

CONSULTANTS IN DEVELOPMENT

2130 P Street, N.W., Suite 803, Washington, D.C. 20037 Telephone: 202/223-8466

PN-NAX-311
10N 2410

Women in Development
Agency for International Development
Room 803, P Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20033
(202) 223-8466

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W O M E N I N D E V E L O P M E N T

A Training Module

by

Maryanne L. Dulansey

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PART I

MATERIALS FOR DISCUSSION

Note: This Training Module on Women in Development was prepared by Consultants in Development in January 1977 for CARE's use in three regional field conferences held during the year. CARE and CID have agreed to make the material available for wider use, in the hope that other development assistance agencies will be encouraged to give attention to the role of women in development.

FINAL GOAL Increase beneficial impact and reduce adverse impact of development programs on the target population of the poorest majority, especially the portion who are women.

INTERMEDIATE GOAL Introduce methods of improving program planning with respect to the role of women in development.

TARGETS Identify assumptions made by program planners about women's roles in development.

Identify consequences of inaccurate or erroneous assumptions on the attainment of program goals.

Identify ways in which we, as planners, can gather information on women's roles in development and apply it in program planning.

METHOD Group discussion, led by panel of three, based on attached materials.

MATERIALS A) Background
B) Case Study, "The Invisible Women"
C) Questions for Discussion
D) References

INSTRUCTIONS Please read the attached materials, and prepare responses to the Questions for Discussion.

Women in Development (A)

BACKGROUND

- A1 Why focus on women if we wish to promote better development programs? Because we have learned the hard way, through trial and error, that it is necessary.
- A2 Just as we have learned that effective development programs must be especially concerned with the "poorest majority," we are beginning to learn that the same applies with regard to women within this group. In fact, it applies doubly.
- A3 If the poor are on the outer fringes of economic and political power, the half of them who are women are even further marginalized. If the poor suffer adverse impact from modernization or development as it has been traditionally practiced, then poor women are even more seriously affected. And if the poor have been contributing to development with their labor without sharing proportionately in its resulting benefits, the women are even more disadvantaged. And, if the gap between rich and poor is growing, the "double jeopardy" under which poor women exist creates an additional gap within society and further threatens the success, as well as the rationale, of development.
- A4 Another way of looking at it is to say that we are focussing on poor women because they are part of our target group--often more than half--about whom we have known too little.
- A5 Are there any characteristics which women of the poorest majority may have in common? How can we, as program planners, take these into account? What impact may current development programs have on women? How can we tell? How can we improve the effect of the programs we design on women? Are there any lessons learned from our experience? One would like to have the answers to all these questions. However, we are only beginning to recognize the problem, and the best service we can render is to ask better questions as we increase our awareness and understanding of the problem.
- A6 Think about these questions in the setting of programs with which you have had experience, and come to the Regional Meeting prepared to discuss them with your colleagues. To facilitate the discussion, a common context is offered in the form of a Case Study. It presents a situation which may occur in any CARE country program, in fact, in any development assistance organization's program. Before turning to the case, however, we will take a look at some of the ways in which planners think about the role of women in development.

Women in Development (A)

A7 Almost every planner has made the following assumptions in the course of formulating development programs:

- 1) that men work more than women
- 2) that men grow the food crops
- 3) that men are heads of households
- 4) that cash earned by men is family income
- 5) that men are small entrepreneurs
- 6) that women can get whatever credit they may need
- 7) that women can take advantage of educational opportunities
- 8) that women eat a proportionate share of the food available to the family.

A8 We are just beginning to realize that the assumptions we may make about men's and women's roles do not always square with reality, resulting in faulty planning. For instance, if we plan to increase family income for a certain target group by providing men with means of earning more money, what happens if we run into situations where (3) and (4) above do not hold true? If we plan to increase educational opportunities for the youth of a target community by constructing a school, suppose assumption (7) is not true?

A9 These, and other commonly held assumptions about the role of women in development, are increasingly coming into question as we gather data and learn from experience. Because there is a great lack of data in this area, each program planner is faced with the need to gather his or her own information. However, we do know some things about the role of women which will be useful to program planners.

