APPROACHES TO DEVELOPMENT

THE NGO EXPERIENCE IN SRI LANKA

ARTI

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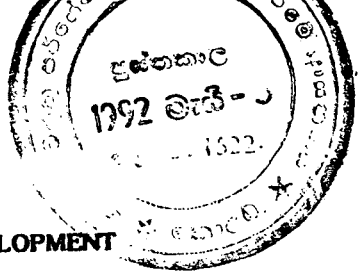

APPROACHES TO DEVELOPMENT

THE NGO EXPERIENCE IN SRI LANKA

Proceedings of the Workshop
2nd, 3rd and 12th February 1991

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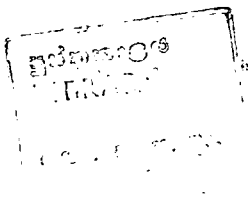

FOREWORD

The proliferation of Development NGOo in Sri Lanka, as in many other developing countries in the recent past, has aroused a concern over the functions and contribution of the NGOo in the promotion of development activities among the poor, particularly in the rural areas. The questions raised also pertain to the impact of NGOo upon the entire development process. Among the key issues often raised at relevant forums are the impact of the NGO Programmes on intended beneficiaries both in their coverage and depth, impact on the social and natural environment, time spent in achieving the realized results, costs and benefits of the programmes, and the status of rapport between NGOo and the government sector.

Having considered the importance of these and other issues raised, ARTI has perceived the need to initiate a dialogue, both among the NGOo and between the NGOo and the government sector. It is with this objective in mind that ARTI organized and hosted a workshop on the NGO approaches to development. The three-day workshop held on 2nd, 3rd and 12th February, 1990 was organized in six sessions covering the following areas: History and the Role of NGOo; Umbrella Organizations of NGOo; Village Based Projects of NGOo and the Government Approach; Poverty Alleviation; Women and Community Development; Contribution made by NGOo towards Agrarian Development and Education.

The present volume synthesizes the results of the workshop deliberations, which were put together by Mr. S.M.K.B. Nandaratne, Research and Training Officer of ARTI.

It is our hope that this volume would help to broaden the horizons of the on-going debate on the role of NGOo in Development.

D.G.P. Seneviratne
Director.

SOME REFLECTIONS ON NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

What have come today to be designated "non-governmental organisations", (NGOo) by those whose definitions acquire dominance over other possible definitions of phenomena, would, for the most part, have begun life as voluntary organisations. Those which did not, as well as those which did, include among them, organisations that were set up with the specific object of reaching the groups targetted by them without accessing the support of or being subject to regulatory or supervisory control by the machinery of the Government.

This would be true not only of "non-governmental organisations" that operate in the Third World but also of those which operate, even exclusively, in developed countries as well. As is well known, the absence of government supervision has led, in some cases, to gross abuse especially in commercialised societies. Prominent among what may be classified as "NGOo" that have acquired notoriety in tax evasion and in the defrauding of "donors" and "beneficiaries" alike, are religious organisations.

All organisations, "charities" no less than other forms of enterprise, are established and managed by human beings and submit to Parkinson's several laws and to the Peter principle. Even serious academic studies of "organisations" acknowledge the prevalence of what is sanitized in the literature as "managerial slack": the owners or share-holders entrust the management of the organisation to professional managers who then proceed to reward themselves for their services in a manner that they consider appropriate. The share-holders, as long as they are given an adequate return in whatever form, on their investment, do not probe the processes of management too deeply, as a rule, provided also that the "managerial slack" does not reach scandalous proportions.

In the case of government, the share-holders are the citizens of the country. The citizens' attitude to the management performance of the government is very much the same as that of share-holders in a public company or in some other NGO, except that the citizens' right to scrutiny would be limited by how able and willing a government is to employ its coercive powers to prevent or to limit such scrutiny. To the extent to which the State permits organisations or individuals, who are not answerable to its own citizens, to engage in the management of any segment of the national economy, or of the social and

cultural space in which people live, it would be denying its own shareholders, the citizenry at large, their right to scrutinise, check, assist, encourage or in whatever other way, participate in the management of their own affairs.

The parliamentary model of democracy, extending all the way down to sub-national levels, is designed to provide the appropriate forum for managing and supervising the activities of non-governmental organisations and of individuals in those areas in which a government need not and/or cannot itself participate. NGOo therefore would be accountable not only to those who fund them but also to the citizens of the country in which they operate. In addition to their accountability to the micro-communities in which they intervene, this latter accountability must be mediated through the duly constituted government of the country.

NGOo can be effective, in a way beneficial to the community, only in conditions which include the existence of a strong tradition of local self-government. Most voluntary organisations are set up on the basis of a belief in self-help. In Sri Lanka, death donation societies, **dayaka sabhas**, thrift societies, co-operative credit societies, sports clubs and so on, belong to that category. There are others in which the mobilization of community groups has been encouraged by external agencies: the rural development societies set up by government and the **mahila samithi** set up under the direction of a national level body, belong here. These are indigenous organisations and are funded entirely by domestic resources and by and large target the rural communities for their development in their own behalf. The position with respect to foreign or foreign funded organisations is more complex.

Funds do not always represent merely a concern for the well being of others; they are also a vehicle through which the notions that those who provide funds have of what "well-being" constitutes, are carried to the intended 'beneficiaries'. In some cases funds carry with them the ideologies of fund raisers which the recipients are then called upon to subscribe to. In yet other cases the targetting of NGOo interventions is determined by a particular reading of which groups in a community are the most "disadvantaged". The view of some western NGOo that minority groups are necessarily discriminated against perhaps flows from their experience of how minorities within their own societies have been discriminated against. This perception is open to question particularly in post-colonial societies which are characterized rather by dominant than by oppressed minorities.

In western societies themselves, in the present phase of their development, their economies are managed and social values engineered by a dominant minority.

At the global level, the vast mass of humanity, their resources and their cultures are becoming increasingly subject to attack by the many forms of strangulation, economic and military, that a minority has shown itself able and willing to employ.

At yet another dimension, "non-governmental organisations" are being supported as an instrument for undermining the capacity of the State, and of the people it represents, to manage their own affairs. NGOo are now being permitted, particularly by weak or client regimes, to receive official development assistance (ODA) that has been negotiated on a bi-lateral basis by the State. The capacity of the State to direct the targetting of such resources, which impose debts on the community at large, thereby weakens in a significant degree. Given the character of the dominant economic system, which would like to subject the entire global economy to the particular forms of mismanagement that the processes of the expansion of capital have developed to catastrophic dimensions, the role of foreign-funded NGOo in dismantling the life support systems of traditional societies cannot be lightly discounted.

The observations made above are not to be read as an indictment of voluntary organisations or even of those which style themselves "non-governmental organisations". On the contrary, they are intended to caution such organisations that are now operating in Sri Lanka against accepting assistance from local or foreign agencies or individuals upon conditionalities that go beyond their reasonable expectation that the funds made available by them would be accounted for in terms of their contribution to the improvement of the life chances of those whom the organisation wishes to assist.

One of the claims made for NGOo, vis a vis State organisations, such as the Department of Rural Development, is that they are more cost effective. The Department of Rural Development, is no more but an earlier evaluation of its work established that it had performed a most fruitful service over a long period of time on the bare minimum of resources made available to it. The increasing amounts of funding that are flowing into NGOo that are located in the Third World and the financial accountability required of them has inevitably led to an expansion in its management cadres at the central level. The management of the NGO intervention itself tends to absorb an increasing proportion of the funds that were presumably intended for improving the lot of the poorer segments of our societies.

It is also claimed for NGOs that people find them more accessible than they do the machinery of the State. Whether this assertion is valid

or not would depend, in a significant degree, on the culture of administration that prevails in a given society at a given point of time. It is also claimed that NGOo are necessary in order to mobilize communities and to help them articulate their needs and aspirations before the component elements of the government machinery with which they have to interact. In democratic societies in which the machinery of government is guided by the representatives of the people, however, such an intermediary function would be redundant.

Given these considerations, the legitimate function of the State would be not one of directing the work of voluntary organisations but of helping them to focus their energies and financial resources on such activities as are consistent with and complementary to the broad social objectives that have the endorsement of the people. The State cannot conceivably be required to desist from performing this supervisory function with respect to voluntary organisations any more than it can be held unaccountable for the functioning of its own machinery.

D.G.P. Seneviratne
Director.

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Annex 1

Chapter 1

HISTORY AND ROLE OF UMBRELLA ORGANIZATIONS

1.1 THE NGO'S PAST AND PRESENT: AN OVERVIEW

Leel Gunasekera*

My subject covers a long period from the 3rd Century B.C. up to this Seminar. Non Governmental Organizations are referred to as Private Voluntary Organizations in America while they are called Voluntary Organizations in the U.K. In many respects the contributions made by NGOS* which are called Sweccha Sanvidana in Sri Lanka have influenced social policy.

Social policy is considered as the promotion of social objectives as an integral part of planning for economic growth and development. It is the essence of a country's policy of government. It could be developmental or service oriented depending on the national conscience which the governments interpret as policy often based on the manifesto of the party that brings the government into power. This policy which governs the promotion of social welfare services as part of developmental plans could be in relation to social legislation.

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* NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

In ancient Sri Lanka a policy based on the Buddhist concept of social service had been followed since the time of King Devanampiyatissa when Buddhism was introduced in 243 B.C. This policy was based on cordial principles of equality and compassion taught by the Buddha where discrimination of individuals on caste, creed and colour had no place. Here the individual was considered important and hence personality development was stressed. Human development was considered more important rather than material outlook.

Accordingly, the Buddhist social policy maintains that the best of all people is one who lives for his own good as well as for the good of ones own fellow people. This kind of person who is best on his own good as well as that of others is the best, highest, top most and supreme (Anguttara Nikaya).

Following these principles Royalty and their subjects had one goal in life that was to accumulate merit, and not to accumulate wealth and power. Social policy was based on a dedication to help others with the thought of Maitri or loving kindness radiating from the hearts of individuals like unto ripples of water spreading centrifrugally from a deep pond when a stone is thrown at.

With the development of individual personality the organizations were better formed and those structural arrangements tested and tried for centuries have their relevance even today.

The earliest NGOs were the Dayaka Sabha, the Wew Sabha and Gam Sabha.

The Dayaka Sabha: This is the temple society where people are given the leadership by an erudite monk in their day to day affairs. Mundane, supra mundane, persuits for spiritual, moral and cultural development in social welfare was symbolized by edifices like the Ruwanweliseya and the irrigation system.

Wew Sabha: This is an organization of people to manage the large reservoirs of the irrigation system and promote agricultural activity for self-sufficiency.

Experts say that the grandest irrigation schemes of technical excellence in all Asia were found in Sri Lanka during the ancient times.

Gam Sabha: This is an institute established for decentralization of power, peoples' participation in decision making, grass roots level administration where free discussion and less competition were practised for community development with the principles of Sharing (Dana), Pleasant words (Priya Wachana), Constructive activity (Artha chariya) and Equality (Samanathmatha).

This system broke up with the onset of invasions and colonial rulers. The Portuguese, Dutch and the British established their power over Sri Lanka bringing about far reaching changes in the

economy and social life of the country. However, the voluntary organizations continued the tradition of social welfare spirit.

While the foreign rulers concentrated on establishing their sovereignity over the country, administratively and politically, welfare activities and social development activities were carried out by religious (Christian) church related welfare organizations which followed the footsteps of the rulers.

The main areas of impact of social welfare were the educational, welfare, youth and health sections. The earlier organizations established were:

Baptist Mission	1802
Weslian Missionary Society	1814
Church Missionary Society	1818
Young Men's Christian Association Young Women's Christian Association	1882
Salvation Army	1883

Religious organizations followed suit. As a response to the new wave of Christian activism Buddhist and other religious groups also became active in the spheres of social services and educational activities.

Buddhist Theoseptical Society	1880
Mahabodhi Society	1891
Young Men's Buddhist Association	1897
Vivekananda Society	1902
All Ceylon Buddhist Congress	1918
Ramakrishna Mission	1929
Muslim Education Society	1890

Later federations of National Councils were also introduced YMBA - 1949, YMCA - 1962, ACWBC - 1950.

Most of the NGOs in Sri Lanka that are functioning today were established by groups of like-minded people with varying interests, some of them were denominational in character and sought to popularize religious values. Buddhist tradition especially required that charitable deeds be performed in order that one is able to acquire adequate merit for a better future. The influence of Christian Missionaries was most widespread in their field from the 15th Century onwards. Similarly there were also volunteers whose motivation to engage in social welfare was associated with a high social status, in keeping with their wealth, political power and education. It was felt that the class they represented required of them to extend their patronage to those considered less fortunate. Involvement in social welfare work was considered a symbol of high social status.

There were also yet groups of individuals who kept on being attracted to diverse interests such as a fondness for music and dancing and all such elements which constitute what is identified as "culture". Their aim was to promote the subject of their interests. In course of time some of these groups formed themselves into organisations which today have expanded into complex and structural concerns to function both at local as well as national level. An overview of the spectrum of NGO activity in Sri Lanka today presents a multifaceted picture of activity such as:

Care for the disabled and the handicapped
Pre-schools - care for the child
Youth activities
Women's activities and the care for the elders
Religious and cultural activities
Literary activities
Research and training
Information dissemination
Co-operation thrift and credit
Development income generation
Vocational training
Issue oriented campaigning
(Peace, environment, ethnic unity)
Relief and rehabilitation
Appropriate technology

In a broad and general way the areas of action and themes could be classified as:

i. Research and information
ii. Training and Human Resource Development
iii. Welfare and Service
iv. Relief and Rehabilitation

Although development of human resources has come to be the focus of interest to all those concerned with improving the quality of life of those who are considered to be poor, deprived and powerless, welfare and service cannot be totally ruled out as outdated and inappropriate.

Sri Lanka has had a long tradition of social welfare and service as was referred to at the beginning of this paper. It is interesting to note that among those interested in welfare and service programmes are groups with diverse aims and objectives. In recent times their approach has come in for severe criticism to say that it encourages charity and dependence.

Some critics have in a cynical way referred to a category of "do-gooders" whose chief concern is to dole out things and feel inwardly relieved of a sense of guilt that remains in their sub-conscious minds reinforced by a faint awareness that "the rich have continued to remain rich" only at the expense of the poor. It is said that they know, that they belong to the privileged category of the rich. The critics say that the impact of their programmes is very minimal with their approach being cosmetic and one of superficial mending.

When discussing the NGO situation in Sri Lanka one cannot ignore the importance of two, far reaching developments in 1948 when the Department of Social Services was established for the government sector while the Central Council of Social Services Sri Lanka (CCSS) was established for the non-governmental sector to co-ordinate all voluntary social service organizations. These GO and NGO bodies were established on the recommendation of the Social Services Commission (1946) appointed by the government to examine the Social Development situation at that time.

Ever since the government sector developed with the Department of Social Services leading other bodies like the Department of Labour, Department of Probation and Child Care Services culminating today as the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. The CCSS grew up as an umbrella organization up to the present state which is going through a period of strengthening with a USAID Project as a result of which many affiliated organizations are joining as members lured by the macro and micro grants to affiliates, for income generating projects. The CCSS is an affiliated member of the International Council of Social Welfare, Vienna.

Recently the NGO council of Sri Lanka another organization established in the eightees to co-ordinate agro-based developmental organizations catering to the Ministry of Agriculture, lands, etc. also launched its activities with affiliation to ANGOC.

When voluntary organizations grew rapidly there were new dimensions vis-a-vis the government sector and the international funding agencies which came into prominence during the disasters both natural and man-made. Likewise with the dawn of the UN decade for development in eight social welfare programmes in the developing countries underwent radical changes.

Research into welfare action revealed that such efforts only led to perpetuation of the "dependency syndrome" and that people were left behind to linger through expectation of more and more better things to come. It is said that where charity prevails, the beneficiaries do not attempt to rise up on their own. They continue to depend on external intervention for guidance, assistance, support and development.

Development education today has made the people aware of their potential to gather sufficient strength to change these structures in their favour. Where self-confidence has been restored with critical understanding, many groups have succeeded in gaining passage for justice, equity and freedom of action.

These efforts engaged in by groups in scattered communities in countries of the third world were further strengthened and reinforced by a wave of fresh thinking that swept across the globe from the research findings of an eminent social scientist from Brazil. Paulo Frier stands pre-eminent among the few intellectuals of the modern day who helped change the conventional welfare action programmes to revolutionary thrusts which enabled the exploited and the oppressed to regain their rights, their sense of dignity and their identity. A new theory of development came to acquire a wide currency which laid stress on human resource development as the appropriate strategy to be followed in place of the stereotype and cosmetic approach of the familiar social and welfare worker.

A new dimension came to be added to development theory that contributed to making people, the real actors and decision-makers. Passive recipients were seen being converted into active facilitators. Changes which occurred as a result of this new strategy were amazingly positive.

Even the donor agencies providing funding to projects and programmes today have come to emphasize the aspect of development that concerns more with sensitizing people and equipping them with a sense of critical awareness in preference to provision of material aid and infra-structural facilities. This new strategy demands that planning of any development activity be based on the participatory management principle which requires the beneficiaries to play the role of planners. It says that planning has to be bottom up and not top-down. Based on their new concept, development action is seen being followed by many organizations in Sri Lanka today and their main thrust is concentrated on training of leadership cadres who in turn were expected to catalyze the people with whom they interact at grass-roots into action for self-reliant and sustainable growth. Examples of this category of NGOs who have pioneered this approach are:

SATYODAYA	- Kandy
SEDEC	- Colombo
PIDA	- Colombo

The sporadic involvement of international agencies in certain instances incurred the displeasure of the powers that be as their local counterparts too left things much to be desired in certain activities in which they got involved. Such an unbecoming behaviour

warranted the introduction of the Voluntary Social Service Organizations (Registration and Supervision) Act No. 31 of 1980 passed by the Parliament). However voluntary organizations jointly made representations sucessfully to the government to reduce the effects of the Act so that voluntary organization could thrive profitably.

Finally it has to be recorded that one can be happy about the volumes of field in Sri Lanka. Most of these being national organizations have sacrified much to build up their organizations. Their history, performance and the future are being studied and recorded by the public here and abroad. A good example is the Sarvodaya Shramadana Sangamaya which is 32 years old and being fortunate to have the charismatic leadership of Dr. A.T. Ariyaratna.

The store house of published knowledge regarding NGOs today speaks much of such literature available. An organization like Sarvodaya has many publications to its credit while Dr. Ariyaratna's collected works itself running into five volumes has taken care of the information on. the simple philosophy. Dr. Ariyaratne's writings have carved a special niche for himself as an authority on traditonal and modern developmental concepts. The interest created by social workers, researchers, policy planners, etc. shows in practical manner the availability of a vast literature on NGO activities now. There is some difficulty regarding these English publications not being available in Sinhala or Tamil, for the benefit of readers at the grassroot level.

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1.2 THE NATIONAL NGO COUNCIL OF SRI LANKA AS AN UMBRELLA ORGANIZATION

L.M. Samarasinghe*

Historical Background

The World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (WCARRD) held in Rome in 1979 served as a factor which contributed to the formation of an umbrella organisation for the Development of NGOs in Sri Lanka. The preparation of the NGO Country Study to be presented at the pre WCARRD NGO Regional Conference held in Bangkok in February 1979 provided an opportunity for some of the NGOs to get together. The Post WCARRD Regional NGO Workshop held in Bangkok in 1980 called for a local preparatory Workshop at which a number of NGOs participated. The need to develop a dialogue between the NGOs and the Government with a view to establishing constructive collaboration in the follow up to the WCARRD plan of action was discussed at this workshop.

Thereafter the NGOs who participated at the workshop formed themselves into the WCARRD NGO COMMITTEE OF SRI LANKA. In early 1981 the WCARRD NGO Committee of Sri Lanka reconstituted

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itself into the NATIONAL NGO COUNCIL OF SRI LANKA. This was because the NGOs felt that it would be more useful for the NGOs to have an all embracing umbrella organisation rather than be confined to the WCARRD Programme which was under the control of the Government Ministries and in any case the impression that the NGOs had was that the enthusiasm of the Government Agencies over the WCARRD Programme was gradually cooling down.

To begin with there were only about 14 NGOs who were the Founder members of the NGO Council. On two occasions announcements were made through the medium of the Press that there was the NGO Council formed to serve as a Common Forum for the NGOs and invited any NGOs willing to join the Council to send in their applications. The response was quite satisfactory and in a few months time the membership increased to about 60.

Thereafter the membership has been increasing steadily and today it has reached hundred and six (106). Some of the member organisations are large NGOs enjoying a prestigious position in the country and some are federations representing groups of other organisations affiliated to them. But quite a large number of the member NGOs are those that need a helping hand and their membership in a National Umbrella Organisation certainly is a boon to them.

