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EVALUATION OF ASSISTANCE FUND IMPACT

ON

RURAL INCOME GENERATING GROUPS

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This evaluation brought together, once again, some of those who have worked hard over the past three years to bring the Assistance Fund to rural Basotho.

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This team will continue efforts to assess the progress of the Assistance Fund in the coming year. We hope that by taking a hard look at this programme in its developmental stages, the final product will be of lasting value to the people of rural Lesotho.

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EVALUATION OF ASSISTANCE FUND IMPACT ON RURAL INCOME GENERATING GROUPS

I. INTRODUCTION

This is the second evaluation of the impact of the LDTC's Assistance Fund on members of rural groups. The first evaluation of these groups was conducted in September 1983. Both evaluations have asked the same basic question, although methodologies have differed for obtaining answers: are rural income-generating group members any better off for having asked the LDTC for assistance?

This report is organised into seven major sections. Section II summarises major recommendations, III presents an overview of the Assistance Fund, IV reviews results of the 1983 evaluation of the Assistance Fund, V describes the evaluation methodology, VI reports findings, and Section VII gives conclusions and recommendations.

II. SUMMARY OF MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS

Below are four "Action Steps" based on results of this evaluation, for the attention of Assistance Fund planners. More details are provided on these recommendations in the last section.

1. Formulate specific objectives for the Assistance Fund.
Broad goals exist for the Fund, along with criteria for effective groups. These are a good start, but the AF needs clear objectives which spell out the outcomes desired and the steps necessary to achieve these results. There is the risk that without these objectives the Assistance Fund could become unfocussed in an attempt to respond to the many needs of income generating groups. Programme objectives need not be cast in iron, however. Periodic revision, would be necessary as programmers gained in experience.

2. Review training modules in terms of appropriateness and amount of time necessary. This step would follow the formulation of specific objectives. It could be that new modules should be added - for example, marketing, if one objective is to help groups identify the best market for their product.

The amount of time spent on each module should be considered after training modules have been identified. One recommendation of this study is that more time be allowed for programme planning since test scores were fairly low on that module. The time allowed for other modules may need readjusting - again, given priorities based on objectives of AF training.

3. Strengthen the record-keeping system to include documentation of group practices in bookkeeping, group work and programme planning. Trainers have already devised some useful records over the years of the Assistance Fund. And some of the most useful information on progress of the Fund is found in reports written after a training session. That is why the term "strengthening" is used - the good work that has been started needs only some modification. The several record-keeping practices and forms that now exist should be reviewed, simplified and most important, standardised.

It is also important that trainers record actual practices in bookkeeping, programme planning, group functions, and any other training modules that are developed. Test results indicate that group members have a good understanding of these training topics, but there are only sporadic records kept on the ways in which members actually use their training.

4. Expand the Distance Education Approach to include materials that group members can use on their own. Bookkeeping materials have been distributed to group members for completion between training sessions to date. This experience should be expanded: written materials and radio should both be part of a distance education approach that would complement training. This is more important with the advent of a new training approach concentrating on group leaders and extension workers.

III. OVERVIEW OF THE ASSISTANCE FUND

The LDTC Assistance Fund offers financial assistance and training to rural groups who want to bring in more income to their families and communities. Briefly, the system works as follows:

1. Groups approach the LDTC with a proposed income-generating activity that they would like to see funded.
2. The LDTC reviews the request and assigns a staff member to help the group to build a strong proposal which explains the intended use of loan money, how the activity will operate, and strategies for product marketing and loan repayment.
3. A Screening Committee composed of LDTC members evaluates the proposal against the LDTC Selection Criteria and decides whether or not assistance should be granted. An interministerial committee is also asked to comment on a group's proposal.
4. Money is disbursed to the group either in a lump sum or installments for purchase of activity inputs. At the same time, training is started with the group through the Intensive Training Model: Trainers live in the village with group members during an initial three-day session covering simple bookkeeping procedures, functions of group members and programme planning. This approach is described more fully in Section VI-C. Monthly follow-up visits are made after this initial training over a period of six months. Training or advice in other topics, such as problem-solving or marketing, is provided as the need arises.

Usually training is conducted by at least two trainers from LDTC's Service Agency. For each group, one of the trainers has the added responsibility of acting as monitor.

Distance education materials on bookkeeping are left with members to complete on their own time and send back to LDTC for correction.

5. The group's progress in conducting their particular income-generating activity is monitored by regular visits from LDTC trainers. Up until now, evaluations of the impact of LDTC assistance have been conducted between six months and one year from the onset of training.

IV. RESULTS OF FIRST ASSISTANCE FUND EVALUATION, SEPTEMBER 1983

This evaluation measured gains from participation in the Assistance Fund between March and September 1983 for three groups: the Khotle Piggery Association, the Koloni Uniform Centre, and the Ipopeng Leribe Poultry Association. Assistance Fund evaluators learned more about how an evaluation of an income-generating project should be conducted than about the impact of the project on group members.

The evaluation followed a pre-test.- post-test design. The pre-test was administered in March 1983. Questions were asked regarding income, perception of ability to manage income-generating activities, participation in group decision-making, and self-confidence in ability to manage and earn income. A post-test asking questions in the same categories was conducted in September. Specific findings on both the impact of the Fund and on possible changes in evaluation methodology are listed below:

- While both personal and household income rose slightly for all groups, this gain could not be attributed to income from the group's activity and any subsequent distribution of profits.
- The income management skills which increased the most over a six months period, as perceived by members themselves, were group work, equipment maintenance and repair, and bookkeeping. While it was worth knowing about members' perceptions of their own skills, it was more important to identify objective measures of skills acquisition. This led to the development of skills tests for the evaluation effort reported in this document.
- While members' perceptions of their influence in group decision-making generally went up from pretest to post-test, evaluators decided that more valid indicators of participation in decision-making should be sought through observation of group process.
- Questions asked to get information about self-confidence in ability to manage income yielded little information. The recommendation was made that these questions be linked more to the work of the group.

Further recommendations of this study centered mostly around evaluation procedures for the future. Evaluators recognized that while more summative kinds of evaluation questions might be answered through interviews and tests with Assistance Fund group members, the best sources of data were the LDTC trainers who made regular monitoring trips to the groups. Trainers were encouraged to continue writing standard trip reports.

Evaluation questions have changed from the time of the initial evaluation in September 1983. As mentioned, the general question

asks if group members are "better off" for having received assistance from LDTC to start an income-generating project. In 1983 we defined "better off" through four criteria:

*simple d
profit*

1. The income of individual group members should increase;
2. Members' ability to manage activities leading to income should increase;
3. All members should participate in the decision-making as well as other activities of the group;
4. Members' self-confidence in their ability to manage and earn income should increase.

While the second, third and fourth criteria were kept as measures of Assistance Fund impact in the present evaluation study, the first criterion was eliminated for the following reasons: 1) It was difficult to attribute any rise in personal or household income to distributions of profit from the group's activity. In fact, most "profit" was being reinvested into expansion of the activity or in repayment of the LDTC loan. 2) Group members did not see their primary group purpose as income generation, especially in the early stages of assistance from LDTC. Learning technical skills in poultry-raising, uniform sewing, etc. was valued far more.

V. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

A. Selection of Groups for Evaluation Study.

At the time of this second evaluation, the LDTC had granted assistance to ten groups, and was in the process of approving assistance to ten more. The following table displays key features of the ten existing groups:

TABLE 1
Assistance Fund Groups: July 1982 - December 1984

| GROUP | ACTIVITY | NO. OF MEMBERS | DATE CONTRACT SIGNED | LOAN AMOUNT |
|--|--|----------------|---|----------------------|
| * Khobotle Piggery Assoc. | Breeding & selling porkers | 8 | July 1982 (loan 1) March 1984 (loan 2) | M3500.00 M2400.00 |
| * Koloni Uniform Centre | Sewing & selling uniforms | 30 | Dec. 1982 | M4500.00 |
| * Ipopeng Leribe Poultry Assoc. | Selling eggs in village & Egg Circle | 17 | May 1983 | M 760.00 |
| * Lekhalong la Baroa | Knitting jerseys & other items | 20 | Sept. 1983 | M1860.00 |
| Bela-Bela Women's Inst. | Making & selling tie & dye | 19 | Nov. 1983 | M 219.52 |
| * Mathebe Nutrition Group | Sewing & selling uniforms | 30 | April 1984 | M3000.00 |
| Matolile Nutrition Group | Knitting & selling jerseys | 35 | April 1984 | M2500.00 |
| Thusanang Matsekha Poultry Group | Selling eggs | 75 | May 1984 | M 800.00 |
| Lesotho Council of Workers-Women's Section | Assistance to Vocational School | | April 1983 | M3350.00 |
| Visual Problems Centre | Assistance in buying machines for training | | Sept. 1983 | M5700.00 |

*Selected as evaluation groups

Of the ten groups receiving LDTc assistance, eight were rural income generating groups and two - the Lesotho Council of Workers-Women's Section Vocational School and the Visual Problems Centre - were training centres.

There were only three Assistance Fund groups at the time of the first evaluation, thus the whole population was evaluated and sampling was not necessary. At the time of this evaluation, however, there were ten groups instead of three. Thus resources such as time, available transportation and number of interviewers limited the number of groups that could be studied.

