

Concept Paper

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

**Guidelines for Supporting
Rural Development Project**

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FOREWORD

The tremendous importance of rural areas for the economic progress of many developing countries is constantly emphasised by development policy experts. The trend, however, is in another direction: marginalised rural regions, which continue to be the site of production and the place where the majority of the poor population in developing countries lives, are being increasingly pushed to the peripheries of official development co-operation. In spite of all the lip-service to the contrary, rural development is not ascendant in most international funding agencies; and governments in many developing countries are falling in line with this orientation more or less voluntarily.

There is a consequent impact of this on the work of non-governmental organisations, however. Under their own volition or mobilised by the presence of promotional funds, they have been working in rural areas for which government institutions are either not interested in or not suited to do. De-emphasising rural development has led to non-governmental organisations being confronted with tasks lying outside their area of expertise in both quantitative and qualitative terms, especially since they usually do not have the volume of resources and personnel capacities to carry out blanket-coverage programmes nor the mandate to assume sovereign (planning) tasks.

Many partner organisations of Deutsche Welthungerhilfe must increasingly ask themselves how rural development projects can be planned and steered under these conditions. The Programmes and Projects Department is therefore submitting a technical concept which summarises the lessons of the past and responds to this new challenge. This is intended as a working aid for partners, experts and appraisers of Deutsche Welthungerhilfe which is without a doubt not exhaustive, but nevertheless quite comprehensive. I would like to underscore three crucial aspects of this working paper:

- As activities which are promoted by non-governmental organisations rarely claiming for blanket coverage, a great value is placed in the technical concept on the model effect of projects and programmes.
- Non-governmental organisations cannot fill the vacuum which government actors have left behind in the promotional area of rural development. What is therefore needed is effective mutual co-ordination, especially among external actors in the

rural region, in order to at least partly compensate for this loss of guidance.

- The experience the Deutsche Welthungerhilfe and its partners need not necessarily be identical to that of other actors, especially governmental organisations. This working paper may at this level contribute, however, to questions being asked about own approaches so that adjustments can be considered.

This concept paper is based on the insight of partners, staff and appraisers of the Deutsche Welthungerhilfe. We owe special thanks to Mr. Christian Berg from the Centre for Advanced Training in Rural Development at Humboldt University in Berlin, who got the discussion process going and contributed to the processing and completion of this working paper. The emeritus university lecturer, Professor Peter von Blanckenburg from Humboldt University in Berlin, and Professor Heinz-Ulrich Thimm from Justus Liebig University in Giessen, have enriched the concept paper and discussion through their involvement.

We believe that rural areas and rural people are not being paid sufficient heed at present in terms of development policy. We are sure, however, that analysis of the questions relating to the issue of rural development will once again receive renewed attention and reappear at the top of the agenda of development experts. Others should prepare for this as well.

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DIRECTORY OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BMZ	Bundesministerium für Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (Federal Ministry of Economic Co-operation and Development)
DIE	Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (German Institute for Development Policy)
DWHH	Deutsche Welthungerhilfe (German Agro Action)
EU	European Union
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (German Enterprise for Technical Co-operation)
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PCM	Project Cycle Management
PNA	Participatory Needs Assessment
PRA	Participatory Rural/Relaxed Appraisal
RD	Rural Development
RRA	Rapid Rural Appraisal
RRD	Rural Regional Development
SLE	Seminar for Rural Development
SHG	Self-Help Group
SHO	Self-Help Organisation
OOPP	Objective (Goal) oriented project planning

1 INTRODUCTION

Deutsche Welthungerhilfe (DWHH) and its partner organisations understand rural development projects (RD projects) to mean target group-oriented support measures that act on the multifarious causes of poverty in rural areas. They are, therefore, aimed at various economic, social, environmental and political areas of the lives of poor groups of the population and seek to make a contribution to the development of civil society in the partner countries. These guidelines are based on long years of experience which DWHH has had in promoting RD projects and co-operating with partner organisations. The guidelines present and explain the objectives, principles and most important tools of DWHH in planning and designing such projects, and are aimed at:

- project and co-operation partners who, with the aid of this paper, will gain a comprehensive picture of the position of DWHH in the area of rural development;
- staff of DWHH who can assess project applications and progress using jointly drafted and agreed-upon criteria;
- appraisers assigned to the evaluation of the projects supported who will be informed about quality standards through these guidelines;
- management and appraisal committees who make their decisions on promoting RD projects on the basis of a clear framework.

1.1 The context of rural development

Fighting poverty to achieve a sustained improvement in the living conditions of poor groups of the population is a priority goal of German and international development co-operation. Development measures in the rural area are assigned a central role because 80% of the population in the poorest countries continues to live directly or indirectly from agriculture and interrelated sectors of the economy. Measures aimed at securing the foundations of existence for poor rural households will, therefore, be a core area of development co-operation in the future as well. In addition to this, rural areas in many places are gaining importance as locations of commerce and service industry. This confronts development organisations with tasks which go beyond the exclusive promotion of agricultural production.

In many developing countries the state is failing in its fight against poverty. The much-touted "market" is for the most part run by actors who draw great benefits from existing market conditions. It is for this reasons that socio-political goals have to be associated with the promotion of rural development. This includes:

- resolutely representing the interests of groups which have been at a disadvantage thus far vis-à-vis other groups, but in particular vis-à-vis government institutions in order to secure acceptance of their rights and demands;
- (local) economic cycles coming about which improve the market position of marginalised farmers with small holdings;
- making sure that self-made crises and internal conflicts in many partner countries are responded to in an adequate manner. It is true that poverty-oriented development programmes in part take the causes of these struggles into account, but effective crisis-prevention measures must be included in the repertoire of rural development projects in order to reduce current tensions and confront direct consequences such as migration and hunger.

The development-policy discussion on RD projects

In the development-policy debate which raged in the nineties - which cannot be reflected here in its entire scope - integrated rural programs and comprehensive regional development approaches were especially subjected to harsh criticism. It was maintained, for instance, that:

- they were too ambitious in terms of their aims, therefore overburdening the actors involved;
- they were associated with excessive follow-up costs which the governments of the developing countries could not raise;
- their multi-sectoral approach was not appropriate for usually sectorally structured administrations in partner countries and thus unsustainable in institutional terms as well;
- they were too technocratic and left too little latitude for self-organisation;
- they were too expensive in terms of their planning and co-ordination processes and thus inefficient;
- they were not sustainable because human, organisational and natural resources were insufficiently mobilised and access barriers to needed services could only be overcome in scattered instances; and last but not least
- they were not effective in fighting mass rural poverty, especially as a result of adverse political and economic framework conditions which they could not influence.

Led by the World Bank, a whole host of international - and especially U.S. - development organisations declared that integrated approaches had failed and discontinued their respective projects (especially area development projects). Instead they began concentrating on improving the macro-economic framework conditions (liberalisation of prices, structural-adaptation programmes, decentralisation and privatisation), and by the middle of the nineties, even more so on implementing sectoral

programmes such as investment programmes in agriculture, social security systems, and the rehabilitation of infrastructure. However, although in German development co-operation RD projects have lost considerable importance, they have not disappeared completely – due, in part, to attempts to bring them back into the development-policy mainstream by repackaging and putting them under a new label. This included:

- adherence to the principle of subsidiarity: whatever can be done at a level close to the target group need not be done "from above";
- resolutely taking the principles of relevance to, and participation of, the target group into account;
- the realisation that the planning and execution of measures does not necessarily have to be done by one actor alone;
- adaptation of activities to account for unfavourable framework conditions;
- taking into account the capabilities and interests of the project holder or partner organisations;
- promotion of self-help organisations (without overburdening them).

