

Process of Community Mobilisation

The social mobilisation for developing organisations at the micro-level is almost the same as followed by other rural development programmes. The most important point to highlight is that in this case the mobilisation is not carried around delivery of certain packages, but with the objective to form and then transform the village level organisations into organised representative NGOs. Any package delivered is implemented with the objective to help the community learn how to take on similar activities in the future on their own. Moreover, the organisations are not formed to shine statistics in the progress reports. The focus instead is in the interest of the communities and sustainability of the VOs. When the Social Organisers are sure that formation of VOs is not the end, but the beginning of a process on which further institutions needs to be developed, he/she will never take it for granted. Further institution building on the basic building blocks would not be possible if they are fake, consisting of just two or three accomplices in hijacking a development scheme or some other advantage from the external support programme.

The following cycle of social mobilisation needs to be carried out by the field workers/social organisers of the external support programme at the micro-level and then gradually hand it over to the meso-level organisations for keeping the communities involved in the development process on a sustainable basis. Of course, the meso-level organisations would not have to go through the initial steps of the cycle as they would inherit well-developed grassroots institutions.

STEP 1 TO SOCIAL MOBILISATION

Preparation

Social Organisers must prepare themselves before they can successfully stimulate self-help development in a community. They must be clear and knowledgeable about their goals; they must know about their target community; they must have the required skills; they must understand the fundamental concepts of mobilization. Objective of this stage is to motivate, equip and train the external programme staff for the whole social organisation process of developing multi-level local institutions ahead. A social organiser and programme staff has to be very clear about all the concepts and terminology used in the participatory development and social organisation. They must be clear about the model they intent for develop at the end of the 4-6 years implementation phase. The staff must have a good understanding of the ways to ensure community participation in all activities and train people in democratic methods. They should also be able to anticipate the possible hindrances to the programme implementation and prepare him/herself self for overcoming such resistance through different techniques of social mobilisation.

The first thing to do now is to start a diary to recording account of the day-to-day progress. An inexpensive school notebook is OK. The SOs might wish to use four notebooks or four parts in a note book and title them: (1) Goals and Concepts; (2) The Target Community; (3) Mobilizing Skills, and (4) A Day-to-Day record. This chapter intends to focus on an SO needs to get prepared. The SOs must not, however, assume that they can get prepared "once and for all." The social organisers continually learn more and more about all the things mentioned in this chapter. It is a never-ending process, and we will be doomed to failure if we ever think we know it all.

1. The Goals

One of the slogans used in management training is, "If you do not know where you are going, then any road will take you there." This applies well to the social organisers while they are preparing for mobilizing the community for organisation. As happens most of the time, it is easy to run around, looking busy, arranging meetings, getting infrastructure projects constructed, talking to community leaders, moving advocacy groups, stimulating action, without moving forward in developing genuine representative institutions at the micro- and meso-levels. The Social Organisers need to clarify their goals, first to themselves, then on paper, then to those around them. Purposeless work or facilitation in delivery of programme packages will take the Social Organisers and their programme nowhere.

Here the Social Organisers should begin writing in their journal, or the section of it they have set aside for goals and concepts. They must set them as their own goals and must not think of them merely as a list of someone else's ideals. The goals of mobilization to develop a community may vary from person to person, community to community. Nevertheless, there are common elements, which include: poverty eradication, good governance, change in social organization, community capacity building, empowering, low income and marginalised people, and gender balance.

As the social organisers go along, reading this practical Guide, engaging in mobilization, they will see that the more each of these goals becomes more interesting and challenging, the more they know. As information of the SOs increase, they need to go back to their diary often to update, refine, and add details to all these goals. Poverty reduction, for example, is more complex and challenging when the field staff of such programmes works with it, in contrast to just listing it. We learn to avoid "poverty alleviation" because that merely temporarily alleviates the pain and discomfort, and does not lead to a durable solution.

Poverty is not merely the absence of money and attacking the causes of poverty means fighting apathy, ignorance, disease, social, political and economic inequality and dishonesty. That is only one example where the Social Organisers' understanding of the goal expands through experience.

Similarly, good governance does not simply mean strong leadership and efficient administration. It also means transparency, accountability, people's involvement, trust, honesty, and a vision for the future. The SOs can hardly expect community leaders to be (or become) transparent in their use of community resources if the SOs themselves are not transparent in their community activities. The community is like a mirror that reflects the work and progress of each field worker. It is plain ignorance if a field worker assumes that he can bypass or cheat some of the NGO/CBOs.

The crux of this discussion is that individually a social organiser can never eradicate poverty nor can he provide good governance to the target community. In this case the social organiser must be clear about his goal and that is to develop sustainable VO, RDOs and RCB. If he goes to form a community organisation for the sake of delivery yet another community development scheme of some micro-credit, he may never succeed in forming sustainable grassroots institutions. The objective of the SOs' work must never be target oriented. The focus should be on the quality of the organisations for the sake of sustainability.

2. The Target Community

Another proverb that is often used in community development is, "The potter must know her/his clay." The SOs clay is the community. The SOs wants to mould and develop it into something strong. To do so, the SOs must know a lot about the community (and about the nature of communities in general). The SO must know as much as possible about its social organization, culture, economy, languages, layout (map), problems, politics, and ecology of the target community. Their research should not be merely to get a list of unrelated facts; they need to analyse them to understand the nature of community as a social system as defined in "What is Community?" below. The SOs have to think about the relations between different elements of a community.

A good start for a social organiser is to make a map of the village in which he intends to start working. The map should be about: Where do people live? What facilities are in the community? (e.g. roads, paths, water supply, clinic, school, sanitation, market and other communal facilities and services). Later, when they lead community members through an assessment of the community situation (resources, needs, opportunities, problems); the SOs will guide them in making a community map. Doing one now by themselves will help the SOs to prepare for that participatory activity later.

The SOs need to put their notes into a diary outlining observations about the community's like: Social organization, economy, language(s), politics, shared values, traditions, and its relationship to the physical environment (ecology). They must also continue to analyse how the different elements relate to one another. The SOs will learn that a community is not merely a collection of individuals, but a system that transcends those individuals. As a system it has various dimensions, technological, economic, political, institutional, ideological and perceptual. People come in and go out of the community, by birth, death and migration, yet the system persists. And it is always changing. The SOs job is to understand that system so they can nudge that ongoing change in certain directions (as indicated in the earlier discussed goals). There is a lot the SOs can learn about their target communities, and they should never stop.

3. The Needed Skills

The skills that the SOs need are not exceptionally difficult to learn, but can be very powerful tools. They can be misused. As an analogy, one should think of the skills of a locksmith. A locksmith performs many useful and valuable services, but they can be misused for breaking, entering, and theft. As the SOs learn mobilization skills, they should use them for the benefit of the community, not to benefit their own self at the expense of the community. Since the target group is the community as a whole, most of the SOs' needed skills belong to communication abilities. They need to learn how to be a public speaker, but not just any kind

of public speaker. The kind of public speaking the SOs need to know is the kind needed for leadership and facilitation.

