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Coaching the Community Mobilisation Unit of the Integrated Food Security Programme

Coaching of Community Mobilisers II

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Preface

To improve the living conditions of the rural population and to promote reconstruction and redevelopment the Sri Lankan Government proposed a support programme for food and nutrition security for Trincomalee and Ampara districts in 1996. This proposal was appraised in September 1997 and the Integrated Food Security Programme Trincomalee (IFSP) sponsored by the Federal German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) was agreed for a first phase starting from August 1998 to May 2001. Ampara district is included in the IFSP with a food-for-work component. The project progress review mission of July/August 2000 has proposed a second phase up to end 2003.

The objective of the Integrated Food Security Programme Trincomalee is:

“People who are at risk of food insecurity and who are affected by the conflict, diversify and intensify their food and income sources and improve their diet and health care.”

The IFSP has been following a participatory approach for community mobilisation. A large number of small scale projects have been implemented. Cooperation with service providers from government and non-government sector has been established. Systematic planning and mobilisation of target groups - people from all three communities who are affected by the ongoing conflict and are at food risk - are preconditions for sustainability. Food security in conflict aims at contributing to stability at various levels.

To support the project management and to enhance co-operation with partner institutions and organisations IFSP applies short-term expertise, covering a number of subjects. The short-term experts perform subject matter tasks which include training of partner staff.

Investment in human resources and institutional support are key aims of German Development Co-operation. In this respect external expertise meets the needs of partner institutions and staff for applying advanced know-how and skills, enhancing communication and encouraging individuals in their career development. The particular situation in Trincomalee makes it even more important to have international and Sri Lankan short-term experts working with personnel from partner institutions and organisations.

IFSP has established a documentation which includes planning documents, working papers, technical papers and photo documents. These documents reflect project progress and are expected to assist the project management in planning and implementation and at the same time enhance co-operation with partners. The views expressed in the reports are shared by IFSP, however, remain the responsibility of the authors.

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Summary:

- 1 The **purpose** of the Integrated Food Security Programme, Trincomalee (IFSP) is to enable needy and impoverished groups whose food situation is precarious to raise and diversify their nutrition and income levels as well as to improve their health.
- 2 The **objective of the coaching sequence** was to assist the IFSP to continue its efforts for community mobilisation through supervision and coaching of the Community Mobilisation Unit in the field and through feed back sessions. On the basis of the experiences gained in the field the Community Mobilisation Unit shall be enabled to improve and adjust their mobilisation efforts entering in a dialog with target groups and responding to their needs.
- 4 The **community mobilisation concept** of IFSP is a group-based approach taking the ground conditions in Trincomalee into account. Considering the need for immediate action the focus is not on a long-term empowerment process but rather on **purposively strengthening** of existing groups (Bigdon & Engel 2000:7) "on the job", while they are taking over tasks and responsibilities during project planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation (Korf 2000:8).
- 5 **Important aspects of the community mobilisation concept** of the IFSP, which were discussed on the basis of the field experiences are *balance between co-ordination and mobilisation efforts, subsidiarity (maximum use of existing/established structures), and purposive instead of political mobilisation due to the conflict environment (see page 7).*
- 6 The IFSP has established a system of **internal planning, co-ordination and documentation** which is adequate and efficient. While the **preparation** of field work is sufficient, the CM could still document their field visits in a more systematic way in the field books focussing on process monitoring.
- 7 The **review of the fieldwork** summarised in this report is focussing on the preparation and organisation of meetings, communication and mobilisation skills, technical knowledge, target group sensitiveness and efforts for CBO-strengthening. The field coaching of the Community Mobilisation Unit has revealed that the performance of the CM has improved a lot and is generally already good. Focussing on some deficits and typical problem situations which occurred in almost all cases, some "*golden rules for community mobilisation*" are recommended in the report (see page 14).
- 8 Some of the shortcomings assessed reveal from **conceptual deficits in IFSP-policy**. Especially in those fields where the IFSP policies are not sufficiently elaborated the CM are not in a position to adequately explain and mobilise in the field and often raise expectations under villagers. The two most important issues, which are mentioned in the report, are the need to stick to clear criteria for beneficiary-selection and the need to further elaborate the income generation component within the IFSP.
- 9 Other shortcomings, which have been observed, can be related to a **deficit on training and exchange of experiences**. Therefore, a series of coaching sequences (review on the concept, practical training on communication, income generation projects etc), a gender training as well as an exposure and exchange visit to another GTZ-project (preferably the JRP) are proposed.

Abbreviations

CATAD	Centre of Advanced Training in Agricultural and Rural Development, Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CM	Community Mobiliser, Community Mobilisation
DoAS	Department of Agrarian Services
DPS	District Planning Secretariat
DS	Divisional Secretary
FFW	Food-for-Work
FO	Farmers' Organisation
GO	Governmental Organisation
GN	Grama Niladari
GS	Grama Sevaka
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
IFSP	Integrated Food Security Programme
IGA	Income Generating Activities
IRDP	Integrated Rural Development Programme
JRP	Jaffna Rehabilitation Project
MPIPA	Ministry of Plan Implementation and Parliamentary Affairs
NEIAP	North-Eastern Irrigated Agriculture Programme
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
PNA	Participatory Needs Assessment
RDS	Rural Development Society
RDO	Rural Development Department Officer
TPC	Technical Project Committee

1. Introduction

Core Problem

In Trincomalee district an alarmingly high percentage of the population is malnourished and exceptionally impoverished. With a large number of houses, village infrastructures and the production base destroyed, large sections of the population are suffering from alarming chronic and acute malnutrition. Households run by single women, often widows, are particularly hit.