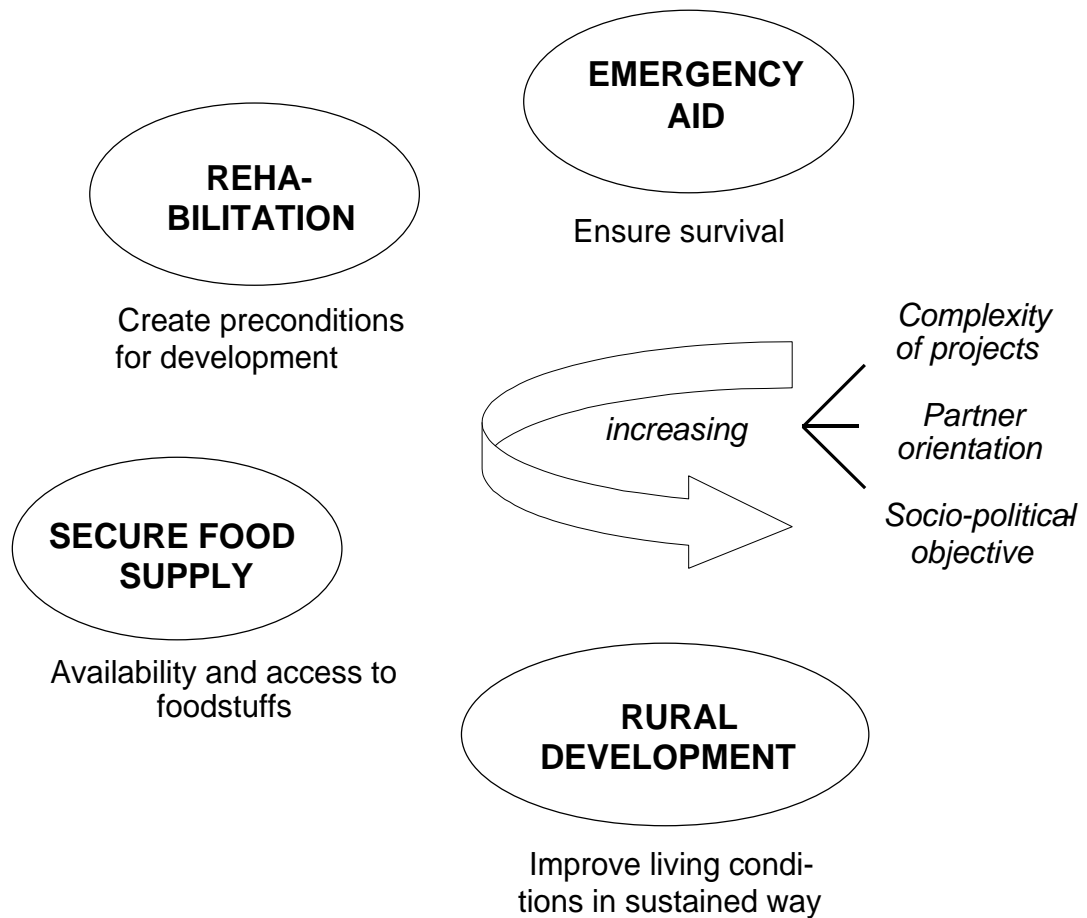
The sector 'Rural Development' in the DWHH project portfolio

Rural development constitutes a special sector in the project portfolio of DWHH. In the broad spectrum of co-operation - ranging from humanitarian aid to development co-operation - projects of this type are marked by a high degree of complexity, strong partner orientation and a clear socio-political objective (see illustration).

Various target groups and the multifarious causes of poverty - in part interrelated - require a multi-sectoral approach in planning rural development projects. Intending to adhere to the principles of fighting poverty and being oriented towards target groups in searching for solutions does not mean, however, that DWHH and its partners desire to focus on all existing problems. Taking a multi-sectoral approach means, rather, planning and designing project activities in such a manner that:

- they offer appropriate solutions for key problems of select target groups;
- existing resources and capacities of the local partner and DWHH are at the same time taken into account;
- all co-ordination possibilities with other government, non-government and private organisations in the project regions (especially with other donor organisations as well) are taken advantage of;
- they are integrated in a medium to long-term programme which allows different focal points to be set in different time phases.

Illustration 1: Positioning of Rural Development in DWHH's project portfolio



It is attempted to bring about synergy effects by linking several sectors - which make a more effective contribution to reducing poverty than mono-sectoral measures. However, this must be realistically balanced with organisational and co-ordination costs, which are usually higher.

The limited financial and human resources of DWHH and its partners on site do not allow any blanket coverage improvement in living conditions on the part of poor groups of the population, in contrast to what major, and especially government-promoted, development organisations are trying for, for example within the framework of regional-development projects. But on closer inspection this ostensible disadvantage turns out to be a comparative advantage: when there is no compulsion to distribute project

resources across an entire region, it is easier to concentrate on developing solutions to problems that can serve as models.

1.2 The role of DWHH and its partners in RD projects

In RD projects DWHH project partners, usually non-governmental organisations, and their target groups play the most important role: they design and develop the project concept, apply for their funding, render services themselves wherever possible, assume the responsibility for carrying out the projects and continuously monitor results and attainment of results and goals.

In support of the above activities the role to be played by the DWHH staff include:

- reviewing project proposals from partners, providing consultation if need be in revising them, or technical support in areas required to prepare for the project (situational analysis, planning, feasibility study);
- drafting project plans (and perhaps a modified cost and financing plan) for appraiser committees and the DWHH-Board to obtain approval for funding;
- writing co-financing proposals for public grants (BMZ, EU, etc.);
- administrating the allocated funds (call-up of funds, evidence of use, etc.);
- engaging in dialogue and consultations with partners on the execution of the projects (backstopping);
- reporting to co-financiers and commenting on evaluation reports.

1.3 The function of the concept paper

An RD project is a continuous process for all parties involved, and it is above all a learning process. Such a process needs to be not only target-oriented, it also needs to be creative and have as high a degree of flexibility as possible. These guidelines must therefore not be understood as a rigid set of instructions to be applied as a template to every project submitted for assessment and consideration. Rather, they are intended to provide orientation along the path to successful, target group-related RD projects that strengthen partners.

2 OBJECTIVES AND FRAMES OF REFERENCE OF RD PROJECTS

2.1 Objectives of RD projects

The distinction made in the following between overall goal, development goal and project purpose corresponds to the hierarchy of goals used in 'Objective Oriented Project Planning (OOPP)': Overall goals describe the strategic orientation, including the long-term desired effect of projects; development goals reflect the actual improvements in their situations desired by the target groups; and project purpose describe those changes in behaviour among target groups and institutions that are required for the achievements of development goals.

