

# "We evaluate..."

*INDISCO partner indigenous and tribal communities  
evaluate their own development projects  
in India and the Philippines*

- December 1995 -

• Danish International Development Agency • United Nations Development  
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Cooperative Branch  
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## Foreword

We evaluate is a collection of self-evaluation reports from INDISCO pilot projects in India and the Philippines. They reflect the feelings of indigenous and tribal groups, their aspirations and their voice in their own development.

In 1995, after the initial 18-month period of pilot project operations, the INDISCO Programme asked the partner indigenous and tribal communities in India and the Philippines to take part in a participatory self-evaluation exercise to assess how they have been doing. This was the first attempt to motivate the partner groups not only in project implementation but also in monitoring and evaluation.

The result was quite impressive. The partner indigenous and tribal groups selected their representatives for the Self-Evaluation Teams and assisted them in carrying out this exercise. The INDISCO partner NGOs, pilot project managers and extension workers also contributed to this evaluation by training the Self-Evaluation Teams and compiling their reports.

Due to the low level of literacy among the partner tribal groups (particularly those in India), it is too early to say that they will be able to undertake the self-evaluation exercise by themselves next time. They may still need training (including literacy training) to be able to plan, implement and evaluate their own development. This first exercise, however, proves that they are keen to learn more and willing to participate in all decisions and project activities.

According to the reports of Self-Evaluation Teams, the participation of women in many of the projects is higher than that of men. This is because of the encouragement given to women groups at the design stage of these projects, to help them to advance their status. The establishment of *mahila mandals* (cooperatives) among women in India is, moreover, a promising step towards self-reliance. Another important component of the pilot projects which attracts indigenous and tribal peoples' participation, is the creation and operations of revolving loan funds. These funds will be further strengthened through joint training programmes with the Rabobank Foundation, as community-based credit and savings institutions. The provision of simple tools and equipment also helps the communities to initiate various income-generating activities. And, finally, indigenous and tribal groups also express their appreciation of the efforts being made by the pilot projects to preserve and promote indigenous knowledge systems and practices.

Participatory self-evaluation exercises will continue to be undertaken every year. It is hoped that this will make the partner indigenous and tribal groups feel that INDISCO is more their own programme and will prepare them for taking over project implementation without the need for outside assistance.

Geneva, May 1996.

Cooperative Branch



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## 1. Introduction

After little more than a year of its operations, the INDISCO programme activities in India and the Philippines were evaluated by the partner indigenous and tribal groups. The exercise was fully participative and the partner ITPs were quite enthusiastic in taking part in the implementation of the exercise. The partner ITPs were first requested to select their representatives to work as members of self-evaluation teams. The team members, together with INDISCO field staff, were then trained on evaluation techniques by the National Coordinators in India and the Philippines. Following this, the individual project activities were taken up by the teams one by one, to check and assess their suitability, effectiveness and sustainability. The results were finally taken to the communities for verification.

This exercise in India and the Philippines took approximately three months including the preparation of the terms of reference, setting up and training of self-evaluation teams, actual conduct of self-evaluation and report writing. Since the self-evaluation exercise is considered to be part of the overall INDISCO initiatives aimed at capacitating indigenous and tribal groups in designing and implementing their own development projects, it will be conducted, on pilot project basis, every year as a training-cum-evaluation exercise.

This document is a collection of the summary of eight INDISCO self-evaluation reports from four projects in India and four in the Philippines. The newly-started projects in Bukidnon and Sarangani and TSS1 on Indigenous Knowledge in the Philippines were not included in this year's exercise as they were only operational at the beginning of 1996.

## 2. Background to the self-evaluation

### 2.1. Definitions

*Evaluation* is a management function as well as a stage in the programme cycle which typically consists of four successive phases that influence each other:

Evaluation refers to the effects and the impact of outputs and activities, assessing the actions or reactions of those affected by the programme either during the implementation phase (interim and final evaluation) or after the completion of activities (ex-post evaluation).

*Monitoring* refers to the implementation phase and is concerned with the process of transforming inputs into outputs through activities. It is, therefore, primarily related to the delivery process throughout a certain period of time, assessing quantity and quality of the programme outputs and activities.

Both monitoring and evaluation require the collection of relevant information on the

implementation phase. Although they are complementary and aim primarily at improved management, they are distinct functions with specific purposes. Monitoring and evaluation should be fed back into the implementation of on-going activities and the planning of new activities.

As compared to a *project*, a *programme* is a coherent framework of action designed to achieve certain objectives. A programme comprises sets of activities which are grouped under different components and which are oriented towards the achievement of specific objectives. A programme therefore consists of interventions on a larger scale than a project and may actually include several projects whose specific objectives are linked to the attainment of the higher-level common objectives.

*Self-evaluations* are generally conducted by the programme management, i.e. by the persons responsible for programme implementation. In the case of INDISCO, self-evaluation is undertaken by the people - the partner indigenous and tribal groups themselves - to assess their own development efforts.

Independent evaluations, on the other hand, can either be *internal*, i.e. conducted by the implementing agency (but not by the people directly involved in the management of the programme), or *external*, i.e. carried out by one or more external consultants who could, for example, represent the multi-bilateral financing source.

## 2.2. Implementation strategy

The INDISCO Programme is an inter-regional support mechanism for country/regional-level pilot projects aimed at supporting the self-reliance of indigenous and tribal peoples. The overall INDISCO principle is the full participation of indigenous and tribal groups in the planning and implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the INDISCO pilot projects. Indigenous and tribal peoples at the grassroots level are therefore involved in the initial project identification. Local NGOs are then selected together with project staff. Pilot projects are later evaluated annually by indigenous and tribal peoples.

The local NGO partners are responsible for the project design and hiring project personnel. This is followed by training of project personnel and project implementation. Linkage and networking also commence.

The INDISCO National Coordinators are responsible for the finalization of project proposals submitted by the indigenous and tribal peoples and local NGOs. They are also responsible for the training of NGO and pilot project staff, data collection, project monitoring and reporting.

At the INDISCO-Cooperative Branch level, project documents are fine-tuned and submitted to interested donors and funding negotiations are carried out. The linkages between indigenous



and tribal communities and the United Nations, international organizations and donor agencies, are established. Training materials are produced and disseminated. Monitoring and evaluation is carried out, and general guidance and advice are provided.

### **2.3. Objectives**

The primary objective of the self-evaluation exercise, as indicated in the INDISCO Programme Document (Immediate Objective no.2, Output no.2, Activity no. 9), is to strengthen the capacities of partner indigenous and tribal groups to enable them to evaluate how they are doing under the pilot projects, to draw lessons from their findings and to train them in planning and implementation. A second objective, from the ILO's and donor's point of view, is to judge whether the INDISCO Programme has conformed with the needs and priorities of the partner indigenous and tribal peoples (ITPs) and to decide whether and when the project execution may be completely handed over to the partner ITPs.

### **2.4. Coverage of the evaluation**

Each pilot project under INDISCO geographically covers a number of villages (as in the case of India) or an entire region/province (as in the case of the Philippines). The self-evaluation exercise will therefore cover all the pilot project villages or regions/provinces or partner communities participating in and benefitting from pilot project activities.

The self-evaluation exercise will also cover all activities undertaken by the pilot projects. This includes: training, literacy classes, income generating activities, revolving loan fund operations, environment protection and natural resource management, cultural preservation, cooperative and small business management, support to traditional livelihood practices, forestry and land-based activities, handicraft development and special programmes for women and youth etc.

### **2.5. Participatory self-evaluation**

An outline for a participatory self-evaluation exercise was prepared and submitted to the INDISCO Technical Planning and Consultation Meeting held in Geneva in July 1995. This outline took into account the ILO evaluation procedures. The Meeting, attended by INDISCO field staff agreed upon a step by step approach to the self-evaluation exercise starting with the preparation of the terms of reference, as follows:

- INDISCO National Coordinators in India and the Philippines prepared a draft terms of

reference for the self-evaluation exercise to be undertaken by each pilot project.

- ▶ The pilot project managers and extension workers, together with partner NGO representatives were then invited to attend a 3-day workshop in each country to discuss the draft TOR and other implementation procedures, including the training of self-evaluation team members to be selected from among the indigenous and tribal groups.
- ▶ Each pilot project manager, with the help of extension workers, organized village-level meetings with the partner indigenous and tribal groups, to inform them about the exercise and asked them to select their representative to set up the evaluation team.
- ▶ Self-evaluation teams (SETs) were trained by the pilot project managers and extension workers on evaluation techniques and procedures, and they were requested to finalize the draft TOR for the exercise.
- ▶ Participatory self-evaluation was undertaken according to the TOR and the reports were submitted to the communities for validation and to the partner NGOs for their comments.
- ▶ Self-evaluation reports were discussed during annual planning and review meetings in India and the Philippines. Self-evaluation reports were also presented by the representatives of the beneficiary groups during evaluation workshops organized during the work of the ILO/DANIDA Independent Evaluation in India and the Philippines.

