

EVALUATION REPORT

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**THE SOCIO-CULTURAL DIMENSION
IN NORWEGIAN DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE IN AFRICA**

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PREFACE

In September 1990, a report entitled "The Socio-Cultural Conditions of Relevance to Development Assistance" was presented to the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This is an abbreviated version of the report, and it highlights only some of the main points and arguments contained in the full report. Some changes and adjustments have been made, partly as a result of questions and concerns raised by the Ministry and NORAD. The report has been prepared by Gunnar M. Sørbo.

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THE SOCIO-CULTURAL DIMENSION IN NORWEGIAN DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE IN AFRICA

ABSTRACT

This report is an abbreviated version of a report entitled "The Socio-Cultural Conditions of Relevance to Development Assistance", which was presented to the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in September 1990. It highlights only some of the main points and arguments contained in the full report.

The report is based on a review of eight NORAD-supported programmes in four African countries. The main purpose of the review was to consider the incorporation of the socio-cultural dimension in the planning and implementation of the programmes.

One basic argument running through the report is that the design and management of new development cannot be viewed in isolation from those aspects of life which already exist, and that all types of programmes are implemented in specific socio-cultural environments which will affect the realization of goals. The contribution of social and cultural analysis to development is to limit the margin of error in project formulation and planning, and to challenge and clarify assumptions held by those responsible for development interventions, about the impact of their interventions on income, asset distribution, employment, health, nutrition, environment, social relationships, and the distribution of power. Such analysis may be applied to issues in many sectors; to all stages of planning, implementation, and evaluation; and over a wide range of development objectives.

The report, however, tries to move beyond a purely instrumental view of socio-

cultural knowledge, and to challenge some of the assumptions behind dominant strategies of development. In order to have economic growth, do we have to buy a whole **package** that changes the society, the polity, and the culture along with the economy; or is it possible to decouple the technologies and new forms of production from the cultural and social entailments?

It is argued that the "catching-up" theory on which we tend to base development programmes is steeped in a **monocultural** mould of development, which defines social progress in terms of Western-type modernization. There is little doubt that the processes of cultural change have become distressing for millions of human beings torn between different cultural universes. On the basis of such considerations, the **terms of change** are briefly discussed, or the preservation of space in which traditional cultures can change on their own terms. In the report, there is also a brief discussion of cultural diversity as a global asset.

The evaluation study revealed that the reviewed projects have either largely overlooked, or only partially incorporated socio-cultural conditions in their planning, implementation and subsequent redirection. Although general or more specific studies were requested in all projects, they were not carried out before ratification of agreements although there was ample time to do so. The study documents and discusses a number of factors which explain such poor performance, both on the Norwegian side and on the recipient side. They include, e.g., a lack of bureaucratic routines and commitments, pressure to speed up the process of implementation, assumptions that only a limited role is envisaged for socio-cultural knowledge; and assumptions that the direct involvement of beneficiaries will make the collection of socio-cultural information superfluous. On the Norwegian side, there is also a tendency to be more occupied with formal aspects associated with Norwegian policy concerns (e.g. role of women) rather than the impact of programmes and the actual situation at project level. A detailed summary of findings is presented in Chapter Two.

Chapter Three presents a number of recommendations, applying both to NORAD/the Ministry and to recipient countries. The recommendations are based

on the following considerations:

- a) All types of assistance programmes are implemented in specific socio-cultural environments or contexts which affect the realization of objectives. Failure to include socio-cultural analysis as part of the project design process, and during monitoring, may cause a project to fall short of its objectives or to have unintended negative consequences.
- b) A culture-sensitive approach to development will be able to draw on the large reserves of creativity, knowledge and skills that are to be found in all societies. Such enrichment will give development firmer roots in society and make it easier to sustain development.
- c) The review of African programmes has revealed that there is a critical inability in NORAD/the Ministry both to **acquire** knowledge about relevant aspects of social and cultural conditions in the localities in which NORAD operates, and to **incorporate** such knowledge into the planning process. While the review has also revealed that this problem is many-sided and complex, there is little doubt that considerable improvements are required on the Norwegian side.
- d) In order to promote sustainable development, also from a socio-cultural point of view, Norwegian assistance programmes must increasingly shift responsibility to national, regional and local levels so as to broaden the base of development and encourage local initiative and problem solving. Long-term capacity building, therefore, must be an integral part of Norwegian aid programmes.

On the Norwegian side, it is argued that NORAD needs crucial expertise and competence inside the organization, not just on the outside. For consultants to be useful, those who commission their services must be able to confront them with their information needs and their decision problems. NORAD suffers from an unresolved tension between being a bureaucracy and being a professional organization, which may not presently favour optimal utilization of existing in-house competence. This should be further investigated, and an inventory made of existing manpower, with a

view of utilizing personell in optimal ways. The new NORAD strategy will require increased knowledge concerning socio-cultural conditions.

The capacity to acquire and to utilize knowledge, however, can not depend entirely on the recruitment and use of specialists. There is a more general need to build the capacity to use social science knowledge and data in ways which would contribute to improving performance. Recommendations are, therefore, made regarding in-service training efforts, planning routines, improved utilization of archives and library as well as the production of data-bases and bibliographies.

In recipient countries, NORAD must support programmes which are compatible with their socio-cultural settings. In order to do so, planning approaches must be promoted which are responsive to needs and desires of local populations and with a capacity for learning and change; and high priority must be given to efforts aimed at building institutional capacity and competence in recipient countries.

In addition, it is also recommended that NORAD initiates a broad-based cultural assistance programme, with a particular view of promoting nation-building efforts and cultural enrichment in multi-cultural states. The objectives of this programme are outlined, and a number of priority areas presented in support of ongoing NORAD efforts within this field.

Chapter One

1.0 CULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT - AFTERTHOUGHT OR FRESH REALIZATION?

1.1 Background

In recent years, it has been increasingly recognized that **the socio-cultural dimension** has not been sufficiently taken into account as a factor in development. Much of the early thinking on development did not accord to culture a central place either as a goal or as an instrument. A current of thought held that the continuing and obstructive persistence of tradition would block substantial modernization as traditional values and institutions are incompatible with modernity. Breaking the cake of custom was seen as the prerequisite to the escape from poverty and to the blessings of modern life.

While such attitudes still exist, international agencies and others involved in promoting change and development, have increasingly come to search for more adequate views of the relation between established life ways and social transformations. Thus in the recent report of the South Commission, it is argued that traditional development strategies have often discounted the importance of cultural factors. Attention has been concentrated on increasing physical investment and production, without realizing that those efforts cannot be fully effective "unless attitudes and values are enlisted to contribute to the achievement of those objectives" (South Commission 1990:45). The report claims that there has been a narrow conception of development which has ignored the importance of enhancing human capabilities and cultural enrichment. As one result, the capacity of societies to cope with the effects of rapid change has been weakened, and the uncritical imitation of Western values, attitudes, and social structures has given rise to social tensions and distress among large segments of the population in the South (ibid.:46). The South Commission believes that development must affirm and enrich cultural identities, because "only on secure cultural foundations can a society maintain its cohesion and security during the profound changes that are the concomitants of development and economic modernization" (ibid.:45).

Partly as a result of similar thinking, a White Paper on Norwegian development assistance (No. 36, 1984-85) devoted, for the first time, a separate chapter (18) to the cultural dimension in development aid. It is here stated that the cultural dimension is at the core of a development strategy with self-reliance as an objective; that this strategy aims at developing confidence in own ability to deal with the problems in local communities, at national levels, and in relation to the world at large; and that the Norwegian government will put more emphasis on the cultural dimension in all of its activities.

In 1987, the Norwegian Ministry of Development Cooperation (now Ministry of Foreign Affairs) commissioned a preliminary study of these issues. The result was a report by Arne Martin Klausen entitled "Sosio-kulturelle forhold i bistanden" (Klausen 1987). In this report, Klausen claims that Norwegian development assistance in practice does not sufficiently conform with major Norwegian objectives in this field. This problem has two aspects, one related to knowledge, the other to communication of knowledge. Another principal viewpoint expressed in the report is that present weaknesses regarding the incorporation of the socio-cultural dimension in aid programmes are also related to the organizational structure of the development agencies themselves, both in donor and recipient countries.

The evaluation study on which this report is based, was commissioned on the basis of the Klausen report. According to terms of reference, the purpose was three-fold:

1. To supplement, and if necessary correct the impressions and conclusions presented in the preliminary report as regards the socio-cultural conditions of relevance to development assistance;
2. Based on a study of how specific projects in Africa have developed over time, collect data which can be used to suggest improvements in the methods employed for preliminary studies which focus on the socio-cultural conditions of the target groups;

3. Based on the above - and on a review of the problems discussed in the preliminary report - help to improve the general planning, implementation and evaluation of development assistance activities.

In collaboration with the Ministry and NORAD, eight programmes/projects in four African countries were selected for evaluation. Those were:

1. Rural Access Roads Programme (RARP), Kenya;
2. Kwale Water and Sanitation Project, Kenya;
3. Rukwa Integrated Rural Development Programme (RUDEP), Tanzania;
4. Sport for All Project, Tanzania;
5. Village Agricultural Programme (VAP), Zambia;
6. Luangwa Integrated Resource Development Project (LIRD), Zambia;
7. Family Health Project (FHP), Zimbabwe; and
8. Integrated Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Programme (IRWSS), Zimbabwe.