The **overall goal** in RD projects supported and co-designed by DWHH is the sustained improvement in the living conditions of poor population groups in rural areas. The stabilisation of living conditions can also be the top priority in RD projects in project regions having particularly unfavourable framework conditions, where disadvantaged groups are affected by increasing impoverishment.

The **development goals** vary with projects, depending upon actual improvements deemed to be particularly important by those involved. They may, for example, describe material benefits (e.g. increased income), social progress (e.g. improved basic education), or even political developments (e.g. increase in influential power of disadvantaged groups) - in accordance with the multifarious forms of poverty. These goals are set through a process of dialogue between target groups, project holder(s), DWHH and other co-operating actors, on the basis of a realistic assessment of the capacities of those involved.

The **project purposes** are directed towards the target groups' procedures of economically, environmentally and socially viable activities in the identified focal areas or sectors (see example).

**Project purpose for a DWHH-supported RD project in the Department of
Cauca, Columbia:**

"Farmers' organisations are actively involved in planning and carrying out activities to improve their living conditions (agricultural production, environmental production, defending democracy and human rights, improving their living conditions and basic supply of social goods) together with public and private institutions and taking into account the specific situation of women in their communities."

2.2 Spatial framework: regional reference

The geographic framework for RD projects is the region in its capacity of being an integral spatial unit which is for the most part homogeneous in social and agri-environmental terms. This is not only aimed at facilitating target group-specific planning, it also allows the replication of problem solutions within the region. Beyond this, project regions are also identified on the basis of:

- being located at local and below the national level in order to allow participatory planning and situation-specific solutions;
- being classified as an impoverished region in the national context so that models for fighting poverty can be developed and conveyed (e.g. through regional planning taking into account national exigencies);
- if possible corresponding with the government's administrative units (district, division, etc.) in order to enable some degree and form of administrative and institutional sustainability.

In RD projects focussing on natural resource management, sometimes a demarcation according to natural spatial features (watershed, valleys, etc.) can serve better as a reference unit than an administrative area.

2.3 Temporal framework: medium to long-term programme orientation

The objectives of RD projects are oriented towards changing behaviour and structures of target groups and institutions. Underlying this is usually a long process of searching for appropriate solutions to problems, organisational development and the institutionalisation of participatory planning, decision-making monitoring and evaluation. In addition, the intervention takes the multifarious causes of poverty into account and comprises several focal areas of promotion. All this requires a planning perspective which goes beyond the usual two to four-year project phases. A medium to long-term programme orientation means adapting the contractual terms for the support of multi-sectoral RD projects in such a manner as to:

- correspond to increased planning needs;
- make development processes possible whose progress and duration cannot be foreseen in precise terms;
- allow changes in behaviour to become inculcated before they become "self-perpetuating";
- not only create non-connected "islands of success" for the intended model formation, but also to allow measurable improvements to be attained for a quantitatively defined group;

- help results from earlier phases to be used in the planning of current activities.

A programme orientation in this context means that a comprehensive project approach is selected, but this does not mean that all measures have to be realised at the same time or within a single project phase. Focal points can be spread out to consecutively following phases depending upon resources and implementation capacities of project holders and target groups.

3 BASIC PRINCIPLES OF DWHH FOR DESIGNING AND PROMOTING RD PROJECTS

The basic principles which are to be explored in terms of their importance and contribution to attaining objectives are summarised in the following illustration.

These primarily involve the principles of fighting poverty and ensuring sustainability of development impacts, followed by the essential orientations with regard to target groups, gender, participation, self-help, capacity, networking and conflict management. This order does not indicate any prioritisation - the relevance of the "guiding lights" presented here can vary with context.

Illustration 2: Objectives and basic principles in planning and design of Rural Development projects

3.1 Fighting poverty

Fighting poverty means orienting all project activities towards enabling as many poor people in the project region as possible to satisfy their basic material and social needs by making use of diffusion effects from appropriate and target group-specific problem solutions. In particular this means that:

- RD projects may not offer any solutions which are relevant only for a small, select number of rural poor, and as a result, do not achieve any diffusion effect;
- in the case of unfavourable framework conditions, e.g. structurally constrained markets for products and inputs, targets must be reduced to ensuring subsistence and lower increases in income ("breadth" instead of "depth");
- support need not relate exclusively to poor groups, however, the inclusion of people who are better off in project activities must not be at the expenses of people who are already disadvantaged;
- RD projects must make a contribution to overcoming the social exclusion of poor groups of the population by supporting the development of civil society.

A contribution is also made to poverty-fighting when the so-called "poorest of the poor" (who only have limited potential to improve their living conditions on their own) are not directly reached by project activities. These groups are often more effectively aided by social programmes.

3.2 Sustainability

Orienting RD projects towards the principle of sustainability means designing all activities in such a manner so that improvements achieved in living conditions of poor groups of the populations continue to be effective after the project support ends. Simultaneously, at the heart of the issue is the focus on significantly improving the abilities of target groups to solve problems, and building and strengthening the required institutions to achieve objectives. They should reach levels of functioning that enables them to react adequately and flexible to changing conditions. This includes the ability:

- to secure income and other material necessities, even under changing framework conditions (economic sustainability);
- to maintain the natural foundations of life in the event of unfavourable external influences (environmental sustainability);
- to guarantee the availability of essentially required goods and services without external support (institutional sustainability).

3.3 Target-group orientation

The target-group orientation of RD projects takes into account the fact that the target group of rural poor is by no means homogeneous. They rather consist of sub-groups differing in terms of their resources, activities, potentials, constraints, problems, interests and needs. These differences may be of a social nature (for example, along the lines of social strata, age groups, vocational groups, etc.), gender-specific or also based on ethno-cultural differences (for example, manifested along the lines of language groups, caste, religious groups, etc.). A target-group orientation that takes socio-cultural homogeneity into account means that activities directed towards poverty reduction should be planned and designed in such a manner that they:

- particularly benefit disadvantaged and precisely described groups;
- address their specific needs and are based on a sufficient estimation of their specific know-how and capabilities;
- are not unreasonably at the expense of other groups, so that conflicts might be caused or exacerbated which the intended target group are unable to cope with.

A target-group orientation is, therefore, not only an integral element in poverty-oriented programme planning. By adapting activities to the people (instead of selecting people for activities), an important contribution is also made to the sustainability of RD projects.

3.4 Self-help orientation

The natural endeavour of people - especially as evidenced by poor groups of the population under the most difficult conditions on an everyday basis - to improve their living conditions through their own or joint efforts is the basis and take-off point for poverty-oriented and sustained project activities. A self-help orientation with RD projects thus means that:

- planned measures and activities are based on already existing (individual or social) initiatives on the part of target groups;
- initiated organisations and institutions are based as much as possible on already existing forms of self-organisation (neighbourhoods, groups of relatives, farmers' associations, etc.);
- the target groups' own responsibility for improving their living conditions continues to be strengthened without this leading to an unwarranted, transfer of excessive burdens on them;
- finding suitable ways to keep the self-help structures viable after the partner NGO and DWHH withdraw.