One criterion for selection was that groups be income-generating in nature. This condition coincided with an LDTc-sponsored conference on "Income-Generation in Lesotho" in February 1985. It seemed logical to share results of an evaluation of financial and training assistance to the eight income-generating groups with conference participants. This criterion ruled out the LCW-Women's Section and the Visual Problems Centre.

Other criteria for selection related to unique aspects of these eight groups. Groups with an asterisk in the preceding table were selected for the following reasons:

1. Khobotle Piggery Association. LDTc's first Assistance Fund group; training conducted led to development of ITM; group proved very costly in terms of group and LDTc resources - LDTc learned that piggeries are not a profitable activity in Lesotho.
2. Ipopeng Leribe Poultry Association. The only group that is actually making profit and that has expanded its operations; training approaches both ITM and its predecessors; considered successful group by LDTc because it expanded poultry operations after six months.
3. Koloni Uniform Centre. Typical rural women's group, associated with Boitoko; top-down leadership structure; difficult to trace financial transactions; considered unsuccessful by LDTc because of effect of leadership on group.
4. Lekhlong la Baroa. Received all ITM training; engaged in mixture of skills training and income-generating; leadership in group not very strong.
5. Mathebe Nutrition Group. Strong role of outside field worker assisting group.

The other three income-generating groups also have their unique features, but were not interviewed at this time because they were not far enough along in their activity to realistically see progress - the Matelile group had not yet mastered knitting, the Thusanang Matselha poultry group only got their chickens in

December 1984, and the Bela-Bela tie and dye group had not found a satisfactory market for their product.

B. Members Interviewed

This evaluation report uses data from two different studies: the first Assistance Fund evaluation, published in September 1983 and the latest study from January 1985. The evaluation of AF impact in terms of group practices, performance on the ITM and use of training relies on January 1985 data. Table 2 compares the number interviewed with total group membership.

TABLE 2
1985 Study Sample

| <u>Group</u> | <u>Total Members</u> | <u>Number Interviewed</u> | <u>% of Total</u> |
|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Khobotle | 8 | 4 | 50% |
| Koloni | 30 | 4 | 13 |
| Ipopeng | 17 | 15 | 88 |
| Lekhalong la Baroa | 20 | 14 | 70 |
| Mathebe | 30 | 12 | 40 |
| TOTALS | 105 | 49 | 47% |

Evaluation visits to all groups were announced at least one week ahead of time. Even so, the LDTC had problems finding group members, as frequently happens whether the visit be for the purpose of evaluation, training, or monitoring. Some members can't meet at the pre-arranged time and place because of illness, family commitments, work in the fields, or simply lack of interest (although the latter is rarely expressed in such terms.)

For the section of this report which covers characteristics of group members, data on age, education and level of personal and household income were borrowed whenever possible from the 1983 study for the Khobotle and Koloni groups. The number interviewed for Khobotle at that time was eight (out of eight); for Koloni, 24 (out of 30.) The larger numbers give a more reliable picture of group characteristics.

C. Evaluation Instruments

As mentioned, experience led evaluators to focus more on what AF group members were able to do as a result of training and whether or not participation in an income-generating activity actually led to an increase in income and ultimately to a distribution of this money among members. Questions from the previous evaluation about members' perceptions of gains in skills and other benefits

were less useful in providing feedback on project impact and were dropped.

The evaluation had three major components: 1) an interview guide in Sesotho which asked participants about their applications of training in AF skills: bookkeeping, group work, and programme planning, and about members' knowledge of group financial practices; 2) skills tests in these same areas; and 3) a review of bookkeeping ledgers for each group.

To be more specific, the interview guide contained questions about:

- benefits members got from group membership,
- their problems with LDTC distance education materials,
- other community and learning activities,
- knowledge of the source of group income and how it was spent,
- uses of training in the three main areas plus technical skills relevant to their particular activity.

A final question asked about their hopes for the group's future. Demographic questions on age, education, marital status, personal and household income were also asked. A copy of the English translation of the interview guide is found in Appendix A.

The tests covered the three training areas of bookkeeping, group functioning and programme planning. Tests were different for each group, depending on their activity. Following is a description of test components:

- The bookkeeping test resembled many of the bookkeeping exercises the groups had used as a part of training; members were given a series of seven financial transactions relevant to their activities and asked to enter them on a ledger worksheet and close the books.
- The next six questions asked about the roles of group officers and members in handling money.
- A final question first presented a situation in which the group's loan money had been approved, and inputs for their specific activity were due to arrive at a certain date. Members were to list approximately six planning steps they would follow in order to prepare for the arrival of the inputs. In the case of Ipopeng Leribe, the activity was poultry, so the primary "inputs" were chickens.

An English version of the test for Ipopeng can be found in Appendix B.

D. Interviewing and Testing Procedures

Evaluation interviews and tests were administered to the five groups over a period of three weeks. It took a half day to interview all members of smaller groups, a full day for the larger groups. Interviewers were the five Af trainers and a Research Officer who works closely with the AF project.

VI. FINDINGS

A. Characteristics of Assistance Fund Group Members

In addition to questions assessing the impact of the Assistance Fund, interviewers asked members of the five evaluation groups about their age, level of education, level of personal and household income, individual learning and community activities, and what they perceived as benefits of membership in an Assistance Fund group.

Table 3 displays the mean, or average age and education level of evaluation group members and the ranges within these two categories.

TABLE 3
Mean Age and Education of AF group members

| Group | Age | Education |
|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Khobotle (N=8) | 43 range: 22 - 55 | Standard 7 range: Std. 4 - JC |
| Koloni (N=24) | 29 range: 15 - 56 | Standard 7 range: Std. 3 - Form C |
| Ipopeng (N=15) | 47 range: 22 - 70 | Standard 6 range: 0 - Form D |
| Lekhalong (N=14) | 32 range: 22 - 50 | Standard 6 range: 0 - Form A |
| Mathebo (N=12) | 37 range: 23 - 57 | Standard 7 range: 0 - COSC |
| OVERALL MEAN | 38 | Standard 7 |

Members of the Ipopeng and Khobotle groups are somewhat older than the others, although in general members of all groups are mature women, with only a few very young or very old members. Nonetheless, the inclusion of young and older members in each group is significant: group membership is generally open to all adult women in the village.

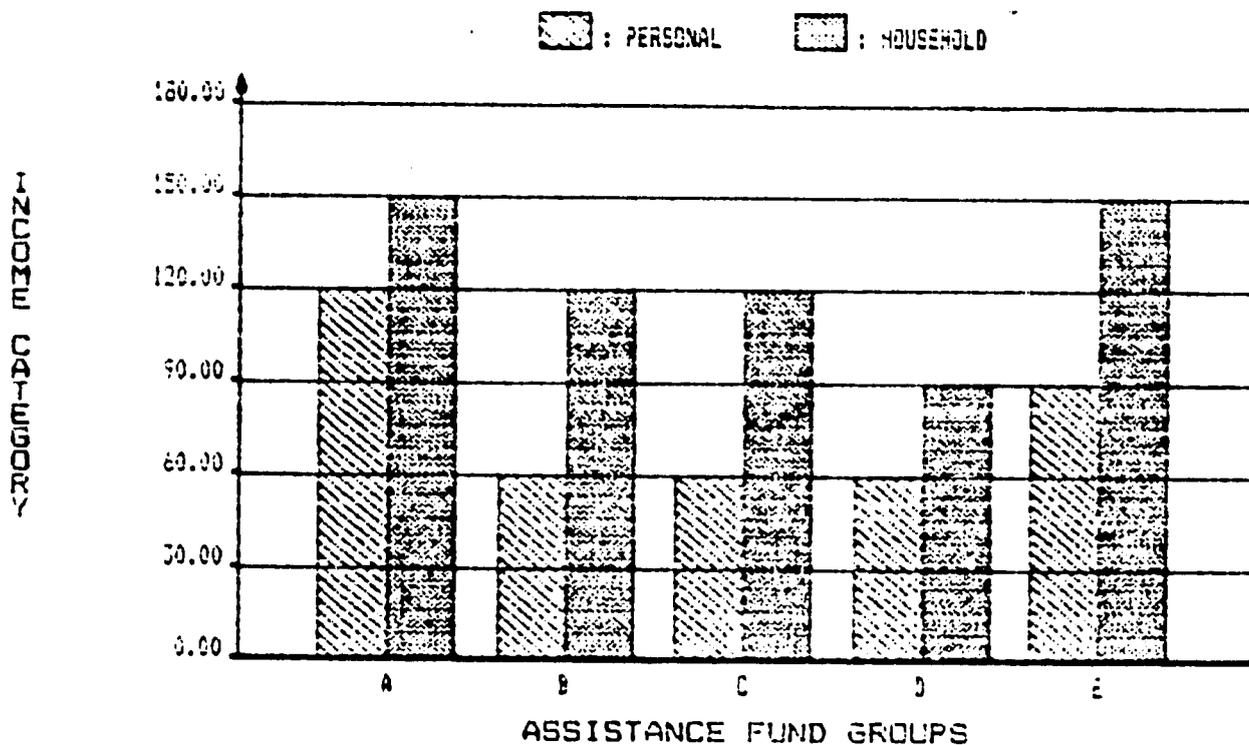
The education level of all five groups is similar, not unusual for Lesotho, where many rural women have completed primary school. Three groups had only one illiterate member each. This relatively high level of functional literacy makes possible the inclusion of written materials in a training approach.