The SOs must learn how to draw information and decisions out of a group, which requires a full understanding of the goals and a relaxed confidence in front of people. They must be able to recognize preaching, lecturing, and making speeches, and avoid those styles. The technical skills they need as social organisers include: public speaking, planning, managing, observing, analysing, and writing. The best way to learn these is through being self-taught. Along these skills, they also need to develop a personal character that is honest, enthusiastic, positive, tolerant, patient and motivated. The SOs have to know how to listen and understand when people talk. They have to know how to:

- ensure that information is accurate,
- know how to illustrate a point and make it interesting to a listener.

The SOs do not:

- preach like a preacher;
- make speeches like a politician; and
- lecture like a professor.

The SOs need to:

- learn how to remain confident while sensitive to others while standing among or in front of many people;
- know how to know and to like people;
- know how to avoid being self centred, vain, or arrogant, and
- know how to lead a discussion without being bossy, dictatorial or sarcastic.

Since the SOs must organize community groups and form executive committees, they need some organizational skills as well. Since the SOs also strengthen by giving management skills, they need management skills by themselves. Similarly, they need some planning skills, as they have to guide community groups through their own planning. Moreover, the SOs advise and guide groups to keep honest and accurate financial records and accounts, they need some accounting skills as well. More than just technical skills, the SOs need to have some personality characteristics that are necessary for success as a social organiser. The SOs' reputation is their strongest asset. If they are known to be honest, diplomatic, fair, hardworking, moral, clean living, tolerant, enthusiastic, humble, and forthright, their reputation will assist their mobilization efforts. If they are not, they must seek a different avocation.

4. The Basic Concepts

To be a successful social organiser, the SOs need more than a few technical skills in public dialogue and organizing groups for action. They need to know why to use those skills. They need to know principles. If their target is a community, then the SOs should know some sociological concepts about the nature of communities and the nature of social change (including development) of communities. This means that they need some understanding of social organization, the subject matter of sociology, anthropology, economics, politics, and the forces and processes that belong to those disciplines. It is not necessary to have a university degree, but the SOs should teach themselves the principles and knowledge of those subjects.

For instance, if the SOs want to strengthen (empower) a low income community, they must understand the enemy, which is the dependency syndrome. If their aim is the removal or eradication of poverty, the SOs need to know more than the symptoms and results of poverty. The SOs also need to understand the causes of poverty, in order to support and promote changes that will counteract those causes.

The SOs must see that poverty alleviation merely reduces the pain, temporarily, but does not contribute to poverty eradication. Poverty is not merely a question of money, and money alone will not eradicate poverty. If they look in "Key Words," at the end of this Guide, the SOs will find a fairly comprehensive list of basic concepts for the community worker. With each term the reader will not find a dictionary definition; however, the SOs will find a few notes relevant to the purpose of this Guide: how to be a social organiser.

The SOs need to think about each concept. Write about them in their diaries and discuss them with colleagues at meetings, conferences, workshops. During the SOs' leisure times, they need to talk about one or two of these concepts and try to go into the depth of the situation in their respective areas. The SOs need

to go one step at a time. Trying to learn "once and for all," is like trying to eat, "once and for all." Learning, like community development, should never end. When the SOs stop learning, they are dead.

5. Outside Resources

As community mobilisers, the SOs will find that it is difficult to find a balance between resources that originate outside the community, and those from within. The SOs and the community leaders/elders will be under considerable pressure to bring outside resources into the community. Donor agencies want to help, while community members want to receive. The SOs know, however, that bringing in outside resources contributes to the dependency syndrome and reduces the chances of sustainability and self-reliance.

Yet there are ways to maximize the strengthening ability of using outside resources as illustrated by the story of Mohammed (PBUH) and the rope that he gave to a jobless person for fetching wood from the forest. If the SOs can gradually utilise the funds reserved for community infrastructure in their own programme or convince other outside donor to provide some costs of skill training, management training, and mobilization, and assist the community in obtaining most of its own construction resources, the SOs can contribute to self-reliance and sustainability.

If Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) had merely given food to the beggar, he would have been training the beggar to be a beggar; by giving him some advice and capital instead, he assisted the beggar to become self-reliant. This Guide does help the SOs in obtaining outside resources, which can be used for preparing effective proposals and undertaking joint development schemes in the community. However, like any powerful tool (e.g. fire), these skills can be misused, and may contribute to poverty in the long run. The SOs need to use them well, and for the correct ends.

STEP 2 TO SOCIAL MOBILISATION

Taking A Start

The SOs do not get the community into action until they take action to prepare it for action. The starting phase is the community's getting prepared phase. After sensitising, raising awareness among the authorities, and getting any necessary permission from the concerned authorities and elders of the community, the SOs' next task is to raise mobilising human, natural and capital resources of the target community or communities.

Raising awareness phase mainly includes (1) explaining the programme goals and (2) methods, (3) convincing them that they can benefit from the social guidance, and (4) taking positive steps to prevent the raising of unrealistic expectations. Undoubtedly, the SOs will find resistance to social change, and often those with the most vested interests are among this target group. Ensuring accurate information and interpretation should be the SO biggest concern at this stage.

1. The Mobilization Cycle:

The mobilization cycle is sometimes called "The Community Participation Promotion Cycle," or the "Problem Solving Cycle," or "The Community Development Cycle," or "The Social Animation Cycle." It is a series of interventions (carried out by one or more social organiser) designed to increase the level of involvement of a community in the decisions that affect its own development. It is called a "Cycle," in that it is repeated, each time building on earlier successes, errors, and lessons learned.

Is a series of interventions in a logical and progressive order carried out by a legitimate, authorized and recognized social organisers. It uses the community choice of action as a means of strengthening, not as an end in itself. The cycle requires that the social organisers be informed and sensitive to community characteristics so as to promote (encourages, advocates for, trains in skills necessary for, and supports) community participation in control and decision making of all actions affecting the community as a whole.

The main steps of this cycle are logically linked with each other and to the cycle as a whole. All steps are needed (absence of any one will seriously weaken its impact); and initiated in the following order, although there may be some overlap and continuation. Participation of all members of a target community (irrespective of biological or social characteristics) is essential to both poverty reduction and community strengthening. The key decisions to be made, and control to be exercised, include: assessing situations (needs and potentials); determining priority problems (and generating goals and objectives from them); planning

actions (community action plans, project designs): implementing and monitoring them, and evaluating their results. Contributions of resources (e.g. donations, communal labour, supplies), dialogue and consultation with external agencies are encouraged, although "participation" is much more comprehensive and inclusive than either "contribution" or "consultation."

