will gain in significance and a stronger commitment will be required to sustainability, networking, advocacy, and moving away from single projects to coherent programmes.

Implications for staff

The position of programme staff is pivotal as they stand at the interface between the international donor and the local recipient. The Programme Officer's task has traditionally been predominantly administrative, controlling and restrictive and largely dictated by the clauses and conditions of the terms of agreement between the donor and its partners. It was more important for them to understand project operations than programme development and, subsequently, in recruiting programme officers, the search was for commensurate skills.

The introduction of partnership is linked to a change in the responsibilities of staff and would call for additional skills at all levels. They would have to develop an extensive and in-depth knowledge of the country and region; become versatile in the processing, relaying and "brokerage" of information; have the skills to chart and plan out long-term, flexible and comprehensive programme scenarios; develop relevant contacts nationally and internationally; and - most importantly - deepen their understanding of development theories and practices. It may be more appropriate to use the label of "programme developer" for such staff.

Programme developers play an important role in funding agencies. They direct the amount and flow of monies and they make important decisions about the content and direction of the programmes they help to finance. However, it is impossible for them to possess the same intimate knowledge about children and their needs as programme implementors have, or to share or even appreciate the sophisticated insights of researchers. Yet, these officers are expected to speak out on children's issues; to decide which programmes to fund, where and for what children; assess outcomes of evaluations, and interact with researchers and practitioners. They often help to set the agenda at national and international fora as well as have an impact on the media.

> Would anybody take programme staff of donor agencies seriously if they were to be stripped of access to financial resources? Would they have anything of substance left to offer?

It is being suggested here that programme developers, even stripped of their "power and prestige" ought to be able to make a contribution to children's issues. They could do so by strengthening their expertise as development specialists; their networking position; their programme development approach; and by becoming credible advocates for their institutional mandate, in this case children. In most instances, these skills may have to be freshly recruited or be instilled in available staff. Partners, too, will look for new skills and expertise in international development agencies if they are to see it as more than just a donor agency.

Communicating with partners

Clear-cut, concrete, and open communications and well-defined rules of engagement are a prerequisite for maintaining good relations between the donor agency and its partners. As multi-cultural situations can easily lead to misunderstandings and misconstrued perceptions, the way messages are communicated should be a subject of permanent concern. Continued efforts should be made to ensure that all substantive decisions are interpreted by both parties in the same manner.

At the most basic level, these efforts entail that all significant discussions are followed up by a written communication summarizing the decisions reached and the actions agreed upon. This allows both parties to make additional comments, should that be necessary. These documents should, in turn, be shared with the relevant staff within the organizations. In this way, reliable institutional relationships, rather than merely personal contacts can evolve between the two organizations. High turnover of programme staff underlines the need for written records and an institutional memory.

Good record keeping also helps to distinguish personally-held views from those held formally by the organization. Although personal contacts and a strong commitment to projects are desirable, it should not lead to a sense of "ownership" by the responsible officer. Such a perception may narrow down, or even disturb the communication between project and donor agency staff. While maintaining prime responsibility for the project with the designated project officer, it is advisable to establish multiple contact points with the NGO partner. This would allow more than one person within the donor agency to have access to information and communication with the NGO.

In working with its project partners the donor agency should ensure that decisions regarding important matters such as assessment of proposals, project evaluation, continuation of funding and additional funding are conducted in a transparent manner. These decisions should also be framed in concrete guidelines or parameters. These guidelines should help the writing of proposals. They are more than checklists and should be understood in the context of a country programme and of the mandate of the donor. In the final analysis, these guidelines should serve the interests of the target group, i.e., children.

Strategic management

It would be beyond the capability of the staff of most donor agencies to give expert feedback at all times and on all the areas listed above. Instead of attending to all matters themselves, it would be more fruitful for staff to opt for "strategic management". This concept acknowledges the growing awareness that the relationship with projects should change, that staff and material resources could be better used and that project monitoring could be more effective. Strategic management is, therefore, outcome-oriented. It requires that ressources - staff as well as financial - should only be spent on those activities that further the objectives of the country programme. It means that staff should endeavour to increase local support capacity for projects, instead of getting involved with action on the ground themselves.