Women in Development (A)

A10

Obviously, there are variations according to each group of people, and sometimes these differences occur from village to village within a small area of a country. With the caveat that one must look at the specific case, it is nevertheless useful to make generalizations. The following are a few statements that hold true in general for developing countries, especially among the poor, and in rural areas:

- 1) rates of illiteracy are higher among women than among man (40% women; 28% men);
- 2) women work longer hours than men (they work both in the household and outside, often in food-related occupations);
- 3) women produce and process food for family consumption;
- 4) women produce, process and sell/exchange food and other items in local markets;
- 5) many heads of families are women (33% overall, and higher where migration occurs);
- 6) women have little, if any, access to credit or training in economic activities;
- 7) women receive less compensation for their work than men (if they receive wages at all, they are paid less than men for the same work);
- 8) men earning cash often spend it themselves; it is not "family income";
- 9) women's nutrition is worse than men's (women eat last, and least, and poorest quality food of that available to the family).

A11

Given these facts, the previous assumptions are major errors. How did they occur? They happened simply because people who plan for development and who allocate resources either do not have such information, or overlook its application to development planning. One might say that, for development planners, women tend to be "invisible".

Women in Development (A)

- A12 We have a "blind spot" when it comes to perceiving women, or the things they do, as relevant to development planning. Everyone agrees that women are the foundation of society; they bear, feed, clothe, and educate the population; they maintain the household; they nurture and cure; and so forth. Yet we fail to make the connection between women's roles and our program goals of improving the quality of life of the poorest majority, whether it be through increasing real income or agricultural production, or literacy, or any of the other interventions we may select.
- A13 Theoretically, if we plan programs in a logical fashion --by identifying a problem, choosing the best implementation strategy consistent with conditions and resources, and setting goals and targets, we should be able to reach our goals, or to discover why we have not reached them.
- A14 However, it is quite possible that we may plan programs so that the goals are achieved, yet a negative effect results from the program activity. It may be a net negative effect, that is, the negative effect may outweigh the positive. Then the program is counter-developmental in its overall effect.
- A15 This unfortunately happens too often. An example may serve to illustrate the point. A project seeking to improve the standard of living of small scale farmers by increasing agricultural production through a Food for Work irrigation program did, in fact, achieve the goal. However, the increased production of the staple crop on the irrigated land had two adverse effects. These were of two kinds. One was long-term, and the other was a side effect. First, while on a short-term basis the standard of living improved, it later leveled off at a point near the starting situation. The small farmers rented the land they farmed, and the increase in productivity prompted the landlords to repossess the land, or to increase rental prices. Secondly, there were adverse side effects in that the prices of the commodity on the local market fell in response to the sudden increase in supply, and this was a great hardship to small farmers who were not participating in the program. If this program were evaluated in the normal time frame for effect on target group, it would be judged a successful program.

Women in Development (A)

A16

The same dynamics operate with regard to women, perhaps more often. As mentioned above (A8), a school construction program may, in fact, provide more opportunities for education to the youth of a certain community, while at the same time leaving females relatively worse off if they don't have access to education, whatever the reason. In the other example, family income would not have been increased by providing the men of the target population with a means of earning more money. However, it is not likely that the indicators chosen for the evaluation of goal achievement would have followed the funds to the family. The planners would most likely have made the assumption that the increased earnings were the same as increased family income. Evaluation would then show achievement of the goal, without its actually having been attained.

A17

Armed with these examples of erroneous assumptions made by planners and their adverse effect on development, please turn to the Case Study, "The Invisible Women". As you read through the case, keep the targets in mind:

- 1) Identify assumptions made by program planners about women's roles in development;
- 2) Identify consequences of inaccurate or erroneous assumptions on the attainment of program goals;
- 3) Identify ways in which we, as planners, can gather information on women's roles in development and apply it in program planning.

CASE STUDY

"The Invisible Women"

B1 This is a three-year project which has been in operation two years. It has just been evaluated, and while the implementation is slightly behind schedule, the goals are being met.

B2 Nevertheless, some disturbing information comes to light during the course of a visit to the project site by CARE staff. The Country Director and the Assistant Country Director discuss the matter and determine to find out what happened and how the project can be revised.