There is a logical and functional social process of strengthening a community. It varies in length and some details, but the pattern remains basic. The SOs' role is to initiate the process and follow it through. The Mobilization Cycle here is a general example followed by many development programmes. This cycle vary from community to community, from time to time, and according to the resources available, the SOs' programmes policy, and other circumstances.

The basic and essential process is something like this: First the SOs get permission and authorization to do their work. Then the SOs start raising awareness in the community where they observed problems. The SOs caution against people assuming that the SOs will solve the problems but point out that the community has the potential resources to solve its own problems. All it needs is the will, and perhaps some management skills in which the SOs can help them get. The SOs facilitate their community unification, assessment and agreeing on a priority goal. The SOs help them to organize an executive committee, or revitalize an existing one. The SOs help them prepare an action plan and project design. The SOs cheer and appreciate the community members as they, not the SOs, implement it, ensuring that the transparency, monitoring, reporting, and evaluation aspects are inbuilt in the mechanism. The SOs help them celebrate its completion, and evaluation of the results.

The second assessment starts the process all over again, which is why we call it a cycle. The second time they are stronger and more self reliant, and perhaps the SOs have identified local social organisers who will help sustain the cycle as the SOs slowly withdraw to build umbrella bodies on the existing micro-level institutions. Before forming umbrella bodies (RDO) the SOs need to conduct thorough evaluation to assess maturity of the VO and WOs.

2. Paving the way.

Before the SOs begin working in the target community (or communities), they must have obtained both the needed permissions of the concerned community elders/leaders, and also the active cooperation, of the local administration and leaders responsible for the area. The SOs must keep in mind that they really have two targets (beneficiaries), not only (1) the community but also (2) the authorities who are responsible for the area that the community is in.

The social organisers must be recognized by authority and obtain legal status if they are not to be vulnerable to get blamed as seditious agitators, and harassed by police and others concerned with maintaining law and order. Furthermore, it is among the authorities where the most vested interest lies in maintaining the "provision" approach and fear of the "enablement" approach, as civil servants, officials, politicians, traditional and new leaders, and technical experts see immediate benefits of the provision approach as a means to obtain influence, popularity, votes, promotions and career advances. Sensitisation is not just a formality, but must be well planned and executed. The counteracting of rumours and false assumptions must be integral to the sensitisation strategy.

The SOs' goal for each community is to strengthen it by promoting self-help actions. The SOs' goal for the authorities is to work towards sustainability by moving towards an enabling context or environment (political and administrative) around and above the community. The SOs also have to build linkages of the local communities with different government line agencies and departments so that they may work together even when the SOs programme phases out of the area in the future.

The SOs' goal for leaders (political and informal), administrators ("bureaucrats"), and government line agencies technical experts ("technocrats") is to persuade them from being "providers" to becoming "facilitators of self help by the communities." This is not an easy task. The politicians claim that they would "provide" (e.g. any communal facility), and obtain popularity and votes. They, thus, have a vested interest in the "provision approach." Likewise, when administrators and technocrats claim that they would "provide," they look forward to enhancing their careers and obtaining promotions. They may have a vested interest in not changing to "facilitators." The SOs' strategy, however, is to demonstrate and convince them that they will benefit by abandoning the "provision" approach and moving to a "facilitating" approach.

The truth is that, if they shift from a "provision" approach to an "enabling" approach, in time, they will benefit. That is because every community has hidden resources that will not be identified and used so long as outside authorities are expected to provide all the resources. If the community gets the responsibility to provide its own facilities and services, and given management training to do so, many hidden resources are revealed and used. If leaders and responsible authorities shift to an enabling approach, the resulting strengthening of the communities can become the bases from which they can obtain their popularity, votes, career advances and promotions.

It is the SOs' responsibility to demonstrate that the "provision" approach may benefit leaders and authorities in the short run, but is not sustainable, whereas the "enabling" approach contributes to genuine development and growth which benefit them in the long run. To the extent to which the SOs can convince the authorities of their benefits from strengthening communities, the SOs will more easily obtain permission to work, obtain their active cooperation, and counteract vested interests that would seek to hinder the strengthening and self-reliance of the communities. To obtain clearance or permission from the authorities, it is useful to provide them with some documentation, referring to official policy, agreements and memoranda of understanding (MOU) that the SOs might have. This depends upon the respective programmes of the SOs, who should explain to the relevant authorities how they will benefit from having stronger, self-reliant communities in their areas of responsibility. If the SOs' budget and work plan allow, this is the time to organize a workshop for sensitising authorities and community religious, social and political leaders.

3. Awareness Raising.

After the initial preparations, the SOs should start encouraging the community to take action. Before encouraging the community to act (and therefore learn and become stronger) the social organiser must make the community members aware of specific realities. During this step, it is important to avoid raising false expectations, and actively counteract the inevitable assumptions and rumours about the kind of assistance to expect.

If they remain passive and expectant of government or other outside help, then they will remain with the burden of poverty and weakness; No community is totally poor; if there are live humans in it then it has resources and potentials, including labour, creativity, life, desires, and survival skills and living attributes. They should begin this by calling for a public meeting with all members of the community. This starts the "awareness raising" phase of the cycle. The SOs may find a tendency for only some persons to show interest in attending a meeting. Separate meetings for women should be arranged by women social organisers in the areas where men and women cannot have joint sitting. The SOs' job is to ensure that the poor and marginalised persons attend the meeting. The same with other people who need to be encouraged: the youth, the disabled, the ethnic minorities, the shy people, the religious minorities, the illiterates, and the very poor. When the SOs start talking about community problems, and asking what their priority problems are, there will be a tendency to assume that the SOs are there to solve their problems for them. The SOs must counteract this assumption and explain that they have to solve their own problems; the SOs can only assist and guide them, not do it for them.

Similarly, they may assume that the SOs will provide resources. Quickly and firmly squash that assumption, explaining that they must identify and provide their own resources; the SOs can only assist and guide them in doing so. The SOs need to learn to use stories, proverbs and analogies to illustrate the SOs points. The SOs are there to provide management training and encouragement; the SOs are not there to provide money, pipes, roofing material, etc. The SOs cannot expect people to avoid making such assumptions. They will. The SOs must actively and publicly contradict those assumptions that will falsely raise their expectation that the SOs provide resources. If the SOs do not, then they will find destructive disappointment later that will undo all the work the SOs have done. People will claim that the SOs promised them resources but that they failed to keep their promise. Providing accurate information is important (avoid raising false expectations).

4. Organisation.

No community is unified; there are schisms and factions in every one. The degree varies. When there is much social disparity, it is more difficult to reach a community consensus of the priority problem, and thus the priority goal. Community organisation is a necessary precedent to most community mobilization, and continues throughout the cycle as needed.