Purpose of the IFSP

The aim is to enable needy and impoverished groups whose food situation is precarious to raise and diversify their nutrition and income levels as well as improve their health. To achieve this purpose, the following results are aimed at: 1) Social and economic village infrastructure improved; 2) Village health care and health awareness improved; 3) Outreach of existing advisory and extension services improved; 4) Additional employment opportunities available to target groups; 5) Improved provision of financial services to target groups by established and reputable institutions; 6) Project-related institutions in government and non-government sectors are supported in target group outreach and community mobilisation.

Background of Community Mobilisation

A participatory and integrated development approach is the framework of IFSPs activities for food and nutrition security (cf. Bauer et al. 1999). The project cycle starts with participatory village workshops for needs assessments (PNA) where communities and specific vulnerable families analyse problems and identify their priority projects. Community mobilisation facilitates the different phases of the project cycle (needs assessment, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation) and aims to improve the self-help capacities of local communities and especially vulnerable groups (cf. Bigdon & Engel 2000). Target groups are expected to not just participate in “their projects” but are challenged to apply their own capacity by actively contributing in terms of kind, cash and management aiming at promoting ownership and thereby reducing dependency and vulnerability.

First ideas for a social mobilisation concept for the IFSP have been developed by IFSP-CATAD in summer and autumn 1999. The further elaboration of a social mobilisation concept was facilitated by a consultant team (Bigdon & Engel 2000) and carried out in collaboration with the newly appointed Community Mobiliser Team in February/March 2000. The background for the concept are the experiences available in Sri Lanka in general and experiences from the North and East in particular which required specific adjustment to the situation in Trincomalee district and the requirements of the IFSP. On the basis of the recommendations of the consultancy team Sewa Lanka Foundation (SLF) was contacted to conduct as training for the Mobilisation Unit of IFSP which took place in September 2000.

The Project Progress Review (PPR) conducted in July/August 2000 confirmed in general the approach of the IFSP, pointing to some deficiencies in the practical implementation (cf. Schall et al. 2000). A first review on the community mobilisation concept and supervision of field work of the IFSP was conducted by Korf in December 2000 (cf. Korf 2000).

2. Objective of the Mission

The aim of this mission is to assist the IFSP to continue its efforts for community mobilisation in a systematic and at the same time pragmatic way, through sequential coaching of the Community Mobilisation Unit. On the basis of the experiences gained in the field the Community Mobilisation Unit shall be supported to improve and adjust their mobilisation efforts responding to needs of target groups. This first sequence has the aim of reviewing the

fieldwork of the Community Mobilisers through coaching in the field and feedback sessions. The precise tasks for the consultant team are specified in the terms of reference in Annex 1.

3. Methodology

IFSP promotes joint learning, knowledge creation and diffusion based on good practices and in-process learning in the field of innovative approaches of participatory planning, community mobilisation and capacity building for food and nutrition security (cf. Korf 2000). This coaching sequence was therefore conducted in a participatory way, promoting dialogue, learning from the field experiences and discussing the strength and weaknesses of the mobilisation approach and the project components. The coaching team (Bigdon and Sivayoganathan) accompanied the CM for their regular field visits, supervising the dialogue between the CM and the target groups, viz. village communities and community based organisations, CBO (see working plan in Annex 2). After each field day, a comprehensive feedback session was conducted, starting with the self-assessment of the CM and a feedback of the colleagues (at those sites, where colleagues joint the field visit).

The feedback of the supervisors followed the criteria of the evaluation sheet, presented under Annex 3, considering aspects like: set up of the meeting, communication/mobilisation skills, attitudes and behaviour, technical knowledge, target group sensitiveness, CBO-strengthening efforts, balance between co-ordination and mobilisation. The criteria will be used as a framework for the review of the fieldwork documented in this report. At the same time typical situations and common problems as well as conceptual issues were discussed, mainly concerning the overriding questions: What is the task of CM and how can he (she) achieve it practically on the ground? How can a CM tackle specific difficult situations?

Important aspects of the feedback sessions and following discussions are summarised in this report. As the time for this coaching sequence was rather limited (one week in the field) this report is very concise and has to be seen as one part of a the coaching sequence.

4. Basic Principles of the Mobilisation Concept

The IFSP has developed a concept of community mobilisation (Bigdon& Engel), that takes the specific ground conditions in Trincomalee District into account, viz. the unstable ground security situation and the alarmingly high rate of malnutrition, which urges for immediate response. The aim of community mobilisation is therefore to mobilise vulnerable groups and village communities to actively taking part in the development process of priority projects. Elements of the mobilisation process are awareness creation for own potentials and resources, motivation for self-initiative, self-organisation and facilitation of contacts to other service providers (Gov. Dept., NGOs, Private Sector).

Considering the need for immediate action the focus is not on a long-term empowerment process but rather on purposively strengthening of existing groups (Bigdon & Engel 2000:7). Purposive mobilisation is a process which is inter-linked with the planning and implementation of infrastructure (community) and income generating (poverty) projects. The basic idea is to strengthen CBOs and vulnerable groups (action groups) "on the job", while they are taking over tasks and responsibilities during project planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation (Korf 2000:8).

The different phases of community mobilisation within the project cycle and responsibilities of the CM are documented in Bigdon and Engel (2000). The model is applied in a flexible manner and does not always include all steps. One important difference to the model is that the community mobilisation starts only with the PNA, not with a pre-mobilisation phase starting some weeks before the PNA.