Strategic monitoring also entails that an agreement should be reached with project partners on priority areas and project monitoring should, then, largely deal with these topics. Singling out a few priority monitoring issues would not exclude keeping an eye on financial and other reporting. Donors are afraid of misappropriation of funds. Stories about corruption in the South are rife in the North; and fundraising international NGOs don't wish their constituents to think that the monies entrusted to them are mishandled. Projects should be helped to become capable of "self-generated learning" which is manifested in self-evaluation, self-monitoring and also self-accounting. It should also lead to the identification and resolving of problems and increased accountability.

> Strategic management is not the same as more checks, more rules and regulations and more paper work. This is seen as a sign of distrust and a ploy by the donor to retain control.

Mechanisms and tools are available which will facilitate the development of these practices. The provision of locally available training is one of the most important tools to improve the functioning of projects. This would include the identification of training needs of project staff and finding appropriate training for them. Project work can also be reinforced by making available resource materials - manuals, training videos, guides, data banks and references; developing issue-oriented agendas; promoting networking and joint activities and organizing thematic workshops.

It is obvious that donor agency staff cannot have expertise in all aspects of child development research and practice. Use should be made of external resource persons or specialized agencies to provide information on specific issues or to help formulate constructive approaches. Partner organizations could play an effective role in supplying this expertise; in fact, a key reason for extending the network of partners may be to provide a platform for exchanging complementary skills.

Staff development

The move to programme development and strategic monitoring calls for expanded roles and responsibilities and even greater skills. While new staff can be recruited on the basis of an adjusted profile, existing staff would have to be adequately prepared to take on their new assignments. Management would be required to play an active role in devising and implementing this staff training plan.

In-house discussions and studies are the most effective means by which the contours of a new operational style can be defined. These discussions can focus around the assessment of new proposals, on new trends in research and practice or on lessons learnt from the organization's own experiences in the field. Exposure to the work of NGOs is in itself a prime source for training. In this process, staff can upgrade their skills, improve their understanding of development issues and, most importantly, develop an affinity with the new approach.

Staff should be aware of the "development paradox" which regularly baffles development agencies. This appears when the expertise and knowledge of an agency reaches such high levels that it far exceeds the capacity of collaborating NGOs. The tendency for the agency is then to foreclose discussions with the NGOs and lock them out from essential decision-making processes. Development agencies should, therefore, seek to acquire skills that are supplementary and contributory to those of NGOs. This dynamic also entails that the mosaic of partnership continuously changes.

Resource development

NGOs need to obtain as well as to generate information. This is an essential component of institutional empowerment. They also need to reach out to diverse audiences and "package" the information accordingly. They may wish to hand out simple leaflets, write texts for newspapers;

or they may opt for sophisticated multi-media approaches. The setting up and maintenance of an information/communication service calls for resources and skills that are usually not within the reach of NGOs. Collaboration with others and using services of specialized groups on a part-time basis is a familiar way of resolving this lack of capacity. However, it still requires specialized skills to conceptualize, supervise and evaluate the products, or even to identify reliable partners.

> Interacting through Internet and accessing the information available there will change the nature of development partnerships. This discussion has not even started yet.

International donor agencies are well placed to facilitate the flow of documentation to partners and also to keep news clippings, books, articles and international resources. They could collect and publish relevant documents on children; undertake the translation of relevant experience and publications and also set up a data bank on names and addresses of persons and organizations that could serve the NGOs. The outreach capacity of such resource centres will certainly grow with the ever-increasing access to cheap and customer-friendly electronic communication systems.

Life in cyberspace will not diminish the need for human interfacing; this is likely to increase commensurately, and resource centres could initiate workshops, field trips and otherwise get people in touch with each other. These resource function will enable international agencies to reach out to many audiences with relatively little finances. In some countries, international agencies could thus cease to be traditional donors while maintaining their partnerships, or even extending them, by assuming the role of resource organizations.

V. Building Partnerships for Children

The availability of a mission statement and programme guidelines, does not guarantee child-focused action on its own accord. It requires staff and partners who know about children's issues, are committed to working with and on behalf of children, and who have the motivation and skills to connect with children and their care-givers.

Targeting Children

Questions such as - should children be singled out as a target group; should they be direct beneficiaries of development programmes; how should the impact of programmes on children be measured - continue to be debated by child-development specialists, practitioners, development agencies and policy-makers.[6] This ongoing discussion allows for several observations and contributions to be made to issues which have a direct bearing on the partnerships child-related donor agencies will form to benefit children.