Follow-up action on the self-evaluation exercise will be considered and undertaken at three levels, i.e. the community level, the implementing NGO level and the INDISCO Programme level. As for the community level, group meetings will be organized to discuss final reports and incorporate recommendations of the evaluation team in work plans, cultural events will be observed to check whether project activities contribute to strengthening the cultural heritage and the pilot project managers revise/update work plans and training curricula according to the recommendations. As the final aim of this exercise is to assist indigenous and tribal peoples in achieving self-reliance in planning and implementing their own development, training on self-evaluation will continue to remain an integral part of the entire pilot project activities. The partner NGOs will also take into account the recommendations in overall project planning and implementation, training of field staff and the design/revision of project documents. The INDISCO Programme will use self-evaluation reports to understand the needs and expectations of the partner indigenous and tribal groups and accordingly take them into consideration in future planning, informing the donor community and related governments for policy improvement.

### 3. India

There are 4 INDISCO pilot projects in India - one in each of the 4 States constituting the so-called *tribal belt* of India. These pilot projects include Mayurbhanj project in Orissa district, Jhabua project in Madhya Pradesh, Ranchi project in Bihar and Panchmahal project in Gujarat.

The following self-evaluations report have been received from these pilot projects:

#### 3.1. Mayurbhanj project, Orissa

Mayurbhanj pilot project in Orissa, which was initiated in 1994, composes six villages, namely Badajambani, Bandhasahi, Durgapur, Karanjia, Masinasol and Nuasahi which are all located around Dantiamunha market centre in Morada Block of Mayurbhanj District. These villages are predominantly inhabited by tribal communities such as the Santal, Bhumija, Kolha and Kharia. Their primary occupation is agriculture supplemented by agricultural labour and cottage industries such as *sal leaf* plate and cup-making, *sabai grass* rope-making, and *tasar* silk-worm rearing. These cottage industries use local natural resources which are available in abundance.

In the initial stage of the self-evaluation exercise, three groups sat down separately to reflect on their respective functions and activities. These three groups included the members of the *mahila mandals* (local societies), those concerned with literacy programmes and those concerned with cooperatives and the revolving loan funds. In the second stage of the self-evaluation exercise, the whole community of the project village concerned, gathered to discuss the progress of the project. Their main recommendations and comments have been summarized below.

##### 3.1.1. Project implementation

With reference to the numerous activities carried out under the pilot projects, which range from income-generating activities to institution building, training, health care and revolving loan funds, the tribal villagers/project beneficiaries summed up the main achievements as follows:

- ▶ development of self-confidence and capability, motivation and awareness building;
- ▶ functioning of self-sustaining, grassroots institutions and organizations,
- ▶ improvement in literacy level and greater consciousness about health issues, nutrition

and sanitation;

- ▶ creation of *mahila mandals* and youth groups, and their involvement in action programmes;
- ▶ improvement in the status of local tribal women and their active involvement in action and self-help programmes ;
- ▶ establishment of a close relationship with NGOs and Government authorities including the district-level development authorities.

The tribal villagers commented in particular on the formation of *mahila mandals* or cooperative groups and the income generating schemes which had been initiated in the villages. It was their conviction that, on an individual basis, the *sal leaf* cup and plate-making activities would not have been taken up, The activity requires the cooperation of many people and due to the villagers' involvement and cooperation from the outset, the cup and plate-making activities and the *mahila mandals* were successful . The villagers also pointed out that sufficient time had been given to them to make their own suggestions and decisions regarding project activities in their village, and that this had also been crucial to the success of the project.

The villagers from the different project villages further considered the cup and plate-making activity to have been the most appropriate choice of income generating activity for their villages. The cup and plate-making schemes are viable, the technology is easy to learn and the raw materials are easily available. Furthermore, there is also no risk of over-harvesting *sal leaves* as the *sal* trees grow in abundance in the district .

The village meetings generally agreed that the side-effects of the income-generating activities had included an increase in the awareness and motivation of *mahila mandal* members and had had a marked impact on the lives of the tribal villagers. Women are, for example, now recognized as important contributors to the socio-economic life of the village whereas before they were considered passive and inferior .

In addition to this, it was also pointed out by the villagers that as a consequence of the pilot project activities, the demand for educational programmes for children had greatly increased. Adults too had acquired numerous new skills as a result of the literacy programmes and *mahila mandal* activities. Moreover, the health education camps, which are conducted regularly in the villages were considered to be extremely important as ill-health, poverty and illiteracy are the three uppermost evils which are responsible for our backwardness have kept our tribal communities suppressed .

### 3.1.2. Recommendations

The six village communities included in the project made the following recommendations during the self-evaluation meetings in their respective villages:

- ▶ The leaf cup-making activity should be improved and expanded because it has helped us to improve our standards of living and the social status of women. We need more machines and larger work sheds, and also buildings for the training and educational programmes .
- ▶ We never used to have credit facilities in the villages before. The revolving loan funds have helped many people start income generating activities like *sabai grass* rope-making . (See also Boxes 1-4) We think that the loan amount should be increased so that such businesses can be expanded and become more profitable. Loans could also be provided to farmers with waste land to enable them to grow more *sabai grass* using new scientific methods .

#### Box 1: The revolving loan fund makes a difference

The indigenous and tribal communities in India are among the poorest of the poor. The poverty estimation made by the Planning Commission in 1983 placed 68.9 per cent of the population in Orissa as living below the poverty line. Agriculture is the main occupational base of the tribal people, be it as cultivators or agricultural workers. Irrigation facilities are minimal in spite of their considerable potential. The cultivation pattern is generally mono-cropped, centred mainly on minor millets. Their cultivation techniques have remained mostly unchanged. Increased population and deteriorating land quality has, however, made it impossible for the tribals to survive on agriculture alone.

The INDISCO Programme in close collaboration with SSADRI\* initiated a pilot project in Mayurbhanj district in Orissa for tribal and indigenous communities. This pilot project aims at demonstrating alternative employment and income-generating approaches with optimum community participation.

As the tribal communities have no access to any "formal" financial institution, and the cost of borrowing from middlemen is unbearable, the sustainability of any economic activity becomes questionable. Each pilot project has therefore a revolving fund component which supports the "package" programme.

The following three case studies in boxes are a result of interviews with villagers who have benefitted from the revolving loan funds. These stories of these individual borrowers illustrate clearly how *a little help can go a long way*.

Although the cases sited in the boxes below represent the stories of three men, it must be noted that among the total number of borrowers, there are in fact 142 female borrowers and only 65 male borrowers. The beneficiaries of the revolving loan funds include 6 women societies and 207 individual borrowers from 6 different villages.

(\* SSADRI: Social Science and Development Research Institute, Bhubaneswar, Orissa)

## Box 2.

*Mr. Jena Singh, aged 45 years, lives in a small village in Mayurbhanj District in Orissa. With a large family to support, he barely managed to make ends meet as a farm labourer. Today he supplements his income by making sabai rope and selling it locally. This is Jena Singh's story....*

"I belong to the Kolha community and live in Karanja village with my wife and five children. I used to be a farm labourer and do different jobs like thatching roofs, ploughing, sowing and harvesting on the farms belonging to wealthy land owners. I also used to carry merchandise from place to place on trolleys. I earned very little and struggled to make ends meet. Sometimes I could go without work for many days and when I did work I used to get an average of 12 to 15 rupees per day, which is not enough to maintain a family with.

I have 0.35 dec. of waste land on which *sabai* grass grows. I manage to harvest about 120 kilos of grass from this land which I use for making rope. Actually, my wife makes the rope. Since the *sabai* grass season only lasts for two months, my wife and I both continue as wage labourers after the season has finished. The proceeds from the sale of the rope amounted to about 700 rupees each season.

However, things changed in my village after the Project got underway. In April 1995, I received a loan of 200 rupees from the Revolving Loan Fund in order to expand my rope making business. I purchased 40 kilos of grass and a week later we had produced 36 kilos of rope for which we received 432 rupees! Prior to that I used to earn only 50 rupees a week! Now life is looking a lot brighter, my family are content, we eat better and my children go to school.

Since my rope making business was so successful and my loan repayments regular, the Project Manager, backed by the cooperative society, recently approved my request for a further loan of 1,000 rupees towards my business. Together with my savings, I am now able to acquire 70 to 80 kilos of *sabai* grass per week and the proceeds from the sale of rope amounts to 700-800 rupees. From the money I have been making, I have been able to buy a goat for 250 rupees and I am hoping to start a goat-rearing business too.

The Revolving Loan Fund has been an enormous help to me and many of my fellow villagers. The loans have given us hope. We see that it is possible to improve our economic conditions through our own efforts. The future is no longer so bleak. And our children are able to go to school. I now want my children to get a good education and good jobs in the future".