Table 4 looks at levels of personal and household income for the

five study groups. "Personal income" is that income brought into the household by the the group member herself. Categories of personal income on the interview guide averaged from M1 - M30 per month, to M210 and more. "Household income" consisted of all income coming into the household, regardless of the source. For this question income categories ranged from M1 - 30 to M500 and over.

TABLE 4

MEAN PERSONAL & HOUSEHOLD INCOME PER MONTH



- KEY: A - Khobotle Piggery Association
 B - Koloni Uniform Centre
 C - Ipopeng Poultry Association
 D - Lekhalong la Baroa Knitting Group
 E - Mathebe Sewing Group

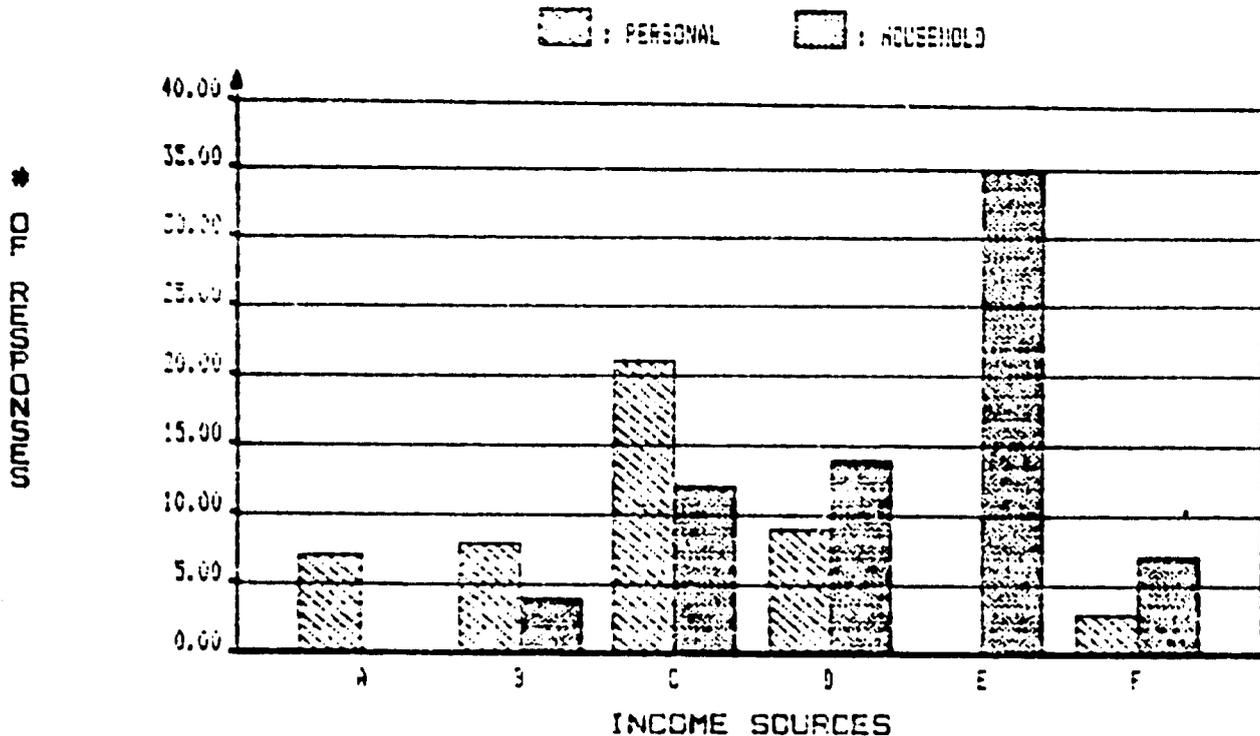
The average amount of personal income was somewhat over M60 per month, or about M720 per year. The mean household income for all five groups fell roughly at M120 per month, about twice the average personal income per month, or M1440 per year. This figure compares favorably with a 1979 ILO estimate of rural household income of M720 per year, or M62 per month¹. More recent figures are available from the Government of Lesotho's Five Year Development Plan 1980-1985: The Plan contrasts estimated average

income per year for 1980-81 for households with a migrant worker - M1500 - with households with no migrant worker - less than M400 per year.

Table 5 looks sources of personal and household income.

TABLE 5

PRIMARY SOURCES - PERSONAL & HOUSEHOLD INCOME



- KEY:
- A - Sewing, knitting
 - B - Beer selling
 - C - Sale of agricultural products
 - D - Salaried employment/business
 - E - Mines
 - F - Other

The primary source of personal income was the sale of agricultural products, or in other words, farming. Traditional rural activities such as brewing beer and making brooms and mats accounted for 30% of the responses on this question. Sewing, knitting and crocheting articles for sale (outside of the AF group sewing/knitting activities) is a more recent activity.

Businesses mentioned included buyers and sellers of ready-made clothes (sources included Durban, RSA) and a cafe. Two out of three salaried employees were teachers.

Group members were also asked to identify the primary source of household income - either themselves, or the income of a husband, brother, etc. - whichever is the largest and most regular. Although respondents were encouraged to give only one source in several cases a respondent mentioned two.

In most cases group members mentioned remittances from the South African mines as a primary source of household income. Yet mine remittances should not be overemphasized - the other half of household income sources consisted of traditional and agricultural subsistence activities and income from the modern sector. Agriculture included sale of maize and vegetables, wool and livestock. The business category includes clothes sellers and one cafe owner. Salaried workers - almost as important a source as agriculture - were civil servants, teachers, shop workers, and a mission employee. Other sources mentioned were shop rental, carpentry, grasswork, bricklaying, and having a chief in the household.

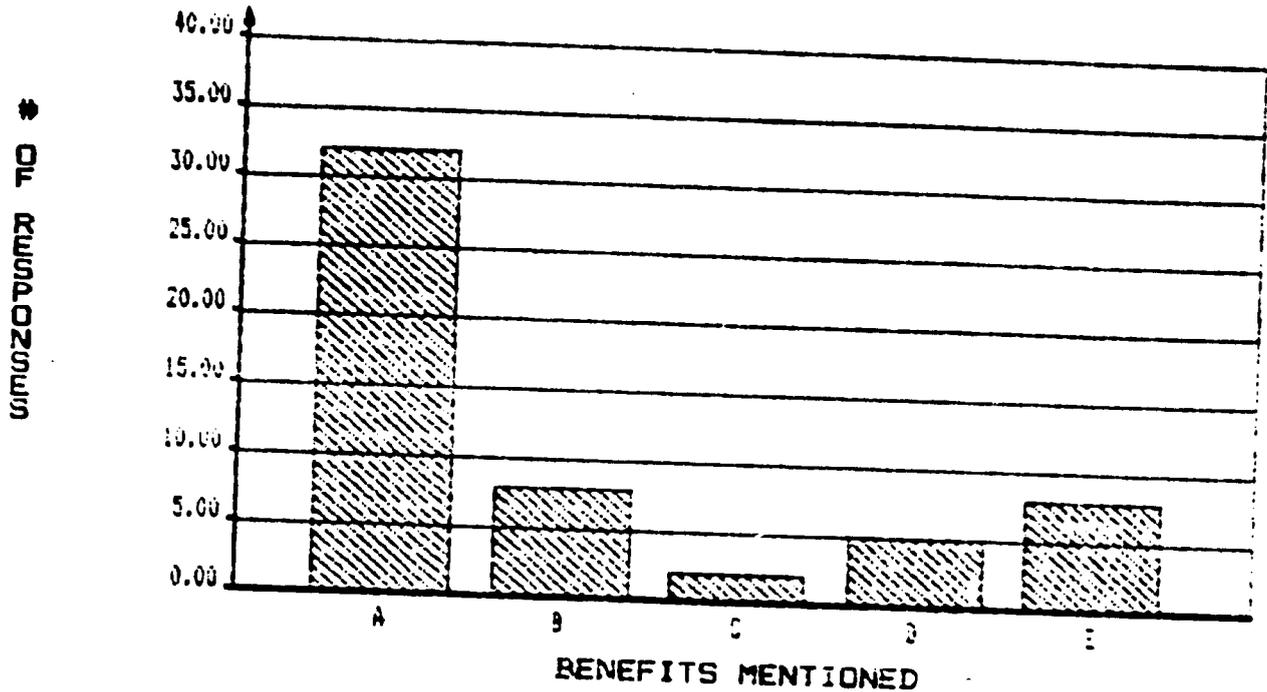
Economic analysts have predicted a decrease in mine remittances to Lesotho for a number of years. The non-mine income sources cited above plus the Assistance Fund activities become more important in view of Five Year Plan's statement that from 1975 to 1980 about 40 percent of all households had no migrant labour income. Planners predicted that this figure would rise to 67 percent between 1980 and 1985. Thus income generating activities in the rural areas will be a major source of economic stability in Lesotho as the question of alternate employment for returned miners becomes more acute.

Table 6 looks at the reasons members were interested in group membership.

