

LEARNING
AND
DECENT WORK
FOR ALL

***NEW DIRECTIONS IN
TRAINING AND EDUCATION FOR
PRO-POOR GROWTH***

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The accelerating rate of globalisation in the 21st century presents increasingly complex and demanding challenges. These challenges are not only economic, but also social and political if benefits of global growth are to be equitable between and within countries, and hence truly sustainable. It is now widely recognised that although globalisation has the potential to deliver benefits for all, it may also significantly increase global poverty and inequality. The degree to which globalisation will benefit the poor will depend crucially on the types of policies introduced in order to complement and build on market growth, and to address underlying inequalities in power and resources which significantly distort the ways in which markets operate.

Since the end of the 1990s international agreements and policy debates have increasingly focused on the concept and imperatives for ‘pro-poor growth’. In these debates Human Resources Development is seen as playing a key role. Education and training are explicitly part of the pro-poor growth framework in many multilateral development agencies, including ILO, UNDP, the World Bank and bilateral agencies like DFID, SDC and CIDA. Skills development and training for the informal and formal sectors are an essential component of the ILO’s Decent Work policy framework. This includes explicit attention to the needs of particularly excluded and disadvantaged people including women, the extremely poor, the disabled and ethnic minorities.

In the context of changing production systems there is increasing recognition of the pivotal role of both education and training for both economic and social goals. No society can succeed in a globalised environment unless people have adequate knowledge and skills. These are vital not just for maintaining competitiveness and ensuring adaptable and productive enterprises, but also for achieving personal and social development. In particular, a well functioning system of education and training enhances both economic and social integration by offering opportunities to many groups who would otherwise be excluded from the labour market. This is especially important for promoting gender equality and overcoming many forms of discrimination (ILO, 1999).

Moreover education and training are not only instrumental to economic growth, but also a basic human right, explicitly mentioned in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and many other international and regional agreements and national constitutions (the ILO Recommendation concerning human resources development: education, training and lifelong learning, 2004). Training and skills development are included in the standard definition of ‘basic education for all’ agreed at the Jomtien Conference in 1990 which covered ‘all the skills and knowledge that people need if they are to lead a decent life’. These ‘basic learning needs’ include not only early childhood education and primary schooling, but literacy, vocational and other training for youth and adults to provide basic life and employment skills (Bennell, 1999).

However, throughout the 1990s, funding for training and skills development decreased, despite official commitments in many development agencies to Human Resource Development and poverty reduction. Some Northern industrialised countries continued a commitment to subsidised provision of lifelong learning and training as an integral part of

national economic policies to increase their competitiveness in the global economy. This has often included specific programmes for disadvantaged groups like youth, women and the long-term unemployed. However in Southern low income countries:

- Public expenditure on basic education, skills development and training was seriously curbed in the context of structural adjustment policies and liberalisation.
- Poverty-targeted assistance was focused on provision of minimalist microfinance. Funding for integrated or complementary non-financial services, including training, was substantially decreased.
- Human Development budgets in major donor agencies focused largely on primary education programmes rather than skills for work (WB, 1995; UNICEF, 1998; Bennell, 1999).
- Although a few programmes have been introduced for ‘lifelong learning’ and ICT these do not reach the very poor.

Towards the end of the 1990s, and increasingly in recent years, there began to be some renewed interest in the need for training and skills development. This was partly because of increasing evidence of the shortcomings of minimalist microfinance for poverty reduction, and particularly for enterprise development. A combination of shrinking aid budgets and documented evidence of limited impact and effectiveness of much publicly funded skills development and training led to a focus on market solutions and (following debates in micro-finance) on financial sustainability. This has taken a number of specific forms:

- Training focusing on entrepreneurship rather than technical skills.
- Apprenticeship schemes through private enterprises for technical training.
- Market-led financially sustainable Business Development Services targeted at small and medium entrepreneurs in which training is one element.
- Voucher schemes to combine some degree of poverty targeting with trainee choice.

However, despite the now universal commitment to Human Resource Development and pro-poor growth, funding for training programmes for the poor continues to decline.

The market focus on demand-led services, partnership with the private sector and cost-recovery have been important advances on many earlier subsidised programmes in terms of meeting the needs of certain groups of entrepreneurs and employees in a more sustainable and cost-effective manner. Systematic poverty assessments of these market-based training programmes remain to be done. Assessments have focused mainly on financial sustainability. In some cases there are estimates of enterprise/job creation and overall outreach, but with no discussion of poverty-targeting or poverty impact. Nevertheless, it is clear that the design of the programmes fail to address the training challenge faced by very low income women and men. Enterprise training is designed mainly for small and medium-

scale entrepreneurs and the methods and models of management promoted do not meet the needs of very poor entrepreneurs. Apprenticeship schemes generally fail to address the training needs of employees for a time-efficient and thorough grounding in production skills. In some cases they amount to little more than a means for employers to get subsidised and very cheap labour. Market-led BDS do not meet the needs of very poor entrepreneurs or employees and often excludes them. There has been no empirical examination of the underlying assumptions of trickle-down of benefits at the small enterprise level to employees and micro-enterprises down the value chain.

Crucially, although women make up the majority of the very poor, training interventions continue to see them as a marginal and special case. For poor women gender inequality compounds the constraints of poverty. Women have much more difficulty controlling household resources to invest in their own skills for enterprise or career development. Women are generally excluded from private apprenticeship in more lucrative 'male' industries. Mainstream enterprise training and interventions rarely discuss gender issues and gender discrimination within value chains and households. This is despite the serious constraints these pose for industrial upgrading, household poverty reduction and livelihood development.

Parallel to these mainstream debates about the best mix of subsidised and market approaches, there have been many small-scale project-level innovations in poverty-targeted training methods and content, particularly in female-targeted projects. These have included:

- Integration of life skills, gender awareness and empowerment into livelihood and entrepreneurship training.
- Participatory methods which focus on participant bottom-up learning rather than top-down 'expert' training and which are accessible to illiterate people.
- Integrated programmes of livelihood development and literacy training for very poor and illiterate people.
- Training as part of a set of poverty-targeted programme strategies including micro-finance, marketing support, organizational strategies and macro-level advocacy.
- Integration of empowerment skills with programme impact assessment.
- Skills upgrading targeting different levels of particular economic sectors: employees, outworkers and upstream enterprises as part of an integrated pro-poor sectoral approach in these sectors.
- Training which attempts to address broader political empowerment and civil society development.

In many cases two or more of these elements have been combined. However, these innovations have so far been marginal in donor-level debates and also funding.

SUMMARY DETAILS OF INNOVATION IN THE SELECTED PROGRAMME CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY 1: TANGAIL INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PROJECT, BANGLADESH

- Poverty targeted training for female road maintenance workers in livelihood diversification and empowerment

CASE STUDY 2: SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE TRAINING NETWORK (SATNET) AND KABAROLE RESEARCH AND RESOURCE CENTRE (KRC), UGANDA

- Sustainable agriculture training for both women and men
- Integration of gender training into mainstream training

CASE STUDY 3: ANANDI, INDIA

- Skills training for women in non-traditional activities
- Area networking and mutual learning through fairs or 'melas'

CASE STUDY 4: ACONSUR, PERU

- Skills and enterprise training for increasing the benefits and negotiating power of women in the context of industry upgrading

CASE STUDY 5: SOCIETY FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TEXTILE FIBRES (SODEFITEX), SENEGAL

- Combined literacy and livelihood training geared to the needs of a particular subsector

CASE STUDY 6: SOMALILAND EDUCATION INITIATIVE FOR GIRLS AND YOUNG MEN (SEIGYM), SOMALIA

- Voucher programme for accessing a diversity of training, including literacy and livelihoods and including specialist training for particularly disadvantaged groups like the disabled

CASE STUDY 7: WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME (WEP), NEPAL

- Participatory training for women's empowerment in the context of a micro-finance programme

CASE STUDY 8: INTERNAL LEARNING SYSTEM, INDIA

- Diary system for self-learning for individuals and groups integrated into programme monitoring and evaluation in micro-finance programmes

APPENDIX: PARTICIPATORY ACTION LEARNING SYSTEM, UGANDA, INDIA AND SUDAN

- Diagram-based action learning for livelihood development, organizational development, advocacy and programme planning, monitoring and evaluation

This paper argues that the recent small-scale innovations deserve much greater consideration and funding in any serious and coherent strategy for pro-poor growth. The paper builds on current debates and evidence from a number of donor agencies including ILO, World Bank,

DFID and GTZ¹ and also secondary source material from NGOs and the author's own research:

- Part 1 provides an overview of current debates and evidence in relation to training and skills development for pro-poor growth and proposes a framework for examining training needs.
- Part 2 discusses in detail the poverty impacts and broader implications of the experience of eight innovative training and skills development programmes for which sufficient information was available to the author at the time of writing (see summary).
- Part 3 summarises the main conclusions in relation to potential ways forward to improve the content, targeting, and institutional framework for training and skills development for poor and very poor women and men.

Appendix 1 discusses a new diagram-based methodology: Participatory Action Learning System being developed by the author with a number of NGOs in India, Uganda and Sudan. Although the methodology is too new to have been systematically evaluated, preliminary piloting indicates that the methodology could be usefully integrated into the other types of training discussed here.

Poverty assessments have not been systematically done for all the case studies and the studies cited were often commissioned for other purposes. However, it is unlikely that the case studies discussed are the only important examples of innovation.² There is sufficient evidence from these Case Studies and anecdotal evidence from other programmes to indicate that such programmes are an effective and potentially significant contribution to pro-poor growth and the Decent Work Agenda. Although undoubtedly in all cases further improvements and refinements can be made, they point to the possibility of developing effective:

- **Content of training** to equip poor women and men to take advantage of the opportunities in the rapidly changing economic and social environment. It means training which addresses basic numeracy, literacy and analytical skills to enable very poor people to take advantage of emerging opportunities and decrease their vulnerability within the market. It means not only technical or enterprise skills training, but ensuring that skills are relevant to markets and can be adapted to market changes over time. It also requires integration of negotiation and organizational skills to address underlying forms of inequality and discrimination because of gender, ethnicity, age and disability.
- **Methodologies** for training to make them more accessible to the poorest women and men who work in the informal, as well as formal, sectors. This means accessible to women and

¹ In particular for ILO the other papers from the InFocus programme on Skills, Knowledge and Employability, the Occasional Papers from the International Training Centre in Turin, the Training Policy and Employability programme and Training Partnerships Country Studies. For the World Bank the studies commissioned for the Working Group for International Cooperation in Vocational and Technical Skills. For DFID the papers commissioned under the 'Learning to Compete' programme. All available from the respective agency websites.

² See for example discussions of the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in India obtained from references on their website: www.sewa.org.

men with very low levels of numeracy and literacy. It means rethinking methodologies so that the training process itself develops skills for participatory organization and analytical thought. It entails adapting delivery of training to the time and resource availability of the target groups. Crucially it entails a change in the power and status relationship between trainer and trainee, whereby trainers facilitate the building of trainee confidence and questioning and see themselves as ‘learners about poverty and the strategies of poor people’, rather than top-down imposition of ‘solutions for the ignorant.’

- **Integration of training** into other dimensions of programme delivery, in particular micro-finance and impact assessment. The recent shift to minimalist micro-finance is not necessarily the most effective or cost-efficient means of poverty reduction and misses a very important potential means for cost-effective delivery of training. The large amounts of money currently spent on ‘expert’ external monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment could be used to develop effective information systems for ongoing participant action learning and programme innovation.³ These innovations in poverty-targeting in small-scale projects also have valuable lessons for ways of integrating poverty targeting into larger-scale ‘mainstream’ programmes.

The current official commitment to equitable Human Resource Development requires a shift in funding priorities to investment in training and skills development for the poor as an integral part of the pro-poor growth agenda. The content of ‘market-led’ services needs to be redefined to incorporate not only the technical and managerial skills directly required by enterprises for their market competitiveness and survival, but also the basic and life skills needed by the poor in order to negotiate and manage livelihoods in response to market opportunities and constraints. It requires a serious commitment to target and design innovative training for the very poor, including paths for upward mobility to other types of training. It requires a rethinking of ways in which poverty-targeted training can be integrated into other types of pro-poor interventions like literacy, micro-finance and sub-sector development, and how these themselves can be more effectively poverty-targeted. It also requires integration of equity concerns: poverty, gender, ethnicity and disability into mainstream training and interventions for enterprises upstream in value chains and into mainstream education and training at all levels.

Crucially it requires a political shift from rhetoric of pro-poor growth, which sees the poor as needing to be integrated at the margins into ‘growth as usual’ to a real commitment to developing the skills and potential of the vast majority of the world’s women and men as part of a Human Rights agenda for growth itself. Unless the rights of the very poor to skills development and training are prioritised, they will become even more marginalised not only by economic growth but by ‘Human Resource Development’. The primary focus on basic education for children excludes the majority of adult women and men on whose income their children’s access to education depends, thus perpetuating inequalities to the next generation. The focus on small enterprises and cost recovery in poverty-targeted interventions risks leading to further marginalisation and disadvantage of micro-enterprises further down the value chain. The failure to seriously address the training needs of employees and workers undermines both enterprise efficiency and employee incomes. In all cases the impacts on

³ This has been discussed at length by the author in Mayoux 2002; 2003a. See also Appendix on Participatory Action Learning System.

women in terms of increased exploitation, unmanageable workloads and ill-health are likely to be particularly damaging. In all cases this is in contravention of Human Rights Agreements and undermines not only 'pro-poor growth' and social cohesion but the economic and political sustainability of global growth in general.

***PART 1: EDUCATION, TRAINING AND
PRO-POOR GROWTH: ISSUES AND
CHALLENGES***

SECTION 1: EDUCATION, TRAINING AND PRO-POOR GROWTH: COMPETING PERSPECTIVES AND POLICY APPROACHES

1.1 EDUCATION, TRAINING AND PRO-POOR GROWTH: THE DECENT WORK AGENDA

The accelerating rate of globalisation in the 21st century presents increasingly complex and demanding challenges. It is now generally recognised that although globalisation has the potential to deliver benefits for all, it may also significantly increase global poverty and inequality. The degree to which globalisation will benefit the poor will depend crucially on the types of policies introduced in order to complement and build on market growth, and to address inequalities in resources and market power which, not only contravene peoples' human rights, but distort the markets on which growth depends. If benefits of global growth are to be equitable, and economically, politically and environmentally sustainable it will require not only macro-economic policies but also profound shifts in the social and political structures which underpin current inequalities in power and resources.

Rapid globalisation and integration of world markets are producing a widening gap in terms of countries' participation in the global economy and the benefits that countries, enterprises and individuals reap from this participation. Even where total employment has recently increased through industrialisation, labour markets have become more and more segmented between:

- primary employment of core workers employed on stable contracts with good career progression, training provision and social protection. These are people with high skills, disproportionately male and career-dominated.
- secondary employment of peripheral workers employed on insecure, flexible and often part-time contracts characterised by high turnover, little career progression and little access to education and training.

Within many countries there is a growing gap between different population groups in terms of access to decent work and incomes, and participation in economic and social life. The poorly educated and trained are generally the losers in the process of economic change, even at times of economic growth and low unemployment (ILO 2003, p10 based on ILO 1998a; 1999a).

In low income countries the various policies and developments associated with globalisation: trade liberalisation, technology change, industry and enterprise restructuring, and new managerial and business practices – have often had profoundly negative effects on labour markets. Unemployment has continued to rise as new labour market entrants have been unable to find productive and rewarding jobs. There have been widespread redundancies in the private sector as it tries to cope with the challenges of globalisation, raising productivity

and finding markets. There have also been widespread redundancies in the public sector as governments have cut budgets in an effort to make their public administrations more efficient.

This means that the vast majority of men and women are relegated to the category, not even of 'peripheral' workers with work contracts, but of a rapidly expanding informal sector with little prospect of livelihood improvement or even income stability. Individual women and men in increasingly unstable households and fragmented 'communities' are attempting to combine market and non-market incomes and support from a range of activities in agriculture, manufacture and services. They frequently combine, and move in and out of, micro-enterprises and work for others. The distinction between entrepreneurs and workers is frequently blurred within complex value chains and shifting subcontracting and marketing arrangements.

For very poor women and men at the bottom of the value chain even those few traditional customary rights to use of resources, rights in work or community support are being rapidly eroded. Population growth, expansion of market economies and in some cases Northern 'development' investment are bringing about profound changes in customary access rights to productive resources like land, forests and fisheries. This affects availability not only of staple food but foraged food, in the hungry season, fuel, water and grazing. These are crucial to survival itself for many very poor people. In many countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, these economic forces for impoverishment have been cruelly compounded by HIV/AIDS and an increase in other diseases like malaria. Intra-household relations and traditional community safety nets are becoming particularly unstable, undermining the traditional rights to livelihoods and support of women, children and the elderly with little prospect of defending even their limited rights in national legal systems.

Since the end of the 1990s the concept of 'pro-poor growth' has been promoted by institutions, researchers and organizations in order to achieve sustainable poverty reduction whilst still maintaining economic growth (eg. UN 2000, World Bank 2000a,b; Ravallion 2001 quoted Klasen 2003). The ILO has been at the forefront of efforts to ensure that the benefits of globalisation are shared by all and lead not to increasing concentration of global power and resources but to global poverty reduction. The Decent Work Agenda states that the overall goal of the global economy should be to provide opportunities for all people to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and dignity. The Agenda has four strategic objectives all considered vital to social progress:

- Employment creation
- Promoting fundamental rights at work
- Improving social protection
- Strengthening social dialogue

Crucially for the ILO the goal is not only employment creation, but creation of employment which promotes the underlying goals of freedom, equity, security and dignity. Equally

importantly, these strategic objectives apply not only to the formal economy, but also to the informal economy where the majority of very poor women and men are working.⁴

A significant dimension in debates about pro-poor growth is the increasing recognition that human capital development, of which education and training are an integral part, is a key component not only of pro poor growth, but economic growth in general. Statistical analysis has shown economic growth to be highly correlated with levels of human capital development (e.g. Barro, 1991; Mankiw, Roemer, and Weil, 1992 quoted Klasen 2002). There is also a very close correlation between income inequality and both the average level and the distribution of human capital (Deininger and Squire, 1998; World Bank, 2000b quoted Klasen 2003). This implies that it is not only aggregate levels of human capital per se which correlate with economic growth, but the extent to which the poor have access to this human capital. Although statistical correlation cannot prove the direction of the causal effect, it would indicate that levels of poverty targeting of this human capital development are significant factors in stimulating growth itself and also the incomes of the poor themselves. Low levels of human capital amongst the poor is one of the central avenues through which inequality appears to negatively affect economic growth (Deininger and Squire, 1999; World Bank, 2000b quoted Klasen, 2002). The record of East Asia where high human capital accumulation (and rapidly shrinking disparity in human capital) promoted growth and poverty reduction is an important illustration of these linkages (Dreze and Sen, 1989; World Bank, 1993; World Bank, 2000b quoted 2002 Klasen).

It is now widely officially asserted, though not so far evident in policy change, that women need to be seen not as a marginal minority interest group, but the priority group for human capital development (eg World Bank 2000a,b). This is so not only in the interests of women themselves, but of pro-poor growth and economic growth in general. Klasen (2002) estimated that if Sub-Saharan Africa had given the same priority to addressing gender inequality in education as was given in East Asia, real per-capita annual growth between 1960 and 1992 would have been between 0.4% and 0.6% faster. In South Asia, where gender gaps are more pervasive, growth would have been 0.7-1.0% faster. These effects of positive gender equity strategies are in addition to the positive growth impacts of increasing average investment in human resource development for both women and men (Klasen, 2002 and references therein to Dollar and Gatti, 1999; Knowles, Lorgelly, and Owen, 2002; World Bank, 2001a, Blackden and Bhanu, 1999). Estimates of growth impacts of positive gender equity strategies in education would be much greater if they also took into account the subsequent impacts of women's education on reduced gender inequality in employment, access to technologies, or credit, all of which have been found to be significant (Blackden and Bhanu, 1999; Klasen, 2002).

Moreover education and training are not only instrumental to poverty reduction and economic growth, but also a basic human right in themselves. Education and training are explicitly

⁴ The ILO commitment to poverty reduction is expressed in numerous policy statements including: ILO Constitution; Decent Work Agenda; ILO Director General's report to the International Labour Conference, 2003: "Working out of poverty"; International Labour Conference, 2002: Resolution on the Informal Economy; Global Employment Agenda; Poverty Reduction Strategy Programmes; Millennium Development Goals (MDG); Report to the Working Party on the Social Dimension of Globalization, 'Poverty Reduction and Decent Work in a Globalizing World', Education for All programme.

mentioned as a basic human right in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1948 American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man. At the regional level this right is recognised by the Social and Labor Declaration of Mercosur (1998) and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2000). It is also part of many national constitutions including Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Germany, Guatemala, Mexico and Spain. Training and skills development are included in the standard definition of ‘basic education for all’ agreed at the Jomtien Conference in 1990 which covered ‘all the skills and knowledge that people need if they are to lead a decent life’. These ‘basic learning needs’ include not only early childhood education, primary schooling, but also non formal literacy and vocational and other training for youth and adults including vocational training that helps to provide basic life and employment skills (UNESCO 1991 quoted Bennell 1999).

Education and training are explicitly part of the pro-poor growth framework in many multilateral development agencies, including ILO, UNDP, World Bank and bilateral agencies like DFID, SDC and CIDA. Skills development and training for the informal and formal economies are an essential component of Human Resource development in ILO’s Decent Work policy framework.

In the context of changing production systems there is increasing recognition of the pivotal role of both education and training for both economic and social goals. No society can succeed in a globalised environment unless people have adequate knowledge and skills. These are vital not just for maintaining competitiveness and ensuring adaptable and productive enterprises but also for achieving personal and social development. In particular, a well functioning system of education and training enhances both economic and social integration by offering opportunities to many groups who would otherwise be excluded from the labour market. This is especially important for promoting gender equality and overcoming many forms of discrimination (ILO 1999b).

Learning, education and training are therefore seen as benefiting:

- Individuals through helping them escape from poverty
- Enterprises through improving productivity and competitiveness
- National economic growth and social development through a mutually reinforcing combination of the above.

This emphasis on skills development and training has been even further strengthened in more recent ILO documents:

Economic, social and technological change is gathering pace and calls for continuous policy and institutional adaptation in order to meet new needs and seize the opportunities that are opening up in a rapidly integrated world economy. It has been increasingly recognised that people’s endowment of skills and capabilities, and investment in education and training, constitute the key to economic and social development. Skills and training increase productivity and incomes, and facilitate everybody’s participation in economic and social life... Unless [poor countries], supported by the international community, implement effective and inclusive policies and programmes for education and training for all, the skills gap is likely to grow even wider... [Employment creation must be supported by] ‘increased and effective investment in human resources development, learning and training for employability, competitiveness, growth and social inclusion of all’ (ILO, 2003 p3 added)

However, throughout the 1990s, despite official commitments in many development agencies to Human Resource development and poverty reduction, funding for training and skills development decreased. This is partly because of:

- largely negative assessments of the achievements and cost-effectiveness of many large-scale publicly-subsidised programmes by governments and multi and bilateral aid agencies.

and

- the emerging dominance of market-based approaches to development which began to search for new private sector solutions.

1.2 PUBLIC SUBSIDY APPROACHES: VISION AND REALITIES

During the 1970s, there was considerable optimism amongst policymakers, donors and researchers about the potential impact of vocational training on productivity and incomes for the poor. This was seen as a necessary and integral part of the growth agenda of many governments. Alongside vocational training for the formal sector there was a rapid expansion in programmes of skills training for the informal sector, particularly micro and small enterprises. Governments in many developing countries established networks of vocational education and training (VET) in order to supply the high and middle level ‘manpower’ [sic] needed to meet ambitious objectives laid out in development plans and elsewhere. National labour force development was inextricably linked with state-led industrialisation strategies focusing on import substitution (Bennell 1999).

OECD

‘All persons, whether small or micro enterprises, must be helped to acquire minimal training in the trade concerned and in elementary management. Even if an artisan knows his [sic] trade, he is often handicapped by ignorance of the simplest management techniques. Knowledge of these techniques can transform a worker into the head of the micro enterprise. Very short training sessions (a few days) adapted to the sector can be devised. The state could often entrust this task to NGOs.

(Morrison 1995 quoted Bennell 1999)

In some countries the combination of import-led industrialisation and investment in vocational training was relatively successful in bringing about sustained growth. In Singapore industrialisation was able to progress through a series of mutually reinforcing stages maintaining international competitiveness and investment in human development. Other countries like Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Mauritius and Ireland combined carefully targeted investment in their human resources with investment in physical capital and industries and industrial expansion. The respective roles of public and private sector vocational training is however unclear, as is the level of impact on the very poor as opposed

to those just around the poverty line. It is also unclear how far the approach to training itself could have succeeded without an accompanying heavy investment in prior basic education. Although training is clearly a contributory and necessary factor, the success of training is in turn also dependent on economic expansion to which many other factors have also contributed (Bennell 1999).

BOX 1: A SUCCESSFUL HUMAN RESOURCE STRATEGY: SINGAPORE

Singapore has shaped its national human resource policy to provide the necessary skills for each phase of development:

Import substitution: a standardized education system supplied the science, maths and technical education needed and fostered ethnic groups and values by focusing on basic literacy and domestic languages, as well as English.

Export industrialization attracted foreign investment by means of tax, profit repatriation and training policies. Local training institutions focused on technical skills, these measures being complemented by technology transfers from institutions in advanced countries. Foreign corporations were provided with financial resources and infrastructure to set up training programs, resulting in a large increase in technical education.

High value added production: training subsidies and grants encouraged foreign companies to train their workers. Education reform that emphasized technical and vocational education was supported by expanding universities and polytechnics.

Knowledge-based economy: will demand new learning and training approaches which encourage workers to be innovative and creative.

Source: ILO 2003 p16

In many other countries where the economy itself failed to grow to provide jobs for trainees, training in itself has been less successful in either stimulating growth or increasing incomes of trainees. At the same time there have been differences between training programmes and also between target groups and contexts. Little systematic evidence is available and interpretation of findings is often conflicting. Nevertheless Bennell (1999) in his review of studies in the late 1990s concludes that while smaller training programmes aimed at groups facing only moderate problems in the labour market yielded positive results, broad and untargeted interventions have been universally ineffective.

In Latin America, national vocational training institutes have been relatively well resourced through national public-private collaboration. A strong system of public training provision was developed over a period from before World War II until the end of the 1980s. This primarily focused on formal apprenticeships for youth to equip them for the labour market. Some national vocational training institutes set up specialist divisions to respond directly to the training needs of the poor and disadvantaged in the informal sector. More recently there has been a particular focus on disadvantaged youth using vouchers to promote new training providers and to more effectively reach the target group. They have placed considerable

emphasis on the guarantee of a work experience placement and have focused on short training interventions with clearly defined outcomes (McGrath 2000; CINTERFOR 2000). Training methodologies have also become more participatory and trainee-focused.

Programmes which have been at least to some extent successful include firstly the Chile Joven programme which placed a heavy emphasis on enterprise-based training using job placements with over 15,000 firms agreeing to accept CJ trainees.⁵ SENA in Colombia introduced a nation-wide programme of part-time short courses for poor, younger workers. The USAID- sponsored Carvajal Programme, started in the 1970s, developed enterprise training for women followed by credit and business extension, to change attitudes towards business management. Although there were high initial drop-out rates, those entrepreneurs who remained experienced impressive rates of increase in income and good levels of loan repayment (McKean, 1989).

However the success of these programmes has depended largely on the ability of the economy to provide jobs for trainees. Economic difficulties in Argentina and Colombia frustrated the adoption of the CJ model in those countries (see CINTERFOR, 1998:241 q Bennell 1999). Skills development for self-employment is much less well developed. Evaluators have expressed concerns that training is becoming too short-term focused and little is being done to ensure institutional development. In some cases the quality of instruction, curriculum and institutional support given by private providers is unsatisfactory (McGrath 2000). The degree to which these programmes are reaching the very poor apart from youth is also unclear as the literature fails to make a distinction between different groups of poor people. Although some rural programmes exist, rural coverage remains limited in many countries. Moreover the potential for replicating these models for poor people in countries in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa which have much lower levels of literacy and lower levels of industrial growth are likely to be limited.

