PARTICIPATORY PLANNING FOR SUSTAINABILITY

BY

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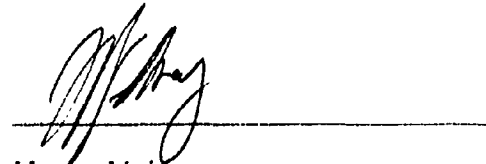Saint Mary's University

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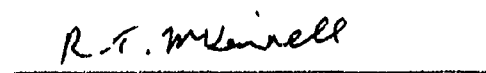© Natwadee Choosri, 1995

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PARTICIPATORY PLANNING FOR SUSTAINABILITY

ABSTRACT

The motive of this study lies on the recognition that project planning has become a vehicle for social change in many development interventions. Around the world, public sector managers, private consultants, and the staff of the non-governmental organizations are increasingly called upon to plan, manage, and ensure that those interventions are sustainable in the long-run. However, criticisms of the way international assistance agencies and developing countries plan and implement projects show that little attention is given to issue of project sustainability. This failure to incorporate sustainability as critical element in development interventions has raised much debate in development field. Despite controversy about the meaning and means of achieving sustainability, it has been widely accepted that early involvement of local participants in planning would produce better results.

This study depicts a framework of project sustainability for those involve in the development interventions to take into consideration while planning, monitoring, and implementing rural development projects and argues the need for a more "careful" planning that incorporates intended participants in the planning and implementing process as well as concerns for socio-cultural aspects of project environment. However, it is important to note that this framework has to be adaptive to specific context of each project environment and responsive to the differences in local needs and conditions.

March, 1995
Natwadee Choosri

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	=	Asian Development Bank
AID	=	Agency of International Development
CD	=	Community Development
CIDA	=	Canadian International Development Agency
EDI	=	Economic Development Institute of the World Bank
FAO	=	Food and Agricultural Organization of the U.N.
IDRC	=	International Development Research Centre
ILO	=	International Labour Organization
IP	=	Industrial Promotion
MP	=	Member of the Parliament
NEA	=	National Energy Authority
NGO	=	Non-governmental Organization
OED	=	Operations Evaluation Department of the World Bank
PMU	=	Project Management Unit
RID	=	Royal Irrigation Department
SDC	=	Swiss Directorate for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid
UNESCO	=	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNDP	=	The United Nations Development Programme
UNIFEM	=	The United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNRISD	=	The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
WB	=	World Bank
WHO	=	World Health Organization

EQUIVALENTS

1 rai	=	0.16 hectare
1 tang of unmilled paddy	=	10 kilograms
1 tang of milled rice	=	15 kilograms
1 baht	=	$0.05 Canadian

GLOSSARY

amphoe	=	district
kamnan	=	sub-district headman
tambon	=	sub-district

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER ONE

POSING THE PROBLEM

"If development were a one-time procedure like a vaccination with a lifetime effectiveness, there would be no reason to be concerned with sustainability. But development is not such a procedure. Simply infusions of outside resources rarely generate self-sustaining improvements in productivity and life quality" (Honadle & VanSant, 1985).

Why do some development projects result in long-run improvements, whereas others introduce only a temporary change in local activity? This question has been asked and numerous answers have been offered. For quite some time, those answers have shifted away from purely strategic explanations towards an awareness of the crucial role of the tactical aspects of organization and management in project success. In fact, some observers question whether common success measures such as per capita income, high standard road (transportation) system, or the increase in food production are adequate to capture the essence of development. As Honadle and VanSant (1985) have articulated "temporary infusions of project resources often generate employment and income benefits that do not last beyond outside funding; roads can deteriorate rapidly if they are not maintained; and quick production jumps may benefit powerful landowners rather than poor farmers." Critiques of the development record such as this one emphasize the need to go beyond inventories of artifacts to examine the need for changes in local capacities to make self-sustaining improvements. The importance of a project, thus, lies not with the goods and services it introduces into local settings so much as with its ability to foster local initiative in response to its presence.

Accordingly, the mid 1970s has witnessed a reconceptualization and modification of development interventions--moving away from "trickle-down" theories, exclusively emphasizing physical infrastructures (Cernea, 1991) to a more holistic approach where each project is planned with careful consideration of the relationships among social structures, environmental conditions, economic opportunities, local cultures and needs, etc. (Doering, 1994). It involves citizens at the grassroots level trying to join in and gain control over decision-making that affects their local environment and resources. Local participation has been seen as fundamental to sustainability in designing and delivering local solutions to local problems. Therefore, through encouraging social innovation and local initiative, local participation is itself a sustainability strategy.

RESEARCH PURPOSE

The central question addressed in this study is how *rural* development projects can be self-sustaining. Several factors have contributed to the increasing recognition of the need to address social aspects of development. Most important is the accumulating evidence about the effects local participation in project design and management have on the efficiency of implementation and project sustainability. As Michael Cernea (1991) has argued, development planners should "listen to the people" or "put people first" when dealing with development projects (i.e., to incorporate local beneficiaries in the decision process and to have them participate in their own efforts to help create desirable results according to their definition of needs). Many development researchers and practitioners (e.g. Bamberger 1988; Cernea 1991, 1992; Chambers 1983; Garcia-Zamor 1985; Korten 1980, 1984, 1986; Oakley 1991; Pongquan 1988; Rahman 1993; Uphoff 1974, 1985, 1989) agree that active local participation in project planning and implementation can improve project design through the use of local knowledge;

increase project acceptability; produce a more equitable distribution of benefits; promote local resource mobilization; and help ensure project sustainability.

Unfortunately, evidence also indicates that most development projects rarely have "sustainability" as their main objective due to the fact that they are merely concerned with specific and short-term results. In fact, little attention is paid to the involvement of local participants in planning, implementation, maintenance, evaluation, and socio-cultural analysis of development. Failure to see "project sustainability" as a main objective in project planning could lead to a failure to sustain target benefits (FAO, 1986; AID, 1988; Oakley, 1991, EDI, 1993).

The goals of this thesis are to elaborate the importance of "project sustainability" and to attempt to draw out the underlying framework of the concept for project administrators working in rural development, whether international, national or non-governmental. As such, the objectives of this research are to explore the concept of "project sustainability" (i.e., its meaning and principles) with a concentration on the importance of sound project planning and design and to challenge the idea that careful planning can help ensure project sustainability. Further concepts that need to be clarified are the following: What factors are involved in planning development projects for sustainability? What do we mean by planning sustainability? What kinds of benefits do we expect? Benefits for whom? How can we reach and assess or measure those benefits? If someone is to benefit; will someone lose? The research will present an analytical framework that can be applied to rural development efforts and place it in the context of the sustainability of development benefits.

THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The study suggests a conceptual framework that emphasizes the process of development and the importance of maintaining the benefits of that process. Broadly stated, development projects involve the deliberate use of resources to achieve self-sustaining improvements in human well-being and capabilities. Project planning is the designing process of transforming those resources to achieve that objective. Ideally, local needs for development should be the initiating factor for project activities. Recognizing local interests and needs defined by the local population is crucial for securing their participation on a long term basis (Cernea, 1992). Unfortunately, in reality, this driving force commonly comes from outside. In either case, the typical project pattern brings external inputs into a local situation to address welfare and capacity goals.

This thesis strongly argues for participatory planning of rural people to be involved in development intervention and to have some influence on those planned activities that will affect their lives. For development is a complex process, composed of several partial processes--social change, cultural mobilization, economic growth, technical modernization, and democratic participation--all of which are closely interlinked and interdependent (Brinkerhoff, 1991). The tasks are multifarious, enormous and can be solved only if the people themselves are mobilized, not by continuous injections of external aid or technical assistance alone (Cernea, 1991). Early involvement of project beneficiaries can thus help clarify the complexity of project environment and create a sense of commitment, partnership and contribution among those involved in the interventions.

Planning is seen as a means or mechanism which help guiding local participation to make its way towards sustaining achievement by mobilizing rural people and resources in the process of strengthening their capacity to manage, maintain, and have control over the long term improvement. In other words, if

development interventions are to achieve long-term improvement, they should result from combining the efforts of the rural people themselves and their locally available resources. As Cernea (1992) has suggested, mobilizing local resources and aspirations would stretch funding and benefit more people. This is considered the key aspect of sustainability.

The need for a participatory approach to planning has already been stressed on several occasions. However, it is not easy to plan in a participatory process. Participatory planning means that decisions are mutually made by planners and project participants (beneficiaries), through a process of dialogue in which all those involved express their needs and views. This almost inevitably requires more time and resources than a more conventional "top-down" approach, and requires planners or field workers with special skills and attitudes. Sometimes, agreement cannot be reached, then the plan stagnates. In many cases, planners know that they should adopt a participatory approach but fail to do so because of lack of time, resources, or aptitude or because of pressure from politicians, central government officials or donors who want an immediate decision and results. In such cases, the short-run benefits of saving time and resources are likely to be outweighed in the long run by the problems of trying to implement a project without support and understanding from the participants (Conyers, 1993).

For too long, it has been argued, conventional project models have not only controlled the means of material production, but also the means of knowledge production and, in particular, the power to determine what is valid or useful knowledge. Local knowledge has to a limited extent been recognized and development projects have rarely sought to incorporate people's knowledge into project design and planning (Oakley, 1991).

The people themselves should be seen as the main resource for obtaining information about local social conditions and ensuring that plans are relevant and

appropriate to local needs. It is, therefore, important to ensure that the various social factors which may affect the success and sustainability of the project are taken into consideration at the planning stage in order to avoid as many problems as possible.

For the purposes of this study, sustainability is understood as the continuation of benefit flows to the rural community during and/or after the project or the organization that stimulated those benefits. Looking at sustainability demonstrates a concern for what will happen after a project terminates.

For progress to be made in the practice of development, attention must be concentrated on the process of converting resources into development gains. To assess this conversion, the degree of sustainability must be considered in the following criteria: (1) the existing project-initiated goods and services that are still maintained for a certain period of time past the termination of donor resources, (2) the continuation of local action or local organization stimulated by the project, and (3) the generation of successor services and initiatives as a result of project-built local capacity. Ideally, this assessment would include a visit to a project site after its termination to determine the magnitude and nature of the project's legacy. It is important to keep in mind that the main goal is to create continuous benefit flows in favour of local beneficiaries who should become self-reliant after the termination of the funding or assistance. The mechanism to achieve these ends will be further explored.

This research study views any rural development project as an effort to help local/rural people and their communities in a process of healthy and desirable improvement. This process may be stimulated and facilitated by external forces; but not as an attempt to impose external standards. Instead, it should motivate people to take collective action to promote their interests on the basis of social knowledge they had generated and engaged collectively and harmoniously to

decide on their own improvement. In this context, the result of the project should not be inconsistent with rural beliefs, values, and determination.

However, it is also worth noting that the "rural poor" or the "rural people" do not necessarily constitute a homogenous economic and social unit. One must recognize the multidimensional, powerful, and in many instances, anti-participatory forces which dominate the lives of the rural people. Thus, the recognition of the class, caste, religious and geographical differences that exist in rural areas will be necessary.

The author thus sees development projects as "people-oriented" development, which require collaborative planning between the government sponsored agency carrying out the project and the beneficiaries who should be considered as co-workers or equal project partners/participants rather than mere recipients. The effective collaboration between government agency and the beneficiaries depends on reorienting central agency bureaucracies toward planning *with* rather than *for* local/rural communities. In essence, people-led development demands that rural people move from being objects to becoming subjects of development process (Freire, 1989). It is based on the principle that rural people's knowledge is worthy of consideration and that their knowledge is as appropriate a basis for development action as that knowledge brought in by professionals or outside experts.

The jump from the planning stage to obtaining sustained welfare improvements, however, is a great one. It has to pass through all the stages where rural communities have to be actively involved (whether in approval or rejection of the scheme). Finally, the resources are utilized to provide some type of goods and services. The most important thing is that if responses of the rural masses are positive; if they are satisfied with the results, it can be concluded that the project

has produced benefits and that if those benefits can be maintained by the rural communities, the result will be sustainable.

THESIS STATEMENT

The argument presented in this study is based on the notion that participatory planning is crucial for project sustainability. Since the purpose of designing rural development projects is to benefit the rural poor, the early involvement of local participants in the planning process will ensure the appropriateness of the project from the perspective of intended participants. As projects fit into the local socio-cultural contexts and finally gain participants' commitment, sustainability becomes more likely.

METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES OF DATA

The argument of this thesis is based on experiences and analyses of the rural development researchers and practitioners (e.g. Michael Bamberger 1988,1990,1993; Robert Chambers 1983; George Honadle 1984,1985; David Korten 1984,1987; Peter Oakley 1991; Anisur Rahman 1993; Michael Cernea 1991,1992; Derick Brinkerhoff 1990,1991; Norman Uphoff 1986,1988 etc.,) who have extensive experience in the issues of project management and community participation.

Since the hub of the research is concerned with participatory planning for project sustainability, an extensive literature review in this field was undertaken. Also, comprehensive literature in community/institutional capacity development, local participation in development planning and management, social analysis for rural area development planning, design and management of sustainable projects has been reviewed. In this process it was found that the stream of literature was mainly confined to self-reliance and capacity of the local community in

maintaining the flow of benefits and their well-being. The cluster of concepts was the generation of equity participation; the involvement of rural poor (the disadvantaged) in the decision making process fostered by effective decentralized management; the reconciliation between central top-down planning with local bottom-up planning; the devolution of power and social mobilization; the management of conflicts\clashes among interest groups; the cooperation in research and training among a number of institutions, organizations, and concerned individuals; the need to deal effectively with operational and strategic tasks of projects which includes specification of objectives, defined roles/ responsibilities, realistic plans and schedules; the need to analyze project environment (both internal and external) and identify the factors most important for success.

Most of the literature within the boundaries of this research argued that in order to achieve sustainability the project design must be technically feasible, economically viable, socially and culturally acceptable to the intended project participants. Other rural development projects that were reported as "success" were also linked to autonomous grassroots organizations; a well-defined framework for democratic participation; managerial skills of project administrators; adaptable and flexible programming/operating; commitment of project staff and participants; political support from stakeholders; institutional capacity of local participants to maintain the sustaining benefits; compatibility of project objectives with socioeconomic and cultural environment.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The research relies entirely on secondary data: books, journals, publications of both government and non-government resources; rural development academics; field researchers and practitioners.

This study uses both qualitative and quantitative data with the emphasis on the former to explain the relationship between project planning and sustainability. Both sets of data play an important role in portraying socio-economic changes and the initiative of the local community in helping planners evaluate or measure sustainability.

The analysis of data will concentrate on the way planning arranges conditions to allow sustainability to occur. In order to understand the arrangement of what has happened in the past and then seek out the requisite changes for bringing about the development benefits resulting from project planning, the principles of sustainability must be discussed.

To illustrate the discussion, a number of case studies of development projects in Thailand will be introduced. They are comprised of a completed project of pump irrigation, an on-going project of mat weaving, and the Northeast Rainfed Agricultural Development (NERAD) institutional building project. The lessons from the case studies will demonstrate what factors project planners should take into consideration when planning a development project so that it would result in sustainability. This will lead towards some concluding remarks and analysis of the required factors.

However, due to financial and time constraints, case studies could not be conducted as field research. Instead, they are selected from various publications to shed light on the issue.

The study is organized in five chapters. Chapter one poses the problem of the issue, the purpose of the study, its main thrust, thesis statement, methodology, source of data, and basic assumptions. Chapter two explores various definitions and maps the concept of project sustainability, its principles and assessment. This chapter also formulates two broad factors affecting project sustainability (internal and external) within and upon the control of project management. Chapter three

provides background information on the concept of local participation, examines a number of key issues related to its practice and how it relates to the sustainability issue. Chapter four introduces a number of case studies of development projects in Thailand to describe types, patterns, and aspects of beneficiaries participation and to highlight how related elements were contributed to project sustainability. The conclusions derived from this study are presented in chapter five.

CHAPTER TWO

THE IMPLICATIONS OF PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

"All action should start from what the peasants are, what they know, what they can do, what they live and what they want" (Six-S Association, West Africa).

This chapter examines the concept of project sustainability and its importance (by looking at different definitions raised by key donor agencies and development practitioners, the discussion of its components and other related terminology). The essence of its assessment will be also elaborated. The last section consists of the primary factors of sustainability with brief illustrations, all of which will assist project managers to identify the principal points to help guide their analyses of sustainability.