Development problems can frequently be best solved in a sustained manner by the people affected themselves - whether on an individual or community basis. A self-help orientation thus makes a direct contribution to the attainment of RD project goals. Indirectly and over the long term, a self-help orientation can help improve framework conditions in the sustained fight against poverty because this promotes the development of civil society in the project region.

3.5 Participatory orientation

In the context of RD projects, participation means: a partnership dialogue between the people involved, a sharing of decision-making and interest-representational power and joint responsibility for the attainment of the goals that have been set. This implies that:

- project planning is designed as a process to allow all actors, in particular target groups, to sufficiently articulate their interests and identify with the project;
- decisions and activities are co-ordinated in such a manner that the goals of all involved parties are taken into account as much as possible;
- control over the benefits of the project and necessary adjustments in programmes and strategies take place through a process of dialogue between target groups, project holders and DWHH.

When local knowledge are integrated into the planning process, project activities addressing the interest of the target groups, spaces are opened to learn together in a dialogue and appropriate structures are consolidated, a participatory orientation is a crucial contribution to the sustainability of RD projects.

3.6 Gender orientation

Gender-specific division of labour, the important role of women in the production process and last but not least the frequent disadvantaged position of women in society require that gender aspects be taken into account in RD projects. Project activities (including institutional arrangements) must in particular ensure that:

- both women and men have an influence on the planning and implementation of projects and are equitably able to draw benefits from them;
- the gender dimension is sensitive to women and men in terms of both taking into account concrete short-term needs (practical gender needs) and strengthening the representation of women's interests in the longer term (strategic gender needs).

Gender orientation as a cross-cutting principle to target-group orientation, participatory orientation and self-help orientation makes a crucial contribution to the fight against poverty.

3.7 Capacity orientation

The capacities of those involved in an RD project (DWHH, partners / project holders, target groups and other relevant actors) determine to a major extent the latitude for designing projects and thus, the possible magnitude and complexity of the project or programme. A capacity orientation means:

- making a realistic assessment of the potentials and constraints of those involved in the project with a view to their ability to execute it;
- integrating the strengthening of the partner capabilities and support for institution building in the project in order to expand the existing capacities;
- adjusting goals and tasks to fit to the available implementation and M&E capacities, which may include the lowering the goals, if need be, by concentrating on key areas.

A capacity orientation thus not only makes a significant contribution to institutional sustainability of RD projects - it actually also helps to reach the set goals.

3.8 Network orientation

RD projects supported by DWHH are very rarely the only development activities and their partners often not the only "development actors" in a region. As NGOs, neither DWHH nor its local partners usually have any major influence on framework conditions, which are determined by government actors. For this reason connections to those organisations having comparative advantages in this area (e.g. bilateral and multilateral donors) are to be striven for. At the same time the existing problems are usually too complex to be solved solely by supporting the partner project. A network orientation, whether contractually agreed upon or not subject to any contractual stipulations, means the following for DWHH and its partners:

- that RD projects are to be viewed from the outset within the overall context of development initiatives in the region, and at the same time also to establish contact with government offices and agencies early on;
- to refrain from promoting areas which are already being competently covered by others;
- to exchange information with other actors on development activities and the (sub)-regions in which they take place, and to co-ordinate efforts to deal with possible overlaps and gaps;
- to seek and use additional possibilities to co-operate with other actors.

For DWHH itself, networking also means co-ordinating efforts with other donor organisations wherever this appears to be possible and propitious. A network

orientation not only allows a more efficient application of resources while at the same time increasing the overall effectiveness of an RD project, it also facilitates positive interaction by mutual learning from the experiences of other actors. The DWHH country papers which exist for the major partner countries make here an important contribution to make DWHH's ideas regarding goals and focus areas transparent.

3.9 Crisis prevention and conflict management

Rural regions do not remain unaffected by conflicts of a political, religious, ethnic or other nature, or from struggles for resources. RD projects can strengthen polarisation and allow conflicts to become visible, especially in situations where the project activities support groups which have been marginalised thus far in pursuing political, social and economic aspirations. Supporting target groups does not always lead to constellations which provide compensation for the possible loss of power and/or resources of other actors in the region. Conflicts can definitely be of a productive nature in respect to the rural development goals if they can be anticipated and managed and do not lead to violent struggles.

There are a number of tools at the level of RD projects that allows to recognise the potential for violence in its incipient stage and design the project strategy in such a manner as to prevent them from erupting. The "do no harm" approach, which has been developed for planning and executing projects in conflict situations, assumes that there are conflict creating as well as reconciling actors and mechanisms in every society which can be strengthened or weakened by project activities. The task of project managers is to systematically analyse this environment and to determine what actions need to be taken. The frequency and depth of the analysis depends on the respective situation.

It is important here that two frequently held opinions are confronted:

- "Development work per se prevents conflicts": If this were the case, then some of the armed conflicts currently taking place would not exist. There is no correlation between the degree of development aid and the appearance of civil war-like conflicts.
- "Conflict prevention is an independent project approach": Conflict prevention is integrated in other project activities and should continue to be pursued as a cross-cutting task in all projects which operate in a respective context, as argued above.

4 TOOLS FOR PLANNING AND DESIGNING RD PROJECTS

The discussions in the following sections are aimed at serving as an orientation for the practical application of the described objectives and principles in planning and implementing rural development projects. They range from initial steps of data collection and appraisal to general requirements for designing project activities, and include important tools for supporting self-reliance and institution building within the framework of RD projects.

4.1 Analysis of the current situation

A detailed analysis of the current situation in the project region forms the basis for a high-quality conception of RD projects. Such an appraisal of the present situation carried out by the partner organisations, if need be with technical assistance from DWHH staff or external consultants, includes:

- description the poverty, res. the social situation in the project region;
- a system and problem-oriented target group and gender analysis;
- identifying and assessing the relevant political, economic, environmental and socio-cultural framework conditions;
- an analysis of capacities and constraints of the project holder and other relevant actors and institutions;

For the data-collection in this appraisal phase it is important to use analytical and participatory tools appropriate to the situation and task, while at the same time focusing on information of relevance to solving the identified problems (avoidance of 'data cemeteries').

Description of the social context and the poverty situation

The point of departure for an in-depth analysis of target groups is the analytical discrimination and categorisation of the population in the project region according to features relevant to poverty. Depending upon the specific context - especially taking into account the socio-cultural differences perceived by people themselves - these features may be of a social (family status, number of children, social status, level of education), socio-economic (income, land holdings, livestock holdings, production resources, living quality, access to the market) or ethno-cultural nature (religious affiliation, ethnic group, caste). The application of appropriate survey methods from the tool box offered by 'Rapid Rural Appraisal' (RRA) (e.g. wealth ranking, social mapping,

ethnic mapping) in conjunction with the assessment of relevant secondary data sources should allow to answer the following crucial questions:

- Which groups are worse off than others and particularly needy?
- Which groups are not reached by government or other private service systems?
- Which groups are especially affected by social exclusion?

Are the poorest groups of the population reached?

The use of "wealth grouping" in an RD project in Laos

In order to improve the benefits of the project especially for the poorest groups in the village community, it was investigated after one year which households in the village had mainly profited from the project activities. To do this the village committees in Laos, who usually represent the literate elite in the village, but also have responsibility for social needs and village development, were surveyed.