In South Asia public sector training provision for the poor has been relatively tiny. India has had the largest number of nationwide skills training development programmes for poor and disadvantaged groups. Publicly funded training schemes for the informal sector include 4274 Industrial Training Institutes providing training in engineering and nonengineering trades. Formal apprenticeships were introduced through the Apprenticeships Act 1961 which requires employers in notified industries to engage apprentices in specific ratios in relation to the workforce. Apprentices obtain training for periods ranging from six months to four years at the end of which they are tested by the National Council for Vocational Training. Vocational training programmes for women began in 1977 funded by ILO/SIDA and are implemented through a network of one national and 10 regional vocational training institutes set up exclusively for women (Mitra 2002).

However the quality of vocational training institutions is recognised by the government itself as being unsatisfactory. Much of the training are for skills for which there is little demand, skills acquired are very poor, facilities and infrastructure are inadequate and there is hardly any follow-up of trainees. Fulfilment of the Apprenticeships Act is largely limited to public sector firms and private sector firms generally do not comply with the requirements. The

⁵ In the first three years, almost 60 percent of the young people enrolled found a job at the end of the programme, compared with 40 per cent for young unemployed people not in the programme” (ILO, 1998:181).

BOX 2: INSTANCES OF RENEWED COMMITMENT TO SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

ZAMBIA 1997 POLICY STATEMENT ON HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Has as broad aims to balance the supply of skilled manpower at all levels with the demands of the economy and act as a vehicle for improved productivity and income generation and less inequality.

More specific objectives were:

- To raise labour productivity
- To promote entrepreneurship and economic participation in order to increase economic efficiency in both formal and informal sector
- Promote the versatility, creativity and employability of Zambians
- Empower women economically
- Provide skills and opportunities that will respond to Zambia's needs for poverty alleviation, improved housing and healthcare

ILO 2003

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY IN SOUTH AFRICA

Organisational arrangements: Rather than creating new institutions to develop and implement the reform process, preference has been given to using existing institutions. The creation of a unified training system is a key objective. In order to establish ownership of the reform process considerable efforts have been made to consult all the main stakeholders. Significantly, however, this did not specifically include the poor.

National Skills Authority: The NSA is a new advisory body under the Ministry of Labour.

A National Qualifications Framework: The NQF is intended to be a comprehensive mechanism for awarding qualifications based on credits received for achieved learning outcomes. Attainment of credits goes towards the achievement of eight levels of nationally recognised qualifications. The system seeks to ensure the 'portability of learning outcomes' and cut across the traditional education-training divide.

Learnerships: A new learnership scheme is intended to broaden the present apprenticeship system beyond traditional blue collar trades to include white collar occupations in the service sector as well as the informal sector and special target groups including unemployed youth. Through learnerships, structured learning and work experience can be accredited within the NQF.

Public funding: The state is to continue to fund training for the poor and other disadvantaged groups. A new system of competitive tendering for long-term training contracts is to be introduced.

National Levy-Grant Scheme: Eighty per cent of training levies collected will be distributed to employers through new Sector Education and Training Organisations (SETOs). The remaining 20 per cent will be allocated to a National Skills Fund which can be used to target training in 'priority sectors'

Sources: A. Ziderman and A. Van Adams, 1997. 'Reforming the Training System in South Africa' in I. Gill and F. Fluitman, 1998; Bennell, 1993.

quality of training is again poor (GOI 2001 quoted Mitra 2002). Only 5% of the labour force in the age group 20-24 had any vocational training obtained through formal institutions, as compared to 60-80% in developed countries and 28% in Colombia and Mexico (GOI 2001 quoted Mitra 2002).

In sub-Saharan Africa levels of commitment and expenditure on VET have varied. Some countries, like Zambia and South Africa have shown a firm commitment to human resource development, although this does not necessarily include the very poor. However a series of studies by World Bank and ILO in the 1990s concluded that most governments in SSA were simply too poor to be able to fund major training programmes for the poor. Many also lacked firm commitment to poverty reduction. Most training resources were allocated to a small number of public training institutions mainly training school leavers for skilled public sector occupations. Because VET is not regarded as a basic social service, countries have been under particular pressure from the World Bank to privatise them (King 1996). In his study of VET in Sub-Saharan Africa Bennell concludes that the impact of public sector training for the poor has been minimal in most countries. Unit training costs were relatively high with small enrolments and low completion rates. In youth training programmes, relatively few trainees become self-employed. In Nigeria, for example, by the early 1990s, only 2 % of the over 100,00 apprentices trained through the government's Open Apprenticeship Scheme had managed to start their own businesses mainly because of the high cost of equipment (see Gallagher and Yinusa, 1996). In Zimbabwe, only 3% of students graduating from Youth Training Centres in the early 1990s became self-employed (see Bennell, 1992). However it is unclear whether or not trainees were able to progress to employment (a more accurate measure of poverty impact than just self-employment) as a result of the skills they learned.

In all countries poverty targeting and poverty impact of most programmes have been limited. Impacts have varied and available information relates more to pilots than programmes themselves. However it is unlikely that the widespread shortcomings identified by Bennell and others in relation to poverty reduction in certain ILO projects are confined only to these projects:⁶

- **Targeting:** Training targeted to the very poor, (especially women in survival enterprises), has been the exception rather than the norm. Government sponsored organisations for the development of MSEs (especially Enterprise Development Institutes) tend to cater for non-poor clientele.
- **Lack of effective participation** of beneficiaries in planning and decision making, particularly women. This has limited the relevance of training to their needs.
- **Methodology:** Training projects and programmes for the poor have generally replicated the policies and practices of training for the formal sector. They have been a largely 'top-down' supply-driven process of skills transfer which has ignored the knowledge and skills

⁶ Bennell 1999 reviewed a number of ILO programmes in the 1980s and 1990s: Training for Rural Gainful Activities TRUGA in Asia, Skills Development for Self-Reliance SDSR in East and Central Africa and Vocational Training for Employment Generation in Cambodia building also on earlier studies of these programmes by Baidya and Chaudhari, 1991 and Walsh, 1992.

of the poor. For the passive recipients training has often been a disempowering, even “infantilizing” process.

- **Content:** Traditionally male-dominated artisan training courses (plumbing, metalwork, carpentry etc.) have predominated in most countries. The focus on technical training in manual trades meant that most training for women was in a narrow range of traditionally female-dominated activities. Training in social and business skills has been fairly limited, particularly for women (Kuiper, 1991; Bakke-Seeck, 1996; Burckhardt, 1996 quoted Bennell 1999).
- **Staffing:** Instructors usually have little or no understanding of the problems of doing business in the informal sector, and particularly the specific problems of the very poor. In many cases insufficient numbers of women instructors are employed in order to ensure gender equity in outreach. In Nepal, for example, only one-quarter of the national instructors and one of the 12 international experts were women.
- **Timing:** There has been a heavy emphasis on longer duration reemployment courses for unemployed youth and other disadvantaged groups, especially the disabled. The provision of short courses for MSE operators and workers remains very limited. Women, most of whom were already working long hours, found it difficult to complete training courses. Special support measures, in particular child care centres, were not generally available.
- **Location:** Most training has been delivered at training institutions rather than within communities and workplaces. In many countries (particularly in SSA), governments have preferred to establish a parallel network of mainly rural based training institutions specifically intended for training for self-employment (e.g. Youth Polytechnics in Kenya, Youth Training Centres in Zimbabwe, Brigades in Botswana).
- **Cost for participants:** Fees were driving away the poorest. In Ghana, for example, even at government-funded vocational training centres in remote rural locations, the majority of students come from relatively well off urban backgrounds (see Bennell, 1998). Where there is excess demand for post-school education and training, training intended for the poor and other disadvantaged groups is likely to be ‘captured’ by better qualified school leavers.
- **Funding:** Training for the poor has often been seriously underfunded and insufficient information is collected in order to be able to identify properly training needs in local labour markets. The design of training projects, especially in post-conflict situations, has tended to be too rushed so that planning ends up being carried out simultaneously with implementation. Serious shortages of trainers in rural areas mean that training is generally of poor quality (see Bryant, 1997).
- **Sustainability:** Training programmes for the poor have often been the result of donor initiatives. As separate projects and programmes with their own funding and management structures, they have rarely been effectively institutionalised on a sustainable basis.

Serious shortcomings were particularly evident in relation to training for women. Women were vastly under-represented in formal business training programmes and ‘mainstream’

BOX 3: IRRELEVANCE OF SKILLS TRAINING FOR WOMEN: WEST BENGAL BAGWEAVING AND EMBROIDERY INDUSTRIES

A study of women trainees in both government and NGO training in West Bengal found that women were present only in a narrow range of training courses in handicrafts. Their participation in training courses in 'male' skills had not been considered by either the administration or the women themselves.

Although many courses were nominally for poor women and some were even targeted to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, they were attended predominantly by better-off women from upper caste groups. This was because of institutional favouritism in allocation of places and inappropriate timing of courses in relation to the agricultural calendar. At the same time there was high demand from upper caste groups because these particular skills were seen as an asset on the marriage market. The skills taught were largely irrelevant to the needs of the industries concerned, and due more to the particular skills and tastes of the middle-class non-entrepreneur trainers rather than actual market requirements. This meant that the focus was on improving product quality, but without considering productivity and cost. There was no training at all in marketing.

This failure of the publicly-funded skills training was in sharp contrast to the rapid expansion of skills training in the private sector by women themselves. Where women found the activities potentially profitable they often trained each other. Skills like bag-weaving had spread over a large number of villages as women had married out and taught female in-laws and friends in their marital village. These women would then work for the same middlemen or middlewomen, sometimes in putting-out chains from the original women or their husbands.

At the same time this private sector training also had serious shortcomings. Although women learnt the skills necessary to produce for particular middlemen and middle women, the rapid spread of such skills further saturated already swelling female labour markets and led to reduction in wages. The skills training which women were able to provide each other did not equip them for independent or collaborative marketing or negotiating higher wages.

Reports since the original research in 1989 indicate that little has changed since that date despite increasing awareness at higher levels of what is needed for more effective market-based training.

Source: Mayoux 1989

skills programmes of the 1970s and 1980s. For example, a review of women's participation in technical training institutions in Latin America found that men predominated in the formal training system which prepared the trainees for the formal sector, whereas women predominated in short-term technical courses with a concentration in the service sector. Low income women were excluded even from the short-term technical training alternatives (McKean, 1989). Most training courses for women concentrated on what were seen as 'female' skills, particularly tailoring, handicrafts, food processing and catering. Many of these programmes failed to attract poorer women except where a substantial stipend was offered. Of those women who did participate few subsequently engaged in any form of independent income generating activity. Findings from research by the author in West Bengal in the 1980s (See Box 3) remain relevant to many current government and NGO training programmes for women in India (Mitra 2002). In Latin America although more recent programmes have successfully reached girls, they have been less successful in placing them

in sustainable employment (McGrath 2000). Moreover training intended to address women's reproductive roles e.g. nutrition training, generally increases women's workload rather than seriously attempting to provide realistic solutions to women's heavy work burden and/or including men in changing gender roles.

The degree to which these shortcomings are due to 'inevitable systemic factors' in large-scale programmes or to specific design features which can be rectified now with hindsight has been a subject of much debate. As discussed in the final Section, training cannot be seen as a 'magic bullet' and is most developmentally effective and cost-efficient when it forms an integrated part of a coherent poverty reduction strategy. However some of the above shortcomings in relation to content, methodology and institutional relationships could have been addressed, and/or are being addressed, in some more gender-aware programmes, even large-scale ones. There is also no reason why some of the insights from the small-scale programmes discussed below could not be incorporated into larger scale programmes.

1.3 MARKET APPROACHES: CONTRIBUTION AND LIMITATIONS

In the 1990s a number of key donor agencies developed a more market-driven approach to provision of training. This was partly a result of the negative assessments of state provision in terms of both their impact and cost discussed above. Studies in the 1990s particularly in Africa described the importance of private sector apprenticeships in skills development and stressed the need to complement rather than supplant these. Studies also reported virtually no demand for training from either workers or entrepreneurs in the informal sector who generally identified credit and markets as the main constraints on increasing incomes (Mead et al 1990; Parker and Steel 1992 quoted Bennell 1999). The interest in market solutions was however also largely driven by the combination of declining aid budgets and the prevailing neo-liberal agenda of 'rolling back the state' both of which implied greater reliance on the private sector in all areas of development.

The World Bank took the lead in promoting pro-market reforms in VET provision. Governments, particularly in low income countries, were advised to reduce the share of VET in the overall education budget in order to target funds on primary and basic education. By the end of the 1990s support for public training institutions had declined rapidly. In some countries e.g. Zimbabwe and South Africa large cuts in donor supported training NGOs had led to commercialisation of a significant proportion of their training activities (Bennell 1999). In most large donor agencies also funding for training rapidly declined as explicitly poverty targeted enterprise and livelihood support came to focus on minimalist micro-finance.

Enterprise-based training in both formal and informal sectors was to be provided through greater private sector involvement to increase both market relevance and cost recovery (World Bank 1991 quoted Bennell 1998). In order to promote and increase cost recovery of private sector provision of skills training a number of experiments were made, notably the introduction of voucher systems like the one for the 'Jua Kali' in Kenya and those introduced in Latin America. Training programmes themselves were funded by external donors or NGOs increasingly switched attention from skills training to marketing skills and later to entrepreneurship training more generally. This enterprise emphasis included many training programmes for women following the gradual implementation of gender policies in donor

BOX 4: SOME COMMON ELEMENTS OF PARTICIPATORY BUSINESS TRAINING***Understanding profits***

Reinforce existing understanding of profits as revenues minus expenses, including the separation of business from household accounts and setting levels of personal income out of profits. Specific exercises may include: helping women to identify conflicting priorities leading to irregular withdrawals of cash and goods from the enterprise and high non-business expenses; looking at different kinds of expenses and how these can be minimized; and cash control exercises.

Keeping records

Examine ways of keeping records which are relevant to the needs of particular businesses and groups, in order to assess profits and ensure the integrity of group finances, and avoid suspicion and corruption. Record-keeping methods have been devised for illiterate women using symbols.

Marketing

Look at the range of marketing skills involved in getting goods and services from the producer to the consumer, including product design, market research, promotion and pricing. May use exercises with standard business class formulae of the 'Six Ps' or 'Marketing Mix': products, places, people, price, promotion and business plan. These exercises build on women's existing knowledge and examine the effects of different changes on their situation.

Sources: Walsh et al., 1991; Kraus-Harper and Harper, 1992; Lockhead, 1990)

agencies. There were an increasing number of training manuals dealing specifically with women's business skills, generally including similar elements to those outlined in Box 4. Many of these have since been carried over to the more participatory training conducted as part of market-led Business Development Services. These often explicitly targeted poor but 'more enterprising women' who may be illiterate but still have 'entrepreneurial and risk-taking' ability (e.g. Kraus-Harper and Harper, 1992).

By the end of the 1990s training increasingly became only one part, and often a minor part, of market-led Business Development Services (BDS) which attempted to address a range of different enterprise constraints and needs on a financially sustainable cost-recovery basis (See Box 5). A series of international conferences attempted to identify a number of 'Best Practices' partly derived from earlier principles of financially sustainable micro-finance (See Box 6).

BOX 5: MARKET-LED BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SERVICES: TYPES OF INTEGRATED SUPPORT

Market Access: marketing business; market linkages; trade fairs and product exhibitions; development of samples for buyers; market information; subcontracting and outsourcing; marketing trips and meetings; market research; market space development; showrooms; packaging; advertising.

Infrastructure: storage and warehousing; transport and delivery; business incubators; telecommunications; courier; money transfer; information through print, radio, TV; internet access; computer services; secretarial services.

Policy/ Advocacy: training in policy advocacy; analysis and communication of policy; constraints and opportunities; direct advocacy on behalf of small enterprises; sponsorship of conferences; policy studies.

Input/ Supply: linking SEs to input suppliers; improving suppliers' capacity to provide regular supply of quality inputs; facilitating the establishment of bulk buying groups; information on input supply sources.

Training and Technical Assistance: Mentoring; feasibility studies and business plans; exchange visits and business tours; franchising; management training; technical training; counseling/advisory services; legal services; financial and taxation advice; accountancy and bookkeeping.

Technology and Product Development: Technology transfer/commercialization; linking SEs and technology suppliers; facilitating technology procurement; quality assurance programs; equipment leasing and rental; design services.

Alternative Financing Mechanisms: factoring companies that provide working capital for confirmed orders; equity financing; facilitating supplier credit

Sources: Miehlbradt and McVay 2003a,b.

BOX 6: BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SERVICES: PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

- Business-like and demand-led: The best BDS organisations at supporting MSE are like those MSE in terms of their people, systems and values.
- Sustainability: the need to look for innovative ways to encourage the long term delivery of BDS.
- Tailoring is essential through focus on clients' needs.
- Participatory approaches to the design and implementation of BDS.
- Maximising outreach is essential and providers need to develop imaginative ways of achieving this.
- Building on demonstrated initiative - where possible build on what is already there rather than impose from outside.
- Split and focus delivery - i.e. stick to the knitting' and avoid trying to deliver a range of different services and products.
- Systematic approaches and programme integration. Focus in a project does not deny the need for strategic awareness and effective networking between providers.
- Renewed focus on cost analysis.
- Continued importance of impact assessment and evaluation.
- Subsidiarity - complement the role and activities of others including the state.

Source: Gibson 1999 based on CDEED (1997) Business Development Services for SME Development: A Guide to Donor Funded Interventions.

The policies promoted for market-led Business Development Services undoubtedly represent a move forward in the attempt to address some of the shortcomings of earlier large-scale publicly funded programmes, in particular:

- a focus on demand-led services which respond to market realities rather than top-down supply-driven training.
- a focus on participatory methods which build on peoples' existing experience and skills.
- an emphasis on long term sustainability and institutional collaboration. This latter is seen as essential to combining programme focus with addressing the need for integrated service.

However they are also based on a number of premises which threaten to further marginalise and disadvantage the very poor in both training itself and the growth process in general.

Firstly the main focus is often explicitly on small enterprises, and explicitly excludes 'income generation' (IGAs) or 'subsistence-oriented' activities. Even where micro-enterprise needs are discussed in the BDS literature, explicit definitions of micro-enterprise generally shift towards what in other literature would be classified as small enterprise⁷. In some development agencies the terms 'income generation' has become a pejorative, rather than descriptive term. However although the distinction between 'income generation' and 'enterprise' may be analytically useful for some purposes in highlighting the need for diversity of provision for people with different livelihood strategies, it has serious shortcomings as a practical guide to targeting and brings serious dangers of stereotyping peoples' potential. Many people, particularly women, are likely to be juggling a diversity of market and nonmarket activities in order to cope with the pressures of poverty. They may of necessity be more concerned with daily subsistence in the combination of activities rather than longer term enterprise growth planning. Nevertheless, as is evident from the individual Case Studies discussed in Part 2, in practice distinctions between subsistence-oriented income generation and profit-oriented enterprise are very blurred. Women involved in 'IGAs' can and do move up to increase incomes from some of these activities and develop micro and small enterprises. Appropriate training and other support which starts from their initial situation but enables them to develop a realisable vision and strategy for expansion is often a crucial part of this process, together with skills upgrading and other inputs. Use of the analytical distinction as a basis for targeting removes from providers the pressure to evaluate training content and methods to maximise social inclusiveness and provide paths for graduation from subsistence activities to profit orientation. It has particularly serious implications for provision for women who become ghettoised in income generation rather than included in gender-equitable small enterprise training.

Secondly the focus on cost recovery and short-term financial sustainability means that services are generally outside the payment capacity of the very poor. Existing evaluations of

⁷ There is often a blurring of the 'upmarket' trend because the acronym 'MSE' is used in some documents to refer to 'micro and small enterprises' and in others to 'Medium and Small Enterprises'. Less careful documents imperceptibly merge the two.

these programmes focus exclusively on general outreach, sustainability and cost-recovery. The attention to impact assessment has so far yielded no firm data on poverty reach, much less poverty impact. However anecdotal evidence suggests that very few poor people are being reached. No assessments have been done of the assumed ‘trickle-down of benefits’ of small and medium enterprise development to workers and employees. Such assumptions need to be seriously questioned in view of the very limited attention to employee skills training itself within small enterprise, the frequent use of credit for labour-saving technology and lack of attention to labour welfare in enterprise training programmes.

Thirdly reliance on market solutions presume that there are sufficient providers to constitute a competitive market which will improve quality and push down costs to clients. It also assumes that clients are sufficiently informed about the different options and have non-discriminatory access to BDS markets. In general current BDS provision is largely inadequate on both counts. For example although voucher schemes can be successful, for them to function properly it is not only essential that consumers are well informed about the training that is being offered, but also are faced with real choices between training providers. In most rural areas, in particular, where the number of accredited training centres is very limited and widely dispersed choice is seriously limited and hence competition pressures on providers to ensure quality and cost-efficiency (World Bank, 1995; Bennell, 1996).

Finally there has been little in the way of investment in skills development programmes for livelihoods of the very poor. The term ‘income-generating activity’ or ‘IGA’ is often used pejoratively and explicitly outside the remit of enterprise development⁸. Although as discussed below skills training for livelihood diversification of the very poor can be extremely effective in poverty reduction, particularly for women, it remains marginalised in donor and government policy.

⁸ This was very explicit even at a workshop on ‘Small Enterprise Development and Empowerment’ organised for Swiss Development Corporation by Intercooperation in Gerzensee in December 2002. Papers from the workshop are available on www.intercooperation.ch/sed/, but the keynote paper by Linda Mayoux was criticised by SDC staff in charge of small enterprise because of its poverty focus which was seen as outside their remit, despite the focus on empowerment. Very similar statements have been made by representatives from DFID at other workshops attended by the author and in informal interviews.

SECTION 2: SKILLS LEARNING FOR DECENT WORK: CURRENT AREAS OF INNOVATION

Despite official commitments in many development agencies to Human Resource development and education and training as a key component of pro-poor growth, funding for poverty-targeted training and skills development has significantly decreased since the early 1990s.

- Publicly subsidised training programmes have always marginalised the needs of the poor, and there is no sign that the official support for pro-poor growth has led to any change in targeting. Moreover overall budgets for training have decreased in many countries. Public expenditure on basic education, skills development and training was seriously squeezed in the context of structural adjustment policies and liberalisation. Human Development budgets in major donor agencies focus largely on primary education programmes rather than skills for work. (World Bank 1995; UNICEF 1998; Bennell 1999).
- Market-based solutions have moved away from skills training and poverty targeting. Poverty-targeted assistance is focused on provision of minimalist microfinance. Funding for integrated or complementary non-financial services, including training, has in many cases completely stopped – even from the very funders who urged separation of micro-finance from other services in the interests of greater effectiveness of training as well as micro-finance.

These changes are partly because of the largely negative assessments of the achievements and cost-effectiveness (including poverty targeting) of many large-scale publicly-subsidised programmes by governments and multi and bilateral aid agencies discussed above. It is also however part of a general marginalisation of the needs of the poor which is largely masked by the rhetoric of ‘pro-poor growth’. Only those poor who are now considered by development agencies to be ‘growth-oriented’ are seen as appropriate recipients of enterprise or employment support. This excludes the vast majority of poor women and men. Assertions and assumptions of trickle down remain to be substantiated in many contexts and for many target groups. The focus on primary education is likely to benefit the poor, but primary education alone is not sufficient to ensure sustainable livelihoods and Decent Work and is therefore not sufficient for pro-poor growth.

Although it is certainly true that previous training has been largely irrelevant to the needs of the very poor, this does not mean that effective skills training is not needed. Nor does it mean that developmentally effective and cost-efficient training cannot be developed and provided. Largely marginalised from debates in governments and the large donor agencies, there exist a number of small-scale project-level innovations in poverty-targeted training, particularly for women (See Part 2). The focus on ‘market-led’ services needs to be redefined to incorporate not only the skills directly required by enterprises for market growth and survival, but also the skills needed by the poor in order to negotiate and manage livelihoods in response to market opportunities and constraints. Training needs to be based on:

- a coherent learning framework which addresses the multidimensional nature of poverty as part of the learning agenda.
- a participatory learning methodology which builds on the strategies and initiatives of poor people themselves and supports them to identify and negotiate an upward path of livelihood development and empowerment.
- a firm commitment to equitable access in mainstream training and provision of specific training adapted to the particular needs of different groups of poor women and men where this is necessary to facilitate access to mainstream training.
- effective institutional integration of training with other types of support as a coherent poverty reduction strategy.

2.1 KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS FOR POVERTY REDUCTION: A MULTIDIMENSIONAL FRAMEWORK

It is now generally recognised that poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon. Even development agencies like World Bank which earlier focused only on income poverty from the late 1990s began to use a broader multidimensional framework in both analysis of poverty and consideration of policy responses. This included not only tangible dimensions like income, health and education, but less tangible but equally important underlying dimensions of vulnerability and voicelessness. Moreover these different dimensions are interlinked – locking people in a vicious cycle of downward mobility or, if appropriately supported, enabling a virtuous upward spiral of poverty reduction. By 2000 the World Bank development framework had come to emphasise the importance, not of growth per se, but labour-intensive growth, re-establishment of broad provision of public services, promoting opportunity and security. It also included a new emphasis on empowerment and included gender equity.

BOX 7: WORLD BANK POVERTY FRAMEWORK

MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY

Poverty is pronounced deprivation in well-being...The voices of poor people bear eloquent testimony to its meaning. To be poor is to be hungry, to lack shelter and clothing, to be sick and not cared for, to be illiterate and not schooled. But for poor people, living in poverty is more than this. Poor people are particularly vulnerable to adverse events outside their control. They are often treated badly by the institutions of state and society and excluded from voice and power in those institutions.

POVERTY FRAMEWORK

- Income poverty
- Health
- Education

- Vulnerability
- Voicelessness and powerlessness

POLICY FRAMEWORK

- Labour-intensive growth
- Broad provision of social services
- Promoting opportunity: expanding economic opportunity for poor people by stimulating overall growth and by building up their assets and increasing the returns on these assets, through a combination of market and nonmarket actions.
- Empowerment: enhancing the capacity of poor people to influence the state institutions that affect their lives, by strengthening their participation in political processes and local decisionmaking. And removing the barriers- political, legal and social – that work against particular groups and building the assets of poor people to enable them to engage effectively in markets.
- Security: reducing their vulnerability to such risks as ill-health, economic shocks, and natural disasters and helping them cope with adverse shocks when they occur.

Source: World Development Report: World Bank 2000 Chapters 1 and 2

This wider definition of poverty has however generally failed to be reflected in many World Bank policies or those of many other agencies, particularly in relation to enterprise development. The multidimensional and mutually reinforcing nature of poverty, insecurity and powerlessness implies that:

- firstly training which focuses only on technical or enterprise skills in isolation is not likely to be sufficient to increase incomes.
- secondly training methods will need to challenge and overcome problems of lack of confidence and cultural constraints which hamper learning.
- thirdly training will also need to address not only disadvantage at the individual level, but also the broader unequal structure of opportunities and constraints in households, markets, communities and national and international policy which are underlying causes of poverty.

This points to the need for a wider framework of skills and learning needs for poverty reduction (See Box 8). This needs to be an ongoing and cumulative process of learning from a diversity of sources rather than one or more one-off injections of ‘training’.

Firstly there is a need for provision of very basic skills to reduce peoples’ vulnerability and increase their ability to access a wide range of sources of information and avoid being cheated and exploited. These include not only foundation skills like numeracy and literacy, but also wider learning skills for finding out about sources of information and accessing them, analytical, problem-solving and calculation skills. Even illiterate people may have some of these skills which can be developed even before they are able to improve literacy and numeracy skills. These skills are however essential to improving the sustainability of training benefits and for people to continue to update and improve their skills and knowledge.

Secondly there is a need for basic life skills to enable people to negotiate with others and to plan their lives. Very poor people, particularly women, have never felt able to envisage a better future or to think through steps which might be taken to achieve what they want. Many lack the confidence and assertiveness necessary to begin to defend their rights within markets, households and communities. There is also a need for skills for organization, collaboration and action beyond the individual level. This includes how to conduct better forms of economic collaboration for production and marketing as well as collective action to protect economic, social and political rights.