The projects were chosen so as to provide sufficient variation regarding project activity, forms of administration, technology, target populations and project history. Interviews focused on principles, policies and objectives of Norwegian development assistance were also conducted with a substantial number of NORAD and Ministry officials, both at head office and in four African countries. A full report was presented to the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in September 1990 (Abdel Ghaffar M. Ahmed et al.: "The Socio-Cultural Conditions of Relevance to Development Assistance - an evaluation of their incorporation in Norwegian development assistance to Africa"; Centre for Development Studies, University of Bergen). This is an abbreviated version which highlights only some of the main points and arguments contained in the full report. It does, however, raise or emphasize some issues which are only marginally dealt with in the main report. This follows from a conscious attempt to incorporate some of the experiences gained in the process, i.e. after the presentation of the full report. As a consequence, some of the recommendations have also been reformulated.

1.2 Defining Socio-Cultural Conditions

"Culture" is often regarded as a **sector** of society dealing with expressive activities of various kinds. This definition is reinforced by current practice in NORAD, where a specialized (sectoral) office is assigned responsibility for "cultural development assistance projects" (e.g. museums, restoration of antiquities and collection of oral traditions). Another definition, adopted in the Klausen report, views culture as the total "set of ideas, norms and values that a group shares, has received from former generations and try to pass on to the next" (Klausen op.cit: p. 5). In this sense, "culture" is an aspect of **all** activities taking place in a society rather than a specific set of activities. Thus there is no cultural **dimension** of development, if this is taken to mean a separate facet of development, alongside the political, economic and social. Insofar as all human activities can only be understood in a context of meanings and intentions, it follows that they all have a socio-cultural aspect.

In a recent book entitled "Cultural Forces in World Politics", the Kenyan political scientist Ali Mazrui argues that culture, in the broad sense used in this report, serves seven fundamental functions in society (1990:7f).

First, it helps to provide **lenses of perception and cognition**. How people view the world is greatly conditioned by their cultural background. An Iranian peasant is likely to view the world around him differently from how most Norwegian aid officials view it. Part of that gulf is personal and ideological, and part of it is rooted in a thousand years of differing civilizations.

Culture also provides **motives for human behaviour**. What makes a person respond behaviourally in a particular manner is partly cultural in origin.

A third function of culture lies in providing criteria of **evaluation**. What is deemed better or worse, ugly or beautiful, moral or immoral, attractive or repulsive, is partly a child of culture.

The fourth function of culture is to provide a **basis of identity**. International developments over the last few years have clearly underscored that development is not just about increasing human welfare, but also about managing cultural identity.

Fifthly, culture is a **mode of communication**. The most elaborate system of communication is language itself, but culture as communication can take other forms - including music, the performing arts, and the wider world of ideas.

The sixth function of culture is as a **basis of stratification**. Class, rank and status are profoundly conditioned by cultural variables.

Finally, an important function of culture also lies in the **system of production and consumption**. Patterns of consumption are culturally conditioned and they profoundly affect production. And how much of a **cultural** achievement is the economic success of Japan?

The term **socio-cultural conditions** indicates the need for viewing beliefs, values and attitudes as an integral part of institutional and social arrangements in any society. Thus socio-cultural conditions encompass methods of taking decisions and exercising power; social relations and organization; patterns of resource allocation and utilization; and the forms and techniques of production, inclusive of indigenous technical and environmental knowledge. They are on-going processes, varied, complex, and under constant change.

In the remaining part of this report, the terms "culture" and "socio-cultural conditions" will be used interchangeably.

1.3 Culture and Development - An Instrumental View

The emergent concern with culture with respect to Third World development appears to be largely prompted by disappointment with current economic development. In fact, the terms "social" and "cultural" are often mere rephrasings of the term "non-economic",

thereby suggesting the need for incorporating factors which have largely been dismissed by dominant theories of development. The next move is to introduce non-economic variables into our models, so as to "base development on tradition" or to consider "culture as a tool for development". The case for such incorporation can be made on the following grounds:

The basic assumption of a development programme or project is that certain interventions will produce changes which will somehow bring forth improvements or solve what is seen as problems, e.g. low productivity, low standard of living, or poor infrastructure. It follows that the implementation of a project may be regarded as a testing of assumptions concerning the relationship between means and ends. It also follows that a sensible planner will seek information pertaining to the most important conditions that may affect the realization of objectives. While it never will be possible to fully anticipate or predict the outcomes of alternative interventions, a good planner will always try to reduce the margin of error by having as much relevant information as possible made available to her/him before deciding on any interventions.

Now clearly the need for information varies with different projects. Thus the kind of information required for building a road is not the same as the information required for digging a well, or for running a health campaign. One common feature, however, is that **all types of projects must be implemented in specific socio-cultural environments which will affect the realization of goals.** Failure to include socio-cultural data or knowledge as part of the project design process may cause a project to fall short of its planned objectives or to have unintended negative consequences.

If the objective is no more than the construction of a road, social factors are of course less important than technical and financial factors in determining the outcome: the implementation of the project does not depend very much on assumptions about the beneficiaries' behaviour. But in most cases road projects are not undertaken merely for the sake of building roads. The objectives may be to help increase agricultural production, to provide services and amenities to the rural population, to provide asset-creating employment, or to meet the need for mobility. Achievement of these objectives

depends, of course, on people's behavioural response to the project.

Road projects may also have unintended social consequences. In a number of cases, for example, increases in land value caused by road improvements have been captured largely by wealthy persons, often outsiders who buy up small farms on speculation and thus contribute to the impoverishment of already disadvantaged rural households. If such impacts can be anticipated, the design can include mitigating measures such as land registration in the impact zone or controls over land transfers during the project period. In other cases, the building of a road may have far-reaching consequences. It may "open up" an area which has hitherto been rather isolated, making it easier for outsiders to enter and for governments to govern; or it may help bring about important economic changes, both in terms of productive activities and in terms of trade patterns. The Turkana road in Kenya (built by NORAD funds) provides an instructive example of such developments.

There is a host of similar issues related to programmes which are often assumed to be of a purely technical nature. The basic argument is rather simple: **The design and management of new development cannot be viewed in isolation from those aspects of life which already exist.** The contribution of social and cultural analysis to development is to challenge and clarify explicit and implicit assumptions made by those responsible for development interventions, about the impact of their interventions on income, asset distribution, employment, health, nutrition, the environment, gender relations, and the distribution of power. Such analysis may be applied to issues in many sectors; to all stages of planning, implementation, and evaluation; and over a wide range of development objectives. Above all, it contributes to an understanding and clarification of **relationships** - it helps those responsible for facilitating development to anticipate the way people of all types, conditions, roles, and classes will respond to new initiatives, whether they are targeted projects, generalized assistance such as infrastructure, or broad changes in the policy or political environment.

In this view, then, knowledge of socio-cultural issues is regarded as being crucial for providing better **managerial "tools"** in the development process, and it is seen as

complementary to other types of information judged to be important to achieve development objectives. Or to put it differently: The mistake of the "economism" which has tended to dominate the international development agenda, has not been to believe that economic poverty is the most obvious problem of underdevelopment. Rather, the mistake has been to believe that economic problems can be understood and solved by economics alone.

1.4 Culture and Development - A Second Reading

Within the terms defined by our first reading, the present concern with culture may be seen primarily as an attempt to make improvements on current approaches to planning; or as an **afterthought** rather than a fresh realization. It is necessary, though, to move beyond a purely instrumental view of the role of socio-cultural knowledge, and to challenge some of the assumptions behind dominant strategies of development.

It is often assumed that to have economic growth, we must buy a whole **package** that changes the society, the polity, and the culture along with the economy. In the 1960s, it became fashionable to decry growth without development and modernization. In this view, transformation of the economic, social, political, and cultural infrastructure is a necessary precondition for sustained growth, and growth which does not involve institutional transformation can provide only transitory gains. According to Daniel Lerner, a prominent student of development in the 1950s and 1960s, economic, political, social and cultural factors are "so highly associated as to raise the question of whether they are genuinely independent factors at all" (1958:438).

Lerner's modernization theory is alive and well in our own time, and the attractions of the Western model need no elaboration: the elevated levels of gross national product that have been achieved in the West permit broad masses of the population to enjoy levels of physical comfort to which only elites aspire in most of the world.

However, the "catching up" theory on which we tend to base our development

programmes, is steeped in a **monocultural conception of development**. Social progress has come to be defined in terms of the modernization project, and attention and resources have been devoted to legitimizing modernization as Westernization.

The other side of the coin has been a tendency for planning to proceed without reference to the **existing human resources** (local skills, knowledge, capital and organizations) of an area. Such factors come to attention only in cases of conflict and failure, and so they are often seen rather as a set of obstacles and impediments to development. In the process, alternative paths of development more congenial to existing cultural traditions are seldom considered, and the cultural integrity and vitality of different human groups often threatened or even destroyed by development strategies which stress economic growth, transfer of technologies, or institutional efficiency. While the reaction to Western modernity ranges from eager welcome to violent rejection, **there is little doubt that the processes of cultural change have become extremely distressing for millions of human beings who are torn between different cultural universes.**

Although the critics of monocultural development have always existed, they have gained a broader hearing in recent years with the faltering of growth in the South, the emergence of social and economic problems within the West itself, and the global problems of the environment, ethnic violence, debt, and other growth-related concerns. An increasing number of people regard the dominance of the Western model as deriving not from its inherent superiority, but rather from the political dominance of those who believe in its superiority. It also seems to derive from a propensity for dualistic thinking (the "us/them" confrontation) which has been particularly strong in monotheistic civilizations, including the West (cf. Mazrui op.cit.: 13ff). In Norway, Terje Tvedt recently published a book (1990) which dealt mainly with this issue, but while the book received much attention in Norwegian media, the main thrust of Tvedt's argument (the "us/them" categorization being a persistent theme in Norwegian perceptions of the Third World) was largely ignored.