The focus of this coaching sequence was more on the practical mobilisation skills than on the general concept. The review of the overall community mobilisation concept will be part of a second coaching sequence. Nevertheless some aspects of the community mobilisation concepts emerged during the field supervision, which are briefly summarised:

- *Balance between co-ordination and mobilisation:* As pointed out in Korf (2000:8), it is essential to find the right balance in the fieldwork between the two aspects of project-co-ordination on the one hand and community mobilisation on the other hand. While in the beginning of mobilisation the CM need to focus much more on motivation and mobilisation, during implementation the focus turns more and more towards co-ordination activities.

There is a danger that the mobilisation is neglected in favour of achieving quick results on the ground, as e.g. envisaged and expected by decision makers. Instead of taking time to encourage and support local action and ownership, CMs might jump into the role of managers who organise all necessary support to the local CBOs or action groups to have projects speedily implemented (Korf 2000:8). An important entry point for more sustainability in the process is training of representatives and members of CBO in leadership, management, and planning skills.

- *Subsidiarity (maximum use of existing structures):* IFSP is working through the existing structures and service providers. On village level partners are mainly CBOs, while the technical assistance is provided through field staff of various departments or NGOs. The CMs are the link between the village communities and the various service providers. The aim of mobilisation should be to strengthen the existing structures and networks. Subsidiarity means that the CM should leave as much responsibility as possible with the respective field officer of the existing service structures. He (she) should only take over an active role where the service provider's structure does not exist.

In practical term, the CM should collaborate with the field staff of the departments, the Samurdhi Development Officers, the Rural Development Department etc. If IFSP is organising leadership training for the partner on village level, e.g. RDS the RDO should take over a role in the training. Though the project progress might be slower when collaborating with service providers, it is the most important entry point to contribute to the strengthening of local structures and thereby to sustainable development. It is important to take into consideration that the situation in the uncleared areas is different, as service structures are to a large extent not functioning. In those areas the CM has to take over a much more active role.

- *Conflictive environment - purposive versus political mobilisation:* Political interference and patronage can be observed at all levels of society. In the CBOs, e.g. RDS the representatives are often the local elites, which are re-elected even when cases of corruption and clientelism are obvious. The CMs do not feel in the position to discuss these problems with the village poor, as it would be too dangerous to interfere in the power structures on village level. The conflict parties are also playing a role in this. Considering the conflictive ground conditions, community mobilisation within the IFSP is not a political mobilisation but a purposive project oriented. The CM advocates for the needs of the vulnerable families in the village, but does not interfere in existing power structures.

5. Review of Field Work and Recommendations

5.1 Office Work: Planning, Internal Co-ordination, Preparation and Documentation of Field Work

IFSP has established a system of co-ordination and documentation, which is explained in Korf (2000:13). The coaching team joined the PNA Progress Review Meeting and discussed the preparation of the CM for the field visits. The IFSP-management, the Community Mobilisation Unit and the Engineers are usually participating in this meeting. Major aspects and recommendations are summarised below. The progress of the project implementation is discussed at the end of each month on the PNA Progress Review Meeting. The following format is used for the review of all ongoing project activities:

Result: e.g. I: "Infrastructure Development is Promoted"

Division/ Village and Project	Physical Progress	CM-Progress	Financial Progress: IFSP-GTZ	Financial Progress: Constraints	Suggestions, next Steps:

Assessment:

- (+) The CM Unit has established a co-ordination and documentation system, which seem to be sufficient and effective.
- (+) A working plan is elaborated on the Community Mobilisation Unit - IFSP Management Meeting, beginning of each month.
- (+) The field visits are co-ordinated by the co-ordinator of the Community Mobilisation Unit, who writes the weekly working plan on the office board, transparent for all.
- (+) The PNA/project Progress Review Meeting is a suitable procedure to discuss the progress of projects and to exchange the experiences made in the field. Various problems, which occur during fieldwork, are discussed, focussing on strategies to solve them.
- (+) The preparation for the field visits was assessed to be sufficient. The CM had all prepared a checklist for the field visit, pointing out the topics, which they wanted to discuss with the target groups.
- (+) The project book, containing all project documents, like contracts, budget estimate, and implementation schedule is with the president of the implementing partner (mainly CBOs). Field visits of the CM are documented in the project book.
- (+) The CMs are using a field book, where they documents the field visits. Some CM were taking notes during the meetings, other did not.

Recommendations:

- Documentation within the field book could still be done more systematically, focussing on major discussion topics, decisions and necessary follow-up activities. Process orientation in the documentation is not yet sufficient. CMs should document their field visits immediately after the village/project meetings.

At the end of the PNA-Progress Review Meeting of May 2001, the following topics were discussed:

- The PNA-Progress Review Meeting is taking too much time considering the limited progress, which can be reached within one month. Therefore it was decided to have the meeting only once in two month. ¹It was recommended to stick to the above format. The responsible sub-teams should prepare the progress of their projects before the meeting presenting it on a meta-plan board.
- The results of the discussions, shall be documented in the computer, printed out and filed as soon as possible after the meeting by the respective sub-team.
- For a better co-operation and capacity building selected DPS-staff could be integrated to the meetings.

5.2 Community Mobilisation in the Field

5.2.1 Preparation of Meetings

Community mobilisation on village level requires a professional performance of the CMs. This would include starting with a suitable entry into the village and set-up of the meetings. The following important aspects were considered when observing how the CM entered the village for a mobilisation meeting:

- *Contact person*: the identification of a contact person (e.g. president of CBO) is important to have a link to the village communities and beneficiaries
- *Inform about the meeting*: villagers, best through a contact person should be informed about the date, timing and objective of the meeting in advance
- *Time-management/punctuality*: time-management starts with arriving in time and is important throughout the meeting. It should be avoided to have too long meeting, which keeps villagers away from their work
- *Location of the meeting*: need to be suitable for a gathering. It is recommended to gather at a public place, to avoid jealousies
- *Gathering in a circle*: it is important to organise the meeting in a suitable manner, especially if a high number of people gather. To be able to address all participants equally it is recommended to gather in a circle and to ask people to come closer
- *Identification of people who are gathered*: it is important that the CM gets an overview on the people who are present at the meeting. Often the meeting aims at addressing the beneficiaries only, which have already been selected during the PNA, but non-beneficiaries will almost always also turn-up and raise expectations for project support. It will definitely help in the process to know which are the beneficiaries and which are the non-beneficiaries. The CM needs to compare the names with the PNA-list of the beneficiaries.