BOX 8: MULTI DIMENSIONAL SKILLS FRAMEWORK FOR POVERTY REDUCTION

POVERTY TARGETED TRAINING

1) BASIC SKILLS ESSENTIAL TO REDUCE VULNERABILITY

- Foundation skills: numeracy and literacy
- Learning skills: 'finding out' skills, analytical skills, problem-solving skills, calculation skills,

2) EMPOWERMENT SKILLS

- Life skills: negotiation skills, planning skills
- Organizational skills: participatory skills, collaborative skills, lobbying and advocacy skills

3) LIVELIHOOD SKILLS FOR ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

- Technical skills: broad technical skills, specialist production techniques, skills for product diversification, quality upgrading and/or increased productivity.
- Entrepreneurship skills: management skills, marketing skills and market-led product development.
- Financial skills: income management, financial planning and understanding of financial services
- Work/time management skills

INTEGRATED LIVELIHOOD STRATEGY

- **Enterprise training at all levels** of enterprise to incorporate non-discrimination issues and good practice in apprenticeship delivery, employee relations and incorporating the needs of those at the bottom of the value chain
- **Microfinance**: appropriate micro-finance for trainees, core micro-finance training designed to develop life skills, micro-finance groups to provide basis for training delivery and ongoing networking
- **Marketing support**: to progressively build market self-reliance, remove market discrimination and barriers, and develop new markets
- **Economic policy change**: advocacy to remove the barriers to very poor and non-literate informal sector workers

Thirdly, livelihood skills themselves need to be defined more broadly to encompass technical skills, entrepreneurship skills, financial skills and work/time management skills necessary to enable poor people to take advantage of emerging economic opportunities. At the same time

the specific technical and entrepreneurship skills need to be relevant to the particular products, markets and situation of the trainees concerned.

As discussed in detail in Section 2.3 and the following sections, however these different skills need to be seen not as a set of 'discrete modules', but as an integrated package whereby the content and methodology used in livelihood skills training reflect and incorporate the basic and empowerment skills as part of an integrated and time and cost-efficient package.

Finally, as discussed in the Case Studies and the final Section of this paper, training itself is likely to be much more effective as part of a coherent and integrated livelihood development agenda including training for other actors/enterprises up the value chain, micro-finance, market support and economic policy change. This in turn to be part of, and contributory to, the broader pro-poor development framework encompassing adequate social services and political change (See Box 7 above).

2.2 WHICH POOR PEOPLE? DIFFERENCES AND INEQUALITIES

The relative importance of different dimensions of poverty differs between different groups of poor people. The balance of non-market constraints and dimensions of inequality, discrimination and vulnerability affect the ways in which different groups of poor people are able to negotiate and respond to opportunities and constraints in the market. This means that although the above framework elements are common to all poor women and men, their relative importance and ways in which they can be addressed will vary. There therefore needs to be an appropriate balance between ensuring that training content is sufficiently inclusive to avoid discrimination whilst at the same time capable of responding to the specific needs of particular poor and disadvantaged groups.

Gender inequality and discrimination

Women have been seriously disadvantaged in access to all types of education and training at both basic and higher levels and across the range of training and skills provision. This is despite the fact that women constitute over half of 'humanity' and their disproportionate representation among the poor and very poor. It is also despite the assertion on the part of most development agencies that women need to be seen not as a marginal minority interest group, but the priority group for human capital development because investment in women's education and training has a disproportionate impact on poverty reduction and economic growth.

Human capital development for women however requires not only increasing women's access to primary or even secondary education, but enabling them through education and training to challenge and change gender inequality and discrimination. Gender inequality and discrimination operate at all levels: distribution of household income and assets, burden of unpaid reproductive work, market access, discrimination in market negotiations, and community and national level norms and constraints. The degree to which women's training needs are different from those of men depends very much on the social and cultural context and the particular economic sectors involved. As discussed in detail below, there is a clear need for training specifically targeting women in certain circumstances. There is an equally

pressing need to mainstream gender issues in mixed-sex and male-targeted training, including training for men to take on some of the burden of unpaid domestic work and anti-gender discrimination training for medium and large scale enterprises higher up the value chain.

Age

Age discrimination within households, employment and the wider society generally disadvantages children, youth and the elderly. Most publicly funded education and training have generally targeted basic education to children and technical training to young or relatively young adults. However more attention needs to be given to the needs of specific poor and very poor groups in the different age categories:

- Adults who need basic educational skills of reading and writing before they can enroll on more technical types of training
- Working children who are unable to attend school in normal hours and/or for whom the types of curricula on offer do not address their livelihood skills needs
- The elderly who are often those most neglected and have least control over their life circumstances in very poor families.

Although as discussed in Part 2 there is good evidence of significant poverty impact of combined literacy and livelihood training, particularly for adult women, this has been consistently underfunded and badly organized outside a few NGO programmes. The needs of the other two age groups remain largely unaddressed.

Social status and ethnicity:

In many countries people from particular ethnic or religious groups, especially those with minority status may be seriously discriminated against. This includes Scheduled castes and tribes in India, particular ethnic groups in parts of Africa, indigenous populations in Latin America. These groups have conventionally had less access to and control over resources and employment, less access to education and they have been excluded from political processes. They often have specific needs because of language and/or cultural factors which are not reflected in mainstream business practices, education or decision-making. In some cases particular social groups are occupation-based, but have lost traditional forms of livelihood because of changes in markets or lack of basic and empowerment skills. These particular linguistic, cultural and skills needs will require specific attention for those ethnic minorities and social groups who are commonly discriminated against and particularly disadvantaged.

Health status and physical/mental capacity

Health status is a key determinant of levels of income poverty. Chronic physical and mental illness often debar people from work and many forms of assistance altogether. This is particularly so where public health services are inadequate and people are dependent on their own ability to afford private healthcare. In Africa and elsewhere HIV/AIDS has compounded

existing problems of ill-health and conflict for a significant proportion of the population, being a cause of, as well as aggravated by, poverty.

In some countries the numbers of seriously disabled people are a significant proportion of the population.⁹ It is clear therefore that their needs must somehow be addressed through increasing their access to training and also adapting training content and delivery to their needs. Changes in working practices, facilities at work, and the nature of different types of supports that could improve the training and employment prospects of people with disabilities are increasingly being advocated. There is a need both to increase accessibility of mainstream training through ensuring accessible venue, content and methodology and provision of specific services and training adapted to their needs. There is also a need to include training in accessibility issues in mainstream enterprise training.

Geographic, economic and political disadvantage and vulnerability

Poverty is often much greater in remote rural areas with poor or nonexistent infrastructure and distant markets. This does not always mean lower levels of general health and well-being, but leaves people particularly vulnerable to expropriation of resources by external vested interests and also to exclusion from political and economic decisions which may profoundly alter their lives. However, training facilities have generally been more concentrated in urban areas. Even rural-based training programmes have often been primarily attended by urban participants because of the nature of the curriculum, education levels and fee levels required (Bennell 1999). It is clear that there needs to be greater effort towards developing appropriate training facilities in rural areas, including those which are particularly remote and impoverished.

Pro-poor growth also requires the upgrading of different economic sectors which employ large numbers of poor people, particularly in the informal economy. In many cases this will require, not only addressing the training needs of the poor themselves, but training also other actors/enterprises up the value chain to ensure that the poor benefit disproportionately from upgrading. In the case of particular seasonal activities like agriculture and fishing, addressing poverty levels and increasing the negotiating power of the poor will require training to diversify income sources to reduce income fluctuations in low seasons as well as, or instead of, intensifying and upgrading core sectoral activities.

Some populations are particularly vulnerable because of their geographical location and susceptibility to specific environmental hazards like floods, earthquakes, drought and so on. Other populations are subject to serious or sporadic ethnic conflict. These can cause very rapid impoverishment even of people who otherwise might be relatively better off. In these situations, however, it is the very poor who are likely to suffer most and who are likely to recover less quickly from serious shocks. These problems may seriously disrupt training programmes and/or the ability of trainees to use training. They must also be taken into

⁹ In India for example there are more seriously disabled people than seriously malnourished ones (ILO/ARTEP 1994 quoted Bennell 1999). In many countries, particularly those in post conflict situations, numbers are extremely high.

account in the content of training to better enable people to cope with such disasters and plan their activities accordingly.

The 'hard-core' poor or 'ultra-poor' or 'poorest of the poor'

Pro-poor growth must mean benefits not only to those just below the poverty line, but also the very poor. In recent years, in recognition of differences between different groups of poor women and men, questions have begun to be raised about how far poverty targeting really reaches those who are well below the poverty line. In some countries numbers of such people may be significant. Some NGOs have been developing training facilities for:

- Very poor women and members of ethnic minorities who may have specific needs not catered for in 'mainstream' poverty targeted interventions.
- Street children who need training or basic education to meet their specific needs.
- Wage workers and self-employed in low paid industries for whom inequalities within the workplace or value chains may be a key source of poverty.
- Those disabled and chronically ill people who would be able to work if certain types of discrimination were eliminated and certain types of facilities offered.
- The destitute in or from geographically marginal areas or disaster and conflict areas. This includes migrants, some of whom may be reduced to begging and prostitution but who have skills or potential to learn and enter employment.

However, despite the large numbers of people in these groups in many countries, training provision has generally been on an extremely small scale. Although some benefits for the very poor from other enterprise and livelihood interventions may be indirect, explicit targeting of these groups with good-quality training will also be necessary to ensure that they benefit disproportionately from pro-poor growth.

2.3: CURRENT INNOVATIONS IN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT FOR LIVELIHOOD IMPROVEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT

Parallel to, and to a large extent marginalised by, the 'mainstream' debates about the best mix of subsidised and market approaches, there have been many small-scale project-level innovations in poverty-targeted training methods and content, particularly in female-targeted projects. These have included:

- Integration of life skills, gender awareness and empowerment into livelihood and entrepreneurship training.
- Participatory methods which focus on participant bottom-up learning rather than top-down 'expert' training and which are accessible to illiterate people.

- Integrated programmes of livelihood development and literacy training for very poor and illiterate people.
- Training as part of a set of poverty-targeted programme strategies including micro-finance, marketing support, organizational strategies and macrolevel advocacy.
- Integration of empowerment skills with programme impact assessment.
- Skills upgrading training targeting different levels of particular economic sectors: employees, outworkers and upstream enterprises as part of an integrated pro-poor sectoral approach.
- Training which attempts to address broader political empowerment and civil society development.

In many cases two or more of these elements have been combined. However these innovations have so far been marginal in donor-level debates and also funding.

What follows discusses experience of such innovation in a number of programmes which have explicitly attempted to address the training and skills needs of the very poor and particularly women. Box 9 summarises the different areas of innovation in each programme.

BOX 9: SUMMARY DETAILS OF INNOVATION IN THE SELECTED PROGRAMME CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY 1: TANGAIL INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PROJECT, BANGLADESH

- Poverty targeted training for female road maintenance workers in livelihood diversification and empowerment.

CASE STUDY 2: SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE TRAINING NETWORK (SATNET) AND KABAROLE RESEARCH AND RESOURCE CENTRE (KRC), UGANDA

- Sustainable agriculture training for both women and men
- Integration of gender training into mainstream training.

CASE STUDY 3: ANANDI, INDIA

- Skills training for women in non-traditional activities
- Area networking and mutual learning through fairs or 'melas'

CASE STUDY 4: ACONSUR, PERU

- Skills and enterprise training for increasing the benefits and negotiating power of women in the context of industry upgrading.

CASE STUDY 5: SOCIETY FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TEXTILE FIBRES (SODEFITEX) SENEGAL

- Combined literacy and livelihood training geared to the needs of a particular subsector.

CASE STUDY 6: SOMALILAND EDUCATION INITIATIVE FOR GIRLS AND YOUNG MEN (SEIGYM)

- Voucher programme for accessing a diversity of training including literacy and livelihoods and including specialist training for particularly disadvantaged groups like the disabled.

CASE STUDY 7: WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME (WEP), NEPAL

- Participatory training for women's empowerment in the context of a micro-finance programme.

CASE STUDY 8: INTERNAL LEARNING SYSTEM, INDIA

- Diary system for self-learning for individuals and groups integrated into programme monitoring and evaluation in micro-finance programmes.

APPENDIX: PARTICIPATORY ACTION LEARNING SYSTEM, UGANDA, INDIA AND SUDAN

- Diagram-based action learning for livelihood development, organizational development, advocacy and programme planning, monitoring and evaluation.

***PART 2: RIGHTS-BASED
PARTICIPATORY LEARNING: SOME
CURRENT AREAS OF INNOVATION***

INTRODUCTION: SOME CAVEATS ABOUT THE EVIDENCE

It must be stressed that the Case Studies discussed here are by no means the only innovative programmes, but some of the very few for which there was at least some available information on poverty impact at the time of writing. There is a lack of good quality, comprehensive data about the provision of training to the poor and the outback points and impacts of this training. Out of a total of 30 international NGOs asked by Bennell in 1998 to provide evaluations of skill development projects, not one had any robust evidence. A thorough Internet search and correspondence with key donor agencies in the preparation of this paper also yielded little in the way of poverty assessment of training, particularly in training for men.

There are a number of reasons why this is the case, arising largely from the current policy focus of most development agencies:

- the switch of attention in many donor agencies away from poverty targeted training to micro-finance and/or basic literacy currently perceived as more cost-effective strategies for the poor has led to lack of interest in further evaluating training
- the move from training to more integrated forms of market-led Business Development Services where the main debate has been about sustainability and scale rather than poverty impact has meant that the former have been the almost exclusive focus of assessment
- training programmes for women have been assessed from a gender perspective which generally includes information on incomes, intra-household and in some cases community-level effects. These studies often do not discuss the initial poverty levels of their samples or differential impacts by poverty level.

There are many studies of training programmes by donor agencies like World Bank, DFID and ILO as discussed above. However these do not focus on poverty assessment, only outreach and sustainability.

There are also inherent methodological problems with impact assessment of training programmes, many of which also apply to many of the studies below. Impact assessment itself is only beginning to be done in any systematic way in some programmes, principally micro-finance. Impact assessment of training programmes faces problems common to all impact assessment but which are exacerbated in many training programmes because of the modes of training delivery.

Firstly there is considerable debate about relevant frameworks and criteria for assessment. Even economic assessment of impact on incomes and assets is complex because of income fluctuations, market fluctuations, lack of records and the interrelatedness of market and non-market work and resources. Moreover, as discussed above, incomes and assets are only a part of the multidimensional nature of poverty which affect peoples' levels of vulnerability and

sustainability of livelihoods and wellbeing. Frameworks must also encompass impacts at different levels: individual, household, enterprise, markets and local economies and so on¹⁰.

Secondly there are problems of sampling and ensuring the representativeness of the interviewees. The fragmented provision in many large scale training programmes where many training institutions are unregistered mean it is impossible to get an overview. Trainees are notoriously difficult and costly to trace because, unlike microfinance participants, they rarely have any ongoing relationship with the training institution. Problems tracing trainees are even more acute with migrants, women who subsequently marry, etc., thus biasing attempts at random sampling. Low response rates frequently invalidate the findings.

Thirdly attribution problems are exacerbated because of the many different dimensions of any training programmes. It may not be training per se, but some particular aspect of training which produces benefits or fails to have an impact. For employees it is difficult to distinguish effects of formal training from on the job training and informal provision. Moreover training does not take place in a vacuum but effects are generally combined with those of other interventions or influences: micro-finance, television and radio promotions and information, marketing support or opportunities and so on.

Timing of assessments is also an important element. All the above methodological problems are further exacerbated in longer term studies. Most assessments are made very shortly after the training course, or even based on participant evaluations at the end of the training. However in some cases it may take quite some time for impacts to become apparent as trainees are more able to take up emerging opportunities or make changes in their situation. In others the impacts on confidence and setting up of enterprises may be immediate but then decline over time as economic difficulties occur. Evaluations are usually undertaken too soon after projects finish to be able to assess the extent to which there have been sustainable impacts on businesses and livelihoods. There is also little incentive to undertake longer term studies, because these fall outside the project cycle.

It must be stressed that for all the above reasons, and the fact that none of the studies were commissioned explicitly for this paper, the information on impact is generally far from systematic and in many cases the evidence raises as many questions as it answers. Some of the cases discussed below, notably the Integrated Learning System (ILS) and the Participatory Action Learning System (PALS) attempt to integrate the training element not only with monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment but into participatory learning for improvement in programmes and policies. As argued in the final section this is potentially a more developmentally effective and cost-efficient means of addressing some of the inherent problems of impact assessment to enable a more sustainable and dynamic process of innovation and adaptation of training to participant needs.

¹⁰ For detailed discussion of impact assessment frameworks for enterprise development see the many papers on the website of DFID's Enterprise Development Impact Assessment Information Service www.enterprise-impact.org.uk

Nevertheless, despite many shortcomings, the evidence is sufficient to indicate some positive ways forward and also to counter current cynicism about the necessary failure of any attempts at effective and efficient poverty-targeted training.

SECTION 3 (CASE STUDY 1) LIVELIHOOD DIVERSIFICATION FOR THE VERY POOR: TANGAIL INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT, BANGLADESH

Edited by Linda Mayoux from an Evaluation Report for GTZ by Susanna Adam (Adam 2002) ¹¹

Note: exchange rate in 2000-2001 was !!Taka per US\$1.

The Women's Development Component of the Tangail Infrastructure Development Project (TIDP) is an example of a poverty targeted training programme for women which combined livelihood and enterprise skills with literacy and gender and social awareness. The training was combined with fixed term employment in road maintenance and compulsory savings from these wages with the banks. Some women accessed some credit from other sources.

What follows is based on a very detailed quantitative evaluation of the 2000-2001 Pilot programme for GTZ by Susanna Adam (2002). The evaluation concluded that the training has successfully enabled very poor and previously destitute women to engage in a diversity of income generation projects and increase their livelihood security. Women have also increased status in the household and become much more active in the community.

3.1 TIDP TRAINING CONTENT AND METHODS

TIDP started operating in December 1991 as a Rural Development Project of the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) to improve roads and markets. Substantial numbers of women were employed but an evaluation found that most returned to destitution once the short-term employment had ended. Women Development Component (WDC) was launched in January 2000, implemented through four NGOs, to develop and test approaches for providing long-term economic security for the women. Training was of a number of complementary types to address different areas of constraint on women's income generation as indicated in Box 10.

A total of 219 women participated in the TIDP Pilot Phase. All of them were trained in an average of 1.8 different income generation activities and practically all the women (218) completed the training successfully. The focus in the programme was on women's traditional activities because it was felt that the particularly disadvantaged socio-economic situation of these women meant that any kind of training measures had to be simple, socially respected, and of low economic risk. Priority was given to agricultural activities which, with the exception of cow rearing, demand little starting capital. All the IGA training courses included basic technical, organizational and business skills. Only one of the IGA training courses –

¹¹ I am very grateful to Susanna Adam for her detailed comments on an earlier draft and also to Edda Grunwald of GTZ for informing me of the study and facilitating contacts between us.

tailoring - was very experimental. Here the women were carefully selected, training was longer and excluded all other training choices.

BOX 10: TYPES OF TRAINING OFFERED UNDER TIDP WDC

Basic Orientation (Road Maintenance Training): a 6-day course provided by LGED combined with Basic Job Orientation provided by WDC in road maintenance skills, conditions of employment and preparation for the awareness training.

Awareness Training : a 6-day ‘awareness training’ on health and sanitation, nutrition, savings and savings management, dealing with banks, basic concepts of income generation (including field visits to successful producers), women’s basic legal rights regarding dowry, marriage registration, divorce law, polygamy, early marriage, etc.

Literacy and Post Literacy Training: basic reading, writing and numeracy skills introduced over 5 months, 2 hours every working day (altogether 240 hours). The women were encouraged to continue practicing their reading and writing skills through the introduction of notebooks, a project newsletter and a small mobile library containing five short story books. Supervisors were the key persons for running the mobile library and in supporting the women’s writing exercises.

IGA Training: women could choose up to three different IGAs from a range of different courses designed to integrate with their road maintenance work routine. These were 3-5 day courses focusing on technical, organizational and business skills in traditional areas of women’s income generation: poultry, cow and goat rearing, sewing, shop keeping, vegetable cultivation, food preparation. All course materials were specifically designed for women with extremely low education levels, containing a lot of pictures and simple worksheets but also aiming to reinforce women’s literacy and numeracy skills.

Entrepreneurship Training: course content varied from group to group because business competences were specifically related to the envisaged future IGAs. Methods included role-plays, drama, demonstration, and marketing of own products. The women were able to comprehend basic and simple business issues. The entrepreneurship training lasted 6 days and was done in 12 batches with an average participation rate of 18 women.

The training was accompanied by compulsory savings from the women’s road maintenance employment earnings in order to provide funds for their IGAs. It was not specifically linked to micro-credit. However more than a quarter of the women did receive a loan at some point even though a very small one: 41 from an NGO, 12 from relatives and 8 from unspecified sources. Of these only 8 were used for the IGAs, the others were used for housing (20), marriages (5), and other reasons (26) such as medicine for a sick family member, hospital costs, someone going abroad etc. 7 of the above women received their loan before road maintenance, half of the others (27) already during, and the remaining (27) after road maintenance. The impacts described below can therefore be assumed to be due to the training, coupled with savings although these latter did not always operate as intended as discussed below.

TIDP WDC also sought to build awareness and capacity among their technical and administrative staff to improve gender cooperation and to promote networking in order to

raise the capacity of community leaders and service providers to promote and deliver responsive training and advice to very poor women.

3.2 IMPACT OF TRAINING PROGRAMME

The programme was monitored quantitatively and qualitatively in a number of ways:

- Two Individual Fact and Development Sheets with short questionnaires to monitor development of individual women. The first questionnaire, conducted shortly after starting employment in road maintenance, collected information about living conditions, family structure, learning and work experiences, and ideas about future income generation. The second was conducted after awareness training in order to observe its impact and to find out whether individual IGA plans had been modified.
- An impact survey was conducted 3.5-4 months after the termination of the Pilot Phase training. This looked not only at what the women were doing, but also how were they doing it, and the impact on their financial situation and social life. Out of the 219 women who participated in the pilot phase, 201 were traced.

In addition, women were encouraged to do their own monitoring and sharing of experience through:

- Individual monitoring tools which also developed women's awareness, literacy and numeracy skills. This was done through a diary containing both the Bangla and English calendar. In addition to monitoring this reinforced training messages through a monthly slogan and pages for practising letters and numbers.
- A regularly distributed newsletter "Khola Chithi" ("Open Letter") which contained individual success stories regarding dowry, marriage registration, starting an IGA, etc. told by the women road maintenance workers.
- Regular meetings and visits by WDC.

The discussion below is based mainly on the findings from 1 and 2, but supplemented by information from the other processes.

Skills acquisition, work performance and IGA development

Practically all of the women interviewed were destitute before road maintenance. The baseline study (conducted immediately after the women's employment in road maintenance) revealed that most of the women lacked any kind of market experience other than very rudimentary, home based activities. Although the majority of them were involved in some type of agricultural work, only half of the 127 women interviewed in the baseline study did so for income generation. During the baseline study women were found to have very little confidence. Their physical condition was often very bad and their knowledge about basic health and hygiene was very limited. They could not read or write, could not deal with even basic financial matters, and were unaware about their legal rights.

The Road Maintenance and Awareness-raising training had direct impacts on women's road maintenance performance. The women performed their work more efficiently because they knew their tasks more clearly. They felt they did a respectable job and were more confident towards the community and their own work. They took initiative for certain maintenance tasks themselves, had better access to materials needed for repairs and were less involved in environmentally destructive activities, such as removing new plants etc.

Significantly private local employers had started to hire former TIDP women as day labourers. 29 women interviewed in the follow-up survey were earning an income as day labourers and earning an average of 475 Taka per month. Most of these were involved in agricultural work, and therefore incomes cannot be attributed to the WDC as such but rather to the fact that women have proved through road maintenance to be reliable workers. Some were even hired by local contractors for road maintenance. This is a somewhat new source of private sector employment for women in the Bangladesh context. The significance of this source of part time employment income also points to the need for women to develop diversified livelihoods which can take advantage of this type of employment as well as other income generation activities.

Almost all of the women were involved in the IGAs they had been trained for, indicating that not only the savings but also the training had been responsible for the setting up of IGAs. Even their other businesses were related indirectly to the training they received during the pilot phase. Altogether, the 201 women had embarked on 636 activities (3.2 per person)¹² out of which 572 (90%) were still running at the time of the impact survey. Of these 572 current IGAs 424 (74%) had been started following the training. Only 4 of the women interviewed had not started any activity for generating income. All others were performing at least one up to a maximum of seven activities. In general women ran these businesses on their own. In only 5 cases did women share the IGA with someone else, either a family member or a close neighbour.

Case Study 1: Hamida

Hamida (50) is a widow from Gopalpur Upazila. She is the head of a family of 5. Her son had no work and she worked as housemaid with practically no income before she started road maintenance. Soon after getting wages from road maintenance she gave her son 200 Taka for buying and selling fish from the local market. This both raised the household income and enabled her to save more money from her wage. After IGA training she had saved enough money to lease some land and start paddy cultivation. With the additional compulsory savings from road maintenance work she successively started more IGAs (poultry, cow rearing).

At the time of interview she cultivated the land by herself employing labourers. From her two cows she sold one at a profit of Tk 4,500, which she saved at the bank for reinvestment. Fish selling accounted for the largest portion of her income (Tk 1,200 per month). Altogether household income amounted to 2,500 Taka monthly and she felt her economic situation had changed from

¹² The number of IGAs started is more than the 1.8 average for which they received training. The reasons are unclear without further analysis of the data. Presumably because not all women needed training in all the activities they set up eg paddy cultivation and lending money. But it might also indicate women sharing the skills they had learned, and IGA ideas, with other women.

'very bad' before to 'bad' during and 'good' after road maintenance, choosing only the 3rd highest category out of five and thus implying that she strives for more.

Hamida also plays a role as a midwife in her village. She does not take any money for this and therefore people respect her.

The types of IGA were diverse, covering 36 individual types of agricultural, livestock, petty trade or handicraft activities. Two of the evaluation results were rather unexpected. Firstly, the near half (97) of the women were involved in paddy cultivation, although this was not given in the training. Secondly a fairly large number (49) were acting as some type of financial agent through lending money for paddy cultivation or investing in non-motorized transport against a fixed interest rate or fee. Paddy cultivation includes sharecropping where the bulk of the leased land is given to someone else to cultivate it against half of the harvest. Still, about two thirds of the women who lease land cultivate it themselves with the help of their families and external short-term labour if need be. The influx of women in paddy cultivation is a fairly new phenomenon in Bangladesh that can be attributed partly to changes in technology, and partly to a gradually increasing acceptance of women working in some traditionally male activities. It may be that uptake of this particular activity is due mainly to the savings and micro-finance. However the personal Case Studies 1-3 (See Boxes) indicate that the awareness raising training, enterprise training and income from other IGAs following the training had given women more confidence to take on this work.

The literacy training was also found to have had some contribution to development of skills and confidence. 76% of the participants successfully completed their literacy training as per curriculum. All of them could at least recognize the letters and numbers. 50% had learned to read, and 30% could read and write. Women were proud about their newly acquired skills, have gained personal esteem, and are paid respect by community people for their achievements.

Increased incomes and assets

Impacts of the project as a whole on incomes had been significant, although there was no systematic analysis of the relative contribution of the skills training compared with investment from earnings/savings from the road maintenance or earnings from existing activities. By the time of the follow-up survey 32 women (16%) reported earning more than 1000 up to even 6000 Taka per month and thus seemed to have managed to get above the poverty line. 68% had managed to maintain the standard they had gained through road maintenance. Only 16% were at risk of falling back into destitution. Most of the income was from IGAs. This compares with a maximum income from pre-programme agricultural activities of 80 Takas per month.

The highest incomes were in cow rearing, sewing, and shop keeping and a range of 'other' activities. Shop keeping was by far the most profitable of the given activities but not accessible to everyone. It depended very much on location and availability of enough customers and women's mobility to find inputs at the cheapest rate. Thus the activity was only taken up by 15 of the women, one of which had already closed down and 2 could not yet answer the respective questions. Some of the tailors had also been very successful but others

sold their machines and started other IGAs. Some of the cases show the considerable determination and resourcefulness of the women in overcoming almost insurmountable odds against them because of a combination of poverty and gender inequality and discrimination as in the case of Rashida (Case 2).