As suggested above, the renewed interest and critical attitudes to much of the development thinking that has dominated international aid programmes, stem from deep-

felt concerns over recent events and developments, both in the North and the South. Three examples may illustrate how a preoccupation with very different problems may lead to the posing of similar questions regarding culture and development.

1.4.1 The NIC Challenge

The analysis of the impressive economic performance of countries like South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore has been dominated by the search for explanations. Roughly, these divide into factors concerning the peculiarities of the countries themselves or of the external forces acting upon it. Thus one version attributes the success of Korean development to the interactions of government policy with social and cultural factors; particularly a high propensity to work and save associated with Confucian tradition. Recent studies of Japanese development have also emphasized the importance of cultural peculiarities, e.g. the high cultural value placed on being taken care of as against the value of autonomy, the latter being widely regarded in the West as universal. The important role played by state policies in the newly industrialized countries in Asia is also often interpreted as being facilitated by particular political cultures which allow for deliberate and persistent efforts of governments.

While the details of current debates on the Asian experience are not our primary concern, it is important that new questions are being asked regarding the cultural peculiarities associated with modernization. It is not the production and consumption of material goods that are called into question; nor the science and technologies which have brought material abundance to the West. Rather, the Asian experience suggests **the possibility of separating or decoupling the technologies from the cultural and social entailments.** We will come back to this below.

1.4.2 African Agriculture

Recent assessments of the performance and prospects of African economies have

portrayed a deepening economic crisis centred on the problem of food supplies. The great challenge for the 1990s is to enable African agriculture to transform itself into more sustainable and productive systems, and to support many more people.

Compared to the large irrigated areas in Asia, much of the African agriculture is complex, diverse and risk-prone. There is an extraordinary diversity of local ecologies, farming systems, and socio-economic conditions. If we want to transform African agriculture into more sustainable and productive systems, such diversity and complexity pose particular problems for agricultural research and development efforts. Any innovation, such as a new seed variety or a new practice, is likely to fit conditions and needs of far fewer farm families than in the Green Revolution areas of Asia which are or can be made so much more uniform, and where water tends to be much more reliable. The complexity of African agriculture presents interactions difficult for scientists to manage and study. If they try to simplify them, they may easily help destroy the complexities which are the strength of existing farming systems. In fact, African farmers often reduce their risks by making their farming systems more complex, and by relying on factors of production under their own control, while the "transfer-of-technology" approach often seeks to reduce just those elements of existing farming systems which provide its strengths, i.e. its complexity and adaptiveness.

The existing farming systems are part of the enormous cultural diversity (incl. indigenous technical knowledge) of the African continent. Some of them, like the food system based on the "ensete" (false banana) in Ethiopia, support millions of people, perhaps on higher densities than any other system except for the irrigated areas along the Nile in Egypt. Yet we have insufficient knowledge of the origins, maintenance and change of such systems, perhaps primarily because we still cling to a model based on the transfer-of-technology paradigm. For such reasons, it has been argued that there is an urgent need for exploring alternative approaches based on a reversal of location, role and learning, and with farms and farmers central instead of research stations, laboratories and scientists.

The African example suggests the great importance of cultures as **knowledge systems**.

Such knowledge systems are at the base of the considerable complexity, diversity and adaptiveness which characterize much of African agricultural and resource management systems. Understanding a resource management system means understanding not only the nature of what is being managed, but also the viewpoint of the manager. In a situation where it seems to be important to retain current diversity and complexity, and to reduce vulnerability, ongoing efforts often produce further marginalization, loss of customary resource tenure and increased vulnerability. This is particularly apparent among pastoral societies and it matters little that the principal agents of such modernization may be Westernized indigenous elites rather than Westerners.

1.4.3 Ethnic Conflicts

Over the last years, it has been seen how nation-building efforts have been frustrated by ethnic conflicts in a growing number of "new nations". In many cases, such conflicts coincide with economic problems and poverty, but they also underscore that **development is not just about increasing human and material welfare, but also about managing cultural identity.**

On the one hand, there is clearly a homogenizing trend that is making people in contemporary societies more and more alike. On the other hand, these same people also claim to be different, and not necessarily equal, on the basis of their identity, linguistic difference, ethnic membership, and rights to the soil. In many countries, the optimism of people who predicted the beginning of "the integrative revolution" and the decline of "primordial loyalties" (kinship, caste, ethnicity) has by now waned and dimmed with disenchantment.

On a world scale, there is clearly a revival of identities based on culture or ethnic belongings and apparently a concomitant decline of identities based on the state or on political ideology. Cultural forces seem to be at heart of power in international as well as in many national relations. Lebanon, Sri Lanka and the Sudan are all warnings of the possibilities of dismemberment of established states; Iran (at least during Khomeini's

regime) may be regarded as "an application of an exit visa out of the Western cultural system" (Mazrui op.cit.:244). To many, Islam is presently seen as the only major cultural system to challenge Western hegemony in the contemporary world, and some of the reactions in the South to recent events in the Gulf must be largely understood within this context.

It is worth noting that the South Commission is also concerned with the issue of cultural identity. According to the Commission, policies should pay due attention to a) the right to culture, b) cultural diversity, and c) the cultural role of the State (op.cit.:133). Socio-cultural issues, then, are not limited to "what needs to be known about local communities and local populations". There is clearly also a macro-dimension to culture and development (national and international) which is extremely important for development agencies to understand and relate to, both because it has a bearing on development programmes, and because we need to confront it in order to expose dilemmas, instill realism, define priorities and make choices.

If this is not done, development programmes will tend to have only a limited chance of success, and it will be difficult to promote human rights, democracy and other worthy causes in productive ways.

1.5 Is Cultural Diversity a Global Asset?

Once it is recognized that the threat to other cultures is the **entailment** rather than modern production, science or technology themselves, it becomes possible to explore other options, or **alternative forms of modernity**, which the uncritical acceptance of the Western model has closed off. To quote again the report of the South Commission: "A culture-sensitive process of development will be able to draw on the large reserves of creativity and traditional knowledge and skills that are to be found throughout the developing world" (op.cit.:132).

It might be claimed that nothing really valuable is lost in the process of modernization,

apart from what might capture the attention of the folklorist or anthropologist. But the issue is hardly folklore. It is rather that traditional societies are not lacking in social organization, motivating goals, and productive activity, and that these structures provide solutions to a great number of vital and inescapable needs in a population. Traditional does not mean fixed and unchanging. Tradition is actively constructed and dynamic. The issue is therefore **the terms of change**. It is the preservation of space in which traditional cultures can change on their own terms.

An increasing number of people also claim that the Western model has yet to produce an acceptable model for relationships between people or with nature, and that **it would be in our own self-interest as well as the global interest to promote cultural diversity, and a corresponding diversity of development models**. From an environmental point of view, there would seem to be a particular urgent need for exploring alternative forms of modernity.

The argument is evidently one from uncertainty. Within the human species culture bears the primary load of the intergenerational transmission of knowledge. We cannot know today what crises we shall face in the twenty-first century. Nor do we know that the West will find the cultural resources within its own tradition to cope with these or other, less dramatic, contingencies. Cultural diversity may be the key to the survival of the human species. Just as biologists defend exotic species in order to maintain the diversity of the genetic pool, so should we defend other cultures in order to maintain the diversity of forms of understanding, creating, and coping that the human species has managed to generate.

An important part of our uncertainty is also linked to the fact that the development process is **irreversible**. Whether it proceeds in small steps or in one swoop, the result is generally the same: you can't go home again. It would not matter that the process is irreversible if individuals were endowed with perfect foresight. However, the inability to foresee all the consequences of the first steps down a path makes irreversibility crucial. Not only can't you go home again, but you can't figure out whether or not you want to until it's too late to change your mind.

2.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

2.1 Introduction

While the review of African programmes which receive NORAD support covered altogether eight projects (cf. above), only four programmes were singled out for indepth study. This included a particularly thorough examination of the files related to the selected programmes. These programmes were:

1. The Rural Access Roads Programme, (RARP), Kenya;
2. The Village Agricultural Programme, (VAP), Zambia;
3. Rukwa Development Programme, (RUDEP), Tanzania; and
4. Luangwa Integrated Resource Development Programme, (LIRD), Zambia.

It must be noted that the four projects under discussion are not, historically speaking, concurrent. They stretch over a span of just under two decades, extending from the early negotiations of RARP in 1974 to the LIRD agreement in 1989. For further details on the programmes, we refer to the Main Report. In this report, only the conclusions will be presented.

2.2 The Scope and Quality of Information on Socio-Cultural Conditions

The programme profiles corroborate the conclusion that NORAD and Ministry personnel were generally aware of the significance of information on local socio-cultural conditions (SCC) to planning processes. In all four projects, general or focused studies of a social anthropological nature were requested. **In none of the projects, however, was the requested study undertaken prior to the ratification of agreement.** As will be explained

below, the reasons why studies were not undertaken are varied, complex and hardly susceptible to cross-project generalization. In the cases of RARP and LIRD, virtually no information on local SCC was available for decision making processes. In RUDEP and VAP, some information was made available, though in terms of its scope and quality significant differences may be noted between the two programmes.

Considering the status of data on target populations that was retrieved by NORAD in deciding whether or not to support RARP and LIRD, is a relatively simple task, because the utilized information was almost free of reference to local socio-cultural conditions. In the case of RARP, there were minor references to major ethnic groups and crop preferences in some of the programme areas, but aside from these virtually no information was presented concerning socio-economic, political, or cultural processes in the local communities; and absolutely no systematic information was provided on how these societies were constituted and functioned. In LIRD, on the other hand, a socio-economic study was commissioned, but the consultant failed to submit his report. Though some of the material collected might have been made available, in crude form, to NORAD personnel, there is no reference whatsoever in the correspondence and documents relating to LIRD to substantiate such a conclusion.