Assessment:

- (+) The general set-up of meetings organised on village level has been satisfactory in all cases.
- (+) Usually a contact person of the local partners was informed on the date and time of the meeting and there is a high discipline among the CMs of trying to be in time for the meetings.
- (+) The locations for the meetings have mostly been suitable and on a public ground. In some cases the gathering took place at a private place.
- (+) Gathering the people in a circle was done in a professional way. CM addressed women

• ¹ However, IFSP management decided to continue with monthly meetings to ensure an immediate and comprehensive documentation for purposes of enhancing activity monitoring. Quarterly review meetings with a focus on the village shall assess impacts.

- and late-comers always to come closer to join the circle.
- (+) Time-Management was generally good, in some cases the meetings were too long, gathering too many people for different issues, which might not be relevant for all of them.
 - (-) Identification of participants of the meeting is often not done at the beginning, but was mainly done in the later discussion.

5.2.2 Communication and Mobilisation Skills

The communication skills are the cornerstone for any mobilisation effort and therefore need to be specially considered through training and coaching in the field. Successful mobilisation requires special skills, e.g. it is not sufficient to be a good speaker but to be a good facilitator. Good speaking and listening skills are essential. If we take community participation serious, it is important to provide space for discussion and joint decision making. The communication and mobilisation skills of a CM have therefore been assessed through looking into the following aspects:

- *Way of addressing people:* to build up a good rapport with the people it is important to have friendly attitudes and good behaviour, taking people serious and explaining clearly the objectives of the visits. Use of a clear language and understandable expressions.
- *Encouraging participation through asking questions:* asking question is the entry point to encourage people's participation in the discussion. To stimulate discussions leading questions like "do you all agree..." should be avoided. Instead open questions are more suitable, like: "what are the duties of the RDS?", "What can you contribute during the project implementation?", "Why are women not members of the CBOs"? "How can we overcome this problem?" etc.
- *Keeping expectations realistic:* villagers will always have expectations when development agencies are coming to their village. The question is how the expectations and recipient mentality is addressed by the CM, whether they are increasing the expectations or manage to make people aware of the limitation of the support and the importance of their initiative, active participation and contribution.
- *Moderation skills:* as the CM have to organise meetings and facilitate decision making processes, moderation skills are elementary, which allow them to give the ownership of the discussion and decision-making to the villagers but still be the master of the process at any time of the meeting.
- *Balance of listening and talking (preaching):* Avoiding preaching and finding the right balance between message delivery and a process of joint learning though listening to each other.
- *Decision-making process:* it is important that the decisions taken are not dominated by the CM but the output of a discussion where all interest groups could raise their voices and participate in the decision-making process.
- *Transparency:* to build up a good rapport and situation of mutual trust, it is important that the criteria of co-operation and the decisions taken are transparent to all members of the village community. During meetings the CM should try to keep the process transparent to all participants at any moment, e.g. visualise, summarise.

Assessment:

- (+) All CM have a friendly attitude, respectful manner and open-mind to address the target groups.
- (+) Good introduction of the purpose and objectives of the meetings and field visits. The CM referred to the PNA-process, which took already place in the village and explained the follow-up of the PNA.
- (+) In some cases CM had a patient way to react to criticism and a sensible way to deal

- with the security situation by careful wording.
- (-) All CM have the tendency to use English expressions, which are not understood by the villagers. Use of simple easy-understandable language can still be improved. In some cases the CM talked to fast.
 - (+) Moderation skills: In some cases the moderation skills were very good, loud and clear voice, always master of the situation. In other cases there was a tendency that the discussion sometimes escalated, especially when villagers did not agree with each other.
 - (-) The facilitation of a decision-making process was sometimes not finalised. There is a tendency to stop the process when it becomes complicated.
 - (+) In most of the cases the CM had a good way of trying to keep expectations realistic by explaining the conditions of IFSP-co-operation and the need for contribution and participation of beneficiaries (Example: "The future activities in this village depend on the extend you get involved and active"). In one case the CM did not even introduce the IFSP-packages to avoid expectations in the first meeting. Others were too pushy and raised expectations through asking again and again about the problems and needs of the villagers. Furthermore expectations were created through promises on leftovers or later projects were non-beneficiaries might have the chance to participate.
 - (-) Decision-making process: There is still the tendency, that the decision-making process is not participatory. Often the CMs are taking the decision for the beneficiaries, instead of facilitating a joint decision-making. Some groups, especially women are often left out in the decision making process. A typical situation is, that CM are addressing all when they talk, but turn towards the men, if it comes to decisions or sub-group formation.
 - (-) CMs are not encouraging villagers enough to come out with their opinions. There is a tendency to talk mainly with the leaders or to ask only leading or closed questions, like "Do you all agree...", "So, your problem is... ". Sometimes the CM answered their own questions without leaving time for the villagers to respond. There is a lack of asking open questions to stimulate discussion. One good example was asking the beneficiaries "How often do you eat per day?", when explaining the meaning of food security.
 - (+) The balance of listening and talking (preaching) was in most of the cases good, sometimes already very good, leading to a real dialogue. In some cases there was still the tendency to preach like a politician, repeating many things again and again without giving enough space for joint discussion and listening to the villagers.
 - (+) The transparency was often given through the explanation of the IFSP-criteria. In some cases the CM ask the villagers whether they agree with the IFSP-criteria for co-operation. In other cases it was observed, that during a meeting some decisions and actions were not transparent to all participants. For example the handing over of a check to the CBO-president was not sufficient explained and therefore not transparent for all, how much money was handed over and for what purposes under what conditions.