B3 Details are contained in the following Project Description and the record of the discussion.

B4 Project Description

In an effort to make more productive use of its resources, the government is relocating people from overpopulated coastal regions to the interior, opening a new area which has been underpopulated, and which has great potential for agricultural production. CARE has been invited to participate in the Resettlement and Integrated Rural Development Program being planned and coordinated by the Rural Development Office. Also involved are the Ministries of Education, Health, Agriculture, Public Works and Transportation. In addition, the Department of Cooperatives, the National Nutrition Planning Board and the Provincial Government are involved.

B5 The government has established a village, put in basic roads and cleared the land. It has relocated landless peasants from the coastal areas and promises to deliver housing, potable water, land and other agricultural inputs such as tools, equipment, seeds, fertilizer, training and extension services, a school and health facilities. A production and marketing cooperative will be established, with credit facilities attached.

B6 About 2,000 people/400 families are participating in the program in this phase. They are ethnically homogeneous, but are of a different group than the people which inhabit the region. However, there are no other settlements nearby the new village.

Women in Development (B)

B7 The government has invited CARE to participate in the initial 3-year phase by assisting with the housing, school construction, water system, agriculture, and nutrition/health/family planning aspects of the program, as follow.

B8 Housing

CARE will provide roofing and other materials required to roof the houses, and will help to plan, coordinate, implement and evaluate the construction of 400 houses. The Rural Development Office will operate the program, in which the owners of the houses are expected to repay the value of the materials, thereby setting up a revolving loan fund for further construction. The owners will contribute labor and locally available materials and will participate in a Food for Work program during the six months in which they are engaged in building their houses.

B9 Goals

Improve the living and health conditions of some 2,000 people by providing permanent roofing materials for improved housing.

B10 School Construction

In cooperation with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Public Works and Transportation, CARE will provide materials such as roofing and cement and supervise the construction of a three-room schoolhouse which may also be used as a community center. CARE will provide school furnishing including desks, tools and seeds for a school garden, and a water supply until the water system is able to serve the school. The initial student intake into the primary grades is expected to number under 200. The school will be open to all those who have not had primary education under 15 year of age.

B11 Goals

Increase enrollment and literacy among rural school-children and provide a basis for secondary education through the construction of a school.

Raise the standard of living of the community through an increase in earning potential by providing educational facilities.

Women in Development (B)

B12 Water System

CARE will work with the Ministry of Public Works and Transportation to provide the village with water for household use. The project may be expanded to include irrigation systems after the initial phase of three years. CARE will provide the construction materials, technical assistance, and supervision, as well as food commodities for Food for Work. The community will provide the unskilled labor. The Ministry will supply the plans.

B13 Another component of the project will be a sanitary education program to educate users on the relationship and importance of clean water to good health, the prevention of water-borne diseases, and the need for proper handling and disciplined water consumption. The Ministry of Health will supply two Community Health Aides to undertake the program.

B14 Goals

Provide constant, readily-available supply of potable water to 400 families in the village.

Reduce incidence of water-borne diseases in the village.

B15 Agriculture

The main economic activity of the settlers is agriculture. New crops such as soybeans will be introduced, as the land is especially well suited to such cultivation. A five-hectare plot of land will be given to each farmer, together with seeds, fertilizer, and tools. Short training courses will be held, and the Ministry of Agriculture will station extension agents in the area. It is expected that production will be very high, due to the fertility of the soil, the favorable climatic conditions, and the potential for multiple cropping, in addition to the improved technology which will be introduced. While the farmers will own their own plot of land, they will work cooperatively, in order to share equipment for land clearing and ploughing.

B16 The Agricultural Marketing Board of the Ministry of Agriculture will market the soybeans; the Farmers' Cooperative will provide storage for corn and beans for local consumption, and will sell the surplus through the Marketing Board.

Women in Development (B)

B17 CARE will provide seeds, tools and technical assistance to the Ministry of Agriculture, and give training courses for the officers and staff of the Farmers' Cooperative in bookkeeping and office management.

B18 Goals

Improve the standard of living of small scale farmers and their families by increasing agricultural production.