Case Study 2: Rashida

Rashida got married when she was very young but quickly returned to her father's place after being beaten brutally by her in-laws, because of failing to pay dowry. Her husband remarried. After working as housemaid with practically no income she was selected for road maintenance work. She successfully completed a number of different trainings. After awareness training she went to the court and claimed for a divorce settlement according to the marriage law. Through the court she got Tk7000 from her husband. She used this to buy a cow jointly with her mother, taking a 50% share each.

Rashida especially liked her training in small business management. Immediately after the training, she started a small grocery shop with a capital of Tk.4000. The shop went well until the owner of the land her shop was built on started demanding things on credit. As Rashida could not give him what he wanted due to lack of capital he abused her and kicked her off his land. Rashida tried her best to shift the shop to a suitable place but was unsuccessful. Finally she had to sell out.

She did not lose her determination though, but started supplying homemade sweets, the most popular items of her shop. In addition she raised two cows. Now she earns 60 Taka per day by selling milk. She has taken some land on lease and was planning to start poultry rearing. Rashida built a new house from her own money. Her parents are staying with her because her brothers refused to look after them.

Rashida will think of marriage only if someone wants to marry her without dowry and who accepts that all her businesses and assets will be under her control. Despite the setbacks she feels she has entered a new life with self-confidence and realization.

Some of the IGAs had been discontinued for various reasons. The highest discontinuation rate were cow rearing (25% discontinuation) and sewing (30%). In cow rearing this was largely due to disease (31 cases). Sewing was also particularly problematic. Despite careful selection and advice before and during training, 30% of the respective business starters had given up sewing by the time of the survey because they had not learned enough skills to get enough orders. Some were also unable to take correct measurements because of low levels of numeracy. However the women who gave up sewing did not lose their investment because a sewing machine can be sold without losing its value. Other women had to discontinue because of family problems (11).

Even where women did not actually give up IGAs some had problems. 86 (43%) said they had to struggle, with at least one of their current IGAs. Of these 34 women felt they could solve their problem. The remaining 52 could not find a solution and thought they might have to give up the particular activity soon. 28 (54%) out of these 52 women had also closed down IGAs before, pointing to a group of women with extreme and persistent problems.

Interestingly lack of market or profit was not mentioned as frequently as in many other studies.

The compulsory savings during road maintenance work were meant to be used for IGA implementation. By far the majority of women had done so: 63.5% was used directly and an additional 13% indirectly for IGA investments. The latter 13% were used to buy a homestead (8.7%) or land (4.0%) of which at least a homestead can be counted as indispensable prerequisite for IGA success. Repayments of debts and loans account for only 10% usage of saving. 'Other' expenses arose from marriages, including dowry, medicines etc. The current savings averaged about 400 Taka per person (bank) and 600Taka (bank and NGO).

The degree to which women had accumulated savings was however less than anticipated. Bank membership was not common with the women before joining road maintenance. Up until the time of the follow-up survey 67 still kept their money with a bank and/or 56 with an organization. Of these 40 claimed to keep no money at home at all. However the majority of the women closed their bank accounts despite being advised differently. Of those women who continued with their bank accounts only 7 have added to their savings after job termination.

This may not however reflect women's failure to plan their finances, but more the greater benefits from investment in assets or IGAs as discussed above. Women did not complain about difficulties with the banks as such (only 5 did so explicitly), but most expressed their disappointment with not getting the interest rate they had hoped for. The often delayed deposits of savings reduced the interest substantially. The little amount left was just enough to cover the accounts' costs. At the same time 40% of the women were members of different NGOs. Apparently they make better use of the various saving schemes now than they could do before. All in all, the evaluators concluded that women made very sensible use of their savings because of their enhanced awareness about the relation of investments and profits and thus their individual socio-economic well-being.

Women had also increased control over incomes and assets. In general women ran these businesses on their own. As noted above, in only 5 cases did women share their IGAs with someone else, either a family member or a close neighbour. The majority of those women who bought a homestead (24 out of 28) registered it in their own name, which is not at all common for a poor woman in Bangladesh.

Improved well being and intra-household relations

180 women said that the training programme has changed their approach to their daily life: improving their physical environment, health and hygiene, more awareness about nutrition and the need to care for and educate their children, including the girls. Three quarters (150) of the women have changed or improved their accommodation during and after road maintenance. Only 24 did so with the support of someone else, mostly a family member.

Women's position in the family had also gradually changed for 92 out of the 216 women since they became involved in road maintenance. Although not all the changes (eg divorce) are necessarily completely positive or completely attributable to the training, the increased self-assurance with which the women make life decisions was attributed by them to their improved financial situation and contribution to family income (cf. Table 1). Out of the 137 women who stated to have experienced changes in family support about 80 received direct help with their IGAs and household work. But this may reflect greater use of unpaid child labour, possibly of girls. The extent of change in the contribution of husbands and boys is

TABLE 1: CHANGES IN FAMILY RELATIONS

Since I became an earning member of the family I have been respected and consulted	40
My husband discusses with me and listens to my opinion before taking any decision.	25
Husband came back	9
I am the head of the family now and take all decisions	8
Family members listen to me, I also listen to them, live together peacefully	2
My husband started beating me but I told him to leave the house	2
Got divorced/separated	2
Started a 2nd marriage	2
It is my 2nd marriage, my husband does work according my advice	1
Now I am 'all in all' and independent.	1
Other	7
Total number of women responding (with multiple responses)	92

unclear. Some women continue to face serious problems at home.

Gender relations in the community

In general, the women's self-evaluation about their position in the community clearly shows the close correlation between economic success and social respect. Many of the men initially felt that women should not work in road maintenance, partly due to their perception of appropriate gender roles and partly due to jealousy about women's opportunity of getting some income. This led to initial harassment. Women also had to face harassment at some of the roads because some landowners would not allow them to take earth from their fields for road repair. Women are now moving outside their homes much more than previously (32% compared with 20% in the baseline could be described as 'mobile').

Case Study 3: Afiza

Afiza is thirty-five years old; her husband divorced her when she was pregnant. She gave birth to a baby boy in her parents' house. From then on Afiza lived with her parents and brothers and worked as a housemaid with no self-confidence until the TIDP training.

From her savings Afiza bought a piece of land. She herself did all the preparatory work to build a house. She cultivates vegetable and the previous winter she earned Taka 400 from sales. She also raises poultry and sells eggs and chickens. After completing the daily routine work, she makes

traditional embroidered bedcoverings (katha) stitching. She can complete one within three days and she takes Tk.70 as service charge for each single katha.

Through the training courses Afiza got acquainted with some government and NGO officials and she was trained in basic social development work. She does not want to forget her training. She says, "I learned many things. I must use and spread my knowledge for women's development". She plays a vital role in different social activities. A few months before she was actively involved in stopping an early marriage (a girl of 12). She also stopped an oral divorce by presenting the papers on legal divorce procedures, which she received during training. The previous week she managed to settle an argument between neighbours and thus prevented one of the men involved from police custody.

In this way Afiza became a social figure in her community. The village people know her very well, like her and, above all, trust her. Thus they asked her to run for the Union Parishad (comprising of several villages) election, but Afiza refused. However, she is thinking of getting involved in the Gram Sarker (only one village) election. With the backing of her community, she feels that she must use her knowledge and skills for the betterment of the people but she would like to attend more training courses so as to be able to perform well as a representative at the grass root level.

Afiza still keeps some money at the local bank. Her long-term plan is to cultivate her land to the extent that her crop is sufficient to cover her family needs, possibly even buying some more land or some cows. Afiza's ex-husband came back and proposed remarriage. She denied, saying "the way he divorced me was not legal. Now I am earning money, so he wants to come back but if he keeps proposing I will take legal steps against him."

Women's active participation in community life has also increased. There had not been a big increase in voting. The majority, 186 women, reported voting in the election but of these about two thirds of them had always done so. More striking was the recent active involvement of 58 of the women in campaigning. As a result of the awareness-raising training women had taken action against dowry, physical violence and sexual abuses by reporting respective problems to community leaders, the local administration and/or the WDC office. Some women had also become leaders in their community as in the case of Afiza above.

3.3 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR TRAINING PROGRAMMES

Ideally a further longitudinal follow-up of the women would be required to show the sustainability of the benefits. Nevertheless the short-term impacts are clearly due to the combination of skills, enterprise and awareness training and the savings accrued during their employment.

An indication of impact is also in the changed attitude of the women towards training itself. Women perceive education and training more positively than they did before. Before the pilot phase most women were unable to formulate their training needs. In the follow-up survey a little more than a third of the women felt they were in need of additional training either with

regard to upgrading their current skills (29) or to learning something new (43). An overwhelming majority of 159 women (80%) also said they would recommend training to their neighbours even on a cost sharing basis. Most of the affirmative comments mentioned financial benefits from training either through making profits or through saving cost.

The total running costs of the programme were however considered by the consultant to be rather high. This was partly due to the experimental elements inherent to a pilot phase and partly due to administrative problems in paying the women for their work on time. This meant on many occasions the women would not have been able to attend the courses unless the transport fares were taken over by the project. In other cases it was necessary to provide some food as the women were unable to concentrate on their training due to hunger. Some cuts in running costs could be achieved through improved management. Some of the costs could be covered by the women themselves, for seamstresses could be supported in finding a local master tailor where they could learn for a longer period.

SECTION 4 (CASE STUDY 2) SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND CIVIL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT: KABAROLE RESEARCH AND RESOURCE CENTRE, UGANDA

Linda Mayoux with Sheila Kakyó and Rosette Mutesi

This Case Study describes the role of training in sustainable agriculture by Sustainable Agriculture Trainers Network (SATNET) and Kabarole Research and Resource Centre (KRC) in the context of inter-organisational collaboration for civil society development in Rwenzori Mountain Region of Western Uganda. It focuses particularly on the impact of integrating gender analysis in training for sustainable livelihoods.

Although a rigorous assessment of the different trainings has not been done, an evaluation by Linda Mayoux and Jason Agar in 2002 for the Netherlands NGO Hivos (the main funder for both programmes) found a very positive impact of the training on a number of gender-related dimensions of poverty in those groups where gender had been integrated into the training.

4.1 MULTIPLE CAUSES OF POVERTY IN RWENZORI REGION: IMPLICATIONS FOR POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY

The Rwenzori mountain region of Western Uganda has rich agricultural resources but poor infrastructure, poverty, disease, ethnic conflict and all-pervasive gender inequality have seriously undermined development. Important cash crops in the area are coffee, bananas (matoke), passion fruits, vanilla, cocoa and bee products but markets are seriously limited by the poor communications and transport infrastructure. Over 80% of the population in all five districts where KRC and SATNET work derive their livelihood from subsistence animal and crop production, selling small amounts of cash crops. A small percentage of men and male youths, and to a lesser extent women, are also involved in petty trade. Health in general is very poor with very high incidence of malaria, intestinal and childhood diseases and high prevalence of HIV/AIDS. These in turn seriously affect productive activities as well as being obvious problems in themselves.

There is a pervasive psychology of insecurity throughout the region and an understandable reluctance to take a long-term perspective on developing livelihoods caused by the health crisis and also ethnic disputes between groups in all of the Districts. The government decentralization policy has further accelerated pre-existing tribalism. Preferential funding and support for the dominant tribe has accelerated disunity among the local leaders and within communities. Some political leaders have used poverty alleviation programmes as personal development projects to increase their own power and influence. In the West of the Region armed insurgents take advantage of these conflicts to solicit support and recruit people into their forces. Since 1996 many people have lost their lives or been abducted, and over 180,000

people have been displaced from their homes. Although rebel activities have scaled down since 2002, many of the communities have only just begun to rebuild their lives.

A key cause of poverty is also gender inequality. For women this wider insecurity is compounded by instability of intra-household relations and hence of their long-term access to productive resources. Being the major food producers and providers, most women have access to land for food production or cash crops through their relationships to a male (e.g. husband, father, son, brother, uncle, etc.) who owns the land. For Uganda as a whole it has been estimated that although 70-80% of the agricultural labour force is composed of women, only 7% own the land they till (UWONET 2000). The wider context of insecurity contributes to a high prevalence of male alcoholism, violence towards women and prostitution. These latter are leading to a disproportionately high incidence of female HIV infection including young girls. Although the precise extent of the problem is unknown, it is clear that much of the cash income from the land owned and used by men is diverted from household nutrition to expenditure on alcohol and male luxury expenditure. Women have few resources to invest in improving their own production to provide for themselves and their children.

4.2 SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE TRAINING

KRC and SATNET therefore consider that any poverty reduction strategy for the area must not only include development of agriculture, markets and infrastructure. It must also address communal divisions and gender equity and build civil society to counter corruption and lack of accountability in implementation of programmes and policies for the poor. Their approach is to promote sustainable agriculture in the Region not just as a technical and environmentally sustainable response to low productivity and environmental degradation, but in a way which also promotes sustainable communities through collective exchange of information and ongoing learning.

SATNET is a network of 35 member organisations training in sustainable agriculture. It was set up in September 2000 by trainers from 12 NGOs and CBOs from all the districts of the Rwenzori region and funded by Hivos. The aim of the network is to strengthen information sharing and collaboration between trainers and community development workers. SATNET provides member organizations with specific training and support services for more effective promotion of sustainable agriculture practices including animal traction, agro-forestry, animal husbandry, agro processing and marketing and micro finance. Gender has also been integrated into some of the community-level trainings delivered by extremely dedicated local trainers with high levels of competence both in sustainable agriculture and in gender because 'without gender equity one can't have sustainable household livelihoods'. A more comprehensive gender strategy has recently been adopted.

KRC is a civil society NGO with a number of different programmes. The Micro Projects Programme (MPP) discussed here provides matching grants to community groups to help fund training by SATNET and other organizations. Training is only given to groups which have already formed and the larger grants are targeted to community groups and umbrella networks who have concrete plans to further disseminate the training within their communities. Group organization is then reinforced by grants for specific group-managed projects which either involve collective production or, more commonly, group management of assets which are then allocated to individuals. Between 2000 and 2002 KRC gave MPP

grants to a total of 155 groups. Activities included sustainable agriculture/organic farming, 'zero grazing'¹³ and cattle, goat, pig and rabbit rearing, animal traction, bee-keeping, tree and fruit growing, water harvesting, book keeping and rights awareness. It also funded training to members of Middle Level Organizations¹⁴. Parallel to the grants programme KRC also has a self-managed micro-finance programme similar to that of WEP (See Case Study 7 below) to meet individual savings and credit needs. This had not however really started at the time of the 2002 evaluation and is not discussed here.

BOX 11: SATNET: MISSION, OBJECTIVES AND GENDER POLICY

SATNET MISSION

To train farmers and communities to sustainable agricultural practices and appropriate technologies to achieve food security, better incomes, improved health in a sound environment.

SATNET OBJECTIVES

- Carry out training of trainers on Sustainable Agriculture
- Collect and disseminate information on Sustainable Agriculture
- Enhance networking amongst its members, NGOs and other stakeholders
- Lobby and advocate for appropriate Sustainable Agricultural policies
- Enhance support for particular member organisations to become centres of excellence in their expertise
- Stimulate research in sustainable agriculture
- Enhance monitoring and evaluation of member organisations.

GENDER STRATEGY

- Member organisations to recruit female trainers wherever possible
- Preference for SATNET training to be given to women to increase the number of female trainers in the region.
- Every SATNET course has a session on gender awareness
- SATNET working parties are gender sensitive and where possible gender balanced
- Women are encouraged to participate in all SATNET activities especially radio programmes, training events and exchange visits.
- Decentralize SATNET activities whenever possible to districts and community levels to ensure the participation of more women.

As well as economic programmes KRC also has Human Rights and Civil Peace programmes which work partly, but not only, with the same community organizations. The former includes a strong women's rights programme which reinforces the gender follow-up from the SATNET training. Original plans for MPP gave a target of at least 50% female participation. In practice the proportion of women has been higher, with close to 73% of the total 2,987

¹³ Where livestock are kept in a pen rather than allowed to roam. This significantly increases the weight gain of the animal and enables efficient collection of manure for fertiliser.

¹⁴ Unfortunately the training organizations have not been reporting on the exact number of people trained but probably over 4-500, extrapolating from the data which exist for 4 out of 8 trainings. 196 of the 266 recorded trainees were women ie about two-thirds.

members of groups supported being female between 2000 and 2002. MPP staff, supported by the Women's Rights Officer have a very strong gender focus which underlies their group appraisal and monitoring process.

4.3 IMPACT OF THE TRAINING PROGRAMME

The Hivos evaluation of KRC's Micro Project Programme, and hence also SATNET training, was conducted in September 2002 by the author together with Jason Agar, a sustainable agriculture expert from Kadale consultants, Malawi¹⁵. The evaluators visited a total of 13 groups in the different Districts covered by the organisations, all of whom had received some sort of training in sustainable agriculture and/or livestock and were involved in group activities. The sample covered different types of groups: very successful groups, weaker groups and middle level organisations. All except three of the group meetings were very well attended with between 10 and 40 participants, depending on size of the group. In addition to group meetings, informal interviews were conducted with both the executive members of the group and where time permitted also with the poorest members, particularly very poor women. In addition to consultations with the groups themselves, the evaluators also held meetings with the trainers and other local stakeholders, including local government and women and men councillors, in order to get a wider idea of the impact of the programme on livelihoods, gender and civil society development.

Time did not permit rigorous quantification and cross-checking of findings but the evaluation used a combination of probing participatory and qualitative techniques to obtain both quantitative and qualitative information which was judged to be broadly reliable¹⁶. As MPP is a group-based project offering services to groups and not individuals, the Terms of Reference for the Evaluation focused on the group activities, not details of individual or household income increases from implementation of sustainable agriculture practices. These latter were nevertheless often discussed during the interviews although they were not assessed in detail.

A key shortcoming of the Evaluation in relation to this particular paper is that impacts were not disaggregated by poverty status. Both SATNET and KRC are economically and socially inclusive rather than poverty-targeted programmes. They both also recognise the need to increase poverty reach. Nevertheless many of those attending the participatory meetings were obviously extremely poor and particular attention was paid to ensuring that their views and experiences were included both through the ways in which focus groups were conducted and some individual qualitative interviews.

Impact of sustainable agriculture training on agricultural practices, food security and incomes

The training was found to have had a significant impact on agricultural practices and productivity at both the group and household levels. The evaluation found almost universal

¹⁵ Jason Agar took responsibility for the detailed economic and environmental impact evaluation of the projects on which part of the discussion below is based.

¹⁶ These techniques included voting techniques in participatory exercises, assessing the level of generalisability of particular individual responses in informal interviews and/or observed changes in agricultural practices with key informants.

implementation of sustainable agriculture practices as a result of sustainable agriculture training. The main changes mentioned and discussed were the adoption of new practices to protect and improve soil fertility, improve water collection and retention, improve pest control, improve diversity and variety of produce and improve productivity. Physical evidence was seen of:

- Trenching to improve water retention (almost universal)
- Composting of organic waste using different methods (almost universal)
- Improved matoke (green banana) through water conservation and better management (very common)
- Use of animal manure and urine for soil improvement and pest control (almost universal where there were animals)
- Improved soil management through not burning, double digging and other techniques (very common)
- Planting of kitchen gardens with a range of vegetables (almost universal)
- Rotation, line planting and inter cropping of appropriate crops (almost universal)
- New methods of pest control using plants, ash and animal urine (very common)

In all the groups visited, the sustainable agriculture training had been combined with MPP grants for the introduction of new livestock such as heifers, goats, pigs, rabbits and poultry either as a group-managed asset and/or with a rotational system for allocating offspring to individuals. This contributes to improving both assets and incomes as there was scope to sell products like eggs and milk. Livestock were also promoted to provide manure and urine for soil improvement and pest control as part of new sustainable methods of crop production.

Actual increases in productivity were difficult to measure as there was no clear baseline information (aside from vegetables where the increases were reportedly often from a nil base). For some of the groups it was too early to determine what the productivity improvements would be as they had not harvested. However, credible reports from some of the trainers were that there was a 33% increase in matoke productivity. This is a well-established crop which people already knew about growing. Such spectacular improvements following the training through better management but with limited additional inputs are extremely impressive. As matoke is the staple food crop as well as a cash crop, this also contributes to household food security.

The implementation of micro-projects following the sustainable agriculture training had led to an improved level of food self-sufficiency for participating households. All the groups reported improvement in availability of vegetables for household consumption. Many of the groups also reported improved production of crops that were benefiting from using manure and compost. This often related to vegetables and particularly beans, but also to pineapples, matoke and others. Both the adoption of sustainable agriculture and introduction of livestock had led to improved nutrition for the participating households.

- Availability of vegetables in the rainy season, when most families did not commonly eat them, has increased. Most families reported that vegetables were bought once or twice a month previously, whereas now most were eating them daily, at least in the wet season. Intercropping with pulses in particular had also resulted in increased consumption of these, which provide valuable sources of protein.

- New crops, such as pineapples that provide another source of nutrients and variety in the diet.
- Consumption of animal by-products, especially milk and sometimes eggs also contributed to nutrition.
- Groups raising rabbits were consuming them at least once a month as well as selling them, adding protein and other vitamins. This may partly be due to the limited demand for rabbits as the traditional preference would be for chicken.

Most of the micro-projects had multiple goals including nutrition, agricultural productivity, capacity building and income generation. The impact on the latter was less obvious, particularly in group projects. Most of the larger livestock: cows, pigs and goats were sold for an income, as were the eggs from exotic poultry breeds. However the groups had generally failed to generate significant group incomes because of a combination of contextual factors and group dynamics. Some of the general problems encountered by the micro-projects related to the complete lack of local demand (e.g. meat from improved livestock varieties) or difficulties and uneconomic costs in marketing locally or outside the area. A marketing element needed to be built into the training and ongoing support to deal with marketing problems, including issues of post harvest storage. Veterinary services are critical to livestock projects and absence of a sufficient standard of service (quality and availability) caused problems for exotic livestock-related projects. The economic sustainability of group projects was also hampered by insufficient group business skills. Finally for participants themselves, particularly women, the main motivation was household food security and so far less time and effort was put into group income-earning activities.

At the same time a lot of enthusiasm for group activity itself was expressed by group members. When asked open-ended questions about the benefits of KRC support, after the benefits of training, members mentioned increased mutual help in cultivation and the labour saving gains of this and also the ways in which this increased the enjoyment of even routine tasks. This indicates that group activity has a value over and above any economic benefits from group enterprise. The evaluation found positive outcomes of the group-based approach to training and grants in terms of community integration and participation in planning:

- Increase in women's confidence to speak in public meetings because of group activity.
- Some of the groups had already shown considerable initiative in accumulating group assets and accessing support from other sources.
- Benefits from networking and meetings in terms of increased access to a wider range of information on many different issues.
- Collective organization to address community problems was evident in some groups following KRC supported training. Key examples are actions to counter alcoholism in one of the groups.

Impact of gender training on gender relations and household poverty

Despite SATNET's current guidelines, not all the groups visited had actually received gender training. Only 5 of the 13 groups visited appeared to have done so. At least some of the groups had been trained before SATNET and the gender policy had been formed. Not all SATNET trainers were found to be gender sensitive and there was some way to go to reach SATNET's ideal. However the fact that the 13 groups had all received roughly equivalent types of support apart from the gender training, provided a rough control sample against which to judge the changes in those groups which had.

The comparison between those groups which had received gender training as part of the sustainable agriculture training and those which had not was extremely striking. In the groups which had not received gender training there were serious gender inequalities. Even in women only groups many women had serious problems with the men in their households. This involved not only limits on their access to and control over agricultural land and household income, but apparently high levels of male alcoholism, marital infidelity and violence which were also instrumental in the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS as well as child and household poverty.

It was clear that where it had been integrated the gender training had made a significant contribution to women's empowerment in terms of:

- Changes in gender roles and acceptability of women's involvement in previously male activities.
- Increases in women's confidence and sense of self worth: because of their income earning, their realisation that they could do many different and previously 'male' tasks following training.
- Increases in women's control over income and decision-making in the household: in general women said they controlled the income from group activities and assets gained through the group like crops and livestock. They also said there had been a positive change in decision-making in the household following integration of gender awareness training in Sustainable Agriculture training, particularly where men had also been involved in training.
- Increases in women's confidence and ability to participate in public discussions: as a result of the training and also the group activity itself.

There also appeared to have been:

- Significant changes in men's attitudes towards women's work, helping women, women's decision-making in the household and women's capacities in general. The main, but very significant, changes had been in relation to men now doing some of the heavier tasks for the household eg fetching water and fuel. Fewer men participated in tasks seen as 'feminine' like cooking and washing dishes and clothes.

BOX 12: TWO EXAMPLES OF IMPACT OF GENDER TRAINING**NGANGI TRADERS ASSOCIATION (ANIMAL TRACTION)**

Gender training had been included in the Sustainable Agriculture training. From this they had learned:

- women and men must work together
- women already have a heavy workload so the men were sensitised on this and the men are now helping more
- women have a right to earn their own income
- women have a right to make decisions in the household
- women have a right to participate in public life and have an important contribution to make to the community

The women felt there had been changes following the training in both women's and men's attitudes although not all men had accepted the new ideas. Women here were also involved in ploughing which had previously been a male activity.

KIBOOTA ASSOCIATION

Gender issues and HIV/AIDS were covered in training.

One man asked at random from the back of the group said he had learned the following:

- there should be equality in sharing domestic work and children problems.
- how husband and wife can work together to improve their life and feed their families.
- they should be trustworthy to each other or take protective measures against HIV/AIDS or they should abstain.
- how to advise schoolchildren about HIV/AIDS.
- they should be kind to those who are affected by HIV/AIDS.

In relation to gender men felt that there had been a change:

A third of men put their hands up to say they had helped with housework before the training and two-thirds put their hands up for after the training. This generally meant fetching water and getting firewood which had been seen as possible men's activities before. Only four men said they could cook and only six said they washed dishes. Usually these are given to children. No men are washing clothes because this is 'women's work'. Men also said they worked outside the village so it was more difficult to do things when they got home.

Men said there had been a big change (which they saw as a positive move towards equality) because women were now contributing to school fees whereas before this used to be men's responsibility.

Women felt there had been a change:

- Women are now co-operating in agricultural work in men's crops so this gives them more rights.
- Before men were spending more money on prostitutes and drinking.
- There is a greater sense of mutual understanding within the household.
- Whereas before if a man was a drunkard he would come home and fight now after the training they discussed more together.

A show of hands indicated that before the training most of men had been drinking heavily. Most of the men, but not all, put their hands down as having reformed substantially following the training. Of the women half said their husbands had been drinking heavily before the training and all were much better now. The problem was said to be that not everyone did the training and so there are still problems in the community.

In relation to HIV/AIDS 50% of women thought men's behaviour had changed following the training.

- A decrease in male alcoholism and violence following the public raising of these issues as a problem and discussion amongst both the men and women.

These changes had in turn had a significant positive impact on household wellbeing.

These changes over the course of such a short training were due not only to the content of the training, and the impressive skills and dedication of the trainers, but the organizational context within which they took place. This meant that what was actually learned in the training, and issues raised, were then subsequently followed up in group meetings and then further reinforced in monitoring by KRC.

4.4 CONCLUSIONS AND WIDER IMPLICATIONS

The evaluation therefore found significant impacts on sustainable agriculture practices and gender relations both of which in turn had a very positive effect on household poverty and livelihood sustainability. This is not to say that support and training could not have gone much further, particularly in relation to gender which as noted above had not been universally integrated:

- Land issues and women's independent ownership of land or joint ownership were extremely important for many women to their sense of security. Some women were able to negotiate individual ownership of household land, some were able to buy land where it was cheap and others were able to negotiate putting their name on documents for household land. Following the evaluation KRC has been putting more emphasis on land issues in the Women's Rights training, particularly in the context of the new Ugandan legislation on women's equal rights to household property.
- More follow-up was needed to translate the attitudinal changes in relation to gender roles and decision-making into more fundamental changes in behaviour.
- Positive action was needed in many of the mixed-sex groups to increase women's active participation. Even where women were in leadership positions, other women did not necessarily fully participate.