CONCEPT OF PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

Both governments and international development agencies are increasingly aware that development planning focuses mainly on project implementation and that much less attention is paid to issues of operation, monitoring, maintenance, and sustainability. While many countries have developed sophisticated technical or computer systems to monitor project implementation and to compare intended and actual physical and financial performance, few produce regular monitoring reports on project operation and maintenance and on whether projects are actually producing the intended results.

As resources become increasingly scarce, this lack of information on the performance of development projects is becoming of increasing concern, and the

demand for more systematic monitoring and evaluation of project sustainability is likely to grow (AID, 1988). At the same time, there is increasing criticism that international funding agencies and national governments are heavily concerned with ensuring their projects' economic viability, while little attention is paid to the impact of projects on broader developmental concerns. Only recently has the World Bank, in tandem with other international development agencies (i.e., UNDP, FAO, ILO, SDC--Swiss Directorate for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid) become concerned with the concept of project sustainability.

The Operations Evaluation Department (OED) of the World Bank published its first overview study of sustainability issues in 1986 and conducted a program of impact evaluations in which projects are revisited approximately five years after they have begun operating in order to assess whether they have been able to produce the intended benefits and how well the flow of these benefits is being sustained (OED, 1987). Project sustainability is also one of the major themes of the 1988 Annual Review of Project Performance Results (OED, 1990). World Bank Project Completion Reports now tend to include a section on project sustainability (W.B., 1988). Increasingly, efforts are being made to cooperate with non-governmental and local organizations with experience in these fields. Attention is also focusing on the issue of how to ensure that the poorest and weakest sectors of society fully participate in the benefits of development. Another overriding objective of development initiatives is to generate self-sustaining improvement in human capabilities and welfare (FAO, 1986).

Despite recent interest less information is available on the sustainability of projects than on how well they are implemented. Honadle and VanSant (1985) studied 21 U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) financed integrated rural development projects and found that sustainability was a major but neglected issue. They stated that "many of the projects were designed at a time

when it was assumed that careful planning and well-designed implementation strategies were the main keys to success. The full complexities of, for example, project operation, institutional capacity development, and local socio-cultural factors were not yet appreciated. They consequently did not receive enough attention from donor agencies and national governments."

Sahgal and Fadden (1994), upon auditing CIDA Bilateral Economic and Social Development Programs, noted that "At the project level, CIDA generally monitors its performance by assessing whether the inputs agreed to have been delivered. It does not measure development results. Consequently, knowledge about the quality of individual projects is not gathered and assessed."

Sahgal and Fadden further indicated that development requires (after the termination of aid funding) something of value be left behind that can be sustained and that enables countries to better manage their own development. This is fundamental to achieving the goal of "helping people help themselves," i.e. to become more self-reliant. However, in order to achieve that goal, it is important to ask what is to be left behind?, what is to be valued?, and by whose standard/judgement?

DEFINING SUSTAINABILITY

Project sustainability is defined by many economists and international development agencies as the capacity of a project to continue to deliver its intended benefits over a long period of time. The degree of sustainability of a project has been defined by Honadle and VanSant (1985) as

"the percentage of project-initiated goods and services that is still delivered and maintained five years past the termination of donor resources, the continuation of local action stimulated by the project, and the generation of successor services and initiatives as a result of project-built local capacity."

OED (1986) has defined it similarly:

"The term 'sustainability' describes the ability of a project to maintain an acceptable level of benefit flows through its economic life. While this may often be expressed in quantitative terms involving the internal economic or financial rates of return, benefits may also be qualitatively assessed. For projects in the productive sectors such as industry, the principal measure of performance is output, generally expressed in terms of capacity utilization, but Bank supported projects normally have other objectives such as subsectoral policies, technology transfer and institution building, which must be assessed qualitatively."

The usual definition of sustainability is based purely on economic evaluation. Project sustainability over time is defined as the maintenance of an acceptable net flow of benefits from the project's investments after its completion, i.e., after the project ceases to receive financial and technical support. This definition implies that the standard for determining sustainability is simply to assess whether the economic rate of return is equal to or greater than the opportunity cost of capital and tends to ignore participatory, institutional, cultural and the overall dimensions of project environment.

The full integration of social variables in the definition of sustainability has lately become an issue. The OED (1989) also emphasizes that sustainability is more difficult to define and measure in human resource development projects where qualitative as well as quantitative indicators must be taken into consideration. Therefore, sustainability is a relative concept that must be assessed in terms of a set of indicators that combine different quantitative and qualitative aspects of project performance.

Cernea (1987) criticizes the usual definition of sustainability and derives the following conclusion:

"A major contribution to sustainability came from the development of grassroots organizations, whereby project beneficiaries gradually assumed increasing responsibility for project activities during implementation and particularly following completion...where grassroots organizations thrived, there were certain distinct qualities inherent in their growth and in their relationships to project activities. These included some form of decision making input into project activities, a high degree of autonomy and self-reliance, a measure of beneficiary control over the management of the organization, and the continuing alignment of the project activities with the needs of the beneficiaries."

Basic principles of project sustainability raised by the Swiss Directorate for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid (SDC, 1991) are the following:

1) Sustainability is **quality**.

"A development project consists of a series of activities which are carried out with outside aid by an institution in the partner-country (implementing institution). With the project aim in mind, certain results of durable benefit to the target group should be achieved."

2) Sustainability aims at **long-term** project success.

"A development project is sustainable when the former 'implementing institution' and the target group carry on the effects achieved by the project in a *continuous and durable process and without outside help*. A development project must, therefore, enable the implementing institution and the target group to guarantee an appropriate level of benefit after the financial, organizational, and technical aid of an external donor is concluded. Whether sustainability is ultimately achieved can only be ascertained long after the end of a project. At present, long-term studies to this end do not exist."

SDC also raised a very crucial and interesting point of project sustainability as a double paradox.

1) *The time-effectivity paradox* portrays the difficulty in development projects that consists of the fact that activities are limited in time, whereas the benefits for the beneficiaries should be as lasting as possible.

2) *The dependence-autonomy paradox* concerns the external support during the project that encourages the growth of new dependencies which are

contradictory to self-reliance and therefore to sustainability. The institutional and personal interests of the development cooperation organizations and those of the project partners and beneficiaries can prove to be in conflict with each other: on the one hand, the supporting organization tries to lead the partner and beneficiary towards a greater self-reliance, and on the other hand, the external support induces a greater dependence.

In short, the principal idea contained in the aforementioned definitions is that any project (whether it is in the agricultural, urban, industrial, transport, or power sectors), is designed to produce a continuous flow of outputs, benefits or services throughout its intended lifetime.

However, the notion of 'intended lifetime' can be varied. For some kinds of projects (i.e. housing or road construction), the intended project lifetime may be as long as 20 years, or considerably shorter for others depending on factors involved. Instead, the success of a project should be focused on its ability to sustain the flow of benefits over time.

White (1987) argues that perhaps the word 'program' is more suitable for the concept of sustainability for it would better capture the sense of the collective objectives of development projects: "thinking in terms of program objectives can enhance sustainability by forcing attention on longer term actions and on their relevance to a country's development problems."

From the administrative point of view, sustainability means *building organizational capacity* to perform over an extended time period and to assure the continuation of useful and valued outcomes for local beneficiaries. Effective social institutions are believed to act like a thread that connects the agro-environmental, economic, and management perspectives on sustainability (Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith, 1990). This notion of "institutional building" is the latest argument for sustainability.

Since the term *institutions* are by definition *sustained patterns of social organization*, the concept of sustainable institutions needs further clarification. In a more practical sense, sustainable institutions mean collective entities that meet the following criteria: (1) they are able to recover some of their costs or even become self-financing; (2) they supply a continuing stream of benefits; and (3) they survive over time as identifiable units (Ibid, 1990). Whether these are sufficient or even necessary criteria of sustainability, however, remains unclear. The question of how long before an organization can be considered sustained is still unclear. Self-financing is also a questionable indicator of sustainability since developing countries are home to many organizations that are poorly endowed. Desirable development entities may not be sustainable in this sense. The question of long-term benefit flows is similarly unclear. Another critical issue is of who the beneficiaries of the organization are (whether local landowners or landless labourers). Elite-oriented collectivities are inevitably and more likely to gain benefits for themselves.

ASSESSMENT OF PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

The assessment suggests a distinction between whether a project has been sustained up to the time it is studied and whether it is likely to be sustainable beyond its intended lifetime (Honadle & VanSant, 1985).

Bamberger and Cheema (1990) suggest that the assessment must take into consideration the expected flow of benefits over the project life cycle. For certain kinds of projects (i.e., some irrigation projects), the maximum flow of benefits may be achieved soon after the project begins to operate, and may gradually decline thereafter, while in other kinds of projects (i.e., self-help housing projects) there may be a relatively long consolidation period before the maximum level of

benefits is achieved. The different project life cycles obviously affect the appropriate times at which to assess project sustainability.

And since an essential component of sustainability is the objective of creating development benefits during and after the life of the aid project, the determination of what is an appropriate level of benefits is problematic. AID (1988) suggests that an appropriate level of benefits will vary in kind and degree from project to project, whether in health and education or in road building and telecommunication. The flow of benefits, after an aid project, may not be as high as during the project's life, and for some infrastructure projects the flow of benefits may not begin until after an extended period of investment. What is clear is that the importance and the duration of the stream of benefits must be justified as reasonable when compared with the initial investment and the costs--financial, institutional, and costs to the beneficiaries (labour and resources)--of maintaining the benefits.

Bamberger and Cheema (1990) also raised an interesting point that many projects are intended to produce a number of different benefits, some of which may easily be quantified (industrial output, volume of water, number of houses constructed), but others are qualitative and are more difficult to measure. When a project has multiple outputs, it is misleading to use a single number or indicator to assess sustainability. The project may have successfully delivered some benefits, but may have failed to deliver others. For example, an irrigation project may produce a significant increase in the volume of water that may lead to sustained increases in the production of certain crops. However, the same project may not have produced the intended health improvements. The overall assessment of the sustainability of this project would be determined by the relative weights attached to crop production and health.

Since the emphasis of this study is on sustaining results, it is *the outcomes that have some attached values by local beneficiaries and local institutional ability to maintain them that are to be preserved*, not necessarily the project itself. To some extent, in terms of the institutional ability to maintain the results of some value to local participants, the state should move in the direction of deconcentrating its power/authority and allocating responsibilities and decision-making, for the local community to be self-sustaining. However, in relation to power, this case of minimal state intervention could be considered by the government as loss of power and control.

To conclude, the assessment of long-term sustainability requires an evaluation of the institutional capacity to maintain the delivery of services. This may include the evaluation of the quality and stability of staff, adequacy and stability of financial resources for recurrent expenditures, coordination with other government agencies, and linkages among local community organizations.

FACTORS AFFECTING PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

This section may be viewed as a reference of points that project managers should bear in mind during the selection, design, implementation, and evaluation of their development projects. The various considerations and factors presented, however, should neither be viewed as a set of fixed conditions to which projects should be rigidly held nor as conditions to be set forth in project agreements. Rather they should be viewed as reminders of the importance of being attentive to factors affecting the sustainability of the benefits of development projects and the circumstances in which those projects take place.

From a broad review of the literature (i.e., Honadle & VanSant, 1985; AID, 1988/1989; SDC, 1991; Brinkerhoff, 1991), came the following issues, problems,

and opportunities that concentrated on factors affecting project performance and impact within rural development context.

1) Internal Factors

Internal factors are those factors usually considered within the control of project management or the donor agency (e.g., choices about management strategies, organizational structures, financial and technological context, project design, monitoring, and evaluation approaches).

1.1 Management, Organization and Institutionalization

Managerial leadership is the key to developing sustainable projects. In many respects, project management encompasses responsibility for shaping policy and technological applications, setting goals, mobilizing support from coordinating organizations, and project participants, as well as directing internal administrative systems and developing a mutual trust. These management responsibilities are all essential to sustainable projects. When project objectives are well matched with an organization's administrative capability, especially when it is existing and expanding over time, sustainability is enhanced (AID, 1988).

Administrative systems for personnel training, maintenance, information, feedback, budgeting and financing are developed to keep pace with project dynamics. Usually, the organizations are created or strengthened, since when external resources end, local actors should be able to continue activities. The Asian Development Bank Regional Seminar in Rural Development (ADB, 1985) also agreed on the notion that institutional capacity building is a key element in project sustainability.

In many projects, however, relatively little emphasis is given to institution building and training. In fact, projects are often designed to avoid the need to build capacity. The creation of special project management units (PMUs), divorced from

the regular host government bureaucracies, for example, is a favoured implementation approach of large donor agencies. This approach is often justified on the grounds that existing institutions are too weak to implement planned activities to achieve their required objectives within the project life. While such units had proven highly effective in achieving implementation and production targets in the short term, AID experience suggested that they often had a short-term outlook and had a poor track record in achieving sustainability (ADB, 1984; Honadle & VanSant, 1985). Bamberger & Cheema also add that this occurs because they do not adequately deal with the maintenance aspects of physical infrastructure and thus negatively affect sustainability of projects.

All in all, the appropriate organizational choice depends on such factors as the type of project, its scale and complexity, and its goals and priorities. Also, the choice of organization should be influenced by an assessment of relevant local conditions, such as the institutional capacities of existing public and private organizations and the regulatory and policy environment (AID, 1989).

Capabilities of implementing agencies need to be assessed on the basis of their administrative capacities, financial viability, their potential to facilitate the distribution of project benefits, their knowledge of local conditions, and their close relationships with (and understanding) of participants' interests. In sum, rigorous social analysis needs to be undertaken to incorporate the needs of the community into project design, the extent of community organization, social indicators to be included in project monitoring and evaluation system (Bamberger, 1988).

Some literature agrees upon the attention towards decentralizing planning and management from central government ministries through field administration (e.g., the creation of local administrative units and delegation of regional, sectoral or functional purposes).

Decentralized decision-making affects project sustainability in several ways. First, where decentralized units have the financial autonomy, they are able to allocate resources for continuing the activities initiated through the project. In contrast, where a project is planned, monitored, and evaluated by a central agency, local organizations are less likely to enthusiastically pursue project goals after the withdrawal of the central agency.

Second, where a project is identified and olanned with active participation of local organizations, it is more likely to reflect the priority needs of the area and thus is more likely to be sustained. One of the reasons why externally funded projects are, in some cases, not sustained is that such projects might not reflect the immediate needs of the community.

Third, where local and regional level organizations lack an adequate planning and management capacity, the project is unlikely to be sustained. Effective planning and management capacity at the regional and local levels result from the opportunities provided to these units through decentralization.

1.2 Financial Factors

Projects often fail to induce sustainable processes as a result of financial factors. High-cost subsidized goods and services are used without generating or realizing the ability to cover the cost of maintaining and replacing them. Thus, the possibility that these goods and services will continue to be provided after outside funding ends is reduced and eliminated (Honadle & VanSant, 1985).

Project planners sometimes design projects as though the availability of donor funds and host country resources were unlimited. And this tendency is reinforced by pressure on donors to use foreign assistance and capital-intensive solutions. Often there is a problem of preference for more sophisticated capital equipment than is needed (Ibid., 1985).

Project sustainability is difficult to accomplish in situations where a country is too dependent on foreign resources for development projects and where local resource mobilization capacity is too weak. In such situations, the emphasis should be put on the ability of the recipient government to mobilize resources through instruments such as taxes and user charges at all levels (national, regional, and local) (Bamberger & Cheema, 1990).

It is important to emphasize that induced development depends ultimately on the overall quality of the project, rather than on the absolute amount of its financial inflows. Massive financial resources may trigger a short-term development flow but without institutional and social entity built in at the same time, the long-term positive effects of financially induced changes will remain at risk.

Another crucial issue concerns the allocation of funds for maintenance of services and facilities. This needs to be done at the stage of project design to ensure the financial autonomy and resource base in the long run (Ibid., 1990).

1.3 Technological Factors

Project technologies may vary from complex, large-scale systems to more modest, locally based technologies. An appropriate choice of technology depends on such issues as beneficiary perspectives on its value and reliability and their consequent willingness to support operations and maintenance costs; the ultimate profitability of the system; its dependence on external support for essential fuels, repairs, and spare parts; and its long-term compatibility with the natural ecosystem and resource base (Honadle & VanSant, 1985; AID, 1989).

Choice of an inappropriate technology is often cited as a major cause of failure in development projects. Advanced technology and expensive hardware that exceed an institution's financial or technical capacity, for example, are likely to be wasteful, ineffective, and ultimately unused. An appropriate technology that

is precisely focused on the needs of the task at hand is more likely to enable local staff to master it quickly. Also, the costs of providing and maintaining the technology must not be excessive relative to benefits generated. Transfer of technology to a local situation is made easier if the technology is intimately connected to existing knowledge, compatible with local culture/values, functional in a dispersed system, widely affordable, and employment generating. It is not always necessary that the technology being transferred is the most advanced available (Korten & Klauss, 1984; IDRC-EMDI-ITB, 1987).