As discussed earlier the SOs should ensure participation of the cross section of the community. This is part of the SOs' strategy of unity organizing the community. The community may be based in differences in clan,

ethnic group, religion, class, gender, age, education, physical and mental abilities, occupation, income, wealth, land access (owner, tenant, squatter, other) and other characteristics that divide people. It is important that the SOs are seen as neutral (like a referee), not allied to or favouring any faction. This means the SOs must know the community very well. If the SOs spend much time with some people, others may feel the SOs are biased. The SOs must not be afraid in public to mention the differences and factions in the community, but then quickly point out that they are not aligned with any faction or factions.

The SOs aim at making the community homogenous. Unity of the community means all factions are loyal to the community as a whole and, in an atmosphere of tolerance, all people understand and respect all others, irrespective of religion, class, clan, gender, ability, wealth, ethnicity, language, or age. A unified community is a pre-requisite to identifying a single community priority problem and goal.

After organising a community, training in Community is necessary. One of the elements of the community management programme that distinguishes it from orthodox animation or community development interventions is the addition of management training. It is not sufficient to allow or even stimulate a low income or marginalised community to participate in democratic and developmental decision-making and actions; it is also necessary for that community to have the capacity to participate. Management training is designed to increase that capacity.

As a method of capacity building, management training goes beyond traditional training, with its emphasis only on skill transfer. Management training included some skill transfer, but also awareness raising, information transfer, encouragement and restructuring (organizing for decision making and organizing for effective action).

5. Open Dialogue:

The SOs' main tool, both for raising awareness and community organization, is a public meeting in which discussion is the central feature. Here it is very important that the SOs are thoroughly informed and conversant with their goals and the key concepts. The SOs' best role model should be that renowned educator of ancient Greece, Socrates, who taught by always asking questions, never giving answers. He was a great facilitator, guiding people to think (analyse, observe) for themselves. The SOs, too, should appear relaxed, confident and informed. Draw questions out of the participants. Especially, they should ask the quiet and shy ones for their opinions. They must not allow the over confident and dominating ones to take over or control the discussion.

In the public meetings the SOs also introduce the "brainstorm" session. The SOs must explain that different kinds of sessions have different ground rules. The open dialogue, where the SOs guide by facilitating and questioning, allows for debate and cross talk; the "brainstorm" does not. In a brainstorm the SOs emphasize that there is no debate, no criticism, no cross talk. The SOs will call for suggestions and write them on the board, all of them, even the silly ones, and later prioritize the list of suggestions. The "brainstorm" is very structured and focused and the participants must learn and practice the ground rules.

The SOs must never tell a community group what to think or what to do. The however, must remain focused on their goals that is empowering the community for fighting apathy, ignorance, dependency, disease and dishonesty (the causes of poverty). But the SOs have to facilitate them in coming to their own realization, and their own decision. The SOs must take this facilitation approach if they want to empower or strengthen them. Lecturing and preaching should be avoided.

6. Challenge the Community:

While the SOs want the community to develop strength, the SOs do not passively and automatically accept at first what appears to be the community's priority goal. Resistance produces strength; for instance the muscles become strong when they are forced to resist in the weight lifting exercises. If the body builders' muscles never meet resistance, they will grow weak. If the SOs do too much for a community, it will not become stronger.

The first suggestion of a priority by the community might not be well thought out, and if the SOs challenge it, they may think more carefully about what action they would take. Let us look at a hypothetical example. Perhaps the community members say that their priority goal is to build a clinic. "Fair enough," the SOs reply, "But what is your reasoning behind that choice of goal?" "Does the community have the capacity to build and maintain a clinic?" "What problems will the clinic solve? And what problems will it cause?"

Strengthen them by letting them defend their choice. If it turns out that community members want a clinic because a rival community down the road has one, that their main motivation is pride, then the SOs can clarify that. "Remember that it is the community own resources that will go into building it; is that really how the community wants to spend their money?" the SOs say. Perhaps it then comes out that babies are dying, and that is their primary concern.

Here is the SOs' opportunity to point out an important principle of primary health care; that prevention is much better than cure. Children are dying mainly from diarrhea caused by water borne diseases. A clinic may help in curing disease, but it is more humane, cheaper, and less risky to reduce water borne disease by a combination of three things: (1) hygiene education leading to behaviour change, (2) a clean potable water supply, and (3) effective sanitation that keeps human wastes away from the drinking water.

By being challenged to analyse its problems and search for practical and feasible solutions, the community may respond by re-examining its priority problems and re-defining its priority goals. They SOs must not passively accept their first choice of goal.

7. Needs Prioritised by the Community.

Although the social organiser must first make an assessment of community resources, potentials, hindrances and needs, the strategy of the mobilization cycle requires that an assessment be done with the community as a whole. This might not be done all at once, and may be done or continued to be done by the community executive later, after it is formed and organized. All future plans and actions in the intervention must be made on the bases of observed reality, not on the imaginings or special interests of specific factions within the community. Everyone in the community must recognize the needs and potentials.

Defining Priorities; Problems and Goals: When the community is sufficiently unified, and when all factions are involved, it is time to set the community into action. That is done by obtaining a consensus of priority problem, and turning it around as a way to identify the priority goal. The brainstorming technique is one of the tools to use here.

The focus of the SOs' public dialogue and awareness raising will be the community choice of action to take. It is very important to the SOs' success that the final decision is that of the whole community, not merely the desire of one or two factions or influential persons within the community. There will be a great eagerness, and pressure, to complete the action, be it construction of a link road, clinic or water supply, or some social work service. The SOs must not be diverted by the eagerness and pressure.

The community has its goal (e.g. drinking water supply scheme) while the SOs have their goal (community empowerment). They are not the same. The SOs assist and guide the community in obtaining its objectives, the right way, no matter how long it may take. Politicians, journalists, and administrators will try to judge the SOs by the community goals (e.g. building the latrine). That should not deceive the SOs. The latrine construction is the SOs' "means" not the goal. If any infrastructure scheme is constructed without empowering the community, without increased gender balance, without increased transparency, without increased self reliance, then the SOs have failed to reach their objective.

It is relatively more easy to pump resources into a community (e.g. money, roads, hand pumps, etc) to build the physical structure, but it is not likely to be sustainable; the community members will not feel they own it, and not feel responsible for maintaining it. The SOs may reach the short-term objective of achieving the programme of donors' target, but the SOs will fail to reach their own long-term social organisation's goal of strengthening that community. If the community projects or micro-credit schemes are not done correctly, they are not worth doing at all. The "provision" approach weakens the community and contributes to the socially debilitating "dependency syndrome."

8. Strengthen the Community.

While there are many factors that contribute to strength, capacity, or empowerment, the one that most concerns a social organiser is "organization." Other factors being equal, the level and effectiveness of organization determines the strength of a group, agency or community. We may use a football team as an example. If the SOs have two football teams, with the same number of individuals, the same range of skills, physical condition, and technology (e.g. quality of shoes), they would be equal. Let us say one team is not organized; there is no division of labour, no coordination, no recognizable social structure. The other team is

organized, has a coach with authority, has different roles for goalkeeper, defence, left and right wings, centre forward, and other division of labour.