¹International Labour Office: Job Skills Programme for Africa, Options for a Dependent Economy: Development, Employment and Equity Problems in Lesotho. Addis Ababa, 1979.

TABLE 6

BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP



- KEY:
- A - Production skills
 - B - Income management skills
 - C - Income Generation
 - D - Working with others
 - E - Productive use of time

Production skills - learning how to use sewing or knitting machines, raise pigs or poultry - remain the primary benefit of group membership. This was also the case in the September 1983 evaluation. Another similarity is that the number of people who cite earning income as a benefit is low: only two members across all five groups. These findings reinforce the growing awareness of AF planners that the label "income generating groups" is meaningful primarily to them and less so to groups. This suggests that LDTC must help groups to see the connection between an activity and its economic benefits, and at the same time assist in their attempts to develop the necessary skills to carry out economic activities.

Ipopeng members listed a wide range of benefits - not only learning skills but also making good use of time. Two of the four who said they saw no benefits as members put this statement in terms of profit sharing. This could be a result of the fact

that Ipopeng is closer to actually sharing profits as a group and is eager to see money going to individual members.

Mathebe members' sole interest, with one exception, appeared to be learning production skills. Specific skills were cooking, sewing, knitting, learning about a balanced diet, and a range of other home economic skills. The obvious source of these interests was the group's affiliation as a nutrition group.

The response of "production skills" as a benefit of group membership by Lekhalong members is similar to that of the Mathebe response. Although some members related the skills to learning how to use the Passap knitting machine - tied directly to producing knitted school jerseys - many included crochet, cooking, embroidery, etc. among benefits. There were more responses in other categories, however, indicating a somewhat greater awareness of the possibilities of group membership.

AF evaluators asked group members about their learning and community activities in order to get a better picture of their interests and activities. Table 7 looks at learning activities outside the Assistance Fund group.

TABLE 7
Learning Activities

| Group | None | Literacy/ Correspondence | Training Programs | Own Projects |
|---------------------|------|-----------------------------|----------------------|--------------|
| Khobotle (N=8) | 2 | 1 | 5 | |
| Koloni (N=24) | 15 | 1 | | 8 |
| Ipopeng (N=15) | 6 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| Lekhalong (N=14) | 13 | | 1 | |
| Mathebe (N=12) | 10 | | 1 | |
| TOTALS | 46 | 4 | 10 | 9 |

There were very few learning activities mentioned, although members interpreted the question broadly. The only activities mentioned frequently were training programs offered through national ministries and organisations such as Botetoko, trader training from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the Ministry of Health training for Village Health Workers, and one international development project through the Irish government. Even though the number of AF group members learning from these projects was relatively small, these data suggest that development projects offer village people a significant

opportunity to learn new skills and practices.

There were few mentions of learning in more formal settings, such as correspondence courses. Literacy courses were mentioned only twice, undoubtedly because almost all AF group members had at least some primary schooling. This fact plus the interest of members in skill development and in training offered by LDTC and other organisations suggests that the LDTC "Learning Post" literacy programme could complement those development organisations offering skills training to rural people.

The projects mentioned as learning activities by Koloni members included cooking, tie & dye, knitting, poultry-raising, working with the village water supply, and improving agricultural practices.

Table 8 displays the range of community activities mentioned by members.

TABLE 8
Community Activities

| Group | None | Building Roads/Dams | Digging Wells/Pipes | Burial Society | Credit Union | VHW | Farmer Coops |
|---------------------|------|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----|-----------------|
| Khobotle (N=4) | 1 | | | 1 | 2 | | |
| Koloni (N=4) | | 2 | 4 | | | 1 | |
| Ipopeng (N=15) | | 5 | 7 | 3 | 1 | | |
| Lekhalong (N=14) | 4 | 1 | | 6 | | | 3 |
| Mathebe (N=12) | 1 | 2 | 1 | 7 | | 2 | 3 |
| TOTALS | 6 | 10 | 12 | 17 | 3 | 3 | 6 |

AF group members participate much more in community development activities than in individual learning projects. The range was wide, reflecting again the influence of development activities in the area. Those engaged in road fixing and building dams might be working with the "Food for Work" Program or at the chief's command. Similarly, those digging wells may live in villages that have asked the government for a village water supply. Tree planting might be a village-initiated activity or part of a woodlot project. Farmer coops are frequently started with local groups by the Ministry of Coops and Rural Development. Three members were Village Health Workers and had participated in training.

Burial societies are commonly found in Basotho villages and are traditional in nature. These societies plus credit unions and farmer coops all have committee structures similar to AF groups:

that is, a chair, vice-chair, secretary and treasurer. Both the positive and negative patterns of group organisations learned in these other groups accompany individuals joining AF groups.

B. Knowledge of Group Financial Procedures

Evaluators wanted to know how much members knew about the state of the group's finances. This was considered evidence of a member's application of knowledge gained in training. They were asked if they knew the balance in the bank book, the source of group finances and the uses of group income.

Group members had a difficult time pinpointing an exact bank balance, as evidenced in Table 9.

TABLE 9
Balance of Group's Finances

| <u>Group*</u> | <u>Tried to State Balance</u> | <u>Amount Stated</u> | <u>Did not try to State Balance</u> |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Khobotle (N=4) | 1 | M200 | 3 |
| Koloni (N=4) | 2 | M886-M995 | 2 |
| Ipopeng (N=15) | 5 | M100-M4000 | 10 |
| Lekhalong (N=14) | 4 | 0-M100 | 10 |
| Mathebe (N=12) | 6 | M300-M800 | 6 |
| TOTAL | 18 | | 31 |

*The numbers interviews for all five groups came from the January 1985 evaluation.

Most did not know the current bank balance of their group. When members did mention a figure, it was difficult to verify the accuracy of the figures that were mentioned because of the generally poor condition of the groups' financial records.

Monitors' examinations of these records - bookkeeping ledgers in particular - revealed the following:

1. Khobotle

- a) Although the group was given a bookkeeping book prepared by LDTC, they were using their own book to record finan-

cial transactions. Lines in the book were hand-drawn, making book hard to read.

- b) Many figures were cancelled as a result of calculation errors but these cancellations were signed by a group committee member, as taught by LDTC.
- c) Descriptions of financial transactions were inadequate.
- d) Attempts have been made to balance the books, but not in the way taught by LDTC. It was difficult to tell exactly what figure represents the balance.
- e) Despite the above problems, there have at least been attempts to maintain a good record of financial transactions.

2. Koloni

Attempts at a review of this group's financial records have been complicated by the tactics of one group member. As group founder, owner of her own school uniform sewing business, and a wealthy person in the village, she dominates group proceedings. She holds on to the financial records book and the savings book. It is difficult enough for the LDTC to get hold of the books let alone for group members to gain access.

3. Ipopeng

- a) Entries were made correctly in appropriate columns.
- b) Addition was always correct.
- c) Sometimes corrected errors were signed, sometimes they weren't. Some pages were untidy.
- d) Both the treasurer and the chairperson were taking responsibility for keeping books.

Ipopeng had made the greatest strides of any of the five groups in term of putting into practice bookkeeping principles learned. Income entries now distinguish between money gained from sale of eggs at the Egg Circle and sale of eggs in the village, in addition to income from other sources. The balance at the end of the month is correctly carried forward to the next month's ledger.

Nonetheless two-thirds of the members interviewed did not know the correct balance, although a number stated that they could find out anytime by asking the treasurer or other committee member. Three said the balance was around M100, which was not too far off from the October balances for both

Ipopeng I books (M221.88) and Ipopeng II books (M108.99). Only one person stated an exact amount - M894.80, although it was not the most recent balance (August '84 instead of November '84.)

It would appear from this group, whose members had the greatest chance of actually knowing the balance in their bank account, that such knowledge was not sought. It is not known whether this is because members trusted the treasurer to handle their financial affairs for them, or the treasurer did not report such information at group meetings, or any number of other possible explanations.

4. Lekhalong la Baroa

AF monitors have had difficulties in examining the group's financial records due to the infrequent attendance of the treasurer. In fact three members mentioned that the reason they didn't know the balance was because there were no books to examine. It is thus difficult to know if the figures stated by the four members were correct.

5. Mathebe

Complete ledger books for this group were also difficult to obtain. The main problem with records for those months available was that income and expenditures were added together. The group monitor is currently working with the group to correct this problem.

In summary, group members generally did not know their group's bank balance for two main reasons: either the books were poorly kept and hard to follow, or they were not available to the group at large, or both. In the case of Ipopeng where books were both available and well kept, the information was sought by only half the group.

Table 10 contains information on members' views on the source of group income.

TABLE 10
Source of Group Income

| Group | Sale of Group Product | Fund Raising | Contributions Fees, Fines | Other |
|---------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|-------|
| Khobotle (N=4) | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Koloni (N=4) | 3 | | 2 | |
| Ipopeng (N=15) | 13 | 10 | 8 | |
| Lekhalong (N=14) | 14 | 4 | 3 | |
| Mathebe (N=12) | 5 | 11 | 8 | 8 |
| TOTALS | 38 | 27 | 23 | 9 |

In four of the groups the majority of the members mentioned the group's income-generating activities - either selling eggs, pigs, school uniforms or jerseys - as a source of income. The exception was Mathebe where less than half the members mentioned sale of uniforms. This group is not very far along in the production of uniforms, however, and thus is relying mostly on other sources - fund-raisers (mostly stokvels and malikilane) and member contributions - to make enough money to pay back LDTC and to buy cloth, thread, etc.