Several reasons are given by those who believe that children should have priority in development programmes. First, there is the moral obligation to support the vulnerable. This obligation has now become internationally accepted law and is enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). A second and important political reason is that communities and societies at large are more at peace and in balance when they see that their children are taken care of.

More recently, NGOs implementing programmes for children have come under increasing pressure from powerful donor agencies to show the benefits of child programmes to the society at large. Investing in children is, as the term suggests, now becoming a predominantly economic concern. The key objective is to turn children into productive adults who will pay taxes. It is

6 *In the main, children and youth are conveniently left out of this equation; they still do not participate in decision-making which touches on their lives. It is only gradually being understood that they too should be heard and be allowed to chart out their own destinities.*

believed that neglected children will cost society more: they will need extra medical care, will repeat classes in school, will under-perform as workers, will have large families, or otherwise become a burden for their country. Consequently, implementing agencies are pushed to include economic indicators in their evaluations or adjust their programmes so that they may produce positive economic outcomes.

Although the search for long-term effects of child-related programmes is legitimate, it carries with it the inherent danger of looking at children only as future adults, and not as deserving of attention in their own right. The CRC recognizes children as inherently important, regardless of their future status, or the future outcomes of intervention programmes. Children have the right to receive care, even when it cannot be "proved" that this care will be translated in terms of positive outcomes later on in their lives. This is the true meaning of putting children in focus and is, perhaps, the most important lesson that has been learnt or should be learnt.

It is sometimes argued that children form an integral part of the society in which they live and as such cannot be reached effectively unless the environmental conditions under which they live are also improved. This is a valid argument and some environmental improvements do have direct benefits for children. For example, better playgrounds, improved nutrition, health-monitoring, or schools have immediate positive results. However, not all general improvements necessarily reach the child. While in theory they should have a bearing on the development of children, their effects in practice may be minimal.

A different kind of argument is presented by adherents of the community development approach. It is generally assumed that the community should be allowed to decide its own priorities and strengthening the community will affect the lives of children accordingly. Community development is still seen as a good means or an opportune way to reach children as it is believed that programmes for children can be effective only if they are rooted in and supported by the community.

Children's programmes can all too easily become entry points for more general community action. In seeking to improve the lives of children, projects may be mounted to alleviate poverty, reorganize village societies, improve agricultural output, construct a road, establish a health post or a rice bank. It can be argued that each of these single interventions will have a positive impact on children. In practice, however, it may not always bear out that way. Income may accrue only to the elite, or to a single segment of the community. In spite of all good intentions, the child often gets lost in such programmes.

It is detrimental to the cause of children if the spin-offs of such programmes were the only justifications for action for children. A child focus can only be maintained if the complexities, dynamics, and implications of intervention processes are clear and the intervening links between initial programme input and impact on children are understood. Put in simple terms, the following questions should be raised of any intervention: what is the impact on children and what is required to sustain it?

Measuring Impact

It is not uncommon for development agencies to repeatedly refine their policies, programme objectives and strategies in keeping with current trends and concerns. In general, their attempts at self-evaluation usually stop at this point. Their constituencies, whether they be donors, boards of trustees, volunteers or the public are usually satisfied when the agency's target group and accompanying working philosophy are appealing.

This means that the question about the impact of their programmes on children and on children's development is hardly ever raised. This aspect also appears to be missing from the work of many child development agencies. Instead of looking at the impact of programmes on the lives of children, circumstantial indicators of effectiveness are often used. One may look at the number of teachers or health workers trained instead of looking at academic performance or changes in the number of sick children. Likewise, it may be argued that the establishment of a network of independent, child-oriented NGOs will not automatically lead to more healthy and well developed children.

To assess the impact of an intervention on children, meaningful childhood-development indicators are required. Infant and under-five mortality rates can serve as crude but useful bench marks of child health. Weight for height, and height for age are similarly effective indicators of the nutritional status of children. The advantage of these indicators is that they can be readily observed by non-specialists, are relevant in any context, and lend themselves to inter- and intra-country comparisons.

Equivalent indicators do not exist for the field of psycho-social development, which forms a major component of a child's make up. For older children, school failure and drop out rates are often used as indicators of psycho-social functioning. But these indicators are not fair to children as they usually tell more about the schools and the education system than about the children themselves. For younger children practical, easy-to measure and internationally comparable indicators are not available.