NORAD, both in Oslo and Nairobi, requested more information on local SCC in RARP areas, but the type of information requested reflected mainly concerns about perceived undesirable effects the programme might have (i.e. impact) rather than questions related to the socio-cultural conditions of target populations. The information requested by NORAD in the case of LIRD would most probably have made considerable difference in planning the project, because the bulk of the questions raised concerned socio-cultural preconditions (e.g. division of labour, position of women, socio-economic adaptations). This may also be interpreted as an improvement in assessment procedures within NORAD, taking into consideration the fact that RARP planning was undertaken in the mid-1970's while LIRD is a relatively new programme whose final negotiations took place in 1989.

There is no doubt that in terms of both scope and quality of information, the planners

and decision-makers in charge of RUDEP were better placed than those in the other three projects. The survey undertaken by BRALUP (now Institute of Resource Assessment, IRA) concerned the preconditions in Rukwa, and the preliminary development plan formulated on its basis drew directly on that information. The report on the situation of Rukwa is the most thorough and systematic document presented so far, not only in the history of RUDEP, but in all four projects. Regarding information on local SCC, it contains a systematic analysis of some prominent socio-cultural aspects of the local situation. Several of the other research projects suggested or initiated under RUDEP tended to have the same quality. Up to 1989, however, few results of these other studies were presented. For a few years IRA was not included in the work on a project outline in Rukwa, but since 1986 NORAD (Dar) began to collaborate with the Institute, and their joint research proposal, if carried out, promises generation of information that could be internalized into the flexible RUDEP planning process.

Decision-makers in charge of VAP also had access to considerable information on local SCC. But very little of this information actually related to preconditions. Unlike RUDEP, however, no intensive pre-study was undertaken. Most of the available information concerned negative experiences with resettlement schemes. The work of the social anthropologist in VAP was, however, instrumental in providing information on aspects of local conditions, and some of the findings were internalized in due course into the planning process. As the subsequent Village Agricultural Programme to a large extent was formulated by persons critical to the settlement schemes, experiences from impacts on certain aspects of local SCC were incorporated into the proposals from the outset.

In general, the specific items of information on local SCC requested by the Norwegian officials were rather restricted and mainly related to i) economic issues, and ii) the social situation of women. It seems not unwarranted to conclude that few, if any, attempts were made to understand the local political situation and other aspects of the local organisation outside the field of gender differences. This is particularly true with respect to cultural aspects (world-views, beliefs, norms, values, etc). In none of the projects was information requested on local perceptions, aspirations and concerns over how, e.g.,

identity might be retained under conditions of rapid change, partly initiated by the development process itself.

The project histories above also indicate that **the scanty material on SCC actually gathered in the process, was seldom adhered to in planning and decision-making.** The integration of information on SCC into the bureaucratic process (internal discussions, explicit demands in relation to recipient governments, etc.) was mainly successful when the information related directly to Norwegian policies and concerns or on specific topics raised and requested by various actors in the process.

2.3 Utilization of Information on SCC

Availability of information on SCC does not, by itself, ensure incorporation of local SCC into development assistance projects. In both RARP and LIRD, insufficient, if any, information on SCC was available for decision-makers. Assessment of incorporation of information is thus irrelevant in the two projects. But though more and better quality information was made available in the course of planning processes in both RUDEP and VAP, the way that information was actually utilized leaves much to be desired.

Generally speaking, very little of the rich information on SCC provided by IRA and others seems to have been incorporated by NORAD personnel into either the major RUDEP documents or the discussions within NORAD and the Ministry. The specific information relevant to assessing whether or not RUDEP would build on local socio-cultural conditions was neither provided nor requested during the planning process by NORAD in Oslo or Dar.

There may be different reasons for this, one being that the proposed activities were predominantly technical in nature, aimed at providing infrastructure (administrative capacity of RUDEP, road construction, irrigation). Information on SCC could thus be assumed "not immediately relevant" by NORAD personnel in Dar and Oslo. However, in so far as some of these projects were envisaged to be based on local participation, and

would in any case affect local conditions, the disregard of information on local SCC cannot be justified. For one thing, how would local participation be ensured if not based on an understanding of the communities themselves? Such an attitude towards SCC tends to corroborate Klausen's view that **"the underlying idea [embraced by NORAD personnel] seems to be that correct internal processing makes an analysis of the socio-cultural conditions for development redundant. In other words, the socio-cultural conditions that are necessary for a project are assumed to be existent when in fact they might not be present at all"** (Klausen 1987).

Another reason may be related to the planning philosophy upheld by RUDEP itself. This philosophy envisages a planning process in which local SCC are assumed to be accommodated through the involvement of the local people themselves, who are projected as active in identifying needs, formulating plans and implementing projects on the basis of their own social and cultural preconditions. But this is hardly a credible justification for the disregard of information on SCC in the bureaucratic process. Indeed the success of NORAD's efforts in Rukwa as a whole is to be assessed specifically in terms of whether or not RUDEP managed to ensure such a form of community participation, and it is only on the basis of information on SCC that such an assessment becomes tenable. Available evidence, however, seems to suggest a rather limited extent of participation.

As outlined above, under the Settlement Schemes/VAP an intensive social anthropological study was requested from the outset, but never materialized. Subsequent to the appointment of a social anthropologist, however, systematic, but focused and restricted information was made available. Hedlund's first report, though restricted in coverage, provided a baseline analysis of local SCC, whereas his second report and most of the information on Settlement Schemes related to the consequences of development projects. Eriksen's preliminary report, though based on observations in the course of implementation, was also a baseline study that delineated social and cultural factors of relevance to project implementation. Hedlund's main contribution to VAP planning, however, seems to be confined to the information on local rights and land use. The data he provided concerning indigenous agricultural adaptations and organisation were not

incorporated into any of the documents on which the decision-making process was based. Simultaneously, it is interesting to note that information on SCC not provided by Hedlund was requested by Oslo - particularly information regarding the situation of women. However, none of the requested information was provided in due time before the ratification of the VAP agreement.

The utilization of information on SCC need not be undertaken solely at the initial stage of planning. Even after commencement of implementation, information is relevant in attempts to adapt or redirect projects. VAP seems to have benefited considerably from internalization of information generated at later stages of project life. The findings and recommendations of the two major VAP evaluations have had far-reaching implications for the nature and scope of VAP's objectives and activities. Subsequent to the first evaluation, the women-in-development (WID)-orientation of VAP was given more emphasis; subsequent to the second, a phase currently underway, VAP has ceased to undertake direct implementation of activities, a task now carried out by the local government structures.

While the VAP evaluation reports served to redefine the whole concept of the project, the information provided by the VAP social anthropologist seems to have had limited impact on implementation. Eriksen's information about witchcraft beliefs and how it affected the extension workers, for example, was simply ignored.

The basis and strength in RUDEP's processual planning stems from the in-built flexibility to modify and adjust activities in order to accommodate new or added objectives in the course of implementation. Information generated at a late stage in project life is accorded potentially as much significance as that generated in the initial planning process. There is some evidence that RUDEP is continually being adapted to the realities of the local setting, but, as explained earlier, it is not readily clear to what extent these adaptations are based on knowledge of local SCC.

RARP has demonstrated a fine example of how a project could improve performance in the course of implementation through diligent monitoring. But this is true only as far

as technical matters are concerned. The programme simply had no mechanism by which information on SCC could be generated through monitoring implementation. The long-awaited World Bank impact study, narrow in focus as it came to be, seems to have had no effect whatsoever on either RARP or its successor MRP.

The utilization, then, of information on local SCC in all four projects seems to be generally limited. There seems to be a lack of clear procedures in NORAD by which information generated through external evaluations or internal monitoring could be internalized in projects. At least the documents and correspondence found in both Oslo and the country offices do not corroborate the existence of such procedures, and in this connection the deficiencies relating to NORAD's archives should also not be overlooked.

2.4 The Focus of Attention

As mentioned above, the four projects under discussion are not, historically speaking, concurrent. They stretch over a span of just under two decades, extending from the early negotiations of RARP in 1974 to the LIRDPA agreement in 1989. Viewed in historical terms, the focus of attention seems to have been characterized by one salient feature: Through time, discussions within NORAD and Ministry tended to demonstrate a steady decline in the magnitude of concern over the nature of **impact** of projects, except in areas relating directly to NDA policy objectives ("poorest of the poor", women and the environment). Thus whereas the discussions on RARP expressed considerable worries about the impact of roads on various spheres of the local economy and society, the main focus of attention in the case of LIRDPA was the position of women.

The tendency not to express concern over impact may be incidental and typical only of the four projects discussed here. It may also indicate that, through time, NORAD and the Ministry have come to shoulder increasing workloads, and, as a result, the general working conditions are less conducive to pursuing time-consuming, detailed matters related to projects. However, there is reason to believe that this tendency is also due to

the fact that recipient countries and organisations through time have acquired competence in the Norwegian "development language". Proposals now tend to be submitted with formulations, though not necessarily intentions, more in line with Norwegian development assistance policy objectives.

The discussions that took place during planning processes in all four projects indicate that both NORAD and the Ministry have consistently focused on issues relating directly to Norwegian policy objectives. These issues included the position of the poor, integration of women, focus on the environment and popular participation. In the particular cases of RUDEP and LIRD, special emphasis was placed on the issue of incorporation of local SCC as well. In all projects there were requests for more information on these focal issues. Almost invariably, however, the requested information tended to relate to the nature of impact. Before approving proposals, NORAD wanted to ensure that those groups of primary concern to Norwegian policy would not be adversely affected by projects. In other words, objectives were to be realized negatively rather than positively. Very rarely were the questions NORAD and the Ministry raised related to the socio-cultural pre-conditions of the groups of concern to their policy objectives. This raises a question concerning the way in which Norwegian policy objectives are operationalized in decision-making process.