1.4 Project Design Approaches

Project design approaches may range from highly structured blueprints to very flexible process designs. Factors influencing the appropriate degree of flexibility or specificity for a particular project include the amount of change and unpredictability in the project environment, the innovation of the project, and the management and institutional capacities of the implementing agency. For example, more flexible designs appear more appropriate in situations in which little is known about the development problems or where considerable change is anticipated in the project environment (AID, 1989).

Honadle (1984) strongly believes in the design approach and project implementation processes that support local learning capacities and result in enhanced local capacities and initiatives. He suggests that project design should be a process rather than the production of a document. The process approach to design is a flexible, adaptive, learning-oriented approach in contrast to a rigid, blueprint conventional approach. It begins with the notion that project activities are redesigned in accordance with what is learned. Projects are modified and adapted as knowledge is gained about their specific environments.

Thus, the process model helps reflect local realities and address local constraints, as identified and refined in a dialogue with the potential participants

and implementing agencies. Ideas are shaped into project components with the participation of local beneficiaries and consensus is sought at different decision-making levels. It also ensures that the proposed intervention will be technically feasible, economically viable, and socially and culturally acceptable to the intended participants (Garcia-Zamor, 1985; FAO, 1986; Oakley, 1991; Cernea, 1992).

2) External Factors

Despite careful planning and expert management, rural development projects may produce many effects that are neither planned nor foreseen. Unanticipated effects are usually perceived as negative, although positive side effects may also occur. In a potable water project, for example, health benefits can accrue from an increased volume of water or they can result from its improved quality. But if the net benefits are not as great as expected, the reason may stem from burdens resulting from contamination or contagious disease. The availability of the water may even produce environmental degradation, resulting in a situation worse than that which existed before the project began (i.e., the reduction of soil fertility, the destruction of forest, the reallocation of people living in the area as a result of the intrusion of a dam) (Honadle & VanSant, 1988).

Most importantly, development projects operate within the context of existing social, political, economic, and cultural circumstances that are beyond their control and influence. Political instability or sovereign risk, or even frequent turnovers in political leadership, can undermine the 'ong-term growth needed to achieve sustainability. Economic instability also can be disruptive to project sustainability through the negative impacts of high inflation on budgets, foreign exchange shortages on capital equipment and spare parts. Natural disasters can

result in losses or diversions of critical resources and damage the economic base for development projects.

These external factors, which are beyond the direct control of project management, also include government commitment and its policy environment, the role of donors, stakeholders, local participation, socio-cultural setting, environment and ecological factors recognized by many to be critical to project sustainability.

2.1 Government Policies

All development projects exist within national socio-political and economic settings that affect their performance and potential. In fact, the chances for success are low for even a carefully designed and well-implemented project when it exists in an unfavourable political and economic environment (Honadle & VanSant, 1985).

Developing countries have historically suffered from serious economic problems such as shortages of domestic savings and hard currency, as well as internal demand and supply imbalances. These difficulties have led, in turn, to slow growth, unemployment, and high rates of inflation. In many cases, governments chose to address these problems in ways that hampered the impact of projects. This was the case, for example, with the failure of a project to construct a rice mill in Papua New Guinea. When the government lowered the official price of rice, the farmers in the region no longer found it profitable to market their outputs. Consequently, they switched from rice to other crops. As a result, the newly constructed government rice mill eventually went bankrupt (Ibid., 1985).

Country (government) or local commitment to a project is one of the most commonly identified factors affecting sustainability. This commitment takes into account the agreement on objectives; the strong support within the responsible organizations and from various political, bureaucratic, private, and local

community groups; and the willingness to provide financial and personnel resources. Since commitment may vary over time and be affected by other external factors and competing interests, it might be desirable that this factor to be assessed on a continuing basis.

It is clearly seen that government commitment and policies that support project objectives are often very important to the sustainability of development projects. Even the results of a 'good' project will possibly not be sustainable if the policy environment is hostile. If conflicts over policy and priority are likely to preclude sustainability, it is doubtful that such projects would be successful.

2.2 Role of Donors

The role of donors is crucial in project sustainability. This is because in many developing countries significant numbers of new development projects are being financed by donor agencies. In some cases, donors have a narrow, short-term perspective. Unrealistic donor demands on counterparts and lack of coordinated reporting guidelines could hamper performance of projects. Bamberger and Cheema (1990) point to several aspects of foreign-assisted projects that are counterproductive to project sustainability.

First, donors have often in the past favoured the creation of new institutional structures and special project implementation and management units that have fragmented the government machinery at the regional and local levels. As mentioned earlier, the main result of creating special units is to limit the role of local governments in the development process.

Second, some donors might be reluctant to make large-scale investments in institutional development. This is due to the fact that the institutional changes take a long time to effect socio-economic development and are often more politically difficult to plan and implement. In the final analysis, both the recipient

government and donor agencies might be more interested in short-term gains which could have negative implications for project sustainability.

Third, donors have tended to give too much attention in project selection to the tool of economic analysis without giving due consideration to administrative and sociological factors.

Finally, in the past the donors often did not establish a direct linkage between the construction of services and facilities and their maintenance. The design of projects usually did not specify the arrangements for their sustainability. It is only recently that the maintenance and sustainability of projects have begun to be emphasized.

The current debate regarding "external agencies" which, in a broad sense, mean government and non-government organizations, revolves around who is the better agency to promote and maintain sustainability. There is an argument that often government projects tend to be big, market-oriented, and are far more centralized while NGO projects are smaller, more flexible in the use of resources and more able to be innovative in response to local conditions. While it is true that a great number of NGO projects see the involvement of beneficiaries as an important process to sustainability, not all NGOs support beneficiaries participation and there are many governments that are genuinely seeking to promote more widespread beneficiaries participation in the benefits of development. Therefore, there is no universal truth in this situation.

2.3 Support of Key Stakeholders

The achievement of project sustainability also depends to a large extent in part on the support of key stakeholders such as key figures in the central and local governments, trade unions, business associations, religious organizations, local community groups, and international agencies. Shifting political alignments and the transfer of key officials from one agency to another represent variable forces of

influences which might affect or change a project over time. A project that is strongly supported by one administration may become more vulnerable after a change of government (Bamberger & Cheema, 1990). It is also important to keep in mind that contradiction among key stakeholders often exists.

In addition to project beneficiaries, stakeholders also include project planners, implementors at multiple levels and local leaders. Project sustainability is determined by the continued cooperation of all principal stakeholders and also among large numbers of organizations with different resources, skills, objectives and procedures through communication systems and the exchange of information.

The planning process should emphasize active involvement of the stakeholders at all levels. Therefore, adequate training for stakeholders is also an integral element of sustainability especially among three groups of managers: (1) concerned government leaders and civil servants from the national government, local governments, program management, and field offices; (2) leadership and staff of non-governmental organizations and nonprofit groups; and (3) formal and informal community leaders. These groups have different roles and functions and the content and the methodology of their training would therefore be different. The training of government officials should be aimed at reorienting them to support local communities and enhance their human relations skills to work effectively with the poor communities. The managers from the other two groups need to be trained in processes of planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating upgrading projects and other self-help approaches.

2.4 Local Participation

For many projects in which the benefits are directly associated with local populations, participation becomes critical to sustainability. Local participation in planning, implementation and in the key decisions affecting beneficiary welfare is a vital part of project activity. It is an integral part of the continuing flow of

benefits after termination of a donor's assistance. Thus, strategies for achieving sustainability must be well grounded in the context of local decision making, and they must be based on an awareness of local constraints (Korten & Klauss, 1984; Bryant & White, 1984; Honadle & VanSant, 1985; A.I.D, 1988; Pongquan, 1988; Bamberger, 1988; SDC, 1991).

Local participation in project management decisions may vary from actively participating in project decision-making to simply responding to project efforts to gather beneficiary information and perspectives. The type of local participation necessary and appropriate for a particular project depends on such factors as the type of project, the presence or absence of viable local organizations, and cultural and political attitudes toward participatory activities. The concept of community participation will be further discussed in chapter three.

2.5 Socio-cultural Factors

Development plans are often said to fail precisely because of social and cultural factors--usually those pertaining to people at the "receiving end" of the plans. The participatory development field study in Thailand reported by Turton shows that these socio-cultural and political factors are integral (sometimes dominant) aspects of every stage of the development process and thus deserved to be put as a high priority.

According to Turton (1987), more effort and time should be spent by all parties concerned on describing, analysing and diagnosing specific realities, whether social, political, cultural or economic, before devising and putting into practice the next round of plans and projects.

AID (1988) stressed that the integration of a project with the social and cultural setting of its participants and its operating circumstances becomes especially important if the activity is not to be rejected after assistance ends.

Projects that attempt to function in ways that are inconsistent with local traditions or assume changes in behaviour patterns have a high risk of failure.

AID further clarified that the involvement of local communities and institutions can promote sustainability by building a base of support and fostering a sense of local ownership of the project. Working through local communities makes it easier to take advantage of traditional organizations and indigenous practitioners and benefit from their knowledge of what may or may not work in their society.

A lack of attention to women, moreover, often parallels a lack of attention to target populations in general in design and evaluation. Projects that hope to have a lasting impact and become integrated into the social fabric of a community must explicitly address women as principal actors. Gender-specific data that help to define the differences between the roles, responsibilities, and opportunities of women and those of men can assist managers to strengthen the sustainability of project benefits (AID, 1988; Bamberger, 1988; SDC, 1991).

Further information in terms of principles of sustainability, indicators of project sustainability, and factors in the sustainability of social services are summarized in Appendix I, II, III.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

It has become clear that sustainability is not automatically a result of development projects. It must receive serious attention from project inception through termination. Among the considerations that should guide planning and management attention are the following (Honadle & VanSant,1985):

* *What benefits are to be sustained?* A careful distinction should be made between temporary, project-related outputs and intended long-term benefit flows.

* *What resources will be required to fund long-term benefit flows?* Will the project be self-supporting or will a permaner. subsidy be required? It is important to distinguish capital costs from recurrent costs in making this analysis. If a local organization is used, its access to a resource base and its control of that base are key elements to be examined.

* *If external resources will be required, what will be their source?* A secure and predictable source of long-term subsidy should be identified before the subsidized activity begins.

* *Does the administrative capacity exist or is it being developed to maintain essential systems for the continuation of benefits?* Organizational capacity, leadership, history, and resource control are key issues.

* *Are permanent aspects of service delivery being institutionalized in government or private sector structures?* If so, are new administrative resources required or are there already existing staff?

* *How much of the requirement for both financial and administrative inputs can be undertaken locally?* Local inputs reduce dependency, increase predictability, and serve the interests of local control.

* *Is each project component in an organization appropriate for the tasks to be performed?* The concentration of authority when needed, the sharing of authority when needed, the requirement for a long or brief presence, incentives for performance, the requirements of individual tasks and the interrelationships among tasks, and a focus on local action must all be considered.

* *What measures will be taken to link staff action to local action and focus on post project inheritance?* The structuring of staff incentives, technical assistance, evaluations, leadership style and attention, recruitment, satellite organizations. policy settings, private-public sector linkages and various contextual factors will all need attention during the design process. Particular attention to pre-

existing patterns of informal interactions is called for. Consideration of how the project can build on positive patterns and foster local initiative can make the difference between failure and success.

It is important to note that sustainability of development projects cannot be established unless the examination of each of these factors has been achieved. However, one might have to make choices or trade-offs between these factors since their relationship can be complementary or in conflict. Perhaps it is important to ask who will gain and who will lose as a result of these trade-offs. Given a favourable political and economic setting, management of community participation, financial factors and government policies that express long-term commitment to a project stand out as particularly significant (Bamberger & Cheema, 1990; AID, 1988; Bamberger, 1988; Korten, 1984).

The implications of sustainability are vital as a reference on points that project managers, field staffs, donor agencies should bear in mind during the selection, design, implementation, and evaluation of the development projects. In sum, there are rarely simple or universally applicable approaches that are equally appropriate in all contexts. Rarely are there simple answers or single "right" approaches that apply to all project environments. Rather, there is often a whole array of possible approaches to choose from, with the appropriateness of the approach dependent on the local context and the project's goals and emphases. It is a combination of approaches that best suits the circumstances.

CHAPTER THREE

PARTICIPATION IN PROJECT PLANNING

"Everybody speaks of people's participation. A bureaucrat going into a rural area in his brand new imported jeep, and having a few words with the village people, comes back to the office and speaks jubilantly of people's participation in planning" (A.T. Ariyatne).

One of the major objectives of rural development is to meet basic needs of rural people in such a manner that these people will continue that process without any external help. Within this view of development, participation enhances the opportunity for the population to influence decision-making in favour of local needs and aspirations. One significant factor cited by EDI as well as the AID Regional Seminar on rural development is the accumulating evidence about the effects that local participation in project design and management have on the efficiency of implementation, cost recovery, and project sustainability (Garcia-Zamor 1985, Bamberger 1988, Binnendijk 1989, Oakley 1991).

Participatory planning equips participants with the ability to plan, execute, and manage a project and to work towards achieving their needs. In this case, participants are able to learn new skills/concepts about life and how to make a living out of one's own resources.

In the context of the present situation every agency involved in development recommends participation as an effective approach for rural development. The UNESCO, for example, has recommended that regional governments adopt participation as a basic policy measure in their national development strategy and encourage the active participation of all individuals through governmental and non-governmental organizations (Ibid, 1988).

This chapter highlights the beliefs and experiences shared by rural development contributors that people should come first in all stages of development projects. "Putting people first" in development interventions means eliciting the need for change that they perceive; identifying culturally compatible goals and strategies for change; developing appropriate, workable and efficient designs for innovation; using rather than opposing existing groups and organizations; and gathering detailed information so that the socio-economic impact can be accurately assessed. Basically, the chapter is devoted to factors and elements of participation that support sustainability.

AN ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT

The postindustrial era has recognized new potential to development that focuses on the enhancement of human growth, well-being, equity, and sustainability. It has favoured self-organizing systems that highlight the role of the individual in the decision process and call for the application of human values in decision-making. Its knowledge-building processes have been based on social learning concepts and methods, which require joining in a collaborative planning process with "social knowledge expert" or the beneficiaries for effective social change. Achieving the purposes of people-centred development implies a substantial decentralization of decision-making processes (Korten & Klauss, 1984; Chopra, 1990; Oakley, 1991).

Since the late 60s there has been considerable support for the view that development in the Third World has for too long benefited the few and excluded the many. The means by which this trend would be reversed is a process of participation and the awareness of power relationships relating to the overall social, political, economic realities in a specific country.

The emergence of people-centred development perspectives, as a result of the recognition of the failure the "trickle-down" effect predicted by neo-classical growth theorists (e.g, Rostow, Hirschman, W.A. Lewis), gradually gained popularity beginning in the mid 70s. Its central concept is quite simple. It is an approach to development that looks to the initiative of people as the primary development resource as well as to their material and spiritual well-being. The focus is on social learning and the empowerment of people to control their own lives and resources (Korten & Klauss, 1984; Lisk, 1985).

In the past decade the literature on development has highlighted this increasing support for the concept of participation. Several of the major international agencies such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) have either launched substantial research programmes on participation or have sought to incorporate participation in their development practice. Others, particularly the non-governmental organizations (NGOs), have strengthened existing commitments. Academic and research institutions have similarly explored the concept of participation with the result that there is currently a large amount of literature on different dimensions of participation in development (Oakley, 1991).

DIFFERENT SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT ON PARTICIPATION

Three schools of thought, which came to the same conclusion in arguing that "participation" is a critical element in tackling the problems of the poor in the Third World, can be summarized as follows:

* The first school sees "participation" as the key to the inclusion of human resources in development efforts; due to the fact that previously, development

planners had overlooked the contributions that people could give and the skills that they could bring to development projects.

* The second school sees "participation" in a very different light. It sees participation as an effort to tackle the structural causes of people's poverty rather than as yet another input into a development project. Participation is the process whereby people seek to have some influence and to gain access to resources which would help them sustain and improve their living standards.

* The third school sees "participation" as social awareness, popular education, and conscientization. The objective is to make local people aware of their conditions and problems, and of any possibility of improving their living standard. This notion of empowering local participants is believed to equip them with analytical, action-oriented skills necessary for them to become actively involved.