5.2.3 Technical Knowledge

To carry out their work successfully, CM need to have a profound know-ledge on all IFSP-principles, criteria and packages. Furthermore they need to understand the tasks and services of the service providers (government departments and NGOs). The CM are always collaborating with technical staff, like IFSP engineers or department field officers, who are the experts in the respective field. Nevertheless, discussing the implementation of projects or planning income generating activities with action groups, requires that the CM have a technical knowledge, which enables them to facilitate the planning and decision making process on village level. The technical knowledge has been assessed through looking into the following aspects:

- Understanding of IFSP-principles, criteria, components and packages
- Overview on service providers and their activities

- Knowledge on technical details for income generating activities

Assessment:

- (+) Mostly good explanation of IFSP principals, criteria and expectation for peoples participation and contribution by using simple language, like "IFSP aims to help those who have no food", "IFSP is not like the government, providing services for free, but asks for your participation".
- (+) Good knowledge on bookkeeping and leadership-training.
- (+) Good technical knowledge on equipment's for income generating activities, like fishing net.
- (-) Confusion in the use of the expression "action group", not always clear what is meant with action group.
- (-) Purpose of action group formation, e.g. for well-construction not clearly explained to villagers.
- (-) Procedure and criteria for the selection of beneficiaries for income generating activities not clear. There is still a need to clarify this project component by the IFSP management.

5.2.4 Target Group Sensitiveness

CM need to be target group sensitive, in the sense, that they should do every effort, to identify different interest groups and integrate them in all meetings. For the assessment the following aspects have been considered:

- *Identify leaders:* it is important to identify village leaders, who are accepted representatives for certain groups.
- *Identification of poverty groups:* it is also important to have clearly identified the most vulnerable families in the village, what is usually done during the PNA. In many cases some new families have settled into the village or some people have been left out during the PNA.
- *Gender aspects:* Furthermore gender aspects need to be addressed, through integrating women and men in the decision making process.
- *Consider different interest groups:* The interests and opinions of specific groups, like minority groups in the village, the non-beneficiaries etc. need to be considered when decisions are taken, to avoid creating conflicts within the community.

Assessment:

- (+) In most of the cases good leaders had been identified who have standing in their communities and who organise the community and beneficiaries from within. In one village the president of the Tamil as well as the president of the Muslim RDS have been equally selected as contact persons for the drainage project and the collaboration between the two societies is successful.
- (+) In some cases there was a high sensitivity for those people, who did not participate in the discussion. The CM tried to bring them into the process through directly addressing them and asking about their opinion, e.g. "The president has talked a lot, now I want to hear, what do you think about it...?"
- (-) Women have been often excluded, when it came to action group formation or decision making.
- (-) It was not always possible to clearly identify the vulnerable families, identified during PNA, as many of the poor did not come to the meeting, while other newly settled people joined. It seems to be difficult for the CM to obtain an overview on the poverty status of the beneficiaries.

- (+) The manner to address the non-beneficiaries was sometimes not adequately. CM often tried to satisfy the non-beneficiaries by promising further project activities or left-overs. There was a lack of clear explanation of the criteria for the selection of beneficiaries during the PNA. It seems to be not always clear to the CM how they should tackle the request from people who were not considered as beneficiaries during PNA.
- (-) Especially during informal progress meetings on the site the CMs have the tendency to talk mainly to the CBO-leaders. Too less time is spent on chatting with the other beneficiaries to get their opinion on the progress of the project.

5.2.5 CBO-Strengthening

People's participation and contribution in the process of project planning and implementation requires strong CBOs with capable leaders and office bearers. Leadership- and office bearer training is therefore an important task of the CM with the aim to strengthen the village communities. In the assessment the focus was on the following aspects:

- *Leadership-/office bearer training:* the training for leaders and office bearers should focus on their awareness for the duties and responsibilities of representatives as well as on their capacity building through the introduction of management skills.
- *Mobilisation for self-initiatives:* communities should get active instead of waiting for services to come (recipient mentality). The philosophy of self-help, participation in development, contribution needs to be rooted within the CBO.
- *Participation and maintenance through CBOs:* The active participation of CBOs in the implementation process as well as the maintenance of the site is one indicator for a strong CBO.
- *Strengthening existing structures:* Facilitating links between CBO and service providers through collaborating with respective field staff.

Assessment:

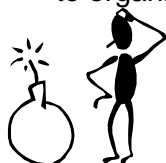
- (+) Good teaching skills to explain and exercise bookkeeping with office bearers of CBO.
- (+) In many cases the participation of CBO-members in the process of project implementation was very encouraging.
- (-) In some cases it was obvious, that the CM did not adequately address the recipient mentality of villagers. When villagers asked for IFSP-support for little things, what they could easily do on their own, the CM gave the decision to the IFSP-Management instead of using the request as entry point for a discussion on self-initiatives, contribution and participation of community in their development process.
- (+) In most cases the collaboration with field staff from departments, Samurdhi or NGOs seems to be good. Facilitating of contacts to other service providers, e.g. to local NGOs or societies to address specific problems of villagers.