In the process, the focus of attention of Norwegian personnel tended to shift from concerns with information on the local situation to organizational and technical issues. One reason for this is perhaps the fact that in all projects more information had been requested before project assessment was submitted. But there seem to be no mechanisms or procedures to follow up such requests. As concern for technical and organizational matters mounts, information on local communities seems to be regarded as of lesser significance to planning. As project agreements were ratified and implementation started, in the absence of the requested information as explained earlier, socio-cultural issues became even more marginalized in communication between projects, country offices and Oslo. This seems true even of RUDEP. The bulk of the correspondence between Oslo and Dar es Salaam in the initial planning stage dealt with various organisational and administrative issues relating to the design of RUDEP, division

of responsibility between project management, NORAD's Dar es Salaam office and Oslo. As implementation started, moreover, considerable attention was accorded to the question of the extent and form of cooperation with NGOs in Rukwa, the role and capacity of the regional administration, the problems of integrating the activities of TAN-055 and TAN-060, the integration of community participation and health activities into the appropriate regional departments. Finally, as RUDEP grew larger, an added theme was the need for more efficient control routines with respect to the use of cars.

2.5 Constraints on Data Collection

It may seem rather striking that in all four projects agreements were ratified between Norway and partner governments in the absence of background material on the communities, especially when Norwegian personnel, in both Oslo and country offices, requested such material to aid the decision making process. In each of the four projects, however, certain constraints seem to have made access to information either very difficult or irrelevant.

On a general level, it seems that **NORAD lacks bureaucratic routines which ensure the initiation of baseline studies.** Likewise, there seems to be a general lack of routines whereby already existing material could be retrieved and utilized in the process. The volume of such material in various local academic and research institutions as well as government archives is generally considerable. In all projects the discrepancy between existing and retrieved information seems massive. This is one area in which improvements may readily be achieved.

The review also indicated prevalence of other, project-specific constraints on data collection that include;

- Multi-donor contexts (e.g. RARP) may establish formal operational frameworks that severely restrict capacity to request information not regarded essential by the majority of donors;
- Economic considerations may prompt Norwegian organizations to await the

- results of ongoing studies commissioned by others rather than commit Norwegian funds to initiate independent studies. Promised studies may not materialize in time to be utilized in planning prior to the signing of agreements (e.g. World Bank Impact Study of RARP);
- Lack of clear commitment to a project (e.g. LIRDPA) may prompt Norwegian personnel to disregard initiation of pre-studies in an attempt to avert commitment to follow-up and implement recommendations;
 - Limited role envisaged for social scientists (e.g. VAP) whereby Norwegian organizations constrain the potential scope of input by social scientists. Rather than engaging in intensive studies to feed the planning process, the VAP social anthropologist seems to have found himself a "hostage" of the VAP management;
 - Pressure by country offices to speed up processing to sign agreements and commence implementation on the assumption that monitoring might be a viable alternative to pre-studies.

2.6 The Nature and Extent of Compromise

As noted above, issues relating to Norwegian policy objectives had generally been raised by officials. There is some evidence, however, to suggest that these issues were sometimes tacitly compromised through accommodation of external constraints encountered at an early stage of the bureaucratic process in Oslo. One such constraint concerns the limitations imposed in multi-donor programmes, as in the case of RARP (cf. above). Another is the general tendency of NORAD country offices to demand approval or initiation of a project, even when Oslo had requested, and was still waiting for retrieval of sufficient background information. Thus in spite of insightful comments and systematic criticisms raised in the course of the internal discussions in NORAD, **the drive to have agreements signed and projects initiated tends through time to override policy concerns on the Norwegian side.**

RARP and Settlement Schemes/VAP are cases in point. In both projects, NORAD country offices either ignored information that would prolong the decision-making

process, or insisted that the projects should be initiated despite the fact that great worries were expressed in the internal correspondence within NORAD.

NORAD seems to have compromised policy issues twice in the case of VAP. The first compromise was the seeming indifference demonstrated by NORAD, both in Oslo and Lusaka, that the resettlement schemes were a failure and ran counter to Norwegian policy objectives. NORAD subsequently conceded the failure, and started to question the request for funds to support the Village Productivity Committees (VPC), as the latter were said to be ineffective, lacking popular support and imposed from above. It also raised critical questions regarding the position of women in VAP. Oslo communicated its objections to Lusaka, which was supposed to convey it to the Zambian Government. But for the sake of a quick decision and ratification of the agreement by the Zambian Government, Oslo soon after informed Lusaka of its readiness not to attach importance to either issue in case the Government showed intransigence over the issue. Zambia accepted, however, NORAD's viewpoint. However, although stress was laid on issues relating to the provision of funds for the VPCs, there was neither understanding of, nor any request for baseline information relating to them.

The dilemma entailed in having to compromise policies for efficiency was more often than not resolved by insistence on the need for constant monitoring of project implementation. However, by approving and initiating the project, the project is simultaneously carried on into a new phase in which other considerations and other actors are usually involved. By emphasizing monitoring as an alternative to pre-studies and background information, compromises were effected. RARP provides an example of this. Emphasis on monitoring, however, is valid only under conditions where there is a willingness on the part of all actors, and where there is in-built flexibility to ensure that the potentials of monitoring are fully utilized. Within a flexible framework as of the RUDEP concept, for example, monitoring should be accorded prominence, although the necessity for sufficient baseline information in the initial planning process should not in any way be compromised. In other projects, and RARP in particular, there is reason to believe that few of the worries expressed in the initial decision making phases were ever incorporated into systematic monitoring and evaluation exercises.

2.7 The Operationalization of Norwegian Policy Objectives

One of the major constraints to the fulfilment of Norwegian policy objectives relates to the articulation and communication of these objectives by Norwegian personnel. When background information is requested in the processes of deciding whether or not a proposed project may be accepted, Norwegian policy objectives and concerns must be operationalized and given substance. Operationalization of policies and concerns entails a process whereby abstract ideas are translated into concrete and practical measures relating to the concepts, objectives and targets of proposed projects. The manner in which policy objectives and concerns were operationalized in the four projects under review suggests that in several instances the process of operationalization tended to compromise the spirit of Norwegian policy objectives and concerns. But this is not a consequence of a deliberate tendency to effect compromise. It is rather a result of constraints on operationalizing objectives in a socio-cultural context so radically different from the one in which these policies are conceived and adopted.

A major Norwegian policy concern relates to the integration of women (WID-orientation) in assisted projects. In negotiations and correspondence relating to all four projects, NORAD personnel sought to emphasize that concern. The question of women is probably the most recurrent theme in the negotiations. With a few exceptions, however, the operationalization of the concern took the form of attempts to secure opportunities for women to partake in access to various resources and fora provided by the proposed project. More concretely, the WID-orientation was more often than not operationalized as a requirement that at least 50% of the participants in various projects, recipients of incentives, members of popular committees etc., had to be women. **Very seldom was operationalization of the WID-orientation based on understanding of the women's actual position in the societies concerned.** In the process, NORAD personnel tended to overlook the material and other constraints facing implementation of their concept of women's participation. These constraints relate to prevalent forms of division of labour among the sexes, systems of property rights and inheritance, women's general work-load, access to informal political systems, and an array of other questions relating to how women are in fact valued and placed in their various roles in the target communi-

ties. Such operationalization of the WID-orientation may easily result in a formal access for women, without them, however, really benefiting much from interventions.

There were, however, some exceptions to that trend. Both during the discussions about VAP and LIRD, some NORAD personnel were demanding information on the overall context of women's situation in the target communities. The interviews with NORAD and Ministry staff also corroborate the emergence of an awareness in some circles that "gender roles" rather than "the situation of women" ought to be the focus of Norwegian policy concern. This awareness, it should be stressed, does not merely signify a change of terminology; it does open new horizons for a more context-based operationalization of the WID-orientation.

The focus on the environment is another Norwegian policy concern which NORAD diligently pursues in project planning. The operationalization of this focus implies, inter alia, the undertaking of steps to put an end to those adaptations in developing countries which are viewed as being destructive to the environment. Typically, the adaptations involved are shifting cultivation, nomadic pastoralism, wood-cutting and hunting. In Settlement Schemes/VAP, LIRD of Zambia and RUDEP of Tanzania, which involved agricultural and/or natural resource development, NORAD argued that the traditional forms of agricultural adaptations had adverse effects on the environment. In the implementation of these projects it was envisaged that permanent and intensified forms of agricultural production constituted the means to achieve environmental protection. Again, the specific contexts (socio-cultural, economic, political) within which such adaptations were embedded, seem to have been largely disregarded.

It follows from the foregoing points that Norwegian policy objectives and considerations tended to be conceptualized either in terms of a Norwegian context or in a socio-economic and historical vacuum. The concerns of Norwegian development policy are seldom operationalized so as to confront differing concrete realities, at least not at this level of the bureaucratic process. In the bulk of the discussions within NORAD on these projects, "focus on women" tended to imply "giving women formal access"; "popular participation" meant "giving access to formal bodies"; and "environmental protection"

required "permanent agriculture". Very rarely were attempts made to relate the policy objectives and concerns to the conditions in the recipient countries and/or communities. More often than not, however, such attempts were at such a high level of abstraction as to lead to a situation in which, for instance, conceptualizations of "women in Africa" tended to influence the formulation of a specific project in the Northern Province of Zambia; or the idea of the superiority of commercial settled farming to inform an agricultural project in communal lands. Of course one should not rule out that such an operationalization may incidentally prove congruent with the realities of the context, and in effect promote development in some cases. But it is obvious that such congruence cannot be known in the course of planning. Congruence is a process of adjustment of the abstract ideas informed by thorough knowledge of the context in which these ideas are to be operationalized:

The inability to undertake more context-specific operationalizations of Norwegian policy objectives and concerns promises a situation in which policy issues tend to remain a purely bureaucratic exercise. The most immediate objective for the scrutinization of project proposals would thus tend to be the mere adoption of policy recommendations in project designs and agreements. As the policy formulations reached in the process will tend to remain only general and mostly unrelated to the specific conditions they will confront in the course of project implementation, the whole exercise may sometimes attain a ceremonial character. Thus while scrutinization tends to place pressure on planners in recipient countries to include phrases about women's roles and local participation in designs and formal agreements, the discrepancy between the letter of agreement and the reality of the context remains conspicuous.