DEFINING PARTICIPATION

The term "participation" has been defined and interpreted in different ways by various researchers, planners, and administrators. Among many terms which are used more or less synonymous with "participation" are "people's participation", "popular participation," "community participation," "local participation," etc. In most of the literature on development, in general, the term "participation" is understood as a process, not as a static phenomenon (Korten & Klauss, 1984).

> "Because the development process is essentially a learning process, one person cannot develop another. One cannot learn for another, but one can help another learn. Therefore, planning one's development cannot be done effectively by others; it must be done by oneself. A government cannot develop a country; it can only help its country develop itself. Thus, effective development planning must be **participatory**."

Nyerere (1968) defined it similarly:

"Rural development is the participation of people in a mutual learning experience involving themselves, their local resources, external change agents and outside resources. People cannot be developed, they can only develop themselves by participation in decision and co-operative activities which affect their well-being."

Honadle (1985) stressed that local participation is an essential part of project sustainability precisely because the development project is a *process* and not simply an *end* condition. The participation process is more radical than the conventional project approach. It involves changes in the attitudes and actions of project participants in the process itself. Through participation in their own development, people have the opportunity to strengthen their capabilities and build their own channels for expression and accountability. As he put it

"In an ideal world, local participation would be the beginning of a development effort rather than a response to an outside initiative. But even in an imperfect world, local participation is the key to sustainability."

CONCEPT OF PARTICIPATION

Before moving to a broad concept of participation, it is important to distinguish the three kinds of participation proposed by Bamberger (1988):

* beneficiary involvement in the planning and implementation of externally initiated projects, or **local participation**;

* external help to strengthen or create local organizations, but without reference to a particular project, or **local organizational development**;

* spontaneous activities of local organizations that have not resulted from outside assistance, or **indigenous local participation.**

The difference is that the first two are externally promoted participatory approaches used by governments, donors, or NGOs, while the third is the kind of social organization that has evolved independent of outside interventions.

Bamberger noted further that the main objective of local participation is to make local people aware of their conditions and problems, and of any possibility of improving their living standard. The focus would be on making those "underprivileged," "disadvantaged," or "low income groups" able to help themselves. Lack of viable organizations to represent the interests of the poor makes direct participation of these people a necessity. Experience has also shown that the representation of these people by local political elites does not serve their interest effectively. Therefore, the formation of the organization based on the interests of these underprivileged is the foremost requirement. For this purpose, local participation in development projects is necessary to create the awareness of their common interests.

Generally, participation can be interpreted through three broad concepts (Oakley, 1991):

* **Participation as contribution**: the dominant interpretation of participation in development projects in the Third World sees participation as implying voluntary or other forms of contributions by rural people to predetermined programmes and projects. These stress rural peoples' contribution as implicit in the participation and fundamental to success.

* **Participation as organization**: It is controversial across the range of development literature and practice whether organization is a fundamental instrument of participation. The distinction lies between the origin of the organizational form which will serve as the vehicle for participation; either such organizations are externally conceived and introduced or they emerge and take structure themselves as a result of the process of participation.

* **Participation as empowerment**: In the past decade the notion of participation as an exercise of empowering rural people has gained wider support. However, the term is difficult to define and understand. Some see empowering as the development of skills and abilities to enable rural people to have a say in or negotiate with existing development delivery systems. Others see it as more fundamental and essentially concerned with enabling rural people to decide upon and to take actions which they believe are essential to their development.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND COSTS

Why has local participation become increasingly popular during the past two decades? This is due to a consensus among development researchers and practitioners of the benefits participation contributes to development (Bailey, 1991; Korten, 1980; Kottack, 1985, Uphoff, 1985; Salmen, 1987).

* Involvement of the local community at an early stage is likely to improve project design by ensuring that full advantage is taken of local technology and knowledge of climatological and topographical conditions, and ensuring that the project is fully adapted to the social organization of production. EDI cited many examples of the drastic consequences of not consulting beneficiaries (i.e., expected labour was not available during religious or community festivals, and certain house designs or sanitary systems were not acceptable to particular groups).

* Local Community involvement can ensure a project's social acceptability and can increase the likelihood of local participation in the project. Moser (1993) gave examples of squatter upgrading projects in politically volatile areas where it would have been impossible for the project to have been implemented without the systematic efforts to involve major community groups through consultation and planning meetings from the very beginning of the project. Where this social

acceptance is not achieved, projects may never begin, participation levels may be much lower than expected, or services may not be used.

* Local participation may help ensure the more equitable distribution of benefits and may ensure that politically or economically weak groups have access to the project services and benefits. On the other hand, the project may be co-opted by the powerful political elites of the community for their own profit (Uphoff, 1985). In this case, the result would be that certain groups have much less access than they would have had.

* Resource mobilization is much easier when participants are committed to a project and actively involved in its design and implementation. Community resources may be provided in the form of labour, materials, or money. Extensive evidence from irrigation and housing projects indicates that if users are not involved in project design, they are very unlikely to agree to pay user charges (Bamberger, 1988). The willingness of a community to provide labour or other resources is also closely associated with their feeling of involvement in the project.

According to Oakley (1991), what was essential in all rural development projects was an effective feedback mechanism to rapidly inform project managers about the participants' attitudes and perceptions concerning the value and usefulness of the project's services and its problems. Accordingly, participation gives more accurate and representative information about the needs, priorities and capabilities of local people; and more reliable feedback on the impact of project initiatives and programmes.

It would be wise to note that the practice of participation has both positive and negative sides depending on the factors influencing it. The political environment within a particular country, for example, can in some circumstances be supportive of this process; however, in different circumstances, it can be a fundamental obstacle. Especially, in countries where the prevailing ideology does

not encourage openness or citizens' comments but prefers to maintain the direction and decision-making of the state affairs in strict control of its own, the prevailing political environment will not be conducive to participation. Furthermore, a centralized political system that puts less emphasis upon local mechanisms for administration and decision-making can immensely reduce the potential of participation. It can be seen, thus, that the nature of the political environment within a particular state can have a strong influence on the potential for meaningful local-level participation.

Similarly, the planning of development programmes and projects is often centralized and planning procedures often discourage local involvement (Conyers, 1993). Government planners are invariably a professional group who do not concede their practice to the local level. Most rural development planning takes place in ministries in urban areas and there is rarely any desire to pass these responsibilities to the local level. Planning information and data, moreover, are often complex in nature and rarely presented or interpreted in a way intelligible to most rural people. Finally, the cost, both in terms of finance and time, of encouraging effective local participation in planning are substantial and few governments are prepared to undertake such a commitment (Oakley, 1991).

It is also worth noting that in many Third World countries rural people for generations have been dominated by and dependent upon local elite groups. In practice this means that the rural poor have become accustomed to leaving decisions and initiatives to their leaders. The lack of leadership and organizational skills, and consequent inexperience in running projects or organizations, leaves most rural people incapable of responding to the demands of participation. Moreover, the rural poor do not necessarily constitute a homogenous economic and social unit. Efforts to encourage participation which are directed at the "rural people," the "rural poor," or "farmers," as if these constituted distinct and

homogenous categories, fail to recognize the class, caste, religious and geographical differences that can exist in rural areas. Rural people may share their poverty, but there may be many other factors which divide them. Aggregating the rural people as one enormous mass is inadequate in seeking to promote participation. In this respect, it is important to be aware of the economic and social differentiation that characterizes the rural areas of many Third World countries and that if misunderstood or inadequately managed, could severely frustrate efforts to promote participation (Ibid, 1991).

Some authors who do not favour any participatory approaches to development have given various reasons. These include deficient representatives of target groups; dominance of articulate groups consisting of the well educated, well-off and (higher social and economic status) powerful local elites who generally pursue their own interests.

Despite such expressions of caution and reservation, many authors maintain that local participation is a sufficient condition for successful development planning, project implementation, operation and maintenance (Jedlicka, 1977; Oakley, 1991; Cernea, 1991/1992). Frequently local participation has been shown to be an important element in ensuring sustainability (Honadle & VanSant, 1985; Cheema, 1985; Bamberger, 1988).

LINKING PARTICIPATION TO PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

The following guidelines for promoting participation were proposed by the Workshop participants in the EDI report, some of which are also found to be consistent with the experiences shared by Uphoff (1986) and Honadle & VanSant (1985) on the role beneficiary participation contributes in the design of sustainable projects. Some of the recommendations are:

* Projects should be designed flexibly to accommodate existing local organizations and changes in organization and objectives as projects evolve. Feedback is required to access the effectiveness of different kinds of organization (both formal and informal; small and large; existing locally and externally formed);

* Projects should make maximum use of indigenous technologies and materials;

* Catalysts (animators, promoters) should be used to help strengthen local organization and participation;

* Bureaucratic reorientation (Garcia-Zamor, 1985) is needed so that bureaucrats will be able to work with local groups rather than seeing them as a threat;

* Participatory approaches are intimately linked to decentralized development, thus achievement of significant beneficiary involvement depends on a willingness to delegate authority/power to local government (Lisk, 1985);

* Implementation procedures must be designed to ensure participation of particular sectors of the community such as women and other groups that are economically or politically weak and marginalized (Moser, 1993);

* Financial, organizational, and policy constraints should be identified and minimized.

It is also important to keep in mind that types of effective participation differ with particular development initiatives. The response needed for increasing agricultural productivity is distinct from that desired to implement a family planning program. Whether economic or social development initiatives, some changes in behaviour on the part of rural people will be required for success. In addition, development initiatives will not be sustained unless participants make

some form of commitment to support those initiatives (Honadle, 1985; Cernea, 1991/1992; Bamberger & Aziz, 1993).

As Honadle & VanSant put it; "to encourage local participation, some form of incentives have to be provided to bring local people into a project as involved stakeholders and to work as "co-owners." Furthermore, local maintenance of project outputs is substantially improved when such outputs are viewed by local people as a result of their own efforts (Lisk, 1985).

The emphasis is on the use of *existing local organizations* as they can enhance participation by providing beneficiaries a mechanism that can support sustainability by becoming a learning entity that can continue appropriate project functions after the project itself has left the scene. Often they are valuable channels of information about needs for specific services and, because they may be primary users of these services, local organizations have an important role in planning and implementing service delivery. Another key role of local organizations is a means to mobilize local resources. A sensitive awareness of local conditions, practices and needs, combined with knowledge of the project environment is essential for development planning and management (Honadle, 1985; Brinkerhoff, 1991).

Moser (1993) shared the view that special attention should also be paid to the participation of women. This is because "women, as much as men, have the right and duty to participate in the execution of projects which profoundly affect their lives. Since women, as wives and mothers, accept primary responsibility for child bearing and rearing, they are mostly affected by housing and health projects. They should, therefore, be involved in the planning and decision-making as well as in the implementation and management of projects which related to their lives."

Special attention has been noted in terms of the constraints local participation has on project approach. These are the following:

- Projects are "time-bound" with definite starting and completion dates. The need to prepare a project for approval within a certain financial year makes it difficult to engage in potentially long, drawn-out community consultations. Similarly, the need to complete the project by a certain deadline may also discourage project officers from involving local organizations in implementation where this may cause delays.

- The project cycle usually ends with the completion of the physical infrastructure and consequently most of the project objectives are defined in terms of short-run and numerically quantifiable indicators. Institution building or long-term issues of sustainability of services and benefits tend not to be included.

- Donor agencies usually require that project design, outputs, and budgetary categories are precisely defined at the time of project approval to facilitate supervision and to ensure that the project's original objectives are achieved. This makes it more difficult to build-in the flexibility required to adapt the project to the requirements and organizational patterns of the local communities.

- Donor agencies frequently require the use of international consultants and procedures, which can restrict the use of local designs, technology, and labour.

To solve these problems, Uphoff (1985) summarized ways of ensuring local participation in project design and implementation. First, the degree of participation desired must be made clear at the start and in a way acceptable to all concerned parties. Second, there should be realistic objectives for participation. Third, specific provisions for introducing and supporting participation are needed. Fourth, there must be an explicit and adequate financial commitment to participation. Fifth, there must be a plan to share responsibilities in all stages of the project cycle. He also pointed out that participants involved in the planning and execution of projects are more enthusiastic about making the project work than are people suddenly handed an asset to which they have contributed nothing.

Bamberger (1988) recommended the establishment of relations with interested organizations in each region in order to understand the regional context and to learn from other organizations an essential component of its community participation strategy. National NGOs are the main sources of experience in this field. Many of them could help to design and deliver training courses, to prepare training material, and to design any research projects. Universities and other research organizations have also done extensive research and have considerable teaching and training experience in this field. Thus, coordination with other organizations is fundamental in order to achieve participation.

In sum, active local participation in project planning and implementation may improve project design through the use of local knowledge; increase project acceptability; produce a more equitable distribution of benefits; promote local resource mobilization; and help ensure project sustainability. However, participatory approaches may also be riskier than bureaucratic/technical management as there is a danger of co-option of the project by certain groups, the creation of conflicts, or losses of efficiency due to inexperience with the participatory approaches.

SOCIAL ANALYSIS

What appears to be a growing belief among international development agencies, consulting firms and developing countries in general is that proper social analysis as a result of local participation can lead to positive results--both social and economic (Kottack, pp.325-355 in Cernea, 1991).

There is considerable agreement to the taking of social factors (e.g. sociocultural/demographic characteristics of intended participants, social organization of productive activities, cultural acceptability of projects, project accessibility to different sociocultural groups, gender issues in design and

implementation, methods of eliciting participants' commitment) into consideration in identifying and planning rural development projects (Baum and Tolbert 1985 Cernea 1991/1992, Conyers 1993).

Despite the recognition of their importance, the analysis of social factors has not been institutionalized to the degree that the analysis of economic, financial, and technical factors should have been. Guidelines on how to collect and analyze data on these factors are still needed. Obviously, more research on completed projects is needed to understand the relationships between forms of community organization and project outcomes.

One could argue that doing social analysis for each project would increase the cost of project design. In hindsight, one learns however that the cost of not doing social analysis is much higher, especially, when one takes into account the evaluation findings from those analyses that could be useful to incorporate the past lessons for the next projects.

To sum up, participation is a means of improving the quality of plans and increasing the chances that they will be successfully implemented. This is because the plans are more likely to be relevant to local needs and conditions and more likely to have popular support and commitment if the people who will be involved in (or affected by) them are fully involved in the planning process. Participation is also of direct benefit to the participants in that it increases awareness and understanding of the world and gives them more control over their lives.

Although the benefits of participatory planning are widely recognized, there is much confusion about what it actually is. Participation can take many forms and it is important to understand the differences between the scope, degree, and channel of participation. Clearly defined objectives in terms of *who* will benefit, *who* will lose, *who* will participate, *how* participation can be more crucial to project sustainability, *what* is "benefit," and *what* is to be considered

"participation" is a must. Accordingly, projects have to be formulated and understood under the relevant political environment of existing government because participation has essentially to do with economic and political relationships within the wider society. It is not just a matter of involvement in project activities. Development projects need to recognize this wider dimension, to support and facilitate it and not restrict it within their own functional and geographical limits. Importantly, technical choices should be designed to value the technical knowledge of local people.

Development of local organizations for the operation and maintenance of community-based rural infrastructure was often found to be essential for sustainability. In these cases, very early involvement of participants in the project technology and site location decisions are important to ensure the appropriateness of these plans from their perspective in order to gain their commitment.

In short, local participation in the planning process is a complex process involving cultural, psychological, social, and political factors. There are no universal models or guidelines. The main thrust is the dialogue among project participants in the use of information to gather relevant lessons from experience and insights. It also elicits the preferences and values of those to be affected by projects. To have a lasting impact, there is a need to nurture the continued commitment of major participants. Designing participatory techniques is an integral part of exploring and experiencing. These are difficult to implement within the co; ntional project framework. Experiencing through the process of trial and error by learning of what works and what does not work could be the panacea for the practice and success of participation; it should be structured with sensitivity in a manageable and applicable way.

CHAPTER FOUR

CASE STUDIES (THAILAND)

This chapter describes types, patterns and aspects of local participation in the development process and highlights how related elements were integrated into the implications or factors of project sustainability. It seeks first to summarize the physical, social, and economic setting of the areas under study and second to illustrate background and objectives of the three case studies. Third, lessons from the case studies are provided as implications for development studies. Moreover, the degrees of intervention by government officials and their effects on participatory decision making in project planning and implementation are analyzed. However, the following experiences should not be stereotyped since there are various political, economic and cultural aspects among communities.

The empirical work of the first two case studies presented in this chapter are outcomes of detailed village surveys undertaken by Soparth Pongquan during his field research trip in Thailand in 1986. The research focuses on participatory development planning at the local subdistrict level in the Central Plain of Thailand. The third case presents a regional development project in Thailand that sought to increase benefits for the poorest of the country and focuses more on the issue of institutional sustainability. Findings of the cases will outline major achievements, problems, constraints and provide some lessons for future management of projects.

POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THAILAND

Thailand, as shown in figure 1, is divided into four regions known as the North, the Northeast, the South, and the Central Plain. The Northern part is, by

and large, a mountainous area. The Northeast is a vast plateau with ranges of mountains, most of which are semi-arid. The South extends onto the peninsula and is characterized by tropical rain forest. The Central Plain, dominated by Mae Nam (river) Chao Phraya and its tributaries, is considered the most important region for agricultural production. The topography of Thailand is shown in figure 2.

The country is governed by Constitutional Monarchy with King Bhumibol Adulyadej reigning over a centralized unitary state. However, real decision-making in affairs of state lies with the Prime Minister under the Parliamentary system. Administrative divisions represent seventy-four provinces (*changwat*). Subdivisions include districts (*amphoe*), subdistricts (*king-amphoe*), communes (*tambon*), villages (*muban*), and municipalities (*tesaban*). Practical politics is confined mostly to bureaucratic elites and their supporters (LePoer, 1989).

For centuries rice farming has been the most important productive activity and way of life for the majority of Thai people. In the mid-1980s, more than half of Thailand's working population engaged in agriculture and most produced rice as a main or subsidiary crop. However, during the past two decades, rice production has declined in relative importance to other crops. This diversification has been assisted by government's support for cash-crops (Turton, 1987).

Since areas of the study are located in the Central and Northeastern part of the country, that is, The Pump Irrigation Project and the Mat Weaving Project are in the Central Plain while the Northeast Rainfed Agricultural Development (NERAD) Project is in the Northeast (as shown in figure 3), physical geography and economy of those areas are worth investigating in more detail.

Large areas of the Central Plain are well irrigated, fertile and have good access to markets through the road network and a system of waterways transportation to the Bangkok metropolitan area. The Central Plain's economy is based on monocultured rice production. Irrigation is dependent upon monsoon
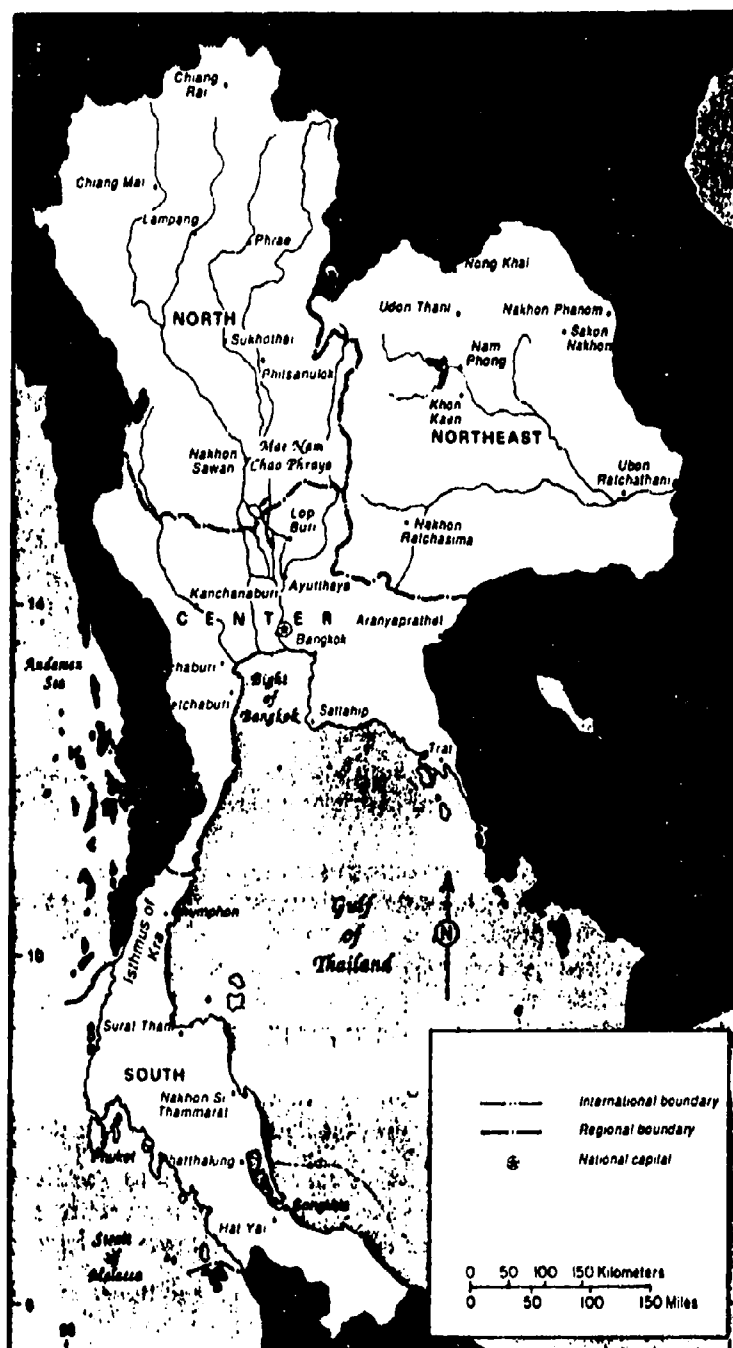
Figure 1 Map of Thailand and its Regions

Figure 2 Topography of Thailand
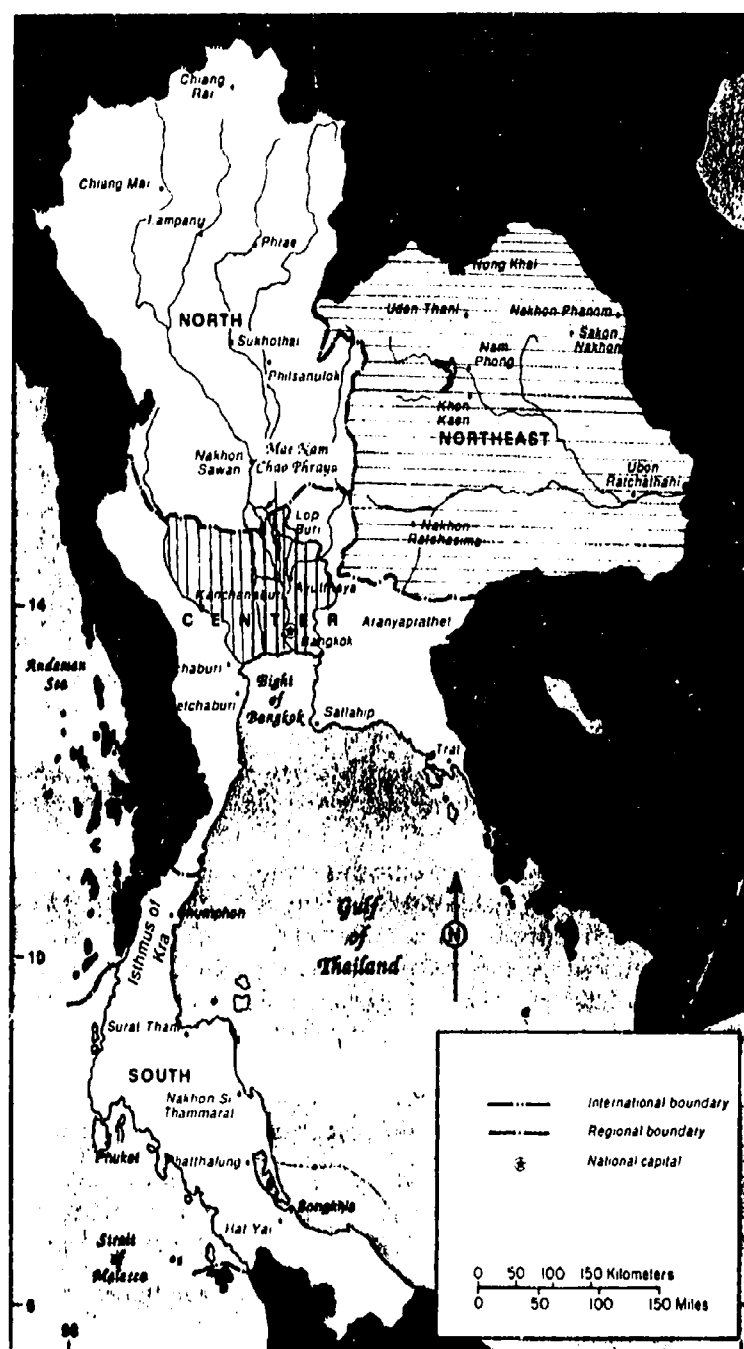
Central Plain [Pump Irrigation Project and Mat Weaving Project]

Northeast Area [NERAD Project]

Figure 3 Location of Case Studies

rains and the water level of the Choa Phraya river system. The region produces a large surplus of rice to meet the demands of both domestic and overseas markets.

The Northeast region, on the other hand, is far more devastated than the rest of the regions. The farmers in the Northeast are the poorest in the Kingdom. While half of the region is devoted to farmland, little of the land can be irrigated. Most of the rural households in the Northeast depend on erratic rainfall for their crop and livestock. In addition to unreliable water supplies, farmers must cope with low soil fertility, poor infrastructure and inadequate agricultural technology (Ingle, Schmidt, and Pisone 1990).

SOCIO-ECONOMY OF THE FIRST TWO CASE STUDIES

According to Pongquan (1988), the concept of cooperation/participation is not new for Thai village communities. Normally, people from all social classes would join in social activities. They would come together and help each other in family as well as communal matters. Sometimes, contributions would be requested in terms of money and/or labour for voluntary works which are generally carried out during the dry season (February-May).

Compared with other villages, the village under study has been in a fortunate position since it is supplied with electricity. The road connection has linked the village to infrastructure, facilities and services in the area.

There were 47 households at the time the field study was conducted. Forty-three households engaged in field crop production, 35 farmers owned land and held land titles, and the remaining 8 households had rented land for cultivation, mostly from their relatives. Social class of the village can be defined by the status of tenure by means of production. In rural areas, the major means of production is land. Wealth, power, and social status are all related to land tenure. The distribution of sizes of land holding is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of Households by Size of Land Holding

Status[1]	Size of Holding (rai)	No. of Households	%
Landlords	> 60	2	4
Rich Farmers	30-59	9	19
Middle Farmers	15-29	21	45
Small/Poor Farmers	1-14	11	23
Landless Labourers	<1	4	9
Total		47	100

source: Pongquan (1988)

Occupations pursued by the households are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Distribution of Households by Major Occupation

Occupation	Number	%
Rice cultivation	38	77.5
Rice & Upland cultivation	5	10.2
Wage labour	4	8.2
Other occupations	2	4.1
Total	49	100

source: Pongquan (1988)

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[1]   Landlord households arc defined as those whose members do not usually work their land by themselves but own enough land so that they can support themselves collecting land rent.

Rich farmers are those who own more land than the average and who might rent out some of their land while farming the rest by themselves. They are considered to be much better off than most households in the village, but they still work their fields and do not own property to the extent of the landlords.

Middle sized farmers are those which hold and work enough land to be fairly self-sufficient and capable of supporting themselves from the land.

Small or poor farmers are those who neither own nor rent enough land to support themselves. They have to supplement their farm income through off-farm agricultural or non-agricultural labour.

Landless households are those of labourers who neither own nor rent land for agricultural production, other than their homeplots, and hence make a living working the land of other households or being employed elsewhere.

According to the survey, the following needs and problems were identified by villagers: (1) low yields in rice and corn production; (2) lack of alternative sources of income owing to the almost complete dependency on rice and corn production; (3) need for supplementary activities, particularly in non-agricultural production; (4) insufficient services of agricultural extension; and (5) lack of modern technology and technical know-how to increase productivity in rice and corn production.

A PUMP IRRIGATION PROJECT

1) Origin

The project was originated by Mr. Bancha (a village headman) following a visit to the pumping station of an irrigation scheme of the nearby village. The project had been supported by the National Energy Authority (NEA), Ministry of Science and Technology, upon the request of a Member of Parliament (MP) from the province. An electric pump had been installed to lift water from the Pana river to irrigate farmland through a concrete-lined canal. It was the first attempt to implement this kind of project in the province. Normally, water is channelled to the field by means of gravity irrigation below a weir or dam, constructed by the Royal Irrigation Department (RID), Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives.

When Mr. Bancha returned to his village, he raised the issue with the sub-district headman (*kamnan*), discussing the possibility of bringing this kind of project to his village. The *kumnan* agreed to propose this project under the *Tambon* plan with the consent of the Tambon Council members, and forward it to the provincial office for funding and approval. Due to the high cost, the project was rejected by the provincial administration in 1980.

However, the change in political power was in favour of Mr. Bancha's effort because his family had supported the newly elected political party. Mr.

Bancha established close contact with the new MP of the province. By November 1981, two months after the NEA survey team's arrival in the province, Mr. Bancha was informed by the *kamnan* of the project approval. The costs were estimated at 7.5 million Baht for the purchase of a huge electrical pump and for the construction of three kilometres of the main concrete-lined canal and six kilometres of farmland turnouts, to be funded by NEA. The implementation of this project was scheduled for the period of June to October, 1982.

2) Project Preparation

In January 1982, the same group of three surveyors from the NEA revisited the village, finalized details of location and construction of the irrigation structure and facilities and consulted with the village headman in order to ensure that the lay-out was technically feasible.

During the conduct of the survey, the surveyors were asked many questions by villagers about the future location of the irrigation facilities. The team members replied that their sole concern was the study and design of physical structures in the scheme, which was too technical a matter for the villagers to understand. The surveyors stated that the lay-out map, once ready, would be left with the village headman so that the villagers could go and check for themselves. According to the NEA surveyors, the village headman would call a meeting for all villagers to explain details of the project and to ask for their consent on turning over land where the irrigation facilities were to be constructed.

3) The Conflict

After the officials had left the village, no further action was taken, neither by the NEA nor the headman. Concerning the progress of the project, Mr. Prawit together with the other two villagers decided to discuss the matter with the village headman. However, Mr. Bancha refused to show them the lay-out map, explaining that it was confidential.

Being unsatisfied, they revealed the matter to the public and visited the NEA office in the province so as to clear up their suspicions about the project. The official showed them the original lay-out map as prepared by the NEA survey team in August 1981 with some corrections made by the village headman.

From the lay-out map as shown by the NEA officials, it became obvious that the route of the main irrigation canal and its turnout canals had been planned for the benefit of Mr. Bancha, his relatives, and his supporters. According to the lay-out, only twelve families, mainly the rich and some medium farmers, and all but four small farmers who were Mr. Bancha's workers, would have received direct benefit from the irrigation scheme serving an area of about 400 rai (one third of the cultivated land in the village area).

The evidence from the NEA officials led to profound dissatisfaction among the villagers. In this respect, Mr. Bancha refused to give any clarification to the villagers as well as to government officials from other line agencies.

Due to various reasons, the project could not be started on June 1982 (according to its original schedule). One of the reasons involved a conflict with the Royal Irrigation Department (RID). Part of the area for the construction of the NEA planned irrigation scheme, about one kilometre in length, overlapped with the existing RID irrigation canal.

At the beginning of August 1982, Mr. Bancha died of a sudden illness. The election of the new village headman was held two weeks later. There were only two candidates, Mr. Chupong (Mr. Bancha's son) and Mr. Prawit. Mr. Prawit received the majority vote to assume the position of the village headman probably because his involvement in fighting towards the fairness of the project had made him popular among his fellow villagers.

The new village headman eagerly removed all obstacles to the project. He again visited the NEA office to resolve the dispute. The NEA officials decided to

go into the village and call a meeting at the request of the new village headman. The meeting was attended by 85% villagers representing of all households. The participants expressed their dissatisfaction with the original design. However, the controversy remained unresolved. According to the original work schedule, the project had to be completed before October 1, 1982 otherwise the budget allocation would be foregone. Confronted with this problem, the villagers urged the NEA staff to start redesigning the lay-out map during the course of the meeting so that villagers could discuss its features and a consensus could be reached. To facilitate the designing of a new lay-out, Mr. Prawit proposed to the NEA officials to search for the landowners who were willing to contribute some of their land to the project. Then, a sketch of the lay-out could be drafted on the basis of villagers' willingness to join the project, also taking into account the technical feasibility of their land.

In redesigning, no specific criteria were given as to locating irrigation facilities, except for technical requirements. The NEA surveyors drafted a lay-out according to what villagers proposed in the meeting. One of the villagers proposed that the main direction of the irrigation system should be where it could supply water to a large area of cultivable land providing opportunities to landowner to dig their own farmland ditches. Finally, the participation reached the consensus on the revised proposal which satisfied both villagers and NEA officials.