First all households were broken down into four income groups within the framework of a group discussion. The criteria for assigning these households were developed without any instructions, but in a relatively homogeneous manner in all the villages during the group discussion: land holdings, ownership of buffaloes, etc. The activities supported by the project were then written down for each household by the village supervisor, which showed that the poorest families especially were participating the least in the projects.

In an ensuing discussion the village community expressed the conviction that poor families could not make the contributions required. In response the promotional conditions were adapted together with the committees in such a manner as to ensure that in the following year the poorest families were much better represented in the activity planning.

In project regions with a great heterogeneity of the natural resources or other location factors a zoning of the population according to appropriate spatial features (highland area/low-lying area/central region/isolated sub-region, etc.) might be relevant and useful.

Target-group analysis

Participatory data-gathering methods are used in the target-group analysis (PRA – Participatory Rural/relaxed Appraisal, PNA – Participatory Needs Assessment, Sondeo, etc.). In addition to verification (may be even modification of the planning) they serve to categorise the population, in order to answer the following questions:

- What are the most important target group-specific problems and needs and how are they interrelated?
- What are the most important target group-specific potentials (including: know-how, ability and experience) and constraints and how are they interrelated?
- What are the most important organisational forms and structures of the target groups to be taken into account in designing project measures, especially in the area of promoting self-help to be integrated and used (neighbourhood groups, clan structures, co-operatives, hunting associations, etc.)?

It is, in addition, important to explore traditional relationships between (possible) target groups as well as their relations with other groups, like patronage relationships, dependent relationships and other such. This information is relevant to assess social acceptance, feasibility and the impact of project activities (see also 3.3).

Taking relationships between different ethnic groups into account within the framework of project planning in Mali

The "Western Timbuktu" project area in Mali is located in a sensitive environmental area: as a result of the creeping expansion of the Sahara in the Sahel zone, where living conditions are almost unendurable, with temperatures soaring over 40 °C, in some areas accompanied by cold nights, sandy soils and low amounts of rainfall. Different ethnic groups - Moors, Bellahs, Peulhs, Bambaras, Songrhais, Twaregs - live in this area. Over the centuries a sophisticated tradition of specialisation, division of labour and barter has developed among these groups. Thus the Twaregs, living in nomadic groups, traditionally engage in camel and cattle-raising. The Bellah, who cultivate the soil and raise goats, live in a patronage relationship with them. These settled agriculturists trade the crops they grow with the nomads for meat and leather. During the planning periods for the project traditional activities and relationships between the ethnic groups were observed and studied. The project takes into account the multifarious exchange and dependency relationships, so that the balance between ethnic groups in this region is not disturbed by giving excessive preference to one group. Well-building and repair as well as measures aimed at improving animal health benefit livestock-raisers, while the recovery of fertile low-lying soils benefits the farmers.

Gender analysis

The focal point in the gender analysis is first of all on the distribution of roles and tasks (in households, businesses and public life) and the socio-economic relationships between the sexes, and secondly on the specific needs of women and men. The most important questions asked in the analysis are thus:

- Who has access to, and control over, which resources (soil, means of production, know-how and skills, credit, supply and sales markets), including the possibility to build up individual equity?
- How are tasks and activities (daily as well as over the year) and the burdens resulting therefrom distributed – differentiated according to the work load in the production of goods and services?
- Who has the decision making power over goods, monetary income and food, how are these distributed, and who is responsible for rendering certain services (e.g. school money)?
- Who has what practical and strategic gender needs?

Gender analysis within the framework of a well-building project to supply drinking water in Afghanistan

In various villages wells with hand pumps were supposed to be built to supply the population with drinking water. The original planning called for wells to be installed in the proximity of mosques, which are especially frequented by males. As women are traditionally responsible for fetching water, however, a survey was conducted among women prior to the commencement of the project.

It turned out that the women preferred other locations to set up wells, as they do not have unrestricted access to public places such as mosques or bazaars. The wells were then built at locations which were accessible to all the inhabitants.

Analogous to the target group analysis, it is also important to conduct a discriminating gender analysis within the sexes (according to age, family status, socio-economic situation, etc.).

Analysing the framework conditions

In selecting the framework conditions to be analysed at national and regional levels, their importance to the attainment of the objectives in poverty-oriented RD projects is crucial. The following framework conditions apply and the accompanying questions usually need to be asked - even if in differing degrees according to the context:

(Macro-)economic framework conditions:

- What is the demand from available supply and sales markets?
- What is the purchasing power of the populations?
- How competitive are relevant agricultural and crafts products?

- What is the supply and demand situation on the local and regional labour and capital market? (In some situations also: How high is inflation? How high are wages? What is the situation regarding the foreign currency market?)

Socio-political framework conditions:

- What possibilities exist for taking the interest of disadvantaged groups (e.g. market power, political representation) adequately into account and which mechanisms (e.g. clientelism) ensure this?
- What opposing interests are there with respect to access to resources and markets?
- What is the relationship between the government and the rural population (e.g. paternalism)?
- How is the government bureaucracy organised and oriented (e.g. vertical-sectoral structures, process-oriented)?

Environmental framework conditions:

- What are the climatic and natural spatial conditions like?
- In what condition are the natural resources and what changes are they undergoing (e.g. deforestation, soil degradation)?
- What factors influence these changes (e.g. pressure from use, ownership and usage rights)?

Infrastructural framework conditions:

- What infrastructural facilities (e.g. hospitals, schools, transportation routes and linkages, energy and water supply) are there and what condition are they in?

Socio-cultural framework conditions:

- What preferences (e.g. in favour of securing their subsistence) do the target groups have?
- What importance do social relationships have?
- What logic governs action within existing incentive systems?
- How relevant are certain norms and rules to individual decisions on production and consumption?
- How relevant is the membership in ethnic, regional or religious groups?

In individual cases it needs to be assessed to what extent the project strategy must or can be adapted to unfavourable framework conditions or influence their (partial) change.

Adaptation of the project concept to framework conditions in Peru

Example 1: Reaction to the competitive situation in sales markets in a fruit-cultivation project

The original project idea of promoting small-farm fruit cultivation by rehabilitating the irrigation infrastructure was related to the fruits (apples and grapes) which had been cultivated for the market in the capital city of Lima thus far. Within the framework of a preliminary evaluation it became apparent that these types of fruits were subject to strong competition from imported fruits (from Chile). For this reason the project concept was adjusted by including a market-oriented diversification of the trees to be cultivated.

Example 2: Adaptation to increased pressure from use and legal insecurity in a resource management project in native and settler communities in the Amazon region

Traditionally a brief phase of use followed by ten years of lying fallow were practised on tropical soils in the Amazon region. In the wake of increased migration the pressure on soils which can be used for agriculture became greater and greater. A shortening of the fallow period is definitely possible over the medium term using proper agricultural techniques and selecting appropriate cultivation systems. As farmers do not have fixed usage rights to the soil and thus must expect that they will be evicted at any time, they were not prepared, however, to invest in the improvement of the foundations of their production. Willingness on the part of the target population to cultivate the land on a sustained, permanent basis was able to be gained by initiating a process where farmers would receive formal recognition from communities and, based on this, awarded title to land (thus providing legal security) and receiving support within the framework of the project.