Different team members have different roles and practice playing in an integrated manner (e.g. passing the football). In this case it is easy to see that the second team is more powerful, has more strength and capacity than the first one, even though their other characteristics are equal. Better organization makes better capacity. So, too, with whole societies. The point, for the SOs as a social organiser, is that their goal in strengthening a low-income community is to help them target group consciously organized for more effectiveness. The SOs do not form a community organisation for their own sake, or help them choose chair, vice, secretary, and treasurer, just to have pretty titles. The SOs help them get organized, get better organized, or reorganized for effective action, to empower them. Better organization results in better power.

STEP 3 TO SOCIAL MOBILISATION

Organising the Community

It must be kept in mind that VOs are the basic building blocs of the whole rural development model proposed in this book. Therefore, all the focus should be on their sustainability right from the beginning. The SOs want the office bearers of the community organization to become stronger by being organized effectively and trained in the necessary skills. With the whole community, the SOs select and organise the office bearers. This core group of the community organisation may have different names, e.g. simply office bearers, executive committee, Community Implementing Committee, Project Committee, or Development Committee. Then, with this executive, the SOs make a detailed participatory assessment of conditions (including problems and resources) in the community. The sound principle is that all the community members should be involved in problems identification, prioritisation and planning phases.

Using brainstorming techniques, the SOs show the community members how to participate in decision making. After identification of a scheme and formation of a core committee for that task, preparation of an action plan takes place. The SOs then guide the core committee in presenting their findings to the community as a whole. Then, using brainstorming techniques again, the community modifies (if necessary) and approves the action plan. The SOs should also explain about requesting outside resources (the skills of writing proposals, etc), warning them of the danger of the dependency syndrome. The SOs also train them in the importance of monitoring and have them decide on how it should be done. Finally, the SOs help them to organize for implementation.

1. Implementation.

The actions the community will now undertake are to:

1. form an executive committee;
2. assess community conditions;
3. prepare a plan of action;
4. obtain needed resources;
5. ensure that all community activities will be monitored, and
6. organize most effectively for implementation.

Simple implementation by itself will not necessarily strengthen a community, nor will training. The SOs' task is to integrate community action with training and guidance of community members. At all times the SOs are guiding the community, show them that this is an opportunity to learn for undertaking such projects in the future on their own. The whole process up to the preparation of an action plan may at first seem to them to be an unnecessary nuisance; the SOs must be enthusiastic in showing them its importance and usefulness. The community gets stronger when its members learn by doing and when the SOs facilitate their self learning.

2. Forming the Core Committee.

Because the details of a project design can not be accomplished in a public meeting of hundreds of people, it is practically necessary for the community to form a Core Committee for the project duration and for follow up. This Core Committee should be chosen by consensus if voting will contribute to factionalism and schisms; here the social organiser must be aware of and sensitive to community values and practices. The social organiser then needs to train the committee in participatory planning, management and leadership, so

that it does not become non-transparent (secretive) to the community as a whole. The Core Committee should review the action plan, add details as needed, and prepare a project design for community approval (again using the participatory methods encouraged by the social organiser).

The core committee for the project/projects must be chosen by the whole community not just a faction or a few factions. The core committee must be part of the community, and be responsible and accountable to the community. The SOs must make this clear to the community members, using whatever communication skills they may have.

The SOs also need to break down assumptions in this phase. The choice of accountant/treasurer, for example, may be fraught with assumptions. Many people, especially in rural communities with many illiterates, may assume that they must select the most educated member of the community as treasurer. This may have been a school teacher. It has often been the experience that the school teacher is from a far off district, has a low salary, has no roots in or loyalty to the community, and absconds with the community resources he has been entrusted to handle. One does not need to read and write in order to count. If an older person, deeply rooted in the community and well trusted, is chosen, then he can be the treasurer, even if illiterate. The whole process, however, must be culturally appropriate and acceptable to community members.

3. Situational Analysis.

A community should undertake its activities from an informed base. The core committee should make an on-site assessment, analyse it, then present its findings to the community as a whole. This is a "situation analysis." Although the SOs have already made their own assessment, including a map, as part of their preparation phase, it is important that the core committee make its own assessment. The SOs must not do it for them and the committee should not delegate it to anyone else.

A convenient date should be set for the SOs and the executive committee to walk around the community. They should walk around all or as much of the community area as they can, looking, talking to people, making notes, drawing sketches. They should meet afterwards to compare observations and draw up a combined assessment report. One member of the core committee (not the SO) to write up the combined findings of the assessment, to be presented to the community as a whole.

In the assessment walk, the SO should look for problems and solutions, resources and constraints. He/she should show roads that need repair. If the SOs (including the core committee) identify an old carpenter or another skilled person, they must determine if he could give some training to some the young people; if he is supported by his family would he donate his energy and advice, or need a small honorarium? They must look for other potential resources, human and physical and note them in the assessment.

After the core committee meets to agree upon a combined assessment and after the report is written (copied if possible) they should present their findings to the community as a whole. This requires calling another whole community meeting at a convenient time. In most cases, we have observed that the social organisers depend upon verbal discussion and shy away from the use of flip charts and other audio visual aids. If the SOs, as social organiser, have a flip chart and news print for such presentations, to loan them, or can borrow some, all the better. The SOs should not present their findings. The SOs facilitate the meeting and let them present their findings to their whole community. The assessment is a prerequisite to the community plan of action. The SOs need to ensure that there is complete understanding among the community members what the core team observed, and that there is consensus about the nature and extent of problems and potentials.

4. Preparing an Action Plan.

In training and encouraging the community and its office bearers or the core committees to become stronger (more self reliant), the SOs must impress upon them the necessity of management and planning. In planning, it is first necessary to have a vision, "Where do the community members want to go?" It is important that the community is unified in sharing its vision. The SOs' job is to ensure that. The essence of management planning is condensed into four questions:

1. "What do we want?"
2. "What do we have?"
3. "How do we use what we have to get what we want?" and
4. "What will happen when we do?"

The community assessment should answer question two. To answer questions three and four, the community should prepare a Community Action Plan. This can be a one-year plan, a five-year plan, or some other time period, consistent in length with other development plans in the area. The action plan should indicate:

1. how the community is now;
2. how it wants to be by the end of the period; and
3. how it intends to get from 1 to 2.

The action plan should be drafted by the executive committee, based on community feedback from the presented assessment and all the community members. The draft action plan should then be presented to the community as a whole for refinement and approval. Again the SOs should not present it, but facilitate so that the executive can present it. Its acceptance must be by the whole unified community.