## Box 3.

*Mr. Gorachand Murmu, a Santal from Bandhasahi village in Mayurbhanj District, Orissa, used to be a migrant agricultural worker. Today he is the Secretary of the local tribal co-operative society. This is his story.....*

"I was earning my livelihood by working in the fields of others as an agricultural labourer. I used to migrate to other places in search of work and this forced me to remain away from my wife and child for days on end. My wife had a difficult time during my absence but I was not able to look after our daughter. My income was then about 30 to 50 rupees per week. I used to get *sabai* grass for rope making from my small plot of land, but this was barely enough for two months.

Then, later on I acquired a loan of 200 rupees from the Revolving Loan Fund. With this I purchased 80 kilos of *sabai* grass. My wife and I worked as farm labourers during the day and at night we used to make rope to earn a bit extra. We worked hard and were sometimes able to make rope from the entire 80 kilos of grass in one week. From this, we could earn up to 828 rupees which was a lot of money for us.

We even managed to save some money which we have deposited in a post office savings account. We have now a total of 2,700 rupees in this account and from the interest we get, we are able to meet many of our daily expenses. We are now able to spend about 40 rupees per day on domestic expenses. From the rope making we are also getting a steady income.

After I got an additional loan of 5,000 rupees from the Revolving Loan Fund, I have been earning even more because I purchased three pigs at 750 rupees each and an additional 650 kilos of *sabai* grass. I have also started buying *sabai* rope from my village which I sell for a profit at the weekly market. Now that we are living more comfortably I intend to save more money and have opened an account at the Baitarani Gramya Bank in Dantiamunha.

I am so happy that I no longer have to leave my village in search of work. My family members are also very happy that they are now able to meet their requirements and feel secure in life".

## Box 4.

*Mr. Ruhia Singh comes from Badajambani village in Orissa district. He is 45 years old, belongs to the Bhumij tribe and is a landless labourer. He is married with 5 children. This is his story...*

Ten years ago I was a bonded labourer. My father had borrowed some money from a merchant from Jugal which is about 22 km. from my village. I was working full time in the merchant's house and received only 15 rupees per year! But, of course, I was given food and some clothes. The work was very strenuous, but I kept working for 7 years during which time the payment was increased to 45 rupees per year! In the end I could stand it no longer so I fled the merchant's house and hid in my village.

In my village there was no work and no money. My mother became very old and fell ill quite often, but there was no means of getting hold of medicine for her. Being quite desperate I pleaded with a local bank manager who eventually agreed to give me a loan. I received 100 rupees from the bank but could not pay it back. Later I was taken to court. My life was wretched and my family suffered a lot.

When the Project started operating in my village I learned that it was possible to get a loan to start an income-generating activity. This was an opportunity I could not let slip by. I received a loan of 200 rupees to start *sabai* grass rope-making. I purchased 40 kilos of *sabai* grass from the local market and within a week produced 32 kilos of rope which I sold for 320 rupees. I used most of the money to buy more *sabai* grass in order to make more money. After a while I managed to get a steady income which enabled me to cover household expenses and buy clothes and medicine for my family.

Since my business was going so smoothly I became eager to expand it. The committee of the Revolving Loan Fund was also pleased with my progress and therefore agreed to grant me an additional loan of 1,000 rupees. With this I bought more *sabai* grass and produced more rope. Today I make an average of 700-800 rupees per month.

As for the future, I hope to start other income-generating activities from the surplus I manage to make from rope making. In the meantime we live much more comfortably than ever before thanks to the revolving loans.



## 3.2. Jhabua project, Madhya Pradesh

The district of Jhabua is situated in the western belt of Madhya Pradesh, the state with the largest tribal population in India. The 5 villages included in the INDISCO pilot project are Nawapada, Gopalpur, Bhagor, Sandla and Kheseria

The first stage of the self-evaluation exercise involved the organization of a workshop for the NGO partner-organization, NCHSE<sup>1</sup>, tribal representatives, extension workers and project staff, on evaluation techniques and procedures and modalities regarding implementation.

The self-evaluation teams for each village were thereafter set up with 50-50 per cent representation of both women and men. The major findings are given below.

### 3.2.1. Project implementation

The activities carried out in the villages include: stitching (sewing) programmes, health camps, *sal* leaf cup and plate-making, doll-making (in Nawapada), literacy classes, energy saving programmes, thrift funds for women, nurseries and a *dal* mill.

Summing up their likes and dislikes, the villagers listed the following activities in order of their preference: health camps, literacy classes, seminars and workshops, income-generating activities, *mahila mandal* banking arrangements and revolving loan funds. The villagers also appreciated the integration of Government programmes.

The villagers did, however, point out that they were no longer interested in some of the activities initiated and that it would be better if these were terminated. Some villagers also expressed disappointment in the lack of immediate benefits from the activities and the fact that no men were involved.

Regarding the local NGO and project staff, the villagers were of the opinion that much of the success of the project was due to them, their honesty, sincerity and commitment. Furthermore, they had play a very important role in bringing their problems to the attention of the Government authorities.

Specific comments were made by the villagers on the following activities:

#### *Mahila mandals*

The importance of organizational skills and leadership qualities was pointed out. The villagers also agreed that the idea of forming *mahila mandals* in the villages had been excellent and was highly appreciated. *Mahila mandals*, the villagers stated, have an

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<sup>1</sup> NCHSE: National Centre for Human Settlement and Environment

important role to play in the development of our villages .

The fact that regular meetings had been held in the *mahila mandals* was considered by the villagers to be very valuable as the meetings had helped to create better understanding in the local community. The meetings had also helped families form the habit of saving and of helping each other. Many nearby villages had now started to follow their example.

The economic aspect of income-generating activities was also discussed: A year ago nobody had a bank account in the villages but today there are 5 *mahila mandals* and many individuals with bank accounts and post office savings accounts .

### *Training programmes*

The training programmes initiated in the villages were very much appreciated by the villagers. However, some felt that they should be postponed during the rains and the migration period as well as during marriages and religious celebrations. Upon reflection, this would cause difficulties for the continuity of the training programmes as some celebrations and festivals in the rural tribal areas continue throughout the year.

### *Revolving loan fund*

Almost the whole loan amount available under the revolving loan fund, was spent on fertilizer. A number of villagers complained that the loans had been delayed but the project team explained that this was due to the unavailability of fertilizer at that time.

### *Health issues*

The villagers expressed their appreciation for the *health camps* from which they had greatly benefitted. The camps had enabled them to save both time and money by not having to travel to the nearest hospitals in the towns. In addition to this, all the villagers had participated in the immunization programme.

It was generally agreed that awareness about health issues and hygiene was very useful. It was also stressed that there was a great need for a regular medical facility in the area.

Regarding *family planning*, it was apparent that the idea was gradually catching on. It started with one woman from Bhagore who had become convinced of the benefits of planning one's family after having attended the counselling services provided by extension workers and animators. Shortly after 10 other women decided to follow suit.

The villagers also declared satisfaction with the local *survey*, which had been carried out by the NCHSE, on the prevalence of disabled persons in the area, the nature of the disabilities and causes, and possible rehabilitation schemes. The villagers expressed a

hope that the proposed rehabilitation schemes could be implemented in the near future.

### Literacy

All the literacy classes run by the NCHSE in the project villages have shown positive results according to the self-evaluation reports. The villagers pointed out that All members of *mahila mandals* are learning the alphabet and simple arithmetics, and quite a number of school drop-outs from the villages have been re-admitted to the formal education system.

#### Box 5. Village-level progress in pilot project villages in Madhya Pradesh

In the 5 pilot project villages, activities such as doll-making, leaf-cup making, stitching literacy classes and health camps are carried out. Village committees have also been formed in these villages; each committee has six members - 3 men and 3 women. In addition to this, villagers have also initiated the following activities:

In *Nawapada* village, a group of 5 men have started a brick-making business. The group took up a loan of Rs. 20,000 from the revolving loan fund to cover the cost of water, lime and firewood to make 100,000 bricks. Each brick is sold for Rs.1 at the local market.

In *Gopalpur* village, a watershed management programme funded by the Australian High Commission is about to commence. Between 40 and 50 villagers will be working on the 50 hectare plot of land under the programme. The plot consists of private and revenue land. The villagers will earn Rs.25 on the revenue land and Rs.20 on the private land.

In *Bhagor* village, a bamboo nursery and a eucalyptus nursery have been started. The germination rate and actual amount of saplings produced was, however, low due to the poor quality of seeds. One farmer from Bhagor has started to grow vegetables near the river. It is hoped that this initiative will serve as a model for other farmers. In addition, a group of 20 men have invested a loan of Rs.20,000 (from the revolving loan fund) in the tile business. The men purchase the tiles for 75 paise each and sell them for one rupee at the local market. Two local women have also taken up loans of Rs.2,500 each to purchase sewing machines and material.