There was also a need for more focused group organizational training. Although some groups were very strong and had high levels of social awareness, in other cases there was evidence of:

- Exclusion of very poor people: in some groups this had been because very poor people had not been able to save and join savings and credit activities introduced by the groups. Culturally the extremeley poor are in this area stigmatised as lazy and drunkards – a stigma which needs explicit attention.
- Lack of skills in participatory management: even where it was obvious that group leaders and executive members were very socially aware and wished to promote participation, the ways in which unguided focus group discussions proceeded indicated a lack of skill on the part of the management in participatory methods for conducting discussions. Training on group dynamics had only covered the need to keep records, to have meetings and other procedural matters.
- Lack of skills in group problem solving: in some groups the evaluators were presented with shopping lists of items for which extra funding was needed and the types of items listed indicated that the groups were not always seeking their own solutions to their own problems. Many of the items such as bicycles, simple farming equipment and so on where things which groups could easily raise funds for themselves. The amount needed often amounted to less than those handed out in several rounds of existing ROSCAs. This is therefore also an important area to be addressed in training.

In general there was also a need for much greater awareness of and attention to the needs of the extremely poor. Some of these problems are currently being addressed through the introduction of the Participatory Action Learning System (PALS) described in Appendix.

Nevertheless, despite these shortcomings, and also inevitable gaps in information gathered during the evaluation, the experience of SATNET and KRC clearly demonstrates the potential poverty impact of group-based livelihoods training. Particularly where gender issues are fully integrated into mainstream training for both men and women significant changes can occur to reinforce livelihood sustainability as well as women's rights. The impact of training is much greater when it builds on and further strengthens group solidarity so that people are involved in ongoing information exchange networks and collective assistance.

SECTION 5 (CASE STUDY 3) AREA NETWORKING FOR WOMEN'S ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT, ANANDI, INDIA

Linda Mayoux, Sejal Dand and Jahnvi Andharia

NOTE: The Rupee exchange rate at the time of the participatory review fluctuated around \$1=Rs46

This Case Study discusses two particularly innovative approaches to training by ANANDI, an NGO working for women's empowerment in Gujarat, India¹⁷. ANANDI was founded in 1995 and currently works in two different areas of Gujarat: Panchmahals-Dahod and Saurashtra. The main basis of their work is the facilitation and strengthening of grassroots and poverty-targeted women's organizations. In the tribal area of Panchmahals-Dahod ANANDI has facilitated the formation and expansion of two local women's organizations – the Devgadhi Mahila Sangathan and the Panam Mahila Sangathan. Over 3000 women are members of these sangathans, now plan and manage many of their own activities addressing gender violence, health, food security, livelihoods, micro-finance and capacity building of women panchayat members. In Saurashtra ANANDI helps local NGOs to mainstream gender in their programmes through gender and other training. Most of these programmes involve group organization around different issues, including but not only micro-finance. ANANDI has helped women organize to effectively manage post-earthquake rehabilitation projects and oppose communal conflicts. ANANDI is also involved in advocacy and networking to mainstream women's needs and interests in state policy.

As part of their work with women's organizations and partners ANANDI conducts a wide range of life and technical skills training which aim to challenge existing gender roles and stereotypes and also improve women's incomes and household livelihoods. Discussed here are:

- Training for women masons to enable them to get sustainable private sector employment in more lucrative male activities like skilled construction work.
- Area networking as an effective and cost-efficient form of mutual learning.

ANANDI is also currently involved in adapting PALS to both enterprise training and their area networking (see Appendix)¹⁸.

There has been no in-depth and systematic poverty assessment of ANANDI's training. What follows is based on ANANDI documents and particularly on the findings of an all too brief

¹⁷ More details of ANANDI's programme can be found on their website: www.anandiindia.org.

¹⁸ Details of the PALS process in ANANDI are available on the ANANDI website.

Participatory Review by Linda Mayoux involving 5 days fieldwork in December 2003 using a combination of qualitative and participatory tools.¹⁹

5.1 WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT: TRAINING OF WOMEN IN NON-TRADITIONAL OCCUPATIONS

ANANDI has a number of training programmes which aim not only to increase women's incomes but also to challenge gender roles as the basis for significant and sustainable increases in women's income and control over income. This includes training women in new agricultural technologies and non-traditional crops. Women attending meetings during the Participatory Review reported with pride how they now ploughed their own or sharecropped plots and irrigated and planted new varieties of staple crops. Previously these tasks had only been done by men and single women were dependent on male relatives as and when these men had time away from their own fields. These possibilities for increasing agricultural production was also leading women to think about sustainable alternatives to labour migration and reverse the trend of declining local production, unstable household relations and fragmented communities.

A particularly innovative and successful initiative has been ANANDI's women masons training programme in Saurashtra. Attempts have been made elsewhere to train women as masons (see Wadhwa 1991) and other non-traditional occupations like the silk industry (see eg Leach et al 2000 and contrasting account in Sinha 2000). These have however often proved very problematic because training alone does not enable women to get contracts in a very gender discriminatory labour market in the private sector. The ANANDI experience and discussions with the women masons in the course of the Participatory Review indicate some ways forward for promoting women's entry into 'male' occupations.

In Saurashtra as in many other parts of India, women are often employed in manual labour in construction work. But the wages are very low. In this area women's daily wages were Rs50 a day compared to Rs200-250 for a skilled mason, all of whom were men. ANANDI had been involved in a number of projects in the area which involved construction work: earthquake rehabilitation and post-earthquake house construction, construction of the Women's Information Centres and sanitation programmes. In all these projects ANANDI has mobilised and trained women to manage the projects, including management of male and female labour and voluntary workers. This has had a positive impact on effectiveness of poverty targeting which has been much better in the women-managed projects than the parallel government ones.

Following these positive experiences ANANDI decided to translate this training into sustainable opportunities for women to challenge gender roles by becoming employed in masonry work. Women were enthusiastic and forthcoming about learning mason's skills. ANANDI trained two batches of 15-16 women in masonry work with the help of Peoples' Science Institute. The trained women masons were then involved in the construction of

¹⁹ These latter were relatively rigorously implemented versions of the PALS tools discussed in the Appendix to this paper and described in detail on ANANDI's website www.anandiindia.org

sanitation blocks. ANANDI linked the trained women masons with other organisations for training in earthquake resistant technology for building houses.

During the Participatory Review 10 women were interviewed. Of these 5 were landless and the rest marginal farmers and all but one were illiterate. All the women were intending to continue as construction workers. Some women had already worked together on private contracts, others were taking on more responsible jobs in contracts given to men in their households. For those women who were working jointly there had been initially some opposition – some male construction workers had come in the night and broken down the walls they had just built. But the women rebuilt the walls and put on a night watch. They knew the men in the community and negotiated with them. They said the men felt threatened but that resistance was decreasing. There was however no shortage of demand for construction work in the community and nearby towns and so the women were not causing male unemployment.

The women expected that in the long term they would be accepted in the community as skilled workers in the construction sector. They were at the moment earning Rs150 per day rather than Rs250 earned by very skilled male masons as they needed to increase their experience and establish a good reputation. Eventually though they expected to get the same amount. Much of the work of ‘master’ masons involved planning and supervising rather than manual work. Women had certain advantages here because they knew women’s needs and priorities in housing design and there was potential for them to establish their own specific expertise on this basis.

The success of this initiative however was due not only to successful teaching of technical masonry skills (which would also need to be upgraded through work experience) but the gender and empowerment perspective and the organizational support which women received in countering resistance from men. There was significant potential for women to obtain contracts from other members of the organization. They also planned to train other women. In the longer term ANANDI planned to use this example to encourage women’s entry into other profitable areas of ‘male’ economic activity.

5.2 AREA NETWORKING FOR SOCIAL AND POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT: THE ‘MELAS’ OR FAIRS

A second innovative strategy which ANANDI has developed is the idea of ‘area networking’ through holding of area events or fairs ‘melas’²⁰. The melas have proved an extremely powerful means of stimulating discussion, mutual learning and collective action between women.

²⁰ Further details of these networking events can be found in Dand 2003.

BOX 13: KEY FEATURES OF THE MELA

- Use of different visual, diagram and symbolic media for communicating ideas and information between women and women's organizations
- Lateral learning between women from different groups facilitated through discussion of their experiences using these media
- Incorporates a cost-effective training element into the lateral learning process through the various media above and involvement of skilled local resource persons and organizations
- Identifies common concerns, interests and ways forward through women sharing and discussing numbers and data gathered by themselves before the mela
- Builds networks for solidarity between women's groups from different areas
- Builds dialogue between women and invited elected officials, government and mainstream institutions as an advocacy strategy.

The idea of women's melas or fairs is not new in India. Handicraft fairs at local, state and national levels are often attended by women's organizations to sell their products, and in the process exchange (or 'borrow') design and marketing ideas. Such events have also been held in Africa. The idea to use such events for intensive mutual learning and training on an ongoing and cumulative basis, particularly around poverty and gender issues, was however new.

The first mela was held in December 1999 in Rajkot over a period of three. The 16 collaborating organisations brought together over 600 women leaders from 211 'mandals' (Self Help Groups)²¹ and NGO organizers. The various NGOs were working in different sectors like education, health, rural development or water resources. Others were working with theatre, film and design and were drawn in to assist the mandals to share their strategies in an interesting manner with a large group of women. At the mandal level intensive discussion took place to identify women's learning needs, choose representatives and generally prepare for the event.

During the first two days participants discussed their problems and achievements. On the final day the theme was forward looking, identifying strategies for mobilisation and issues that required collective action beyond the village level. Its main aim was to raise awareness, exchange experiences and lead to strategies for collective action. A number of collective activities were organized, each of which had a product which is visual, spatial or oral to make both the discussions and outcomes accessible to everyone (see Box 14). The activities show a progression for the different issues:

- From personal to political: reinforcing values of democracy, transparency, participation
- From past and present realities to vision for the future: affirming women's multiple identities and moving from familiar to new

²¹ In ANANDI as indicated above, many of these mandal organizations involved savings and credit but this is by no means the main focus of many of them. Some mandals do not involve savings and credit at all but have been organized around other projects, local lobbying concerns or issues like gender and communal violence. In this paper the local term 'mandal' is used to differentiate these organizations from savings and credit-based Self Help Groups.

BOX 14: ACTIVITIES FROM THE FIRST MELA***Activity 1: Problem Matrix***

- Step 1 A list of issues facing poor women was drawn up after consultation with field workers and from secondary sources and drawn up as a two dimensional graph on the wall
- Step 2: Each mandal representative came up to the wall and put pictured icon stickers against the problems they were facing in their villages.

Activity 2: Recording achievements and strategies

- Step 1: Ten stalls were set up where each participant was to go and get their mandal details registered. Each issue was assigned a symbol. For example a large tray of mud along with paper trees were used at the afforestation stall. Cutouts of cups and saucers to represent caste restrictions on sharing food and drink were pinned on a soft board by mandals which had overcome caste discrimination.
- Step 2: As women leaders were registered each was given a badge with icon buttons representing activities/action taken by their mandal.
- Step 3: Women then split into ten groups of 60 each. Over the next two days as they went to each stall women constructed the road map of their work and achievements as they shared their experiences. They exchanged experiences of their struggles in taking on new roles as community leaders.
- Step 4: Scoreboards were kept for savings and credit which aggregated the amounts reported by the mandals. The cumulative figures were reported in the plenary.

Activity 3: 'We shall let our fears go'

Apart from looking at the tangible achievements of the mandals the women shared their journey of struggle, negotiation and triumphs as they stepped out of their homes into the groups and then to government offices at local level.

- Step 1: In group discussions facilitators used charts to document the fears shared by the women.
- Step 2: At the end of group discussions, women identified the fears they had to overcome and each woman wrote one fear on a gas balloon and gathered in the open ground.
- Step 3: At the sound of drums and the slogan 'we shall let our fears go and bring in strength', women collectively let go of 700 balloons symbolizing their fears. This filled the whole sky with colour and was a moment of rejoicing and great enthusiasm for everyone.

Activity 4: Tree of Dreams

By the end of the mela women had drawn up their vision for the 21st century. The vision was that of working together, meeting each other and ending the isolation they faced.

- Step 1: The women were asked to write a dream – personal or for the village or the community on to a leaf.
- Step 2: Each leaf was then stuck on a panel to create a beautiful tree of women's dreams for the future.
- Step 3: The huge tree of women's dreams was exhibited at the end of the mela for everyone to see.
- Step 4: The mela ended with women exchanging plant saplings between mandals of different regions with the promise that they would nurture the plant saplings just as they would nurture their dreams. One day they would all grow into the kind of tree they had collectively created.

- From local to global: developing women's positive self image as actors and not only passive recipients

The key event was production of the 'Tree of Dreams' (see Activity 4). In the plenary the experienced women's groups shared their experiences of moving from "Mandal to Maha-Mandal" or federation.

Parallel to these activities experiences and ideas on various issues were exchanged at different stalls:

- Gender Panels: a set of 14 panels developed by a local women's organization described the socialization process by which men and women are raised differently and how they lead to the subordinate position of women in society. Debates were held on various common sayings such as "Women are women's enemies".
- Savings and Credit: route to self-help and empowerment: another mandal presented a skit showing how within eight months of initiating savings and credit activities they solved electricity problems of the village through contacting the General Electricity Board office and/or finding the fault and fixing it on their own. There was also a Panel Discussion with experts from NABARD, Department of Rural Development and Friends of Women's World banking on linkages for savings and credit groups.
- Income Generation Activities: There were stalls where women's groups showed how they had successfully initiated income generation activities and the amount of income they were able to generate in activities like nursery raising, organic manure manufacturing, soap and agarbatti and screen-printing.
- Water: A short documentary showed how women's groups had struggled to reduce the drudgery involved in fetching water. This was used to initiate discussion facilitated by water development experts from some of the participating NGOs.
- Snakes and Ladders: A large snakes and ladders board was designed to illustrate what a good mandal was and the rules they should follow to keep it vibrant and active. Women then played the game with a dice.
- Health: Panels, posters and live demonstrations were used to explain the importance of health issues as a step towards control over one's life.

As women walked through the different stalls facilitators asked them about their experience of addressing specific issues and problems and encouraged discussions. The key experiences and positive strategies were recorded. On the final day stalls included a Mock Court to simulate women's struggle for their rights and one on strategies against alcoholism. At the end a newsletter was produced bringing together all the achievements of the different groups and listing all the resources they had accessed.

Many of the activities of the mela contained educational events with fun. In particular, there were many singing and dancing events encouraging women to enjoy themselves, something which had often been actively discouraged in their families because of norms of female

modesty. A tribal women's drama troupe put on a play depicting the history of women's struggles in India and another one depicting the power of Mahila Mandals in dealing with corruption in government offices and services at local levels.

Since this first event many more melas have been held on different topics in different places. Each involved 300-700 women, covering a range of cultural, economic and political issues important to women from food security to women's role in panchayats. Planning and designing of tools specifically for the event are done over a three month period. This enables the dialogue at the village level, coordination between different NGOs and identification of key persons from the village as resource people. In subsequent melas one of the key methodological improvements was to use participatory diagram tools and surveys to collate data from the mandals beforehand in order to increase participation of members who could not attend the event and gather more detailed information on the achievements of the groups.

IMPACT OF THE MELAS

There has been no systematic assessment of the impact of the melas per se. It is nevertheless clear that they provide a catalyst and focus for significantly reinforcing the development contribution of ANANDI's other activities.

- At the mandal level, intra-mandal coordination and action has improved. At subsequent melas it was found that mandals themselves have taken the initiative to act locally on issues other than credit. Their interaction with government agencies has increased.
- NGOs in the region have become more active in forums and networks addressing violence against women, women's political participation in local bodies, health. Smaller mela-type events have regularly been held by NGOs for mandals in their areas.
- Press coverage and participation of state level agencies as resource persons has led to women's concerns and development contribution getting greater visibility and respect in the wider society.

5.3 WIDER IMPLICATIONS

ANANDI's experience shows the possibilities for enabling women to enter much more lucrative male activities – countering much of the scepticism surrounding these possibilities. It is clear however that training is best where women are already employed in less skilled aspects of the same work process and have certain potential market advantages eg because of their links with female clients or specific relevant knowledge. It is also likely to be most successful when backed up by support of an organization which can counter any initial resistance. The third key factor, as with any economic activity, is a dynamic market so that women are not displacing men from work, but able to generate their own new contracts and clients.

Fairs provide a focus for intensive exchange of ideas, certain skills and information between women, and developing linkages for future networking and more in-depth skills exchange

between groups. Some training can be provided directly at the melas themselves through the life skills and empowerment exercises. Other more technical information can be available in the stalls in take away form. Periodic events of this type can also provide a powerful focus for ongoing reflection, investigation of markets and assessment of profitability of different production techniques, and also economic collaboration at group level (as in the case of WEP above). Events can then help women exchange this information over a wider area.

The costs of such an event are similar to the average cost for other training, per person per day. During ANANDI's events a ratio of one facilitator per 15 participants is maintained. Costs like travel and production of tools are shared partially by the organisations and the participating groups. Costs for development of the kit, games and facilitation are minimized through reliance on volunteers and committed professionals, local artists, theatre activists, song-writers, designers. The largest cost is in terms of time from various NGOs in the area and volunteers from other civil society institutions (students groups, teachers, self-help group leaders/ family members).

Future plans for the mela and training include developing the PALS tools discussed in the Appendix in a more structured and systematic way than the previous use of participatory diagrams. This will enable a much more comprehensive and strategic exchange of information at the mandal level. This will be documented at the melas as a firm base for grassroots-based advocacy. The tools will also be incorporated into some of ANANDI's other training.

SECTION 6 (CASE STUDY 4) SKILLS TRAINING FOR UPGRADING OF VALUE CHAINS: ACONSUR, PERU

This section was edited by Linda Mayoux and Gerry Hofstede from material written and collated by Aconsur²²

Aconsur is a non-governmental organisation promoting the development of micro and small enterprises for the textile sector. This paper focuses on training programmes delivered through the Innovatex Training Centre, opened by Aconsur in 1999 in Villa El Salvador, a poor District of Lima. It is an example of skills and life training as part of a broader subsector upgrading strategy to ensure that women in particular are able to remain competitive in the changing market environment.

What follows is updated from Aconsur's submission to a competition for models of gender-sensitive enterprise development organized by Intercambio, Lima (Hofstede, Contreras and Mayta 2003). This means it focuses particularly on the gender dimensions and gender impact of the training rather than poverty reduction as such. There has not been a systematic in depth impact assessment, but rather reliance on gender disaggregation of monitoring of outreach and sustainability and a few gender assessments of specific topics. The information available is admittedly very incomplete, and there are many unanswered (and unasked) questions particularly in regard to how far the outcomes measured can be attributed to Aconsur's activities and how far the overall improvements documented are true for very poor micro-entrepreneurs, or disproportionately to the better-off and better-educated small entrepreneurs. Nevertheless as gender inequality is a key dimension of poverty and Aconsur is operating mainly with low-income entrepreneurs in the informal sector, contribution to poverty reduction can be at least to some extent inferred from those changes in gender relations which have been reasonably reliably documented. Moreover the underlying ideas and principles are in themselves illustrative of some important ways forward.

6.1 INNOVATEX ACTIVITIES

Aconsur was formally created in 1994²³ as the first specialised Small and Micro Enterprise Service Centre for the garment and knitting industry in Peru. The sector as a whole, and

²² Aconsur participated in the Intercambio Gender in Microenterprise Support Best Practices Contest (2000); see further: *Between Profits and Fairness, Quality and Equitable Services for SMEs in Latin America*, Grupo Intercambio, Lima, 2003. The editors are very grateful to Sigifredo Velásquez Ramos, current Director of Aconsur for assistance in trying to update and clarify the earlier material.

²³ Its origins go back to initiative of a local community leader Maria Elena Moyano who was contacted by the Italian Cooperation. She helped design the project through consultation with women micro-entrepreneurs. Tragically the project was halted for some time when Maria Elena Moyano was killed by Shining Path guerrillas. The project was then re-initiated in 1994 under the management of its then director, Maria Isabel Gonzalez, as Aconsur "Development Programme for Female Textile Activities in the Marginal Districts of Lima" funded by Progetto SUD, an Italian NGO.

garments in particular, is facing difficulties owing to the recession and the competition with Asian products. Nevertheless in the garment industry there is potential for technology innovation, product diversification and increased production for the national and export haute couture markets. In knitting, there are different specialities that range from traditional hand and machine knits to macramé.

The garment and knitting sector are traditionally associated with women subcontracted home-workers who receive only a fraction of the value of their product in a highly competitive market. Although women predominate among the workforce, SME associations are almost exclusively directed by men as they are mostly the formal owners of the enterprises. A key goal of Aconsur is therefore to strengthen women's skills and bargaining power in the industry to both capture the potential markets and ensure that women receive equitable remuneration and participation in policy making for the industry. This in turn entails addressing gender inequalities in the household and enterprises.

ACONSUR works with micro enterprises concentrated in the predominantly poor and very poor areas in the Southern Cone of Lima: the districts of Villa El Salvador (VES), Villa Maria del Triunfo and San Juan de Miraflores. It was started through an initiative of the Italian Co-operation and the Small Business Programme at the Ministry of Industry. The Innovatex Centre, the focus of this Case Study, was opened by Aconsur in 1999 with financial support of the Inter-American Foundation. The Centre offers non-financial services to textile micro enterprises in VES and other districts of Lima. It has a number of interrelated goals:

- economic development: increase sales, build technical and business skills and capacity, quality improvement and opening up new markets.
- personal development of both female and male micro entrepreneurs in the industries
- development of networks and associations of small and micro entrepreneurs to represent their interests within the broader policy framework at both local and national levels.

Innovatex is the only service centre in Peru which offers Business Development Services integrating technical and social dimensions.

6.2 TRAINING METHODOLOGY

In the first project year the focus of Innovatex was on raising self-esteem, training, technical assistance and product development. In the second project year it added a focus on the design of prototypes and product marketing. In 2001 the training offered by Aconsur through the Innovatex Centre covered:

- Technical Training: theoretical and technical courses based on the types of products on demand in the market. Courses take place prior to commercial fairs, business rounds, public bids for state purchases. They bring together both male and female micro entrepreneurs who are interested in participating in market promotion activities.

- Business training: using ILO training methodologies on SYB (Start Your Business); IYB (Improve Your Business); IWEB (Improve Your Work Environment and Business) and WISE (Work Improvement for Better Productivity), as well as the CEFE (Competency based Economies through Formation of Enterprise) methodology of GTZ.
- ‘Enterprise culture with a gender approach’ Module: Innovatex has adapted and field-tested a basic module on gender and enterprise to the needs of both machine- and hand-knitted garment producers.
- Training in participatory planning and implementation of group activities to foster a culture of co-operation and to strengthen associations of small and micro-entrepreneurs.
- Training of trainers and consultants in advanced design and production skills and training skills based on ILO methodologies. This included a seminar on basic Internet skills for textile consultants and trainers to upgrade their use of Internet tools, search for textile information sources, web search for measures, sizes, productive processes, commercial opportunities, etc. An on-line sweater catalogue has also been developed for export purposes which is sent by e-mail.

Training as such is part of a broader approach to information provision and capacity building which also includes:

- Technical assistance tailored for groups and individuals based on specific products, such as for instance, children’s clothes, women’s clothes, or shirts. Individualised technical assistance is also given when there is a need for intensive improvement on specific skills in their own shop.
- Labour Information and Job Placement Centre (LIPC) attached to the Labour Information System of the Pro-Employment programme of the Peruvian Ministry of Labour works closely with Innovatex to attend to the demands of women workers and youth. The LIPC also offers a good referral system for complementary services regarding medical or legal aid centres for occupational health and domestic violence.
- Information about credit services.
- Information exchange and mutual learning between entrepreneurs through participation in social integration activities such as picnics and exchange meetings between men and women entrepreneurs are promoted. Exchange visits are organized for women knitters to increase their confidence outside their immediate environment and give them access to wider ideas to stimulate their technical and business skills.
- Workshops on human and citizen rights to increase awareness of women’s human rights and raise awareness of women’s skills and contributions to the family and community. Domestic violence prevention workshops are held which either deal directly with cases of domestic violence or refer them to other institutions who can give assistance. Innovatex has also held widely publicised activities on women’s rights and their contribution to the economy, including events on International Women’s Day. Topics related to the

prevention and treatment of occupational diseases (campaign for visual screening) and gynaecological ones (campaign for prevention of cancer of the uterus) are also addressed.

The structure of all the trainings is participatory, building on the experience of the entrepreneurs themselves. All the trainings and services are guided by gender equity criteria in order to increase the participation of women as heads of their enterprises and leaders in the community. Women are always consulted regarding the best schedule and time to carry out the training activities. Negotiating between couples is encouraged to enable women to participate in commercial activities outside the district in Lima and the provinces. In family businesses participation of both spouses is encouraged with specific activities for women to increase their self-confidence and management skills. Aconsur organizes family meetings to promote better relations within the family and in the family business. Entrepreneurs are also strongly encouraged to be socially responsible, giving women workers adequate training opportunities and transferring the skills they learn to their workforce.

Information and capacity building provided through the Innovatex Centre is in turn part of Aconsur's broader subsector strategy which includes:

- Market promotion to improve competitive capacity to win public bids and for other commercial activities such as trade fairs in Lima and the provinces.
- Formation of strong and gender equitable networks and associations with at least a 20% female presence in SME garment associations by the end of the project and gender equity in leadership positions.
- Participation in the development planning process of local government in Villa El Salvador.

Aconsur has also been involved in a range of other gender initiatives, including the promotion of an information centre for women entrepreneurs along with the VES local government, and other partner organisations. In particular Aconsur contributes to the integration of gender equity concerns in the local and national planning processes.

6.3 IMPACT OF THE PROGRAMME

There has been no comprehensive or detailed impact assessment of Innovatex which would enable firm conclusions to be reached about the relative contributions of the different types of training, or even the programme as a whole to poverty reduction. Available data for the first two years of the project 1999-2000 consist of a sex-disaggregated data base for productive groups that enables monitoring of:

- Quantitative comparative outreach for men and women for the different services.
- Number of women becoming recognised as heads of new or existing enterprises rather than subcontract labour or workers in male-headed enterprises.

-
- Improvements in enterprise performance: punctuality in delivery of clients' orders, proper finishing of garments, elaboration of business plans.
 - Economic value of domestic work and decrease of domestic workload because of increased male contribution. Aconsur's Gender Unit is validating a new measure to calculate the cost of reproductive work as part of the production costs.
 - Micro enterprise networks or associations formed with equitable participation of men and women.
 - Improvements in living standards due to women's and men's access to basic services like community education and health provision.

This information is supplemented by a series of surveys by Aconsur and Innovatex to validate information on the database. This information has not been systematically analysed and documented. Nevertheless it does permit some preliminary conclusions about impact.

Outreach and poverty reach

In 1999 Innovatex reached a total of 235 small and micro-entrepreneur clients – defined as those with whom a regular contact was established and receiving a minimum of three courses and technical assistance. The total number of people accessing or benefited by the broader range of services from Aconsur itself is much larger and includes women and men workers in the client enterprises who also access the services but with a lesser intensity or frequency. In 1999-2000 a total of 1,234 persons were given training and technical assistance in production and product development: design, standardization of sizes, productivity, deadlines. 235 persons received training and technical assistance in business management geared to improving their management capacity. Finally, 313 persons received direct benefits from the access to markets and market support for product development, sales, and contacts with new markets.

Innovatex is not explicitly poverty targeted and there has been no monitoring of poverty status of clients. However the focus on micro as well as small enterprises implies a predominant degree of targeting of those just below and just above the poverty line and those further below the poverty line. VES where Innovatex works includes many very poor households. In 1995 46.1% of the households were ranked as poor. Only 68% of the population has safe water supply.²⁴

Innovatex is also reaching a very high percentage of women even though it is not only female-targeted. Of the Innovatex regular clientele 85% were women. Of these 64% were hand-knitters; 9.9% machine-knitters and 25.8% garment makers. The 9% of handknitters who are illiterate can be assumed to be poor. A further 13% of handknitters had not completed primary school. Many more of those accessing Innovatex and Aconsur services

²⁴ Data from the Metropolitan Planning Institute, based on information from "INEI: Socio-Economic Profile", 1996. The Peruvian poverty statistics classify households living in poverty as those with an average household income of US\$ 56 a month (\$672 per annum), and those in extreme poverty with a monthly income of US\$ 32 (\$372 per annum).

are workers in these enterprises and may benefit from the improvements in the enterprises and the links with LIPC.