Table 11 displays members' views on the uses of group income.

TABLE 11
Use of Group Income

| Group | Pay back LDTC loan | Materials | Transport | Building Expenses | Capital Expenses | Other |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|----------------------|---------------------|-------|
| Khobotle (N=4) | 2 | 4 | | 1 | | |
| Koloni (N=4) | 2 | 4 | | 1 | 1 | |
| Ipopeng (N=15) | | 13 | 6 | 7 | | |
| Lekhalong (N=14) | 12 | 11 | 5 | | | |
| Mathebe (N=12) | | 11 | | | 5 | 5 |
| TOTALS | 16 | 43 | 11 | 9 | 7 | 5 |

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The largest category was materials - the regular expenses incurred to keep the projects going: cloth or wool and thread for sewing and knitting groups; feed, medicine and replacement layers for the poultry-raisers; and feed and pigs for the piggery.

Transport was cited by two groups - the Lekhalong group paid transport feed to send some of their members for sewing training offered by BEDCO in Maseru; Ipopeng members paid transport on their regular trips to the Egg Circle in Hlotse. Building expenses were mentioned frequently from Ipopeng members because of the expansion into a second poultry house.

Members of two groups did not mention loan repayments - Ipopeng finished paying off their loan within the first six months of loan receipt. However Mathebe group members have not yet repaid thus it is curious that they made no mention of this use of income.

Comparing Tables 10 and 11, it appears that most AF members have a sense of using money coming from the sale of the group product to buy further inputs for project maintenance. At the time of the interviews, two groups were behind in repayments: Lekhalong la Baroa and Koloni. In each case members were aware of the need for repayment, as illustrated in Table 11.

C. Evaluation of Assistance Fund Training

Following the interview, group members from the five study groups were asked to participate in a test of the skills they had learned as part of Assistance Fund training. These tests were conducted in order to obtain a more objective measure of the performance of members after training in bookkeeping, group functions and programme planning.

Some of the training took place as part of the Intensive Training Model (ITM), especially with the newer groups at Lekhalong la Baroa and Mathebe. But much of the training was conducted before the ITM was developed, in fact, earlier training sessions at Khobotle and Ipopeng led to the development of the ITM. Therefore, training offered to members of the five study groups was not standardised, although the content in bookkeeping, group functions and programme planning was basically the same.

Training Module Objectives. General goals of the modules that comprise the ITM and the training that preceded it are as follows:

1. Group Functioning and Leadership (2 units)
 - to raise awareness of individual roles and responsibilities within the group;
 - to raise awareness of roles of committee members.
2. Simple Bookkeeping (6 units)
 - to help group identify members who could be trained as treasurer because of literacy and arithmetic skills;
 - to raise awareness of proper money management procedures;
 - to help group examine its existing bookkeeping system and identify qualities of a good system;
 - to fill in the headings of a simple bookkeeping system;
 - to learn how to post financial transactions and write concise descriptions of same;
 - to balance book.
3. Programme Planning (3 units)
 - to raise awareness of the importance of planning a programme;
 - to help group develop a plan for group activities;

- to finalise the plan and assign responsibilities.

For a further description of the ITM, consult the LDTC publication "The Intensive Training Model - Training Modules on Group Functioning, Simple Bookkeeping, and Programme Planning" referenced in the Annotated Bibliography in Appendix C.

Test Description and Participants. As mentioned earlier, the test for the three modules consisted of 1) a ledger sheet upon which members were to enter a series of financial transactions for the group, 2) questions about roles of group members and 3) planning steps for an income generating activity. An example of the test for the Ipopeng group is found in Appendix B.

The number of evaluation group members taking the test differed from the number interviewed in three of the groups, even though both were conducted on the same day. One of the Ipopeng members was illiterate, so 14 were tested instead of 15; one Mathebe member was illiterate and another was not interested in taking the test, so 10 instead of 12 were tested; and an interview for one Lekhalong la Baroa group member was separated from its test and subsequently lost, so there were 15 tests and 14 interviews for that group. There was an equal number of tests and interviews for the four Khobotle members. Mean scores were not analysed for the Koloni Uniform Sewing Centre because the number tested was so small (four out of 30 total members) that scores were not representative of the performance of the group as a whole.

Test Results. Table 12 displays mean test scores for Khobotle, Ipopeng, Mathebe and Lekhalong la Baroa. Included in brackets is the number of training sessions LDTC devoted to each topic. Means were calculated even though training was not standardised across groups to at least give an idea of groups' understanding of modules. The exception was programme planning - the Lekhalong la Baroa group never received any training, even though they attempted that portion of the test - thus the study group mean was not calculated for that module.

TABLE 12
Mean Test Scores: Assistance Fund Training

| Group | Bookkeeping | Group Functions | Programme Planning |
|---------------------|----------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| khobotle (N=4) | 56% [3] | 64% ^a | 38% [2] |
| Ipopeng (N=14) | 55% [7] ^b | 68% [2] | 79% [2] |
| Lekhalong (N=15) | 48% [3] | 42% [1] | 9% [not offered] |
| Mathebe (N=10) | 86% [3] | 77% [3] | 28% [2] |
| OVERALL MEAN | 61% | 63% | (not calculated) |

^aEven though "group functions" were not presented in the form of a training module, this topic was discussed frequently during the informal problem solving sessions LDTC held with this group.

^bFive sessions were spent on simple bookkeeping, two on analysis bookkeeping.

Ipopeng members performed the best over all three tests. This group was tested on analysis bookkeeping, which differentiates more clearly between different categories of income and expenditures. Only two training sessions were devoted to that topic, although certainly the five spent on simple bookkeeping - always taught first in AF training and the subject of bookkeeping tests for all other groups - was useful in preparing members for the more advanced version of bookkeeping.

Mathebe members performed very well on tests in both bookkeeping and group functions, but poorly in programme planning. The concept of setting a timeframe for planning steps was not well understood.

The Lekhalong la Baroa group did poorer than the other groups in all three tests. This could be explained by the fact that they didn't receive as much training as Mathebe and Ipopeng, except in bookkeeping. However khobotle also did not receive much training and did as well as Ipopeng on two tests.

A possible explanation for Lekhalong's poor performance might be a lack of group cohesion. There is no strong leadership in the group and conflict has threatened group progress on a number of occasions. (For more information on the life of the group, refer to the Case Study on Botetoko Lekhalong la Baroa prepared by LDTC for the February 1985 Conference on Income Generation in Lesotho.) However, group conflict by itself would not necessarily explain poor individual test performance.

Table 13 looks at the kinds of errors made in the bookkeeping test.

TABLE 13
Summary of Bookkeeping Errors

| Type of Error | Khobotle (N=4) | Ipopeng (N=14) | Lekhalong (N=15) | Mathebe (N=10) | Total |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------|
| No postings w/figures | 1 | 9 | 4 | 4 | 18 |
| Entries put in wrong columns | 2 | 8 | 8 | 3 | 21 |
| Could not match postings with headings | 1 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 12 |
| Omitted names of columns | 3 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 20 |
| Mistakes in arithmetic | 2 | 5 | 11 | 2 | 20 |
| Balancing | 2 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 9 |

There was no one type of error that predominated. However, members made fewer errors in closing, or balancing the books than other kinds of errors.

Performance on a test in bookkeeping demonstrated whether or not individual members understood how to properly fill out a bookkeeping ledger. In practice however, the picture was different, as discussed in Section B. Ipopeng was the only group whose books were in good shape and even then, most members did not know the current balance.

Table 14 summarises the number of group members answering each of the six questions on group member functions at least partially correctly.

TABLE 14
 Respondents Answering Group Function Items
 at least Partially Correctly

| Test Item | Khobotle (N=4) | Ipopeng (N=14) | Lekhalong (N=15) | Mathebe (N=10) | Total |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------|
| Treasurer signs name - mistake | 0 | 4 | 1 | 7 | 12 |
| Incoming money given to treasurer | 2 | 14 | 7 | 10 | 33 |
| Receipt needed for money spent | 4 | 13 | 10 | 9 | 36 |
| Treasurer/other member-deposit money | 4 | 13 | 14 | 1 | 32 |
| Chair issues letter-amount to be withdrawn | 2 | 14 | 11 | 9 | 36 |
| Chair, etc. signs bank book after withdrawal | 2 | 11 | 9 | 8 | 30 |

As in Table 13, there was no one item on which members performed extremely well or poorly, except for the first item: members in all four groups had trouble remembering that the treasurer was to sign her name after correcting an entry.

The most common error in the program planning exercise was forgetting to assign a time-frame for each activity listed. The other problem was that trainers should have spent more time on this topic in three of the groups.

Results of the three tests have established that three groups understood the basic concepts of keeping books and functions of group members (Ipopeng members also knew how to plan income generating activities as well.) Observations of group monitors have shown that in actual practice, members - again with the exception of Ipopeng - fell short, particularly in the areas of group functioning and bookkeeping. Financial records were sometimes unavailable for Lekhalong and Mathebe because the treasurer was absent. Records for these two groups were generally incomplete and poorly kept.