In *Sandla* village, a group of 8 men have built a lift irrigation system with a loan of Rs.25,000 from the revolving loan fund. A grocery store and a clothes shop have also been started by villagers who have taken up loans of Rs. 5,000 each. In *Kheseria* village, a bamboo nursery has been started, and in 4 of the villages, groups of 5 women have taken up loans of Rs.10,000 each to start fertilizer and seed businesses.

Furthermore, under a Government scheme, 50 smokeless "*chullas*" were recently introduced in Gopalpur and Kheseria, 7 in Bhagor and 10 in Sandla.

### 3.3. Ranchi project, Bihar

The INDISCO Ranchi project is situated in Ranchi district, Bihar. The population in the rural areas is mostly tribal. The tribal people suffer from abject poverty and exploitation mainly due to a weak resource base characterized by low productive mono-cropped, undiversified rainfed agriculture and declining support from their alternative resource base, the forest, on account of its over exploitation. The 5 villages included in the Ranchi project are Saridkel, Maranghatu, Simbukel, Bududih and Kudadih.

Self-evaluation teams were established in each of the 5 pilot project villages and the tribals were asked a series of questions concerning the project, including the initial stages and how they view the various activities. The self-evaluation teams thereafter compiled separate reports for each village. In the following section the reports are compiled and summarized:

#### 3.3.1. Project implementation

##### 3.3.1.1. Initial stages

During the self-evaluation exercise all the villages in the Ranchi pilot project expressed that they were at first sceptical to the village extension workers, their regular visits and all their questions. However, since the extension workers spoke the same language as them, they soon came to trust them and cooperate with them. The people of Bududih village emphasized that the extension workers had greatly helped them in creating unity in their village and in mobilizing and motivating the villagers. The women of Simbukel were particularly grateful to the female extension workers for teaching them how to conduct meetings and for giving them the encouragement and self-confidence they needed. In Maranghatu village the women explained, It was at first difficult for us to form committees as we were not used to it as the men were. The extension workers guided us and also helped us in becoming office bearers of the *mahila mandals*.

Regarding the establishment of village organizations and committees, nearly all the villages stated that there had been traditional organizations in their villages before the project was initiated but that these organizations had not functioned satisfactorily. All the villagers agreed that village organizations and committee were very important for the unity and development of the village

The villagers also highlighted the fact that women never used to attend village meetings and that today it was quite normal for them to participate. After the initiation of the INDISCO project, most of the villages had established separate women's and men's committees in which to discuss their problems and find suitable solutions. In Saridkel, for example, the villagers had experienced that the committee had been very instrumental in strengthening the village:

The members put forward a problem and the whole committee tries to solve it together. We are sure that this committee will also continue even after the INDISCO project comes to an end.

Many of the villagers claimed they had gained a lot of self-confidence through committee work. The tribal villagers of Maranghatu and Kudadih explained that they had also learned that by organizing oneself in a group, it was much easier to approach the Block Development Office and to be listened to when assistance was needed.

Considering other advantages that the pilot project villages had gained from the formation of committees, the villagers mentioned: the possibility to receive loans from the revolving loan fund; meetings were held more regularly; villagers got to know people from other villages; women were now listened to; and, finally, in Bududih, it was stated that the committee had been instrumental in discouraging the sale of liquor in the village.

In Simbukel, the villagers highlighted the fact the committee enabled members to receive loans from the RLF for the mat-weaving project. In May 1995, the women had received an additional loan in order to start a small rice selling business. In Bududih, it was mentioned that sometimes women have problems in attending committee meetings due to their heavy workload.

### 3.3.1.2. Activities

#### *Non formal educational and literacy classes*

Prior to the pilot project, most of the villagers were illiterate. In all of the villages, the illiteracy rate was very high, especially among women.

At the beginning some of the villages were rather sceptical towards the literacy classes but now they support them fully and would generally like more classes to be conducted. The villagers of Maranghatu and Simbukel, for example, had formerly been of the opinion that if girls go to school they might loose their domestic skills, and besides: Girls just get married anyway and go to another family. Finally, however, they agreed to send their female children to school.

Many of the villagers also blamed illiteracy among children on the fact that many children are obliged to work for their family, especially during the monsoons.

In the pilot project villages there are two groups of literacy classes; for youngsters (below 14 years) and for adults. In Simbukel and Bududih 3 literacy classes being conducted for both women and men.

The villagers informed the self-evaluation team that pupils who have attended the

literacy classes can write their names and read simple words. Villagers also expressed the appreciation of the fact that classes are free as this encourages more people to join. The classes have also encouraged many parents to send their children to formal schools.

All the tribal villagers were in agreement that there was an urgent need for more training materials, especially exercise books and pens, but also additional lamps as some classes were conducted at night. They also expressed a need for the extension workers to receive further training in teaching methods.

### *Lift irrigation schemes*

All the villages, except Kudadih, have installed pumps sets. During the self-evaluation exercise the villagers explained that they used to irrigate their crops by hand, drawing water from wells. With the introduction of pump sets, the villages are able to produce more crops and lessen the work burden. All 4 villages expressed a wish for more pump sets in order to increase production. In Saridkel it was stated: The area is so large that it is difficult to manage with one pump machine. In Maranghatu, it was claimed, With a bigger pump machine for lifting water from the river, we would be able to increase the area of vegetable and wheat cultivation and become more self-sufficient.

The villages all charge Rs.2 per hour for the use of the pump set. This money goes towards the maintenance of the pumps. Maranghatu has collected a total of Rs. 475. Bududih has collected Rs.106. Simbukel villagers did not specify the amount and in Saridkel, some problems are being experienced with the pump machine which is in need of repair. However, the irrigation committee has still managed to collect Rs. 60 so far from users.

In Simbukel there are two pump sets which the villagers declared have enabled them to improve and extend the area of cultivation. They were also able to cultivate crops twice per year which had previously been impossible. The villagers admitted that in the beginning they had not made proper use of the irrigation facilities but this had now changed.

### *Revolving loan funds (RLF)/income-generating activities*

In Saridkel, the 4 women who had taken up loans for mat-weaving, felt that they had benefitted greatly from the loans. They said that mat-weaving was a particularly good extra income-earner for women in their spare time, but that it was essential that loans are provided at the right time so that they can purchase large enough palm leaves. The women commented that price for mats on the local market was relatively low and that access to outside markets would enable them to increase their income.

The 7 women who had taken up loans from the RLF in Saridkel for rice-selling,

complained that the loans had been provided late in the off-season when the price of paddy is high. It was therefore difficult to make a reasonable profit from the purchase and sale of the rice. Women's groups from the other villages also experienced the same problem.

In Maranghatu, the villagers were extremely happy with the RLF and the loans provided which had enabled them to initiate many income-generating activities without having to borrow money from money-lenders as they used to do. In Maranghatu 34 women have taken up loans for mat-weaving, the sale of paddy, rice, dry fish and groceries. A total of 22 men have also been granted loans for the cultivation of wheat and vegetables.

In Simbukel, the villagers characterized the RLF as a perfect means through which self-reliance can be attained. Within the first year, men and women's groups had already started income-generating activities such as mat-making, sale of home-husked rice and the cultivation of cash crops. The village committee in charge of the RLF are diligent in ensuring that loans are paid back so that others can benefit from the fund. The villagers recommended that special training be provided on the management of the RLF and on skills development.

In Bududih, the women had also benefitted from the RLF by initiating mat-making and rice-selling activities. In Kudadih, 15 women have taken up loans for the purchase and sale of rice and vegetables and in November 1995, 18 farmers also took up loans for the cultivation of cash crops. The Kudadih villagers also mentioned that the RLF committee had members from all 5 villages and that the president and vice-president (a woman) were from their village.

### *Skills training*

Villagers expressed their enthusiasm for the training programmes provided by the pilot project. In Saridkel, villagers had profited from training programmes on: sustainable agriculture; animal husbandry; methods of non-formal education and the role of the village animators. The following themes for training programmes had also be proposed for the future: tailoring and knitting; bee-keeping; carpentry; fishing; nursery raising; and sowing and replanting of paddy using improved techniques.

In Maranghatu and Bududih, the villagers felt that the amount of training programmes conducted in their village, although useful, was not enough. They requested in particular the following themes for training: sustainable agriculture; managerial skills; non-formal education techniques; agriculture; animal husbandry and poultry raising, nursery raising and forestry, pump set maintenance; tailoring; health and hygiene and information on Government schemes.

In Simbukel, the villagers commented that the following training programmes were particularly useful: organic farming techniques, animal husbandry, non-formal education methods and techniques and health and sanitation (such as the use of smokeless hearths). The villagers also suggested that the following training programmes be organized: rabi and dry crops; pump set repairs and maintenance; environment and cooperative member education.

In Kudadih, skills training was not discussed.

#### *Other activities/comments*

Nearly all the pilot project villages mentioned the youth organizations which mainly organize games and cultural programmes. It was, however, hoped that their role could expand.