The Secretariat

The formation of the ASIAN NGO COALITION (ANGOC) at the Regional level with its office at Bangkok and the association of the National NGO Council with the formation of that organisation from the beginning served to build up the credibility of the NGO Council in the eyes of individuals and organisations and we were spared the usual sarcasm and criticism that newly formed organisations of this nature are generaly subjected to.

We also maintained a close liaison with the local office of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and that too served to build up the image of the NGO Council and helped to win the confidence of many NGOs and induced them to join in as members. This image was further strengthened as the local NGOs knew that the ANGOC is maintaining a close link with the Regional Office of the FAO in Bangkok.

The NGO Council was therefore acceptable to the local organisations and joining in as members of the Council was considered quite useful and promising.

The persons who were associated with the formation of the NGO Council did enjoy a considerable degree of public confidence in their own respective spheres and that too served as a contributory

factor for the acceptability of the newly formed umbrella organisation.

The office of the National NGO Council was housed in the office of the Freedom From Hunger Campaign Board (FFHC). This office is situated in a convenient locality with very satisfactory access facilities. Several facilities of that office such as secretarial assistance, telephone service, postage, typing, duplicating machines, printing, etc. were extended to the NGO Council at no cost. The monthly meetings of the Coordinating Committee and the periodical meetings of the NGO Council were also held at the office of the FFHC Board for over two years. This was a very satisfactory arrangement.

But the FFHC Board is appointed by the Government and is placed under a Ministry of the Government. The NGO council therefore felt that its presence in that office may not do much good to its image as an umbrella organisation of the NGOs.

Limited accommodation was therefore located at the premises of the All Ceylon Buddhist Congress which is situated in a convenient location and that organisation itself was a founder member of the NGO Council and the office was shifted in 1983 to this location. This of course meant that no more free services were available to the NGO Council by way of office equipment, secretarial assistance, stationery, etc. Nevertheless the challenge had to be met.

An appeal was sent to selected member NGOs to make contributions in kind or cash to equip the new office. There was a reasonable response to this call and it became possible to acquire the very basic requirements for the new office. Payment for the Secretarial Assistant appointed and the rent for the office accommodation was met from the member contributions. ANGOC also provided a modest financial contribution for a short period at the beginning. The Chairman and the Secretary worked as volunteers in the office and also shared some of the basic expenses of the office.

Membership

The NGO Council when it drafted its constitution decided that its membership should satisfy the following qualifications.

- it must be a local NGO.
- it must be working at national or secondary level.
- it must be working in more than one village.
- it must be accountable to its membership.
- it must be engaged in promoting some form of development conducive to the promotion of the quality of life of the people.

The member Organisations represent the Buddhist, Hindu, Christian and Muslim faiths and they also represent the different racial groups who constitute the population of the country. The National NGO Council is the First Forum in the history of the NGO Movement in Sri Lanka that brought together NGOs of the various religious and racial groups. There was always an element of suspicion among the various NGOs, and organisations representing the various religious and racial groups would not meet together to discuss even common problems. The NGO Council has changed this situation to a considerable degree and they now discuss their problems together and even share the facilities and resources they command.

At present there are 106 NGOs who are the members of the NGO Council. There are about 30 members who are themselves Umbrella Organisations having an affiliated membership of about 500 organisations. Applications for membership do come in regularly.

In 1986 the Constitution of the NGO Council was amended to confer a limited membership to International NGOs. In that an International NGO is conferred the status of Associate Membership without voting rights. We do have several International NGOs who are our mbmers now and some others have made enquiries and are showing an interest to join in as members. The membership fee payable by an ordinary member is Rs. 100/- per year and the membership fee for an associate member is Rs. 250/- per year at present.

The Newsletter

We started a quarterly journal from the beginning. At first we cyclostyled it and later on we printed it. At the request of some of the member NGOs we had included features in Sinhala and Tamil in addition to the English. The journal then had 24 pages. With the rapid increase in the cost of printing paper and postage we reduced the number of pages to 12 and for nearly two years we failed to bring out the journal entirely due to the lack of funds.

Thanks to the assistance extended to us by a donor we have now commenced bringing out a Newsletter and the issue for the last quarter of 1989 has already been published. We hope to continue with this quarterly Newsletter and re establish the communication system that sufered serious damage during the past two years.

Publications

The NGO Council brought out publications

- Herbal Food and Medicines in Sri Lanka.
  The FAO Regional Office provided some financial support for this publication. This book turned out to be quite popular and all copies were sold out in a short while.
- The Directory of NGOs
- The Status Paper on NGO involvement in Rural Development in Sri Lanka
- The Country Report on Village Surveys, Village Consultations and the National Workshop

Three publications were brought out in association with the Agrarian Research and Training Institute (ARTI) as part of the joint NGOC/CIRDAP Programme on Rural Community Participation in 1983.

- The Report of a Study Tour to China was published in 1984. (There are several reports based on the many workshops and seminars organised by the NGO Council awaiting publication. But for want of funds we do not know when these could be published.)
- "A Perspective on the State of NGOs, in Rural Development in Sri Lanka" was recently published by ANGOC in the Philippines for our benefit.

Focus on the Past Performance

Some of the activities of the NGO Council during the past period could be sumarised as follows:

- training programmes for the nominees of member NGOs.
- workshops/seminars for the benefit of member NGOs.
- carrying out village surveys in 21 villages.
- successful negotiation with the Central Bank and the State Banks to provide easy credit facilities for the benefit of member NGOs.
- negotiation with State Agencies to sort out problems of member NGOs
- provision of assistance to some member organisations to obtain donor support.
- building up of the enthusiasm of the member NGOs to activate the Annual World Food Day Programme sponsored by the FAO.
- organisation of programmes for the benefit of development NGOs in the various districts of the country.
- compiling of a Directory of NGOs and other Publications.
- other assistance and guidance to smaller NGOs.

Diversity of Interests of the NGOs

The areas of interests of the various NGOs cover a wide range of subjects. It has therefore been quite problematic to cater to their varied demands from time to time. Many of them do focus their attention on a variety of activities depending on the needs of the target groups they serve. For the convenience of the NGO Council activities member NGOs have been identified as falling into five broad groups. Many of them are in more groups than one. The grouping and the number of member NGOs in each group at present time are as follows:

1.	Social Services	66
2.	Agriculture and Environmental Protection	50
3.	Health, Nutrition, Child Survival and Development	48
4.	Womens Development and Self Employment	53
5.	Research Education, Culture and Appropriate Technology	59

Very few NGOs specialise in one particular area such as Social Services. The earlier approach was that some NGOs such as Social Service Organisations specialised in a particular field of service. But the current trend of the NGOs is to have several facets to their service or development approaches. They could, of course be in related fields. The above grouping therefore is based on the main interest areas of the particular NGOs.

Some Areas of Special Emphasis

At present, in the Sri Lankan context certain areas have received special emphasis and many NGOs are engaged in activities relating to such areas.

- Activities relating to the protection of environment is one such area. Many NGOs are engaged in activities falling within this area. The denudation of the forest cover by various official programmes and lack of official vigilance has caused many environmental problems. An attempt to set up a coal powered energy project in a coastal town attracted the attention of many NGOs and they carried out a very effective protest until the Government decided to stop the coal powered energy project.

- The spread of the habit of drug abuse has also attracted many NGOs to lend their support to control this problem. There are several groupings of NGOs who are actively interested in tackling this problem.
- Organisation of relief work for the benefit of refugees has taken a very large proportion due to the destruction of villages by terrorists in the northern and eastern parts of the country. Men, women and children are suddenly deprived of their homes and loved ones and they have to be brought to safer areas and fed, clothed and medically cared for.

There are very large numbers of such persons receiving relief from NGOs at various centres. In the past the need for disaster preparedness was not felt in Sri Lanka except for an occasional flood or cyclone.

But now this has become a major problem and it would go on for quite a long time. The end is not yet seen and groups of people in such distress do surface even now.

- Attempts at bringing peace to disturbed communities and racial groups is another exercise which is attracting the attention of many NGOs. The conflicts that do exist today seem to be the creations of power hungry groups. They have set one group against the other for their own convenience and power needs. The need for creating an environment of peace has attracted many NGOs and they are trying to build bridges to unite the communities.

Demand for Training

There has been a regular demand for training from member NGOs. The need for training is felt more by the smaller NGOs than the few large ones. Some of the large organisations have organised their own training arrangements to meet their specific requirements. But the large number of small NGOs lack opportunities for training. NGO Council has not been able to meet this demand adequately due to the lack of resources.

Some of the areas for which the demand is high are as follows:

- training in simple financial management systems suited for small organisations.
- training in management relating to income generating programmes.
- training in management of marketing systems suited to small scale undertaking in rural areas.

- training in project identification, formulation, monitoring and evaluation.
- training of trainers for rural development programmes.
- training leading to creation of self employment avenues.

Simple financial management for some NGOs is quite problematic. Bigger organisatons employ the services of qualified accountants and finance managers. The smaller organisations underestimate the importance of financial management and leave the task in the hands of uninitiated novices and often discover the mistake too late. The failure of most small organisations is often due to this problem.

Many NGOs make commendable beginnings in promoting income generating programmes in the rural areas. But some times they fail to take adequate measures to ensure the effective management of the programme. The efficiency of persons entrusted with such activities are taken for granted. Over a period of time the programme suffers irreparable damages due entirely to the absence of management skills and training.

Many NGOs at the rural level engage in activities which seek to produce various items of handicrafts and other products and then look forward to an in flow of income to such villages. But they lack basic knowledge of the behaviour of the market mechanism process and end in failure. The importance of marketing systems suited to different kinds of activities is often not appreciated adequately. There is a total insufficient knowledge on this subject on the part of most NGOs working at the rural level.

Training of trainers is really a challenge. The Change Agent programme implemented by the Government in certain parts of the country in Sri Lanka has completely failed in spite of the training provided for the trainers by the leading training institutions of the Government. This is an area which needs a very careful approach. Unless the trainers are well trained and the training modules are carefully formulated the efforts could be wasted.

The highest demand from NGOs at the present time is for specific training leading to the creation of self employment opportunities for the youth in rural areas. This training needs to be more than mere skills training. The production, storage, packing transportation, marketing and all other aspects related to a particular item produced need to be adequately taken care of in the training.

The potential for harnessing locally available resources to create avenues of employment appear to be quite high and such factors need to be given a prominent position in formulating training modules for this purpose.

Well designed training programmes in this regard could produce most desirable results and help ease social tensions that now prevail in the rural scenario throughout the country.

Current Programmes

We have included a series of training programmes, workshops, seminars and networking sessions in the work plan drawn for the current period.

The first NGO networking sessions were held on the 6th of January 1990 at the Organisation of Professional Associations and the invitees were NGOs who are not members of the NGO Council. This was quite a success and the participants agreed that this is a good way to bridge the communication gaps in the NGO sector and they unanimously called for more frequent networking sessions.

Arrangements are being made to hold NGO networking sessions in all the districts and during the current year we expect to cover four districts at least.

Restructuring

We have taken steps to restructure the Constitution. In place of the former Coordinating Committee we now have a Board of Directors who are sharing the executive power of the Council.

The Chairman is elected from among the members of the Board and they are expected to take turns in sharing that responsibility.

In order to cater to the diverse interests of the various NGOs there are five different committees representing the five areas of interests already referred to. Each such committee has its own Chairman and Secretary and are expected to function simultaneously. This way we also expect to provide more opportunities for a wider circle of persons to play leadership roles and improve on their leadership qualities.

We have also taken steps to improve the eficiency of the Secretariat by recruiting additional staff.

1.3 THE ROLE OF NGOs IN THE MICRO-ENTERPRISE SECTOR

H B Dissanayake*

What is a Micro-enterprise?

It is difficult to give a definition that would satisfy all shades of opinion. However, for practical purposes, 'micro-enterprise' could mean any type of productive activity at village level (also at urban level) that would employ modest labour and capital and simple technology. Examples are all kinds of cottage industries, small-scale agriculture, such as vegetable cultivation and cut-flowers, fishing, poultry, piggery, small scale service industries etc. The dividing line between small-scale industry and micro-enterprise is rather thin; it is mostly a matter of scale. They could be at either subsistance level or commercial level. Any efforts towards development of micro-enterprises should be to lift them from subsistance level to commercial level, make them more efficient and sustainable.

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NGOs' Versus Formal Sector in the Formation and Development of Micro-Enterprises

(i) NGOs' commitment to development of communities is not profit-oriented. It emanates from a sense of selfless dedication and noble aspirations.

(ii) NGOs work at the grass root level and thus have an intimate knowledge of the communities and their socio-economic environment. They have long years of experience working with the people and have built up a strong informal relationship.

(iii) In view of the rather close and informal relationships that have been developed between the people and NGOs, they have easier access to segments of society such as the under-previleged, women etc. People have greater confidence in the promotion efforts of NGOs and could thus be more co-operative.

(iv) NGOs adopt more flexible approaches and are not bound by hard and fast rules and procedures. They can change their methods fast, to suit changing situations.

(v) In view of their intimate knowledge of people and their conditions and also the confidence people have in them, NGOs could organise village level associations such as credit societies, producer associations etc., mobilize savings, supervise credit utilization, collection of loans etc. very effectively.

(vi) Good track record of NGOs in organising village level development activities, their intimate knowledge of field conditions, their reliability and trustworthiness, could make them efficient credit intermediaries for formal lending institutions.

(vii) NGOs are capable of maintaining healthy relations with both state agencies as well as private sector institutions. As such they are able to obtain necessary support from the State as well as develop linkages with private sector industries which are essential for the sustained growth of micro enterprises.

How Can NGOs Help Promotion and Development of Micro-Enterprise Sector

(i) As explained in para 2 NGOs live with the people and are capable of understanding the needs of the community, their weaknesses and strengths as well as how they could be motivated for productive enterprise. They could harness their multifarious capabilities towards organising the disorganised or unorganised village communities into viable production units or groups which could form the nucleus for generating growth at the village level. When people are organised into groups at the grass-roots level, they get a sense of unity and strength. Such grouping of people together makes

them mutually helpful to each other and give them a sense of involvement not only in one's own progress, but in the common progress of all around them. Even if one were to leave aside such spiritual aspects, there are hard monetary and economic benefits in organising people into groups. A group of people could save a sizeable amount of capital which could be used as a collateral for the members to obtain a loan from a Bank, which individually they may not be able to raise. Lending institutions too may find it easy to work through organised groups, for both disbursement of credit as well as loan recovery. In the case of defaulting members, group could exert pressure on them to fulfil their obligations as otherwise the whole group would suffer.

In a group it is more economical to organise common facilities such as marketing, transport, procurement of agricultural inputs, raw material etc. My saying these few words about organising people into groups at a village level should not be understood to mean that individual entrepreneurs should be of no concern to the NGOs. They are as important as the group. Whether the approach to development should be on individual basis or on the basis of an organised group should be decided according to the circumstances in each case and the peculiarities of a given environment.

(ii) NGOs could assist the small entrepreneur in product improvement through technology transfer as well as market research. Their wide connections both within and outside the country as well as their close contacts with similar organisations elsewhere and private sector industry would enable them to make their contributions in this regard. Development of backward linkages with established large manufacturing industries is one such mechanism whereby micro-level industries could achieve upgrading and expansion.

(iii) NGOs could play a more direct role in the development of micro-enterprises by organising mobilization of resources at village level as well as organising credit through formal banking sector by playing the role of credit intermediaries. Term 'Credit intermediary' here would mean not just a conduit for disbursement of credit and its recovery; it means an agency for identifying and developing village level entrepreneurs, supplying them credit, monitoring their progress and ensuring their success so that the project could be sustained and loans recovered. This may sound a tall order but such is the type of challenge an NGO has to face if it was to come to grips with the elusive problem of moving a segment of the society where formal institutions are finding it hard to make a dent.

Examples of Micro Credit Projects Assisted by NGOs

Two examples as to how NGOs have effectively got involved in the development of the micro-enterprise sector in two countries.

(a) Micro enterprise development project in Sorsagon Province in the Philippines.

(b) Deedar Comprehensive Village Development Co-operative Society in Kashinathpur and Balarampur in Bangladesh.

Sorsagon Micro Enterprise Development Project

ADB has approved US$ 8 million as a loan to be given to selected NGOs in this province for the development and expansion of micro-credit projects. NGOs will not only play the role of entrepreneur developers, but also barefoot bankers. The project was launched in 1988 and by the end of 1989 about five million US$ had been disbursed among a broad category of mirco entrepreneurs organised into village level associations. This is the first attempt by any major lending institution to use NGOs in this complex role.

Deedar Comprehensive Village Development Co-operative Society in Kashinathpur and Balarampur, Bangladesh

Started and developed by a dynamic small scale entrepreneur himself, Mr. Mohammad Yeasin.

Village Co-operative Society was used as a focal point for mobilization of resources at village level as well as the major lending agency of interest-free funds to a variety of activities in the village, among which micro-enterprises form an important category. Co-operative Society plays an important role in screening the projects for giving credit, monitoring progress of the same and assisting them to succeed. In addition to providing credit it also does ancillary services such as marketing of products or produce, supply of raw material, feedstock etc. It also conducts literacy classes, entrepreneur development for both men and women, particularly for women.

Chapter 2

THE NGOs RAPPORT WITH GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

2.1 THE NGOS RAPPORT WITH GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Christie Silva*

The subject of this paper is the role of the voluntary sector vis-a-vis the state sector. It is indeed a current topic as in a Democratic and open society individuals have to play a major role both in Government sector and the Private sector. In the matter of socio-economic development of an under developed country we have to get full support of the voluntary organisations to make the efforts of the government more effective, and more fruitful. This is specially relevant in the field of social welfare activities. Even in the international scene the role of NGO is significant as it reflects the importance attached to voluntary initiative in the social welfare programmes of many countries (Social Development News Letter, November 24 January - June 1986). NGOs have played a supportive role in many fields such as labour, education, promotion of co-operative movement, in the advancement of special population groups such as youth, aging, disabled and also prevention of crime and criminal justice, population culture, etc.

Our aim in all our activities be it private or official should be the upliftment of those who have lesser advantage in sharing the social and economic benefits derived from policies and

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programmes implemented by state agencies. It is with this aim in view that Ministries and Departments should carry out these functions today.

For us to be successful in our task we have to harness the support of the people for whom we work. How can we get this support? It is by encouraging establishment of voluntary organisations. Traditionally our people are religious minded, hospitable and charitable. These characteristics and qualities nourished further by christian influences in modern times, stimulate them to group together to serve their society and the country. The concept of voluntary organisations is not new to our society. If we go through the historical records and archaeological findings we could easily see that it is not something alien to our society. The basis of formation of these voluntary social service organisations is the common interests and common aims strengthened by gregarious instinct in man. Their activities and aims vary according to their interests and needs. Therefore the scope of promotion of these interests depend largely on the cohesive nature of their relationship to society and the relationship they build with the state agencies active in the related fields.

It is pertinent to pose the question whether any state agency when formulating rules and regulations concerning any type of service to the people is capable of doing so covering every foreseeable event or situation. I think it is far from truth to say that they are infallible and perfect in every way to draw such regulations or plans that will cover every aspect of a problem adequately. This will definitely create gaps or inadequacies in operating such plans and this is where the voluntary organisations play a vital role. They can step in at once and fill the gaps in the process of operation of plans and projects of state agencies.

Think of a crisis situation created by natural disasters like floods, cyclones or earthslips or by man made disasters like violence. In a situation like this can state agencies such as Ministry and Department of Social Services do everything to give relief to every victim? No. We need the assistance of service oriented organisations to pull the victims out of danger. Who comes immediately to rescue the persons in danger? It is the neighbour or the village voluntary organisation that will appear at the scene first.

Another example is the number of creches and pre-schools that are functioning in all parts of the island. So far either the Ministry of Education or the Department of Social Services have not formulated a plan for establishment of pre-schools for normal children or handicapped children. But the need for them has been felt by the parents, and they have banded themselves into societies and have established pre-schools for them and run them efficiently.

Except three large State Homes for Elders today all other Homes and Day Care Centres for elders are established and run by voluntary social service organisations, of course, with state support. In this area of care and welfare of elders, children and disabled persons, sense of dedication and devotion is essential for the efficient running of institutions for them. These virtues are found very often in voluntary workers than in persons who work for a wage. That is why the state has encouraged voluntary sector to engage in social services and solicit their support and services. This will not only enable the government agencies to perform their duties better but also create opportunities for the people to participate in government activities and share the responsibilities with the state and among themselves.

There is another area of help the state needs from the voluntary organisations. Any set of rules operative governing assistance schemes for disabled or for people who cannot fend for themselves may not permit officers to grant adequate quantum of assistance to a person who needs more than the prescribed maximum. Then the recipient is not in a position to meet his requirements and may be subject to frustration. In such instances the voluntary organisations can grant the balance amount of assistance to complete his or her requirements. In the case of self-employment allowance paid to disabled persons which is limited to Rs. 2,500/- an International Organisation SHIA has stepped into meet the balance amount needed to start self-employment projects.