2.8 The Intellegibility of Information on SCC

A substantial number of NORAD and Ministry officials claim that research reports written by social scientists, particularly anthropologists, are largely unintelligible and generally not useful for planning purposes. In order to incorporate SCC in planning of

Norwegian projects, they usually explain, the information on SCC should be provided in usable form. While the team concedes that the products which the social scientists are commonly called upon to produce, often leave much to be desired, the issue may be more complicated than what Norwegian officials would seem to imply. In view of the manner in which information on local SCC was handled in the four projects, there is no doubt that, within NORAD and the Ministry, there seems to be a serious problem of cross-cultural translation. Put simply, it is a problem of understanding and evaluating socio-cultural phenomena in target communities, not in terms of Norwegian and/or Western standards, but in terms upheld by these communities themselves.

The limited information on SCC requested, provided and utilized in project planning and decision-making processes corroborates the prevalence of a problem of cross-cultural translation. In other words, while Norwegian officials seem to have a genuine feeling that knowledge about local socio-cultural conditions are of importance for development planning, their understanding of the realities underlying these conditions seems quite limited. They seem almost invariably to request and utilize information of a readily comprehensible nature, that is to say, of the type which would "make sense" in a Norwegian and/or Western socio-cultural context. This implies that NORAD officials tend to disregard the fact that non-Western ways of thinking and living are real, and tend to think of other people as "basically Westerners".

As discussed earlier, the pre-feasibility studies, project assessments and early reviews carried out in connection with the four projects contained only to a very limited extent information on local SCC. The scanty material provided, however, did not inspire most NORAD officials processing the documents to pose questions relating to that material. Insofar as it was largely not utilized, the information might itself have been deemed irrelevant. Unfamiliar ideas and practices, such as witchcraft and sorcery, were most likely regarded as exotic and somehow irrelevant aspects of local culture. The officials were interested largely in issues relating to Norwegian policy objectives and concerns; and their questions were confined to issues such as the "position of women" in the local communities. By so doing, however, the officials simultaneously demonstrated an inability to comprehend the "otherness" of the information they were actually requesting.

Symptomatic of the inability to understand the otherness of local SCC is the way in which information on witchcraft beliefs was handled in the four projects. Various pre-feasibility studies, reviews and reports on projects pointed out that witchcraft suspicions occasioned totally unacceptable working conditions for extension workers (VAP), constituted one of the main health problems in Rukwa (RUDEP), and would severely hamper the efficiency of project personnel brought from other regions (RUDEP). Nevertheless, the question of witchcraft was never mentioned in the internal correspondence among NORAD officials dealing with these projects. Nor were the officials in the concerned projects able to understand what had been taking place and take action accordingly. Information on exotic ideas and practices must somehow "make sense" for an official before he/she incorporates it into practical planning. When information is regarded as irrelevant, it is understandable that no action will be undertaken on its basis. In the process, however, important issues relating to the seemingly exotic phenomena are easily glossed over and swept away from the agenda.

Witchcraft as a theory of causation, of how occurrence of unfortunate events is explained by villagers, is absurd by modern scientific standards. For one thing, how could malaria be caused by an evil eye? For another, how could the evil eye be involved when the body of which it is part (the accused person) was not physically present in the village when malaria was contracted? Such is the typical reaction of Westerners on hearing of witchcraft cases. In witchcraft cases, though, the event itself is not interesting, and usually only incidental to the case and as such may be substituted by any other event (collapse of a hut, divorce of a daughter, loss of an animal, etc.). Witchcraft cases, exotic and unscientific sets of ideas as they are, are of interest as a means of defining tensions in social relations among the persons involved. Witchcraft cases provide a theory of accusation, and the notions expressed in their course are not adopted in "normal" everyday life as a guide for action. Underlying witchcraft cases thus are conflicts and rivalry over rights, resources or persons. When a VAP extension worker, who belonged to the same Northern Province as the target population, was accused of witchcraft, a message was actually being conveyed. The details of that specific case are not known. It might be personal and as such irrelevant to VAP. But it could well have been of paramount significance to VAP management: the extension worker, being from the same

area, might have unwarrantedly favoured his own immediate relatives in the distribution of the free and/or subsidized inputs provided by VAP. By disregarding a witchcraft case, the VAP management might have denied itself an opportunity to assess the performance of its extension workers, who are pivotal to the realization of programme objectives.

Thus, one of the long term problems facing NORAD and the Ministry in the attempt to pay greater attention to SCC of local communities, is how to improve capacity and competence of their personnel in cross-cultural translation.

2.9 Conclusions

All projects discussed in this chapter (as well as the two remaining projects described the main report) are indicative of the lack of effective routines in NORAD/the Ministry both to **acquire** knowledge about relevant aspects of social and cultural conditions in the localities in which NORAD operates, and to **incorporate** such knowledge into the planning process. The problem is many-sided and complex.

It is important to emphasize that in most of the projects discussed individual planners (within NORAD and in other organisations with which NORAD cooperated) did request information on several aspects of SCC of relevance for project planning and implementation. These requests seem mainly to spring from strong concerns about possible **unfortunate** effects of the planned projects on specific target groups. There were, however, also strong actors at work within NORAD who struggled to initiate projects and programmes before the requested information had been gathered. Most prominent among these forces were the NORAD missions abroad. Subject to internal bureaucratic routines and political pressure from recipient governments, these missions were instrumental in initiating projects despite the many critical comments and questions raised in the internal discussions within NORAD.

This tendency to force projects through did, however, still leave ample time to conduct pre-studies, as in most cases 4-5 years elapsed prior to project initiation. Very little

information on SCC was, however, gathered, and important questions were thus left unanswered. The failure to provide the material partly reflects a lack of effective routines within NORAD for designing and executing pre-studies and partly a failure to utilize Norwegian and/or African research institutions capable of conducting such studies. As in most cases there would already be considerable material on local conditions gathered in various academic and administrative institutions, archives etc., the cases above also indicate a substantial under-utilization of already existing material.

The information on local conditions in fact provided was of two kinds: i) various field visit reports, comments etc. submitted by NORAD planners, and ii) professional reports, comments etc. submitted by consulted social scientists and others. Information from the former source was largely impressionistic and with a strong focus on aspects of (seemingly) immediate relevance for official Norwegian concerns (especially the situation of women). The latter type of information seems also inadequate from a professional point of view. Although there are some exceptions, the few anthropological contributions seem neither to provide all-embracing background pictures of the communities in question, nor more specific analyses of project relevant aspects. The restrictions placed on the social scientists involved in the projects, in terms of work descriptions and time constraints, account to some extent for this deficiency. Partly, NORAD did not allow the consultants to investigate the conditions they themselves found relevant, partly NORAD did not, and still does not, fully acknowledge the specific methodological characteristics inherent in anthropological investigations (prolonged fieldwork etc).

The tiny information on local SCC provided by these few contributions was adhered to in different ways. Although the cases are very few and, accordingly, inferences far from certain, it seems to be the case that information provided on the situation of women was picked up and utilized in the negotiation process. Information on unfamiliar aspects of local social organisation (for instance unaccustomed ways of arranging land rights) and on significant cultural aspects (like witchcraft beliefs) was, on the contrary, not adhered to in the further planning process on the projects. This indicates a problem of comprehension on the part of NORAD when it comes to differently constituted realities. Only information of an easily understandable and acceptable nature seems to be

incorporated into the planning process.

On a more basic level this tendency reflects the constant dilemma of having to operate in unfamiliar environments, i.e. in the midst of communities with strikingly different ways of living and thinking, with a Western (or Norwegian) frame of conceptualization. The cases above illustrate that among most NORAD planners, **information tends to be adhered to in terms of focuses of the Norwegian political debate and on the basis of Western conceptualizations, not in terms of the actual realities of the communities with which NORAD interacts.** This pertains also to the phrasing of requests for prestudies and additional information. As most of the cases above illustrate, information of a very broad and unfocused nature was requested (on "the situation of women", "people's traditions"), and it seems generally to be the case that planners were rarely capable of formulating substantial questions informed by the reality with which they were dealing. This problem partly springs from inadequate training in cross-cultural understandings granted NORAD officials. It is also a reflection of the fact that competent persons seldom are assigned the task to serve as cross-cultural translators of foreign and unfamiliar ways of life during project planning.



Chapter Three

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Introduction

For apparent reasons, a number of claims and assumptions made in Chapter One of this report were not really tested in the actual review of African programmes. The review, however, has revealed a number of constraints and weaknesses which it is important to overcome, regardless of whether one adopts the first or the second reading discussed in Chapter One. They apply to different levels and stages in the planning process, and to NORAD as well as to recipient country institutions.