5. Project Design, Proposals, Outside Resources:

A "project" is the action (or set of actions) decided upon by the community (as a group, stimulated by the social organiser). The format of the project design is something like this: What is the problem? Define the goal as the solution to the problem; Refine the goal into a finite set of objectives (SMART); Identify resources and constraints; Generate a set of strategies to use the resources, avoid the constraints and obtain the objectives; Choose the most effective strategy; Decide upon organization (structure, who does what, budget, schedule); and Decide upon monitoring, reporting, and evaluation.

Remember that the SOs' job is to fight dependency, where community members come to rely on outside assistance for community improvements. The SOs emphasis should be on community self reliance on its own resources. If the community chooses an expensive project, and cannot expect to raise enough money, the SOs must caution them to be more realistic -- not to depend upon outside charity.

A proposal is a request for funds from a potential donor. The best proposal is designed like a project action plan, which serves to justify to the donor why it should donate funds. The same project action plan should be the basis for submitting to higher levels of Government to access ceded funds. The SOs should not do the work of the committee, however tempted the SOs are. The core management of the community organisations must learn by doing. A project design can be used as a proposal for obtaining outside funds. It must be used for getting the approval of the whole community for undertaking the project. The essence of the project design, like the brainstorm, is to systematically answer The Four Key Questions, (what do we want, what do we have, how can we use what we have to get what we want, and what will happen if we do).

It is the SOs' responsibility to go through these four key questions in detail with the office bearers of the community organisations, putting them into the relevant context, and systematize the answers into an appropriate document to be written by the core committee, where possible. When discussing resources, the SOs will often hear members of the core committee saying that the community does not have enough funds. There is a tendency to rely on outside donors, which increases vulnerability and decreases the strength of the community. With some effort, community members can pull in resources from many and varied sources. The social organiser, nevertheless, does not dictate to the community that the community must provide all these. Instead, the SOs can mention all of these, and ask the community members to identify those, which the community can provide.

6. Monitoring Arrangements.

The word "monitoring" sounds a bit like technical jargon, and some of the community members might feel a little threatened by the SOs' talking about it. The SOs should not be afraid of it; the idea of monitoring is very simple. It is also important for community strengthening, and serves many purposes so long as it is an essential integrated element, not something separate which was tacked on like an after thought. To get the point across, the SOs should use a metaphor. The "bicycle" analogy can be useful here. They should ask the group, "How many of the SOs here know how to ride a bicycle?" We hope and expect at least one says yes. (If not, the SOs will have to be hypothetical, or ask about any other activity that requires sight). "Yes"? Good!

"Have you ever tried shutting your eyes while riding a bicycle?" "If not, can you imagine what will happen?" The SOs can draw out a number of answers, which should indicate disaster, like running into a tree

or person, going off the track, falling down. Now the SO should say that the community is the rider; the bicycle is the project design; the ride or journey is the community project. The project design (bicycle) will get the community where it wants to go (objectives), but the community must keep its eyes open (monitor its progress).

Every project, large or small, can easily go a little off track, and usually does. If it is not closely and continuously monitored (watched), then it will soon go off the road, hit something, and fall down. If it is constantly monitored, then small deviations can be quickly and easily corrected, and failure avoided. The community must be in the driver's seat. Others will also want to monitor. Any external donors will want to know if their donated resources are being well used. The SOs will want to monitor to see how well the SOs are strengthening the community. The community has the greatest reasons for monitoring. Responsibility of the SOs is to impress upon the community members the importance and simplicity of monitoring keeping in mind that simple does not always mean easy. The SOs job is also to guide the core committee in ensuring how monitoring is to be done by them is included in the project design; the monitoring is seen as important as the action itself; the core committee is committed to monitoring; the core committee carries out monitoring, and the core committee reports its observations to the whole community.

How the community project is to be monitored should be agreed upon and understood by the core committee of the community organisation, and carefully spelled out in its planning documents.

7. Organizing for Action:

Many people do not realize the different kinds of organizing done by a social organiser, for different purposes. The two most important kinds are: 1. organizing for decision making; and 2. organizing for action. Of course these two are closely related. When the SOs assist the community to form the core committee, they actually organise the community for decision making. Now, when the SOs work with the community to decide who does what (e.g. in the project), the SOs are organizing for action or implementation. Although there will be overlap, action organizing should also identify certain individuals to carry out specific tasks. This is essential. If a task has been identified (e.g. transport fertiliser to the project site), it should not be left up to the group as a whole. That way it may never get done as everyone thinks it is someone else's responsibility.

A large number of tasks should not fall on one person, e.g. the president or secretary. It is important that as many tasks and responsibilities be delegated to as many other community members (especially those not on the core committee) as possible. The SOs should emphasise the value of as much and widespread participation and contribution as possible, and make sure that when a task or responsibility is delegated to an individual, that it is well known by everyone, and if it is not completed on time, that individual can be called to account by the community. Community action should not be spontaneous and ad hoc. It should be organized.

STEP 4 TO SOCIAL MOBILISATION

Implementation

At this point the community and its leaders, like the politicians and journalists, will be more interested in the actions and results (e.g. the building of the water supply, clinic or school), and needs to be reminded and encouraged that monitoring and reporting must be concurrent with the action. This is where community enthusiasm can decline or be destroyed, if the action (especially in its finances) is not transparent, and made fully clear to all the community members. While the goal of the community is the finished facility, the goal of the strategy and social organiser is increased community strength and capacity, so emphasis is put on monitoring and reporting (verbal and written). Also, this is where the community becomes aware of more needed training in skills related to the action (financial and accounting skills, report writing, technical skills). By virtue of preparing the community, the SOs are already in action at this stage. Now it is time for the community to go into action. The whole community has participated in decision-making, it has formed an executive, created a community plan of action, designed a project, and an organization for acting. Time for it to start moving.

As an example, let us say the implementation is building a hand pump facility. Plans are examined; resources collected, building begins. There are several areas where the SOs have work to do. The SOs should not organize, supervise or work in installation of the hand pump facility. The SOs' role is to facilitate needed technical training (identified by the community and its executive during construction), ensure that the work is monitored, that there is full and free information about all aspects (especially financial disbursements) and

that community members never become complacent or slip into thinking that it is not their own project. The SOs do not control the community action; the SOs encourage and assist them to do it. The SOs provide praise, positive advice, public recognition. They assist in obtaining needed training, and promote public knowledge, gender balance, transparency, and a high project profile.

1. Implementing the Community Plan:

In the community preparation phase, at least two documents should be prepared (i.e. by the core committee) and approved (i.e. by the general body members of the community organisation). These are: (1) the Action Plan, and (2) the Project Design (which may or may not have been used also as a proposal). Unless these are changed by the core committee and the community as a whole, they should be referred to often, especially if a dispute, or question of what to do next, arises. The project design should be seen as linked to, and part of, the community action plan.