5.3 Recommendations: Golden Rules for Community Mobilisation

In the following the most important aspects, which were frequently observed and discussed with all CM are summarised in the form of "Golden rules for Community Mobilisation":



- Always check your time-management and try not to overburden a meeting with discussing all details with a big group of villagers. This becomes especially important during harvesting time, where meetings need to be as short as possible and therefore focussed on the most relevant issues.
- At the beginning of a meeting the CM should always identify the people who are gathered, to get an overview who is there and who from the PNA target groups/beneficiaries is not attending the meeting.
- To have clear criteria for everything helps to be able to respond to criticism and to be transparent for all. Always refer to these criteria and mention clearly, that projects will only be implemented, if the villagers fulfil the criteria.
- Make clear why a decision was taken and on what criteria (this requires that the IFSP-management has a clear position on decisions by using the developed indicators without exceptions). This becomes especially important in a conflict area, where different groups will easily feel left out or discriminated.
- Handle financial issues transparent for all! If you hand over a check to an office bearer make it transparent to all members, how much it is, for what it should be used as well as the requirements from IFSP.
- Get involved, if CBO committee meetings get a one-man-show. Encourage that other members are also getting more active.
- Let them do! Give as much space and responsibility to the local partners. When providing training, like bookkeeping let the group members exercise after explaining.
- Always take note on the major discussion points and decisions shortly after the meetings
- Focus on a real dialogue! Less preaching, more listening!
- Integrate women in all committees, which are formed. It is important to hear their voices in all decision making processes.
- Stress on the need of a strong CBO as basis of all projects!
- Strengthen existing structures through collaborating with field officers of departments and NGOs. Strengthen networks on village level by introducing villagers to field staff of other service providers or organisation in the region
- Fix a day for the next meeting and make clear what will be discussed and who should be present. It is important to have a contact person in the village, who is made responsible to organise the next meeting.



- Avoid to give always the IFSP management as an excuse for rejections of support. The CM should rather explain and discuss more about the potentials of the villagers to get active, without expecting outside help for everything.
- Avoid to create expectations under non-beneficiaries through promises for additional support or left-overs. There is a need to have clear indicators for the selection of beneficiaries, which could than be used as arguments.
- No exceptions from the selection criteria!
- Avoid to long one-way conversation! Ask more questions to get villagers involved.

- Avoid dominating with your own opinion! Try to guide the target groups through a process of joint decision making!
- Do not ask about the general problems of the villagers after the PNA, as this will create more expectations. Refer to the PNA-results!

6. Conceptual Issues: CM and IFSP Policy

The field coaching of the Community Mobilisation Unit has revealed that the performance of the CM has improved a lot and is generally already good. Nevertheless, there is still scope for improvements. The institutional arrangements in place for coordination and documentation are appropriate, procedures and formats for preparation and documentation of fieldwork are also widely in place.

The deficits, which have been observed can be related to further needs of well targeted training and exchange of experiences among the CMs on the one hand and a lack of clarity on some conceptual issues. The CMs need to have a clear understanding on all IFSP policies and packages to offer, to be in a position to mobilise the envisaged target groups. Especially in those fields where the IFSP policies are not sufficiently elaborated, the CMs are in danger to raise expectations under village communities.

Some conceptual deficits are summarised:

- *Income generating project component:* Procedure and criteria for the selection of beneficiaries for income generating activities are not yet clear. There is still a need to clarify this project component within the IFSP-Management/Team. The idea of a flexible fund for the CBO for i.g.a. needs to be further elaborated and discussed with the project staff. Is it a good idea, to give the funds to CBO for further identification of beneficiaries? It has to be carefully observed, whether the CBO is selecting the vulnerable as beneficiaries.
- *PNA-Follow up:* The PNA follow-up should take place as soon as possible after the PNA, otherwise it is more difficult to guarantee that people are the same, who joined the PNA. In some cases, where the PNA follow-up delayed, there are many confusions with newly settled people or people who moved away. In those cases it is difficult to stick to the selection criteria applied during PNA.
- *Action groups:* The term 'action group' is used with different meaning. Purpose of action groups should be discussed together with the CMs and the IFSP management (What for? Who should be part of it? What is the duty of action group members? How many members? Gender aspects!)
- *Clarity of selection criteria:* to have clear indicators and selection criteria for beneficiaries is especially important for the CM that they can be transparent in their decisions, which is important to avoid creating expectations and conflicts under the village community. The IFSP-Management has to support the CM through applying the same criteria when they are taking decisions. It should definitely be avoided that senior staff of IFSP makes any promises in the field, without applying the criteria.
- *Withdrawal from the village:* it is not yet clear, how much time is spent on community mobilisation, especially if there is no accepted co-operating partner on village level or conflicts between different groups in the village, who are not willing to co-operate with each other. How much effort and time can be spent mobilising and mitigating within one village community? Is it appropriate that no project activity started after more than one year of mobilisation efforts? When is the time to withdraw from one village? These questions need to be discussed between the CMs and the IFSP management.
- *Process monitoring for internal learning:* it is important that the experiences made by the field staff are documented and shared in regular discussion meetings. Process orientation within the field documentation can still be improved. The IFSP management can support the process of learning from the experiences, through facilitating regular

coaching sessions, where good practices and un-intended impacts (do-no-harm) are discussed with all field staff.

- *Security Issues*: The IFSP policy with regard to security issues is appropriate and the "green-light" policy is followed by all field staff in a professional way. Travelling in the field, especially in uncleared area, a lot of time is spent on listening to the radio, to get feed-back on the ground situation and for the monitoring of the position. This extra-time what is needed, has to be taken into consideration by the IFSP management as well as field staff, when planning the field-trips.