In Maranghatu the training and demonstration on paddy cultivation was considered particularly useful and interesting and the villagers declared that they would be using the same method themselves as it was both cheaper and more environmentally friendly.

All the INDISCO villages also highlighted the improvement in the relations between the project villages. And finally, the participatory approach - the fact that the villagers themselves were involved in village and project decision-making (including the women) - was generally applauded.

### **3.4. Panchmahal project, Gujarat**

The INDISCO Panchmahal project is situated in the Panchmahal District on the eastern border of Gujarat State and is the most under-developed region of the State. It spans a total area of 8,866 sq. km. and has a large tribal population of more than 45 per cent.

The INDISCO pilot project in Gujarat, which started in May 1994, is implemented by a local NGO called, Sadguru Water and Development Foundation. The project covers five tribal villages: Chanasar, Tandi, Sampoi, Ghensva and Bambela. The tribal villagers' main occupation is agriculture. However, erratic rainfall patterns, undulating topography and depleting natural resources are typical for this densely populated area and consequently the number of people living below the poverty-line is estimated at almost 90 per cent.

#### **3.4.1. General assessment of the pilot project**

All the 5 villages were in agreement that they had greatly benefitted from the INDISCO pilot project: In our village, Ghensva, the people have benefitted from the ILO project with the



local organization, Sadguru. We feel a new awareness has taken place within us....

The people of Ghensva also commend the changes in agricultural techniques which are slowly taking place in their village: We are now attempting to become more adventurous in adopting new technologies in our day-to-day life. And they highlight the good relations that have been created between the tribal farmers from the different villages.

In Bambela village, the tribals feel their lives have changed tremendously: Farmers no longer have to migrate in search of work but can cultivate crops locally due to the installation of lift irrigation facilities. The children have benefitted too as they no longer have to migrate with their parents but can attend school instead.

In Chanasar, the villagers also highlight the importance of the lift irrigation scheme which has been functioning for the past 2 years: The project has taught us how to manage the scheme more effectively. We have learnt about water distribution, different cropping patterns and methods, the use of plant nutrition and improved seed varieties, and vegetable and cash crop production.

In Tandi village, the tribals maintain that the future of the village will certainly be improved through the on-going INDISCO project. In Sampoi, the villagers liken the difference in the village before and after the project to the Earth and the sky. They claim that relations between the villages have greatly improved; people share their problems and help each other. They also highlight the increase in food production with the installation of the irrigation scheme, the achievements of the *mahila mandals* and youth groups and the importance of the training programmes and study tours which they would like to see more of.

### **3.4.2. Project implementation**

#### **3.4.2.1. Cooperation with project staff**

In Ghensva, the villagers express that they have come to appreciate the project staff: We learn a lot of new things about our village from the project staff. We then share this information with the leaders of the village and the children - it's like holding a meeting. We have also learnt how to approach Government authorities.

In Bambela and Tandi, the villagers also agree that they have learnt a lot and hasten to add that they have never had any problems with the project staff. In Sampoi, the villagers stress the fact that the project staff are part of the village - not outsiders.

All 5 villages agree that the project staff go out of their way to offer their assistance and guidance to the villages. In Chanasar, the villagers declared, Before the project intervention, no one from either Sadguru or the Government would visit our village. Now they come and

give us information on different topics - especially agriculture. As a result of this, our people have begun to think about the social and political problems in our village. We have also received a lot of information on the project activities, and the project staff have been very helpful to us.

### 3.4.2.2. Project activities

#### *Study tours*

Ghensva, Bambela and Chansar commented on the study tours which they felt were very informative and interesting and enabled participants to see how other people approached and solved problems similar to their own. All three villages expressed the need for more study tours.

#### *Irrigation schemes*

There is a remarkable change in the production of food grains in the village and, as the irrigation scheme continues, the yield will further increase, (Ghensva).

Due to the lift irrigation, we have got water in our fields and have begun sowing wheat and grain....Unproductive land has now become fertile and we can cultivate on the land, (Bambela).

Due to project intervention, we received inspiration and guidance on how to manage the lift irrigation scheme, and will manage to cope even in the future, (Chansar).

The Sampoi villagers also agreed that they had benefitted from the irrigation scheme, The greenery of the village has increased and production too.

#### *Mahila mandals*

Ghensva, Chansar and Bambela emphasized how important it was that the women have the opportunity to make and save money through their mahila mandals and how this also gives them increased self-confidence, Before there were no groups in our village (Chansar) but now the women are saving and even have bank accounts.

In Sampoi, the villagers stated that the Jagruti *mahila mandal* had taught the women how to hold meetings and work with men: Because of the *mahila mandal*, the women have become courageous and even go to the *Mammedar's* office to talk to him. They have also started storing grain. Whatever profit the women get will be used for their self-development.

In Tandi, the villagers consider the most important activity in the village to be the dairy which is run by the women. This activity has resulted in the women becoming, ...very

bold and no longer scared of the men. This is because of the formation of the *mahila mandal*. The women have also started going on their own to the Taluka office and to the dairy office in Godhra.

### *Youth groups*

Although some of the villages lamented the fact the too few men had been involved in the project activities, they applauded the efforts of the youth groups. In Ghensva the formation of a youth group had motivated the youth to take up more and more new activities, Any problem in the village is dealt with immediately by the youth group. If there is a job that cannot be done single-handedly, the youth help out. In the lift irrigation cooperative, the youth group helps the secretary in his work of measuring the water distribution in the fields. During the night, they also assist with the water distribution.

In Chanasar, the youth have started horticultural nurseries and received lots of information on different developmental activities.

In Sampoi, the youth group known as *Ekta yuvak mandal* has built a road, assisted the lift irrigation cooperative and generally helped out in times of crisis. The villagers of Sampoi feel that the youth should receive more information and training.

### *Training and other project activities*

The Bambela villagers considered the nurseries to be very beneficial and would like to start a nursery for eucalyptus, bamboo and horticultural products.

In Sampoi, the villagers cited the benefits of horticultural and tree planting activities: After a few years the village will be green like a *gokul* village. And we will have wood for construction and fuel. We will also be able to eat different types of fruit from our *vadis* and set up a market for the fruit .

All the villages acknowledged the importance of training activities - particularly in agricultural techniques and the enormous impact they have on the development of the villages.

In Sampoi, the villagers mentioned, in particular, the training programme provided for youth on the roles of *Talati*, *Gram Sevak*, village nurse, malaria worker and doctor, which have enabled them to assist government employees. The training sessions on lift irrigation, animal husbandry, horticulture, agriculture and tree planting were also highly appreciated.

### *Cultural aspects*

In Tandri, the villagers stated, the project is strengthening our cultural practices and

customs and helping us use them in a worldly way .

In Bambela, Chanasar and Sampoi, the self-evaluation team was informed that discussions had been held between the project staff and the villagers on their traditional values and practices. The villagers all stated that the project had not been harmful to their traditional, cultural values and practices but that some of the traditional values and practices had been harmful to them and should be changed. For example, in Chanasar the villagers said, We feel some of our practices like bride-price and the *vidhi* during the death of a person are very costly. But when we have tried to control them, the other villages have been very negative and have claimed that the project has influenced us.

#### *Government policies and schemes*

The villagers of Ghensva, Chanasar and Sampoi claimed that they had received sufficient information (through the project) on the various policies and schemes of the Government which could be beneficial to their community. The Bambela villagers felt that they had not received enough information and, in Tandi, it was claimed that only the women had received sufficient information

Responding to the question from the self-evaluation team of how the project can improve the relations of the community with the Government, the villagers were of the opinion that the awareness and village unity created by the project had enhanced their relationship to the Government. Possible joint ventures between the project and the Government for the development of their village, were also suggested by the Bambela villagers.

#### **3.4.2.3. Strengthening of project activities**

Responding to the question on how project activities can be strengthened, the villagers of Ghensva underscored the importance of continued, active participation in all aspects of the pilot projects.

In the lift irrigation schemes, the villagers emphasized the need for careful distribution and control of water as well as the timely procurement of good quality seeds and fertilizers. Moreover, the collection of fees for the use of water, which will go towards maintenance and repairs of the irrigation facilities, was regarded as essential.

Sampoi villagers stressed the importance of different types of training for the development of the village and added that without full participation and unity in the village the activities would not be so successful.

Finally, the Chanasar villagers underscored the importance of savings, particularly with regard to the revolving loan funds and *mahila mandals*, and recommended that the youth groups

should become more involved in development activities.

**Box 6: Village-level activities in Gujarat**

Membership of the women's savings groups has further increased in the last few months. The women are organized in 15 different savings groups. Each member saves Rs.10 per month and, after one year, the groups can start providing credit to members.

The *Ghensva* village animator has started a women's savings group in her hamlet. Although she is the only literate woman in the village, she needs assistance from her daughter when doing the accounts. The groups savings will be used to provide loans to the women for health purposes and marriage expenses.