Uses of Training. AF trainers conduct training with two purposes in mind: 1) members are to learn how to manage the income generating activity for which they received a loan, and 2) use the skills in other groups or activities. In addition to

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administering tests on the three main training skills; interviewers asked each member how she planned to use the training received. The next three tables display results.

TABLE 15
Use of Bookkeeping Training

| Group | With Group | At Home | With Job, Other groups | Better Understand | Not yet |
|---------------------|------------|---------|---------------------------|----------------------|------------|
| Khobotle (N=4) | | 1 | | 1 | 2 |
| Ipopeng (N=14) | 4 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3 |
| Lekhalong (N=15) | 1 | 5 | 1 | | 8 |
| Mathebe (N=10) | 1 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 1 |
| TOTALS | 6 | 11 | 5 | 7 | 14 |

Most members mentioned at least one use of bookkeeping training, except in Lekhalong la Baroa where half the group said they were not using skills yet. The use most often cited was budgeting for the family. Others mentioned that they could help the group's treasurer and secretary keep the books or that they could understand the group's financial report. Several said they could apply knowledge of bookkeeping to other groups, for example, church groups. One said she was now doing bookkeeping as part of her job as school principal. Six just stated that they could understand bookkeeping better now and did not state specific uses.

Members also suggested some uses of training received in functions of group members and financial procedures, displayed in Table 16.

TABLE 16
Uses of Group Functions Training

| Group | Apply to Other Groups | Know Functions- Group Members | Other | Not Yet |
|---------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|-------|---------|
| Khobotle (N=4) | | | | |
| Ipopeng (N=14) | 6 | | 1 | 7 |
| Lekhalong (N=15) | 6 | | | 9 |
| Mathebe (N=10) | 1 | 7 | 1 | 1 |
| TOTALS | 13 | 7 | 2 | 17 |

The answers given to the question of how training in group functioning was used were not actually "uses", or applications of training. Rather they were points that the members had learned: different functions of group members, the importance of punctuality and sharing responsibilities in the group.

At least half the members of Ipopeng and Lekhalong groups gave no response and the greatest response category was "apply training to other groups." This answer is perhaps obvious given that training which deals with the roles and functions of group members is meant to be applied in a group setting.

Table 17 looks at uses of training in programme planning.

TABLE 17
Uses of Programme Planning Training

| Group | Plan Ahead- Group, Home, Job | Divide Group Work | Set Time-Frame | Other | Not Yet |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-------|------------|
| Khobotle (N=4) | | | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Ipopeng (N=14) | 6 | 3 | | | 5 |
| Lekhalong (N=15) | 4 | | | | 11 |
| Mathebe (N=10) | 3 | 1 | | | 2 |
| TOTALS | 13 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 19 |

Training in programme planning lent itself more readily to uses outside a group - the response given most frequently was planning ahead for activities of the group, at home or on the job. Examples in this category included setting realistic time frames for family activities, budgeting money for children's needs over a period of months, planning village and school activities. Evaluation planners encountered an example of a use of programme planning at Ipopeng, where the LDTC interviewers' visit had to be postponed because it conflicted with the group's scheduled activities for the initial date proposed. There were few answers from Lekhalong members since they hadn't received training on this topic.

In summary, training given to AF group members had relevance outside the context of income-generating groups and at least half the members of most groups were using these skills in their groups, homes, other groups, jobs or in the larger community.

D. Distance Education Component to Assistance Fund Training

Part of LDTC's training for Assistance Fund groups has been distance education materials on bookkeeping. Two assignments are given to group members, both in the form of ledger sheets. The first asked members to fill in headings, write in the opening balance and post financial transactions. The second was a revision of the first, with the additional task of closing the books.

The first assignment is usually distributed after the initial three-day Intensive Training Model. Members complete the assignment on their own, and then mail it back to LDTC for corrections. LDTC monitors review the assignments and then mail them back with comments to members.

The second assignment is given when monitors are satisfied that members have a good grasp of basic financial record-keeping procedures and are ready to learn how to balance books. There are usually training sessions in between the two assignments, but it is up to the trainers to decide when members are ready for the second.

Trainers report that some members return their assignments regularly, some don't. When members have problems completing the work, they are asked to go through the exercises again. Some go through these assignments three times before the work is correct.

Interviewers asked group members if they had problems working through the distance education assignments and what those problems were, who helped them and how they helped.

Table 18 looks at the number of members who said they had problems and the nature of those problems.

TABLE 18
Problems with Distance Education Materials

| Group | Problems | | Nature of Problem | | | | |
|---------------------|----------|----|-------------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------|-------|
| | Yes | No | Arith- metic | Book- keeping | Closing Books | Reading, Writing | Other |
| Khobotla (N=4) | 3 | 1 | | 3 | | | |
| Ipopeng (N=14) | 9 | 6 | 3 | 2 | | 1 | 1 |
| Lekhalong (N=15) | 11 | 3 | | 4 | 7 | | |
| Mathebe (N=10) | 8 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| TOTALS | 31 | 14 | 5 | 12 | 8 | 2 | 2 |

Most group members had problems with the assignment and expressed these problems either in general terms or more specific terms (e.g., "adding and subtracting", "problems with figures", or "closing books.")

Table 19 looks at helpers and how they helped members with bookkeeping assignments.

TABLE 19
Help with Distance Education Materials

| Group | LDIC | Helper | | Method of Helping | | |
|---------------------|------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------|
| | | Other Member | Self/ Children | Explanations | Cross- Checking | Other |
| Khobotla (N=4) | | 1 | 3 | 1 | | |
| Ipopeng (N=14) | 2 | 7 | | 5 | 1 | 1 |
| Lekhalong (N=15) | 8 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 1 |
| Mathebe (N=10) | | 5 | 2 | 3 | 1 | |
| TOTALS | 10 | 14 | 8 | 16 | 4 | 2 |

Ipopeng and Mathebe members got help mostly from other members, while the Lekhalong members mentioned LDIC as the greatest source of help. This could be another reason for their comparatively

low scores in bookkeeping - the assignment was to be done "at a distance", in between LDTC trainings. It was counterproductive to wait for The LDTC's next visit in order to have the assignment explained or checked. Reliance on LDTC also attests to the Lekhalong group's lack of cohesion - members in the Ipopeng and Mathebe groups helped each other out more.

Only one group member got help from outside the group - she asked her children to help with addition. Explanations and cross-checking work were the kinds of help mentioned, except for one honest individual who said that her helper did all the work.

E. Groups' Future Plans

A group's plans for the future coincided with its stage of growth. The Ipopeng group had already expanded its initial poultry activity, and had now reached the point where individual members felt knowledgeable about the technical aspects of keeping layers and about how to manage their activity. They felt that each individual would benefit by having her own chickens. Specifically, half (seven out of 14) mentioned that they wanted their own chickens so that they could sell eggs. Several gave details as to the size of these individual operations: one said she wanted 100 by next year, one thought each member should have 50 layers, another said it would take three years to get chickens for each member.

Some of the other comments from Ipopeng members reflected plans for the continued expansion of the group's poultry project.

- The number of broilers and layers should be increased (2 responses)
- Chicken house should be expanded, along with site (1)
- Group needs a place for slaughtering chickens and for selling them, plus refrigerator (1)
- Need a van for purchase of feed (1)
- Membership should be increased
- Members should see more profit from the activity (2)

Since Ipopeng has reached the stage where income comes in regularly from egg sales and the expenses of feed, transport, and replacing old layers are predictable, recent training from LDTC has focussed on how to share profits among group members.

Both the Mathebe and Lekhalong la Baroa AF groups were trying to consolidate their income generating activities. They were trying to gain sufficient skills in sewing and knitting, find a suitable place for their activity and identify the best market.

Mathebe members wanted to accomplish the following:

- Find the best site for sewing: either the coop building or another site (5 responses)
- Expand membership (4)
- Diversify sewing to include trousers and "lishoeshoe" (3)
- Purchase more sewing machines (3)
- Improve interpersonal relationships (2)
- Increase sales to schools (1)
- Share profits (1)
- Start production of vegetables (1)
- Consolidate present activities before expanding further (1)

Some of the future plans of Lekhalong members resembled those of the Mathebe group:

- Buy more knitting machines (1)
- Get a building for knitting, sewing, other activities (1)

Lekhalong members were concerned about paying off their debt to LDTC and simply getting their AF activity underway.

- The LDTC loan should be paid off (5 responses)
- We should get money from sale of jerseys to schools (2)
- All should know how to knit and work voluntarily (2).

In general, Lekhalong members' answers to the questions about future activities reflected a group that is still struggling to get underway. Responses for the Mathebe group focussed on improving the sewing activity. In contrast, Ipopeng members looked beyond the group's original poultry activity to further expansion for the group and introduction of the same activity to individuals within the group.

VII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the major questions this evaluation has tried to answer is whether members of Assistance Fund groups have gained in their ability to manage activities leading to income. Increasing these abilities is the whole purpose of Assistance Fund training.