There is another great advantage in having an organised voluntary sector not only in the field of social work but also in other fields of human activities. That is the flexibility with which they can perform their activities as against rigid financial and administrative regulations that govern the public sector organisation. Government institutions are bound to adhere to regulations and bureaucratic methods in all their activities either commercial or otherwise. It does not mean that voluntary organisations are completely free of regulations. They also have to adhere to their constitutions and norms in their variety of activities. But they have flexibility and they could change their regulation as and when they have a need for such changes. That is why they can work easily and quickly and often succeed in achieving their objectives.

To quote some examples from our own experience to prove the point made here, it was brought to our notice in early 1980s that amputees in the country could not get artificial limbs from General Hospital Orthopaedic Workshop for years. After investigating we found that there were thousands on the waiting list for many years unable to get artificial limbs to provide them with mobility. There were obstacles and bottlenecks in the system which authorities

could not remove. People turned up at the Department of Social Services and made requests for artificial limbs. We were concerned with their problem and wanted to supply them with the limbs free of charge quickly. We thought that if the Department of Social Services set up a workshop the same situation would arise as in the case of the Health Department, and decided to set up one jointly with Friend-in-Need Society and International Human Assistance Programme (IHAP) which had a branch in Sri Lanka at that time managed by a Board consisting of representatives from three organisations. The result was the birth of Jaipur Limb Production Workshop at 171, Sir James Peiris Mawatha, Colombo 02. By this method we could clear the long waiting list at General Hospital Orthopaedic Section and supply necessary limbs to all amputees who came to the Department of Social Services. This is one of several examples of success we achieved in consequence of close co-operation and collaboration with voluntary sector.

It is not only in production and provision of material things that voluntary sector can play an important role, but also in the field of qualitative improvement of life of the people in a country. Integrated Education Centre at Piliyandala set up by Rev. Mervin Fernando, Jinarathana Vocational Training Centre by Rev. Galaboda Gnanissara Thero, Sarvodaya Centres, Diyagala Boys Town by De La Sale Brother, S.O.S. Children's Village are few examples. All these institutions and organisations go a long way in building the nation, improving the quality and standard of our people, and most important is supporting the Government of the country in implementing its policies. Therefore they deserve the recognition and support of the Government, and without this support it is difficult for these organisations and institutions to continue in their services. If proper government support and guidance is provided I think that the voluntary sectors could provide with a very good supportive service in achieving the objectives that the government envisages to achieve in the fields of security, temperance, promotion of racial amity, child care, health, nutrition, development of self-reliance (which is envisaged by the implementation of Janasaviya Programme), upgrading of vocational and technical training etc. Already both local and international NGOs have shown a keen interest in these fields. (Marga Publication - NGOs in Sri Lanka and their relevance to/potential for involvement in the development programmes of the Government).

While enjoying the support and facilities the voluntary organisations have to remember an important fact, and that is to mould and regulate all their activities to fit into the overall policy of the Government in power as the government elected by the people and for the people, is responsible to them in implementing its

policies. Further it is also important for the voluntary organisations to make great efforts especially in a country like Sri Lanka where multi-ethnic and multi-religious groups exist to bring about unity and harmony among all groups and not to confine their services to one particular group on the basis of race, religion or caste. In social work the fundamental principle is to treat all human beings as members of one human family with no barriers of race, religion or caste. If this is followed they are bound to get the support of all sections of the population.

In considering ways and means of promoting voluntary social services organisations we tend to forget that if any organisation is given complete freedom without any state intervention they tend to overstep the limits that they have to observe. Suppose any voluntary organisation getting funds from either a foreign donor organisation or from the Government misuses these funds for purposes detrimental to the policies of the Government it will be disastrous for the country. They also must be protected from mis-appropriation of these funds by their employees or others. Therefore any right thinking person would agree that there must be a mechanism to control and supervise their activities.

This need was felt in 1980 and Act. No. 31 was passed by Parliament. Under this Act all Social Service Organisations should be registered with the Department of Social Services. It is generally felt that this Act needs amendments, and action is to be taken to review the position. Any mechanism created for control and supervision of voluntary organisations should be strengthened by traditions and conventions evolved and established by continous adherence to them by these organisations themselves. Then they will become more effective and forceful than legal compulsion.

Another aspect that should be emphasised is the utilization of funds and other scarce resources in an effective and meaningful way of avoiding waste. Some voluntary organisations both local and international getting funds from abroad formulate projects in the field of social work without consulting the relevant Government Authority and without being aware of similar projects being carried out by another voluntary organisation or Government Agency. This will either create duplication or overlapping with the activities of other organisations, and causes waste of resources which could be gainfully used in other areas which need their services. Therefore it is essential that any voluntary agency hoping to start new projects should consult the relevant Government Department and find out the need for such projects in a particular area. Then the concerned Department will advise the voluntary organisation on the subject

and can even undertake to monitor the progress and co-ordinate. This will eliminate waste and overlapping of work with the activities of other voluntary bodies or Government Departments. What is needed today is to dovetail various programmes and projects of voluntary organisations into the overall development plans of the Government. Then only there will be a real impact of their activities on the social and economic development of the country. In this context it will be very useful if a high level committee is set up comprising of officials of the Ministries related to social welfare and development, representatives of NGOs to meet at regular intervals and discuss what programmes of the Government the NGOs can be involved in, which particular NGOs could collaborate in, which particular programmes and how best such collaboration could be secured and what form it should take in respect of each participating NGO, as suggested by the Marga study too (Marga Institute Doc. SEM/88/79 Aug. 79 UNDP/MARGA).

This suggestion is made as it is important to remember that the State Sector and Voluntary Sector are interdependant. As stated earlier, Government alone cannot perform its activities in the field of social welfare activities. Nor can the voluntary sector fulfil their obligations without the Government support and recognition. Sometimes the work of State Sector has to be complemented or supplemented by the voluntary sector. Therefore one needs the other and they must co-operate and have a mutual understanding for smooth functioning and proper progress.

These points stated earlier lead to the conclusion that voluntary organisations have a vital role to play in all social welfare activities and they should be given encouragement, guidance and supervision, and work in close co-operation and collaboration with the state sector to bring about the desired social and economic progress of the people.

2.2 RURAL DEVELOPMENT: THE GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE

Edgar Fernando*

Introduction

The origins of the modern Rural Development Movement can be traced back to the period of the Donoughmore Constitution (1931-1947). "The Central Board of Women's Institutes" (1930) which led to the establishment of the Lanka Mahila Samithi founded by Mrs. Mary Ratnam, and the establishment of the "Raigam Korale Grama Jeevita Sanrakshaka Samithiya" (1932) may be regarded as the precursors of the Movement. In August 1931 the first village Mahila Samithi was inaugurated at Pannipitiya.

In September 1932, an All Ceylon Conference on Rural Development, presided over by Mr. Wilmot Perera, Member of the State Council, was held at Horana. In September 1935 Mr. G.C.S. Corea, Minister of Home Affairs, summoned a meeting to discuss the plight of the people as a result of the raging malaria epidemic (1934-1935). A report was submitted to the Executive Committee on the theme of Rural Reconstruction. The need for taking concerted action to improve the socio-economic conditions of the rural peasantry was immediately recognised.

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Rural development as a Government sponsored activity had its origins in a Resolution in the State Council urging the establishment of a scheme of rural welfare. On 31.03.1936, Mr. Henry Amarasuriya, M.S.C. for Galle moved a motion in the State Council to the effect that "the Board of Ministers should take immediate steps to organise a Rural Development Scheme", and Mr. George E. de Silva, M.S.C. for Kandy proposed that a sum of Rs. 2 milllion be allocated annually for a scheme of Rural Development.

During this period, maternity and child welfare services, dispensaries and hospitals were opened up in the rural areas, and the setting up of voluntary organisations of the rural people was encouraged. Unprecedented attention was also paid to the opening of human settlement schemes, agricultural development, the expansion of irrigation activities, and the restoration of tanks in the villages. The Government also introduced measures for the relief of chronic rural indebtedness. The Debt Conciliation Ordinance of 1941 curbed the activities of money lenders who posed a major threat to the stability of social and community life in the rural areas. It was also during this period that the Free Education Scheme (1945) which equalised educational opportunities, was introduced.

It was in the decade of the forties, however, that systematic and meaningful rural development activity took firm root in the Island. In 1940 a sub department of the Department of Commerce and Industries was created to deal with matters relating to peasants and rural development. In 1947 a separate Department of Rural Development was established to deal exclusively with matters relating to rural welfare; almost immediately Group Societies were set up in various parts of the country so as to ensure the supervision of rural development activity at the grassroots level. Rural Development Societies were gradually formed at the village level, and by 1952 "Kantha Samithis" were set up for women.

In 1955, the Department of Rural Development was amalgamated with the Department of Cottage Industries, but in 1970, the Department of Rural Development was established once again as a separate department.

A significant landmark in the history of Rural Development in Sri Lanka was the simultaneous creation of the Ministry of Rural Development and the Ministry of Rural Industrial Development. While the Ministry of Rural Industrial Development continues to function, the activities of the Ministry of Rural Development are being decentralised, and in the transitional period the Department of Rural Development functions under the Ministry of Public Administration, Provincial Councils and Home Affairs.

Recent Developments

The pattern of development in the political and administrative system of our country in the past ten years or so, permitted the proliferation of various Government departments and agencies in the common task of rural upliftment. The same rural clientele are addressed to, often independently and unilaterally by sectoral Ministries without any coordination by the Ministry of Rural Development - and the resultant effect is fragmented development, for the needs and aspirations of the targetted beneficiaries are not adequately considered. Programmes in rural development are often planned in Colombo, and policy changes and shifts in priorities could be effected only with the approval of the Ministry authorities in Colombo. This is the background against which recent developments have to be viewed and assessed. The following are the major developments in the period 1977-1989.

The Gam Udawa Programme

The Gam Udawa Movement marks emergence of a new development strategy in rural housing. Initiated in 1978, the Gam Udawa programme has now come to stay as one of the major settlement schemes in the country. The idea of picking the remotest villages and settling the poorest people in a much more congenial environment economically, socially culturally as well as hygienically in a model village has spread to all parts of the country.

Swarna Bhoomi

The Swarna Bhoomi programme seeks to confer permanent land title on over a million landless farmers in rural Sri Lanka, and thus usher in a free and independent peasant community. The basic principle underlying the movement is that by generating a feeling that the land belongs to the farmers themselves, it would give them all the encouragement to make their lands more productive and optimise the return.

The issue of Swarna Bhoomi lands commenced in 1982, and within a period of one year over fifty thousand allottees of Crown land had received Swarna Bhoomi title issued under the seal of the President with a survey plan delienating the boundaries of each allotment.

The Maha Pola Concept and the Scholarship Fund

An innovative approach in coming to grips with the problems of rural marketing has been the establishment of the Maha Pola. This new venture, initiated by Minister Lalith Athulathmudali in 1980, is a movement directed towards meaningful participation of the rural people in reaping the benefits of an open market economy. Goods are made available in the rural areas at prices prevalent in Colombo and the principal towns. The Maha Pola would make purchases of local goods at reasonable prices at the points of production itself. This was a boon to the village producer, for often he had to spend a sizeable part of his income in transporting goods and vegetables from the farmyard to the rural market square. Hitherto farmers and village craftsmen had to be content with the price paid by the traders, for they had no other outlet for bulk produce.

The Maha Pola has other uses as well. It serves the rural community as a centre for social interaction, and it is the place where town fashions reach the village. Pola day is the "off day" for the villagers, and the rural womenfolk look forward to the Pola day not only to buy their household goods, but also to meet friends and be away for a while from their household chores.

The relevance of the Maha Pola for rural development is seen as a scheme that seeks to bring about social justice and equal opportunity among the rural people. However, in the Maha Pola Scholarship Scheme brings into meaningful focus the benefits of the Free Education concept in Sri Lanka. Under the Maha Pola Higher Education Scholarship Trust Fund, an award of scholarships is made annually. Ninety per cent of these scholarships are awarded on the basis of need. The first awards under the scheme were made in November 1981, and in the same year the Fund was created as a Public Trust. Today it is a Statutory Trust by an Act of Parliament, and the administration of the Fund is vested in a Board of Trustees with the Chief Justice as Chairman.

Integrated Rural Development Programmes (IRDP)

The programme for Integrated Rural Development (IRD) seeks to widen economic opportunities and enhance living standards in the rural areas, to redue intra-district and inter-district disparities, and hence promote more balanced growth, and to focus development efforts especially to local needs and encourage local initiative. Major emphasis is placed on employment generating activities, the

promotion of self employment, and the imparting of vocational skills to the youth.

Programmes for Integrated Rural Development are multi-disciplinary in approach and multi-sectoral in operation. For the first time in Sri Lanka, the Kurunegala district was chosen for a pilot project in IRD with assistance from the World Bank.

Fifteen districts are now covered by IRD projects. As at the end of 1988, the total expenditure on IRD amounted to Rs.556 million. Performance of certain IRD programmes suffered a set back in 1987 due to the severe drought conditions and civil disturbances in the north and east. The Mannar, Vavuniya and Mulativu IRD programmes remain temporarily suspended owing to civil disturbances. For much the same reasons, the commencement of the IRDP in Batticaloa district, funded by the Canadian Government had to be differed further.

The Children's Secretariat

A Children's Secretariat was established under the then Ministry of Plan Implementation in connection with the International Year of the Child 1977. In view of the importance, the Government attaches to children's health, education and welfare, the Children's Secretariat is now established as a permanent Government agency devoted exclusively to the welfare of children. The major objectives of the national programme are to reduce infant mortality and child mortality and morbidity, and to reduce. non-attendance of schools at primary levels. The programme also seeks to reduce disparities in services for children, particularly in the rural sector and the Mahaweli development area.

The principal areas of concern for the Secretariat are all persons between 0-14 years of age and those who have a bearing on this age group, namely, pre-school children, children in primary schools, and women in child bearing age. The rural areas receive priority attention as many of the problems encountered in the rural areas are much more formidable than the problems encountered in the more articulate urban sector whether it is in the field of environmental sanitation, nutrition, recreational facilities or the general well being of the child.

Some Points of Criticism

We have reviewed in brief, the Government experience in rural development in the past decade or so. A noteworthy feature

that calls for comment is the non-involvement of the Ministry of Rural Development in any of these programmes. It would be a daunting prospect, indeed to find persuasive reasons for such non-involvement. The consequences of such non involvement have been the duplication of efforts, the waste of manpower, the absence of a single authority that would coordinate the programmes of the different departments and agencies and the improvident and sometimes wasteful utilization of scarce financial resources. More importantly, this lack of concern led to the marginalisation of the Ministry of Rural Development - and to its "extinction" as a Ministry in the allocation of Ministries under the new Government in 1989.

Criticism has been forthcoming that in the period under review, the Ministry of Rural Development did not have a clearly defined plan of action for rural welfare. The detractors have pointed out that this was in large measure due to the frequent changes of key departmental personnel, notably in the office of Director of Rural Development. There were instances where a Director functioned in office for a period of less than six months - and this fact militated against the formulation and implementation of any coherent and consistent policy for rural development.

Another major criticism levelled against the Government effort at rural development during the period under review, is that the planning and implementation of all major projects was Colombo based, with very little, if any, of the planning, monitoring and evaluation of projects at the grassroots level. Especially in the programmes for Integrated Rural Development, the final decision on changes in priorities, the allocation of financial resources, and the deployment of staff lay with the Steering Committee in Colombo, presided over by the Secretary to the Ministry of Plan Implementation. Given such a context, therefore, it is not surprising that there was very minimal people's participation in these projects. As recently as 1985, Dr. Wickrema Weerasooria, Secretary to the Ministry of Plan Implementation admitted quite frankly that

> "in Government programmes one finds it very difficult to achieve the commonly quoted grassroots participation or popular participation".

The process of "Development from Below" was still something to be attempted. It was only as the decade of the 'eighties drew to its close there was a consensus and growing realization, both at the political and administrative levels, that a new approach to

rural development was necessary, a new approach that would mobilise the participation of all segments of rural society in the development process. It now became increasingly evident that in spite of the substantial investment in the rural sector, the impact of that investment was not discernible in the living conditions of the rural poor. Oftentimes, the beneficiaries of rural development programmes were the village elite who comprised a small minority in the village, but were nevertheless in effective control of village society because of their social standing and economic resources. It was only marginally that the poorest segments benefitted, and that too, in a somewhat niggardly manner. All too often they had been the victims of the capital intensive, technological, elite oriented development process.

What then are the major issues in rural development and how best would the Government respond to the challenge?

Major Issues in Rural Development and the Government Response

Rural Unemployment: Broadly speaking, the unemployed are those who are not, or who cannot be gainfully employed under existing conditions in rural society. Statistical data sources have consistently shown that the unemployment problem has been one which has afflicted new entrants to the labour force in their young age groups: they are youthful, concentrated largely in the wet zone, and many of them are educated. Further, unemployment is particularly acute among young females. In addressing the problem of rural unemployment therefore, the Government takes full cognizance of these structural factors.[2]

Percentage Distribution of the Population by Labour Force Status - Rural Sector - 1987

Labour Force Status	Male	Female	Average
Economically Active			
Employed	45.7	12.7	29.0
Unemployed	3.6	4.3	4.0
Total	49.3	17.1	33.0
Economically Inactive			
Below 14 years	35.2	33.6	34.4
Over 14 years	6.8	7.9	7.4
House workers	1.3	34.6	18.2
Disabled	3.2	3.6	3.4
Retired	1.1	0.6	0.8
No Interest	2.2	1.9	2.0
Others	1.0	0.7	0.8
Total	50.7	82.0	67.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total population	15,163	15,601	30,765

Source: Ministry of Plan Implementation.

The Mahaweli Programme: The single most important step taken by the Government to provide employment opportunities primarily among the landless rural poor is the Accelerated Mahaweli Development Programme. The Programme has three major components: The Headworks, Downstream engineering and Irrigation Works, and Settlement and Agricultural Production.

Under the Settlement and Agricultural Production component, 9113 landless rural poor families were settled in system C of the project in 1984, and 5000 families were settled in 1985. The total settled in System B reached 10,784 by the end of 1987, while in System G the total amounted to 3,374 families by the end of 1987[3].

In the Mahaweli project today one witnesses the voluntary movement of people from the densely populated wet zone to the sparsely populated dry zone. It is indeed a high water mark in the population and demographic policy of Sri Lanka. The new farmers have benefitted from assured irrigation supplies, and have moved into commercial agriculture. With the accent now on crop diversification, enormous opportunities are now available for entrepreneurship in the settlement sector itself to generate higher incomes and employment opportunities, from processing industries to agri-business.

Rural Credit: Since most non-farm occupational categories in the rural areas are from the economically weaker sections of the community, capital and financial difficulties are among the main constraints that face the rural entrepreneur.

Government's continuing concern with this central issue is reflected in the steps taken to make credit easily available to the rural people. In 1967 the People's Bank was vested with the responsibility of providing agricultural credit to farmers, and from 1973 the Bank of Ceylon also commenced credit operations in the rural areas.

The opening of Regional Rural Development Banks is another important step taken by the Government to provide credit facilities to the rural people. These banks were first established in 1985. They are confined to a geographically defined region, and are engaged in the development of agriculture, small and medium scale industries, fisheries and other productive activities. These banks are specifically empowered to grant loans to farmers and fishermen, cooperative societies and various societies and groups involved in production, processing and marketing.

At the end of June 1988, the number of Regional Rural Development Bank branches amounted to 43. In all around 18,000

loans have been granted. These banks have concentrated on small scale loans with a view to generating self employment opportunities and additional sources of income in the rural sector. They have a fairly diversified loan portfolio with non-agricultural activities such as small industry, trade and commerce being granted nearly 65 per cent of the total loans. These banks have also attempted to deviate from the traditional security based lending to project oriented lending. They adopt innovative methods with effective use of field officers, village credit camps and mobile banking srvices.

An innovative feature of the Regional Rural Development Banks is the "Naya Niyamaka" scheme introduced in late 1988; it is an attempt to link the informal credit sources to the formal or institutional banking system. The financial resources of the banks would supplement the resources of the informal sector to meet the small borrower's credit needs. Among the most popular forms of self employment at the village level made possible as a result of the "Naya Niyamaka" scheme are poultry farming, batik work, wood carving, brick making and carpentry.

Rural Industrialization: There is no clear cut definition of rural industry; usually it means industries located in the rural areas. However, the large factories which are capital intensive, utilise large volumes of capital and modern technology and are managed by salaried staff tend to get excluded from the category of rural industries, though they are located in the rural areas. Thus, what is included is the cottage industry type of small industries and handicrafts.