7. Recommendations for further Coaching Sequences

Supporting the continuous improvement of all project activities and capacities of project field staff, and partners the IFSP is recommended to organise the following training and coaching sequences:

Coaching Sequence 2:

Review of the community mobilisation concept on the basis of the experiences gained during the field coaching sequence and practical training on specific situations of mobilisation

Objective:

- CM have all the same understanding about the mobilisation concept within the IFSP
- CM have shared best practises and negative experiences of mobilisation
- CM have improved their communication and mobilisation skills

Methodology:

- Discussion with resource persons on the potentials and limitations of community mobilisation
- Role play on typical situations and problems which occur in the field work (see Annex 4)
- Theoretical input and exercises on question techniques

Gender Training (for all IFSP-staff)

Coaching Sequence 3:

Income Generation Projects (IFSP-concept, cost-benefit analysis, experiences of other projects, contact institutions)

Exposure visits to other GTZ supported projects:

An exposure visits to and exchange with other projects, preferably the Jaffna Rehabilitation Project (GTZ) and/or the NECORD-project of the ADB. The objective is, that the CM gain more insight into other projects experiences and approaches. Furthermore the institutional learning within the GTZ in the field of best practises could be support through this initiative.

Coaching Sequence 3:

Moderation, Presentation, Progress Monitoring, Report-Writing

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Annex 1: Terms of Reference (ToR)



INTEGRATED FOOD SECURITY PROGRAMME TRINCOMALEE (IFSP) PN 97.3653.9

SEQUENTIAL COACHING AND TRAINING FOR THE COMMUNITY MOBILISATION UNIT OF THE IFSP

SEQUENCE 1: COACHING OF FIELD WORK – TERMS OF REFERENCES (TORs)

Sequential Coaching of the Community Mobilisation Unit:

The aim of the mission is to assist the IFSP to continue its efforts for community mobilisation in a systematic and at the same time pragmatic way, through sequential coaching of the Community Mobilisation Unit. On the basis of the experiences gained in the field the Community Mobilisation Unit shall be supported to improve and adjust the mobilisation concept of the IFSP, responding to needs of target groups. Furthermore, in a brainstorming meeting (20.04.01), the Community Mobilisers identified further coaching and training needs in different areas related to their office and field work:

- Coaching of the field work
- Review of the community mobilisation concept on the basis of the experiences gained
- Communication, Negotiation, and Conflict Management Skills
- Visualisation, Presentation and Report Writing
- Moderation
- Gender Training
- Project Planning and Project Management
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Social Mobilisation Skills (group Strengthening, adult education, motivation, awareness creation)
- Income Generation Projects (loss-benefit analysis, concepts, contact institutions)
- Furthermore exposure visits and exchange with other projects, preferably the Jaffna Rehabilitation Project (GTZ) were proposed to gain more insight into other projects experiences and approaches. An exchange visits with the JRP could be organised after the field coaching (sequence 1) and the revision of the community mobilisation concept (sequence 2).

The coaching and training could rather be provided in short blocks of 4-5 days over a longer period of time that it does not interfere with the field program.

Aims of the First Coaching Sequence:

This first sequence has the aim of reviewing the fieldwork of the Community Mobilisation Unit through coaching in the field and feedback sessions with the Community Mobilisation Team.

Expected Results

1. A coaching programme, which allows the coaching of all Community Mobilisers of the IFSP in the field is elaborated in collaboration with the Community Mobilisation Unit. The schedule should try to fit into the planned field programme of the Community Mobilisers.

2. The practical field work of the Community Mobilisation Unit is reviewed through coaching in the field, focussing on the following aspects:
 - Review communication and dialogue of CMs with target groups, CBO representatives and partners in preparing, planning and implementing PNA projects.
 - Review mode and quality of co-operation with CBOs and partners with emphasis on promoting enhanced involvement of officers, e.g. TO and DO on divisional level and encouraging ownership at CBO level.
 - Review and advice on recording, reporting and documentation of field work/progress with a view to support activity monitoring
 - Review behaviour, attitudes and practical approaches to ensure IFSP commitment is effected timely and according to requirement and contribution and commitment from CBOs is enhanced.
3. The findings and experiences gained in the field are discussed with the respective CM and the whole team in feedback sessions and a final evaluation session.
4. The findings of the coaching sequence and recommendations are documented in a concise report.

Coaching Team:

Christine Bigdon: Political Scientist; advanced training in participatory methods and approaches; experienced in the conceptualisation and application of social mobilisation concepts and empowerment processes in India and Pakistan; background to conflict mitigation concepts (ex CATAD team member). Present Position: Resident Representative of the South Asia Institute, Colombo Branch Office, University of Heidelberg.

C. Sivayoganathan: Institutional Consultant of IFSP, Professor for Agricultural Extension, Department of Agriculture Extension, University of Peradeniya

Proposed Schedule:

The first coaching sequence of the fieldwork of the Community Mobilisation Unit is proposed for the 20th to 28th of May 2001. The following time schedule is planned:

May 20 th :	Preparation
May 21 st to 25 th :	Travel Colombo-Trinco, PNA Project Review Meeting, Field supervision
May 26 th :	Final Evaluation Session
May 27 th :	Report Writing

Contribution from IFSP

Transport and material for the coaching team shall be provided by the IFSP. The IFSP will support the logistical arrangements necessary for the field visits.