As long as commonly agreed upon psycho-social indicators are not in place, work at the community level should be guided by other forms of information or understanding about children. Although not sufficiently sturdy in a scientific sense, views of parents, teachers, and care-givers are highly relevant. Reports of this kind, ideally corroborated by observations by others, should be welcomed as they do give a picture of the effectiveness of the programme, and keep the attention trained on the child. The availability of local partners are indispensable as they have the knowledge, skills, contacts and sensitivity to reach children.

"Redd Barna has found time and again that the traditional community development model does not always improve the health, education and security of children in the way project proposals set out. Most honest project evaluations in development literature show that people in the middle and top of local social hierarchies tend to benefit most from project inputs, and women and children the least ... hoped for effects on children could be more substantial and easier to sustain if children were kept systematically in focus in planning and monitoring the projects." *Wam, 1994.*

Ideally, indicators should be used in tandem with a proper monitoring system. Only then can the effect of a programme or intervention be ascertained. This would entail the establishment of a system that, in its most rudimentary form, would keep track of the number of children and of what is happening to them in the areas of health, nutrition, and psycho-social development.

As community averages can easily obscure or hide individual or sub-group differences, these numbers should take into account other pertinent features as well. These features could, for example, refer to socio-economic, cultural, ethnic, religious, or geographical backgrounds of the children and their families. Donor agencies could, in principle, set up such a monitor but this social platform for children would be far more strengthened if it were used and maintained by partners.

Strengthening the Role of Advocacy

What, in the end, should determine the mission of child-related agencies? Should it not be the situation of the ten-year old boy who is chained to a loom in Kathmandu; the twelve-year old girl in a Rio brothel; the eight-year old in Mogadishu who stepped on a mine and lost both feet; the baby in Chicago who is born with AIDS; the sexually-abused five-year old girl in Amsterdam?

The press and media is replete with incidents of children's involvement in crime, prostitution, child labour or about the corruption of childhood. These events in themselves provide enough food for reflection but there are other dimensions to the discussion as well. It is evident that police officers and other law enforcement agencies have either never heard of the CRC or did not know how to act in accordance with it. Local NGO claim that there is little awareness in their countries about the rights of children, and, even worse, no real concern for the plight of children outside their immediate kith and kin. They see the gross violations of the CRC, such as child prostitution, child labour, and under-resourcing of services for children at risk, as directly related to this lack of awareness. They are also open to attack and association with an international agency may provide them with protection.

The majority of local NGOs realize that they should position themselves as children's advocates and make education of the public one of their top priorities. So far, however, the efforts of such agencies have been piece-meal or mainly restricted to fundraising for their own activities. While scarcity of resources is an impeding factor, NGOs also concede that they are unfamiliar with advocacy work, that they do not have detailed information about children, nor good documents, and that they need outlets. On the more positive side, it should be noted that their close contact with children and their families forms a good foundation for effective advocacy.

Partnerships in the field should not become an end in themselves but should be used as a means for achieving the donor organization's larger goals i.e. benefiting vulnerable children. One way of doing this would be join forces with partners in advocating for this goal. It would be appropriate for donor agencies to play a facilitating role in this context by acting as a sounding board and a resource to its NGO partners. Many donor agencies are in the vanguard of the children's rights movement and the promotion of the CRC is a major plank of their international agenda. They have experience with engaging NGOs and governments in children's issues in various cultural settings. They produce useful documentation and are capable of adding and updating this material. In addition, local agencies accept them as a resource and as a serious partner in working out their own advocacy plans. This is an important starting point that can be built opon.

VI. The Cultural Context of Partnership

Partnerships between international donor agencies and local NGOs are by definition developed in an intercultural setting. Does culture influence partnership? Is there a distinct Asian, African or Latin American approach to partnership and does it differ from one country to the next in the same continent? These are legitimate questions. The importance of the cultural dimension is increasingly recognized by international development agencies as well as by the business community. For example, culture was mentioned as a major factor is explaining the East-Asian economic miracle.

Cultural differences need not prove to be a barrier and could even have positive outcomes for the nature of the partnership:

"Culture affects the partnership and the partners affect the [organizational] culture. There is a struggle within Nepali organizations, a clash of values, but the organizations emerge stronger from these clashes." (Staff, RB-Nepal, 1996)

Some argued that the essence of partnership would not vary from one culture to the next, what would vary would be ways of communicating and operating. It can be concluded that understanding the complex field of cultural diversity and learning intercultural communication skills are seen as essential skills in developing fruitful partnerships.