4) Project Implementation

Project implementation started on August 28, 1982 after the detailed feasibility study had been finalized. It was done in the following manner:

A private contractor employed by the NEA constructed three kilometres of the main concrete-lined canal and six kilometres of connecting farmland channels.

The village headman organized groups among the beneficiaries of the project, who held adjacent plots of land, with members of two or three households

to dig feeder channels/ditches into the fields utilizing cooperative labour. In cases where a household was not able to join this cooperative endeavour, that household would send other individuals hired for the task.

As a result, construction of the main structures by the NEA was completed by October 12, 1982 in a rush, having worked with great effort. In this manner, the work shared by groups of beneficiaries digging feeding ditches to their own fields was completed between October 15 and the end of that month.

The huge electric pump was installed near the river bank and behind the house of Mr. Wiboon who was employed by the NEA to maintain the pump and was put in charge of its daily operation.

The Government subsidized 50% of the total cost of electricity consumed for pumping water; the other 50% was contributed by beneficiaries according to the rates fixed by the NEA which are as follows:

* for the wet season, the cost of water was fixed at 75 Baht per hour of pumping for all kinds of agricultural activities; it takes one hour to irrigate four rai. Normally, farmers need extra water only when there is a shortage of rainwater.

* for the dry season, the rate was based on the type of activity:

-- for rice cultivation 100 Baht per rai for one dry season crop

-- in growing vegetables 50 to 75 Baht for one dry season crop depending on the kind

-- in operating a fish pond 200 Baht per rai per catch and filling

During the start-up period in November 1982, the village headman was responsible for project operations, including financial management under the supervision of the NEA official who paid a visit to the village every month or more during the cultivation period.

By April 1983, problems emerged from the distribution of water among beneficiaries (i.e. stealing and blocking off water). Regarding this, the

beneficiaries called a meeting with the NEA staff within the same month to set up the Water Users' Committee to be responsible for water control and distribution. The committee was responsible for scheduling periods of water pumping, managing financial matters, and finding measures of enforcing regulations. During the first year of implementation, only four farmers were penalized. Two cases were so serious that the committee decided to have their farmland feeding ditches blocked for two weeks. Following this measure, there was no further reporting of any disputes and malpractices.

The total number of beneficiaries in the village is 18 households, including two landlords, six rich, eight well-to-do, and four small farmers respectively, whose agricultural land covered an area of 800 *rai*, which is equal to two thirds of the entire cultivable land in the village area.

5) Project Evaluation

The construction of irrigation facilities of the main concrete-lined canal and the feeding ditches, undertaken by the contractor, was checked by the NEA staff soon after it had been completed. The NEA staff also inspected feeding and lateral channels dug through voluntary work of the beneficiaries. The officials visited the village frequently to discuss problems and provided supervision once the construction work had been completed. Generally, problems occurring in the project were mostly solved by the committee members and the village headman.

Starting in November 1982, and throughout until November 1985, the following tangible benefits were realized by the beneficiaries of the project:

1. In the wet season of rice cultivation, the yield increased considerably from an average of 33 to 45 *tang/rai*.

2. As for dry season cultivation, prior to the existence of the project, villagers could not grow rice; but after the completion of the project, all

beneficiaries could grow a second crop of rice with a yield of 75 *tang rai* on an average.

3. Many varieties of vegetable could be grown to a large extent not only for home consumption but also for commercial purpose. By the time the field survey was conducted, 80% of all households grew vegetables in a parcel of land on their rice fields and in their home compounds.

4. After the project had been in operation for three years, the fees collected from beneficiaries upon delivery of water were sufficient to cover all operation and maintenance costs. At the time of inquiry, the net earnings from the project had accumulated to a total amount of 30,000 Baht which was planned to be spent on the expansion of the irrigable land within the village area.

Lessons from the Pump Irrigation Project suggest a careful attention on making sure that the whole process of participation in planning does not restrict among local powerholders and government officials. Although, it seems that participation, power, and conflict are inseparable, strong commitment on part of villagers and full support from the village headman show autonomous potential for long-term achievement.

A MAT WEAVING PROJECT

1) Background

The skills of mat weaving had originally been brought to the village by Mrs. Sunee, a woman from the province, who married a man in the village thirty years ago. At first, she alone was practising mat weaving. Over time, she had taught relatives how to weave mats. This activity became popular with women of other households. According to the research, six had some basic skills and technical know-how of mat weaving. Those women, however, employed a very simple technique and design. They used locally available resources like grass which is

abundant in the area. The mats are normally given away as gifts rather than produced for sale.

After Mrs. Sunee had died, mat weaving became less popular because she had been the only person who could teach. To keep this skill alive, Mrs. Dara, her sister-in-law, made an effort to pass on and spread the skill.

2) Project Origin

In an attempt to revive mat weaving, Mrs. Dara consulted with Mrs. Prani, the Chairperson of the Women's Group, on January 10, 1985. Her objective was to find a qualified person to teach various designs including the relevant technology, specifically methods of dying grass so as to make more beautiful mats. Eventually, the two women consulted with Mr. Prawit, the village headman. The headman was willing to give his full support and promised to endorse the project for implementation by the Community Development (CD) Department of the Ministry of Interior.

3) Sequence of Actions

With the strong support of the village headman, the Tambon Community Development Worker came to the village on January 19, 1985 and met with Mrs. Dara and Mrs. Prani who raised the issue. The CD officer advised them to organize a meeting to discuss this matter with interested villagers. The officer stated that she was willing to assist this project, but financial support could not be extended by her department as it would take time and involve a lengthy procedure to make an official request. Nevertheless, Mrs. Prani and the village headman confirmed that they could mobilize women in the village to help by contributing materials and covering other necessary costs in an effort to conduct a training course. The only crucial issue remained the search for a qualified trainer.

The CD worker discussed this issue with her superior at the district level. Finally, both officers agreed to support the project under the condition that Mrs.

Prani and Mrs. Dara formed a group of trainees as a self-help project, since time constraints did not make the project feasible at the CD Department.

By the end of January 1985, the CD officer informed Mrs. Prani and Mrs. Dara that financial support by the CD Department was not possible. Despite the lack of outside financial support, both women insisted that the officer implement the project under the given circumstances. They requested that the village headman call a meeting to discuss this matter in public so as to mobilize women to join the project.

On February 3, the village headman held a meeting under a big tree in front of his house. This is a place where people would gather to chat and drink after work. Around 50 people came, not only women but also men joined in the informal meeting. The meeting was also attended by the CD worker, and the village headman chaired the meeting.

The headman introduced the purpose of the meeting and asked Mrs. Prani to give detailed information. She stressed the point that lack of technical know-how required in mat weaving motivated her to mobilize women to join in the training as an activity conducted by the Women's Group. She also maintained that women could produce mats commercially once techniques and skills have been improved, and that this activity could help them generate additional income for their families.

The Tambon CD worker informed the villagers about the financial constraints and lack of financial support by the CD Department for this activity, requiring women to help subsidizing the project in the form of material inputs. The training was scheduled to be held during March and April 1985 when most of the women would be free from agricultural work.

Many questions were raised during the meeting such as the availability of handlooms to be used and the place for the training. As for the place, it was

proposed that the village school would be suitable since it provided sufficient space for the training sessions during the school break. The CD worker promised to look for a qualified trainer and additional handlooms from the Department of Industrial Promotion (IP), Ministry of Industry. Mrs. Prani agreed to organize all the tasks related to the training. In the meeting, no one opposed the idea. Most of the women who attended the meeting expressed their interest and willingness to join in this training.

4) Project Preparation

To prepare the training, Mrs. Prani and Mrs. Dara called a meeting on February 10, 1985 to enlist those women who intended to participate and to assign specific responsibilities to them. There were 20 women wanting to join. It was agreed that each trainee would have to prepare her own resource materials required for individual practising. Material inputs to be prepared were dried grass and colours for dying. By then, three handlooms were available in the village. The women who were going to join in the training were told to get their own materials ready not later than April 1985, when the training was scheduled to begin.

Meanwhile, the Tambon CD worker contacted the Department of Industrial Promotion (IP) in order to get technical assistance as well as a qualified trainer and the additional handlooms. In retrospect, the procedure to get project approvals from both the CD and the IP Departments took two months. Moreover, the training was delayed by one month due to the work schedule of the trainer from the IP Department. Owing to these reasons, the training was not held until June 1985, which coincided with the period of rice cultivation.

5) Project Implementation

The delay of the start-up of the project affected at least two aspects of its implementation: first, the training could not be held at the village school since the school term had started. Secondly, additional handlooms to be borrowed from the

IP Department by the Tambon CD worker were no longer available. The training lasted for 20 days, during June 1 through 22, and was conducted at Mrs. Prani's house instead of the village school. The trainer stayed overnight at her home throughout the training period. During the first five days of the training, all 20 trainees joined actively.

Through the training, the following techniques were demonstrated: (1)effective drying and preparing of grasses; (2) cutting grass; (3) selecting and preparing colours for dying; (4) dying grass; and (5) weaving mats of various designs.

The training program started at 8:00 a.m. and ended at 5:00 p.m. every day including weekends. According to the trainees, the training was very interesting and conducted in a lively atmosphere. The trainees, having participated consistently, numbered five women including Mrs. Dara and Mrs. Prani. These five figures were persons who had performed key roles in organizing the training.

Those who dropped out during the training period gave the following reasons:

- Work commitments in transplanting rice (eight women).

- Lack of materials (seven women). As a matter of fact, the grass they had prepared for the training became spoiled and was no longer usable. All five women who remained present throughout the training programme were women who had both easy access to resources and free time. Their households had hired labourers to transplant their rice crops so that the women could attend the weaving demonstration and practice.

- Other reasons were that sometimes it was tedious to have to wait in taking turns until one of the three handlooms was free to practice. Only the owners of the handlooms could practice at night and, hence, would benefit much more than any other trainee.

- Unequal levels of existing technical skills among the trainees, some of whom had more advanced skills than others, and therefore were able to make much faster progress. This problem was also recognized and mentioned by the trainer after the completion of the course.

Nevertheless, the fifteen women who were unable to participate throughout the period attended the training from time to time, whenever they were able.

Contributions to the project were made by two persons. Mrs. Dara made available two handlooms from her house; Mrs. Prani lent one more handloom and provided accommodation for the trainer at her house. Resource inputs and lunch were prepared individually by each trainee and supplemented by Mrs. Prani. Payment of a per diem to the trainer was financed by the Department of Industrial Promotion. It is worth noting that the village headman donated money for the purchase of dyes and materials needed for dying. He stated that he was very pleased to support this kind of self-help project whose resources had been generated inside the village and which had received the support from the government sector.

6) Some Views on the Training

Those trainees who had completed the training thought that it was very useful as they had improved their technical know-how, though the time available for practice was considered too short. Especially, those who did not have their own handlooms highly appreciated the training. Two trainees purchased their own handlooms soon after the training with the financial assistance from Mrs. Prani.

Some villagers proposed the training on such activities should be promoted among young women who supposedly had better eyesight and memories to retain lessons and instructions since most of the trainees were seniors.

7) Monitoring and Evaluation of the Project

During the training period, the Tambon CD worker joined the sessions from time to time. After the completion of the training, she submitted a report to her Department as well as to the Department of Industrial Promotion on the implementation of the project. On July 15, a CD project evaluator from the provincial office and the CD worker came to visit Mrs. Prani's house in order to hold an open discussion among the trainees for evaluation purposes in which 15 women participated.

Following are the major items of feedback given to the officers by the trainees:

- the period of training was too short for the trainees, most of whom

were seniors and not able to follow instructions very well;

- the training was scheduled during a period when participants were

active in agricultural work, thereby lowering the rate of attendance;

-the delay of project implementation had damaged resource inputs

prepared earlier

On that occasion, the evaluator inspected the mats produced during the training period. There were altogether eight mats which the trainees had jointly produced. The evaluator and the trainer as well as the trainees themselves agreed that they needed more practice to develop their skills. At the level attained by then, the women could not possibly produce mats that were commercially viable unless they improved their skills which would take a longer period. The women made a request for more training in the near future to the CD officers. Before leaving the village, the evaluator encouraged the women's group to practice regularly to improve their skills.

Since the evaluation, only three women--Mrs. Prani, Mrs. Dara, and Mrs. Anong (a niece of Mrs. Dara) employed the mat weaving techniques they had

learnt from the training. Others who joined in the training and did not have handlooms came to visit them and practice occasionally when the handlooms were available.

Lessons from the Mat Weaving Project indicates that bureaucracy, poor design, and lack of resources can undermine effective participation and project performance. The lack of effective coordination mechanisms can lead to substantial delays even if there is no active opposition to the project. For a project to be sustainable, active support of several agencies in addition to that of the leading agency is required. Thus, project design must access coordination mechanisms to ensure smooth operation. Also important, are appropriate logistic/administrative arrangements and the constant supervision mechanisms to detect and correct problems which could affect the long-term sustainability of the project.

NERAD PROJECT (The Northeast Rainfed Agricultural Development)

1) Origin

As a result of a 1981 Thai policy, each of the four regions of Thailand has an official Regional Office of Agriculture and Cooperatives. Each office functions to decentralize sector operations at the regional level, and to serve as the regional planning and coordinating entity for both operations and support to ministry units and other agricultural and cooperative development agencies.

The Northeast Rainfed Agricultural Development (NERAD) project was initiated in 1981, aimed at specifically addressing the needs of poor farmers in rainfed areas. The purpose of the NERAD project was to establish in eight representative *tambons* (communes) a replicable agricultural development programme for increasing farm productivity and farm income, particularly among the low income farmers. The long-term objective was to establish, with NEROAC

(the Northeast Regional Office of Agriculture and Cooperatives), in the Northeast region a continuing programme for generating and transferring useful technology from the basic research level to the farm in accordance with agro-ecological and socio-economic conditions.

Institutional sustainability was an integral dimension of the NERAD project design. At the end of the seven-year investment period, with a total funding of $15 million (including Thailand and USAID contributions), several of NERAD's project outputs were expected to be institutionalized and in wide use throughout the region.

2) Conceptual Definition of Sustainability and the NERAD Project

Institutional sustainability is defined as the ability of a system to produce outputs that are so well-valued that enough outputs are continued to be produced following the end of the investment period. In this case, project sustainability is measured by the extent to which outputs produced during the investment period (during design and implementation) meet all of the following three sustainability conditions: (1) outputs must continue to be valued by external stakeholders, (2) they must continue to be produced through some organization and management apparatus, and (3) they must continue to have financial and human resources autonomy.

According to the three authors (Ingle et al.), conceptually speaking, there are three reasons why a project element from the investment period may not be sustained. First, the element may not be targeted for sustainability during the investment period (e.g. most projects contain certain elements that are intended to end when the investment period is completed). Second, some negative environmental factors, such as, unanticipated budget crisis in a project's host organization, may directly cause some project elements to be discontinued and

thus not sustained. Finally, the project's sustainability strategy may not be successful due to poor design, poor implementation, or the combination of the two.

3) Operational Definition of Planned Sustainability

In the first place, the project's sustainability can be viewed from the planning perspective of the project designers and implementors. Its concept can also evolve considerably over the life of a project based on environmental changes and lessons of experience. Secondly, sustainability can be viewed in actual terms from the post-project investment period. In this case, the authors agree that a definition of which project elements are actually being sustained is frequently difficult to measure and can also change considerably over time.

The NERAD project design documents were ambiguous with respect to the project elements that were to be sustained. The project purpose included three hierarchically linked elements--a replicable programme, productivity increases, and income increases. This contributed to considerable confusion over the project's objectives during the early years. There was a justification for the project as (1) area development, (2) research and development, (3) institutional strengthening, (4) bureaucratic reorientation, (5) extension of agricultural technologies, (6) better linkages between research and extension, or (7) some combination of these.

The initial design did not specify which project elements were or were not expected to be continued following completion of the seven-year investment period. Accordingly, the NERAD project objectives were revised many times. This revision reflected both the complexity of the project and the need of project actors to reach consensus on the project's main thrust.

In this version of the design, the sustainability objective was explicit at the intermediate goal--to institutionalize and replicate within the ministry, research and development approaches for optimizing the performance of rainfed agro-

ecosystems, in accordance with national policies and farmers' needs in Northeast Thailand. By 1988, the farming systems research and extension (FSRE) approach was agreed to be the prime target for NERAD sustainability. During the final two years of the project, a major thrust of NERAD was to sustain farming systems research and extension.