In 3 of the villages, 15 women have recently taken up nursery raising. One of the nurseries has, for example, 10,000 saplings. For each of the saplings raised, the Government will pay 40 paise but the saplings will be distributed free of charge by the project.

The youth group of 19 young men in *Ghensva* started their own nursery in November. They now plan to sell their 15,000 saplings to the villagers.

The watershed management at *Bambela* has taken two seasons to be completed but is today looking very impressive. A total of 500 hectares of land have been prepared.

In *Tandi*, 10 women took up loans from the Taluka Office in order to purchase one or two buffaloes each. The animator takes samples of the milk, measures the fat content with a centrifuge and registers the quantity and fat content for the milk cooperative. This group is the first tribal women's group to join a milk cooperative.

Both *Ghensva* and *Bambela* which are situated in a hilly area close to the border of Rajasthan, are poorer and more isolated than the other 3 pilot project villages. Building up a rapport with the local people and assisting them in organizing themselves and starting activities, has also been a greater challenge for the project staff than in the other villages. Today, however, after nearly 2 years, the project team consider the villagers of *Ghensva* and *Bambela* to be the best and this has taught them the lesson, never to give up.

## 4. The Philippines

The Philippines is an archipelago of 7,107 islands with a total land area of 115,000 km<sup>2</sup>. It is populated by more than 60 million people, 18 per cent of whom (12 million) are indigenous peoples. The average literacy rate among indigenous peoples is 50 per cent, while the average under-employment rate is more than 45 per cent.

The four evaluated INDISCO pilot projects in the Philippines are Cordillera, Occidental Mindoro, Tawi-Tawi and ARMM. The newly started projects in Bukidnon and Sarangani and the project which deals with indigenous knowledge systems and practices, are not included in the evaluation exercise as they only became operational at the beginning of 1996.

### 4.1. Cordillera pilot project

The INDISCO Cordillera pilot project aims at supporting efforts to attain self-reliance among indigenous women of the Cordillera Administrative Region. The project was formally started in May 1994 and covers 5 provinces in the region. The indigenous partner NGO implementing the project is Cordillera Women's Education and Resource Centre, Inc. (CWERC).

The self-evaluation team consisted of 22 women members of the Dupag, Tabuk and Kalinga communities who represented the various sites of barangay Dupag. Three members were also selected to assist the extension workers and project manager as facilitators.

#### 4.1.1. Methodology

The self-evaluation was conducted through a workshop where group discussions were held regarding the appropriateness of the major project components, the effectiveness of the project as a whole and the quality and level of participation of the community in the planning and implementation of activities.

As a supplement to the INDISCO guidelines on self-evaluation, the self-evaluation team (SET) formulated a set of criteria for the evaluation of project activities as follows:

- ▶ ability to foster self-reliance;
- ▶ sensitivity to cultural values;
- ▶ responsiveness to ecological concerns;
- ▶ ability to strengthen existing sources of livelihood;
- ▶ responsiveness to the needs of the majority, and
- ▶ ability to create unity among community members.

### 4.1.2. Project design and components

#### *Participatory approach*

The participants in the self-evaluation exercise stated that their participation in the design of the project document had been indirect. However, the NGO partner representatives were directly involved in the design of the project document and their contributions were based on interviews with us.

They further stated:

- ▶ We generally agree with the project components i.e. administrative support, training, acquisition of equipment and the operation of a revolving loan fund. These are certainly responsive to our basic development needs.
- ▶ Regarding project activities, we often participated in group discussions to plan our activities which were then agreed upon collectively.
- ▶ The principal objectives in the project document have been described correctly to us and are still valid.
- ▶ There is reference in the document about how implementation should be undertaken, how we can participate, the role of our traditional institutions and the safeguarding of our traditional practices and cultural values.

### 4.1.3. Project implementation

The participants in the self-evaluation exercise explained that at the beginning of the project they had acted like passive beneficiaries in relation to the partner NGO, but through training we became more and more the main actors in the project implementation process. Participants otherwise expressed their views on the following topics:

#### *Outputs and activities*

We were able to complete were the outputs which we found possible under the circumstances e.g. organizational management training, basic accounting, bookkeeping and auditing of funds, revolving fund management and women's rights advocacy.

In terms of activities, we have opted to decide which activities to undertake instead of following what the document contained to the letter. The only major output which we did not complete is the conversion of our self-help organization into a cooperative under existing National laws. We felt that we are in fact operating as a cooperative although informally.

We are able to practice our traditional systems of cooperativism under the cooperative law, we will then register as a fully fledged cooperative.

### *Employment creation/skills training*

Based on the available funds and the time-frame of the project, we felt that it was not possible to directly create jobs the way private investors do. We thought it would be better to give skills training to enable members to find jobs and to strengthen existing livelihood sources so that more people would be able to engage them.

However, no production or service skills training involving new livelihood activities have been done so far because we have opted to develop our existing livelihood skills first. Hence the available funds were primarily used for basic organizational development. Loans from the revolving loan fund have been provided to members for rice production and loom weaving but it is yet too early to measure the increase in income generated from this activity. A marked increase in the production and sale of our various products has, however, been observed.

### *Literacy training*

Literacy training programmes were conducted informally through village animators and other members. Formal classes were not held as they are expensive and women have problems attending due to their numerous farm and household responsibilities. No head count was conducted so the number of participants in these informal training sessions is not known.

### *Technical training*

So far in the project, the technical training programmes which have been conducted have been on cooperative development, organizational management, culturally-adjusted record-keeping and accounting and the fundamentals of auditing and bookkeeping. These are relevant to our organizational management needs. More than 100 community members attended the training programmes. As a result, we can now run our organization satisfactorily. This is our preparation for going into other forms of skills training .

### *Cultural preservation*

In order to help us preserve our culture, the project gives us the opportunity to use indigenous and traditional cooperative practices in group activities and in running our self-help organization.

### *Cooperative development*

An orientation on cooperative formation based on the prevailing cooperative law has



been conducted. It served as the framework for surfacing and analysing our own traditional cooperative practices. We intend to convert our organization into a cooperative which is sensitive to our culture.

#### *Revolving loan fund*

Some 54 community members were able to borrow from the revolving loan fund (RLF). Most of the loans were invested in activities such as agricultural production and loom weaving. The RLF Committee has been working effectively and the loans are being repaid on a monthly basis. Lately, the repayment rate has sometimes risen to more than 80 percent.

#### *Equipment component*

Although the purchase of a rice mill was originally planned for the Dupag, Tabuk group, this was abandoned when another NGO in the village installed the same equipment. We are now identifying other equipment needs for future procurement.

#### *Environment/natural resource component*

The environment and natural resources concerns have been initially addressed through a training programme on pesticide management. The programme was aimed at reviving traditional non-chemical pest control methods.

### **4.1.4. Performance analysis**

#### **Effectiveness**

Overall, the participants in the self-evaluation exercise declared that the project had been effective in as much as it had opened up accessible avenues for development which were sensitive to indigenous culture, It has sown the seeds of true self-reliance in our community through hands-on self-help activities.

The women further stated, Through the project, we have discovered our own potentials in terms of determining the course of our development, pursuing it mainly through our indigenous knowledge systems and practices and sustaining the same by way of community initiatives.

Except for some cases of overlapping approaches and methodologies, the women considered the inputs of other government agencies and NGOs positive and helpful in their bid to attain self-reliance, Our capacity-building and community empowerment exercises under the project have helped us override the negative factors and keep our bearings.

In order to improve the effectiveness of the project, the women considered it would be

advisable to invest more in activities which would enable the community to build their own socio-cultural as well as physical infrastructure, e.g. in the area of education. An extension of the duration of the project to at least three years may also help, they added.

### **Relevance**

The project components were considered by the women to be relevant to their needs and likewise, the methods employed were sensitive to their cultural values and traditional practices and norms: This is because we were the ones who chose and implemented the activities. Additional implementation experience on our part as well as on the part of the NGO partner and the project manager and extension workers would help make the project more responsive and beneficial.

### **Cost effectiveness**

The project beneficiaries claimed that the project is cost effective in the sense that there is an apparent effort to use the limited financial resources wisely and effectively. They further added, Cost may be reduced vis-a-vis each activity by limiting expenses to basic requirements and encouraging more community contribution and voluntarism. We are stretching the limited funds to reach as many members as possible at any given time .

### **Sustainability**

In regard to sustainability of the project, the women suggested that, An initial step to ensuring the sustainability of the project is to improve the management of the revolving loan fund and increase the seed money for its operation. As soon as possible, the fund should be institutionalized. Further, they added, We believe that organizational development is the key to the sustainability of the project. More time should be given to the project so that greater help can be extended us in attaining organizational stability.