The SOs' job is not to implement the plan, but facilitate the community to do so. They should ensure that the people designated to do specific tasks do so; monitoring is being carried out; there are frequent meetings of the core committee to discuss the progress and meetings of the whole community; and also ensure that accurate records are kept, especially of all financial expenditures. The executive would also need assistance in recording the monetary value of their management contributions (how many hours do they spend in meetings, planning, supervising, implementing, and what is the monetary value of their donated time and energy?). This means many meetings between the SOs and the core committee, and a few public meetings with the whole community would be needed.

2. Monitoring:

While the monitoring and reporting is aimed at observing the action in order to make adjustments and avoid getting off track, it is then supplemented by more in-depth assessment and evaluation. This includes the assessment of impact of the action, and a value judgment about how it was carried out, if it should have been carried out, and what instead should have been planned.

This in turn opens the door to repeating the cycle, because it serves the same purpose as the initial situation analysis and community assessment. As noted earlier, monitoring is important and needs to be included in the project design. When the project is underway, the SOs need to ensure that it takes place. Monitoring is as important as the action being monitored. Remember the analogy of riding a bicycle? If pressing the pedals is the action, then watching where the community is going (monitoring) is as important, if it does not want to go off track and fall down. The SOs say that the people working on the project at the time can see what is going on, but that is not enough.

The whole rider is riding the bicycle, not only the eyes. The eyes must send reports to the brain, which sends adjustment messages to the rest of the body. Different people work on the project in different ways and at different times, but the whole community (and donors) must know what is going on overall and what is intended from doing the project together. When the project is underway, it is the SOs' job to remind the core committee that monitoring is part of the project design, is important, and must be carried out.

3. Community Newly Generated Needs:

While the project is underway, the community and its core committee will become more aware of needed skills. Some of those skills may be artisan, craft or technical skills, such as carpentry, masonry, electric wiring and others necessary for construction. Others may be financial, planning or management skills, such as keeping accounts, fund raising, report writing, conflict resolution, communication skills, and supervising and managing the activity.

Training ranges from informal to formal, on the job site showing skills by experienced to inexperienced, paid training (apprentice-style), through workshops the SOs organize, to sending participants to a commercial or Government training institute. As much as possible, emphasise the informal skill training from resources inside the community. Older and skilled artisans who donate their labour to the community project should show the unskilled and youth how to do the work.

Where artisans have to be hired, the SOs need to try for hiring within the community if feasible, and include training of unskilled community members as part of the hiring agreement contracts. The SOs should also ensure that the core committee records and reports all informal training. Where informal training is not

possible, the SOs might propose training workshops. They have a budget and a source of funds to cover the training costs. If such training needs are foreseen early by the core committee, it should be encouraged to include a training proposal in its community project design.

Depending upon the SOs' budget, and the policy of the concerned programme, the SOs may have resources for sending some people for more formal, or institutional training. The SOs' task is to ensure that the training is approved by the whole community, has an appropriate and needed subject matter for the community project, and is not just a means for giving a perk to a crony. Ensuring that the choice of participants and choice of topic is approved by the whole community will help avoid suspicions of favouritism by the SOs or the executive. Whatever the training, while the project is underway, the SOs should ensure that the choice of participants and topics or skills transferred, are needed by the community, approved by the community as a whole, monitored and recorded, and included in progress reports.

4. Needed Skills.

Although the SOs do not dictate the needed training topics to the community or its executive, the SOs should be prepared to assist it if they themselves identify training needs as they go along. Here is a short list of some possible training topics that may arise. Accounting; Group Dynamics; Monitoring; Project Design; Brick Making; Communication; Management; Planning; Report Writing; or Carpentry; Fund-raising; Mobilizing; Primary Health; Social Work. The SOs may not be skilled enough to train in some of these topics, so the SOs need to identify other specialists and resource people who could do the training with the SOs. The SOs may find it necessary to show specialists how to engage in participatory and facilitative training.

5. Communication Between Core Committee and General Body.

Just as in the SOs' work of mobilizing the community need to be transparent, facilitating, non dictatorial, and involving the community in decision making, so the SOs should also encourage the core committee to be the same towards its community. For maintaining good communications between the community and its core committee or the office bearers, if carried out frequently, three useful methods are: meetings, reports, and inspections.

Public community meetings are the most important means of ensuring a good flow of information between the executive and the community as a whole. At meetings the SOs need to encourage and train the office bearers to take a "facilitating" role as the SOs have been doing as a social organiser. They need to develop good public speaking skills, avoiding speeches, lectures, sermons or pronouncements, learning to draw responses out of the participants. That two-way flow of information ("dialogue" means "two-way"), assists in increasing transparency and promotes good governance, participatory management and democracy. Reports are important, too. They should be well written in very simple language, and should be verbally announced at community meetings. The office bearers must seek community responses. Inspections by the programme staff, where the community members walk around the project site with the core committee, also encourage good communication and transparency.

Posters and posted notices at the place of community meeting can assist in a good flow of communicating, but should not be used alone. They can complement public meetings but not substitute for them. They may be focussed on raising awareness, or on reporting the results of community joint projects and other activities. Such charts and displays can also help visitors understand the map and other details of the area where the community organisation is in existence.

A statement of accounts, including income and expenditures, posted on the project site while under construction, improves transparency. The important thing for the SOs to emphasize is to encourage good governance, participatory management, integrity, transparency, by good communication between the core committee and the community as a whole. The degree to which the SOs have learned facilitation methods of leadership contributes to the degree to which the SOs can encourage and train the core committee and the community leaders to learn and use them too.

6. Sustainability.

Sustainability means, how can something we put in place be made sustainable so that it stays in place. For the community, whose goal was improved health, and objective was to construct a latrine, its concern with sustainability is in questions like, "How do we ensure the latrine will be kept clean, repaired, maintained and

used?" The answer to sustainability is in ensuring community responsibility (by community participation in decision making and control) from the beginning of the community organisation process and the subsequent project. For the SOs, who have put in place a social process of social change, concern with sustainability is more in questions like, "How will the community continue to take charge of its improvements, making its assessments, choosing new priorities, seeking new resources, undertaking new actions and projects, and increasing its self reliance?" The goals of the SOs and of the community are different but complementary. The SOs want the intervention to be sustained. The question of sustainability is answered in how the SOs go about the mobilization process. The SOs' goal is not a once-and-for-all link road, school, clinic or water supply or the use of these projects as an incentive for community organisation. It is sustainable development.

Part of the answer lies in repeating the mobilization cycle itself; part of it lies in identifying and training social organisers from within the target community -- that is training the office bearers or active community members to the level of social organisers, so that they may carry out the mobilisation work even if the programme phase out in the future.