It may possibly be argued that the new NORAD strategy which puts the responsibility for planning and implementing development programmes squarely on authorities and institutions in the recipient country, will reduce the need for detailed knowledge of socio-cultural conditions in NORAD and the Ministry. This is not the case. The new strategy builds on the recognition that donor-exclusive or donor-dominated initiatives, executed in isolation from the recipient-country decision-making process or attempted in opposition to the recipient's aims and objectives, will tend to have only a limited chance of success, particularly over the longer term. While this is important, it does not relieve donors of the responsibility to provide effective aid, including the responsibility to pinpoint the possibilities and constraints which promote or impede such effectiveness, and including the responsibility for monitoring and evaluating Norwegian aid programmes. In the new strategy document, this is confirmed by the emphasis being put on the need for increased knowledge concerning socio-cultural and other conditions as well as the emphasis put on capacity - and competence- building in recipient countries.

The issues that have been raised in this report (particularly Chapter One) do not lend themselves to easy answers. Thus an important part of the "tools" given by those involved in providing socio-cultural data for planning purposes will still be to expose some of the difficulties, contradictions or conflicts of interest in a situation in order that

false hopes of easy solutions should not mislead. Ignoring socio-cultural issues, however, would imply the endorsement or continuation of policies which are presently not particularly successful and which tend to shape Third World peoples into a monocultural mould.

The recommendations that follow are based on the following considerations:

- a) All types of assistance programmes are implemented in specific socio-cultural environments or contexts which affect the realization of objectives. Failure to include socio-cultural analysis as part of the project design process, and during monitoring, may cause a project to fall short of its objectives or to have unintended negative consequences.
- b) A culture-sensitive approach to development will be able to draw on the large reserves of creativity, knowledge and skills that are to be found in all societies. Such enrichment will give development firmer roots in society and make it easier to sustain development (cf. South Commission *op.cit.*:132).
- c) The review of African programmes has revealed that there is a critical inability in NORAD/the Ministry both to **acquire** knowledge about relevant aspects of social and cultural conditions in the localities in which NORAD operates, and to **incorporate** such knowledge into the planning process. While the review has also revealed that this problem is many-sided and complex, there is little doubt that considerable improvements are required on the Norwegian side.
- d) In order to promote sustainable development, also from a socio-cultural point of view, Norwegian assistance programmes must increasingly shift responsibility to national, regional and local levels so as to broaden the base of development and encourage local initiative and problem solving. Long-term capacity building, therefore, must be an integral part of Norwegian aid programmes.

3.2 Organizational Recommendations - NORAD

It makes little sense to view knowledge required for the preparation and implementation of programmes independently of the organizational capacity required for its utilization. This applies not only to particular projects in particular places, but also to institutions and organisations at different levels in the planning process, including of course, Norwegian agencies and organisations. There is little reason to initiate socio-cultural baseline, monitoring or evaluation studies if the knowledge gained through such studies cannot be properly utilized because of problems of capacity and competence in agencies which commission them. This is a crucial point, and it tends to be underrated by researchers as well as development agencies.

3.2.2 Manpower

It is the team's view that **if one wants to translate a specific commitment into institutional priorities that guide day-to-day decisions, one needs crucial expertise and competence inside the organization, not just on the outside.** This is not just a question of interpreting and "converting" reports of consultants into a Norwegian bureaucracy. For social scientists or others to be useful, those who commission their services must be able to confront them with their information needs and their decision problems. There is a need, then, for active dialogue, both before and after studies are carried out.

There is reason to believe that NORAD presently does not fully utilize the existing in-house competence within the field of socio-cultural analysis. This is partly a reflection of the fact that NORAD suffers from an unresolved tension between being a bureaucracy and being a professional organization. Thus staff members tend to be recruited to positions ("saksbehandlere", "konsulenter") which are not necessarily related to clearly defined professional or disciplinary needs. As one consequence, the number of economists, geographers, anthropologists etc. in the organization is incidental rather than planned for. As another consequence, there is a good chance that the particular professional expertise of a certain person is not fully utilized as he/she is typically assigned jobs which may not favour optimal utilization. As a result, the particular

competence which any given person brings into the organization, is almost bound to deteriorate over the long term. In the end, the requirements of bureaucracy are victorious and the professional demands not adequately satisfied.

There would seem to be a number of ways in which the present situation can be improved: First, before embarking upon any massive employment of social scientists at head office (which is not advisable), **an inventory should be made of the existing manpower and its deployment, with a view of utilizing personnel in optimal ways.**

It is particularly important that Norwegian analytical capability and preparedness reflects the various needs as discussed in this report. Socio-cultural conditions are not limited to local levels, (although such levels are important), and the new NORAD strategy will put particular demand on the ability to analyze and confront political and economic macro-developments, so as to expose problems and dilemmas, define priorities and make choices regarding Norwegian development assistance. This will be particularly important if the Norwegian government puts increasing emphasis on linking its aid programmes to human rights, democratization, etc. There is reason to believe that the existing in-house competence in relation to such issues is inadequate.

The decision to place a special advisor on socio-cultural conditions centrally within NORAD is an appreciated measure, particularly if backed by sufficient professional expertise in line offices, departments, and at the NORAD offices in recipient countries.

Regarding the NORAD missions, it is important to recognize that the new strategy will make NORAD's role more clearly defined. The primary responsibility for running programmes is with the recipient country. NORAD will still play an active role in planning, but particularly through constructive dialogue, close monitoring and reviews. There is probably much to learn from the model used by NORAD in Sri Lanka, where the role of expatriate advisers has been minimal, but where NORAD has been strongly involved in the district development programmes through active dialogue, close monitoring and systematic planning routines. Another aspect of the Sri Lanka model is the considerable decentralization of decision making authority to the Colombo office,

which has been matched with the employment of competent staff (including, notably, Sri Lankan professionals), provided with sufficient capacity to take advantage of the authority allocated to them. **The team recommends that the Colombo model be seriously considered for more general adoption.**

The capacity to comprehend and to utilize knowledge, however, can not depend entirely on the recruitment of specialists (anthropologists, sociologists). There is a more general need to build a capacity to use social science knowledge and data in ways which would contribute directly to improving performance. This is discussed thoroughly in the main report, and include considerations related to a) planning routines, b) data collection and c) the problem of comprehending other cultures.

Regarding a) and b), USAID has since 1975 used Social Soundness Analysis (SSA) as one of the ways of incorporating social analysis into project identification and design. The SSA guidelines have recently been reviewed (Development Alternatives 1990), and a set of modified guidelines for social and institutional analysis at both project and program levels has been proposed. It is worth noting that the new framework explicitly adopts a broad unit of analysis, based on the recognition that, if social analysis is to survive and make a meaningful contribution, the unit of analysis has to move beyond the community and the individual to encompass the region and, where necessary, the nation or the state. The report and new guidelines have not been available to the team during its work, but **it is recommended that the Ministry obtains a copy of the revised Social Soundness Analysis guidelines for further consideration and possible use for own purposes.**

Regarding the problem of comprehending other cultures, the question of **training** is relevant in the case of Norwegian personnel who join development assistance projects in different capacities. The training office in NORAD is doing an appreciated task of training for the different categories of people who are going to join the Norwegian missions in partner countries. These are either full-time staff on the mission, administrative or technical assistance personnel on the projects, or volunteers. However, by looking at the training programmes offered at the NORAD home office, we feel that

there is room for considerable improvements. Ongoing plans to introduce changes within the field of personell training suggest that there is already awareness of current needs as far as socio-cultural issues are concerned. **It is recommended that NORAD go ahead with its plans to strengthen the training of personell, and that socio-cultural issues receive sufficient attention in the process.**

In addition, however, other improvements can be made in order to allow country-specific knowledge and experience to accumulate. **First, the posting system for NORAD personell needs to be reconsidered.** Short assignment periods, lack of sufficient overlaps and occasional instances of deliberate replacements are not conducive to the accumulation of country-specific competence in individual officials. Second, the restrictive opportunities for many aid officials to come in contact with and experience the actual reality of different target groups (the "aid culture") do not encourage attempts to transcend accustomed ways of thinking.

3.2.3 Information Systems

The project cases discussed in this report also illustrate the difficulties experienced during the retrieval of existing background material. There is a discrepancy between existing and retrieved information, which may lead to a serious under-utilization of the planning potential. With increasing interests (academic and others) for developing problems, the information on specific topics, regions or local communities is continuously accumulating, and would, if properly utilized, represent a valuable planning asset. The sources of such information (national and foreign academic institutions, NGO's, various archives etc.) are, however, normally scattered and un-coordinated, and the retrieval of relevant material may prove extremely difficult. The following recommendations suggest that various types of information systems should be strengthened.

The deficiencies related to the present information basis should be taken seriously, and **both the archives and the library should be strengthened.** At present any person seeking to obtain an adequate view of a project or programme's history would encounter serious problems retrieving the necessary background documents. The archives seem to have

followed a policy of not storing more comprehensive reports on the projects. In addition, there have been successful attempts by archival personnel actively to dispose of material. Judging from the time-consuming exercise of retrieving material for the present evaluation, it can be concluded that the archives in Oslo and in the NORAD missions abroad do not facilitate efficient information retrieval and they constitute a major constraint on the effective accumulation of an institutional memory.

NORAD/Ministry officials also need to improve their awareness of existing information problems. The problem of unsystematic archives may easily be solved with more resources allocated to the task, but the problem of incomplete archives also emerges from the weak awareness on the part of the officials that the archives are important for the accumulation of knowledge and experiences.

Several steps can be taken to improve the situation. **First, the NORAD missions should actively and systematically collect and store information on the regions, districts and communities of relevance for their activities.** This task should become part of the missions' regular activities, and resources and personnel should be allocated to the job with the aim of facilitating a basis for better planning and more efficient monitoring and evaluation.