### **Staff performance**

The participants in the self-evaluation exercise were of the opinion that the project staff performance could be rated as very satisfactory especially considering the relatively new approach and method applied by the project. It was also stressed that the relationship between the community and the staff had been very cordial and constructive and that more training and experience would enhance staff performance even further.

## **4.2. Occidental Mindoro pilot project**

The Occidental Mindoro pilot project is directed towards strengthening self-reliance among the Batangan-Mangyan indigenous community in Balani, Sablayan, Occidental Mindoro. The pilot project is implemented in the field by Balani Multipurpose Cooperative which is owned and

run by the Batangan-Mangyan community.

The self-evaluation team comprised several members of the community. They were participants in the interviews and group discussions. The Project Manager and extension workers served as facilitators.

#### **4.2.1. Methodology**

The self-evaluation was conducted through interviews and group discussions. An interview guide was formulated for the purpose. The interviews and discussions focused on how and to what extent the community participated in the planning and implementation of the different activities under the project. The benefits which the members derived from the project and the effect of the project on the community were also evaluated.

An analysis of the interviews and group discussions outputs was later conducted and a report on the findings was made. Based on the report, the community leaders formulated an action plan aimed at improving the quality of community participation in the project.

#### **4.2.2. Project design and components**

According to the summary of self-evaluation results, the project beneficiaries (indigenous communities) stated that their leaders had participated directly in the general design of the project document on their behalf. Their leaders had been interviewed by ILO-INDISCO officials but they added, We were directly involved in the identification of specific projects and activities which were later implemented under the project.

The project beneficiaries further commented, The major components of the project are responsive to our needs. We certainly need a lot of training in livelihood skills and in organizational management, including value formation. We need basic equipment to help us improve our production and, more importantly, a revolving loan fund to enable us to sustain our productive socio-economic activities.

The objectives in the project document are still valid, according to the self-evaluation results, and the beneficiaries are comfortable with the method of implementation because: It allows us to plan and implement the project by ourselves taking into account our customs and traditions. The provision in the project document for improving the role of women in the development effort is also highly appreciated.

### 4.2.3. Project implementation

#### *Local implementing organization*

In the self-evaluation exercise, the project beneficiaries expressed their appreciation for the fact that the project was being implemented through their own organization, the Balani Multipurpose Cooperative, and not through an external NGO. This arrangement had proved to be very satisfactory particularly in regard to the project staff, who had been hand-picked by them.

#### *Activities/achievements*

Although the project beneficiaries declared that they have been involved in the planning and implementation of activities, they add, Of course, not all of us are always present in every activity, but every activity provides the opportunity for voluntary participation.

In general, farming activities, involving both men and women, have been the main focus of the project's development efforts. The participants in the self-evaluation exercise claimed that a lot of activities have been carried out and that through these activities, the participants were able to produce the following outputs:

- ▶ a strengthened cooperative which could effectively serve as the channel of assistance for our development;
- ▶ delivery of more meaningful government services in our village;
- ▶ higher income from our farming activities;
- ▶ increased employment opportunities;
- ▶ higher literacy level;
- ▶ better livelihood skills;
- ▶ increased participation of our women in the development process;
- ▶ more effort being made for the protection and rehabilitation of our environment;
- ▶ greater community consciousness of the need for education, sanitation and better childcare; and
- ▶ a considerably less nomadic community.

Other project achievements included the following:

About 20 percent of the unemployed found self-employment; the average monthly income of those who directly benefitted from the equipment and skills training and revolving loan fund, rose by an average of 30 per cent, and at least 20 men and women were able to read and write after attending the literacy classes.

A total of 12 different skills training programmes were conducted with an average of

25 participants per training. These training programmes were based on a training needs analysis and are therefore relevant to our needs. In one way or the other, we were able to make use of the knowledge we got from the training programmes.

### *Cultural preservation*

The self-evaluation participants declared that they had been encouraged to perform the various activities according to their relevant customs and traditions. In addition to this they claimed to have made some moves to promote their traditional basket weaving with the use of rattan, bamboo and vines.

### *Cooperative development and the revolving loan fund*

Regarding cooperative development and the revolving loan fund, the self-evaluation team received the following statements:

We have our own cooperative in the village, the Balani Multi-Purpose Cooperative. Through the project, we were able to operationalize and strengthen this cooperative which we consider as our Peoples Organization.

There were 40 initial borrowers from our revolving loan fund. The Revolving Loan Fund Committee is working and we did not encounter any major problems in administering the fund.

### *Environmental component*

The project beneficiaries reported that they were continuously engaged in tree-planting activities, including the propagation of fruit trees to improve their environment. This is in addition to the exercise of, our culturally-inspired environmental practices like the use of the fallow system to allow natural forest regeneration and the gathering only of minor forest products for needed consumption.

### *Women's component*

Commenting on the women's component, the group stated, Our women have their own organization through which they discuss and plan their women-specific roles in the development effort. All other activities are open to both men and women.

## **4.2.4. Performance analysis**

### **Effectiveness**

Regarding the question of whether the project had reached its targets, the following comment was made, In terms of outputs, we were able to achieve and are on our way to achieving our

targets. Also, regarding internal problems; In the course of implementation, we were able to solve some of our internal problems. We are now more united than before.

The self-evaluation group also noted that several Government agencies and NGOs had been very important in the implementation of the project. These include, A particular religious missionary, the services of the Office for Southern Cultural Communities (OSCC), the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and, most importantly, the support services of the Provincial Government. However, they added, There were some aspects of these services which have had some negative effects like the delineation of our ancestral domain claim which was carried out with very little consultation with the community. But we learned that corrections in the survey would be made later after more consultations with us.

It was further suggested: To make the project more effective, we suggest two adjustments in the process:

- ▶ to adjust the pace of capacity building of the community to enable them to understand and adopt the needed improvements which are being sought. This means that the implementation period should be longer;
- ▶ follow-up skills training programmes could be organized to speed up the development of skills.

### **Relevance and cost effectiveness**

The project beneficiaries were unanimous in their opinion that the project is relevant to our needs, including the need to adjust to the social and economic changes taking place around us. We have not yet felt any negative effect to our values and our indigenous practices except to the extent that we want to make improvements in our way of life.

They also added that considering what we were able to do with the available funds, we believe that the project is cost-effective.

### **Sustainability**

In the self-evaluation discussions it was concluded that, one important way to make the achievements sustainable is to make the project continue to be felt by the community. This can be done by way of capacitating the People Organization to continue project operations on their own initiative. The maintenance of revolving loan fund will also be a critical factor in ensuring the sustainability of the project.

### **Staff performance and follow-up action**

It was generally agreed by the project beneficiaries that the performance of the project staff was exceptional. Moreover, they expressed particular appreciation for their dedication.

Regarding follow-up action, participants stated, We will have to improve the quality and increase the quantity of our participation in the project implementation process. More attention will be made on women-specific activities and the promotion of the indigenous culture. And last, but not least, we must organize more training programmes on organizational management.

### **4.3. Tawi-Tawi pilot project**

The Tawi-Tawi project is aimed at the development of self-reliance of the indigenous Sama Muslim fisherfolk in the province. The local partner organization is the Magbassa Kita Foundation, Inc. (MKFI).

#### **4.3.1. Methodology**

The self-evaluation was conducted through a workshop in which representatives from the following 4 project sites participated: Nusa Self-Help Organization; Kasi Lasa Multi-Purpose Cooperative; Ungus Matata Women Producers Self-Help Organization; and Lambi-Lambian Self-Help Organization. An NGO representative was also invited to participate in the proceedings.

#### **4.3.2. Project design and components**

Participants at the self-evaluation workshop stated that although informal consultations had been held between their organization, MKFI, and some of their community leaders, they had not participated directly in the preparation of the project design. The workshop, however, emphasized that the project document contained provisions for training, equipment and revolving loan funds which were the basic services their communities required in their effort towards self-reliance.

The project document also contained objectives which were appropriate in the context of their aspirations and therefore remained valid. The workshop participants further added, The project allows us to be responsible for specific activities, specially those which are related to our organizational and livelihood development undertakings. There, too, are provisions for the promotion of the role of women, protection of the environment and the preservation and promotion of indigenous and traditional practices.

### 4.3.3. Project implementation

#### *Initial problems*

Assessing some of the initial problems in the project, the self-evaluation workshop concluded that although the partner NGO had helped them, problems had arisen because the NGO was based far away in Manila. At times it had therefore been difficult to get the necessary assistance when needed because of the distance and related communication problems. Solutions to this problem were still being sought.

Other factors which had affected project implementation, were listed as follows:

- ▶ the May 1995 elections;
- ▶ difficulty in transportation;
- ▶ dole-out mentality of some members;
- ▶ lack of cooperation and understanding among members at the beginning; and
- ▶ delay in the release of the revolving loan fund and equipment by the NGO.

Regarding project outputs, the evaluation workshop stated that one had been completed i.e. the provision of extension workers for the community. The other two were still on-going including the establishment of self-reliant cooperatives and the capacity building of about 300 fisherfolks to enable them to become economically functional.