Increase in numbers of female entrepreneurs

Innovatex does not focus on the setting up of new enterprises as such, although some new enterprises have been set up. It works mainly with existing micro-enterprises and subcontract workers with varying lengths of experience and expertise.

An overwhelming majority of the clients have been in operation more than 10 years. Innovatex is involved in specifically encouraging existing female-run enterprises to develop and expand and also encouraging increases in women's role in decision making within male- or household-run enterprises. A survey by Aconsur of all Innovatex participants found that 47% of machine-knit enterprises had women as owners of the business and 53% are men-owned and run enterprises. In either case, though, women are in charge of the production.

The Innovatex survey found changes in operation of the family business. Women were successfully acquiring greater self-confidence in handling the family enterprise, taking decisions and negotiating independently with suppliers and customers. The women were very proud of being able to produce quality products that are accepted in the national and export markets and that provide a very significant income for their families.

ACONSUR created 22 hand-knit productive groups which are exclusively run by women and which have an average of 20 members. The group leaders are trained and receive technical assistance on a continuous basis and in a way that they apply the newly learned competencies. Then they impart the knowledge and skills to the rest of the group members. Several of these group leaders have established their own enterprises. When the project began women were limited to handling services for subcontracts of clients contacted by ACONSUR. They now negotiate directly with traders and national companies and secure their own orders – though so far these still continue to be only subcontracts.

Impact on incomes

A survey found that as a result of Innovatex services 251 out of 568 clients had introduced new production techniques and business management as well as commercial promotion (trade fair participation and other expanded commercial contacts). They had benefited from a better work organization, workshop improvements, including health and safety measures (e.g. better lighting) and had introduced new wage structures based on proper business planning, costing and pricing.

Although ACONSUR clients were producing haute couture quality knitwear geared toward exports, they were mainly operating at subsistence level at the time of the project baseline study. Because it is an artisan product it involves many work hours. Nevertheless the incomes earned constituted a significant proportion of the household income, allowing women to cover some 30% of the family income.

Field evidence suggests women have increased earnings and have gained greater recognition. On the basis of the reported increases in annual sales recorded by Aconsur staff the average

annual income of women clients now amounts to US\$ 1,844 ie well above the official poverty line (US\$672 per annum). In the case of the garment and machine-knitted enterprises, the annual income approximates US\$ 3,514. Average profits are estimated to have increased by 40%²⁵. The women leaders of hand-knit productive units have increased their income by 150%. The machine-knit shops are slowly overcoming the subsistence threshold, generating profits which permit them to accumulate capital, especially for the purchase of machines and improvement of the physical infrastructure of shops. Considering the harsh economic recession that the Peruvian economy has been facing over the past few years and that has affected particularly the garment and textile sector, these results have been significant.

Intra-household relations and division of labour

Innovatex's gender focus has generally helped women to improve their status in the household as well as role in enterprise decision making. A survey by Innovatex measured two variables: self-esteem and the distribution of roles in the family. This indicated that the self-worth of women clients has improved. This is measured by their ability to influence their spouses and children, negotiate with them and modify family roles by having the spouses assume some domestic chores. Men have publicly spoken of their recognition of women's worth as persons and of their important contribution to the family economy.

Change in sharing of household tasks has however been less marked. The general trend is that spouses only take over tasks "to help out" when it is really necessary and to the degree that their wives are generating income for their home. During peak production times (i.e. special promotions through fairs, complying deadlines of client orders) women spend less time on household tasks, spending an average of three hours a day on reproductive activities and between eight to twelve hours a day on productive activities. Spouses or other members of the family take over home chores during the times of peak production. When production is less intensive, women then assume the tasks again and double the time spent because they say "nobody does them as well as they do". There were however several cases where men have permanently taken over daily chores like shopping and cooking.

Participation in entrepreneurial networks or associations

Many women who manage microenterprises are not organised in networks or associations. The Innovatex baseline study found that 87% of women clients did not belong to any organisation and only 13% were organized. Further, the SME networks or sectoral garment associations usually did not have a woman representative on their board.

Although women lead the groups formed by Innovatex as discussed above, there has been little success in promotion of women's leadership in entrepreneurial associations/organisations. Although the male members do increasingly recognise women's efforts and their crucial role in the businesses, this has not yet translated into women's formal representation.

²⁵ It is unclear whether these increases have occurred for very poor micro-entrepreneurs or disproportionately for the better-off and more educated small entrepreneurs.

There are a number of reasons for this which relate to both intra-household constraints and macro-policy towards small and micro-enterprises. The women themselves indicated that taking care of their business was the primary reason preventing them from joining associations. A key factor is also the membership requirements as, whatever women's business contribution, most of the formal owners of the enterprises are men.

6.4 CONCLUSIONS, CHALLENGES AND FUTURE PLANS

Undoubtedly Innovatex's aims are ambitious and inevitably success will be limited by wider economic, social and political factors. There is undoubtedly a long way to go in expanding outreach and poverty reach, achieving increased incomes for all clients and employees and in relation to gender equity at all levels. Nevertheless, despite the shortcomings of the information available, it can be concluded that Innovatex services have had a positive impact on incomes, fair management practices and intra-household relations. This is due to the combination of training as part of an integrated package of services. Changes had taken place within the two years between the start of the project in 1999 and the data and survey covered in this paper. The impact on women's self-confidence and management competence has been particularly marked as the basis for more equitable development and change in the future. Moreover, as noted above, many more of those accessing Innovatex and Aconsur services are workers in these enterprises and benefit from the links with LIPC and, less directly, from improvements in the enterprises, though this latter cannot be assumed. It is also likely that Innovatex's gender focus and policy initiatives have had an impact on attitudes towards women's role in the wider community.

Innovatex service centre as a whole cannot be totally sustainable in the short term. Operational costs of services total US\$278 per client.²⁶ Clients already contribute substantially to the costs of training materials and it is unclear how much more they can contribute. The current tax structure significantly reduces the possibilities for micro-enterprises to increase incomes. The transaction costs of financial services are very high and require guarantees which are not available to micro-enterprises. Even with training it is very hard for women to negotiate good prices for their products from commercial companies. Many constraints also continue within the household as evidenced by those who did not see any change (although these may also have been households where there were already more equitable relationships as well as those where inequalities were so severe that change was unlikely without much greater support).

At the same time it could convincingly be argued that the type of services offered by Innovatex would be a very cost-effective pro-poor investment in local economic and social development. Innovatex training services have become increasingly in demand in other Lima districts and also in the provinces, in particular the module on entrepreneurial culture with a gender approach (which includes training modules on human and citizen rights and domestic violence). There is considerable potential for upgrading and expansion of the knitting and garment industry. In the hand-knit export market in particular there is an unsatisfied demand. Innovatex's integrated approach to training is essential to increase both expansion and development of the industry and the value going to women micro-entrepreneurs and their

²⁶ Aconsur's figure but it is unclear how this figure is calculated.

households and also to workers in the industry. Innovatex's integrated approach to training is also necessary to enable poor micro-entrepreneurs and workers in the industry to participate meaningfully in the development planning process which offers the possibility of considerable improvement in policies for micro-entrepreneurs, general living conditions, health and community development.

SECTION 7 (CASE STUDIES 5 AND 6) SKILLS AND LITERACY TRAINING FOR BETTER LIVELIHOODS: EXPERIENCES FROM SENEGAL AND SOMALILAND.

The Introduction and two Case Studies have been edited from selected cases from John Oxenham, Abdoul Hamid Diallo, Anne Ruhweza Katahoire, Anna Petkova-Mwangi and Oumar Sall, 'Skills and literacy Training for Better Livelihoods: A Review of Approaches and Experiences' World Bank 2002.

7.1 LITERACY AND LIVELIHOODS SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

There is an obvious complementarity between literacy and livelihood skills development. International attempts to link literacy and livelihood skills began with UNESCO's pioneering Experimental World Literacy Program which led to an increasing emphasis on "functional literacy". From 1969, literacy instructors in Kenya were expected to assist their classes set up income generating projects and to invite technical officers to help deepen technical knowledge, understanding, and skills. Uganda has a number of programmes, of which the largest is Functional Adult Literacy Program. Ghana has a national Literacy and Functional Skills Program. At the same time vocational educators have long accepted that, without a sufficient mastery of reading, writing, and calculation, learners cannot take more than limited advantage of possibilities to enhance their knowledge, skills, and capacities. In Guinea, livelihoods and literacy are now so closely entwined, that it is no longer realistic to speak of two approaches there.

BOX 15: FAL'S INTEGRATED APPROACH

The FAL program under the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development is by far the largest literacy program currently being implemented in Uganda. It targets adults and integrates training for livelihood skills into literacy instruction. With the help of the German Adult Education Association (DVV) and UNICEF, the FAL pilot phase began in 1992 covering eight pilot districts. From 1996 onwards, the program gradually expanded from eight districts to 26 by the end of 1998. The program is currently being implemented in four parishes in each of 37 districts and has approximately 127,000 learners (FAL Annual Report 2000).

Integration of subject matter: The approach applies the knowledge from different subjects (or program areas as they are called in this program) to the problem or effort at hand. Such integration has been found to be necessary because in real life, one problem may arise from several causes, and it is usually not possible to solve a problem or promote an effort by looking at one aspect only.

Integration among service providers: The approach is also integrated because it makes use of different professionals or sectoral workers in the field to address the learning or development issues at hand. It is often not possible for the literacy instructor alone to adequately cover the different subject areas needed to address the learners' needs. They are therefore encouraged to bring in extension workers from agriculture, health, co-operatives, and so on to strengthen the learning process.

Integration of learning and life: The approach keeps learning and life together by tying the learning to those things that the learners are already doing, first helping them to do those things better, and then enabling them to start on new activities. To ensure this link to life, the approach aims at immediate application of what is learned in real life situations. Follow-up activities are therefore designed to take the instructors and learners from the classrooms to the learners' work, which for the vast majority of the learners, is in their homes and surrounding fields

Source Okech 1994.

What follows is based on a World Bank Study 'Skills and literacy Training for Better Livelihoods: A Review of Approaches and Experiences' by John Oxenham, Abdoul Hamid Diallo, Anne Ruhweza Katahoire, Anna Petkova-Mwangi and Oumar Sall, published in 2002, which looked at the relative effectiveness of different combinations and approaches to integration. Case Studies 5 and 6 below were selected from the many mentioned in the World Bank Report because there was some detailed evaluation information and they indicate the positive possibilities for this type of approach. Other programmes had failed for various reasons, often underfunding, poor administration or contextual crises like conflicts. The Cases in the Section are however not the only cases of integration of literacy with livelihood training, literacy is also one of the components in Case Study 1 of TIDP in Bangladesh and Case Study 7 of WEP in Nepal (this latter also briefly mentioned in Oxenham et al).

7.2 CASE STUDY 5: SODEFITEX (SOCIETY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF TEXTILE FIBERS), SENEGAL

SODEFITEX (Society for the Development of Textile Fibers) has since 1983 been running a literacy program for cotton producers. The specially designed curriculum comprises training in cotton production, and other aspects of agriculture and livestock raising, combined with literacy and numeracy derived from the requirements of these activities. The decision to include literacy was driven by the realisation that literacy was one of the strongest limiting factors in modernizing cotton production and transferring responsibility for distribution and marketing to the cotton farmers themselves. One estimate put the rate of illiteracy among the producers at more than 80 percent. The main aim was therefore literacy but within the context of a wider aim of increased incomes and livelihood development.

SODEFITEX adopted a gradualist 'snowballing' Training of Trainers approach to outreach. The technical instructors were SODEFITEX employees. At first, the literacy instructors were engaged from outside by SODEFITEX, at a ratio of approximately 25 learners per instructor (moniteur). As farmers became literate, SODEFITEX began to select the more successful new "graduates" as literacy instructors, giving them the necessary training for the task. SODEFITEX began by training and making literate five members of each of its 1,740

producer associations (Associations de Base des Producteurs). For the longer term, it aimed to enable at least one member in each of its 27,179 farming families to become sufficiently literate to take advantage of technological and management advances. In line with this gradualist approach, SODEFITEX organized classes and training for some 2,400 farmers per year between 1984 and 1999, reaching a total of 35,865 learners in the 15 years.

For the first six years, 1984–1989, SODEFITEX ran an eight-month literacy course, spread over two years. Finding that this pattern resulted in non-continuation with some participants and a loss of skills with others, SODEFITEX introduced what it called an intensive course on a trial basis in 1990 and 1991, then generalized it in 1992. This new pattern required participation over only four months in a single year, January to April, in the slack agricultural season, rather than the original eight months over two years. However, to offset the shortening, it required four hours a day, six days a week for 17 weeks—a total of 400 hours of tuition and practice. This pattern seems to suit the farmers and achieve its technical and literacy objectives, and it still prevailed in 2001.

In addition to supplying learning materials worth US\$10.00 per learner, SODEFITEX contracted with the Cotton Producer Groups for the learners to obtain loans for the various inputs required for production. There is thus immediate and continuing support to learn and to implement and practice what is learned.

Impact on literacy

The programme has been extremely successful in teaching literacy. Of those who took the final test, about 80 percent achieved the pass mark or better. The statistics show that more than half the original enrollees persevered and succeeded according to the criteria set by SODEFITEX itself. A comparison between male and female participants gave some interesting findings. Statistics for 35,865 participants (29,957 men, 5,908 women) over the period 1984–1999 show the following:

	Female %	Male %
Enrolled	100.0	100.0
Tested	57.4	71.5
Passed	55.4	54.6
Percent who passed of those tested	96.5	76.4

These figures suggest that women are more reluctant to attempt the test, but those who do are almost certain to succeed.

Impact on livelihoods

In terms of livelihood impacts, SODEFITEX reports that those producers who had the training and mastered literacy/numeracy showed six percent higher productivity than those who remained illiterate. It cannot be determined whether this outcome is due more to the technical content than to the literacy skills of the program.

However, SODEFITEX believes a more important outcome of combining technical with literacy training is the emergence of producer organizations capable of
(a) managing the commercialization of the cotton crops;

(b) managing agricultural credit; and
(c) serving the public interest through assuring food security and organizing village stores for veterinary medicines, agricultural inputs, and other supplies.
These village teams have become an essential link for the rapid increase of production and incomes.

Impact on community participation

The SODEFITEX package starts with improving livelihood, then empowers people to take more control over local affairs. Graduates of the training feel that the determining factor in their being able to take over increasing responsibilities from SODEFITEX is precisely the fact that they can now read, write, and calculate. They are also aware that their growing ability to take responsibility for the affairs of their villages is due to their literacy. In effect, the pattern of training fosters individual productivity, group responsibility, and eventually social responsibility.

Gender equality

For all the impressive success of the SODEFITEX experience, there are also challenges. Only 5,908 (16.5%) of those trained were women.²⁷ Whether this is due to the lower percentage of women among the target group of producers, because of the household targeting of ‘at least one member per household’ or because of the training methodology itself is unclear. It is also unclear whether or not male members then went on to teach women in their households.

Despite its focused and intensive curriculum, welltested materials, well-trained technical instructors, well-trained and supported literacy instructors and links with credit and supplies, as well as its expertise accumulated over 15 years, the program witnessed a dropout rate of around 20 percent during the four-month “intensive” period in 1998/99. A further 10 percent or so declined to take the literacy and knowledge test at the end of the course. These numbers do not of course negate all the benefits that even those who earned less than the pass mark or declined to take the test gained from the knowledge, skills and ideas they derived from the course. But they do signal that high quality implementation and long-term support are required to achieve even these less-than perfect outcomes.

7.3 CASE STUDY 6: SOMALILAND EDUCATION INITIATIVE FOR GIRLS AND YOUNG MEN (SEIGYM)

Somaliland Education Initiative for Girls and Young Men (SEIGYM), supported by the Africa Educational Trust, offers a voucher scheme for vocational and technical training. Non-literate participants can locate and pay for instruction in literacy and numeracy before moving on to specifically livelihood training. Although there is little impact information for this case Study, it is included here to indicate one possible way of encouraging diversification in

²⁷ This contrasts with many other literacy programmes eg Formal Adult Literacy (FAL) in Uganda also discussed in the Oxenham et al study where women’s participation is much higher than men’s. The reasons for these differences are unclear.

training, and also enabling particularly disadvantaged groups to establish some demand in the market for training.

Over three years, 5,000 disadvantaged girls, young women, and young ex-militia men received literacy/numeracy and/or vocational skills training.

The scheme took care to win the support of the local authorities and leadership and works partially through them. Two main committees were formed with representatives from the Ministry of Education, women's groups, youth groups, local NGOs, international NGOs, and UN agencies. Later, there were also four "district" committees. These committees, working with tribal elders and community groups, select the disadvantaged girls and young men to receive vouchers.

Two systems operated:

- In the first system, students could receive a voucher, which they could use to purchase education or training of their choice. The voucher was redeemable only through the Africa Educational Trust (AET) and only if AET inspected the training provider and certified its standards. AET also provided training courses for alternative trainers, craftsmen and women who wanted to run small training courses (such as carpenters, driving instructors, painters, tailors, nurses). This system worked best in the larger towns where there were craftsmen and women who wanted to provide the training and where there were enough students with vouchers to make it worth their while to run a course—usually 10 to 15 students for one particular subject.
- The second system, in effect outside the larger urban areas, also offered vouchers, but in addition, there were meetings and discussions with the students to ask what they wanted to purchase with them. Based on this, AET then recruited local trainers to provide the course, paying them against the value of the vouchers. This worked best in the smaller towns and was also important when the majority of students wanted literacy and numeracy.

To identify the people who could apply for vouchers, AET worked with each local committee to reach agreement on definitions on who was eligible. Then AET and the committee worked on fair and transparent selection procedures in that locality. The AET worked with different committees because, given the fractured nature of the local society, AET aimed to cover different clan areas, so that the central committees would not be accused of bias towards their own clans. Based on the agreed procedures, the committees take responsibility for working with the local community groups, women's groups, local authorities, Imams, and clan elders to select the young people who would receive vouchers. In a number of cases, a local committee agreed to support a project in which a local trainer was setting up a course for a specific group, e.g. a literacy class for 40 disabled people or a basic education class for the children of outcastes, to allow them to gain access to normal schools.

The vouchers are redeemed through a system of supervision and accountability. A local AET staff member monitors each "class" monthly. In the more remote areas, a local teacher or community worker is paid to do the monitoring, using an agreed procedure and reporting form. Voucher payments are then made against satisfactory performance. At present, this is

measured very simply—attendance record of students and teacher over the month, teacher's written lesson plans over the month, comparison of work in a random sample of students' exercise books with objectives and work set out in lesson plans, and the actual ability of students to complete exercises studied over the past month, as shown in their books and lesson plans.

In many cases, local classes are organized and run by women's groups, community groups, and youth groups in an area. In such cases, payment is made to the management of the group. For vocational courses, individual local trainers or craftspeople train small groups. Again, these are monitored and payment made against delivery. Although SEIGYM does not aim directly at institution or capacity-building beyond the skills and livelihoods of its learners, it is in effect forming new institutional norms, capacities, and skills.

7.4 LITERACY AND LIVELIHOOD SKILLS: CONCLUSIONS

The authors of the World Bank Study make a number of general conclusions based on all the Case Studies investigated, including the ones detailed above.

1) Success was highly dependent on the ability of the program to adapt to the interests and conditions of its participants. Experience seems to have produced a strengthening consensus that programs that are well negotiated with their prospective learners in association with local authorities and leaders are likely to be more effective than programs that are simply put on offer. Chances of success are even greater in a program that works with established groups of people who share a common purpose, rather than with individual applicants. In the absence of such groups, it would probably still be better to take the time to identify promising common purposes and to work on forming new purpose-driven groups than to work with individuals who otherwise have little connection with each other.

2) The combination of both literacy and livelihood training were concluded to be more effective than livelihood training alone. Data were not available on the impacts of livelihood training on production, productivity, and standards of living. However, there was virtual unanimity in both individual and focus group discussions that people who had completed literacy courses tended to be more confident and more willing to take initiatives in developing their livelihoods or in taking an active interest in the operations of their cooperatives. Claims by successful learners that they were now following more productive agricultural or livestock practices were common, as were claims that people felt they could no longer be easily cheated, when they bought inputs or sold produce.

3) Deriving literacy/numeracy content from livelihood skills and integrating it with the livelihood training from the very start seems more promising than either running the two components parallel with each other or using standard literacy materials to prepare people to train for livelihoods. Education and training programs for very poor adults also need to offer very clear, concrete and immediate reasons to justify enrollment and ensure perseverance. Programs that start from livelihood skills seem to stand a stronger chance of success because they can demonstrate an immediate reason for learning. Livelihood-plus-literacy/numeracy programs can further greatly improve their chances of success, if they incorporate training in savings, credit, and business management, along with actual access to credit (see case 8 of

WEP Nepal also from this study).

4) NGOs seem to be more flexible than governmental agencies in responding to local and changing needs. Organizations which are more concerned with livelihoods and other aspects of development seem to be better at designing and delivering effective combinations of livelihoods and literacy than organizations that are more focused on education. Projects run by NGOs that integrate development and literacy appear most effective. The implication is that policy for vocational/livelihood education with literacy should consider operating through agencies, both governmental and non-governmental, that work with people in their actual livelihoods and employment.

5) The broad experience of income-generating projects suggests that arranging for both livelihood specialists and literacy instructors is more prudent than relying on literacy instructors to undertake livelihood instruction or income-generating activities in addition to teaching literacy and numeracy. The broad trend appears to treat literacy instructors on a similar basis to livelihood specialists and to pay them for their efforts.

6) It is clear that underfunding is frequently the main cause of failure rather than shortcomings of the approach and methodology itself. Data on costs were largely absent from the programmes studied, so that the study could offer no guidance on comparative costs of different approaches. The minimum period needed by a really illiterate person with normal learning abilities to attain a degree of literacy and numeracy sufficient to support advancement in a livelihood seemed to be some 360 hours of instruction and practice. The costs of programs that combine livelihood, business, and literacy skills are likely to be higher than those of simple literacy programs. However underfunding in many programmes had led to reliance on voluntary or low-paid staff with variable levels of motivation, insufficient staff training, poor premises and resources. Increased funding would be more than justified by the much greater developmental effectiveness of combined literacy and livelihood programmes than either intervention on its own.

SECTION 8 (CASE STUDY 7) LITERACY, LIVELIHOODS AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT: WEP/NEPAL

This material is based on evaluations of WEP Nepal's micro-finance programme, Ashe and Parrott 2001, Bahns 2002, and of the training component in John Oxenham, Abdoul Hamid Diallo, Anne Ruhweza Katahoire, Anna Petkova-Mwangi and Oumar Sall 2002.

Women's Empowerment Program of Nepal (WEP/N) aims to enable women to identify, develop and manage opportunities to improve their livelihoods and incomes. Initial funding was for a three year project starting in January 1998. The WEP model integrates literacy, micro-finance and micro-enterprise training, and an understanding of legal rights and advocacy. Although not explicitly poverty targeted, the programme is economically and socially inclusive of the very poor and most disadvantaged women in rural areas of one of the poorest countries in the world. The intention is to build existing local women's groups, networks and voluntary initiative into a large-scale, sustainable, and empowering programme in an aid-dependent country.

What follows is based on broadly positive evaluations which focused on the micro-finance component (Ashe and Parrott 2001). However both the Ashe and Parrott Study and the World Bank Report by Oxenham et al 2002 conclude that the significant contribution and growth of WEP/N would have been impossible without the training in literacy and empowerment skills. The training has been central to women's organizational abilities to exchange information about livelihood improvements and successful use of savings and group-managed credit.

8.1 THE WEP MODEL

WEP works in Southern Nepal, supported by an international NGO, PACT, and funded by the Nepali government and USAID. It works through thousands of community groups originally set up for literacy programs, irrigation and many other purposes. These were recruited into WEP by 240 NGOs, cooperatives and MFIs selected, trained and monitored by WEP. The model consists of three main components:

- *Self-managed micro-finance*
- *Literacy*
- *Appreciative Planning and Action*

Firstly WEP organizes self-managed micro-finance groups. This is possible because there is a strong ROSCA tradition known in the region as 'Dhukuti' which involves similar as the WEP micro-finance groups: monthly member contributions to a collective fund, regular meetings, choosing a leader, mutual accountability among members, managing money and keeping records even if only on a scrap of paper or in the leader's head. WEP builds on this existing experience to develop skills and experience and build equity funds within the groups. Groups

are small (21 members) and are informal to avoid the costs and corruption of registration. Leadership is from within the groups and all the members are women. WEP insists that women must own the programme by creating their own group policies, paying fees, buying books, providing facilities and supplies, and finding literacy volunteers. Ultimately this requires all members to become literate if they are not already, to understand the banking process and to know how to form and operate a business. As WEP expands to other areas of Nepal it is intended that these large numbers of village-based savings-and-loans associations will create a national women-managed micro-finance system.

The aim is not however just to build a self-managed micro-finance model, but empowerment. Through WEP interventions, women learn to read and write, enabling them to develop and maintain more successful income-producing enterprises. WEP/N does not teach literacy as a preparation or prerequisite for livelihood training, but combines the two from the start of the course. It does not use the national literacy curriculum, but has developed its own curriculum out of the vocabulary and practices of savings, credit, and micro-enterprise. Its booklets make a progressive series: "Our Group," "Forming Our Village Bank," "Grow Your Business With Credit," "Micro-Enterprise," and finally "Linkages" which reinforces empowerment and community activism. The literacy classes are given by unpaid volunteers identified by the groups.

The women also learn their legal rights and how to advocate for social change. Empowerment issues are fully integrated into the literacy and livelihood training. Linkages between the groups are encouraged through mobile workshops: monthly meetings where two leaders of 10 groups meet for a day for training and shared experiences. Of particular importance also is the specific methodology Appreciative Planning and Action which develops women's analytical capacity about their achievements in order to meet further challenges. This encourages a more positive attitude to possibilities for change than an approach which focuses only on 'problems'.

WEP is targeted to women, including but not exclusively very poor women. Over the first 3 years of the programme 1998-2001 the program had expanded to reach 6,500 groups with a total membership of some 130,000 women. WEP/N appeared to enjoy high rates of regular attendance by its participants and very low rates of dropout. Poverty reach was also substantial with 45% of the WEP group members being classified as poor²⁸ i.e. about 55,000 women. Working with women from different economic backgrounds is however a conscious strategy through which WEP aims to enlist the better off in the service of the poor. WEP encourages educated women, often high caste Brahmins and Chetris (or lower caste women who were educated) to use their education to teach others and through their leadership and teaching/coaching role to gain respect in their communities and establish new and positive role models for all women.

²⁸ The poor were classified as those who often rented their homes or lived with relatives, and had a per capita income of less than \$75 annually. They were much more likely to speak a language other than Nepali as their first language and to belong to an indigenous or mixed caste group. Sixty three percent of the poor had never been to school and only 13% had as much as eight years of schooling. The poor were often almost or completely landless and when they could not meet their needs for food, worked as agricultural laborers, left the area to find work or sold their meager possessions. The poorest women were more likely to be widows with working children (Ashe and Parrot 2001).

8.2 IMPACT

WEP undertook a baseline study of the conditions of its prospective participants and their communities before it launched operations. The first impact evaluation in 2001 (Ashe & Parrott 2001) focused on micro-finance but concluded that training was a very significant factor in WEP/N's contribution to livelihood development and empowerment, as well as the expansion and success of the micro-finance programme itself. In what follows the focus is on those poverty and empowerment impacts which can be attributed to the training. For the impact of micro-finance the reader is referred to Ashe and Parrott's full document.

Impact on literacy

WEP starts with literacy and literacy rates in the groups have risen from 28% to nearly 80%. Almost 63,700 women had learned to read at some level through their participation in WEP. Half of those who had had no formal schooling at all were able to read a paragraph "easily" or with "some difficulty", a quarter more could read a paragraph with "great difficulty", and only a quarter could still not read at all. Considering that the program had only been operating for three years at the time of the evaluation, and that volunteers run classes at night – often by kerosene lantern after the women have put in a long day of arduous work – this increase in literacy rates was striking.

Impact on livelihoods

Impact on livelihoods has also been significant. The number of women who had an income generating activity had increased from a third to 90% since joining WEP (See Table 2), mainly raising animals, growing vegetables and other agricultural activities. Although partly due to savings and credit, this substantial increase can be attributed, at least in part, to the literacy curriculum which described women starting and running a business, and the training they had received from the WEP and NGO staff.