This evaluation found that while individual members found LDTC training useful and learned new concepts, actual income generating practices lagged behind. Members of three of the four groups tested performed relatively well on the tests in bookkeeping, group work and program planning. Equally as important, they attempted to use this training in their homes, with other groups or on the job. But two things became clear regarding LDTC's knowledge about application of learning to the tasks of the group: 1) What we do know: With a few exceptions financial record-keepers do not keep the books accurately, make books available to other members, or report regularly to the group as a whole; 2) What we don't know: There was not much written evidence on how members use what they have learned to further group activities, especially for training modules on group work and programme planning.

The other major conclusion of this report is that LDTC's training of AF groups is somewhat divorced from other group concerns about technical skill development, market identification, and actual profit-making. While trainers are sensitive to these issues, the present training model focusses on income management activities for groups and group dynamic skills such as decision-making, problem solving, etc.

At the time this report was being written members of the Service Agency and Research and Evaluation staffs met to discuss preliminary evaluation results and strategies for training of the next group of Assistance Fund groups. Out of these discussions came an idea for a revised training model, entitled the "Training of Trainers" Model (TTM) which would focus on training of group leaders and extension agents working with the group rather than all group members. The major benefits of the TTM are believed to be lower training costs and a way of reaching more rural groups.

The following conclusions and recommendations should be reviewed with this new training approach in mind. First, conclusions and recommendations will be made on Assistance Fund training, the Distance Education component, and other aspects of the AF approach. Then evaluation procedures for future Assistance Fund groups will be suggested.

Assistance Fund Training

As has been mentioned, test scores were sufficiently high to indicate that members understood concepts in bookkeeping and group work. Programme planning test scores were weaker, partially because as the last of the three ITM training topics, less time was allowed for it. However members were still applying whatever they had learned in other non-AF group situations.

An examination of bookkeeping books indicated a lag between test scores and actual financial record-keeping practices. Monitors found that books frequently were not in good order - balancing was not done correctly, entries not made, dates not assigned, etc. Or the books were not available because of non-attendance or interpersonal problems between the keeper of financial records and other group members. These problems lead to the following recommendation:

Recommendation 1. LDTC monitors should keep standardised written records that indicate the state of financial books on each visit to an AF group.

With the advent of the TTM, it may be that LDTC monitoring visits are less frequent and the group leader would also be keeping such records. In either case it is imperative that more attention be given to both the interpersonal and the technical aspects of groups' record-keeping practices. A form could be prepared which includes such categories as nature of problems (balancing, arithmetic, matching postings to headings, etc.) and remedies suggested, date of latest balance, profit made, etc. With all monitors using the same form, it would be simple to compare groups' progress.

Recommendation 2. Training should focus more on the notion of making and distributing profit early in training.

As has been mentioned in other LDTC Assistance Fund publications, these groups rarely describe themselves as "income-generating groups". LDTC realises that voluntary groups have their own reasons for staying together, as illustrated in Table 6: only two people from all five groups mentioned income generation as a benefit of membership. Most were in groups to learn skills. Nonetheless the main reason the AF provides financial as well as training assistance is to help rural group members bring more money into their communities, groups, and families. Both LDTC and rural groups need to make the link between skills development and income generation earlier in their interactions.

It would be important for trainers to spend time exploring with the group their ideas and beliefs about income generation and

profit distribution first, given how little is actually known about the role of income generation in rural groups.

Recommendation 3. LDTC should explore reasons such as level of group cohesion that some groups perform well on AF training topics and others do not.

Betz states in his cost-benefit analysis that "there is no evidence established from this study or others that this author is aware of that increased amounts of training will increase the success potential of income-generating groups" (p. 43). The small amount of data available from this evaluation is not sufficient to support or refute this statement. Nonetheless it can be stated that there is no pattern of "more training sessions equals better results."

Looking only at bookkeeping scores, Ipopeng received a total of seven training sessions on both simple and analysis bookkeeping and the mean bookkeeping scores was 55 %; Khobotle members had three sessions on bookkeeping and averaged 56%. Mathebe members had a mean score of 86% after three sessions; Lekhalong members also participated in three sessions and scored only 48% on the average.

This suggests simply that there are probably factors influencing training other than number of sessions or level of education (similar across all groups.) One possible explanation is the level of group cohesion - how well members work together and how committed they are to the group activity.

Recommendation 4. Tests should be used regularly as a summative measure of learning in AF groups.

There is a tendency for nonformal educators to believe that formal written tests are not appropriate for use with rural adults. In this case the test did not differ that much from the written exercises that comprised Assistance Fund training. Members asked each other questions when they didn't understand, or they asked one of the trainer/testers. But with very little said by test administrators about working as individuals, they generally worked on their own. Results of the tests should be given back to participants and used as a basis for discussion.

Recommendation 5. More training time should be spent on programme planning.

This was training that was put to use by many group members, even if imperfectly. Test scores, however, were poorest for this

aspect of the ITM. More attention is needed on this important aspect of managing group activities.

Recommendation 6. Trainers should devise a systematic way to observe and record group practices in group work and programme planning.

With the bookkeeping modules, trainers know that it is a group's financial records that need examination in order to assess members' comprehension of that aspect of training. Sources of information that will tell trainers how modules on group work and programme planning are being utilized should also be sought.

Distance Education Approach

Distance education materials have only been used with the bookkeeping component of Assistance Fund training so far.

Recommendation 7. Group leaders should be trained to use Distance Education materials with the group.

The new approach training, the TTM, will take care of this to a large degree. Trainees will be group leaders and extension agents - these people will receive the ITM training in bookkeeping, group work and programme planning along with new content areas that have surfaced as group needs - for example, how to identify a market for a product. Part of this training should also focus on helping group members to work through the materials.

Recommendation 8. Training modules should be expanded to include written "distance education" materials and radio programmes for each topic.

The bookkeeping exercise currently in use is one example. Materials for the group functions module, as another example, need not be as technical in nature. For example, a "worksheet" might ask members to reflect on their contributions to the group or to think of characteristics of a good group leader. The group leader or extension worker could lead a discussion on these topics. Radio programmes could be written to accompany these modules.

For ideas on distance education materials, AF planners could consult the workbooks prepared by INADES-Formation to complement

their training programme for development workers.

Other aspects of the AF approach.

Recommendation 9. AF planners need to decide how far LDTC should carry groups through the income generating process.

At present LDTC assistance provides group members with capital for initial material inputs and training to get the group started in managing the income generating activity. A generally assumed, although unwritten goal of AF organisers is that at a certain point groups will go beyond just meeting expenses and actually make profit. This goal demands a much more intensive approach than that provided by the current ITM or the proposed TTM. It would include more training in market identification, and a much more rigorous surveillance of the groups' implementation of training.

In order for LDTC to better make decisions about the intensity and duration of assistance, "end-points" for assistance should be spelled out. For example:

- 1) At the end of six months of LDTC assistance, individual members should be able to perform well on the tests in ITM training topics and group practices should reflect the accurate understanding of the individuals.
- 2) At the end of one year, the group should see profit and have made plans to distribute this profit among group members or otherwise use the money.

All training provided by the AF should be based on such objectives. Of course, objectives must be realistic in terms of monetary and time costs. Having made this decision, AF planners will then be in the position of knowing whether or not training modules need expanding.

Recommendation 10. LDTC should help groups to properly identify a market for activity products early in their interactions.

Training such as that provided through the ITM is only half the story. Group members can learn bookkeeping, etc. and make use of their training within and outside the group. But if the group's activity does not show signs of bringing in profit after a certain number of months, as is the case with four of the five groups in this study (Ipopeng is the exception), the "income-generating component" of the Assistance Fund is missed and

training proceeds divorced from the money-making potential of the group.

If income generation has been identified as an objective of the Assistance Fund, then barriers to income-generation such as poor marketing strategies and high input costs must be addressed.

Trainers would need to decide whether help with marketing could be provided through informal discussion, as is the present practice, or if a training module should be designed on this topic.

Recommendation 11. Training for machines used in producing for a group's activities must be provided.

The knitting group at Lekhalong la Baroa was held back by not knowing how to use knitting machines. Along with identifying a good market, knowing how to use machines is a necessary precondition to actual income generation. LDTC cannot provide such technical training but can identify sources through an expanding network of development colleagues.

D. Evaluation of New Assistance Fund Groups

Following are some suggested procedures for evaluating the next ten AF groups that have been granted assistance as well as future groups:

1. Objectives should be formulated for the AF, and evaluation measures should provide information on these objectives.

The broad aims of the AF project should be reviewed in light of what programmers have learned over the past two years about the AF and about working with rural income generating groups.

2. Evaluation should rely more on monitors' standardised records in addition to other evaluation methods used.

LDTC AF monitors write reports on each visit. These reports provide some useful information on group dynamics and practices both for trainers themselves and others interested in progress of AF groups. What could be added, as has been mentioned, is a form enabling each monitor to make the same observations about a group's financial records and practices in group work and

programme planning. The result would be records on current conditions and practices readily available to AF planners and trainers.

3. An evaluation of training impact should be conducted six months after leaders and extension workers have participated in the TTM.

This would involve visiting these leaders and extension workers at the group site and conducting an evaluation similar to the one described in this report: tests would be administered measuring progress in learning training content, questions would be asked about how training was used. Ideally, monitors would be keeping standardised records on group practices resulting from all AF training by that time and these records would be examined.