#### *Activities*

The workshop participants unanimously declared, We have completed a number of activities which we thought were important for the success of the project. These included livelihood training programmes, cooperative seminars, community consultations and group meetings for participatory planning and assessment or problem-solving. But there were some activities which were not carried out because the necessary equipment, i.e. the pumpboat engine and chest freezer with transformer, were not yet delivered due to administrative problems.

Elaborating on training programmes, the provision of equipment and credit facilities, the workshop further stated: Because of the functional literacy training programmes, livelihood training programmes, cooperative seminars and assistance in the form of equipment and loans, the direct beneficiaries have developed skills which are useful in economic activities. They have also increased their community awareness and cooperation and self-confidence in dealing with other groups and Government functionaries.

Furthermore, the functional literacy component of the project facilitated the organizational development of the cooperatives/self-help organizations.



### *Cooperative/self-help organizations and cultural preservation*

The self-evaluation workshop agreed that the project had inspired them to preserve and promote their indigenous culture, knowledge systems and practices in the management of their own cooperatives and self-help organizations, including their common facilities and revolving loan funds. Examples were given:

One cooperative, the Kasi Lasa Multi-Purpose Cooperative, has already been organized and is functioning. The Ungus Matata and Lambi-Lambian Self-Help Organization are, however, struggling to become cooperatives.

### *Revolving loan fund*

The self-evaluation participants stated that almost all the revolving loan funds had already been distributed to the cooperatives/self-help organizations. We are managing the funds and using them for our livelihood projects. The Revolving Loan Fund Committee has been functioning actively in the evaluation and endorsement of loan applications.

### *Equipment component*

The self-evaluation workshop informed that equipment provided so far included two heavy-duty sewing machines (for the mat weaving/pandan handicraft project), which the beneficiaries claimed were very helpful. In addition, we also expect that the boat engine and chest freezer will be of great benefit as soon as these are delivered to us by MKFI.

### *Women's component*

The role of women has been given importance not only in the composition of membership in the cooperatives/self-help organizations but also in the actual management and responsibility of group undertakings, maintained the self-evaluation workshop. A short training on the status of women in Islam and their role in the family and community was conducted. A short seminar on health issues was also organized.

### *Environment component*

Although environmental protection and development activities have not yet been prioritized, participants claimed that there was a concerted effort to raise the community's level of environmental awareness through discussions incorporated in community/group dialogues and training programmes.

#### **4.3.4. Performance analysis**

##### **Effectiveness**

The self-evaluation workshop maintained that the project had been effective mainly because it had adopted the participatory approach: It gave us opportunity to do the things we believe are good for us. The project team did not impose activity plans on us. Instead, they helped us make and implement our own plans.

However, it was added, The intervention of some political leaders almost adversely affected the project's effectiveness. They tried to discourage us and dictate to us, but we were able to resist these moves by actively involving the whole community in the project.

The workshop further claimed that the beneficiaries were striving to sustain the growing interest and initiative in the community in order to increase the project's effectiveness, but that the organization of more training programmes on management, bookkeeping/accounting and business operations were essential. Moreover, it was suggested that INDISCO's assistance should be provided for at least two or three more years.

##### **Relevance**

The workshop considered the project to be relevant to the community needs and suitable to their cultural values and traditional practices: To us, the project is not only useful for the training programmes, equipment and revolving loan fund it has provided, but also for the learning opportunity throughout the process of becoming self-reliant.

##### **Cost effectiveness and sustainability**

Regarding the cost effectiveness and sustainability, the workshop noted: We can say that many immediate benefits have derived even with the limited funding available. There are also opportunities for us to decide what to do and how to optimize the revolving loan funds considering it is a relatively small amount of money.

To help ensure the sustainability of the project, we are trying to strengthen our organizations and see to it that we learn as much as possible from the project experience while external assistance is still available. For the same purpose, we will exert every effort to make our revolving loan fund work and grow.

##### **Staff performance**

The self-evaluation workshop expressed that, in general, the project staff had done their best to help make the project work. It was, emphasized, however, that more training programmes for the project staff would enhance the delivery of services.

The workshop further suggested that any follow-up assistance should be directly provided to

the cooperatives/self-help organizations themselves. We believe that it would be in the best interest of all parties concerned if INDISCO could, at this point, work directly with the peoples' organization. Given the one year experience in the project, the peoples' organizations may successfully manage the project.

#### **4.4. ARMM pilot project, Mindanao**

The ARMM (Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao) pilot project aims at strengthening the production and marketing of traditional arts and crafts of indigenous Muslim communities in Mindanao. The project started in April 1995.

In the self-evaluation exercise in Mindanao, some community leaders were tasked to conduct village-level discussions about the implementation of the project so far. Although the main developmental activities are still just starting, the comments and suggestions of these village meetings are, nevertheless, useful for future evaluations.

##### **4.4.1. Project design and components**

In the self-evaluation meeting, the indigenous villagers/project beneficiaries stated that

- ▶ the objectives and project components are valid and beneficial. In actual practice, these objectives are the ones we are aspiring to achieve.
- ▶ the main activities mentioned in the document are appropriate for the preservation and promotion of our traditional way of making handicraft.
- ▶ the project highlights our traditional culture and values particularly in the organization of cooperatives.

##### **4.4.2. Project implementation**

The villagers commented that project implementation was, in general, going smoothly because the extension workers were working closely with the community. They also characterized the project as a good medium for the promotion of their traditional handicrafts. Further comments on the various activities of the project were given as follows:

Brassware and other handicraft producers participate actively in all activities including, for example, in environmental awareness seminars conducted by the project.

We are preparing to convert our self-help organizations into cooperatives. We are, in fact

already preparing our Article of Cooperation and by-laws.

The community members have been very eager to attend the basic cooperative training courses.

Our present level of production is good. Recently, we are lucky to have His Excellency President Fidel V. Ramos as visitor in our Dayawan project site. He bought 50 woven vests (*chaleco*) and encouraged everyone to patronize the local handicraft industry.

Several problems were, however, also highlighted:

The speedy improvement and promotion of our products is being hampered by delays in the release of project funds. As a matter of fact, due to lack of funds, we do not have our Product Design and Marketing Specialists yet and no technical training programmes have therefore been conducted.

We also do not have our revolving loan fund yet, but we have been told that this is already on its way. We are eager to have the revolving loan fund because then we can improve and increase our production.

Regarding gender balance in the project, the villagers commented, We have a good mix of men and women working together in our project sites, especially in Upi Maguindanao. However, we have mainly men brassware producers in Tugaya and mainly women weavers in Sultan Kudarat and Dayawan.

#### **4.4.3. Performance analysis**

Regarding the effectiveness of the project, the village meeting concluded that it was too early to assess this as project implementation was in its mid-term.

Regarding the relevance of the project, the villagers emphasized that the project is certainly relevant to our needs because it seeks to help us improve our socio-economic status through livelihood activities which we have already been engaged in for a long time.

Regarding cost effectiveness, it was remarked that the project was cost effective since it makes us do many things even with very meagre funds.

And, finally, commenting on the sustainability of the project, the villagers pointed out that since handicraft production is among our traditional activities, it will surely stay for more years. The project, especially the revolving loan fund component will enhance its sustainability.

**Box 7. Progress of the ARMM pilot project, Mindanao**

The following major activities were carried out with the aim of capacitating Muslim handicraft producers in Mindanao:

- 257 organized target beneficiaries (168 men and 89 women) were trained in cooperative principles and cooperative management;
- 39 organized selected members (24 men and 15 women) and 4 extension workers were trained in project preparation and feasibility studies;
- 59 board members (31 men and 28 women) from 4 organized handicraft producers, and 4 extension workers were trained in revolving loan fund management;
- 598 board members (31 men and 28 women) of organized handicraft producers, 4 representatives from Government agencies and 4 extension workers were trained in self-evaluation techniques;
- the Revolving Loan Fund Agreement was approved and signed by representatives of the respective organizations;
- a Revolving Loan Fund account was opened at the Philippine National Bank in Cotabato City and P 647,500 was deposited in seed fund account;
- Revolving Loan Fund Management Committees were constituted;
- Articles of cooperation and by-laws for the handicraft producers cooperatives were prepared;
- project staff, including a training specialist and 4 extension workers, received training on extension work based on the INDISCO guidelines for extension workers;
- the Sultan Kudarat Women Loom Weavers Association in Sultan Kudarat Municipality, Maguindanao, was formed with 59 women members and 15 Board members;
- the Dayawan Women Loom Weavers Association in Marantao Municipality, Lanao del Sur, was formed with 69 women members and 15 Board members;
- the Tugaya Brassware Producers' Cooperative in Tugaya Municipality was formed with 64 members and 15 Board members;
- the Kominamer Nito Producers' Association was formed with 35 members (18 women and 17 men) and 7 Board members;