The rural industrial policy of the Government places major emphasis on small scale and cottage industries which use relatively less capital per worker; the emphasis is on labour intensive industries that use indigenous raw material. Priority is accorded to new private investments oriented towards consumer goods production and export, and located in under developed parts of the country, with due recognition of the existing pattern of industrial capacity. There is evidence of a planned and deliberate attempt to develop rural small scale industries primarily to promote employment among the landless poor in the villages. As at the end of 1988 rural industry constituted approximately three quarters of all industrial employment in the country and it provided 34 per cent of all rural non-farm employment.

The Department of Small Industries is responsible for the promotion and development of handicrafts (utilitarian as well as artistic) and cottage industries. It seeks to develop and upgrade

skills and transfer technology to promote small and medium industries. The Department has generally focussed on the 'very small scale' sector enterprises with an investment of under Rs. 25,000/- in machinery and equipment. It maintains workshops, demonstration units and provides vocational training in the fields of handloom textile weaving, coir, ceramics, carpentry, leather, light engineering, cane, rattan and bamboo crafts, brass, copper and silverware, and other handicrafts including rush and reedware, traditional musical instruments and other kinds of artistic handicrafts. These centres function as training cum production centres as they are engaged in production activities while imparting skills to trainees.

The Department of Small Industries also plays a key role in promoting a demand for the products of village craftsmen and artisans, partly by providing marketing outlets like the Laksala Trade Emporium which are located in the principal towns, and partly by helping the small enterprises concerned with product design, by assisting producers to obtain loans, and the handling of exports of traditional Sri Lankan handicrafts.

Other Programmes: The Government accords high priority to the programme of rural electrification for it would generate employment in the rural areas, encourage the opening of small industrial projects, and absorb the unemployed and under employed labour in the villages. Under the Rural Electrification Programme, 3362 villages have been supplied with electricity during the period 1977-1984. It is an on going programme.

As an essential element of the development strategy, the Government has assigned education a high priority and has achieved a marked success in changing the profile of education and literacy. The relative neglect of technical education and vocational training in the overall educational system has been recognised, and today the Ministry of Education has a programme that can be classed as an introduction to technical skills or vocational education: the teaching of vocational skills to school drop-outs and those with incomplete schooling using the workshops, laboratories and other facilities available in the general schools system. This emphasis on technical and vocational education is in large measure a response to the criticism that education has failed to respond constructively to national needs.

Rural Development for the 'Nineties

What is the Government strategy for rural development in

the decade of the 'nineties? The main outlines seem clear enough, and may be conveniently enumerated.

The Janasaviya Programme

High on the Government agenda for improving the quality of life for the rural poor is the Janasaviya programme. The Janasaviya Act No. 4 of 1989 introduced a new scheme of administration of relief called the Janasaviya programme. It has a threefold objective viz. to utilise human resources, to promote social stability and to alleviate poverty. The Scheme provides a firm vocational and social foundation to start from, if properly carried out. It deals with the poor, entrusts the work and the responsibility directly to the poor, and encourages the poor to operate it for their own welfare. While the financial demands made of the Government are extremely high, the need for an efficient and streamlined administration/administrative structure is even more demanding.

The focus of the Janasaviya programme is on the rural poor. Who constitute the rural poor and by what criteria do we distinguish them from the rest of rural society? Poverty, like sickness, is usually endured, rarely chosen. It is not a unitary circumstance, and it connotes more than low income. With poverty we associate the nexus of conditions often, but imperfectly associated with low incomes - large family size, malnutrition, a high rate of infant mortality, unhealthy living conditions, chronic indebtedness, and a hopeless sense of alienation. These variables tend to be closely inter-related. Although the one is not the sole determinant or the inevitable consequence of the other, oftentimes poverty and large family size go hand in hand in the rural areas. In point of fact they are both mutually reinforcing.

The measurement of poverty varies according to each country. For present purposes, poverty may be defined as a person's inability to meet the basic necessities of life primarily food, health care services, clothing and shelter either directly or indirectly through barter or purchase. In Sri Lanka those below the poverty line may be defined as the families whose respective incomes are not more than Rs. 8,400/- per annum, and are therefore in receipt of Food Stamps under the Poor Relief Act No. 32 of 1985.

A genuine concern for the poor and dedication to the task at hand is a fundamental requisite for the success of the Janasaviya programme. It would be appropriate therefore to survey in brief the measures taken by the Government in providing the requisite

orientation for officers implementing this innovative programme in poverty alleviation.

The Bureaucracy and Rural Development

There is today a discernible shift in the social origins and orientation of the new administrators towards the rural sector. An officer in the Sri Lanka Administrative Service or similar public officer today is the product of post-Independence welfare policies and is as conscious as the average intellectual of all the problems, the contradictions and the strains of contemporary society.

In its continuing commitment to streamline the administrative structure, the Government has made a deliberate effort to bring the administrator in close touch with the villager and the rural ways of life. One of the major obstacles to public participation resides in the impenetrability of administrative regulations and the language of bureaucracy. Language problems are even more decisive and contribute greatly to heightening the mismatch between theory and practice and between transmission and reception of administrative messages.

So as to train officials capable of promoting indigenous integrated development at the local level, the Sri Lanka Institute of Development Administration (SLIDA), which is the premier training institute for induction and in-service training of all grades of public officers, has initiated a "Rural Immersion Programme" for officers of the SLAS. Under this programme, which seeks to establish a communication oriented administration, new recruits to the Administrative Service are required to spend two weeks in selected rural communities. They reside in the village and observe at first hand the ways of life and living, as well as the customs and traditions that govern rural community life. An essential aspect of this new bureaucratic orientation is that the gap between the officer class and the bureaucracy on the one hand, and the rural population on the other, has been greatly reduced.

Supplementing the new bureaucratic orientation is the training of rural leaders at the village level itself. In 1985 an International Centre for the training of rural leaders was established in Yodagama, Embilipitiya, in view of the growing realization and pressing need for dynamic, committed and self motivated leadership in government and local govrnment institutions and grassroots level organisations. When fully operational, the Centre would provide training in community organisation, people's participation in development activities, and seek to effect attitudinal changes and orientation based on physical and spiritual training.

Conclusion

Both the agencies of Government and the Non-Governmental Organisations are today involved, in a very meaningful and fruitful way, in the development of the rural areas of our country. There are many intangibles and imponderables in understanding the rural mind, the nuances of rural life, the problem of poverty, the issue of rural unemployment and similar issues. Perhaps it would be a rewarding experience to find answers to the following questions:[3]

- What is the state of poverty, and who has to bear that burden. Is it the Government, the community, or the NGOs and other concerned agnecies?
- What is happening to unemployment, and who has to bear that burden?
- What is the state of inequalities, and who is affected by them?

Notes

1 "Rural Development in Sri Lanka". Ministry of Plan Implementation. 1982. Edited by Edgar Fernando.

2 R.M.B. Korale : Report to the Government of Sri Lanka. Ministry of Plan Implementation, 1987 (Unpublished).

3 Dudley Seers : The Meaning of Development. University of California Press, 1974.

2.3 CONTRIBUTION OF SARVODAYA IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Dr. A.T. Ariyaratna*

Rural development should be studied in depth, taking into consideration the present day realities of the country. The rural communities have faced many problems within the broad category of political, social and economic. I do not see the possibility for a dynamic democratic and non-violent transformation of rural societies in a physiological and physical environment of this nature.

"Where lies hope?" is the question which serious minded development thinkers and administrators should ask themselves. For four decades I have been a rural development worker myself. For three of these four decades, I have been involved with the Sarvodaya Movement. From these experience I would like to make the following statements for your consideration:

(1) You cannot think of rural development any longer without taking into consideration development as a whole. Development should be considered not only underlining social and economic development but equal emphasis also should be paid to spiritual,

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moral, cultural and political development. Development should be a total integrated process which should improve the quality of life of human personalities, families, and rural and urban communities, going up to the national community level.

(2) The present method of planning from above should be radically changed taking into consideration the sustenance or the continuity of the national politico-economic system, into a system where priority is given to the needs of those communities in rural and urban areas so that the national plan is a reflection of the true aspirations of the majority of the people.

(3) Maximum effort should be put to educate the people using all available media to clearly define the goals of development - rural as well as national. Individuals and groups should direct all their resources and energies to realize this goal in the context of their own social, political and economic millieu.

(4) While every kind of new and relevant knowledge, coming from every possible source is absorbed in this effort, the aggregate of all such inputs is to realize the goal that they have set before themselves. Communication therefore, is more of a lateral and bottom-up educational nature rather than a pre-planned, top-down, propaganda exercise.

(5) Social change is not considered in a kind of fatalistic manner as inevitable. On the other hand, selective and goal oriented change is promoted at a pace which does not disturb the existing dynamic stability of a culture. The change is always for the better and for self-fulfilment and self-realization rather than for frustration and self-annihilation.

I believe that the above mentioned five principles will suffice for us to think on the same line on the subject of development and change. Let me now describe what Sarvodaya as a movement has contributed in the Sri Lankan social context.

It might have influenced the thinking of the rulers, the planners, the community leaders, and the general public on development principles and strategies relevant to the country. Some examples are:

(a) The greatest resource for development is human beings themselves. Therefore all development should be centered around human beings facilitating them to make the fullest use of their time, thought, effort and skills (Shramadana).

(b) Human resources development should be given priority within the socio-economic and environmental resource context in

which human communities live (Training in appropriate technologies).

(c) Development should be a total process involving all men, women and children in all aspects of their lives. It should start from the bottom-up and be community based. The most disadvantaged, the poorest, and the weakest should get priority. Yet self-reliance, community participation and planned activities should be promoted as a pre-requisite before external inputs are brought in (Jana Saviya, gramodaya and Grama Swarājaya conepts and programmes).

(d) Basic Human Needs satisfaction programmes based on environment, water, clothing, food, housing, health-care, energy, communication, education and culture should take priority over macro-development projects. They should be community based, community-managed, decentralised, environmentally sound and sustainable.

(e) Spiritual, moral and cultural value-systems should be respected and utilized more as a resource and supportive force for development than as a constraint. The objective of development should not be to make an affluent society but a no-poverty, no-affluence society which is an achievable target for a developing country such as Sri Lanka.

(f) Constructive manual labour, skills development, organizational competence, social responsibility, respect for life and human rights, service to fellow-beings, communal harmony, recognition of multi-cultural co-existence, and dedication to and participation in peace-making should be an integral part of formal and non-formal education programmes.

In all areas such as the above, extensive national campaigns were conducted by the movement through Shramadana camps, demonstration projects, public talks, seminars, workshops and conferences, publications, advocacy programmes and the communication media such as the press, radio and television. Special films and videos were also produced by the Sarvodaya audio-visual section to educate people on this approach to sustainable self-development. Massive peace-marches and inter-religious communal meditation campaigns gave the movement visibility as a mass movement for non-violent social change.

It is within this movemental context of Sarvodaya that a variety of organisational structures and strategies were developed and programmes and projects were planned and implemented.

The Organisation

The central organisational arm of Sarvodaya is the Lanka Jathika Sarvodaya Shramadana Sangamaya (Incorporated). It has a national membership which at its Annual General Meeting elects an Executive Council consisting of 75 members including a President, a General-Secretary, a Treasurer and 8 Vice Presidents. This is the supreme Policy making body of the Sangamaya (Association).

The Executive Council appoints a professional staff consisting of an Executive Director, a Deputy Executive Director, a Finance Director, a Development Education Director, an Integrated Field Operations Director, Special Projects Director and other Directors as necessary to plan out, execute, monitor and evaluate various projects and programmes in keeping with the broad policies agreed upon by the Executive Council.

In this task the Board of Directors is assisted by Programme Co-ordinators (at National level) of various specialised divisions, 10 Field Directors in charge of 9 provinces, 30 District Co-ordinators in charge of district programmes, 301 Divisional Co-ordinators in charge of Divisions and village cluster Co-ordinators, among other supportive full-time workers.

The Executive Council also has created autonomous bodies supervised by Standing Committees and headed by Chief Executives responsible to the Executive Council through the President. They are:

1) Sarvodaya Economic Enterprises Development Services (SEEDS)
2) Sarvodaya Rural Technical Services (SRTS)
3) Sarvodaya Relief and Rehabilitation Services (SRRS)
4) Sarvodaya Children's Services (SCS)
5) Sarvodaya Women's Movement (SWM)
6) Sarvodaya Shanthi Sena Services (SSSS)
7) Sarvodaya Shramadana International Services (SSIS)
8) Sarvodaya Legal Aid Services (SLAS)
9) Sarvodaya Bhikkhu (Buddhist Monks) Sewa Organisation
10) Sarvodaya Community Health and Emergency Relief Services (SCHERS)
11) Sarvodaya Research Institute (SRI)
12) Sarvodaya Samodaya Sewa (SSS)

The Sarvodaya Executive Council has created independent legal entities both at the national level and at village levels. Most of the present autonomous bodies will develop themselves also into independent legal entities in the course of time. This is in persuance

of the Sarvodaya policy of total devolution and decentralisation of power over institutions and activities which are presently under its legal control.

1) Sarvodaya Suwa Setha Sewa Ltd., and
2) Sarvodaya Shramadana Society Ltd. (In villages now numbering over 3000).

are already functioning as independent legally constituted organisations with their own democratically elected executive committees.

Development Education

Directly under the control and supervision of the Executive Council as well as under the autonomous bodies and independent organisations a number of Development Educational and Training Institutions are functioning. They are:

1) Regional Development Education Institute
2) Audio-visual Training Centre
3) National Child Development Institute
4) Sarvodaya Buddhist Monks Leadership Training Institute
5) Sarvodaya Management Training Institute
6) Sarvodaya Agricultural Training Institute
7) Sarvodaya Meditation Centre
8) Sarvodaya Vocational Training Centre for the Physically Handicapped
9) School for the Deaf
10) Training Centre for Women in Handpump Development
11) School for Traditional Medicine

In addition to the above, a number of community based training and rehabilitation programmes for the visually handicapped, physically disabled and epileptics are also being conducted.

The above description of the movement and the organisational complexity of Sarvodaya show that it is not a simple project-oriented or programme-based series of activities conducted within a particular time-frame or financial plan for the benefit of a specific target group or groups. On the other hand, Sarvodaya has its target groups, programmes and projects and a time frame aimed at them within the limitations of financial resources it can raise and human potential it can train. Sarvodaya is a movement for social change for the better. Any strategic plan for the coming decade, therefore, has to take into consideration both these important elements, the movemental and organisational, into consideration.

The Need for Sarvodaya Today

When 31 years ago Sarvodaya analysed the social situation in the country showed the broad evil forces under ten heads that were already in operation, it not only foresaw what was going to happen but set in motion alternative constructive processes to counteract them. The short-sightedness of the political leadership, the misguidance of them by bureaucrats and planners in development objectives and stategies did not help Sarvodaya processes to multiply but instead helped those evil forces to multiply unabatedly and plunge the country into the present totally chaotic situation that it is today.

The new open economy era that dawned from 1977 certainly showed promise from a macro-economic point of growth and production as shown by the Central Bank indicators. But the impact on the poorest 40% is also shown in the same table where their share of the national income fell from 13% to 7% between 1978 and 1987 whereas the rich 10% increased their share from 27% to 49% during this same period.

The rise of terrorism, communal conflicts, internecine wars, the breakdown of law and order, university education and schooling systems, civil administration, legal systems, the increase of bribery, corruption, drug addiction, gambling and casinos, the emergence of private killing squads, gangsterism, political assassinations, cold blooded killings of lawyers, public servants and other civilians, blatant violations of human rights, destruction of public property and communication systems and so on have now become the order of the day. In the midst of all this production in all sectors has slowed down and development projects have come to a halt. Basic social services in health and related sectors have suffered immensely.

The real impact of all that has happened and is happening is too soon to be evaluated now. But one thing is certain. There is no development strategy for the coming decade that will be realistic or complete without taking into account this chaotic situation. No amount of economic planning and financial inputs into pure macro-economic development projects are going to repair this damage and bring social and political stability to the country. The social and moral fabric of the nation which has been torn apart has to be weaved together again patiently and carefully. This has to be done basically through a nation wide net work of micro development processes which should have all the components of the Sarvodaya development approach - spiritual, moral, cultural, social, economic and political. It has to be a movement of micro-processes building themselves into a nation-wide macro-process of total national regeneration and reconstruction.

Who is going to give leadership to such a national revival? Certainly not political parties, religious orders, small social welfare and development organisations, isolated and remaining community leaders, armed forces, terrorist groups, armed militants, scholars, media personnel, social analysts, planners or the government. All of them can make significant contributions but certainly they cannot give the leadership for a variety of reasons such as aloofness from people, indecisiveness, loss of credibility, lack of organisation and commitment, regionality and absence of practical experience in villages.

So that leadership has necessarily to come from community groups at the grassroots which have to be inter linked nationally irrespective of caste, racial, religious and political differences. It is to this infrastructure that all other elements have to be intervowen with local and provincial governmental cooperation. The central governmental plans and strategies or the superstructures have to be built conforming to these bottom-up processes and networks.

Even the most bitter critics of Sarvodaya will concede that the leading role for national reconciliation, justice and peace and blazing a new path for sustainable development towards the twenty first century can best be played by Sarvodaya.

Sarvodaya in the 1990s

A decade of social disturbances in Sri Lanka have disrupted the normal functioning of public and private sector organisations as well as the normal life of the people in general. Undoubtedly the normal functioning of the Sarvodaya Movement was also disturbed but it was not disrupted to the extent of being more or less functional as has been the case with most other governmental and non-governmental welfare and development organisations. The spiritual foundation of the movement, its closeness to the day to day life of the people, its highly decentralised and village based nature, non-partisanship in political power struggles and active involvement in bringing immediate relief and rehabilitation and hope to victims at times of man-made or natural calamities irrespective of any political, communal or religious considerations, are some of the factors that have contributed to its survival and progress.

Social disturbances are not yet over. Neither can we predict when these will be finally settled. Therefore, in the nineties Sarvodaya will have to devote a significant part of its time and efforts for peace and reconciliation. Throughout the decade these efforts have to continue with greater organisation, vigour and intensity. Without peace there can hardly be any development. Peace can never come without justice. Justice has to manifest

itself in all sectors of life including human rights and duties, rule of law, political rights and responsibilities and equity in social, educational and economic opportunities. A regeneration of spiritual life and a revitalization of age-old value systems are the most important motivational forces to bring about justice to the people once again to realize peace and development.

The Sarvodaya Economic Enterprises Development Services is the autonomous economic development wing of Sarvodaya. This unit has to decide how many villages it will take within its programme during a particular period of time. Also it has to decide how many villages can be graduated every year so that an equal number of new villages could be added to keep that number constant until such time it can have more financial resources and management training capacities.

In choosing the villages SEEDS had to take a critical decision that the selection was based not only on the fact that a village has gone through the first three stages of village development but the general economic level of the village. Villages that had more families below the poverty line were selected by SEEDS rather than the better off ones.

Where economic, managerial and marketing inputs could not be brought in from SEEDS resources and other strategies had to be developed within the village itself. While increased emphasis is given to improving the economy of village communities the integrated approach to development will not be slowed down in any way. The Ten Basic Human Needs Satisfaction programme will be put on a more efficient basis bringing in more scientific knowledge and technological skills to the village societies so that the communities can enrich their natural and human resource bases and manage them in a more skilful and sustainable manner for the benefit of the people.

Two organisational preconditions have to be satisfied to implement the Basic Human Needs Programme successfully. Firstly, the institutional infrastructure of the communities has to be strengthened to make them viable, effective, autonomous and legitimate to engage themselves continuously in a planned programme of action primarily based on self-reliance, community participation and community management of resources. Secondly, they should have access to regional and national institutions of Sarvodaya which can systematically and selectively respond to their training, technological and external resource mobilization needs.

The existing regional and national institutions of Sarvodaya, therefore, will be systematically reorganised and developed so that they can perform the above function of servicing the village societies more effectively. They will be reorganised in such a manner that most of them can be promoted from being autonomous organisations to being independent legal entities. This will enable the devolution of power at the national and regional levels resulting in more grassroots leadership to emerge and shoulder responsibilities of the Movement.

When planning for the nineties a fundamental question we cannot overlook or bypass is: "Is Sarvodaya going to limit the number of villages where it will function?" The simple answer is 'yes' and 'no'. As far as the financial allocation of the organisation is concerned the answer is 'Yes'. The scope for organisational expansion is limited. As far as the non-financial resources of the Movement - i.e. the non-material capital is concerned, the answer is 'No'. The movemental aspect has no limitations, and it has to expand to embrace the whole nation and perhaps the whole world.

Sarvodaya has been a path-finder and innovator for the people in many respects during the past three decades. In the nineties too this mission has to be continued. During the decade Sarvodaya should blaze a new trail to help in the emergence of a national identity, popularisation of a sustainable life-style capable of being acquired by all within our resources, promotion of literacy and health for all as a people's movement, development of innovative and realistic educational programmes such as community colleges for youth who have come up to the GCE (Ordinary Level) and a rural university service for those who have qualified for university education but have been left out due to lack of places, a Human Rights Movement to re-establish the respect for life and Rule of Law, popular programmes for environmental and ecological protection, an inter-religious movement for the re-establishment of a spiritual value system in the country and a highly decentralised political decision-making system which will contribute to the evolution of a no-party system of politics by consensus in the Gandhian spirit of rebuilding Sri Lanka as a Commonwealth of Village Republics.