The first step would be to review record-keeping systems currently in use with the idea of preserving categories of useful information and discarding questions and categories which ask for information that cannot be used. All records should relate directly to the revised Assistance Fund objectives.

4. A small study is needed to find out from a sample of members of new groups about their reasons for choosing a particular activity.

At present we know little about how a group decides whether it will raise chickens, pigs, sew school uniforms. It would be worthwhile to find out what other options group members consider and why these options are discarded. It would also be useful to know how they prefer to run an activity: as individuals, as a group, and how important the notion of profit is to them.

5. There should be follow-up visits to the older groups to see how activities progress.

For example, did individual members of the Ipopeng Leribe Poultry Association purchase their own layers, as they intended to? How has the issue of poor markets been resolved for groups like Mathebe and Lekhalong la Baroa? And for these same two groups, has the level of sewing and knitting skills increased?

The above considerations are issues that relate indirectly to AF training. They are primarily the structural conditions that must be in place before any activity can expand - conditions that LDTTC may or may not have influenced.

APPENDIX A

18/12/84

FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW

1. What is your name?
2. How long have you been a member of this group?
3. How have you benefitted from being a member of this group?
4. Did you have any problems with the exercises LDTC trainers left for you between training sessions? (Give examples of training exercises if they have forgotten.)

_____yes _____no

If yes, what were the problems?

Who helped you with these exercises?

How did they help you?

5. Besides your involvement with this group, what other self-improvement or learning activities are you currently engaged in? Please also indicate where you are getting the training.

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------|
| _____literacy training | Source: |
| _____skills training | Source: |
| _____correspondence courses | Source: |
| _____none | |
| _____other (please explain) | Source: |

6. What other community activities are you engaged in?

SHOULD WE LIST SOME EXAMPLES?

7. What is the balance in the group's bank book now?

State amounts: _____

Don't know: _____

8. Where does the group get its money?
(Interviewer list sources below - list as many as respondent mentions:

a) _____
 b) _____
 c) _____

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- d) _____
- e) _____

9. What have been the important uses of the group's money in the past six months? (respondents may say expanding chickens houses, buying more chickens, sharing the money, etc. List below).

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____
- d) _____
- e) _____

10. a) Has LDTC's training in bookkeeping been helpful to you?
 _____yes _____no

If yes, in what ways are you using training?
 (either within group or outside group?)

b) Has LDTC's training in group functioning and financial management been helpful to you?
 _____yes _____no

If yes, in what ways are you using training?

c) Has LDTC's training in programme planning been helpful to you?
 _____yes _____no

If yes, in what ways are you using training?

d) Has the training in poultry raising been helpful to you?
 _____yes _____no

If yes, in what ways are you using training?

11. What would you like to see this group doing in the years to come? (Interviewer lists responses below).

QUESTIONS FOR MEMBERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INTERVIEWED

- 12. How old are you?
- 13. What level of schooling did you complete?
- 14. Where do you live (village and district)

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15. What is your marital status?

_____married _____divorced _____widowed
_____single _____separated

16. What do you do to earn money?

17. In which of the following categories does your personal income per month fall?

_____none _____M121-150.00
_____M1 - 30.00 _____M151-180.00
_____M31-60.00 _____M181-210.00
_____M61-90.00 _____If over M210.00, give
_____M91-120.00 figure: _____

18. What is the most important source of income for your household?

_____mine remittances
_____sale of agricultural products
_____carpentry
_____shop clerk
_____other (explain: _____)

19. In which of the following categories does your household income per month fall?

_____none _____M211-250.00
_____M 1-30.00 _____251-300.00
_____31-60.00 _____301-350.00
_____61-90.00 _____351-400.00
_____91-120.00 _____401-450.00
_____121-150.00 _____451-500.00
_____151-180.00 _____501.00 or over, please
_____181-210.00 give amount: _____

APPENDIX B

08/01/85

TEST ON COMPREHENSION OF AF TRAINING (Ipopeng)

I. Here is a bookkeeping sheet. Please fill in the transactions found below, and then close the books.

- a) The group had M100.00 from the previous month.
- b) On the 11th of Nov., 29 trays of eggs were taken to the Egg Circle by Ausi Nthabiseng. There were 30 eggs in each tray, and each egg was 30 cents. She paid 50c in transport from Maryland to the Egg Circle, and 50c to return to Maryland.
- c) On the 13th of Nov. the group bought six bags of chicken feed at M18.00 a bag, and the receipt no. was 302.
- d) On the 16th of Nov. 17 members paid the suscription fee of M20.00 each.
- e) On the 17th of Nov., the group bought chicken medicine for M10.00. The receipt no. for the medicine was M12.00.
- f) On the 20th of Nov., four members went for training. Transport and accommodations was M5.00 for each.
- g) AT THE END OF THE MONTH HOW MUCH MONEY WAS REMAINING IN THE GROUP'S BANK BOOK? _____

II. If Me Maketi makes a mistake in the cash book and then corrects it, what must she do next?

III. When Ausi Nthabiseng brings back money from the Egg Circle, who does she give the money to?

IV. When Nthabiseng pays her 50c for transport, what does she get in return from the taxi driver?

V. When the subscription fees have been collected from group members, who takes the money to the bank?

VI. What must be done first before going to the bank to withdraw money?

VII. What must they do at the bank before they take the money?

VIII. Your group has bought 100 new chickens and they will arrive at Ipopeng on 15 January. What steps must the group follow to be ready for the chickens when they arrive?

SHOW BOXES FROM 1 to 6.

APPENDIX C

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ten papers were prepared and distributed for the conference on "Income Generation in Lesotho" held in February, 1985. Following is a brief summary of the contents of each paper.

1. Developing a Framework for Understanding Income Generation for Rural Groups

This paper outlines broad issues in the field of income generation so as to give the reader a framework by which income generation for rural groups can be understood and analyzed. As such it does not attempt to provide definitive answers to the issues of income generation for rural groups but instead provides a structure whereby further questions can be raised. In particular it looks at the definitions and assumptions of income generation for rural groups.

The original LDTC concept of income generation is to provide people with technical skills and financial credits where necessary so that these can be utilized in the cooperative production of some product for sale in the marketplace. This definition is applied broadly to a range of income generating and pre income generating groups. Other factors which should be taken into consideration when trying to define income generation include the fair and equitable distribution of profits to members, the role of individual versus group activities, and the different stages of development groups go through - a consolidation, expansion, and post-expansion phase.

Many of the LDTC groups are really not income generating groups but learning groups, project organisers have discovered. The paper presents evidence that large scale income generation takes place only after the learning process, often in smaller units or even individually. The paper concludes with a series of commonalities which successful income generating groups seem to have in common.

2. Four LDTC case studies-

Boitoko Lethalong La Barga

Mathebe Nutrition Group

Impheng Leribe Poultry Association

Khobotle Piggery Association

These four case studies represent groups assisted by the LDTC Assistance Fund. All four groups have received technical and financial assistance for some time- in the case of Khobotle,

since mid 1982. Each case provides information on the background of the group, its progress, a description of LDTG training, results to date of LDTG training and financial assistance, and lessons learned about the nature of income generating groups.

3. The Leadership Patterns of Income Generating Groups

This paper provides a definition of leadership by citing current thought. The paper examines assumptions regarding leadership among rural groups. It concludes by making a number of observations about leadership patterns among groups in Lesotho.

4. An Appraisal of the Intensive Training Model

This paper presents a general view of the Intensive Training Model which is currently used by the LDTG Service Agency Section with rural income generating groups. It provides a case study of training with one LDTG Assistance Fund group.

5. The Intensive Training Model - Training Modules on Group Functioning, Simple Bookkeeping, and Programme Planning

This paper is a collection of training lesson plans in group functioning, simple book-keeping, and programme planning which the LDTG has used and pretested with its current Assistance Fund groups. In addition, many of the lessons have been used in LDTG "Training of Trainers" workshops with extension agents. Besides the lesson plans, the paper contains information on adapting the material as well as notes for trainers.

6. The Lesotho Teaching Centre's Assistance Fund: Operating A Revolving Loan Fund

This paper presents an overview to the LDTG's operation of the Assistance Fund, a revolving loan fund providing technical and financial assistance to educational and income generating groups. The paper also presents some guidelines for establishing a revolving loan fund. The final chapter of the paper looks at a cost benefit analysis of one Assistance Fund group with a discussion of the long term continuation and replicability of the model once the donor funded project ends. The appendix contains examples of guidelines and forms, such as the Selection Criteria and standardised contract used in the operation of the Assistance Fund.

7. Nonformal Education Training Manual (pre test version)

Pre test copies of the Nonformal Education Training Manual were distributed to all the participants with the request that they provide feedback to the LDTC on the manual. The manual is intended as a practical resourcebook for all people involved in training either at the local or national level in the country. The manual contains information on the setting of nonformal education (theories of adult learning, definitions of NFE, participatory training, etc.), information on how to plan for a training programme by providing information on the steps that should be considered when designing a programme, and information on needs assessment techniques, setting training objectives, designing and implementing various training activities, and evaluating the programme. The manual concludes with suggestions for trainers on improving their own training programmes.