Secondly, NORAD/the Ministry should make efforts to produce all-embracing bibliographies or data-bases of existing information relating to specific communities, districts or regions. Such bibliographies/data-bases should also explicitly contain information on where the material may be obtained. A highly valuable tool of planning would additionally be to work out comprehensive summaries of and reading guides to the existing material. To produce such guides is a professional task, and relevant expertise should be assigned to the job.

Thirdly, the NORAD library in Oslo should, specifically, be assigned the task of building a collection of books and reports on socio-cultural conditions in areas receiving Norwegian assistance.

Fourthly, sufficient resources must be allocated to the essential task of improving the storing and retrieval capacity of the archives, both in Oslo and the country missions.

3.3 Recipient Countries - General Policies

In order to create or support programmes which are compatible with their socio-cultural settings, or achieve important cultural objectives, it is important that (i) **planning approaches be promoted which are responsive to needs and desires of local populations and with a capacity for learning and change;** and that (ii) **high priority be given to efforts aimed at building institutional capacity and competence in recipient countries.**

In most societies, there is a vast reservoir of useful and valuable traditional knowledge and social values that tend to remain underutilized by governments and development agencies. Since this is essentially the basis on which people have survived and thrived for generations, it must have relevance and importance to present day life and development activities. If we are able to promote new approaches to planning, there is a real chance to utilize the potentials of this knowledge base, identify constraints and problems, and come up with solutions that are based on people's perceptions and aspirations.

If local populations are considered an essential party to decisions made on development policies, it is also important to locate the institutions and channels whereby local participation can be mobilized in the decision-making process. This does not imply local autonomy to countermand national policies of development and investment; but it does assume a genuine participation in evaluating and shaping its local course. There are a number of reasons why the realization of such participation is essential: it constitutes a fundamental component in the ultimate objective of development. More specifically it brings a more integrated and pragmatic perspective to the evaluation of alternatives. People who are themselves involved in change will be more sensitive to the side effects of a particular development course, whereas distant bureaucrats, with a single-sector mandate and responsibility, are organizationally committed to dismiss such

considerations. Finally, on the practical level of implementation such local participation is the most effective way to make a development project "take root". It will tend to mobilize local leadership and entrepreneurial innovators and harness them directly to promotion of the programme.

Unless such participation gives genuine opportunity to influence policy, however, these effects will be transient. The price of achieving participation is thus the acceptance of constraints on the freedom of technocrats to formulate policy, and if these constraints give the policy a direction which is socially more realistic, this must be regarded as an advantage.

The objectives of development interventions, however, must include the building and strengthening of institutions and competence building on **different levels**. While external development agencies at best are prepared to solve problems once and for all, many problems are of the kind that they must be solved **over and over again**, i.e. they require a continuous service of the kind that only national and local institutions can provide. Assistance programmes, therefore, must become concerned with building up the ability of district and national bureaucracies to do and decide things - in addition to paying attention to such abilities and capacities among beneficiaries.

Administrative structures tend to be very hierarchical, centralized and vertically fragmented. Junior officers at the field level are at the bottom of a career ladder which leads progressively to less direct involvement with the poorer sections of the rural community. Decisions on even minor investments are normally made by the central ministries. Generally local governments have often been very restricted in powers and have been mainly concerned with regulative matters of public order, public health, markets, and so on, while the major **developmental** tasks have remained with the field administration of the central administration. The virtues of popular participation have not always been taken for granted.

The need to develop such capabilities is urgent in many fields. The whole policy process in most African countries is very weak. The underdevelopment of human resources for

policy work was part of the historical legacy of colonialism, but despite a dramatic expansion of education, the situation is still very difficult. Even today, the stock of graduates in sub-Saharan Africa is about 0.4% of the population aged 24 and above, compared to perhaps 6% on average in other less developed countries. Furthermore, what policy talent exists is not being utilized fully, as political and administrative conditions do not permit effective development of the skills that are available to governments.

The problem of capacity building, then, is not restricted to local or district levels and cannot be dealt with by local or regional efforts alone. If we want to promote new and improved approaches to planning, **we must be prepared to assist in a broad-based development and more productive use of human resources on both national, regional and local levels.**

3.4 Cultural Assistance

It has been argued throughout this report that the socio-cultural dimension must be regarded both as an **instrument** and as a **goal**. On the one hand, development strategies must be sensitive to local skills, knowledge, capital and organizations, and they must regard them as an infrastructure for future development; on the other hand, strategies must include as a goal the development of culture itself, the creative expansion, deepening, and change of a society's cultural stock.

This double view of culture is also held by the South Commission. While stressing the importance of cultural policies which pay due attention to issues like "the right to culture" and respect for cultural diversity, the Commission also sees the need for blending the preservation and enhancement of cultural forms and traditions with productive activities and income generation (op.cit.: 133). Further, concern with cultural identity does not imply rejection of outside influences. Rather, it should be "part of efforts to strengthen the capacity for autonomous decision-making, blending indigenous and universal elements in the service of a people-centred policy" (ibid.: 132). Thus the

Commission clearly recognizes that cultural identity issues are closely linked to more general policy questions regarding local or regional participation in the development process.

But if culture in the broad sense of the term is at the basis of development and gives meaning to development, it is also often at the heart of **power** in both international and national relations. Policies in many different fields are often seen as favouring particular ethnic groups, sections of a population or districts at the expense of other such groups, areas or categories; and cultural policies may form an important part of the competition for power and influence between politicians, parties and populations. Recent events in countries like India or the Sudan testify to the importance of cultural issues in political development. In a growing number of countries, **nation-building** efforts are frustrated by violent ethnic conflicts that threaten to tear apart nation-states and to destroy achievements that may have been gained in the fields of economic and social development.

While there may still be some redrawing of national boundaries to be made on the African continent and elsewhere, most states will continue to be multi-cultural. This implies that social realities of cultural diversity will often struggle against ideals of unity. The South Commission argues that there must be respect for cultural diversity, and that the decentralization of cultural policy is an essential means of ensuring that the interests of all cultural groups in a country are advanced. It is a major task for political leaders to define a country's national character in a manner that is both integrating and reflecting realities about the country. This means that one has to emphasize labels that unite, while not denying cultural diversity, and that positive symbols of identification with the country at large have to be developed. In most cases such cultural policies must develop together with policies which foster local participation, forms of regional autonomy, etc. It is also a question of establishing **institutions** that are truly national and transcend the boundaries of particular factions or ethnic groups. Successful policies must balance the principles of unity with diversity, remove the divisive issues from national debate and in many cases, promote regional control over own affairs, while enabling them to participate in national power and economic processes on equitable bases. Where a nation is so divided that there is no common frame of reference, no

sense of collective identity, and no vision of leadership beyond factional boundaries and loyalties, parliamentary majority is not democracy, but a dictatorship of numbers.

How can Norwegian development assistance promote policies in support of nation-building efforts which build on the ideals of the South Commission (respect for cultural identity and cultural diversity)? It might be argued that we should shy away from such issues because they are both difficult and politically sensitive. But nation-building efforts are at the base of development, they are burning issues in most developing countries, and it would be naive to believe that development programmes do not relate to them, whether by intention or not. The mistake would be to shy away from them because they are difficult. Another mistake would be to enter this field without the necessary knowledge and sensitivity.

Based on such considerations, it is recommended that **NORAD initiates a broad-based cultural assistance programme**, giving particular priority to Norway's partner countries. It would be advisable to focus attention on some of the "tools" for building regional and national identification. Thus, e.g., the South Commission correctly argues that **formal education** is a principal channel for the transmission and perpetuation of culture, and that access to education, therefore, is a crucial component of the right to culture. At the same time, to serve the goals of development, the education system must be informed by the country's cultural ethos. If this is seen as important, there is in many countries considerable scarcity of books and other means available for existing school systems to teach about own cultures and own society. This is not just quite related to important areas like history or geography (how many countries in Africa have a reasonably updated national atlas, if any at all?), but also to works within the fields of botany, zoology, etc.

On a more general level, the objectives of Norwegian cultural assistance should be

- to promote cultural diversity, renewal and popular participation in cultural life;
- to support development processes by actively utilizing the cultural dimension
- to promote awareness of and pride in own culture, and to develop and enrich cultural heritage; and
- to promote inter-cultural understanding and solidarity.

It is important that it be recognized that there may, in several instances, be a conflict between different objectives. This may particularly apply to the relationships between national and local levels in multi-cultural settings. For a development agencies, there is usually no easy way out of such problems. On a general level, there are likely to be a number of programmes where it would serve well to seek the collaboration of NGOs, both Norwegian and local. Particularly in the sphere of mobilization of human resources at grass-roots level, NGOs tend to have at their disposal a rich experience and know-how often lacking in state bureaucracies and large-scale official development agencies. Many NGOs are themselves products of the mobilization of human resources at the base, rather than government creations. Their contribution could become a determining factor, provided, of course, that they themselves open up to the cultural dimension of their obligations. It would, therefore, be appropriate to explore different **channels** as well as to identify programmes on different **levels**, so as to balance carefully between objectives related both to nation-building, cultural diversity and cultural enrichment.

Within the framework of a new programme, priority should be given to the following areas (which coincide with those already being proposed by NORAD):

- educational institutions, libraries, printing and publishing facilities (incl. the production of teaching books and material);
- media (literature, theater, music, mass media);
- local and national cultural institutions;
- protection, enrichment and development of cultural traditions (incl. knowledge systems, social practices, forms of communication);
- institutional collaboration between cultural institutions in Norway and countries in the South as well as South-South Collaboration.

Finally, we will emphasize again that some of the most positive and productive programmes from a socio-cultural point of view will just as likely be programmes associated with agricultural development or with resource management issues (cf. example on African agriculture) rather than cultural programmes in a more narrow sense of the term. It is, therefore, important that efforts be coordinated so as to achieve optimal benefits, in accordance with the argument running through this report.

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