Annex 2: Working-Schedule

- 20.05. Preparation of Coaching Sequence
- 21.05. Travel Colombo-Trincomalee
Internal co-ordination procedures – observing the PNA-
Progress Review Meeting
- 22.05. Supervision and coaching in the field, Kuchchaveli Division:
- Informal visit to drainage construction site and discussion with
RDS-Leaders in Valaiyoottu (Mr. Muraleetharan. Observers: Ms.
Bigdon,
Ms. Dharsanie, Mr. Ainkaran)
- Discussion on Mid-day Meal with school principal at Kumpurupitty (Ms.
Dharsanie, Mr. Muraleetharan, Mr. Ainkaran. Observer: Ms. Bigdon)
- Meeting of beneficiaries of toilet project, discussion on action group
formation and steps of project implementation in Kumpurupitty (Mr.
Ainkaran. Observers: Ms. Bigdon, Mr. Sivayoganathan, Ms. Dharsanie,
Mr. Muraleetharan)
- Feed-back session at the office.
- 23.05. Supervision and coaching in the field, Eachchilampaththai Division:
- First official meeting of beneficiaries of income generating activities
(i.g.a.), discussion on IFSP-criteria and technical details on proposed
i.g.a. in Verugal Mugaththuvaram (Mr. Sivasuthan. Observers: Ms.
Bigdon, Mr. Sivayoganathan)
- Book-keeping training with office bearers of RDS for road construction
project in Elangaithurai (Mr. Sivasuthan. Observers: Ms. Bigdon, Mr.
Sivayoganathan)
- Feed-back session at Muthur field office
- 24.05. Supervision and coaching in the field, Muthur Division:
- First meeting after PNA, discussion of community project
implementation (well construction) and i.g.a. projects with beneficiaries
in Paddalipuram (Mr. Gowriswaran. Observers: Ms. Bigdon, Mr.
Sivayoganathan)
- First meeting with women's group to discuss possibilities for i.g.a. in
Allim Nagar (Mr. Nesharaashaa. Observers: Ms. Bigdon, Mr.
Sivayoganathan)
- Feed-back session at the office.
- 25.05. Supervision and coaching in the field, Gomarankadawela Division:
- Discussion on Mid-day Meal with school principals at Vilpanakulam and
Kalyanapura (Ms. Kadadshani, Mr. Sugath. Observers:
Ms. Bigdon, Mr. Sivayoganathan, Ms. Swamy)
- Visit of project sites (drinking water well, tank), informal talks to
beneficiaries and president of farmer organisation in Kaliani Pura (Mr.
Sugath. Observers: Ms. Bigdon, Mr. Sivayoganathan, Ms. Swamy)
- Feed-back session at the office.
- 26.05. Final Evaluation Meeting
- 27.05. Report Writing

Annex 3: Evaluation Sheets for Field Supervision

Date:
Division:
Village:

Name of CM:
Language:

Evaluation Sheet 1: Coaching of Community Mobilisation in the Field

	☺	☹	What can we improve?
Set-up:			
Communication and mobilisation skills:			
Technical Knowledge:			
Target Group Sensitiveness:			
CBO-Strengthening:			
Balance co-ordination/ mobilisation:			

Indicators:

- *Set-up:* timing, punctuality, four-eyes principle? Contact persons)
- *Communication and Mobilisation skills:* how are people addressed, moderation skills, listening/preaching, open questions, Let them do, raising expectations, transparency, accountability, attitudes behaviour, motivation
- *Technical Knowledge:* on IFSP-principles, projects, service providers, etc.
- *Target Group Sensitiveness:* Leaders identified, gender aspects considered, poverty groups, minority groups adequately addressed, who is left out?
- *CBO-Strengthening:* how are groups identified, steps of strengthening, monitoring of strengthening process, contact persons identified?
- *Balance between project co-ordination and mobilisation:* time spent on mobilisation and on co-ordination issues

Date:
Division:
Village:

Name of CM:
Language:

Evaluation Sheet 2: Office Work (Preparation of Field Work, Documentation) and internal and external Co-ordination/Co-operation

	☺	☹	What can we improve?
Co-ordination of Field-Work:			
Preparation of Field Visits:			
Documentation:			
Internal Co-ordination with IFSP-Management:			
External Co-ordination/Co-operation:			
Security Issues:			
Monitoring of Impacts:			

Indicators:

- *Co-ordination of Field-Work:* Role of Co-ordinator, Weekly Working Plan
- *Preparation of Field Visits:* preparation of checklists for field visits
- *Documentation:* field book, project book, process orientation in documentation?
- *Internal Co-ordination with IFSP-Management:* regular debriefing, PNA-progress review meeting, CM-IFSP-meetings
- *External Co-ordination/Co-operation:* collaboration with service providers, DS-field staff, Samurdhi officers,
- *Security Issues:* "green-light", four-eyes-policy, uncleared areas
- *Monitoring of Impacts:* do-no-harm

Annex 4: Key questions and typical situations in mobilisation work



- If things go wrong, villagers will always blame the CM for it. CM is often getting in a defensive role. How should he/she react? What would be a strategy?
- How do we handle the situations, that non-beneficiaries are joining the meetings?
- How to respond to trouble creators, like non-beneficiaries, which ask to get benefits, too?
- How to respond to requests from non-beneficiaries or beneficiaries for extra support?
- How to react to unexpected change of mind under beneficiaries, e.g. who do suddenly not want to share a well or toilet with the neighbour family?
- How to respond to land-property problems?
- What is the best way to inform villagers about a meeting? Are other officers like SDO or RDS-president reliable?
- What to do, when many people from the PNA-list are not coming for the meeting?
- What role does the pre-listing during PNA play? All people who are on the list will expect something!
- Can we give the final decision on the selection of the beneficiaries to the RDS? What about the risk, that the president is just nominating his best friends.
- How to come to decisions, especially on estimates of costs, time-schedule for implementation, if beneficiaries are not participating as they lack experience.
- How to come to a decision, when villagers start arguing and fighting with each other?
- What to do, if the people gathered are not explicitly the target group of IFSP?
- Sometimes new people join the CM-meetings or groups occur, which have not been identified during PNA? How do we integrate them, or do we restrict ourselves to the PNA-results?