Analysis of the organisational structures in the project area

The analysis and understanding of the organisational aspects of the organisations active in the project area serves as the basis for decisions relating to organisational co-ordination and institutional development. This analysis is less directed towards the capacities of individual organisations but towards the identification and assessment of the organisational setting in the project area. This requires the following questions to be answered:

- Which services (institutions) are lacking in the area?
- To what extent do the organisations co-ordinate their activities?
- How are tasks, responsibilities and capacities shared among holders?
- To what extent are the activities based on the principle of subsidiarity?

Such an analysis includes a comparative assessment of various organisations which could be assigned with the proposed task and, if applicable, identification of actual possibilities for co-operation between organisations.

Co-operation with the government health service in India

In the Tumkur agro-forestry project in southern India a high rate of malaria was found among the population. The outbreaks of the illness meant that the physical performance expected from the target group in the area of land cultivation, planting and caring for trees could only be insufficiently rendered. In order to guarantee the success of the project, the project team found itself having to include the health problem in its further deliberations.

Within the framework of the holder analysis, the regional government health authorities were identified and contact was sought with them. With the aid of the local health service a programme providing treatment was formulated while measures to combat spread of the disease and an information campaign for prevention purposes were carried out while the project also was able to use the logistics for the government extension officers. As a result of this experience, similar campaigns to combat malaria were then also carried out in the surrounding villages.

Project holder analysis

Like the analysis of framework conditions, the analysis of the organisational structures of project holders also precedes the preliminary decision on project objectives and activities. Capacities and the suitability of organisations for securing a proper implementation of a planned support programme can only be assessed with a view to the specific tasks.

In assessing the capabilities of organisations it is best to identify, firstly, the major deficits (and the constraints surrounding these deficits) which are relevant for the envisaged programme, and secondly, the potential of these organisations to overcome these constraints.

The interrelationships between inputs (resources) and outputs (activities and services) of the organisation need to be taken into account, along with how this is managed (management system, information system). Such a system orientation enables a better appraisal of the workability and effects of intended project activities.

4.2 Target-group specific planning of activities

Adjusting project activities to conform to specific needs, potentials and constraints of target groups first of all requires a decision to be made on whom or which (distinguishable) groups of the population should be supported. In determining these target groups, the following questions should be asked:

- Is there a need to provide support and are the problems relevant in respect to poverty alleviation?
- Is it possible to provide support? In other words, are there objective possibilities to improve the situation by means of project support (constraints which can be overcome and potentials which can be used)?
- Are the target groups capable and willing to participate and take the ownership? In other words, is there sufficient potential for independent development?

Designing activities to conform to target groups does not mean providing special groups special packages of support (farmers with small holdings of less than one hectare, women with small children, etc.). Dividing people into groups for 'administrative purposes' is not only difficult, it is often not practical because the local population may not appreciate this for social reasons (especially if it were of a type that could exacerbate conflicts). The task, rather, is to adapt project activities so that they are in principle available to everyone, but primarily conform to the specific situation of disadvantaged groups (self-targeting). Such an adaptation can take place in multiple ways, for instance:

- By basing decisions on what programmes to support on an assessment of needs (e.g. activities in the health area only if this is a special concern of a large number of poor women;
- By the technical adaptation of project support to meet the specific conditions characterising subsistence production such as, for instance, labour bottlenecks at certain times of year, small size of land holdings, etc.
- By setting conditions for the access of support rendered by the project (e.g. inputs, loans) so that no particular group of persons is excluded, but the conditions themselves make the use of the programme particularly interesting and possible for economically weaker sections;
- Through institutional adaptation, for instance by co-ordinating the times when information and counselling meetings take place with the times most convenient for women to participate in them, or by adapting loan conditions to the special conditions of farmers with small holdings;
- Adapting project activities to the specific needs of target groups, e.g. basic education instead of continuing education, motivation instead of information.

Self-targeting activities to promote the use of fertiliser in Kenya

In order to counter the increasing exhaustion of the soil in western Kenya as a result of permanent cultivation without adding nutrients to the soil, the project developed a marketing strategy co-ordinated with the needs and capacities of farmers with small holdings - as a complementing activity for extension on organic fertiliser. The so-called 'mini packs' basically involve repackaging the 50-kg bags common in the commercial sector (and only obtainable in certain regions) into small 100, 200 and 1000-gramme bags and offering these in local stores within walking distance of the target group.

This programme not only takes into account the limited availability of land on very small farms and the limited purchasing power of the local population - it also especially conforms to the local population's need for small 'trial quantities' which, as a result of the complete absence of experience with yield-increasing fertilisers, is particularly pronounced. At the same time better-off farmers are not excluded from this programme, but they do not benefit from it, either, as the purchase of small quantities is not attractive to them.

Designing programmes to impact favourably on women additionally requires that the possible effects of male-oriented activities on the situation of women be comprehensively taken into account, e.g. the work load, the income and status changes as a result of project initiated programmes. Positive trickle-down effects cannot be simply inferred - rather precise planning is required. It is the responsibility of planners of RD projects to make sure that problems faced by women are not further reinforced and certainly not newly created through the project activities.

4.3 Developing appropriate solutions

The main question to be asked in looking for a context appropriate solution to a problem is: how can a sustained improvement in the living conditions of poor groups of the population best be achieved taken into account the economic, political, environmental and socio-cultural framework conditions? Some typical questions which need to be asked when designing appropriate approaches and activities are:

- What production structure - more diversified/more specialised? - will be best suited to meet the food security and food preference needs of smallholder households and simultaneously adapt well to the prevailing natural conditions as well as to the supply and demand situation on local and regional markets,?
- Which production intensities - more labour-intensive/more capital-intensive? - best correspond to factor-price relations and local resource availability?

- What resource usage systems conform best to local conditions and are the most sustainable, take existing property rights and usage rights into account and link up best to traditional know-how and the experience of farmers with small holdings?
- What organisational forms of the target groups - existing/to be created - are best suited to carry out the respective tasks. If new organisational forms are required, can they be locally managed? Might they ruffle local sensibilities?

Taking into account traditional forms of organisation in Peru

In its participative project planning and execution, the Peruvian partner NGO in the Andes region concentrates on traditional organisational structures such as the *comunidades campesinas* and traditional community forms such as *Ayllus*, *Ayni* or *Minga*. Beyond this Incan terms from the Quechua language group are also used (such as, for example, *Kamayaq*).

The search for solutions that meet the demand of the situation and that can be sustained always implies a careful assessment of the possibilities for adaptation on the one hand and for overcoming existing constraints on the other. Thus, for example, the problem of low soil productivity can be dealt with either by applying, or by improve the usage of organic fertiliser, or even by opting to cultivate less-demanding pants. In such strategic decisions it is important that services and production resources are not subsidised by the project holder. Rather, the possible access of the target groups to these services must be improved or disseminated.