4) Operational Definition of Actual Sustainability

At the end of the project investment period (1989), the actual sustainability results of NERAD were reportedly positive. Three of NERAD's sustainability accomplishments were (1) the continuation of some key elements in each of NERAD's output clusters; (2) the continuation of organizations and management structures for producing valued output in the future; and (3) the continuation of resource flows associated with output production.

In 1989, four new provinces chose to use the NERAD pre-replication model. Other Thai government agencies have adopted many of the analytical tools and technologies developed by NERAD. The donor agencies, including USAID, New Zealand, and others have incorporated major elements of NERAD's approach into their assistance efforts. Several international organizations have distributed NERAD materials and are using several of its tools in their own programmes.

5) NERAD's Context and Chronology

The initiation of NERAD emphasized capacity development within implementing agencies at different governmental levels to perform their new adaptive research and development tasks in dispersed geographical locations. There was little time to worry about what would happen four or five years in the future and even less time to work on a sustainability strategy for the project.

The director of NERAD (also the director of NEROAC) has been associated with the research centre for over 20 years. Most of the senior staff had considerable experience working with the ministry, the other regional entities,

local government officials, and development assistance professionals. Operating in a project mode was familiar to them; through the process of trial and error they had learned what donor and government projects could and could not do, and what resources (both personnel and financial) were available through project mechanisms.

NERAD had three major clusters of outputs. First, the project established organizational structures and processes to improve coordination of other agencies. Second, NERAD developed analytical tools and techniques. Finally, NERAD designed and tested innovative technologies that would help rainfed farmers improve productivity and farm income.

In NERAD's middle years substantial progress was made in developing several rainfed technologies and refining various research methods. FSRE involves on-farm testing of agricultural technologies to refine and improve innovations in line with farmer needs. Emphasis during the final year of the project was to document and transfer the most successful techniques throughout the Northeast.

NERAD used a participatory implementation approach to involve representatives from the major departmental, provincial, district, and village levels, along with its implementing agency's employees. Project tactics included both top-down and bottom-up approaches which were based on the idea that guidance and technical support would flow downward, and that decision making would flow upward.

By late 1985, more serious attention began to be given to NERAD's sustainability which was defined as the continuation of a formalized Northeast adaptive research and development programme within its participating entities following completion of USAID assistance. A joint Thai-USAID evaluation of the project further highlighted the need to give higher priority to continuation of a coordinated R&D programme, and i.ot just the production of NERAD's outputs. In

1986, another outcome was to restructure the NERAD project during its final year, to give top attention to sustainability.

6) Analysis of NERAD Sustainability Issues

The conduciveness of the NERAD project's political, social, and economic environment is directly related to its sustainability.

The dominant forces during the project investment period were NEROAC and USAID. Both of these organizations had a strong and continuous influence on the project's actual sustainability. At the early stage, NERAD faced various problems. Other units in NEROAC were indifferent to or alienated from NERAD. Some officials felt that NERAD had too many resources and too much autonomy, and that they were not benefiting adequately from the project. USAID, on the other hand, was primarily interested in assuring that the project "blueprint" was followed. Sustainability was not explicitly dealt with in the design. It is fair to conclude that the prospects for NERAD's sustainability were low as late as 1985.

Then a turnaround occurred. There was USAID staff turnover. The new team took a positive stance toward NERAD. Project objectives were clarified. A new sustainability strategy was developed to fully involve other NEROAC units in the project and thus gained their support. The prospects for sustainability increased markedly through new forms of support and cooperation.

In the NERAD case, other dominant forces were conducive to NEROAC's role as a planning and coordinating entity from the outset of NERAD. Politically, the ministry support had a potential to attract long-term development efforts. NEROAC demonstrated its ability to welcome an innovative effort like NERAD, so there was no hostility in the Ministry of Agriculture to NERAD's long-term sustainability objective. Neither the ministry nor local university (Khon Kaen University) saw the NERAD project as competition in the field of agricultural research. Instead, they saw it as an opportunity for mutual benefits. Financially,

NEROAC's permanent role in the ministry as a regional coordination agency assisted on resources for recurrent cost.

NERAD also postulated an adaptive strategy which is appropriate for sustainability under conditions of high internal complexity and external uncertainty. NERAD was internally a highly complex project. Structurally, it integrated many governmental departments, local government units, and farmers using a specialized FSRE approach. Technically, the project worked in many different geographical areas with different innovations under a wide range of agro-ecological conditions. Managerially, the project was responsible for producing three major clusters of outputs over an extended period of time with staff of different technical specialties and nationalities.

NERAD's environment was uncertain in some very key respects. First, at the outset of the project there was a lingering confusion about the appropriate role of NEROAC as either a research and development centre for the Northeast or a coordination and planning arm of the ministry. Second, there was uncertainty about the real objectives of the project until at least 1985. Finally, the external demand structure for the project's outputs was largely unknown during the first three or four years of implementation.

To meet the increasing pressure for sustainability that arose over the course of the project, the NERAD director and his management team gradually shifted from a mechanistic to an adaptive management strategy, especially during the final two years. They de-emphasized centralization and stressed information gathering, from the external environment and horizontal communication among the NEROAC and other departments, through their integrated information system.

The internal strategy of NERAD was balanced between task performance and problem analysis, with performance having a slight edge. In the beginning of

the project, problem analysis was internally focused, and toward the end it was more externally focused.

Key elements of this strategy were the project director's close linkages with the ministry and the use of participatory implementation approach to involve representatives from the eight major ministry departments, government officials from different levels, along with employees of NEROAC and NERAD. Finally, performance improvement was greatly emphasized. Though the project began in the blueprint mode, it later became a process of continual adaptation within a flexible framework, and achieved a considerable consensus on objectives, strategies and means.

The NERAD adaptive management permitted the project to continuously monitor changes in the external and internal environment, and to adjust its internal production process in response. This feature is highly dependent on the development and nurturing of linkages between the project and its external environment.

From the outset, the project develoned high quality internal systems for planning and implementation. This feature is synonymous with the project's capacity for efficient and effective production of benefits. The capacity for production is directly related to the need to have project outputs continue to be produced through some organization and management mechanisms.

Concentrated in the project final stage, the dissemination and marketing effort can be viewed as a project's capacity for actively generating political support, which is directly related to the need to have project outputs continue to be provided recurrent resources.

Another factor being examined was the nature of the relationship between implementation and sustainability. At this point, the authors argue that it is not enough to have a strategy targeted only to those activities and actors needed for

successful implementation. Most importantly is support from the political environment. As Bamberger (1990) notes "NERAD produced a variety of high-quality outputs in the early years, but did a poor job of marketing them to key external supporters until the final few years of the project. Unless the value of outputs becomes recognized by powerful actors with influence over recurrent resources, then the probability of sustainability will remain low."

The NERAD experience suggests that successful implementation performance is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for sustainability. Therefore, sustainability should be viewed as an additional dimension to project performance with inherent potential of complementarity and conflict. In this case, sustainability should have its own objectives and strategy, and both of them should be fully integrated into the objectives and strategy for project performance. The relationship between implementation performance and sustainability also seems to be influenced by a project's evolution.

Take NERAD for example, sustainability tended to receive more attention as the project moved toward the end of its cycle. In design and early implementation, there were pressures for obtaining approvals and for demonstrating early efficiency and success. During the latter phases, the pressures changed and team members had time to address the issue of what would remain of value after the project ended. The NERAD implies that the dealing with sustainability issues can never be too late. If proper analysis is undertaken with strong commitment, some changes can be taken during the project's evolution.

FINDINGS OF THE CASE STUDIES

The concept of local participation through their active involvement in project planning and development process was studied in two case studies of the same village in Central Thailand. They are more small-scale and production

oriented when compared to the NERAD project whose scope covers the entire region of the Northeast of Thailand. The NERAD project is also found to be more complex in its structure and objectives. The three projects are more or less similar in their socio-economic and cultural characteristics, whereas they differ in size and type of geographical area as well as population involved.

The pump irrigation project was initiated by the village headman and implemented by government agency. It had a high level of local participation in project planning in terms of its formulation, design, approval, implementation, and evaluation. Villagers helped share the decision-making, providing information, organizing activities, mobilizing other villagers and contributing resources. They also managed financial arrangement and were involved in cooperation, maintenance, and evaluation of the project. Government provided financial and technical support while villagers provided labour and land.

Situation of manipulating the implementation of project by the influential power group emerged in the case of the pump irrigation project. Conflict over sharing benefits arose during the phase of project identification and became manifest at implementation stage. The project was initiated without prior consultation with the villagers about their needs and their capacity to participate. Detailed information collection was done albeit consulting with local leader only. Officials of government line agencies visited the village only once or twice prior to project implementation. That is to say, contacts with villagers were established just upon initiating project implementation. The system of data and information collection was considered weak because people representing different sections of the village population were not consulted to assess their felt needs. It seems that local officers' efforts were concentrated only on soliciting people's participation in project implementation with a focus on their labour force input, their material and financial contributions.

The local elites and various politicians can exploit planners' lack of information and contact with the grassroots to capture public investments for projects that primarily benefit them. As in the case of the pump irrigation, the former village headman used his political and economic influence in the village to capture the project for his own ends. Thus, without proper knowledge of local needs and potentials, even well-intended planners could do no better than choose to make investments they themselves assumed were needed.

Although politics and manipulation by powerful local elite played important roles in the pump irrigation project, with strong commitment among villagers to gain autonomy, problems/conflicts were detected on time during project evolvement. Local officials of the implementing agency were forced to correct certain mistakes in project formulation and design according to villagers' will.

According to the project evaluation, the benefits of the pump irrigation project have been increased considerably throughout the three years of operation. The project had proven to benefit 2/3 of the entire cultivable land in the village (compared to the previous 1/3). The cost was equally shared based on the mutual funding by the government and project participants. In term of sustainability, the pump irrigation project shows possibility for the long-term capacity. This is due to the fact that the user fees collected from participants upon delivery of water were sufficient to cover operation and maintenance costs. The net earnings from the project were accumulated and were planned to be spent on the expansion of the irrigable land within the village area. Village development committee of water users' group was formed by local representatives as an organization to maintain the operation of the pump, manage financial matters, and enforce regulations.

Most important of all is the attitude of villagers towards the project, that is, the sense of commitment and ownership. Their contribution to work with great

efforts, their being attentive to the matter, and their cooperation in terms of labour had helped the project achieved the goals and reflected long-term sustaining basis.

Apart from the commitment to project by local participants, local leadership is another key actor influencing project performance and its sustainability. With his full support, the new village leader in the case of the pump irrigation project managed/mobilized villagers to be involved in planning and implementing the project as opposed to the former village leader who tried to monopolize the benefits. Thus, it can be demonstrated that village leadership can either present potential opportunities to influence the achievement of project objectives and to contribute to sustainable development or constitute constraints and to undermine the genuine success of the project.

The mat weaving project was initiated by one of the women villagers and was implemented by village women group as a self-help project. The levels of local participation illustrate in the formulation, design, approval, implementation, and evaluation stages. In terms of social interaction, there was a cooperation among village women in the decision making process, taking initiative, providing local information, preparing activities, mobilizing other villagers and contributing resources. They also operated and managed the training and evaluating the project. The government provided technical support while villagers provided raw material, handlooms and the venue. The purpose of the project was to provide mat weaving skills and training to village women on income generating activity. Villagers formed a village women's committee representing a local group to manage and maintain the project. The project inevitably benefited well-to-do women who have resources readily available.

Bureaucracy was a major hindrance in the case of the mat weaving project. Delay on part of government agencies in endorsing or approving projects identified or formulated by villagers was found to be one of the reasons for their sluggish

participation. Under such circumstances, people were found loosing interest in the project. By the time official approval was received, the situation had changed and hence people gave lower priority to the project. Such delay was caused by centralization of decision-making process, too many hierarchical levels in government administration, and lack of coordination among local level field agency officers. Many participants of the mat weaving project withdrew from participation because of the delay in releasing funds and because the training coincided with the period when most villagers had to engage themselves full-time in their farming work. This problem could have been avoided or at least anticipated if those involved in planning the project had been aware of the possible social implications and had undertaken the necessary social analysis.

The case of mat weaving provides a lesson that all relevant factors (social, economic, environmental, political, etc.) must be taken into consideration and the inter-relationships between them must be understood. It also presents a perfect example of how enthusiastic local participation can die away due to bureaucracy, lack of social analysis, and lack of resources on part of participants.

Decision-making power, possession of or control over resources, and connection with as well as influence over government officials enabled members of the local elites to succeed in appropriating most of the benefits. They were in position to manipulate the selection as well as implementation of projects in such a way that they and their supporters benefited the most. These are well-off people from within the village.

Both projects show that proper planning on part of government agencies was not done so as to utilize available resources efficiently and effectively.

The drawing of the case studies on local participation in project planning will lead to the conclusion that all forms of social interaction i.e. cooperation and conflict are at work and evident in village society. Cooperation was more

pronounced among members of the same clique. Rivalry existed between political groups. Other conflicts had mainly become manifest in clashes between local influential leaders in their struggle to broaden and strengthen their power bases. Conflicts and tensions cannot be avoided because project structures cut across multiple organizations with the involvement of various actors/participants, but they can be identified, detected and minimized.

The study brings out the difficulties in organizing the underprivileged and the poor of the village communities in a polarized society, which is centred around some few powerful local leaders and characterized by conflict among groups. The case study shows that most of them had been initiated by the rich or the well-to-do to serve the interest of their own and those of their supporters. Likewise, government initiated projects did not succeed in reaching the poor and the underprivileged. All these lead to the conclusion that an effective organization of these people to look after their interest is the foremost requirement to realize the objectives of any participatory development strategy.

Perhaps, creating and strengthening autonomous grassroots organizations of villagers to mobilize themselves and to sustain the active involvement of peasant groups in development activities are necessary. To help such stable forms of local self-organization to emerge is essential because it creates enduring structures which are critical for generating the cooperativeness from individuals' efforts and effective in building long-term sustainability.

The community meetings organized by the planning teams with various population segments are useful but somehow a short lived, transitional form of group action. The interaction between planners and local communities cannot be maintained and sustained on a regular basis after the project teams depart from the village. When village grassroots organizations exist, or when they can be encouraged and established, they tend to be more effective in carrying out

development activities like the Water Users' Committee in the case of the pump irrigation project. Even the most dynamic individuals are limited in their effectiveness if they are scattered and isolated, and if their efforts are not reinforced through group structures and group action. Thus, the sensitive change agents, who know and respect local communities, can be used as facilitators and catalysts for creating stable group structures in the planning process.

Particularly relevant to facilitating participation is the decentralization to the microregional level of NERAD projec' as a remarkable breakthrough of the Thai's bureaucratic planning systems to promote substantial consultation and participation of local communities in the allocation of resources for rural development.

In a move to decentralize, Thailand's agriculture ministry created four regional offices in 1981. One of which was the NEROAC, previously an agricultural research station. In 1981, USAID launched the NERAD project under the implementing agency of NEROAC. Initial activities concentrated on developing capacity for adaptive research with little attention to sustaining this capacity over time. A 1985 evaluation highlighted sustainability problems and NERAD priorities were changed in the direction of institutionalizing capacity through an explicit strategy of demonstrating performance to key national stakeholders. Some lessons from the case are that the NERAD project suffered from a design that spelled out in detail what was to be done and when. This greatly hampered implementation. The project was complex and involved many different parties, so it required much negotiating and coordinating.

In the early years of implementation, internal problem arose as NEROAC staff in other units were alienated by NERAD project's performance successes and resented the extra attention and resources it enjoyed. NEROAC's director (also NERAD's director) took steps to integrate the project more fully into the rest of

the centre's regional programme, thereby sacrificing some immediate efficiency gains in favour of more effective performance in the long-term. This balancing of performance considerations highlights the importance of the trade-offs in planning. Performance cannot be judged the same throughout the life of the project. This also depends on project leaders' ability to face with and manage some trade-offs and conflicts on occasion.

The success of NERAD was claimed to be attributed to the political support from the government and key stakeholders, positive attitude among project staff, the involvement of participants from different line agencies (although participation of farmers had not been stressed), a mix of public and private sector institutions, an delegation of tasks to various levels of government, a compatibility of the project with overall project environment. Another factor of NERAD's success was contributed to its adoption of management systems which promote capacity building. This provided some lessons that management dimension is also important and should not be ignored and that for developing countries and donor agencies to increase the probability of institutional sustainability, they need to rethink their approach to management design to put greater emphasis on adaptive managerial choice which is sensitive to anticipating changes in the environment, on evaluating socio-environmental conditions realistically, and not beyond institutional limits.