B19 Integrated Health Services

CARE will provide take-home food supplements and medical services to the pre-school aged children of mothers enrolled in the program. At the health clinic (which has already been built by the Provincial Government) information regarding improved nutrition, child care and health practices as well as health services and family planning advice will be made available to 400 mothers. Their children will be recipients of free health care including deworming, immunizations against BCG, malaria, and smallpox. CARE will provide the food commodities and will develop the materials required for education and maintenance of the program, as well as the training for the Ministry of Health Community Health Aides assigned to the program.

B20 Goals

Improve the nutritional and health status of pre-school children by providing food supplements and health care for the children and by improving the health care practices of mothers.

Promote participation in family planning program.

Women in Development (B)

B21 Staff Discussion

On a visit to the site of the Resettlement and Integrated Rural Development Program, the Assistant Country Director discovered that, although the evaluation of the program at the end of two years showed progress toward attainment of the goals, the project seemed to be having adverse effects.

B22

One of the problems had to do with the agricultural component. In the course of watching people work in the field, the CARE staff person noticed that they were women, and began to speak with them, learning that the arrangement of 5 hectare family plots was not satisfactory. Since the government was encouraging the growing of cash crops -- soybeans -- most of the farmers grew barely enough corn and beans -- their traditional diet -- for consumption. The settlement scheme does not provide for kitchen gardens, which the women traditionally kept for the raising of vegetables for family consumption and for the local market. The women had formerly been in charge of growing the food for the family, with the exception of the corn. However, that arrangement had been changed by the delivery of agricultural inputs and services to the men in the resettlement program. The proceeds from marketing the crops were retained by the men. No wages were paid to the women, although they spent the greater part of the day working in the fields, especially during planting and harvesting times. Because more land was put under cultivation, the work load of the women was increased. Mechanization was provided for the clearing and ploughing portions but not the planting, weeding, and harvesting.

B23

Because of the demand for increased labor in the types of work traditionally done by women, mothers were keeping their daughters from school so they could help them in the field.

B24

Men were primarily engaged in construction projects, and spent even less time in the fields than they otherwise might have. They also participated in training courses and received the loans from the Farmers' Cooperative for purchase of improved seed and fertilizer.

Women in Development (B)

- B25 Great dissatisfaction was expressed with the way in which the houses were being built. The women did not like the improved type of roofing; they preferred the cooking arrangements to be outside the house; and they said the houses were "facing the wrong way."
- B26 In spite of good attendance rates at the clinic, it was discovered that the mothers were sending the preschool children with older children in order to get the food supplement. The mothers were not, however, receiving the nutrition, sanitation, and child care education.
- B27 The Community Health Aides who were charged with educating people about the proper use of water discovered that the women preferred to have a community supply rather than have water piped to each four-house cluster. They still used the river for washing clothes, in spite of having water near their houses.
- B28 Women refused to boil the water, complaining that it would require more fuel to be gathered, for which they had no time. Besides, they said, if the water came from a pipe, it must be good.
- B29 The food storage program run by the Farmers' Cooperative was operating successfully. It was one way of controlling the production of food, and gathering statistics. Food waste was also sharply reduced, because fumigants were used, and good silo construction prevented rodent depredation. The women, though, did not "trust" the cooperative, and would keep supplies of food out of the harvest for home storage, as they had been accustomed to do.
- B30 The staff discussed these findings, and came to the conclusion that these situations had occurred because the planners failed to take into account the role which women played. Although some of the goals of the projects were being met, the projects seemed to be having some adverse effects on development.
- B31 They attempted to list the erroneous assumptions made in the planning stages, discover what was actually happening, and redesign the projects so they would have better overall effect, and better impact on women. To do this, they worked with some of the government people involved in planning and implementation.
- B32 Please turn to Questions for Discussion, and, based on this Case Study, note your reactions and ideas.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1) What were some of the erroneous assumptions made by the program planners?

- 2) What impact do you think the project activities may have had on the development of the community? of the women in the community?

- 3) How would you go about learning the actual situation?

- 4) How would you go about re-designing the program?

- 5) How might CARE involve host government personnel?

- 6) How can the experiences from this and similar cases be shared? With whom should they be shared?

REFERENCES

These materials will be of assistance in learning about the role of women in development:

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