4.4 Participatory project management

The active participation of target groups - women as well as men - in all phases of the project is the general guideline for the management of RD projects promoted by the DWHH. In particular this means:

- Target group involvement in surveying and analysing the current situation with regard to problems, potentials and needs. Village gatherings, special occasions when disadvantaged groups usually come together (e.g. with child-inoculation campaigns by health authorities in the field, in which especially poor women with small children participate), private house visits for direct 'kitchen table' discussions – all of them can serve well as occasions for survey and situation analysis.
- Participation in the development of appropriate solutions to problems and planning of activities. Suitable tools for this are, for example, participatory research and technology development, joint planning workshops with target groups, technical counselling in planning self-help initiatives, etc.

- Participation in the implementation of activities, e.g. through physical and financial contributions on the part of target groups, through joint monitoring during the implementation, etc.
- Participation in ongoing monitoring of progress and in elaborating recommendations for adjusting plans using participatory M&E and also participatory impact monitoring.

Participatory research in Kenya

In order to provide the target group of small holders with the best possible recommendations and at the same time offer practical demonstration for interested members of the village population, the project staff first set up demonstration fields with previously identified 'contact farmers' to whom various seed, various combinations and intensities of fertiliser and various forms of plant protection are tested to see if they are suited for the respective sites. The close collaboration and joint learning with contact farmers is aimed at putting these in a position over the medium term to allow them to render qualified counselling services to their neighbours after the project is over as well.

Participatory observation of impact in India

In collaboration with the partner NGO and the Seminar for Rural Development in Berlin, a participatory impact-monitoring system was developed and implemented in 1998 to allow economic, socio-cultural and environmental changes in the target groups to be continuously and systematically monitored and to actively include this while reflecting upon and assessing the changes observed. This allows continuous monitoring of whether and to what degree the projects attain their objectives and whether possible undesirable effects come about requiring adjustment in the plan or even a change in the project concept.

The crucial importance of target-group participation to the success - and especially the sustainability - of poverty-oriented RD projects requires their unrestricted and broad application: there must not be isolated 'participation islands' in the course of the project (participation of target groups in a few 'model villages') nor can there be token actions taken in the project planning, for example, exclusively surveying farmers who happen to walk by on short visits to the project region, or the formal participation of a few 'representatives of the target groups' in large-scale OOPP workshops. If an appropriate intensity of participation cannot be guaranteed with existing resources (number of project personnel, their skills, project term), appropriate changes must be made in the planning, e.g. a decrease in the project region, an increase in the number of staff, the provision of additional resources for training, etc..

4.5 Promoting self-help

The transfer of management tasks to the target groups within the framework of participatory planning, implementation and evaluation (in conformity with the principle *'do not for the communities what the communities can do themselves'*) creates the precondition for self-reliance on the part of individuals and communities for sustained improvement in various aspects of their livelihood.

An important additional instrument to strengthen self-help capacities of target groups is to be found in the situation-specific initiation and promotion of self-help groups (SHG) and organisation (SHO). Apart from other objectives, self-help organisations are forming a potential to reduce the gap between target groups and the (government and private) service system. However care must be taken to avoid over-organisation, overburdening and a lack of target orientation. This means:

- deciding on promoting the formation of SHGs/SHOs and on their concrete organisational structure exclusively on the basis of a detailed problem analysis and on the specific objectives and purpose of the organisation, as institutional sustainability can otherwise not be attained;
- adhering to the principle of subsidiarity, which means that SHGs/SHOs should be promoted only if they are really more efficient than individuals on the one hand and government service organisations on the other;
- taking into account basic conditions for keeping SHGs/SHOs functional, such as, for instance, a sound relationship between organisational expenses and benefits for the members, homogeneity of the interests of the members, an optimum size of organisation, etc.

In general, activities for institution building (education and training, management counselling, etc.) should be assigned priority, and complementary services only be offered to well-functioning SHGs/SHOs (e.g. matching funds for savings and credit groups with sufficient management experience and substantial capital stock of their own).

Structure and promotion of savings and loan groups in Karnataka, India

The rural development project in Holalkere has for years been supporting and counselling poor women in their self-help organisation. The starting point is the establishment of savings and loan groups. The most important support activities of the project staff for the self-help groups are group formation, literacy and bookkeeping courses, basic training in finance, conflict counselling and aid in establishing contacts with government administration, counselling, commerce and banking supports.

Only when the self-help groups have reached sufficient stability (minimum savings and as a result successfully management of internal group loans) are project funds used. Social and economic development activities can then be based on the financial and organisational skills acquired. This approach has proven to be very successful.

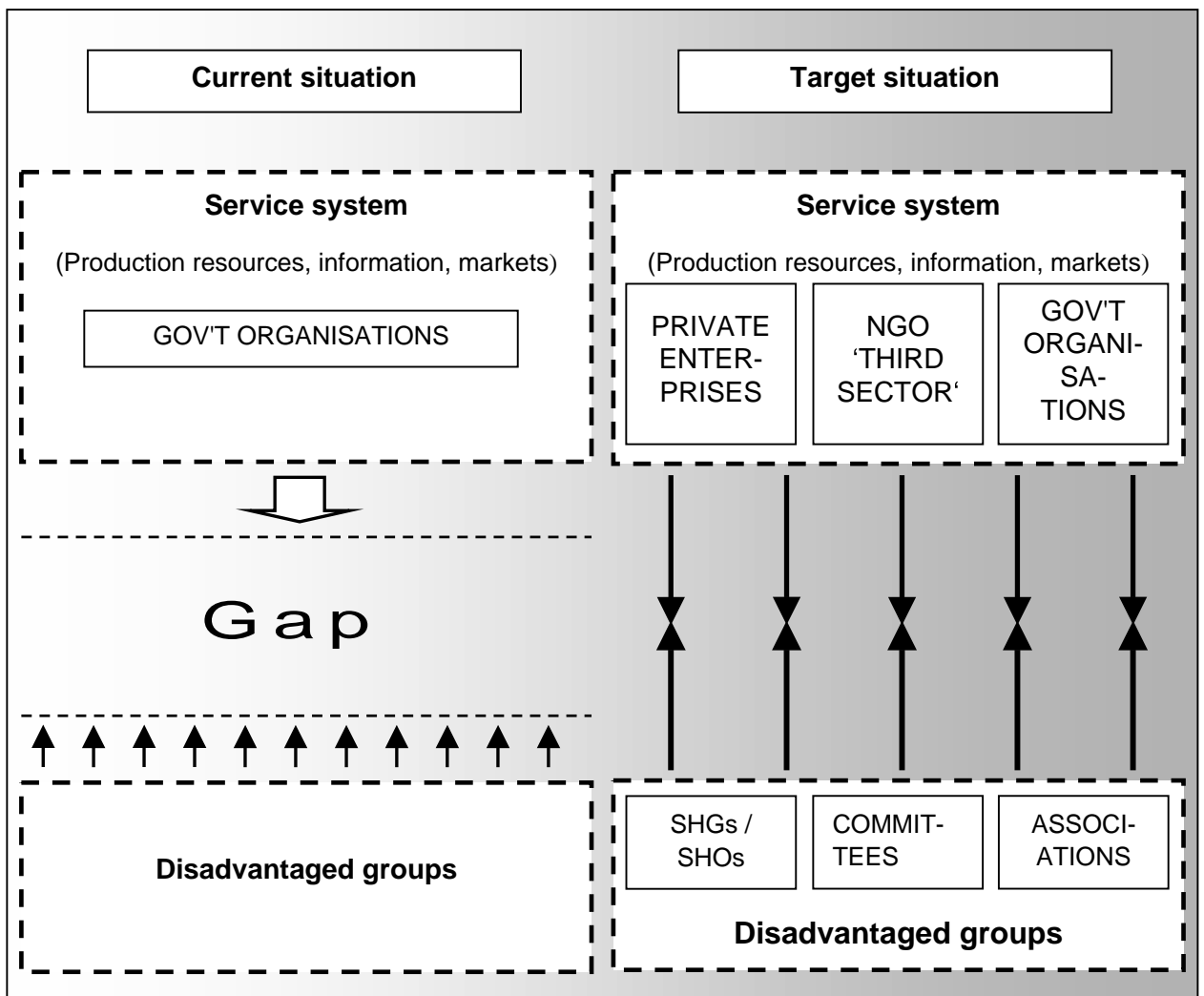
The experience of the past has shown what features characterise stable, well-functioning self-help groups in India:

- the groups must be small (not more than 25 members);
- they must be economically and socially homogeneous; mutual trust is important;
- the groups must have enough latitude to make individual arrangements, but there also needs to be a certain formalisation (books must be kept, loan agreements must be concluded);
- participation in meetings and savings must be regular; in order to achieve this, the groups have in some cases instituted severe sanctions for being in arrears on repayment or for inappropriate behaviour on the part of members.

4.6 Supporting institution building

Strengthening the problem solving capacities of organisations which provide supportive services and improving the overall institutional structure in the project region are complementary elements in developing a pluralistic and effective organisational framework condition for rural development. Important individual components in this overall strategy, whose goal is to strengthen the interest-representation power of disadvantaged groups of the population while at the same time improving the efficiency of the service system (see illustration), are:

Illustration 3: Strengthening the interest-representation power of disadvantaged groups in connection with improving the service system



Source: RAUCH 1996, p.186 (slightly altered)

- Strengthening the capacities of the implementing partner organisations through organisational development inputs (human resources development, management counselling, etc.) so that they can remain as contact partners for the target groups in the project regions, at least over the medium term, and support successful approaches in neighbouring regions as well. However, it must also be recognized that there are limits to increasing efficiency in any given situation. An objective assessment of possibilities and prospects can also lead to a reduction in the spatial and sectoral scope of the RD project to a realistic scale.
- Promotion of other organisations in the project region, either by the DWHH itself or through its partners, whereby the emphasis is not so much on enlarging these

organisation, but rather on increasing their effectiveness while maintaining the capacity.

- Situation-related application of the principle of subsidiarity (what grass-roots organisations can do need not be done by the state, and what individuals or individual businesses can perform better need not be performed by grass-roots organisations, etc.).
- Institutionalisation of participation-oriented planning, co-ordination and decision-making mechanisms (e.g. introduction of public decisions, round tables, decentralised development committees), the creation of neutral negotiating forums and activation of local conflict-solution mechanisms, especially within the field of resource management.
- Promotion of networking between self-help groups and organisations (e.g. by initiating and promoting federating structures) and between grassroots organisations and government and non-governmental service systems (e.g. linking local savings and loan groups to the formal banking system).

In order to assure behaviours needed for the sustainability of the results of RD projects', the support of learning processes at organisations and target groups form the focal point for all institution building support activities. This means that:

- Tools of participatory action research, on-farm research, participatory extension are promoted and used;
- Training workshops for enhancing practical and methodological knowledge and capabilities (skill training, learning workshops, facilitation courses) are conducted;
- Make exposure possible for project personnel and target groups and provide learning material in this respect;
- Participatory monitoring and evaluative approaches are introduced and continued.

If all those directly involved in an RD project – target groups, project holders and DWHH – see this as not only being a package of technical project activities, but understand it to be an especially dynamic process and a common learning forum, a big step will have been taken in the direction of sustained development.

GLOSSARY

Poverty

Poverty is a situation characterised by social exclusion of people from satisfying their basic economic, social and cultural needs. Poverty has both an individual and a social dimension: **individual poverty** is also the case when there is no possibility for a person to realise their right to sufficient and healthy nutrition, to secure and clean drinking water, to adequate clothing and living space, to have a family, and to a long life, to education and training, cultural development, social security, protection from economic and social exploitation and last, but not least, their right for access to markets of importance to their development (labour market, capital market). **Social poverty** accordingly designates lack of integrative social relationships, networks, social institutions and groups, social values, standards and rules.

Gender

This term refers to socially designed roles, i.e. socially determined rights and obligations, of women and men. These are subject to constant change and vary depending upon social strata, age and ethnic group.

Capacity

Capacity means the ability of persons and institutions to perform certain tasks, which is determined by the availability of financial and material resources (including available manpower) and through existing human capital in the form of know-how, practical skills, attitudes and consciousness. Capacity can generally be changed (or increased), but cannot be indefinitely expanded as desired.

Sustainability

Sustainability, understood as the constancy of material, environmental or social conditions and changes, especially designates the capability of systems (ecological systems, small farms, households, service organisations, etc.) and the subjects influenced by these to independently and flexibly adapt to changing external influences and conditions. Sustainability of development projects thus comprises four dimensions: **economic sustainability** means the fixed feature of producing goods or services to flexibly react to changing market conditions. **Environmental sustainability** means the long-term preservation of the productive potential of natural resources (soil, water,

animals and plants). **Institutional sustainability** designates the permanent capability of (local) organisational structures and regulative mechanisms (grassroots organisations and groups, private and state service organisations, marketing structures, planning and target group participation processes, etc.). **Behaviour-oriented sustainability** ultimately means the permanent ability of target groups and actors connected with them to solve problems independently.

Participation

In the context of development projects, participation means the crucial participation of *target groups* in formulating project objectives and planning and assessing projects and the (main) responsibility for implementation of the project. With regard to the intended civil-society development, participation moreover means influence on the part of disadvantaged groups of the population on social and political processes, usually using forms of self-help organisation.

Self-help and self-help organisations

Self-help means any form of efforts by people themselves to improve their living situation. Helping people help themselves accordingly means promoting these efforts by means of external support (this means by necessary supplementary support). Self-help organisations are amalgamations of people with the purpose of jointly endeavouring to improve their living situation. Depending upon their specific objectives and tasks, these amalgamations can be of a formal or informal nature (the latter is frequently referred to as self-help groups) and exist over the short or long term.

Socio-cultural heterogeneity

Socio-cultural heterogeneity refers to social, gender-specific or ethno-culturally related differences between those involved in a development project and groups affected by them while taking into account differences perceived by the actors themselves and the relationship of the target groups to neighbouring groups.

Target groups

Target groups are different sub-groups of the overall population differentiated according to certain features in the area of a project or programme which are supposed to ultimately benefit from the planned activities. At the same time a distinction must be made between direct target groups which the project activities are aimed at, indirect target groups, who benefit indirectly from the project activities, and implementation

target groups, who are not supported because of their needs, but rather because they are important to achieve the priority development objectives of the project or programme.

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