However, the NERAD project, when compared to the first two case studies, shows less emphasis on local participation. It was claimed as a "success-story" due to its managerial ability and strong political support from the government and other stakeholders. Nevertheless, if support from government and other stakeholders is no longer viable, in other words, a shift in political environment may end external funding, NERAD project is likely to be collapsed. On the other hand, the Pump Irrigation Project and the Mat weaving Project show the potential

of long-term achievement in that the autonomous local organizations are no longer dependent on external funding.

In summary, the three case studies demonstrate how rural development projects can be self-sustaining in that project has to be compatible with economic, socio-political, technological, and other relevant factors which differ among sectors and situation. Therefore, project must be designed to make more realistic estimates and to be sustainable within the prevailing local social, economic, and political context. The project must also develop necessary linkages to key stakeholders at the local, regional, and national levels. Project sustainability frequently requires the supportive linkages of stakeholders at all levels. The project design must access the likely attitude of each key organization and must propose coordination mechanisms to maximize the support of these agencies and to ensure smooth operation. Another key factor is the ongoing supervision to minimize conflicts and problems. To highlight sustainability issues, project planners need to include targets for social, political, bureaucratic, and financial support.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter advances the findings or conclusions as a result of the overall process of the research. The conclusions reveal that certain socio-economic, political and cultural forces have a major influence on local participation in project planning and also a tremendous effect on project sustainability. In the light of the findings of the case studies, the following conclusions are drawn and their corresponding recommendations suggested.

Participative planning means the involvement of project participants as active actors in defining the objectives of the project, determining the methods taken to reach objectives, and participating in the results of those objectives. Although community participation takes time and resources, these costs are usually offset by the long-term benefits in terms of creating local awareness, competence and capacity. Participative planning and management also results in a complex scale of activities and organizations and may end up securing prestige or wealth for a few prominent members of a local community. It may record only the views of those who can articulate well and eliminate the majority views. Therefore, one could argue that participative planning may over-represent the interests of the more powerful since participants invariably differ in their power positions. Real power can be dominated by the more educated and articulate individuals.

Moreover, it is often very difficult for the poorest of the local communities to understand why they should participate since this approach usually fails to give them any immediate financial rewards. Thus, the participative approach, potentially successful when people who desire participation are involved, does not

address the question of how to motivate people who are not interested in participation.

Most importantly, participative planning represents a threat to central government officials who often view negatively any trends towards decentralization. National authorities view participative planning as a process that would not only permit the full benefits of the projects to remain in a remote community but something that could trigger a certain awareness and contribute to a loss of political control over the rural communities. An additional conflict, in certain cases, may be that any increased involvement of the local community in development projects may hurt the vested interests who dominate the existing local socio-politico-economic structures.

However, the study rendered proof that participation is necessary from the start of the project planning cycle. If villagers were given the opportunity to identify and implement projects which meet their expectations, they would continue participating until the last and final step. Therefore, to ensure the suitability and acceptability of project activities and interventions, a project planner must build in an ongoing dialogue between project administrators and the participants. Mechanisms can be incorporated into most project activities to promote the participation of the local population in testing technological packages, organizational arrangements, and delivery and marketing systems. This will not only help find solutions to development problems, but will also build local capabilities for future development efforts.

Another successful element is having the participants commit their own resources. The ability to obtain a resource commitment provides the participants with a sense of project ownership which is necessary to ensure long-term sustainability (e.g. in the case of the Pump Irrigation Project, if participants view a

pump irrigation as belonging to them, they will be more likely to maintain it than if they view it as belonging to the government.

Translating participation strategies into projects, which involves people in designing and assessing their consequences, requires complex effort. First, local actors (participants) who will carry out the projects are to be identified at the outset. Second, the project goals and participatory principles are to be in line with the socio-economic interests and needs of the local actors. Third, adequate linkages, information and communication patterns, and forms of cooperation between government line agencies and the local actors/organizations are to be established. Fourth, procedures for joint decision-making, particularly to allocate financial resources are to be selected priorities.

It is important that the benefits of the project should be of general interest to the whole community; it should benefit those marginalized including the poor and the needy; take into account existing social systems, traditions, customs, religious beliefs, and the culture of the rural setting. In this case, planning administrators (as agents of change) should observe community reality and diagnose the problems, outline the adaptive strategies, make decision in the light of local circumstances, and finally have them evaluate the project. More feedback in terms of participants' criticism and judgement on project results whether they had reached the benefit which they want to sustain become a necessity.

One must be aware that the interests of community/project members often differ to such an extent that unified action is impossible. What is advantageous for one subgroup is not necessarily advantageous for another or for individuals. Last but not least, project participants are not necessarily organized as joint partners in any other respects.

The local elite largely determines political decisions at the village level. The same is true for many cooperatives since they are also under the strong

influence of the local elite. The existing socio-economic structure is naturally reflected in the rural power structure and affects all institutions from national, regional, and local levels. Therefore, projects which embody participative approaches must involve attempts to shift conventional relationships of power and influence.

Cooperation on an equal footing implies a new approach from both sides-- no more feelings of superiority on part of the project representatives of central institutions and foreign experts and no more feelings of inferiority on part of ultimate local participants, otherwise the vicious circle of the rich dominating the poor remains. The process of cooperation between local society and central power must emerge out of efforts from both sides: the centre must be willing and able to decentralize the development process and delegate tasks and functions as far as possible.

Special efforts must be made for more effective linkages between the change agent and local participants, and for more efficient feedback and communication mechanisms to maximize local participation in project planning. Such an approach would also foster self-reliance and self-sufficiency among the local participants. It will also reduce dependency which prevails at the local level. Participants should be encouraged to decide on their own needs, priorities and type of projects which would be useful and helpful to them on the basis of their own experience.

Most important is the need for dialogue between planners and the community in order to facilitate a process of mutual learning and mutual trust in which the parties exchange information and ideas and learn from each other. If this dialogue occurs before decisions are made, it would help avoid as many mistakes as possible. But since this is not always possible, one has to accept that mistakes will be made in a participatory planning process and to recognize that this is one of

the most effective ways from which lessons are learned by both planners and participants. In this case, a change in attitude is needed. Project team workers must be encouraged to see local participants with whom they work as equals and to see their interaction with them as a process of dialogue learning, in which information is exchanged and decisions are made on the basis of mutual agreement.

The planning of rural development projects must not only tailor development initiatives to the concerns of the participants, but must do it in a way that the benefits from these initiatives are self-sustaining. The sustainability of the project benefits is not an issue that should arise at the end of the project cycle. Rather, sustainability must be build into a project--planned for its design and monitored during its implementation. The type of organizational arrangements, the nature of the technology and delivery system used, the amount of training and institutional capacity building carried out, the level and duration of the investment, and the attention given to recurrent and manpower costs are all design decisions. Each may have a significant impact on the potential sustainability of development benefits.

Project managers can ensure sustainability by exerting influence on and listening to participants as well as providing appropriate incentives to staff. They also need to be aware of the differences in perspectives on efficiency and effectiveness that exist among their projects' constituencies.

Also important is the relationship and transaction among implementing agency and major actors in the environment (stakeholders). The transaction can be categorized into various types: financing, political and bureaucratic support, public relations, technical assistance, supply of materials and products, and service delivery. Desired outcomes and benefits will not be achieved unless project managers successfully establish, monitor, and nurture these transactions. To maintain these exchange relationships is another key factor to sustainability. Thus,

the stakeholders' relation to short- and long-term support should be prioritized and identified in terms of their resources and interests. It should be noted that command over resources and interests is likely to change over time. The first step is to decide which transactions are critical to performance and sustainability. This will have implications for the way projects are designed, structured, and implemented.

Thus, any sustainable, long-term, and self-reliant development strategy requires the construction and maintenance of strong partnerships across constituencies within the project community. Partnership across unequal constituencies is extremely difficult to construct, and in order for attempts to bridge this gap between levels within the project community, there must be some notion of mutuality.

All in all, projects that aim at sustainability should be structured in the form of flexibility, collectivity, and decentralized decision-making process. Since projects vary with the nature of the task and with the characteristics of the social groups and their environment, the planning systems cannot be strictly blueprinted. Blueprint approaches to design, which rely upon high levels of specification of objectives, activities, schedules, and outputs and have dominated the planning systems for the past two decades need to be combined with the learning process approaches, which are far more flexible and adaptable to changing environments in which development projects operate. It requires periodic project redesign to maintain their fit as circumstances shift and evolves as learning take place building gradually the skills of local personnel. The challenge is to develop design approaches which support learning processes that result in enhancing local capacities and initiatives with the emphasis on self-initiative and post-project dynamics.

Therefore, basic elements to achieve sustainability is an attempt to answer: (1) what to do? that is, what development objectives to target and what goods and services to produce? (2) who to do it for/with? that is, who are the beneficiaries/participants? What are their needs? What are their responses to the project? (3) how to do it? and how to maintain it? that is, what sets of activities to undertake using which technologies? (4) who will be the key responsible in the long-run? What will be needed to maintain the project in the long-run?

Although participatory planning does not necessarily lead to sustainability, the findings of the research confirm that local participation in the planning process and a variety of associated factors help projects obtain their objectives and ensure the long-run benefits. Therefore, efforts to increase local participation in all phases should be encouraged.

The major findings on this relation is that the positive impacts of participatory planning on project sustainability tend to increase with adequacy of project team communication to project participants, their commitment to the project, and the degree to which they obtain control and ownership of project outputs/results. Participation in the early stage of planning is particularly significant in terms of achieving the potential benefits of a participatory approach since it means that people acquire the sense of control of "ownership" and "commitment" which is necessary in order to ensure both the sustainability of the project and the full individual and collective benefits to the participants.

However, much more still needs to be known about the extent to which development projects are sustained in developing countries, the factors that affect sustainability, and about actions at the national and international level needed to sustain projects. Several areas in which additional research is required are: (1) relevance and adequacy of the indicators commonly used to assess project sustainability; (2) factors that affect sustainability of different types of projects; (3)

relationships between the project cycle and project sustainability; (4) roles of developing countries, donor agencies. local government and beneficiaries in project sustainability; (5) types of decentralization programs that facilitate project sustainability; (6) institutional development for project sustainability; (7) relationship between project sustainability and sustainable development. Indeed, sustainability of development can contribute to the task of refining and improving the process of project design, implementation, and evaluation in project sustainability with the responsibility of achieving sustained socio-economic betterment.

Perhaps, the ultimate aim of development assistance in terms of its sustainability is the local institutional learning and their capacity to achieve and maintain the lasting impacts with its own skills and on its own environment. Local participants should be encouraged to take greater responsibility for their own development, to build participatory institutions that would reflect the interests of their members and respond to their needs and preferences. Through their own self-managed institutions, the people could take responsibility for their own self-reliant development along democratic lines. In contrast to top-down models in which governments or capitalist firms "deliver" development to people, leadership and initiative would rise from the grassroots. The process would be participatory and democratic, and the outcome would be satisfaction of social and material needs as defined by intended participants of development projects.

Thus, for developing countries and international donors to help local institutions to achieve this, they need to rethink their approaches to selecting, strengthening, and supporting institutions that serve development purpose. This task involves looking anew at project and programme design and level of integration into existing organization; at the links between management training and performance; at decision-making; at leadership; at mutual trust and managerial

choice; at intercooperation among organizations; at evaluating environmental conditions; at analysing socio-economic conditions; etc. It is essential that projects become a part of the social fabric of the area in which they operate. Satisfying the technical requirements of any project is not sufficient; the project must also be compatible with its setting. This requirement applies to all the factors discussed in this research paper. Attention to these areas will guarantee sustainability and stand to improve the chances that any given development effort would continue to provide benefits after external assistance is terminated.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix I.   **SIX PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABILITY**

The six principles describe areas of action of project-activity in order to consolidate sustainability.

I. Beneficiaries Orientation: A project is sustainable when the target group integrates the project's activities into its own behaviour and these activities become a part of their social life.
        Main aspects: Local tradition (local strategies of change, their agents, and local experiences)
                Forms of local organizations, their mode of information and decision-making
                Social allotment of roles with regard to sex, social status, and power distribution
                Motivation of beneficiaries group towards innovation/changes
(this function leads to self-development, self-confidence and autonomy of the target groups)

II. Organizational Capacity/Capability
    Main aspects: Effective administrative and operational direction, incorporating local traditions of organization
    Methods and means of participatory cooperation with the target group during planning, implementation and evaluation.
    Purposeful medium-term development of capability of organization through training and measure of organization development.

III. Subsequent Costs and Profitability
    Main aspects: Possibilities and limits of local economic situation (family economics production and marketing situation)
    Long-term costs for running, maintenance, investments and recovery funding
    Necessity for contractual and institutionally assured financing systems
(beware of dependencies which should be dismantled; activities should be fitted to local market situations and family economics, practice thriftiness, reduce material power symbols)

IV. Technical Appropriateness
    Main aspects: Linking with existing technical skills
    Technically reliable and easy-to-maintain
    Financially supportable
    Socially appropriate (Social acceptance)

V. Consideration of Political Power
    Main aspects: Linking of project aims to development strategies of country and region
    Incorporation of important political power structures
    Co-ordination of public and private sectors

VI. Realistic Project Formulation
    Main aspects: Realistic qualitative/quantitative objectives embedded in participatory planning
    Appropriate project duration and clarity of project phases
    Flexibility towards changes which are often difficult to foresee
    System of ongoing self-evaluation

Source: Swiss Directorate for Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Aid (SDC)

Appendix II.   **INDICATORS OF PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY**

I.   Continued Delivery of Services and Production of Benefits

1.1   Comparison of actual and intended benefits and services and their stability over time
1.2   Efficiency of service delivery
1.3   Quality of services (benefits)
1.4   Satisfaction of beneficiaries
1.5   Distribution of benefits among different economic and social groups

II.   Maintenance of Physical Infrastructure

2.1   Condition of physical infrastructure
2.2   Condition of plant and equipment
2.3   Adequacy of maintenance procedures and resources
2.4   Efficiency of cost-recovery and adequacy of operating budget
2.5   Beneficiary involvement in maintenance procedures

III.   Long-term Institutional Capacity

3.1   Technical capacity and appropriate mandate of the principal operating agencies
3.2   Stability of staff and budget of operating agencies
3.3   Adequacy of interagency coordination
3.4   Adequacy of coordination with community organizations and beneficiaries
3.5   Flexibility and capacity to adapt the project design and operation to changing circumstances

IV.   Support from Key Stakeholders

4.1   Strength and stability of support from international agencies
4.2   Strength and stability of support from the national government
4.3   Strength and stability of support from provincial and local government agencies
4.4   Strength and stability of support at the community level
4.5   Extent to which the project has been able to build a broad base of support and to avoid becoming politically controversial

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Source: Michael Bamberger and Shabbir Cheema

Appendix III.   FACTORS IN THE SUSTAINABILITY OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Objective: To develop a capability to sustain the benefits (results) generated by aid project interventions after assistance is terminated.

Factors Affecting Sustainability	Implementing Organization	
	National	Local Community/Organization
Commitment/ Government Policies	Commitment of leaders and constituencies to objectives of project and to supportive policies.	Commitment to objectives by local officials/leadership/constituencies. Government support for local organizations and initiatives.
Management/ Organization	Managerial leadership for defining objectives. Constituency building and project administration; organizational capacity (staff, logistics, budget/fiscal, training, management information systems) to carry out project.	Local leaders/managers organized; participants involved in planning/ implementation;local organizational capacities developed to implement/maintain services. Fund raising from multiple sources required.
Finance	Government budget/foreign exchange allocations to cover operations, maintenance, and depreciation; phased in over life of project.	Community contributions for facilities/operating costs raised; user fees established.
Technology	Capacity to select, adapt, review, and maintain project technologies, including adaptive research.	Communities capable of operating and maintaining technology, and have a role in technology selection.
Socioculture	Project objectives and technologies acceptable; gender roles defined; information systems keep management in touch with participants perspectives.	Women involved in project; their roles and responsibilities identified. Local acceptance of technologies; Local "ownership" of project.
Environment	Policies and regulations for protecting environment	Local participation/self-interest in protecting environment promoted.
Project Design/ Implementation	Realistic projections of project objectives, time schedules, and organizational capabilities. Project phasing, flexibility in balancing immediate goals and long-term institution building; monitoring and evaluation to track performance and impact.	Pilot projects for generating participation and learning what works; replication feasibility tested.
External Influence	Political stability and democratic society; international and domestic market economy, access to technological developments and other support.	Local political stability and community participation in decision-making; economic opportunities to provide employment/income that will sustain local social services.

Source: Agency for International Development