STEP 5 TO SOCIAL MOBILISATION

The mobilisation Cycle

The Social Organisers job is to stimulate a social process, which is comprised of a series of activities, (assessment, awareness raising, community organisation, planning and implementation, and assessment again), which together stimulate community strengthening and increased self-reliance. The process of social mobilisation is like a cycle in a way that the SOs go back and start at the beginning again, but every time it is a changed SO and a changed community, as an old Buddhist proverb says that, "The same man can not cross the same river twice," (both man and river become different; they are always changing). Nevertheless, the SOs want to repeat the essential interventions and stimulate the essential social process. But with each step the SOs make progress like a bicycle wheel that goes round and round, but each part meets the path farther along each time round. Meanwhile, the SOs must keep their inevitable departure in mind, right from the beginning of the mobilisation process.

If the community cannot develop without the SOs, then it has become dependent upon the SOs and the SOs enemy is the community dependency. While the SOs repeat the cycle, they aim for their own pull-out, so that the cycle can continue without them in the future. If an SO is replaced, his notes in the diary should be the basis for his hand-over briefing to the replacing social organiser from the external programme or from the meso-level umbrella organisation. If the SOs are not replaced by SOs of the same or other programme, they must find and develop potential mobilizing resources from within the community.

Community Leadership and Internal Mobilization:

The important point to keep in mind is that the key to sustaining the intervention of stimulating the community towards increased self-reliance is in the community. The community development programmes may be willing and able to replace the SOs, but their ultimate goal should be to have the community continue mobilizing on its own. The way the SOs do this is to identify persons living in the community who have the potentials to become social organisers, and the appropriate attitudes and values, and train them in the social mobilisation skills for taking over from the SOs.

Community development is a process of social change. The SOs do not develop a community; the community develops itself. The most the SOs can be is a catalyst and stimulant to that social process. Here a famous quotation from Mwalimu Julius Nyerere is appropriate, "People can not be developed; they can only develop themselves." The Social Organisers must also remember that the tools and skills they have can act as very powerful catalysts of social change. Like any tools, therefore, they can be misused. When the SOs identify community members to train to replace the SOs, it is vital that the SOs examine their character to ensure that they will use mobilization tools to benefit the community, not to benefit themselves at the expense of the community.

Some people have political and career objectives and it is often the case that for some little interest some of the SOs shower gifts and benedictions on such hijackers, who in turn become black mailers. The SOs need to be very careful in selection of the community leaders and doing favours to any one of them as with good participatory and facilitating skills, a person can misuse mobilization for personal benefit. When the SOs identify potential activists/social organisers from within the community, they need to carefully observe them

over time. There is no need to hurry in finding the SOs' replacement; it is good to take enough time to do in right.

When the SOs identify one or a few persons who appear to have potential to become community leaders/social organisers, having qualities of honesty, leadership, genuine concern for development of the people, the SOs need to train them. If they are interested, the SOs can set them up as something like "apprentices," taking time to explain to them why the SOs do what they do. Helping them learn the principles is as important as their learning the skills. Let them try to lead a facilitation session from time to time. More often as their skills grow. After they have gone through two or more mobilization cycles, they should be ready to carry on in the absence of the SOs. The SOs would thus be well on the way to making their mobilizing sustainable.

Learning from mistakes.

We humans can learn from both success and failure, from achievements and mistakes. Remember that mistakes, failures and disasters are not the same. A mistake is not a failure; to err is human. A failure is not a disaster; failing to achieve something does not mean the SOs are a failure. A disaster does not mean the end of life or the end of time. When we fall down we must pick ourselves up and carry on. A day at a time.

If the SOs have been successful at guiding a community to construct its own link road, or complete some other objective, then the SOs have gone one step towards making it more self-reliant. It will have not gone smoothly or perfectly. If the SOs think it did, then they are not being honest with themselves. The SOs should analyse the process and their role in it. They need to be courageously honest in admitting their mistakes. They need to write down their analysis of the mobilization cycle. It is necessary to be objective and neutral about mistakes and failures and not use them as an excuse to paralyse themselves with depression.

From Micro to Meso Level

The important element in the formation and subsequent sustainability of the community organisations is their own members and their interest. The interest promotion of its members is the key element to sustainability. Every organisation is supposed to provide services to its members at their doorsteps; such services could be credit, employment, skills development, income generation and extension services in the field of agriculture and livestock as well as in social sector. How an organisation could be nurtured and developed to provide such services to its members is the point to clearly understand by the social organisers. However, all this sounds well and makes sense on the paper. In reality, no micro-level VO can survive without the external support of an NGO or another higher level organisation at the meso-level. Therefore, for sustainability of the micro-level, it is a must that there should be local, representative NGOs that should remain in the community at higher level and perform their duties like any external programme support.

Sustainability or phasing out

The creation of a sustainable process of development is the underlying rationale of Community organisation. This implies that organisation must itself be sustainable. Ideally for an organisation to be sustainable it should develop into an institution. Practically it is possible if next level of institutions are developed after the maturity of the micro-level. The ultimate objective should be to build the capacity of community organisations to make self-managing, self-financing and self-reliant, multi-level institutions to the extent that the external programme can phase out from the area at some suitable point in time. Building the capacity of the community organisations to keep themselves informed of important issues and policies that relate to the broader development process can enable the community organisations to sustain even after withdrawal of the programme.

It is important to note that saying it easy than doing it in reality. To keep the micro-level organisations sustainable it is a must that they are coordinated and assisted by some kind of umbrella and representative organisations of their own. It is thus necessary that an external support programme should have a clear strategy on how the develop meso-level institutions on top of the micro-level organisations and how would it phase out at maturity of the meso level institutions. The social mobilisation process described in this chapter mainly focuses on interaction with the community at the micro-level because this is the basic work that needs to be carried out by the RDOs once the external programme phase out from the micro-level and start building capacity at the meso-level.

Many development initiatives seem to fail in the long run. Little planning is put on how development will be maintained or serviced or on how they will continue to be used fairly by communities after withdrawal of the

programme without developing meso-level institutions. The social organisation strategy shall address ways and means to ensure an effective and safe withdrawal strategy. In short the social organisation strategy or a programme should include the following components:

- a. Introduction to the programme, its objectives, project area along with describing various components of the programme, intended structure of the local organisation, and inter and intra-organisation linkages and networking.
- b. Need for the strategy, its objectives, guiding principles, and incorporation of various lessons from other programmes and definitions of various terminologies to be used.
- c. Approach to be adopted for social mobilisation and community organisation; involvement of women; integrating environmental concerns into the social organisation package; options for organising communities; out put of the social organisation process for the programme and phasing out strategy for sustainability of the local organisation.
- d. Highlighting various phases and implementation procedures for formation and developing multi-level institutions along with clarifying responsibilities of social organisers, chief social organiser and other related staff.
- e. Detailing monitoring and evaluation procedures for different phases of the programme along with the review and reporting system and phasing out strategy.