"The culture of communication will affect the nature of the partnership. How you approach and speak to people is important. You have to learn a code of conduct to do business. For Japan, Europeans learn a code of conduct because money is involved. In Cambodia they come to help so no need to learn." (Staff, RB-Cambodia).

This inevitably leads to two related questions: how can people recognize cultural differences? How can they cope with them in the context of development partnerships?

Learning Intercultural Communication[7]

> "It is because we are all different that we have so much to exchange with each other."
> *Trompenaars, 1996.*

Down to the remotest village, people can be situated differently along the countless dimensions that make up culture.[8] They may diverge in their appreciation of assertiveness versus modesty, of prestige versus skills, of collectivism versus individualism, or fate versus free will. There are several layers of culture and people can belong to different ones at the same. These are:

- the national level (determined by the country a person belongs to);
- the regional/linguistic/ethnic/religious level;
- the gender level;
- the generational level;
- the organizational/corporate level.

National cultures, defined broadly as collective ways of reacting, will vary as will the corporate cultures of various organizations operating within one country.[9] They may not always be in harmony with each other. For example, there may be a conflict between the religious values of the society and the corporate culture of the organization to which an individual belongs; or between modern gender values and traditional generational culture.

Is it possible to relate to this cultural diversity in a manner that is conducive to building effective development partnerships? The first step is that both parties should recognize and accept that they bring in their own cultural values. Donor countries are, by definition, richer and also culturally more individualist. Conversely, recipient countries are poorer and more collectivist. This is but one aspect of difference, there could be gaps at other levels as well.

Intercultural communication can be learnt. It requires an awareness and knowledge of one's own as well as the other's culture and skills in putting this information into practice. It also calls for "perspective taking", i.e., the wish, attitude and ability to look at a situation with the eyes of the other. These qualities are needed in international donor as well as in local agencies. It could be argued, however, that as initiators donors carry additional responsibilities. Failing the willingness to carry these, cross-cultural partnerships will not be feasible.

Perspective taking and other intercultural communication skills will provide glimpses of the "cultural and social capital"[10] owned by the other partner. These are the special ways of greeting, the relationship with house spirits, the songs, the street games, the preferred tastes in food, family relations, the texture of a dress, the manner food is been prepared, the corner shop, and all those things that make people unique and different from each other. Access to such information is indispensable in understanding how children grow up, how families function and

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7 *This section draws on the work of Hofstede (1994) and Trompenaars (1996).*

8 *In most Western languages culture refers to "civilization" or "intellectual development" and the products of such development such as education, art, and literature. This is considered to be a narrow definition of culture and social anthropologists would extend it to include group patterns of thinking, feeling or acting. Culture, in this broader use of the word, could also be defined as the way in which a group of people solves problems.*

9 *According to Hofstede (1994), a considerable part of the failure of development assistance projects could be ascribed to the inability to recognize differences between the organizational culture of the donor and the recipient country.*

10 *These terms have been introduced by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. Now they are often used to describe the things that make up the daily lives of people.*

how communities work. To have access to this kind of knowledge, international donors cannot do without local partners.

It is also important to recognize that intercultural development partnerships have an institutional as well as an interpersonal side. Difficulties in interpersonal interactions should not be used as an excuse for deficiencies in institutional structures relating to staff quality, training and organizational structures. The partnership will be productive only when there is a flow of externally validated know-how and values to the local agency and locally validated know-how and values to the donor.

Partnership is not a given entity, nor has it a momentum of its own. Partnerships have to be forged and can assume their unique character only by going through this process. The form, content and style of partnerships cannot be predicted or prescribed. At best it can be described as it evolves.

The strongest feature may turn out to have less to do with partnerships, but rather with the similarity of the backdrop against which they are played out. This backdrop is globalization and is already displaying its rawest dynamics. Its promises of prosperity, education, work, a more equitable society and a better environment are countered by fears of a rise in inequality, dwindling jobs and wages, "casino economics", environmental plunder and weak democracies.[11]

Donor agencies cannot fully control the partnerships that will emanate from this scenario but they can help to set the frame. They have powerful tools to bring to the table. These are, once again:

- financial resources;
- internationally-validated know-how and values, in particular, the rights of the child;
- recognition of cultural diversity;
- access to networks; and
- a good reputation.

To sum up, partnerships will be judged on the effectiveness with which they can use these tools in the interests of children.

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11 *See, for example, John Cavanagh (1997).*

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