2.4 THE MANAGEMENT OF OWN AFFAIRS: THE EXPERIENCE OF THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Upali Magaedaragamage *

Introduction

The National Development Foundation (NDF) established in 1979 is a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) registered under the Societies Ordinance of Sri Lanka as a non-profit voluntary agency.

The objectives of NDF are:

i. to build up villagers' self confidence to handle their political, economic, cultural and social affairs by themselves;
ii. to help villagers to identify their resources and to mobilize them to their advantage with least external help;
iii. to assist villagers in realizing their strength and power so that they are able to know their rights and to demand them;
iv. to mobilize villagers at the grass-roots level with the help of change agents (catalysts/facilitators) to organize into groups to carry out development efforts in rural areas.

The Management Council of the NDF is the supreme body which decides its policies, projects and areas of development. Five out of the nine members elected annually for the Management

* Executive Secretary, National Development Foundation.

Council comprise of professionals on rural development and related fields. The other four are coordinating committee members. The Management Committee meets in once in two months to study the progress of various programmes, to provide necessary guidelines and to make decisions on NDF activities.

At present NDF is carrying out the following development programmes including various other special projects:

i. Water management and Re-afforestation programme in the Minipe settlement scheme supported by the Australian Freedom From Hunger Campaign (AFFHC);
ii. Bio gas and integrated farming project with the help of the AFFHC, Foundation for International Training (FIT - Canada), Central Bank of Sri Lanka, Bank of Ceylon, People's Bank, and Regional Rural Development Banks;
iii. Buffalo bank project in Minipe settlement scheme with the assistance of the Canadian High Commission in Sri Lanka;
iv. Women in Development programme with the assistance of AFFHC;
v. Small farmer Development programme with the assistance of the AFFHC;
vi. Seed Bank project with the assistance of GATE, West Germany;
vii. Farmer Federation Development Programme with the assistance of OXFAM, UK;
viii. Muthukandiya field canal rehabilitation project with the assistance of Australian High Commission in Sri Lanka;
ix. Muthukandiya Rehabilitation programme with the assistance of AFFHC and Australian International Development Assistance Bureau (AIDAB);
x. Renovation of minor irrigation reservoirs with the assistance of Swiss Intercooperation and Department of Agrarian Services, Sri Lanka.

NDF Group Organizing Strategy to Attain Self-Sufficiency

When an area has been identified as being suitable to work in the NDF, field organiser for the area begins a process of consultation with the community prior to any formal in the NDF activity. In general there are two main sectors in which this process is applied; water management (including canal rehabilitation and small tank rehabilitation) and small farmer development programmes. In both cases the method of organising the groups for self-management is the same.

Initial Contact

The NDF coordinators meet with individual families and discuss the problems they encounter in the area. At this stage the NDF staff does not reveal the particular interest they have in the area or the sector. This process goes on with all of the families in the particular target area. It may be the households under a particular tank, along an irrigation canal or in a small village or hamlet. These discussions with each family occur at least twice but may occur up to four or five times during the process. This not only gives the NDF staff a feel for the problems of the family and gain their confidence but also gives the families an opportunity to analyse the problems and the issues they face. The time taken for this process depends on the degree of rapport build by the field staff with the households.

Small Family Groups

Following the series of single family discussions, small groups of neighbouring families, i.e. at least two or three are brought together to discuss the common problems they have faced. These meetings are held throughout the area. This type of meetings are held two or three times during the process between the groups of families.

Socio-economic Survey

At the end of these initial meetings, families have an understanding as to why the NDF field coordinators have come to the area. In turn the coordinators have an awareness about the problems prevailing among the families. Then a general socio-economic survey is carried out on all of the target households. The survey consists of the following aspects:

Income and expenditure,
Savings and debt structure,
Health, sanitation and nutrition.

In addition to the survey, the field workers make observations about the condition of the households which are recorded separately, for the purpose of analysis.

Report back to the Families

A general report is prepared and presented before the families meet as a group. This is a meeting attended by the most needy people in the area or the target group for the NDF programme. In the group meeting they concert on the major problems and then identify the priority areas for which assistance is necessary. Usually low income categories are identified as the fundamental problem, and strategies are developed to overcome this. This process can take up to four or five meetings.

Formation of a Society

Following this consultative process and agreement on strategies the group then forms itself into a society. This usually has a membership of around 30 to 35 members. At this stage office bearers and a Committee is formed. The office bearers are usually a Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Deputy Secretary and a Treasurer. An action committee of around six members is also elected. This committee is formed in such a way that it represents the interests of the community. A constitution is adopted by the society. It is adapted from a standard model which is acceptable to financial institutions such as State Banks and Government Agencies, in accordance with the Societies Ordinance of Sri Lanka. Membership fee is Rs. 10.00, and at every meeting Rs. 1.00 is collected from each member. The society meets as a whole on a monthly basis with the committee meeting on emergency or priority matters. The proceedings of the meetings are recorded for reference.

Formation of Sub Committees

The society then forms sub-committees. These sub-committees comprising of 4-6 members are based on the needs or priorities of different members of the Society. For example, some members may take up goat or poultry rearing as an income generating activity, others dairying, irrigated vegetable and spice growing, cash crops and water management. These sub-committees prepare an action plan for their work. The NDF field staff raise the awareness among these groups on the available assistance from the Government line agencies and banks. The members of the groups then start an individual saving programme with the bank depositing around Rs. 25.00 to Rs. 30.00 per month.

Project Preparation

Once the preparation of the action plan by the sub-committee is completed a project is prepared for submission to a lending institute, usually a bank. However, it could also be for government subsidy or assistance. The NDF staff facilitate the preparation of the project in a formal manner according to the requirements of the lending institute or the government department. The application is then formally submitted in the name of the society.

Provision of the Loan

The lending institution then appraises the project by way of project visits and discussions with the applicant(s). It then requests relevant government line agencies for comments, advice and support (if appropriate). If the institution rejects the loan the society negotiates on behalf of the applicant(s).

Work Plan

When the loan is approved and issued, the group meets again to prepare a work plan. If the loan is for an item involving running expenses such as a pump then a service fee is charged, usually with a significant cost advantage to group members. The NDF assistance includes getting co-operation from the line agencies and planning. If agricultural activities are involved then this plan will also include strategies to coordinate and cooperate various activities such as input supplies, marketing, etc. Funding for these sub-committees comes from equipment usage charges plus a crop levy of around 2.5% of the value of production. When the project is under way the group will meet at least twice a month to coordinate activities.

Women's Groups

The NDF Women's coordinators meet the women individually at their households as part of the initial consultation. Attention is focused on household income, health and sanitation. Women are actively involved in the societies and most of the sub-committees have women serving as active members. Specific activities the women undertake to overcome their particular problems include, planning family budgets, home gardening for improved nutrition and cash income. (Most women who prepare lunches for their husbands who are itinerant labourers now charge Rs. 5.00 for that lunch which is less than he would pay if he bought it). Other

activities include, the construction of fuel efficient stoves and the sale of coconut shells to charcoal makers. These women's groups are informal. They are similar to the sub-committees of the society.

Conclusion

According to our experiences the organisation of rural life in order to attain self-sufficiency is a process which has to be carefully planned out with the target groups or the beneficiaries. For this purpose it is essential to identify the real needy and the target groups who have been dropped by the development process.

2.5 A SUMMARY OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES OF CARE INTERNATIONAL IN SRI LANKA

Kevin Henry*

Project Activities

CARE began operations in Sri Lanka in 1956. For most of its 32 year history on the island, CARE was primarily engaged in feeding programs. The oldest of these was the School Feeding Program, done in cooperation with the Ministry of Educational Services, which provided a high-calorie snack daily to a million school children throughout the island. The School Feeding Program was taken over by Government in 1987.

CARE Sri Lanka, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Ceylon Tobacco Services, is also involved in the Thriposha program under which a fortified food supplement is manufactured and distributed to medically identified malnourished mothers and pre-school children. Each month, 580,000 beneficiaries are reached

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* Country Representative, CARE Sri Lanka.

through a network of health clinics. When the Thriposha program started in 1973, 95 per cent of the ingredients were donated by the U.S. Government under PL 480 Title II. The formula has been modified since then to improve the quality of the product and to increase the relative input of locally produced food. In 1981, the product was fortified with vitamins and minerals. Today Thriposha consists of 49% Non Fat Dry Milk, 49% locally produced Maize and Soyabean, and 2% vitamins and minerals. The aim is to have all of the ingredients locally produced by the time the project is handed over to Government in 1991. Funding for the Thriposha project is provided by the Ministry of Health and CARE, with US Government support in the form of PL 480 commodities.

Beginning in 1984, CARE Sri Lanka began to diversify its programming. At this time it assumed support of the Change Agents Program, in which low-income villagers and estate workers undergo a process of conscientization and awareness-raising aimed at helping them improve their social and economic status. The villagers and estate workers are encouraged to form groups around productive activities and to save a portion of their incomes. Through technical assistance and training, they are able to gain greater bargaining power, and more direct access to markets and formal credit. The project is implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Plan Implementation, the Sri Lanka State Plantations Corporation and Janatha Estates Development Board in 250 rural villages and on 30 estates in the period 1987 to 1990. The expansion to the estate sector took place in late 1986. With the establishment of CARE International, NORAD through CARE Norge has funded the major part of CAP since 1984. A Norwegian project coordinator has been attached to this project since 1985.

The CATER (Credit and Training for Economic Development in Rural Sri Lanka) project, begun in 1987 and linked with the Cooperative Movement, will enable 2400 low income rural women members of cooperative societies to increase their incomes by engaging in agro-based small enterprise activities. The women are provided with technical training and are linked to the formal credit sector through the Cooperative Rural Banks. A selected number of women are given leadership training, aimed at eventually strengthening the position of women as leaders in the cooperative movement in Sri Lanka.

The SERVE (Sarvodaya/CARE Economic Resources for Village Enhancement) project, also begun in 1987, is a collaborative effort with the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement, a non-governmental organization, to provide small enterprise training and credit for Sarvodaya Shramadana Society members in Kandy district. CARE assists with the provision of training and technical support to

participants, who are linked to formal banking institutions, including the People's Bank, the Regional Rural Development Bank, and the Central Bank.

TEACUP (Tea Cultivators Assistance Project) began in July 1988 in Kandy district. The project assists tea smallholders with one hectare or less land to upgrade and diversify their agricultural production in order to increase their incomes. Co-financing for the CATER, SERVE AND TEACUP projects is provided by CARE USA and USAID.

After the signing of the Indo-Lanka Peace Accord in July 1987, CARE launched a relief project in the North and East of Sri Lanka for the Maha cultivation season the same year. Approximately 5,000 smallholders were supplied with a total of 7100 bushels of seed paddy, 866 metric tons of fertilizer and 14,500 handtools. Financial support for CARE's agricultural relief project in the North and the East in Maha 1987 was provided mainly by the Federal Republic of Germany with assistance from NORAD through CARE Norge and from CARE USA.

For the Maha 88/89 Cultivation Season CARE obtained 1,842,800 million NOK (US D 271,260) from the Norwegian Ministry for Development Corporation/NORAD to distribute seed paddy and fertilizer to an estimated 4000 smallholders in the districts of Batticaloa, Kilinochchi and Mannar. The program was curtailed in Mannar and Kilinochchi when drought conditions set in. The project was later extended to Yala 89 where Seed Paddy Production (Pilot) Project was carried out on 150 acres with 50 seed paddy producers.

CARE has now obtained funding for Seed Paddy Production Program for FY 91 and 92. The program envisages the production of 52,600 bushels of registered seed paddy utilizing the services of 66 seed paddy producers each from Mannar and Batticaloa districts. The seed producers will be given a loan of Rs. 3,000/- per acre totalling to 200 acres in each district by way of inputs and cash, which would be recovered at harvest time, when CARE purchases the seed paddy thus produced. The loans will be channelled through MPCS Palugamam and three Agrarian Service Centres in Mannar.

The seed paddy thus produced will be distributed to selected farmers for the production of 2nd generation seed paddy by way of lateral spread within Mannar and Batticaloa districts, in collaboration with the Assistant Director of Agriculture, Batticaloa.

Relief has also been given through CARE in the form of milk powder, flour and vegetable oil to refugees and severely affected families from the North and the East.

An intensive study of the damage to the housing sector and

the state of the construction industry in the North and East as a result of the civil conflict was completed in August 1988. Among other things, the study has revealed that the average demand for inputs to the construction industry exceeds the supply by approximately 5 to 1. In addition, an estimated 6400 man years of masons and 8100 man years of carpenters are needed for the repair of and rebuilding of damaged and destroyed houses. Revitalization of the construction sector could thus play an important role with respect to employment generation.

CARE is implementing a project to train 1500 underemployed youth as carpenters and masons in response to this need. The project will run through 8 existing local training institutions in 5 districts. The facilities and training at these institutions will be upgraded to nationally recognised standards. The trainees will spend 10 weeks following an intensive skills course at an institution and will then be placed as apprentices in the local construction industry for 10 months. Trainees will receive a tool kit, and small allowance while attending the 10 week course. Employers of apprentices will provide allowances for the subsequent 10 months.

Those trainees wishing to become self employed, or form collectives after graduation will be given advice and assistance on small business management, credit and small enterprise skills through the project.

From time to time CARE has also provided small scale assistance and relief in the form of food, school equipment, clothes and medical supplies, especially in times of disaster. During the 1987 drought, CARE organized Food for Work programs in Kurunegala and Puttlam districts, assisting affected farmers to renovate minor irrigation works.

Operational Set-up

CARE in Sri Lanka operated from Colombo until the first CARE Sub-Office was established in Matara in August 1985. One year later, the Kandy and Kurunegala Sub-Offices were opened. With the inclusion of the plantation sector in CAP, a small branch of the Matara Sub-Office was set up in Deniyaya in the Morawak-Korale Planting Area. The Anuradhapura Sub-Office was established in January 1988 when CAP was expanded to five Assistant Government Agent Divisions in the same district. Sub-Offices were established in Jaffna in the North and in Batticaloa in the East in late 1987 as a result of CARE's involvement in relief projects in the two provinces.

The sub-offices play a vital role in the implementation and monitoring of all projects: Thriposha, CAP, CATER, SERVE, TEACUP,

and the relief and rehabilitation activities. In addition to project implementation in the districts where the respective sub-offices are located, the Kandy Sub-Office is also monitoring the estate sector part of CAP in Kegalle district; the Kurunegala Sub-Office is monitoring the village sector part of CAP in Puttalam district; and the Matara Sub-Office is monitoring the CATER project in the districts of Galle and Hambantota.

CARE Sri Lanka is working actively to strengthen its international profile in order to improve and expand its operations. The organization is also coordinating its activities with other international and indigenous NGOs. CARE joined the NGO Consortium for relief and rehabilitation in the North and East in 1987. In June 1988, CARE arranged a seminar on resource identification for NGOs in small enterprise development activities. CARE is one of the International NGOs sponsoring the establishment of a "NGO Centre" in Sri Lanka, for the benefit of indigenous NGOs.

During the past two years and particularly with the planning and implementation of more small enterprise development projects, CARE Sri Lanka's Program Division has been consolidated. In respect of planning, monitoring and research, it has facilitated a closer link with the services of the CARE Regional Technical Assistance Team for Asia and with other CARE missions. Staff training and workshops have also been initiated by the Program Division.

CARE Sri Lanka's national staff include specialists in financial management, agriculture, training and allied fields. A Computer Unit has been set up in the Colombo office, supervised by the head of the Program Division.

2.6 EFFORTS OF THE NATION BUILDERS ASSOCIATION IN VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT

M.B. Adikaram *

Building of Nation Builders Association

The Nation Builders Association is functioning as an organisation for the last 27 years. Prior to 1963, there had been a number of discussions particularly with the staff and students of the University of Peradeniya (formerly University of Ceylon) for the establishment of a Work Camp System for the under-graduates, so that they could spend their vacations in rural areas and give a helping hand to the community and under-privileged rural poor. It was also an attempt to provide a forum for the deeply motivated undergraduates who felt that they could go back to the village from where they came and learn from the villager and work for the betterment of all. This was to be one of the solutions for the youth unrest particularly in the universities. When the founder was struggling to organise the Nation Builders Association, there were a few prominent citizens in the country at that time, who came forward to encourage the founder by providing food and transport for the members particularly the undergraduates at that

* Ex-President, Nation Builders Association.

time. Moreover, these poor students who came to the university particularly from the rural areas, found it a way of spending a useful vacation when they were provided free food and accommodation and an opportunity to work for the nation although the facilities provided to them were meagre. The youth by nature being adventurous, enjoyed the work camps and they brought in new ideas and organisational methods to make this programme a tremendous success.

Within a short period of 3 to 4 years, there were more than 500 work camps all over the island from Point Pedro to Dondra involving over 2000 to 3000 undergraduates during the university vacations. By 1968, the University Nation Builders Association, by which name it was referred to by that time had grown to such as an extent that it became necessary to accommodate those who are not involved in the universities and thus the word university, was dropped and the organisation was named Nation Builders Association. Ten years later, the Nation Builders Association published their Memorandum of Articles of the Association and registered under the Companies Ordinance. The Association was incorporated by an Act of Parliament (Act 42 of 1982) and was gazetted as a charity. While it maintained links with the university, the organisation has a much wider membership today. Most of the members are rural youth who are involved in the Association's self help projects. Through a process of evolution over two decades, the Nation Builders Association has become one of the recognised NGOs in the sphere of land water resources conservation and development. For the Nation Builders Association environmental conservation means more than just pollution and conservation, it involves the wise management of natural resources around which development activities ultimately depend.

Efforts of the NBA in Village Development

When one looks at the history of the Nation Builders Association it is clearly evident that the association has gone through three distinctive steps forward, namely,

a) 1963 to 1970
These 7 years had been devoted to work camps and holiday camps trying to find ways and means of working with the rural poor for their development activities and to make them self-reliant.

b) 1970 to 1980

During this period began gradual giving up of short-term work camp methods and tried to establish small scale village development activities and income generating activities. Some of these small-scale village development activities are continued even today and the beneficiaries themselves have been able to establish their own village development programmes. Sometimes with NBA assistance or going to other NGOs.

c) 1980 to 1990

During this period, the NBA has widened its scope of activities. These small scale projects have developed into large projects and programmes with a view to establish environmentally suitable and economically viable projects and programmes so that the rural poor will benefit for years to come.

If one looks at the efforts of the NBA over the last 25 years, its history as an organisation trying to find the best solutions for the problems of the rural poor from the activities contributing to the beneficiaries for their self reliance, it can be said that the attempts and efforts have been very rewarding. Perhaps this may be due to the methods used by introducing rural thinking to solve their problems rather than copying theories and methods which have been imported. The Work Camp method did not bring lasting results. The small-scale projects alone will not change the life and aspirations of the rural poor. The programmes which are environmentally suitable and economically viable appear to be one of the answers to at least some of the problems faced by the rural poor.

However, it should be remembered that the rural poor do not live in isolation any more. They are very much exposed to the media of various types and very often they suffer from it. The repurcussions from political activities, policies of the Government, International problems and even the global environment changes are felt by the rural poor and many of them are aware of what is happening around them although in many instances, they are helpless to get the best out of the existing situation or to change what is available for the better. The changes in their attitude for this development and the motivation of work for their own reliance is one of the many efforts carried out by the NBA through their projects and programmes.

At the beginning of the work camps programmes which were implemented, were meant for the students who were looking for novel experiences, enjoyment and satisfaction. When the first programmes were launched, the founder was concerned with looking for solutions for the unrest in the universities and to train and motivate the undergraduates to go back to their villages with a national feeling when they go out of the university. The intention was to see that they are better equipped Government servants when they find employment in the Government sector as many of the graduates at that time preferred to leave the village and settle in urban areas very often forgetting their village. The community suffer due to the above mentioned reasons of which one was the lack of an enlightened and educated leadership in the village. It is encouraging to note that the work camp system was a success and the efforts of the NBA were successful. It was also successful as NGA was able to provide financial assistance to a large number of poor undergraduates who came from the rural areas to the university under the free education. During this period it was also possible for the Sinhala students to go to Jaffna and Trincomalee and live with Tamil students and work with them and those from Tamil areas to go to the South and work together.