There were however substantial differences in the progress made by the businesses across economic and educational categories. The better off had fared well with almost 60% saying their diet had improved and none saying that it had worsened. These women had much better access to resources for commerce, service and manufacturing and better access to credit, borrowing on average twice as much as the other groups. By contrast only a third of the poor said their household diet had improved last year and 14% said that it had worsened. Also, the poor had higher levels of illness in their families than the better off. Their businesses often had declining sales. How far the decline in nutrition is due to contextual factors or to economic changes brought by the programme eg diversion of household resources to savings and loan repayment or women's time to income earning, is unclear. It is unlikely that it was a result of the training.

TABLE 2 NUMBER, TYPE AND OWNERSHIP OF BUSINESSES BY EDUCATION LEVEL AND BY INCOME LEVEL				
<i>Type and ownership of business</i>	<i>Education level</i>		<i>Income level</i>	
	<i>8+years school</i>	<i>No school</i>	<i>Better Off</i>	<i>Poor</i>
Income generating activity before WEP	32%	37%	36%	25%
For all with a business, "Sales increased"	63%	41%	59%	42%
For all with a business, "Sales the same"	24%	38%	22%	36%
For all with a business, "Sales decreased"	13%	21%	19%	22%
Type of business earned most money in the previous year				
Commerce	26%	18%	25%	22%
Manufacturing	3%	3%	7%	4%
Service	4%	4%	4%	5%
Agriculture or livestock	67%	75%	64%	70%
Business ownership:				
Primarily your own	34%	23%	32%	21%
Primarily household enterprise	65%	75%	67%	77%
Spent time working at business last month	93%	92%	96%	92%
Keeps records in ledger now	48%	23%	43%	18%
Kept record in ledger before WEP	25%	15%	25%	9%

Women's role in decision-making

Women's role in decision-making had increased considerably, even where incomes had not increased significantly or had even declined. When asked whether their role in household decision-making had increased in four key areas, a strikingly large percentage of the poor and uneducated as well as the better off and educated reported they had more authority in the household (See Table 3).

TABLE 3: INCREASES IN DECISION-MAKING				
<i>Areas where decision-making had increased</i>	<i>Education level</i>		<i>Income level</i>	
	<i>8+ years school</i>	<i>No school</i>	<i>Better off</i>	<i>Poor</i>
Family planning	75%	59%	74%	62%
Children's marriage	72%	64%	82%	62%
Buying and selling property	82%	76%	86%	72%
Sending daughter to school	89%	82%	87%	81%
Decision-making increase in other areas	75%	63%	81%	65%

Collective action

Through WEP, women can express their concerns at group meetings and also become leaders. Although women had some level of group management and leadership skill through the dhakuti system, these were considerably strengthened by WEP support. Every page of the WEP curriculum makes the assumption that women will start businesses, run groups and take an activist role in the community creating an ethos that favors progressive change. The combination of savings and lending with literacy and the use of the Appreciative Planning and Action methodology (see above) strengthened the women's ability to make changes in their lives.

Mutual economic assistance between members was strong (see Table 4). A large proportion of women helped each other with their businesses. There was no baseline data and the level of mutual assistance could not be ascribed strictly to participation in WEP. Nevertheless levels of economic cooperation were impressive as can be seen from the most commonly reported types of business support and the percentage of women who received it:

TABLE 4: TYPES AND EXTENT OF BUSINESS COLLABORATION	
<i>Type of collaboration</i>	<i>% women</i>
Got advice on how to produce	40%
Got advice on selling	36%
Accompanied me to the market	35%
We share tools and equipment	32%
We produce together	23%
A member sold my goods at the market	19%
I sold another member's goods	17%
We shared transportation	13%
A member made a loan payment for me	12%

Women are also taking a range of collective action in the community including campaigns for preventing girl trafficking, abuse and alcoholism in addition to many community improvement efforts. The groups had carried out more than 100,000 projects and campaigns since the start of the program.

8.3 CONCLUSIONS AND WIDER IMPLICATIONS FOR TRAINING PROGRAMMES

There is a clear indication that the training in literacy, livelihoods and empowerment has been a key factor in the impact of the programme. In listing the ways that WEP had changed their lives, the most frequently mentioned categories had to do with empowerment and education, not savings and lending. Increased self-confidence and a greater role in decision-making were mentioned by largest number of groups, followed by literacy and knowledge of women's

rights. Savings ranked fourth with a quarter of the groups mentioning savings, followed by easy access to credit, and business development. This reverses the normal set of preferences generally assumed to prioritise credit.

The process of change documented through the individual questionnaires was attributed by the evaluators as due to the frequent literacy meetings; the training received from the WEP and local partner staff; and the investments the participants made in their businesses. Moreover, despite the withdrawal of WEP staff, the groups reported that they were getting stronger and there was no shortage of new women wanting to join. They wanted to learn how to read and write; to have a place to save and to meet with a supportive group of women; and to develop businesses that would provide them with a source of income that they had some control over.

There are however some significant challenges still to be addressed by the programme. It is possible that these cannot be completely addressed within the financial sustainability model promoted by USAID. Firstly the programme will need to examine in detail the reasons for the much lower levels of economic impact of the programme for the very poor. The evaluations (and probably the groups) do not disaggregate savings and loans by poverty status to see if there is discrimination against the poor in loan disbursal. There is also no analysis of differences within the 'poor' group to see how far the extremely poor are being reached or benefited or excluded by the focus on savings, as is the common pattern elsewhere.

Secondly, although the focus on volunteer training decreases costs, in view of experience elsewhere (eg FAL in Uganda discussed in Oxenham et al 2000) it is unclear how long this reliance can continue within any one group. There may be factors within Nepali society, or because of the strong ideological commitment to mutual assistance throughout the training material, which maximise voluntary assistance to very poor women. This does however need to be investigated rather than assumed. Although the level of skills exchange and mutual assistance are high, the continuing very low incomes of many of the poor women would appear to indicate that such assistance needs to be strengthened. Unfortunately the evaluation findings for levels of economic assistance are also not disaggregated by poverty status and levels of assistance across economic categories is unclear.

Section 9 (Case Study 8) Life Skills Learning And Micro-Finance: Internal Learning System, India

Edited by Linda Mayoux from Helzi Noponen 2001, 2003.

The Internal Learning System or ILS was originally designed primarily as a participatory impact assessment and planning system for community development programs, most of which have so far been micro-finance programmes²⁹. However it has also proved extremely effective as a life skills learning methodology. The learning system aims to be an empowering tool for poor, illiterate participants and village groups in a number of ways, through:

- facilitating their own tracking and analysis of changes in their lives
- increasing their understanding of how to alter their strategies as they participate in the economy and interact with actors and institutions in the wider community
- increasing the understanding of field staff and programmes of how their services might better address poverty and empowerment needs.

What follows is based on impact information gathered through ILS itself and documented by Helzi Noponen (2001, 2003) for 3 NGOs in India:

- Activists for Social Alternatives (ASA), a large female-targeted micro-finance programme in Tamil Nadu with over 20,000 members in 1,000 groups operating in 4 districts. Over 35% of their membership and 65% of local leaders are dalits (members of the scheduled castes, formerly known as "untouchables" who are explicitly encouraged to take on leadership positions in the organization).
- Professional Assistance for Development Action (PRADAN), a large development NGO providing a range of professional technical services to over 3,000 village groups in Jharkand, Chattisgarh, Bihar, Orissa, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and West Bengal states.
- Handloom Weavers Development Society (HLWDS), a small sector-specific advocacy NGO located in Kerala using microfinance as one part of a larger development strategy to improve the welfare, productivity and empowerment of handloom weavers, particularly women.

ILS has also been implemented in a number of other programmes, including BRAC in Bangladesh.

²⁹ See Noponen 2001, 2003. For more information and update on the Internal Learning System contact Helzi Noponen at email: HNoponen@aol.com.

9.1 ILS METHODOLOGY

The Internal Learning System extends the notion of participatory impact assessment methods so that people themselves are trained to track and analyse their situation using symbols which are easily accessible to illiterate people. Box 16 summarizes the key features of ILS.

BOX 16: KEY FEATURES OF ILS

DIARIES

- Simple medium of pictorial diaries or workbooks suited to illiteracy and poverty conditions.
- ILS workbook content is comprehensive, reflecting all aspects of their life, domestic and productive work, home dynamics and wider community issues.
- Women own the ILS book. It is their record. Though illiterate, they can “read” it and they can “read” their fellow members ILS diaries. It is their first experience piercing the barrier of the written word.
- No one has ever before suggested they can do such work. They take the responsibility seriously. They are cautious about recording accurately and they take pride in their accomplishment in doing so.
- The diary promotes reflection on their current situation and also goal setting and priority selection and plan formats for the future. It is like a green light for them to dare to think about achieving a better life.
- Each indicator picture has an implied program value attached to it. Women absorb this. It gives permission or space to discuss sensitive empowerment and wider social issues and the courage to attempt change.

DIARY STAGES

- 1) collecting data,
- 2) assessing change,
- 3) analyzing causes of change or troubleshooting,
- 4) planning and training,
- 5) documenting, sharing and reinforcing program values.

PARTICIPATORY PROCESS

- On-going system building a panel data set over time rather than a one-off event.
- Decentralized and streamlined process in which data are collected, analyzed, acted upon and stored in the pictorial diary at each participant level, spreading the burden of data collection and analysis.
- All participants have diaries which remain with them and are never taken away by staff.
- Impact results directly linked to training and planning responses.
- Flexible to local needs and constraints.

The main medium for ILS are multi-year pictorial diaries suited to illiteracy and poverty conditions of participants and leading to a long-term realisable strategy for development. Using pictures or scenes that represent impact indicators, poor and illiterate women keep a diary of change over time by making simple tick marks to note quantities, yes/no responses,

and performance and satisfaction scale ratings. This process goes through five stages: 1) collecting data, 2) assessing change, 3) analyzing causes of change or troubleshooting, 4) planning and training, 5) documenting, sharing and reinforcing program values. Equally important as the diaries themselves are the interactive and participatory investigation processes through which the indicators are decided, and the participatory processes to analyze and respond to the findings. It is these which give it its value as a learning/training tool for life skills.

ILS activities and processes are integrated into existing program operations like loan appraisal, core training and group meetings. In all such activities diaries have been used to help participants learn about their situation, and identify ways of addressing problems of poverty, gender inequality and lack of access to services. Diary content is determined through the inputs of all users, including poor members:

- **ASA's "Journey of Progress" diary.** Here a picture scene of a couple on a journey across a landscape who contemplate taking diverging paths represents the concept of reflecting on options in order to reach goals. A variation of this scene introduces each chapter of the diary with good or bad options on different paths for the major issues in each chapter. These include shelter and living conditions, consumption or material welfare, work assets and conditions, women's empowerment, and finances. At the conclusion of each chapter there is a pictorial planning format in which the woman can take steps to improve her situation in any particular indicator in the chapter. In the concluding section of the ASA impact diary there are other learning exercises: a writing numbers skill-building page, a savings, insurance and pension savings plan to help participants secure their financial situation. Another exercise helps participants to identify their problems and goals, and set their priorities by drawing lines from only one or two icons to a yearly bundle indicating on which indicators they will focus their energies over the coming year.
- **PRADAN's "Boat of Life—the Family's Oar"** workbook represents the oar or tool with which households can steer toward a better life. At the heart of the PRADAN workbook is a finances and a livelihood module. The goal is to help participants learn and plan their way out of debt and vulnerability by strengthening their livelihood base in yearly sets of linked exercises over a multi-year period. The remaining modules address practical needs of living conditions and material welfare and strategic interests of women's empowerment issues in the home and community. The workbook concludes with a synthesis section that guides participants through reflection of their individual role in the Self Help Groups.
- **HLWDS diaries** document conditions of handloom weavers to track the extent to which their members have improved their work conditions as a result of their program interventions and advocacy work.

9.2 ILS AS A TRAINING PROCESS: IMPACT ON POVERTY REDUCTION AND EMPOWERMENT

The findings from ILS regarding the impact of micro-finance on women's empowerment have been discussed elsewhere and are not repeated here (Nojonen 2001, 2003). What

follows focuses on the impact of ILS itself as an ongoing training and mutual learning process of grassroots research and analysis which is fed into programme planning.

The possibly surprising finding is that, contrary to findings for normal types of record-keeping, women have been extremely enthusiastic about the idea of keeping either their own individual or centre diary. In PRADAN, even women from the poorest communities holding a pencil for the first time were fascinated with the ILS workbook and eager to participate. As for those women with some literacy skills, they gave similar answers that reflect their desire to be more actively involved in documenting and learning from their own development situation. Members have been so inspired by the priority setting exercise scene that they have requested large posters be made of it to hang in their meeting places.

WOMEN'S COMMENTS ON ILS DIARY AS A COMPANION

"We can understand this book and fill it ourselves.

"It has everything!"

"We can do this work."

"I can read this story (her own story); I can read her story (fellow group member's story)."

Women, especially those who were illiterate, repeatedly expressed how important it was to them to have the many aspects of their life reflected back to them in the diary. A HLWDS member said that every night after her work was finished and as she lay down on her sleeping mat, she would take out her ILS diary and think about her day and her life in general. She said, "You know, just like you (educated) women have your Femina (an Indian woman's fashion magazine), we have this book."

The women have begun to call the diary their "sacred book." It has become a recruiting tool for women to join or start SHGs in HLWDS. The demand for ILS diaries is so high that when there was a delay in printing new diaries, members accused the NGO staff of selling the diaries to outsiders instead of giving to the NGO members. The local rural development officials are investigating using the ILS in their own government-run development projects.

Source: Nojonen 2003

Better loan use

In a focus group discussion with members from one ASA village center, the members reported their changing attitude to loan use as a result of using ILS diaries.

"We looked at the loan utilization (in ILS diary) and decided to use the loan ourselves from now on. Previously we used to give it to our husbands who would put some money in the business and spend the rest lavishly. Now we ourselves are going to fully invest the loan in production." (ASA member)

Women have used the diary to analyze their situation and set priorities. One member who lived in a rickety thatch home related that after repeatedly looking at the housing status scenes, she decided to make a change in her own situation. In the priority setting exercise, she chose saving for housing improvement as her priority in the first time period. By the

second time period, she had saved enough to build an improved cement brick foundation. In the next round, she will take a loan to build cement walls. She spoke proudly of her accomplishment and expressed confidence that she would eventually have a cement house.

Improved livelihoods and increased household wellbeing

In ASA in a series of participant interviews and qualitative focus group discussions, women expressed their overall appreciation for the fact that diary projected a comprehensive view of their lives including aspects of their reproductive roles (shelter and living conditions, children's education, consumption, etc.), as well as their productive roles. They embraced the idea of keeping track of changes over time even though they were illiterate. They particularly liked the theme "path of progress" "bad scene/good scene" pictures that introduced each chapter.

The member diary also sparked a desire among the participants to improve their lives. This is due to the combination of diary elements such as seeing pictures of a variety of good living/ livelihoods scenes and planning formats to help attain them in a format that stresses taking concrete steps over time.

We can see which path leads to prosperity and we want to be on it.

It shows our past, present and future.

When I first saw it, it really showed me that I could make the impossible, possible. It showed me how to approach people. It gave me ideas to think about for my life.

I like the part on planning. I increased my savings and we bought a plot of land. We are still renting. Next, I want to take a loan from ASA for house construction so I can improve my shelter. We have already started foundation work.

Even before ILS impact data from a random sample of participant diaries could be entered in a computer for statistical analysis, women carried out their own analyses and plans. Within the first few weeks of using the ILS diaries women were changing their attitudes and actions. When questioned about what caused the changes or what was the impetus for their new development plans, the women responded, "Only after using the diary, we thought about getting these things." Asked how they would attain them, the members responded by pointing to some of the options in the planning formats, "By increasing savings we can get more amount of loans and using the loan, we can get these things."

"Women talked for hours about the health page. They challenged each other about not washing hands. Most made pledges to change their practices." (PRADAN field officer)

"The next day (after discussing the health practices page), two members went out and bought mosquito nets for their own use." (PRADAN field officer)

"We are thinking to give more preference for child education."

"I realize now that I should reduce my festival spending."

“The week before we filled in the child education page, one of our members had taken her daughter out of school, all the members discussed it and convinced the member to start sending her daughter to school again. She agreed. (ASA group leader)

The picture scenes in the ILS diaries relating to education and child labor, health practices, basic living conditions, etc. encouraged women to think about making better consumption decisions within the household.

Combatting violence against women

After seeing the picture scenes related to male alcoholism and domestic violence, women began to discuss these widespread problems in their meetings. The male family members realized that not only were women tracking these problems in their diaries, and that the diaries were being shown to outside officials, but they were also discussing specific family problems in meetings. Group leaders even began to counsel individual men on behalf of their members. Men began a slow process of change and women report significant decrease in violence and non-support.

“We stopped an abused woman from jumping onto the train tracks with her two small children. We showed her our diaries and how we also suffer these problems, but how things are also getting better over time. Now this woman has taken a pledge to not commit suicide. Today she is a member of our group.” (HLWDS group leader)

“We have told our husbands that these (ILS diary drinking and domestic violence) scenes were the very purpose of the book, so they decided to give up these habits since we are keeping track.” (ASA member)

“In the next ILS diary, we have made the decision to put a real photo of you in the picture of the drunkard and wife beater and your face will become famous throughout the country!” (HLWDS member to her abusive husband).

There are also cases of ILS motivating women to intervene in cases of abuse in employment in HWLDS.

“Madhavi borrowed Rs.8000/-from her master weaver for medical treatment of her husband who was paralyzed. One day she felt a different kind of approach from her master weaver. Her master weaver harassed her sexually. When she protested it, he pressed her to return his money. Madhavi was thinking about suicide as a way out, but her group members gave a loan to cover the debt and visited the master weaver and showed him her ILS diary marking his sexual harassment.

Lobbying for local services

In focus group discussions women reported that the scenes depicting important places in the mobility section of the ILS diary proved to be a motivating factor for them to move out of their villages. Members also commented on many of the options in the plan format such as “ask for services”, “undergo training”, “seek cluster help”, “go on exposure visit”, “speak out

in community”, “write officials”, “speak with officials”, “undertake campaign”, “do a protest action”, etc, as guidelines for increasing their mobility in order to solve problems.

“Women have become more mobile and are going to the branch office and panchayat.” (ASA field officer).

Women participants in both HLWDS and ASA reported that the diaries had motivated them to increase their participation in the public realm. In HLWDS, in particular, women on their own initiative started to bring their ILS diaries to local community meetings showing them to government officials. They used the diaries as verification of their poverty status much like the ownership of a ration card or BPL (Below Poverty Line) certificate to lobby for eligibility for government program grants and services. The women members began to carry ILS diaries not only to credit program meetings, but to other community meetings as well. They showed their diaries to panchayat and visiting rural development officials and used them to verify their low-income economic situation. The diaries have been used to lobby for electricity connection and verify eligibility for livestock grant program and issuance of ration cards. Over 20 women received looms and 10 women got a large housing grant as a result of using their ILS diary in interactions with panchayat and government development officials. In a sense, the ILS diary is serving as a sort of parallel ration card itself that verifies low-income status in general.

“Before the diaries came, we went to the panchayat meetings but some of us were missing. Now all are going. Those who have spoken out are marking it in the diary.” (ASA member)

“We showed our diaries to the panchayat leaders and government official to show our needs. He said it was not an official document. But we were united, all carrying the books (ILS diaries) to the village meetings. The officer could see our solidarity. He looked at the books and he could quickly see our conditions. Now members have been given looms and some have got housing grants.” (HLWDS group leader).

Abundant examples from qualitative focus group discussions with group leaders and field officers using group level diaries demonstrate the impetus of using ILS diaries to work collectively to improve area conditions.

“My center approached the Block Development Office for street lighting and common latrine. When we go to see the district collector, we will also take this book. (ASA group leader)

“We decided to clean our streets and keep them clean in the future.” (ASA member)

“There was no ration shop. Now, as a result of using ILS diary, members approached the panchayat leader and civil supply office and they have got a ration shop.” (ASA field officer)

“In Nellimoodu village on 22nd November 2002, ten self-helps groups gathered and conducted a procession regarding the pure drinking water problem. The interesting thing was that all the members raised their ILS group diary to press for their demands. Interested by their unity and convinced after seeing the ILS diary, the Panchayat president and other government officials gave assurance to establish pipelines in their areas within one year.” (HLWDS)

“There was a two-tumbler system practiced in our village (untouchability abuse in which dalits are offered separate and therefore stigmatizing drinking cups from those offered to non-dalit customers) and now efforts have been taken to eradicate that problem with the assistance from the government officials.” (ASA field officer).

9.3 CONCLUSIONS AND WIDER IMPLICATIONS

ILS uses impact assessment, analysis and planning activities as a teaching and an empowering tool for poor women to better understand their development situation and its gender dimension and to collectively work to improve it. ILS has shown the feasibility of very poor and illiterate women taking charge of their own learning process on both an individual and group level. It has also shown the types of impacts which this learning process can have on the development aims of programmes themselves.

NGO staff have also benefited from learning about their member's lives. The HLWDS staff began to realize the extent of child labor among their members when examining responses in the diaries. Data from the diaries was subsequently used to prepare a grant proposal and design a child labor prevention program. In a similar manner, the responses to the health scenes in the diary, especially chronic respiratory problems (from breathing thread fibers in poorly ventilated weaving sheds), has been successfully used by HLWDS to lobby for the establishment of clinics in certain panchayat districts with large number of weavers suffering these ailments. Field officers were able to contribute additional examples of efforts to address collective area problems as a result of using center ILS diaries.

Where programmes are committed to a learning process and ILS can be integrated into ongoing programme implementation it is a very cost-effective means of facilitating ongoing learning by large numbers of women, both individually and within groups. It is possible that some of the costs of printing the diaries could be covered by women themselves. The PRADAN field staff tested their interest by asking if they would purchase the book for various prices ranging from Rs. 20 (covering the photocopy costs of US 40 cents) to Rs. 40 (twice the photocopy price and almost equivalent to the daily wage). Women were ready to buy it at these prices and some were even placing orders. The precise costs in terms of time by the programme staff for training and facilitation of the diaries is unclear, and likely to be highly variable between groups. However these are likely to be considerably less than in normal training programmes as they mainly provide a clearer and more strategic focus for group meetings and group/member/staff interactions which would have taken place anyway.

There are many ways in which this approach could be integrated not only into micro-finance programmes, but also as an integral part of enterprise training programmes and provision of business support for very poor and illiterate women and men. Diaries were also used for monitoring in training in TIDP in Bangladesh (Case Study 1). They have also been used as part of enterprise training in Zimbabwe and elsewhere. A further interesting development would be to see how the more quantitative and survey approach in the ILS diaries could best be combined with the more open-ended learning processes of PALS outlined in Case Study 10 of this paper.

***PART 3: LEARNING FOR DECENT
WORK:TOWARDS A COHERENT
AGENDA***

SECTION 10: LEARNING FOR DECENT WORK FOR ALL: A COHERENT POLICY AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Good quality lifelong training provision for poor women and men, including the very poor, must be a key and adequately funded component of a strategy for Decent Work, and also of any serious strategy for pro-poor growth. Despite shortcomings of the information available, the Case Studies presented above clearly show that certain types of training have had a significant contribution to enterprise, employment and livelihood development, even for the very poor. Ongoing training from a diversity of sources can make a very significant contribution not only to increasing incomes, but to decreasing economic and social vulnerability, improving confidence and negotiating power, gender equity and collective action. All the Case Studies above also indicate that there is a high level of enthusiasm and demand for appropriate types of training. Even where initially little need may be seen for training, the value may be later recognised and trainees may even accept to pay for follow-up training and recommend training to neighbours as was seen in the case of TIDP. This is however dependent on initial training being subsidised and effective in increasing people's incomes to enable them to subsequently pay for follow-on training, or employment and micro-finance being available to provide the funds for training with demonstrated usefulness.

At the same time education and training should not be promoted as the new 'magic bullet' solutions to poverty and inequality. They must be part of a coherent strategy for pro-poor growth, provision of basic services and human rights. At a national level statistical analysis has shown the key roles of other interventions like land reform and initial levels of income distribution as key factors determining both economic growth itself and also the degree to which such growth benefits the poorest (Klasen 2002). Healthcare and social services are crucial to enabling people to work and decreasing vulnerability. Other factors include macro-economic context, the nature of markets, levels of corruption and infrastructure provision. For women gender inequalities in relation to the above, particularly control over property and also sexual violence and harassment within the household and community constrain their ability to increase incomes and improve livelihoods.

Much will also depend on the particular type of training. Direct significant impact on incomes of one-off short technical skills training courses for the very poor is unlikely in contexts of economic instability and in view of the serious constraints which they face. The very poor are also unlikely to be able to spare the time for very long formal training without some sort of financial support. The challenge for training programmes is therefore not only to design and deliver skills development and capacity building in the immediate short term. It is also how to initiate and integrate within an ongoing lifelong process of cumulative skills learning. This learning process must equip poor and very poor women and men not only with the technical skills needed by markets and enterprises, but also to enable them to participate in and affect the decision-making processes which constrain their lives at all levels.

Furthermore it also involves not only poverty targeted training, but integration of the principles of the Decent Work agenda into mainstream training and education. Both these involve not only changes in training content, methodology and delivery. They also entail

institutional and political challenges to address the underlying systemic inequalities which have led to the chronic underfunding and lack of commitment to ensuring that very poor women and men really receive the support and skills they need to make economic growth equitable and sustainable.

10.1 LEARNING FOR DECENT WORK: CONCLUSIONS AND AREAS FOR FURTHER INNOVATION

There are many types of training which are needed by very poor people and which could make a significant contribution to the Decent Work agenda and pro-poor growth. The training Case Studies discussed above are of different types, operating in different contexts for different target groups. Moreover, the Case Studies selected were inevitably those for which sufficient impact information for the training itself was available to the author in the short timeframe of this paper. They are by no means the only important examples of innovation³⁰. Undoubtedly in all cases further improvements and refinements can be made. Nevertheless, there is sufficient evidence to indicate some common elements which would address some of the shortcomings of the earlier public subsidy and market approaches discussed in Part 1.

Firstly training for Decent Work must proceed from a clear understanding and commitment to the principles of freedom, equity, security and human dignity (See Box 17). These must explicitly and clearly underlie the content and methodology of all publicly funded training at all levels. This includes not only poverty-targeted training but also training for medium and large scale enterprises and the trainers themselves.

Secondly, the content of training must be adequate to equip poor women and men to take advantage of emerging opportunities and decrease their vulnerability in rapidly changing economic and social environments. Technical or enterprise skills training must ensure skills are relevant to markets and can be adapted to market changes over time. These needs cannot necessarily be predicted even in the medium term by trainers in a training programme. This means that for poor women and men any training strategy must include basic numeracy, literacy and analytical skills to enable them to continually access and assess information for themselves from a range of different sources. Empowerment skills are also essential to enabling people to negotiate in markets, including labour markets and subcontracting chains, and also to flexibly respond to changing market demands and opportunities. Training must integrate negotiation and organizational skills to address underlying forms of inequality and discrimination because of gender, ethnicity, age and disability. At the same time 'less tangible' skills, and even literacy and numeracy, may only be seen as relevant and followed through by participants when taught in such a way as to be directly related to improving incomes and livelihoods. The most effective training combines all these elements in some way.

³⁰ See for example discussions of the integrated training, credit, cooperative and Union activities of the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in India, which have increased the incomes of women involved in a range of handicraft industries and also new sectors like waste management. See SEWA website: www.sewa.org

BOX 17: ELEMENTS OF A LEARNING STRATEGY FOR DECENT WORK FOR ALL

UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES OF DECENT WORK IN ALL TRAINING

- Work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity.
- Freedom of association and effective recognition of the rights of collective bargaining.
- Elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour, including child labour.
- Elimination of gender and other forms of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

(adapted from ILO 1999 pp3 and14)

CONTENT: TRAINING FOR DECENT WORK

- Combined livelihoods training incorporating basic literacy and numeracy.
- Training in learning and information skills: sources of information about markets, value chains, other organizational support and services and how they can be accessed.
- Rights training in regard to private sector and public sector provision and services and how to negotiate 'win-win' solutions: eg what apprentices can expect from private training or homeworkers from sub-contracts, how to negotiate different sources of informal and formal credit, negotiation of market sites, get legal aid and demand accountability of local government.
- Gender and other anti-discrimination training integrated throughout training courses for women and men.
- All training to facilitate peoples' own analysis of their opportunities and challenges and to conclude with their concrete and realisable proposals for ways forward, including sustainable networks between participants for follow-up contacts and collaboration.