From the national integration point of view, these programmes were a success. The simple food given by the people and the rough accommodation and manual labour inculcated the dignity of labour among them. On the other hand, these villagers or colonists who were working with the university elite, established a lasting relationship with the university community which enable the organisation to grow and finally take over the leadership of running their programmes in rural Sri Lanka. It is common knowledge that many of those who were involved in work camps became good and popular provincial administrators later and they implemented development programmes with the training they received in the NBA in spite of the restrictions and difficulties they had to undergo by keeping to strict Government rules and regulations. It should also be mentioned that several attempts were made by the NBA to convince the Government and the university authorities to set up a national service for students in this country. In 1974, the University Grants Commission set up a committee to plan national services for university students and the founder was invited to be the Secretary to the Commission. However, due to unknown reasons, this programme did not materialise and the NBA has not given up its attempts to request the Government and the university authorities to set up a special programme which will benefit the whole country. This idea has been placed before the Presidential Commission on Youth and it is hoped that our efforts will materialise one day.

The second phase of the NBA is the period from 1970 onwards when the Association gradually changed its earlier principles and took to long term, small-scale village development programmes. The first attempt was the establishment of the MOKO project (The Maha Oya - Kuda Oya Project) with a view to carrying out an integrated development programme covering 100 villages in the Kegalle district. It was also the first attempt of the NBA to work with the people, identify their problems and get them to come forward with their solutions and finally implement these programmes with what we refer to as the "Bottom up" approach. During this period, a number of income generating projects were established and for the first time, the NBA was looking for foreign assistance. The main financier was the "Freedom from Hunger Campaign Board" and they administered the accounts and administration. However, these exercises made the villagers as well as the organisation to improve their quality of work and also to establish an efficient administrative system.

During this period a variety of village development programmes established by the NBA ranged from agriculture and animal husbandry to village based industries such as light engineering. It was also an attempt to revive the old crafts and village based industries. For example, "Samapura Light Engineering Project" was an idea brought forward by the villagers themselves with NBA help and assistance from the Faculty of Engineering of the University of Peradeniya. This helped to revive the age old black smithic, introducing new techniques to produce agricultural implements which were cheaper, and better than what was available in the local market imported from outside. Setting up co-operatives, establishing a revolving fund for the use of the village black smithic and buying raw materials in bulk and selling the products direct to Colombo were some of the success stories. These efforts were taken to other areas in the country and directly channelled to the village based organisations giving great responsibility such as management skills to the villagers themselves.

Articles such as prunning knives, welded articles and products of refrigerator parts and certain items for the CEB were some of their achievements. The attempt was to generate more income in the villages and to prevent the draining of money outside Sri Lanka. There were also other benefits for the villagers. Mainly those who received training and who were more adventurous went out of the village and established their own welding units in urban areas and even in Mahaweli settlements. A few of them found employment in the Middle East and still few others were able to get into Technical Colleges and qualify and they even ended up

as Instructors in these institutes. The Industrial Development Board (IDB) also assisted in these training programmes. After a few years, electricity was made available and activities were improved and expanded. These experiences and efforts encouraged the NBA to set up more programmes in different centres in other parts of the country. However some of these attempts could be considered as failures to a certain extent.

The NBA had been very unfortunate in trying to develop certain field crafts such as pottery. There were 5 pottery projects during this period which were not as successful as anticipated. Attempts were also made during this period to revive farmer organisations, and cultivation of certain crops such as turmeric on a commercial scale. Curing methods were introduced and over a few years, it was successful. For example, the Ginger Growers' Association of Kegalle District had nearly 500 members. The programme was funded by donor agencies. This was a successful attempt to organise the farmers growing ginger and turmeric for their consumption who were scattered all over. Their produce were sold to the Cooperative establishments. The efforts and experience of this type of activity made the NBA to redesign some of its programmes and introduce marketing system in relevant areas.

The third phase of the NBA activities, began in 1980. During this period the NBA, with its experience and funds obtained from outside, launched projects which are environmentally suitable and economically viable. With nearly 18 to 20 years of involvement in rural development sector, a number of its members had the opportunity of working in other countries through various international programmes. There were also a large number of international volunteers coming from various organisations who were responsible for enriching the efforts of the NBA. There were more and more persons who could be classed as specialists who joined the Association. These attempts and efforts made the NBA earn a name among the NGOs as one of the best NGOs involved in certain specialised activities such as forestry and watershed management. There were new donors who were willing to fund the activities of the organisation which encouraged the NBA to take over large scale development programmes.

For example, in the field of forestry, the first attempt was to set up a small scale village level community forest at Mailapitiya in the Hanguranketha area in the year 1981. The challenges the NBA had to undergo, made the organisation to overcome them by setting up nearly 250 environment conservation committees in that part of the country. In 1981, the association trained some of its members to plant and handle a small plot of 27 acres mostly with

pinus plants provided by the Forest Department. The first experience gained was the objections raised by the local people for planting pinus closer to the village. This made the Association look for indigenous varieties and during 1982, the Association set up its own nurseries and expanded the activities with village participation to plant 500 acres. The following year this was increased to about 1000 acres and subsequently, the programme was expanded with a number of nurseries where women found employment and was able to provide plants for even other NGOs and Government Institutions, when the need arose.

Members of the organisation studied forestry and some of them even went to the extent of specialising in planting of certain plants such as bamboo. One of the programmes undertaken during this period was the establishment of the Minipe Right Bank Trans Basin Canal Conservation Forestry Project funded by USAID. This was an attempt to reforest all land in the environs of the Minipe Trans Basin Canal which is 38.9 km in length and covering an extent of 28824.5 acres. Techniques of training unemployed youth in the art of forestry, and talking the message of environment conservation to the villages through them were also introduced. After managing ththe planted areas for 3 years, the Association handed it over to the Forest Department. This particular project commenced in 1984 and was handed over after completion by the end of 1989, covering a period of 6 years. A small scale Forestry School was set up at Buddankotte mainly to train village youth in forestry and conservation. It is happy to note that some of the more enterprising leaders have joined the Forest Department and some of them have even gone to the extent of setting up their own nurseries.

In all, there were over 1300 full time participants in this project alone. The efforts and success stories of the Association under the forest and environment programmes made the Association to undertake a number of other forestry programmes with village participation. One of the most challenging programmes was the enrichment of national parks; the Maduru Oya and Wasgamuwa. The environment education for those living closer to those parks from the districts of Matale, Polonnaruwa and Ampara were also one of the highlights of this programme. A programme was also set up to open up nurseries by the Veddah community and get them involved in forestry and environment activities, particularly at the Maduru Oya National Park.

Another programme in environment conservation is the setting up of the Sloping Cultivation Training Centre for training village

farmers in cultivating sloping areas without damaging the hills. This is an attempt to train them in soil conservation and using new extension methods of soil and erosion and adopting suitable crops which will give a better income. The centre located at Bowlana is a motivation centre as well as an extension centre for womens' development.

In the field of water management and irrigation, a number of specialists who joined the NBA, have successfully shown the country that large scale irrigation schemes could be successfully revived through motivation and training farmers in water management. Most of these projects are located in the dry zone, both in the low country and hill country. This was an attempt to hand over the responsibility of system management to the farmers themselves and to introduce new crops for better income during the off seasons. During these years, some of the highlights of these programmes are the water management programmes implemented at Nagadeepa with the participation of nearly 2800 farmers and at Pimburattewa, and Hanguranketha (1300). The conflicts among farmers and government officials have been successfully solved and the management was taken over by the farmers themselves in addition to other benefits. These efforts were made by the NBA to bring 192 farmer leaders Nagadeepa, 173 at Pimburattewa and 414 at Hanguranketha. Now they are able to give leadership to others at village level for the organisation, implementation and development activities which have been to a great extent under efficient water management.

In all, under these three programmes mentioned above or 11,200 acres of land for which they could not obtain water have been successfully cultivated with farmers actively participating in water management.

This is a brief note and a few of the efforts among many made by the Nation Builders Association under village level development activities. During the last 25 to 27 years, the organisation has acquired a considerable amount of experience. It had its share of failures and successes and worries and difficulties. In a short note, and a note of this nature, it is extremely difficult to provide an account of cost and benefits on various projects which is different from place to place and project to project.

Chapter 3

NGOs AND THE JANASAVIYA

3.1 NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS AND THE JANASIVIYA PROGRAMME

L.S. Wettasinghe*

The Janasaviya Programme can be considered one of the most comprehensive and far sighted programmes ever launched for the alleviation of poverty in the recent past. We the Sinhala Kanthabhivurdhi Sanvidhanaya are proud to contribute to it in however minute, a degree, as our organisation too has as its main objective, the upliftmet of women in general and the betterment of the 'socio-economic outcast' in particular.

But before going on to the interaction of the NGOs and the Janasaviya, it is pertinent to probe into the cause of this Rural Poverty, and how it has come to such mammoth proportions. As we see it the main reason stems from the systematic alienation of land from the peasant. This process began with the foreign rulers, continued under subsequent governments and continues to date, in the recent past one can quote instances where Non-National Companies have been given licence to alienate land - the Uva Peasant has been their latest victim.

Then we have the reverse process where we get the alienation of the peasant from the land. The Sinhala peasant of the Eastern

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* Vice-President, Sinhala Kanthabhivurdhi Sanvidhanaya.

and Northern provinces had to flee for their very lives. They have not returned to their land as they have been told in no uncertain terms that they return at the peril of their very lives. They have not been given land but have been told in no uncertain terms to go back. Next we have the problem of the Southern border of the Northern Province. There are twenty eight Sinhala villages with 26,000 Sinhala people whose land is being systematically alienated from them. To these belong the Sinhala villages of the Vavuniya District where landlessness is acute. The government is perhaps not aware of the 'Rajadurai Alienations' by which the little land held by the Sinhala Peasant has been acquired by subversive planned encroachment by Tamils.

What is a 'Landless Peasant' today? He is even more ineffective than his own scarecrow in his erstwhile field!

The First Function of Then, NGO

Hence the first function of the NGOs will be to help assess the extent of landlessness among the rural poor and pressurise the government to allocate land to the peasant who lost all in the land alienation processes mentioned earlier. If their original lands could not be given back they could be given lands under the Mahaweli Project. This could be an extension of the Swarna Bhumi Project. This should have top priority with any government because optimum production will take place only if the peasant feels that the land he is cultivating is his. Moreover real production can take place and actual increase in the national product could only be through the agricultural sector. In a recent survey done by the Sinhala Kanthabhivurdhi Sanvidhanaya in several villages in the Hambantota district we observed that although the majority had selected projects to earn their moneys much of it could not be counted as any real production in actual terms. So we come back to the fact that actual production could only be land based.

As Funding Partner

The government's handout of 2500/- is inadequate for a Janasaviya recipient to launch a project of his choice. He or she needs further funding. They go to the banks for the additional funds. But some of the peasants do not qualify for loans. They go back disheartened. In such instances the NGOs if they have the wherewithal could help supplement loans to Janasaviya recipients. The Sinhala Kantha Sanvidhanaya involved itself along with the SANASA to help widows launch two agricultural projects in Vavuniya. The initial investment was made and the widows were left to proceed

with their project and a subsequent report revealed that they had made an 80% profit in their 'black gram cultivation project.'

The NGOs could also help by building wells, community halls and other amenities that would help the Janasaviya recipients, with their projects.

Help Select Programmes

An important aspect of the Janasaviya programme is that whatever programme is implemented should be in harmony with the geographical and cultural aspects of the region or community the project is launched in. In this field the NGOs can help research the various likes and dislikes or the suitability or otherwise of the projects mooted. Our society had to change a project when helping widows of the Anuradhapura district. The project was to rear goats. Fifty per cent of the widows were averse to it as it involved the slaughter of the animals. In such instances they have to be given alternative projects. The NGOs could make a valuable contribution.

Help Train Personnel

The most constructive contribution the NGOs can make is in the field of training personnel. The raw material is freely available. Our YOUTH do want to make a worthwhile contribution to the progress of the country. They need to acquire some skills in relation to the schemes launched. Whether it be simple manual skills, complicated technological skills or clerical, commercial or other skills the NGOs in conjunction with the state organisations can conduct schemes and programmes to train youth and involve them in the Jana Saviya Project. Our association recently helped train fifty young women in business entrepreneurship. This will go a long way to help them in the success of the scheme they hope to launch.

Peripheral Services

For the women to contribute in the fullest measure they have to be relieved of some of their most pressing domestic duties. These will involve the care of infants, pre-school children and elders. In this field the NGOs can contribute by organising and maintaining creches, pre-schools and homes for elders. These can be on a day care basis, which is more in keeping with the rural culture. In addition it will provide

employment for those not actively involved in the Janasaviya project.

NGOs as Liaising and Co-Ordinating Bodies

The NGOs not being bound by red tape as is the bureaucracy, can liaise more closely with the rural person who is used to the closer relationship of the village level official. They would talk more freely of their fears and aspirations with the NGO personnel as they are not part of the official set-up. In the Sinhala Kanthabhivurdhi Sanvidhanaya dealings with the rural people of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa we found that they expressed themselves very freely to our members. Any problems posed could be brought to the notice of Government Agents and redressed, or suitable action could be taken by both NGOs and GOs in close collaboration.

But for any such project to be successful it will need the fullest and closest co-operation of the GOs and NGOs at all levels from planning down to the last detail of its implementation. The NGOs themselves will have to have closer interaction among themselves and co-ordinate their various fields more closely if they are to make a worthwhile contribution to the national endeavour.

3.2 OUR EXPERIENCE ON SAVINGS AND CREDIT WITH RURAL COMMUNITIES

R.P. Wijewardane*

Redd Barna works in accordance with the declaration of the Rights of the Child as formulated by the General Assembly of the United Nations. Redd Barna is carrying out or supporting projects for children in over 20 different countries, including Norway. Redd Barna is politically and religiously neutral.

Those projects in developing countries are carried out in close co-operation with local authorities and with the people whom the organisation is attempting to assist. In Sri Lanka, we work under an agreement with the Ministry of Plan Implementation.

At present, we have projects or relief and rehabilitation offices administering and co-ordinating our community development and other activities. Including the field staff, the clerical and support staff, Pre-school Instructors, trainees and paid volunteers, Redd

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* Senior Programme Coordinator, Redd Barna Sri Lanka.

Barna has 536 personnel devoting time for the upliftment of the poorest of the poor in 184 villages. Another 250 persons have been engaged in Relief and Rehabilitation. We have estimated that on our community development work over the years, 13,400 families have benefited. Since 1980 an additional 3,500 families have been rehabilitated through our haousing and income generating programme. Summing up, we have assisted 24,400 poor families or 122,000 persons, not always with equal success, but at least in a process of learning which continually improves our performances.

Our undertaking with rural communities can be described as an integrated action programme. The chain of activities is interlinked between the Child and Parents, Village and Urban sectors, Primary Health/Nutrition and Income Generation, Sanitation and Housing etc. In this conference, I would rather concentrate on our experience in handling savings and credit.

For many years in our projects, we have implemented credit programmes which have functioned in various ways and with different degrees of success. When we decided it was time to reassess our approach to credit, we had the advantage of being able to tap the extensive field experience and solid insights of our staff members. As well, we have been very fortunate to learn from the experts of Grameen Bank, Bangladesh.

The process of reassessment has been lengthy and thorough. To be sure we prepared ourselves well for the task. In June 1987 a group of 07 staff members went on a study tour to learn about Grameen Bank and on return, delivered a favourable report regarding its potential for contributing to a reform of Redd Barna credit programme. In April 1988, another 11 staff members went and studied about Grameen Bank, each with the task of reporting on a particular field aspect of the Bank. The overall mandate of this group was to study the financial management of the Bank with the objective of making our own procedures more effective. Parallel to this, we engaged Professor K. Karunanayake and his team to evaluate two of our more successful credit programmes. The outcomes and recommendations of these reports and observations were discussed in length in our Senior Staff Seminars and agreed on modifications in the proposals made by the various actors in the reassessment process. Being thankful to all collaborators on this endeavour: the staff of Grameen Bank, Bangladesh, Consultants and Researchers and especially our own staff members who have contributed immensely, we were able to launch our Savings and Credit programme which is named "SAVECRED".

In the process of formulation of SAVECRED we emphasized, objectively, the following components.

The Failure of Rural Credit

It is a general experience in Sri Lanka that rural credit systems have not been appropriately designed to reach the poorest. What is lacking are, appropriate rules and an organisational framework that ensures accountability. It is Redd Barna's policy and goal to reach the poorest particularly women and children through its credit programme.

Access through Women

Women provide the best access to socio-economic development. On this assumption and in line with Redd Barna policy, 75% of all credit is to be given to women. It is not meant that men are excluded, but they do not assure the qualitative improvement in family life that women do, particularly in the areas of nutrition, health and education.

Youth

Lack of employment and training opportunities are the major issues faced by youth today. Credit is one of the ways to stimulate initiative among the poor youth who can earn an income to meet their educational expenses. Particularly in an overall development context, credit is seen as a means of establishing dignity and ambition in the lives of marginalised youth.

Money Economy

Like everyone else, the poorest people live in a money economy and are subject to its laws and limitations. The accumulation of resources and wise investment are pre-requisites for their progress. The ability to save is as important as the availability of credit.

Income Generation

Credit is a resource that should not be consumed. It must be utilised productively in individual or collective undertakings which can generate profitable income or it must directly improve the quality of life of the loanees in a manner which substantially increases their well-being and productivity.

Self-Sustaining Credit System

A loan is not a grant. A loan is money given on credit and must be repaid. A credit plan should be self-reliant. It must generate income for itself if it is to serve the poor in the future. Therefore, a credit system must charge interest or levy fees. Its income should be sufficient to cover the depreciation of its capital and cost of operation.

Type of enterprises, individual or collective: economic empowerment, participation, social organisation and Rules of the Game are the salient features in Savecred. Since this programme needs a lot of supervision and skills to handle in a progressive manner, the size of the programme, at the initial stage, is kept very small. It is also expected to do changes in rules and guidelines which are in use now, depending on the requirements.

Savecred provides opportunities for the communities to form Save the Children Centres of solidarity around economic issues. These Save the Children Centres also provide the poor with a forum where development issues can be discussed and decided on. Each such centre accumulates Savings in a "Children's Pre school and Welfare fund" for which Redd Barna also supports. This fund finances the operations of the Pre-school. A Save the Children Centre consists of six groups of Five members. Each group saves money in a group fund for mutual benefit of the group members.

Particulars of Funds Collected, Loans Disbursed and Repayments by the end of December 1989

Fund		Amount as at 31 December 1989
		Rs.
Group Fund		54,919.50
Children Preschool and Welfare Fund		30,082.50
Centre Fund		1,730.00
Loans Disbursed		452,070.00
Loans Repaid		174,925.00
Interest repaid on loans	35,510.00	
Emergency fund collected	8,910.00	
Sale of pass books	2,040.00	
Sale of badges	7,290.00	

The following are some key issues in Savecred operation.

* Each group should follow a 7 day advance training before joining in.
* Each centre should meet weekly in a formal meeting where all the cash transactions must be done.
* First loan is issued after two months of acceptance which is available for two members but not for the group leader.
* Repayment should commence on the following week itself, and can go on for 50 instalments maximum.
* Weekly contributions are to be paid by each member at weekly meetings.
* Loans to be invested within 14 days of receiving the cash.
* Maximum loan which can be approved by the project in-charge is Rs.5,000. When the amount exceeds this limit, prior approval must be obtained from Colombo.
* Once the members of the credit circle have received the individual loans in the first round they must form into the second round of the disbursement meeting to discuss the other development issues.
* The field officer should be present at the weekly meetings.

Conclusion

From the brief account given on the Savecred one can understand the measures taken by the Redd Barna to reach at the poorest of the poor in rural Sri Lanka. Taking the lessons learnt from similar activities undertaken by the other developing countries, Redd Barna has attempted to gain a discernible progress in the rural credit programme with its main focus on women and children. The simple reason is that these two categories are the most vulnerable to exploitations in very many ways. It is too early to draw a conclusion about the replicability of Savecred for which a critical evaluation study is needed.

Chapter 4

RURAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES OF NGOs

4.1 THE IMPACT OF FFHC ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Dunstan Fernando*

The Sri Lanka Freedom From Hunger Campaign (FFHC) is a statutory body functioning under the Ministry of Agricultural Development and Research. This Board was set up by an Act of Parliament in 1973. The main objectives of the Board are as follows:

(a) Co-ordination of and support to various non-governmental organisations.
(b) Implementation of its own projects.

From 1979 onwards more emphasis was given to the execution of FFHC's own operational projects such as Village Tank Renovation (VTR) projects and agro-based industries. Since the FFHC has ten years of experience in rural development, it is appropriate to evaluate the impact of its activities on rural development.

* Project Director, Sri Lanka National Freedom From Hunger Campaign Board.

VTR as Entry Point to Rural Development

The FFHC co-ordinates and promotes development projects through non-governmental agencies. It works mainly through the small farmer councils; Wew Sabhas which are the basic village level NGOs in the country. The FFHC focuses its attention on restoration of village tanks as its entry point to integrated socio-economic development and land reform in the dry zone villages. Sri Lanka has over 25,000 villages and more than 2/3 of the population live in village areas. The FFHC in its campaign to eradicate hunger of the villagers has concentrated its attention on the restoration of small village tanks with the physical and managerial support of the farmers to supply water for the cultivation of paddy and other food crops. At present 200 villages are getting the benefit of life through these assistance schemes. These schemes are located in the poorest and the driest parts of the country.

The FFHC field staff live in villages to work hand in hand with the small farmers in the restoration and repair of small tanks. The officers also help them to solve their problems relating to landlessness, agricultural development, unemployment, housing, education, health and sanitation.

The small farmer families comprising of about 30, work through an independent and self- reliant body called the Wew Sabha. These reservoir councils of farmers are solely responsible for identifying the socio-economic needs, planning a course of action to restore the abandoned village tanks, engaging manpower in these villages, effective use of water, developing cropping systems and crop calendars, using high yielding seed varieties, improving yields by the use of suitable fertilizer and scientifically sound methods appropriate to each agro-climatic zone.

The necessary motivation and initiative in the first instance technical know-how (irrigation and agriculture) will be provided by the FFHC. The FFHC works as a partner in development while the Wew Sabha members work full time as the chief producer.

Major Activities in Village Tank Renovation
Wewa Restoration:

The tanks that are in a state of deterioration needs rehabilitation to hold sufficient water to supply water at the rate of 3 acre feet for every cultivated acre of paddy. In reconditioning, the major activities involved will be:

i. Restoration of bunds to an average height of 9 ft. above spill level of sluices with rammed earth, shaped and turfed properly.

ii. Restoration of the sluices for controlled release of water for irrigation.
iii. Restoration of spill ways to control overflow of water during heavy rains.
iv. Restoration of the water distribution system to facilitate the proper and equitable distribution of water with a minimal loss.

Impact of VTR Projects

During the past ten years the FFHC has participated in renovating and restoring about two hundred small wewas (tanks), some in purana (ancient) villages and others in abandoned areas. In the latter areas, farmers have been practising shifting cultivation. This system has upset the ecological balance of the environment. The FFHC believes that this trend can be changed by the farmers themselves with a little guidance, training and some financial assistance. This is the background in which the FFHC works as partners with the farmer communities.

Agrarian Reform

The FFHC's VTR programme provides three and half (3 1/2) acres of land to each farmer family. These farmers have been landless in the past. This programme is, therefore a major step towards the Agrarian Reform.

(a) **Paddy land development:** The existing paddy fields have to be rebunded and new irrigable areas have to be developed for distribution among farmers at the rate of two (2) acres per family.
(b) **Homestead Gardens:** The FFHC assists the farmers to have a well-developed homestead garden with permanent crops, in addition to the vegetable crops. Each garden has to be encircled by a live fence.
(c) **Market Garden:** One acre of high land has been given to each family to grow subsidiary food crops. This area if properly cultivated will enable the farmers to earn a reasonable income and give up chena cultivation.
(d) **Environment Development:** As a result of the FFHC's land alienation policy, each farmer gets 3 1/2 acres of land. One of the objectives of the FFHC is to change chena cultivators to settled farmers. This land policy

helped to stop the slash and burn method up to some extent. In the past, there was scientifically acceptable system for demarcating village boundaries and the FFHC followed the same pattern. An average land distribution pattern of the "Wewa Village" is given below:

1/8 of the Village - Under bed of wewa
1/4 of the Village - Under irrigated paddy fields, Homestead Market gardens
1/4 of the Village - Under forest
3/8 of the Village - Under pasture and fruit trees.

This was a very stable land use pattern, ideal for a small village population and it was also in ecological balance with the environment.

Agricultural Extension

The FFHC has launched an effective agricultural extension service within its villages. A series of Farmer Trainings (Seminars, Workshops) and Demonstration plots, etc. were implemented under this programme in addition to the seminars of the Department of Agriculture. Under the Siyambalanduwa VTR Project (Moneragala district), 291 acres of paddy fields have been alienated among the Wew Sabha Members. Out of these paddy lands 132 acres have been cultivated with paddy during 89/90 Maha season. This is nearly a 45% achievement when compared with the total command area. Therefore, the contribution to the National Economy from those VTR projects should be studied.

Siyambalanduwa Project (Moneragala District)
Paddy Cultivation - 1989/1990 Maha

Name of Tank	Command area (acres)	Paddy cultivation (acres)	Paddy Demonstration (acres)
Morawa Wewa	14	06	-
Telulle Wewa	28	06	-
Galkanda Wewa	17	08	-
Sarabumi Wewa	31	05	-
Galabandipitiya	19	18	-
Dambegasara	30	07	1/4
Kongaha Wewa	24	03	1/4
Meeyaketiara	40	27	1/4
Nuga Wewa	32	13	1/4
Havanpitiya	34	30	-
Terala Wewa	22	09	-
Total	291	132	01

Non-Farm Rural Activities

The FFHC involvement with these village communities does not end with the restoration of the wewa and its irrigation system. It is a continuous effort to ensure rural development by using locally available resources.

Other Income Generating Projects

The FFHC has observed the possibility of starting income generating projects in these villages. Necessary assistance have been extended to entrepreneurs to start agro-based industries and livestock projects.

Craft

Arrangements have been made to implement handicraft industries in Karuwalagaswewa Project area. We found that the

raw materials such as rash and reed, coir and cane are available in this area. The FFHC with the assistance of the Ministry of Rural Industrial Development has taken steps to start several cottage/craft industries by using under utilized resources in the project area.

Improved Marketing

The FFHC has studied the existing marketing pattern within the area and found that the farmers do not get a reasonable price for their products. It is observed that the "fair ring system" is still operating in Siyambalanduwa area. By considering these factors the FFHC has launched a programme to educate farmers on the Marketing of their products. In the same time, arrangements have been made to organise farmers (within the villages) into small groups in order to get better prices.

Rural Youth on Change Agents

The FFHC has encouraged rural youth to participate in village development activities. These youths have been trained to work as change agents in the village. Lot of efforts have been made to give them self-reliance so that they would carry out the development process of their village in future, without the presence of the FFHC.

Women's Participation

In the FFHC VTR programme, men and women are treated as equals. A woman can be a member of a Wew Sabha. There is a Wew Sabha in Waguruwela Project, where the president is a woman and women members predominate.

In another VTR project at Meegaswewa, a group of thirty six women started to restore a reservoir. The AGA of the area supported them. The president and all office bearers of the Wew Sabha consisted of women. They have done a good job by constructing the bund, four metres in height and half a Kilometre in length.

A special programme was launched to train young girls in the Waguruwela project in sewing work. Several sewing machines were supplied by the FFHC. In addition, girls of the Waguruwela were sent for training in social work at the Kaduwela Training Centre. Now they are serving the community.

Health and Welfare Projects

Girandurukotte - System "C": The Health and Welfare project within System "C" of the Accelerated Mahaweli Development Scheme was started in 1982, with the supply of two Jeeps and an Ambulance. This Project is funded by the European Economic Community. System "C" comprises of about 16,000 hectares of irrigable lands with 12164 farmer families and 234 non-farmer families, by the end of November, 1986.

Tantirimale : The Health Clinic was started in November 1988 at Tantitimale Project site. This project is funded by W.P. Schmitz, Stifting, West Germany. The Clinic functions on every Friday. The Medical Officer (AMP) of the Mahawilachchiya Dispensary works here on a voluntary basis and an allowance is being paid for his services. This clinic provides a valuable service to poor farmers in and around the area.

Sponsorship Scheme

In addition to this regular contribution of Sponsorship funds, some Foster parents send gifts and additional funds to their Sponsored children on special occasions such as birthdays and Christmas. Very often they maintain personal contact by regular correspondence. This contact has proved to be very effective particularly to the orphans as it gives them a feeling of security, something more than the general attention given by the staff of the Home. Some Foster parents even make special trips to Sri Lanka to see their Sponsored children and others when in Sri Lanka never fail to visit the children in the Homes.

The Children's Homes and the number of children assisted in each Home under Foster parent scheme are:

1	Anula Wijerama Children's Home - Balapitiya	27
2	Avanthidevi Children's Home - Anuradhapura	19
3	Buddha Jayanthi Children's Home - Kegalle	31
4	Child Protection Society Children's Home - Rukmale	30
5	Gangodawela Children's Home - Nugegoda	73
6	Hindu Board of Education - Jaffna	24
7	Jayawickrama Children's Home - Kadugannawa	10
8	Dr. & Mrs. B.S. Jayawardena Children's Home - Ja-Ela	29
9	Jayanthi Children's Home - Paiyagala	30
10	Kumarakasyapa Children's Home - Kalapaluwawa	31
11	Lamagramaya Children's Home - Hanwella	69

12	Lawris Children's Home - Maradana	10
13	Maithree Children's Home - Borella	31
14	Maliyadewa Children's Home - Kurunegala	17
15	Orphanage for Handicapped Children - Wattegama	24
16	Sivirajah Andha Nivasaya - Manawewa	35
17	Viharamahadevi Children's Home - Biyagama	31
18	Vijitha Balika Children's Home - Beruwela	11
19	Wijewardena Children's Home - Panadura	50
20	D.P. Wijesinghe Children's Home - Induruwa	44
21	Sri Lankadhara Children's Home - Wellawatta	96

Nutrition Voucher Scheme

Under this scheme, the donors in West Germany contribute funds only towards the feeding of children in a Home to ensure that the children receive adequate quantities of nutritious food, without undertaking the responsibility of sponsoring a particular child. For this purpose they contribute DM 180 per nutrition voucher per year that is about Rs.3250/- per year.

Children's Homes assisted under this scheme are:

		No. of nutrition Vouchers
1	Asoka Boys Home - Anuradhapura	35
2	Diyagala Boys Town - Ragama	210
3	Gothama Boys Home - Panadura	42
4	Jagathdala Boys Home - Kidelpitiya	31
5	Keerthi Children's Home - Rambukkana	40
6	Kelaniya Y.M.B.A. Children's Home - Kadawata	24
7	Matara Keerthi Kumara Children's Home - Matara	35
8	Pradeepaloka Children's Home - Matale	26
9	Ramakrishna Mission Boys Home - Batticaloa	19
10	Ramakrishna Mission Sarada Girls Home - Batticaloa	07
11	Ramakrishna Mission Girls Home - Karativu	05
12	Roman Catholic Girls Home - Ilavalay	28
13	Sarana Sevana Children's Home - Mavilmada	24
14	Singithi Sevana Children's Home - Kandy	16
15	Sri Shanmuga Trust Homes - Trincomalee	45

Eradication of Poverty and Hunger

The Village Community Rehabilitation Programme was directed at the rural poor living in the regions of the Dry Zone. This programme endeavours to see farmers producing food for themselves at first instance. In doing so, they may have surplus food which they could sell and earn money to meet the other requirements.

The process of rehabilitation of small reservoir village community (rural development) involves many disciplines ranging from organising farmers, formation of viable rural communities, ecological land use planning, agriculture, social welfare, marketing, training of youths, rural employments, health and nutrition. The impact of the FFHC in rural development can be gauged by studying its "Total Approach System" on Wewa Village Communities.

4.2 IMPROVEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES THROUGH NGOs

W.A. Jayawardena*

The subject assigned to me -- 'Improvement of Educational Facilities through NGOs' -- covers two vast subject areas, namely -- Education and Non-Governmental Organizations. Both subjects apart from their very wide scope, share the characteristic that they have no universally accepted precise definition. One could even say that they defy such precision.

The very abstract nature of the topic, and the limited time assigned for the presentation, makes it necessarily brief. I propose therefore to confine myself to the ideas that have emerged during the seminar through presentations and discussions, and also to share some of my own thoughts with you.

The phrase 'Non-Governmental Organization', or its more popular acronym, NGO, is a relative term. In fact, it is a rather negative term in that it implies an absence of qualities. As seen in UN documentation, it is of comparatively recent origin, used to distinguish between government organizations and others engaged in social development activities. Traditionally, social welfare has been the concern of community-based non-profit making voluntary organizations. However, with changing concepts of growth and equity, and the accent on social justice, social welfare has become a major concern of governments.

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In his brief introduction, the Director, ARTI, DEFINED AN NGO as, "any non-governmental organization which is engaged in community-based, service-oriented and/or development-oriented activities without a profit motive, and with the underlying objective being service".

To define Education, or to circumscribe its boundaries is more difficult. We are familiar with the terms 'informal' and 'non-formal' education, that are currently being used on the premise that education is primarily formal. In other words, formal education is institutionalized education imparted at elementary, secondary and tertiary levels, either through government or government-aided institutions, with approved curricula and syllabi. Education, however, cannot be confined to the limited formalized system of these institutions, although the need and importance of such formal education cannot be over-emphasized.

The area of education which is outside this strait-jacket is commonly referred to as 'informal' or 'non-informal' education. While many characteristics of non-formal education are being increasingly absorbed into the formal education system, NGOs remain, by and large, the principal disseminators of non-formal education.

For man's development as an individual and for the fulfilment of his role as a member of the community to which he belongs, and for his own career upliftment provided by the formal system, he goes through a continuous process of educating himself.

To quote a common definition, "Education is the aggregate of all the processes by means of which a person develops abilities and attitudes and other forms of behaviour of positive values in the society in which he lives." It is in this process of acquisition of knowledge that the NGOs can be mobilized to play a unique and unparalleled role.

The normal tendency in analysing the phrase, "improvement of facilities" in this context, would be to deal with physical or infrastructural facilities that require improvement for their better performance. I do not propose to deal with this aspect except by way of a passing reference. To my mind, the more important and tangible improvements needed are in strategies to make the role of NGOs more relevant and meaningful. This is especially so when there is an increasing recognition of NGOs as partners in community development.

The complementary and supplementary role played by NGOs in providing educational facilities particularly in the non-formal sector are too well known to bear repetition.

The Honourable Minister, in his keynote address, not only emphasized the government's recognition and acceptance of this

important supportive role, but also declared its intention to make greater use of such support by NGOs. He said that government could not and should not attempt to perform such a function itself. Taking an example from his own Ministry, he stated that the Cooperative Movement is to be converted into a non-governmental organization in the hope that it could function more effectively in such a capacity.

An important outcome of the discussions was the consensus on the need to strengthen the mutual understanding, the rapport, the cooperation that the NGOs have with the government. At the same time NGOs should not be subjected to the control and dictates of the government. While the practicability of not being out of step with government policies should be borne in mind, NGOs should maintain their independence to criticize these policies where necessary. This is rather a precarious balance to maintain.

One of the methods suggested was the creation of a forum to interact with government agencies; a measure intended to establish greater understanding and mutual confidence among the NGOs themselves, and thus improve relationships among them.

An immediate advantage would be the sharing of experiences and the pooling and harnessing of scarce resources and expertise. This would in turn minimize duplication and waste. The desired goal is to strengthen the NGOs, and bring the several umbrealla organizations that exist today into a loose-knit Federation, in which individual NGOs would not lose their identities. An organization such as a Federation would in addition to providing a forum for interaction, provide facilities for the improvement and more effective functioning of individual NGOs.

I refer to the facilities that can be provided for secretarial and clerical assistance, correspondence, sales outlets for publications and other infrastructural support on a non-profit basis, in addition to providing advisory services. Although some steps have been taken in this direction by one or two organizations, the impact has been minimal. Therefore, the need for strengthening and coordinating of such facilities is now being increasingly felt.

Another improvement is the greater utilization of NGOs as path-finders and innovators in which role the government organizations with their restrictions and hide-bound regulations find themselves crippled. Comparative independence, a sense of commitment, flexibility, low-cost management style and the capacity to reach the disadvantaged groups make them more efficient conduits for development inputs. These are attributes which government organizations would do very well to emulate.

Rapid technological advancement and its impact on the life of the individual and the community resulting in the erosion of

cultural and social values is a possible threat. The "nuclear families" of the West are already on our doorsteps as it were, and bound to surface in our society in the not too distant future. NGOs could perhaps concentrate on arresting these symptoms and in restoring time-tested value systems, and educating the community to adapt them to be in harmony with the changing society. As the formal education system is geared towards academic achievements it cannot adequately focus on the preservation of social values. This is an area where NGOs can play a major role.

Another area which at present is not adequately looked after either by the formal system or by NGOs, is the improvement of vocational skills. Large numbers of youth leave the formal school system, to enter the job market. Vocational skills training is imperative to enable them to fit into the world of work. Most of the organizations which provide such training are city-based.

At a time when the country is facing ethnic conflicts and youth unrest, peace education should help to bring about social harmony. Parental education and family counselling are also areas that NGOs could look into more effectively.

Extension services in the fields of health, agriculture, and so on, provided by the State, do not adequately reach the rural masses. These services could be supplemented by NGOs.

One of the most innovative and hopeful programmes where a fundamental change is envisaged in the socio-economic structure is the government-sponsored JANASAVIYA or the Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP). The Commissioner underlined the fact that the success of the scheme depended on the participation of the NGOs in providing what he called the 'secondary support lines' -- viz. credit, training, marketing, primary health care, etc. These have been the areas in which NGOs have been involved for several decades.

Whatever one's personal views of the programme may be, considering the impact on the community at large, the involvement and participation of NGOs is a much desired and timely contribution. As the Commissioner readily conceded to a suggestion made by one of the participants, NGOs being popular or grassroots organizations, with their wide practical experience can be effective in identifying the shortcomings and problems in the implementation of the programme. NGOs can spell out possible remedies for overcoming these problems.

NGOs should also be watchful of the international trends and emphasis on developmental projects. As partners of world-wide programmes, the resulting contributions become all the more meaningful and relevant and provides better opportunities even for

the purpose of obtaining funds. Three such programmes are: "Health for All by the Year 2000"; "Education for All by the Year 2000"; and the "International Literacy Year" (which is likely to be extended to an "International Literacy Decade").

In conclusion may I refer to the organization which I represent, the National Association for Total Education (NATE), a comparatively young Colombo-based organization which is decentralizing its activities. Ten branch organizations are in the process of being formed in 10 Administrative Districts. NATE has conducted several educational programmes which are being constantly renewed.

A programme on "Training of Trainers" which was originally centered in Colombo has now become decentralized, with the onus on the district organizations to conduct this programme.

Although decentralization comes with the attendant evils of the lowering of standards, yet the consensus has been that the objective of the training would not have been achieved if it had continued to be handled by a few professionals in Colombo. The opportunity provided to the trainers to train others and draw on local expertise and resources easily compensates any such initial loss of standards. Our training programme would not have achieved its objective if it had failed to train personnel capable of sharing their training. We consider it a step in the right direction. After 5 years of the programme, with only minor changes in between, a major departure is now contemplated with emphasis on —

1) management of village based small-scale NGOs which have neither permanent infrastructure facilities nor full-time or even part-time staff;
2) communal and community harmony and prevention of the violation of human rights which has affected the very fabric of the life of the community;
3) introducing locality-based self-employment and income-generating activities — new ones as well as the improvement of existing ones.

Very few publications begun by NGOs even as annuals, have been able to survive. Many of them have stopped being published due to factors such as the high cost of production and limited sales. However, it is a matter for record that a journal devoted to adult education is now in its sixth year of publication. This contains articles abstracted from English language journals, which are of relevance to us.

A publication fund has been established out of grants initially received for this purpose from an international organization. To

those of us who have little or no access to the wealth of material published in English, this journal serves the purpose of being able to have at least a nodding acquaintance with a vast reservoir of knowledge. This publication is sold at cost price, and we believe that with better facilities for circulation, it could have a much larger readership.

My attempt has been to spell out the role that NGOs can play in educating the community and to indicate some directions in which improvements can be made to make this role more effective. The unparalleled understanding that NGOs possess of local institutions and the socio-cultural environment; as well as the unique position it holds in supplementing the government's efforts should be enhanced and strengthened for the greater good of the community.

4.3 FPA'S EFFORT FOR IMPROVEMENT OF COMMUNITY AND FAMILY HEALTH THROUGH FAMILY PLANNING

Daya Abeywickrema*

The Family Planning Association (FPA) was initiated in 1953 by a band of volunteers whose main concern was to show the value of family planning in improving the health standards of the mother and child. At that stage family planning which was called 'birth control' was something that most people did not welcome in this country. The Government itself was rather undecided as to the need for family planning and therefore did not consider it important to be a part of any government programme either from the point of view of health or the demographic situation.

The family planning movement in the world grew very fast from early 1950s and by mid 60s most of the countries of the world had recognised the need for family planing. The government of

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Sri Lanka also recognised this field and initiated introducing family planning into the health programme in the mid 60s. The Association by this time had joined the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) and begun to receive international funds for expanding family planning work in the country. The main programme of the Association at this stage was to initiate clinics in all parts of the country which would provide services for the different family planning methods. In 1965 the Government took over the clinics operated by the FPA and introduced family planning as a part of the Ministry of Health activities setting up the Family Health Bureau. Today the government programme is carried out as a part of maternal and child health and is implemented by the Ministry of Health through the health infrastructure of the country. The Association continues its work as a private non-governmental organisation mainly to promote family planning and service availability through non clinical activities.