PARTICIPATORY METHODOLOGIES: DECENT WORK FOR ALL

- Use of diagrams, symbols and role play to make training interesting and accessible for illiterate as well as literate participants and enable illiterate people to play an equal role in discussions.
- To develop skills in finding out information and informing others about their own experience.
- To build confidence, communication and negotiation skills and networking, organizational and advocacy skills.

DIVERSITY OF ONGOING DELIVERY AND SUPPORT

- Delivery of training adapted to the time and resource availability of the target groups.
- More provision of mentoring and facilities for mutual learning.
- Where more conventional formal technical training is needed this should be done by people who have an understanding of the situations of poor people and market needs, particularly entrepreneurs who have themselves moved up.
- Integration of ongoing learning into other livelihood interventions like micro-finance, programme planning and impact assessment.
- Full integration of anti-discrimination training and Decent Work principles into all publicly funded training for large and medium-scale enterprises as well as small and micro-enterprises.

There are clear contributions to reducing household poverty through integration of gender training throughout training courses for both women and men. Although dramatic changes in intra-household relations cannot be expected from short courses attended only by women, some changes have undoubtedly occurred which can then be reinforced over the longer term

through other interventions. For example the long-term process involved in WEP, ANANDI and ILS integrated into Self-help Group organization around women's concerns and microfinance allow a longer term cumulative process of women's collective action. The most significant changes are likely where strong women's organizations are combined with gender training for men and women. KRC sustainable livelihoods training brought about a gradual acceptance of the need for change at the community level for both women and men. Here the focus has been on not only women's empowerment, but the importance of men honouring their household responsibilities if their families are to come out of poverty. Such changes cannot however be expected merely from short-term invitations for men to attend some women's meetings. They require development of sustainable organizations with a strong gender focus like those of ANANDI.

Thirdly, once these basic skills have been attained, quality skills training will be needed either in technical skills and/or enterprise skills if incomes are to be significantly increased. The evidence suggests that this is best provided as part of a long-term process of upward graduation, through a range of arrangements including mentoring, networking and mutual learning. A key innovation which might be considered in more detail would be the incorporation of training on how to obtain information about private apprenticeship arrangements and subcontracting, how to negotiate win-win agreements and get the best on-the-job training and experience. As discussed in more detail below, this would also need to be combined with a programme of awareness-raising for employers and upstream buyers through public media to change attitudes and barriers at that level.

Finally, alongside this focus on skills, there is also a need for information about rights, relevant organisations and organisational skills for lobbying and advocacy. Key issues here for women are likely to be property rights and how to combat violence. More generally for both women and men there is a need for information on how to obtain market spaces and rights, the obligations of local government and how to organise to pressure local government to honour its obligations.

Training should also end with concrete plans for ways forward designed by the participants themselves with targets set by them and methods for assessing progress in relation to these. It is common in enterprise training to insist on forms of record-keeping which are neither necessary nor practicable for very poor people – as indicated by the low take-up and often negligible income impact. What is needed is a participatory discussion of exactly what sorts of information, how often and in what form people might need in order to increase incomes based on the sorts of information which people are already keeping in their heads. These action plans should also include discussion of possible roles for ongoing networks between participants and/or with other networks and institutions and how these can be set up and maintained. Where a need for collective action or lobbying is identified the training itself should help people agree concrete plans, roles and responsibilities.

This wide diversity of training needs does not necessarily imply a long string of separate modules and discrete subsidised trainings. Particularly in relation to basic and empowerment skills there are ways in which the methodologies of even technical skills training can increase confidence, build skills in obtaining and sharing information from different sources, analytical and planning skills and capacity for group collaboration and collective action. For illiterate people in particular, the use of diagrams and symbols which they themselves design

and draw rather than drawings by professional artists are likely to be important in facilitating a more equal exchange between trainers and participants. Some of the methodologies in the Case Studies, particularly PALS, has considerable potential for increasing accessibility and developing these types of skills as an integral part of other training. Other important methods which are used involve role play which could also include simulations of different types of collaboration and collective action.

It is important that as far as possible, very poor people are trained by people who have been through, or have considerable understanding of, the serious constraints which they face and hence the most immediately practicable ways forward. Crucially it entails a change in the power and status relationship between trainer and trainee whereby trainers facilitate the building of trainee confidence and questioning and see themselves as ‘learners about poverty and the strategies of poor people’ rather than top-down imposition of ‘solutions for the ignorant.’

The wide diversity of training needs does however imply a much broader definition of what constitutes training and better integration of different types of learning processes. This diversity of needs does not necessarily imply much more intensive skills training by subsidised providers for any one participant. Evidence suggests that, apart from maybe ‘emersion’ training for women unused to being away from home or needing exposure to formal training environments, training is best given in a series of short sessions over time to enable people to assimilate and form their own questions about what they are learning. Moreover there needs to be greater emphasis on developing structures for mentoring, mutual learning, ongoing problem-solving and collaboration rather than only one-off ‘expert’ training. There is a need for private sector involvement to ensure that those doing the training have the relevant knowledge and experience of current market situations and needs, provided trainees know how to identify and communicate their training needs and negotiate with skills providers to ensure that they are trained and not just used as cheap labour. There is also a need for a much more mutual learning and networking like the fairs organized by ANANDI in India and KRC in Uganda.

10.2 LEARNING FOR ALL: SCALING-UP AND SUSTAINABILITY

It is unlikely that training which really targets the poor and very poor can ever itself be financially sustainable, any more than primary education or health care. This is so even if the training is in high demand and significantly increases incomes over time. Some training programmes have managed to recover some costs from participants. But this has either been after trainees have enjoyed the benefits of the first training to increase incomes sufficiently (eg in TIDP) or has adversely affected poverty reach (eg WEP). Some programmes have also used volunteer trainers but unless (as in WEP) trainers receive other benefits like micro-finance, quality of training may be jeopardised (as in FAL). Moreover even the largest of the programmes discussed above are small in relation to the scale of training needed to have a significant impact on national economic growth and poverty levels. This will imply a commitment to adequate investment into training by governments and international donor agencies as well as collaboration with the private sector and facilitation of lateral learning processes. That said, there are ways of both scaling up outreach and increasing sustainability and cost-effectiveness of individual training initiatives.

Firstly more effort could be put into the now common process of 'Training of Trainers'. Poor women and men commonly teach each other and spread skills as in the case of the bagweaving and embroidery industries (see Section 1.2). However little attention is generally paid to teaching trainees how to teach others and/or following up on whether this has happened. More consideration also needs to be given to ensuring that the trainers get some sort of recognition or benefit for their effort and that these issues are discussed in the training. This could be either facilitation of linkages with groups who would pay them and cover the costs for very poor trainees, or some sort of social recognition eg invitation to participate in Associations or exchange visits to further upgrade skills.

Secondly more use could be made of media like radios and even the Internet. This includes both training itself and the promotion of positive images and role models of successful cases of upward mobility and empowerment. In many areas local information centres are being set up. There are ways in which these services could be made accessible to illiterate women and men through use of new technologies like voice recognition software. This currently exists in English, French and Spanish but there would be considerable potential for development in other widely spoken national languages. It would be perfectly feasible for illiterate people to learn to use computers to access multimedia visual material from CD Rom and appropriately designed websites, much the same way as small children learn to push 'smiley faces' on tape recorders.

Thirdly there is a need for much better integration of training into other dimensions of programme delivery, in particular micro-finance and impact assessment. The recent shift to minimalist micro-finance is not necessarily the most developmentally effective or cost-efficient means of poverty reduction and misses a very important potential means for cost-effective delivery of training (Mayoux 2001; 2003 ed). The large amounts of money currently spent on monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment could be used to develop effective information systems for ongoing participant action learning and programme innovation (Mayoux 2001; 2002; 2003 ed). The innovations in poverty-targeting in small-scale projects also have valuable lessons for some ways of integrating poverty targeting into larger-scale 'mainstream' programmes.

Finally the focus on developing the human capital of the poor and very poor does not preclude training and education for the modern sector or for entrepreneurs in medium and large industries. It does however require that in place of mere assumptions of 'trickle-down' explicit strategies to facilitate increased benefits for the poor and spreading of skills downwards need to be an integral part of training at this level. Entrepreneurs need to be better at training apprentices and negotiating mutually beneficial rather than exploitative arrangements with sub-contractors. They also need to question their own gender stereotypes and behaviour towards more disadvantaged groups. Gender awareness, anti-discrimination training and human management skills need to be integrated into higher level training and also for staff in BDS providers.

10.3 A COHERENT AND EQUITABLE STRATEGY: INSTITUTIONAL AND POLITICAL CHALLENGES

These changes will require a significant shift in funding priorities and real commitment to investment in training and skills development for the poor as an integral and core element in the pro-poor growth agenda. The content of 'market-led' services needs to be redefined to incorporate not only the technical and managerial skills directly required by enterprises for their market competitiveness and survival, but also the basic and life skills needed by the poor in order to negotiate and manage livelihoods in response to market opportunities and constraints. It requires a serious commitment to target and design innovative training for the very poor, including paths for upward mobility to other types of training. It requires a rethinking of ways in which poverty-targeted training can be integrated into other types of pro-poor interventions like literacy, micro-finance and sub-sector development and how these themselves can be more effectively poverty-targeted.

Crucially it requires a political shift from rhetoric of pro-poor growth which sees the poor as needing to be integrated at the margins into 'growth as usual' to a real commitment to developing the skills and potential of the vast majority of the world's women and men as part of a Human Rights agenda for growth itself. This will require changes in the economic, social and institutional environment to adopt macro-economic, fiscal and other policies in support of large-scale training programmes for the poor. It will require investment to change 'mainstream' training and crucially also the trainers. Equity concerns: poverty, gender, ethnicity and disability need to be integral themes in mainstream training and interventions for enterprises upstream in value chains and into mainstream education and training at all levels (Mayoux 2001, 2003e). It will also require an 'ethical shift' in business practice to reward private sector enterprises for giving appropriate attention to the training needs of their workforce.

Unless the rights of the very poor to skills development and training are prioritised, they will become even more marginalised not only by economic growth but even by 'Human Resource Development'. The primary focus on Basic Education for children excludes the majority of adult women and men on whose income their children's access to education depends, thus perpetuating inequalities to the next generation. The focus on small enterprises and cost recovery in poverty-targeted interventions risks leading to further marginalisation and disadvantage of micro-enterprises further down the value chain. The failure to seriously address the training needs of employees and workers undermines both enterprise efficiency and employee incomes. In all cases the impacts on women in terms of increased exploitation, unmanageable workloads and ill-health are likely to be particularly damaging. In all cases this is in contravention of Human Rights Agreements and undermines not only 'pro-poor growth' and social cohesion but the economic and political sustainability of global growth in general.

APPENDIX: PARTICIPATORY ACTION LEARNING SYSTEM (PALS)

This Appendix discusses preliminary experiences of a new and innovative methodology based on participatory diagram tools: Participatory Action Learning System (PALS). PALS, like ILS in Case Study 8, has evolved from work on monitoring and evaluation. It originated in work by Linda Mayoux with Kabarole Resource and Research Centre in Uganda (see Case Study 2 above) and a Participatory Review with ANANDI in India (see Case Study 3 above). However it is now being explicitly developed as a training methodology for enterprise development, organizational development and gender training in the Learning for Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) programme of Port Sudan Small Enterprise Development (PASED) in Sudan, and for livelihood training by a US-based NGO, Trickle-Up, and partner organizations in India and Uganda.

The tools and methods themselves, including a draft PALS Manual for KRC and draft PALS Organizational Training for LEAP can be found on various Internet sites. These are constantly being added to and updated.³¹ The methodology will be more fully evaluated as implementation proceeds.³² What follows gives only a brief summary of the approach and the experiences of the very first Inception trainings with programme staff and programme participants.

A1 WHAT IS PALS?

PALS adapts participatory diagram tools for facilitation of ongoing action learning by individuals, and particularly groups involved in livelihoods and civil society programmes. It builds on a long established and diverse set of methodologies for community-based participatory action research, particularly:

- User-led technology development based on peoples' own experimentation and record-keeping started in the late 1970s and early 1980s, forming the basis for diagram techniques used in Rapid Rural Appraisal (Chambers 1994a; Biggs and Matsuert 1999).
- Paulo Freire's Community Conscientisation approach which has increasingly been combined with participatory diagram exercises and supports people to collect their own information in housing, sanitation, resettlement and environmental management programmes³³.

³¹ A more up-to-date assessment of PALS can be found in Mayoux 2005 http://www.lindaswebs.org.uk/Page3_Orglearning/PALS/ReachingfortheSun.pdf. The Tools and methods themselves and how they can be used for impact assessment are given on the DFID-funded EDIAIS website (See Mayoux 2003a, b, c). Details of experience in ANANDI can be found on the ANANDI website: www.anandiindia.org and for LEAP on their website: www.leap-pased.org. Details of any other updates can be obtained from Linda Mayoux: l.mayoux@ntlworld.com and will be pasted on my own website www.lindaswebs.info.

³² For ANANDI, September 2004, for KRC December 2004 and July 2005, for LEAP and Trickle-Up over the course of 2005 and 2006 integrating PALS training with ongoing impact assessment and group development.

³³ See for example the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights who use community-based enumerations, mapping exercises and horizontal exchange programmes in and between grassroots community networks for advocacy on

- REFLECT methodology for literacy and community empowerment developed by Action Aid in which illiterate people start by using participatory diagram techniques to explore problems and their solutions through drawing. They then gradually progress to documenting these in writing. These individual and community drawings and writings are kept in the form of diaries which are then used for local level lobbying and advocacy as well as awareness-raising.³⁴
- Appreciative Enquiry which uses participatory methodologies and visual media to facilitate peoples' reflections on their capacities and achievements in order to develop self-reliant ways of addressing the numerous 'challenges' they face (see WEP in Case Study 8).
- Internal Learning System (ILS) being developed by Helzi Noponen (see Case Study 9). People's use of diaries has been successful not only in helping them think through their problems, but also for local level lobbying.
- Area Networking Fairs supported by ANANDI in India (see Case Study 3) which facilitate mutual information exchange between groups and networks to counter gaps in information at different levels and develop collective strategies for lobbying and advocacy.

PALS is however distinctive in the way it attempts to more systematically combine these different innovations into a sustainable empowerment process which prioritises grassroots information needs and feeds into advocacy and programme planning as well as ongoing impact assessment. The main goal in PALS is to empower people to collect the information they need in order to solve at least some of their individual and collective problems and to increase pro-poor accountability of the development process as a whole.

At all levels PALS is based on the use of a number of very basic diagram types which analyse different logical relationships (see Box 18). These are then adapted to the needs of different types of practical training eg enterprise/livelihoods, organizational development, gender equity. But underlying every training is a focus on simultaneously building up basic analytical, investigative and participatory skills to enable people, particularly illiterate people generally excluded from training, to subsequently apply these skills to any issues which they feel is important. The training process itself also aims, not only to impart and facilitate sharing of knowledge and skills, but also to identify subsequent action priorities and build institutional structures and networks through which they can be achieved. These include periodic area networking events. PALS-based training also, though not as its main aim, identifies and agrees with participants appropriate forms of record-keeping and target setting to enable them to track progress in relation to identified individual and group goals. This can then feed into both training impact assessment, programme planning and lobbying and advocacy.

housing rights and also environmental improvements. Details can be found on their website: www.achr.net. See also examples in Chambers and Mayoux this volume.

³⁴ Details of REFLECT (Regenerated Freirean Literacy Through Empowering Community Techniques) can be found at www.reflect.org.

BOX 18: SOME DIAGRAM TOOLS USED IN PALS**ROAD JOURNEYS**

These chart a journey from point A to point B, generally over time forward to the future and/or back to the past. The road is divided into stages/bridges/hurdles with quantitative targets which can be revisited for monitoring. External events, opportunities and constraints are presented as signposts or bugbears along the way.

Uses in enterprise training

- to develop a business plan of how to reach the business goals based on analysis of past experience and anticipated opportunities and constraints
- to track enterprise growth and estimate profits or losses and the reasons for good or bad performance

TREES

These start from a trunk representing an institution or issue like a household, enterprise or problem. Inputs are then shown as roots and outputs as branches. Both roots and branches can be of different sizes and can be arranged or coloured, grouped and ranked for qualitative analysis eg. gender analysis. They can also represent targets which can be quantified and revisited for assessment.

Uses in enterprise training

- business analysis of actual or potential costs and profits
- livelihood trees of incomes and expenditure, contributions and benefits
- problem and solution trees for particular issues arising to prioritise action strategies

CIRCLES

These show the relationships between different elements represented as overlapping circles. Venn or chapatti circles can also be combined with pie charts to quantify each circle. Circles can be of different sizes and types for qualitative and quantitative analysis and re-analysed for changes at a later date.

Uses in enterprise training

- value chain mapping to show relationships, numbers of people and values in different circle points along the production and marketing chain
- market mapping to brainstorm the different potential markets for the same product and/or different products in the same market also marking on the actual or possible prices, numbers of people etc in each market, possible gender discrimination or patterns of exclusion
- institutional mapping to identify the range of networks and institutions to which people belong, where they have contacts, where they need to influence

CALENDARS

These show the seasonal changes in livelihoods, health problems and other issues.

Possible uses in enterprise training

- to show seasonal changes in costs, incomes
- to show seasonal variations in food security, expenditure needs

DIAMONDS

These identify different local evaluation criteria eg livelihood goals, poverty levels, food security, gender equity, entrepreneurship, participation, and show distribution around an average. Numbers of people/objects/incidence are then marked at each level.

Uses in enterprise training

- to examine concepts of 'sustainable livelihoods', 'successful business', 'good entrepreneur', 'equitable households'

- to plot where participants were before and/or are now
- to set targets for where they could be after a specified time period
- to identify concrete steps for moving people upwards from the bottom category.

Although the underlying concepts and diagram forms are very simple and very quickly grasped even by very poor women who have never held a pen before, the variations and possibilities are more or less infinite depending on the particular focus of the training. Through drawing the diagrams people learn much more effectively and retain information³⁵ and illiterate people are able to participate fully. People are taught how to use the diagram tools creatively for different purposes as part of existing training programmes, routine staff appraisal and monitoring processes as well as initial exposure workshops. Groups then use the tools for their own information gathering to guide their own activities, monitor and evaluate programme interventions, and also lobbying and advocacy campaigns. Diagram sheets are kept by the groups or individuals which drew them. The key points and conclusions referred to are summarised briefly in group minutes to save long writing up, focusing on notes relevant to understanding the diagrams: differences of opinion, participation or particular problems of poorer members and so on. The diagrams are revisited and redrawn at intervals to track changes over time or following changes in programme interventions or economic policies.

The sequencing and combination of the different diagrams in particular training courses, and the ways in which each exercise is conducted, are guided by principles of Empowering Enquiry.³⁶ The process begins by:

- Helping people to clarify what they want
- Appreciating what they have achieved
- Identifying opportunities and constraints at different levels to their moving forward
- Identifying priority actions at the individual level
- Identifying priority actions and networking/collaboration needs at the collective level between participants and in relation to other networks and organizations
- Setting concrete timed targets for these actions and means of tracking achievement and/or ways in which further challenges can be addressed.

In order to complement the diagrams drawn directly by training participants photographic, video and web materials are being developed. Rather than using artist-drawn pictures, the focus is on facilitating direct learning between people themselves in the form of images they feel are useful (eg. design portfolios, diagrams from other trainings) and 'video to provide an entertaining and immediate means of communicating information between people with similar aspirations, opportunities and challenges.

In order to ensure that participation of the poorest, those who are illiterate and/or suffer other forms of disadvantage are included in the process either separate groups are formed and/or

³⁵ Similar diagram techniques are used in good University-level study skills courses in UK.

³⁶ Empowering Enquiry develops further the methods of Appreciative Enquiry. The early discussion of Empowering Enquiry in relation to Impact Assessment given in Mayoux 2003e is now being further developed in the Draft Training Manuals.

processes for increasing participation are followed throughout all the exercises. By the end of the training, through constant repetition and reinforcement of these norms, everyone should not only have become more confident and articulate, but also able to listen to and respect the views of others. These norms also apply to the trainer/facilitator. Trainers become learners from participants based on egalitarian principles. The emphasis is not only on what trainers can teach, but also what they can learn from very poor people about how to live and cope with the many challenges they face. Over time trainers build up a much more solid understanding of their clients and the activities and skills which are needed, rather than assuming they are the only 'experts'.

BOX 19: PROCESS FOR INCREASING PARTICIPATION

- ***Participatory energiser:*** Begin with some sort of energiser which encourages people who might not otherwise speak to come forward. For example people should talk in pairs for five minutes about the topic in hand and then report back on what the other person has said.
- ***Everyone is respected and equal:*** Make it clear to everyone that everyone's word is to be valued and respected, particularly the views of those who may be more disadvantaged than others in the group. This includes women, illiterate people and also men if they are in a minority and not in leadership positions.
- ***Passing the 'microphone':*** Introduce some sort of tool like a stick, or some groups prefer a banana or other object to represent a microphone. It is only the person holding this tool who is allowed to talk. It is then possible to ensure that everyone has a turn to hold the stick and limits on the numbers of time or length of time anyone can hold it can also be introduced.
- ***Make sure everyone has contributed:*** at the end of each stage anyone who has not spoken or drawn on the diagram must be given the 'microphone' or pen and encouraged to comment/draw on the diagram.

The degree of detail and rigour with which changes are tracked depends very much on the use to which the information is to be put and the degree of usefulness to the person being asked to track. If required the diagrams can be used for very rigorous quantitative recording of information and/or complex qualitative analysis³⁷ as well as more general awareness-raising. In enterprise training for example, input/output trees can be drawn with great precision and used as a basis for estimating inputs and gross/net profits from particular activities, precisely tracking how various programme services have/could contribute. The trees drawn by different participants can be displayed on the wall grouped by activity to compare how and why enterprises in the same activity may have different levels of estimated or actual profit and/or to see whether and how some sources of income (roots) can be increased or certain expenditures (branches) decreased. They can also be combined with seasonal charts at top and bottom to track seasonal fluctuations or changes over time in the income and expenditure

³⁷ Full details of these tools and methods and how they can be made rigorous for qualitative and quantitative analysis are presented in 'Thinking it Through' (Mayoux 2003b) and the PALS Manual (Mayoux 2003c) and reproduced with ANANDI diagrams on ANANDI's website www.anandiindia.org.

flows. The advantages over standard Table-based recording is that tree diagrams are very visual representations which enable an overview of a whole enterprise or livelihood to be captured on one page and in a form which illiterate people can understand³⁸.

The diagrams produced in the training are all retained by the trainees and participants, but key diagrams are photographed as required by the facilitator with a digital camera and used as the basis for building a solid information resource base for the training and other programme services. Some of the diagrams are also used as baseline data, together with the targets for future monitoring and impact assessment. They can also be used as the basis for collective lobbying if this is decided as a priority action after the training.

A2 PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT

It must be stressed that the methodology is only in the early stages and is only just being explicitly adapted to training rather than group-level planning and monitoring. A full evaluation of PALS remains to be done. However a number of preliminary assessments have been done of community-based groups sponsored by KRC who have been using PALS.³⁹ ANANDI has also been tracking some of the developments following the Participatory Review in December 2003.

Experience so far indicates that the methodology has considerable potential to rapidly build peoples' skills in obtaining and sharing information and in group level planning in ways which are accessible to the extremely poor. In India (ANANDI), Pakistan, Sudan and tribal areas of West Bengal within two hours women have moved from being diffident and reluctant to holding a pen to fighting to come forward and have their say. Women obviously enjoyed the experience of drawing their own vision and ideas and were proud of the drawings they produced for the first time. These achievements are apart from the awareness-raising function of the content of discussions around poverty targeting, women's empowerment, gender violence, food security and other issues.

Groups involved are extremely enthusiastic about the increased participation, respect for illiterate members and strategic focus which use of diagram methods had brought to their meetings. When questioned illiterate members could repeat easily the conclusions of tree diagram analysis from more than a month before. This is in contrast to the previous situation in groups where many women (and men) could not understand anything of the written documentation of group meetings and were excluded from real participation in decisions. Women said after the PALS exercises in KRC and the ANANDI Participatory Review that the PALS process helped them all to participate in discussions and also to think more analytically and to remember what had been discussed.

³⁸ Details of use of trees in this way will be available on the LEAP website by end of October 2004 www.leap-pased.org and in a forthcoming paper 'Intrahousehold Impact Assessment' on fieldtesting in ANANDI which should be available by the same time on EDIAIS website www.enterprise-impact.org.uk.

³⁹ An assessment by the author in May 2003 of some groups who started using PALS after the first PALS workshop in October 2002 and an internal evaluation for Trickle-Up in 2004 by Marinke Van Riet of Trickle-Up partners sponsored by KRC. Although some of the groups were familiar with REFLECT and some participatory diagram tools, a wider range of tools were being used and the participatory process had significantly improved.

Groups are also adapting the tools to their own problem-solving and planning needs and innovating themselves without external facilitation a long time after the very short training they were given. They are not only using the diagrams but also following the participatory guidelines to ensure that all are participating in discussion⁴⁰. There have been significant longer-term changes in awareness, participation and social inclusion in the groups who have so far used PALS. For example, groups in both KRC and ANANDI have used the poverty diamond tool on their own initiative to track and analyse the degree of inclusion of very poor people and agree concrete changes in group norms to ensure their needs are met.

PALS significantly improves the relations and understanding between programmes and intended beneficiaries. The PALS training for NGO and micro-finance programme staff has already increased the understanding which staff have of the problems faced by very poor programme participants, particularly women. PALS forces them to listen carefully to what is being said rather than dominating discussions.

A3 ONGOING CHALLENGES

It will take time for the PALS system to fully evolve. In KRC not all partners have been equally enthusiastic about introducing it because some are resistant to a participatory process which may undermine their own authority and interests. The Tools are only just beginning to be integrated into mainstream training.

The methodology will also inevitably continue to face a number of challenges inherent in any pro-poor participatory process. In all the programmes where PALS has been implemented so far the challenge has been documentation for the outside world. Systematic ways of documenting the rich information are needed to feed into programme information systems and aggregation for advocacy and lobbying. It is this challenge which will form a key focus of future development of the methodology, drawing on recent advances in rigorous use of participatory tools for quantification (Chambers and Mayoux, 2004). This challenge will to some extent be addressed once the methodology is fully integrated into mainstream training where recording and reporting methods will be devised for the particular topics being learned. But the problems here are more because of the richness and usefulness of the information and lack of time to record it in comparison with the very superficial information generally recorded in more conventional recording systems.

Other less tractable challenges concern the appropriate balance between local participatory processes and the role of development agencies in providing ongoing support. The long term focus on grassroots learning and networking does not avoid the need for external expertise. There are inevitably differences or conflicts of interest within communities, issues where information available is highly inadequate and people may not always be able to identify the best ways forward⁴¹. But PALS promotes much greater recognition and support for peoples' own strategies and goals and a much closer focusing of programme time and resources to complement this. It also means much better processes of understanding and negotiating goals and strategies between people and development agencies to minimise costs and target scarce time and resources to where they are really needed.

⁴⁰ Unpublished field report by Marinke Van Riet on TrickleUp partners working with KRC, April 2004.

⁴¹ For specific examples see Mayoux, 2003c.

Importantly external support is likely to be necessary in order to translate learning into action and lobbying and advocacy. External information and advice may be necessary in order to supply necessary information on the macro-level opportunities and constraints. Lobbying and advocacy will need professional expertise at certain levels and to present the findings of grassroots learning in ways which will be persuasive for national level administrators and policy-makers. The levels of explicit support and funding needed will depend on context. The initial costs of setting up such processes may be higher until methodologies have been adapted and systems and networks established. Nevertheless, costs are unlikely to be high compared to costs of external 'expert' assessments or training.

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