Objective

The primary objective of the Association's current programme is to promote family planning as a health intervention, which could improve the health of the mother and child and the general health of the family by supplementing and complimenting the activities of the government in providing services for family planning to those who desire to plan their family on a voluntary basis.

Activities of the FPA

a. To contribute to the effectiveness of the National Family Health Programme through information, education, communication and training activities designed to mobilise community participation in promoting family planning with emphasis on women's development, provide education in population, family life and human sexuality to young people and provide knowledge and skills in the delivery of family planning services to staff and volunteers of the Association as well as personnel of other organisations including government agencies.
b. To increase and sustain acceptance and practice of family planning by participating in research activities of institutions with expertise in this field, and, demonstrating the safety and efficacy of modern contraceptive methods through the Association's Family Health Research Centre.
c. To make contraceptives conveniently available in both urban and rural areas through a network of retail outlets and community level volunteers.

d. To provide specialised services in reproductive health such as treatment of subfertility, recanalisation, STD's and other types of services related to marital and sexuality-related problems.
e. To broaden the base of organisational support to the National Family Health Programme through activities designed to integrate family planning with other development programmes either through collaboration with or assistance to other non-governmental organisations and governmental agencies.
f. To conduct fund raising activities to increase the financial resources of the Association.
g. To maintain performance standard of the Association through periodic evaluation of the Association's programmes in addition to regular monitoring of projects of the Association.

The Main Programmes of the Association

Model Clinic and Training Centre : The Association runs two clinics, one at Bullers Lane, Colombo and another clinic in Kandy at Buwelikada. The clinic in Colombo serves approximately 40,000 clients a year and offers all methods of family planning, both permanent and spacing. It also serves as a Training Centre for Medical Officers in sterilisation techniques and other methods of family planning.

A major function of this clinic today is to conduct research on the use of different methods of contraceptives, specially where new contraceptives are to be introduced into the country. The Association pioneered the use of Depo Provera, the three monthly injectable in the country and in 1985 introduced Norplant for the new 5 year contraceptive for women by conducting clinical trials on the use of this new method. Today Norplant is approved by the government and very soon it will be available within the government programme in all parts of the country.

The clinical programme has also played a major role in introducing Reproductive Health Education to school children and adolescents. In this programme the Association has done a national survey on the knowledge level of Sri Lankan youth on reproductive health and based on their findings carries out a number of activities to improve the knowledge of young people on human reproductive health education.

Contraceptive Retail Sales Programme : A major activity of the FPA is to increase the availability of contraceptives such as orais, condoms, vaginal foam tablets and Depo Provera, the 3 monthly injectable through the government sector. In this programme the

Association is marketing different types of contraceptives, e.g. orals under the name of Mithuri, condoms under the name of Preethi, Hugger, Rough Rider, Panther through commercial outlets such as pharmacies, general stores and other convenient outlets where public could purchase these contraceptives at a reasonable price. At present, it handles about 80% of the condoms market, 50% of the pill market and 100% of the foam tablet market. These contraceptives are sold at a highly subsidised price by the Association but slightly a higher price than what is being sold by the government in its clinical programme. The income from the sales are used for the expansion of the programme in other areas as well as for making them more accessible to the people.

Population and Reproductive Health Education for Youth : The young people occupy a large portion in our population today. The Association recognises the need to introduce the subject of population to the young generation to make them conscious of the need to have more population planning in the country. The programme is designed to educate them on the demographic situation, the need to understand the link between population and development and to provide opportunities for young people to learn about reproductive health. The programme is carried out extensively through schools selected by a group of young people who work as the FPA's young group.

Rural Motivational Programme : The largest programme within the Association today is the Rural Family Health Programme which is designed to educate people on family planning so that they would have the right knowledge to choose methods of family planning suitable for them. In this programme the Association has set up District Action Committees in all the administrative districts of Sri Lanka consisting of volunteer leaders from the different districts. These Committees select 10 villages per district each year to educate the people of those villages on different aspects of family planning. A more detailed description of this programme will appear later.

Researche : An important aspect of the FPA's activities is to conduct research on the use of different types of contraceptives as well as socio-economic impact of the programme it undertakes and continue to carry out research on these two aspects.

Funding : The Association's major source of funding for its activities is the IPPF. However, it also generates a large sum of money

from local sources through Contraceptive Retail Sales by charging for the clinical services, donations, and other fund raising activities. During the last 5 years our expenditure has been,

	Rs.
1985	17,574,041
1986	23,132,557
1987	20,761,307
1988	23,206,680
1989	23,481,424

Community Participation

During the last 10 years the Association has taken many steps to redesign this programme so that we could involve the community in taking family planning to the people. In order to achieve this objective, the Association designed its village level programme under the title "Community Managed Integrated Rural Family Health Programme". The main emphasis in the new design was to hand over the management of the programme at the grass roots level, to the community itself. The Association established a three tire committee structure for this purpose.

National Level : At the National Level a committee consisting of well motivated educated volunteers were banned together to be in overall charge of the entire national programme. The Committee meets once a month and approves the action programme designed at the district and grass roots level. Further the committee has the responsibility for approving the funds needed for the programme and wherever possible to assist the Association in collecting funds for future activities. They have representation at the national policy making body of the Association, the National Council and the Chairman of the Committee is a member of the National Council as well as the Executive Committee of the Association.

District Level : At the District Level, a District Action Committee (DAC) is formed once again consisting of volunteers from the district itself and representatives from the villages where the FPA functions. The DAC has a responsibility of drawing up the district programme and working with the Committees at the village level in implementing the programme. They are fully authorised to disburse the funds that are allocated to the districts. They also have the right to select various villages where they should work and to represent

at the Government Population Committee which is chaired by the Government Agent of the District. The Chairman of the DAC is a member of our National Council and therefore has the opportunity of bringing the district's view point on the different aspects of the programme to the policy making body of the Association.

Grass Roots Level Action Committee (GRLAC) : In every village where the Association works, a Committee consisting of opinion leaders of the village is formed GRLAC. This Committee is the body that has a full responsibility to implement the village level programme and to mobilise community participation for the success of the programme.

Methodology of Working at the Village Level

The Association normally selects 250 villages per year from the 24 Administrative Districts. The size of each of these villages will be approximately 250-300 homes. Once the village is selected the GRLAC is formed and this committee is given the responsibility of selecting volunteers from the village who could educate the public and mobilise their support for the family planning programme. Since the subject of family planning is not always well known the GRLAC initiates its activities by associating itself with development activities within the village and often it is a Shramadana work. The members of the action committee and the volunteers are thereafter given training on aspects of programme implementation and community mobilization. They are also requested to do a study on the needs of the village in terms of family planning and to identify the couples who will form the target group for further education on family planning and to identify some activities in which the Association could be involved in order to win the support of the villagers for the activities of the FPA. Therefore, the volunteer groups selected are given a 3 day training on what is family planning, how to communicate family planning, and where they should refer the villagers who accept family planning for further instructions. This training also provides opportunity for volunteers to learn about nutrition, sanitation, and general family health. The volunteers are thereafter paired and allocated a certain number of homes where they should do home visiting and talk to the clients so that they could educate them and help them to choose a method of their own choice. Those who are willing to accept a suitable method of family planning are then referred to a government clinical programme for services.

The Association remains actively involved in this programme in any given village for a period of 2 years. Thereafter the volunteers who were trained are expected to continue their work if they were to identify any new couples who need family planning education.

Profile of the Volunteers

The volunteers who have been actively participating in this programme have been educated youth between the ages of 18 and 28 who desire to contribute their personal time for the improvement of their village. All of them work on a voluntary basis. The only incentive that they receive is the three day training programme.

So far, the Association has trained 21228 volunteers during the last 5 years, while a total of approximately 45,000 volunteers were trained throughout this effort. The type of programmes conducted for the volunteers were; orientations, refresher, skill training, leadership training, active volunteer work/s, welfare societies and field days/conventions. The effort of the Association to provide the training for these volunteers has not only benefited us in terms of conducting a well organised programme but also the Association has been able to leave behind a group of young, talented, educated service minded people with a valuable amount of information on general health, family planning, sanitation, nutrition and environmental issues who will use their knowledge and skills for the development of their villages.

Under the programme a variety of activities such as village leaders' seminars, Religious/Shramadana/New Year Programmes, Health clinics, Nutrition programmes, Adult education programmes and Opinion leaders' seminars were organised within the villages to help the community. Some of these programmes were designed to improve the quality of life of the community through education and did not relate to family planning programmes. The most striking feature of these programme has been the willingness to participate and the desire to learn more on the part of the community. The Association has always been a success in all the villages while the only problem being lack of funds to increase participation and to extend the programmes to a larger group.

Programmes for Other Agencies and Officials

It has been observed by the Association that when working at the community level it is of great importance to be linked and closely associated with other non governmental agencies as well as with officials who work alongside the community. We have always recognised that if we are to get proper benefit of the expenditure we incurred in the village level activities the support and the participation of government officials as well as the people who lead other agencies are of utmost importance. Our programmes have been addressed to a number of different types of officials of whom school teachers have been the largest group. Since schools play a very important role in the village and the teachers are often the opinion leaders, the Association has taken great pains to involve them in our work.

Motivational Programmes

It must be mentioned here that our primary function in designing this programme has been to motivate people to accept family planning. At the present time our emphasis is more on spacing methods since we feel that Sri Lanka having a young population, spacing methods must be given high priority. It is a well known fact that when it comes to family planning the male has always taken the back seat. It is the mothers who are very concerned and who seem to feel that the burden is on them. We therefore have conducted a large number of programmes for mothers where we work. These programmes have always been very well attended and according to the participants, their knowledge in relation to looking after children, sanitation, immunisation, nutrition, etc. have improved as a result of such programmes.

The success of our programme depends mainly on the willingness of our volunteers to contribute their valuable time on a voluntary basis. However, we believe that they also need to be well motivated once they have come into the programme and whenever possible should be exposed to other programmes of this nature. In order to give them this opportunity the Association has organised an exchange programme for volunteers from one district to visit another district and see for themselves how other volunteers work. This effort also has made a great contribution to the improvement of the programme.

Contribution of the FPA in Family Planning

The field volunteers maintain a record book giving the details of hours of work they have done each month. In order for the Association to see whether volunteers are regularly involved we collect monthly reports from them to see how many hours of work they have contributed. As seen from the above chart during the last 5 years, our volunteers have contributed 3,121,320 man hours and have been able to motivate 105,550 new acceptors to use a method of family planning.

In each of the districts a Programme Manager is responsible for organising the volunteer programme. At the central level there is a Director responsible for field programmes who also has the support of four Assistant Directors and three Operational Managers. All these personnel have been given training in their duties and the outputs expected. One might state that we have been very lucky to have a highly motivated young band of graduates who have worked extremely well to make this programme a success.

4.4 COTTAGE INDUSTRIES AND WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT

Gladys Abeysekera*

The Lanka Mahila Samiti (LMS) which was founded in 1930 was the brain child of Dr. (Mrs.) Mary Rutnam, a Canadian by descent, who during her health work with the medical services in rural areas realised, the great hardships and deprivations the rural women and children suffered. She decided to alleviate poverty from their midst by forming a net work of Mahila Samiti's in the rural areas, so that rural members could have access to the amenities of life the basic needs which would give them a chance of a decent living. To this end a band of energetic women Miss Cissy Cooray, Mrs. F.B. de Mel, Lady de Soysa, Lady Vaithianathan, and Mrs. N.S. Perera (among a host of others) established the first Women's Institute in 1930 and called it the Lanka Mahila Samiti. This was just one year before the Department of Rural Development came into existence.

The first ever Mahila Samiti was formed at Pannipitiya, a hamlet in Maharagama - and within one year of its establishment 12 branch samiti had got off the ground in many villages of Sri Lanka. Their primary objective was to develop the personality

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* President, Lanka Mahila Samiti.

of the rural women by improving their living conditions irrespective of race, creed or community or to improve the overall quality of life of rural women and children.

The Association was incorporated by an Act of Parliament in 1947 and the LMS Ordinance of 2nd July 1947 came into being. LMS was later declared an Approved Charity and was registered with the Department of Social Services. It is also affiliated to the World's International Body of Rural Women called the Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW) based in Great Britain and fall in line with its aims and objectives, while preserving its own identity. Our members attend the Triennial Conference of this Association and have secured the first place as a member of Honour for Lady de Soysa and twice as Area Vice Presidents for South Asia by Mrs. F.B. de Mel and Mrs. Violet Rajapaksa respectively.

The LMS is governed by a Central Board consisting of 29 members - 9 of these members are elected annually by a secret ballot of the rural samitis and also the Associate membership. The President and Vice President are elected from these, nine others are Provincial Representatives, two are co-opted members and two represent the Girl Guides and the Chief Organisers of the Association. The other seven are Representatives of Government departments with whom we work in close liaison such as the Ministries of Health, Agriculture, Women's Affairs, Small Industries, etc.

Seven of the nine elected members of the Executive Committee of the LMS meet fortnightly, in order to review the day to day problems of the Association. The Central Board, however, conducts quarterly meetings at which important issues are discussed.

The Aims and Objectives of our Association are:

(1) raising of health and educational standards
(2) advancement of all aspects of family living
(3) encouragement of agricultural pursuits
(4) promotion of civic responsibility and qualities of leadership
(5) promotion of handicrafts and other traditional skills
(6) encouragement of social service, thrift and co-operative enterprise.

Our branch societies increased rapidly and we have registered nearly 2900 samitis throughout the island. But owing to lack of close supervision, inadequate transport facilities, limited funds and (Rs. 50;000/- and now Rs. 100,000/- annually for over 25 years) inability to pay a decent salary to the field workers, the number of societies has dropped to nearly a thousand. Rural women were

open to a wealth of information from our Extension Workers and our Honorary Organisers. Consequently there was a cry for quick income-generating short term projects which could improve their living conditions.

Today a Mahila is no longer merely the wife of a farmer or an estate labourer, but a president, a secretary or a demonstrator in basket weaving, sweet making, etc. and also an entrepreneur a business woman capable of providing work for others, while engaging in a business of her own with self reliance. This is a part of women in development which we have achieved through the ages. It is partly on this strengthened foundation that many NGOs are building up new vistas today.

Now let us trace the manner in which LMS has maintained its grass-root level contact with the rural samiti upto date.

It was the wise fore-thought of Miss Cissy Cooray of Panadura, a dedicated founder member of our Association that realised the need for a national training centre for rural women with residential facilities. After successful completion of their training the trainees were bound in honour, and in a spirit of self-sacrifice to share their knowledge and expertise with the group of samiti which sent them up for training to Kaduwela.

So we set up a 3 tier panel of rural mahilas who would work in their samitis in a voluntary capacity as Swechcha Sevikas. They were given training in leadership, agriculture and home economics which embraced a wide range of subjects. The more skilled Swechcha Sevikas were given a further training and sent out as Gramasevikas paid by the Parent Association to be in charge of a cluster of samitis (5 or 6) in their own areas. These were in turn supervised by a Parikshana Sevika who was in charge of an Assistant Government Agent's (AGA's) division and was in duty bound to supervise at least 10 to 15 samitis. They taught handicrafts in the villages, did house to house surveys and advised villagers on good house-keeping, drinking boiled water, cultivation of home gardens with compost manure, preparation of nutritious food to form a balanced diet, mother and child care, thrift and co-operative enterprise thus building up a close rapport with the rural members. Parikshana Sevikas attended some of the monthly meetings conducted by villagers in order to discuss and find solutions to the problems and constraints they face at home and at village level and finally a need assessment is carried out in a simple way. This was long before the more sophisticated methodology of project formulation was introduced to LMC with all its numerous technicalities.

Consequently rural mothers (some of whom even attended adult education classes and were given a taste of literacy) began to realise the need for day-care centres where they could leave their children safely so that they could earn something to supplement their husband's meagre income. Miss Cissy Cooray with much foresight saw this need and set up a number of Day-Care Centres in 1945 not as isolated units, but as an integral part of the local samiti in the interests of the rural children.

One of the SLMC trainees followed a training course conducted by the Department of Education and on her return held training classes for Palikas or Nursery school teachers. Now we have 132 such centres all over the country, 70 of these are registered with the Department of Probation and Child Care and the remaining 62 are supervised by the LMS. However, we are reluctant to undertake the opening up of more centres with the meagre resources at our command, even though assisted in kind by UNICEF or Save the Children's Fund U.K. At present a resident training class for 20 Palikas is in session at our National Training Centre. This is preceded by a course in nutrition conducted for Assistant Palikas or nursery school teachers. Even during early times we have had specialists in the fields of nutrition, soft toy making, family health and handicrafts from Japan, India, Britain and the West to give our mahilas the necessary training.

"We need better paid, better trained teachers to guide the destinies of these toddlers who will be the citizens of tomorrow" said one of our Indian Educationists, Mrs. Shukla who came here to evaluate pre-school work in Sri Lanka.

Now to come down to my theme of Cottage Crafts - The importance and need for promoting cottage crafts in the rural economy of Sri Lanka cannot be over emphasised. Textile weaving has come down from pre-historic times when it is said that Kuweni was spinning cotton when Prince Vijaya landed in Sri Lanka. The well being of the rural members depends to a great extent on cottage industries as such industries contribute to raise their general standards of living. Moreover, these rural members own only a small unit of land to cultivate, which being seasonal, gave them much spare time to be used profitably in the pursuit of crafts. It prevented the exodus of young girls to town. Textile weaving has been one of the earliest cottage crafts in mahila samiti too, starting with the setting up of the first weaving centre at Piliyandala in 1932 and setting up of the Haputala mahila samiti in 1933 where members were spinning the thread grown in their own home gardens. The Galle Cooperative weaving school was of great help to the mahila samiti. Horana, and Baddegama samiti followed suit. The Kaduwela Centre still maintains its weaving section, which supplies table linen, unbleached material, towels,

chesse-cloth etc. to the LMS sales centre in Colombo. An All Island saree sale of local cotton and rayon sarees at prices ranging from Rs. 15/- to Rs. 125/- (the price of local production in the sixtees) was held by the SLMC. Mat weaving as well as weaving articles for kitchen use such as the wattis and athulpath and hendialuva are other products of these samithis. Another example is the mahila samitis at Anuradhapura and Kalutara which are famous for basket weaving industry. These two centres continue to supply products to our sales centre upto date. Occasional competitions have been held in order to revive the old designs and give encouragement for new ideas to come up. The ekel basket industry is now a wide spread activity in the Colombo and Gampaha districts. Coir and pillow lace have been products of the South and lace making, pillow crochet or tatting have won international fame and patronage and continue to be so even today.

The lace exhibitions and annual sales organised by the Late Mrs. F.G. de Mel, Mrs. Wilmot Perera and other such members have helped to sustain the industry against the imported lace. It also was one of the fund raising activities of LMS. Apart from the usual coir rope making, the LMS is involved in turning out a number of coir products such as brooms and brushes, coir rugs, etc. The coconut shell products find a ready and handy sale for our rural samiti mahilas. A team of 15 mahilas from Matara was sent to Kerala to learn more advanced methods of coir work. They have been assisted by the Industrial Development Board (IDB) to turn out a coir machine for the manufacture of rugs.

The Mahila Samithis have helped the rural women to find profitable sources of income and the projects initiated by LMS was based on the LMS theory of self help and co-operation among women. They emphasised a participatory approach and the participants were encouraged to gather and analyse information, make decisions, manage their capital and turn existing skills into small scale business enterprises. Project staff and funding have been deliberately phased out. At the completion of each of the project samiti members learnt to interact with each other and make use of the District Revolving Fund (DRF). The project is now coming to an end having been implemented in 12 districts of the island. LMC is most grateful to the donors of this project; for the development of rural members and children; USAID for granting a sum of nearly Rs. 9 million to be distributed in 12 districts of Sri Lanka, under the close supervision of the LMS, as group loans. Rs. 1 1/2 to 4 lakhs now form a revolving fund in these districts and deposited with the People's Bank. Project participants are granted loans according to their requirements discussed at the business meetings.

The beneficiaries received a training in activities related to agricultural production like post-harvest technology at the Rice Processing and Development Centre at Anuradhapura. Nutrition projects coupled with home gardening, animal husbandry, poultry, dairy farming, mushroom cultivation, fruit processing, retail shops maintenance, yoghurt making, etc. are some other areas included in the training projects conducted by ILMS. These projects have been carried out in Ratnapura, Puttalam, Kandy, Matale, Moneragala, Kegalle and Kurunegala districts.

The projects have been beneficial for the participants and they have been very good at repaying the loans. The Mahilas have developed into good entrepreneurs and learn simple methods of business management to help them to operate District Revolving Funds.

Their living conditions have improved relatively and the beneficiaries themselves admit that the projects have been particularly beneficial with regard to better education for their children, nutrition and greater amenities of life. The women in development have turned out to be successful entrepreneurs, self reliant and confident of their involvement.

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