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INCORPORATING THE INTRAHOUSEHOLD  
DIMENSION INTO DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS:  
A GUIDE FOR PLANNERS

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## FOREWORD

This guideline was developed as a result of a project funded by the Policy and Program Coordination Office of USAID. The project involved an extensive literature review on intrahousehold resource allocation and its determinants in less-developed countries (Rogers, 1985), and a four-day workshop at which professionals from the U.S. and several developing countries discussed why intrahousehold processes matter to economic development projects, and ways in which concern for these processes can reasonably be incorporated into project planning. This guideline owes much to the papers prepared for that workshop, and to the discussions which took place there.\*

I have tried to prepare this guideline in such a way that it may be useful in the design of all kinds of development projects, from direct provision of welfare-related goods and services, to technical assistance, to programs intended to foster institutional development and policy change at the national level. However, the original impetus for the project was a concern for the success of nutrition and health projects, specifically those having infants and children as the main target group. This orientation is evident in the examples chosen and in some of the specific issues addressed in this paper.

I would like to thank my project officer, Dr. Judy McGuire for her continuous assistance, including substantial intellectual

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\* A list of workshop participants appears at the end of this guideline. The workshop papers are being edited for publication.

interchange and valuable editorial comments on this and other papers prepared under the project. I would also like to thank Lisa Miller for editorial comments on this guideline, and Lisa Miller, Jane Yudelman, Barbara Kaim, Lori Chobanian and Paula McCree for their help in finding and abstracting the literature on which this work is based. I would like to express my great appreciation also for the contributions of all the workshop participants, whose lively discussion and thoughtful preparation was of inestimable value to my own thinking on the subject. Of course, any errors of fact or judgment are my own.

## Summary

Development projects have as their ultimate objective the improvement of human welfare. Therefore, project analysis must be concerned with whether target individuals are likely to benefit from the resources and activities generated by projects. Such analysis must be based on an understanding of individual behavior and individual sources of income and material support. The most important argument in this paper is that one cannot make assumptions about sharing of resources within households. While the groups to which a person belongs (family and household) can be important sources of support, it is the individual who must be the focus of analysis. To ensure that intrahousehold issues are taken into account, the following steps in project planning are recommended.

- (1) Spell out the expected linkages between project inputs and expected outputs.  
Identify the specific household processes by which these linkages will occur.  
Identify the individuals involved.
- (2) Before leaving the U.S., review the literature on the country and area where the project is to take place.

- (3) Identify social scientists from the country of the proposed project who have worked on household and intra-household level issues. Contact them for assistance once in-country.
- (4) Travel to the area in which the project is to take place. If there are several culturally distinct areas affected by the project, all should be visited, at least briefly, if at all possible.
- (5) Some on-the-ground data collection is essential. This may vary from relatively unstructured observation to a small-scale survey.
- (6) Especially with larger, long-term projects, plan to start on a small scale, and in all projects, build in a project monitoring capability which will explicitly address the major intrahousehold issues.

Analysis of intrahousehold issues should be organized around answers to the following six questions.

1. Who will participate in the project?
2. Will the project require or cause a fundamental change in household structure or function?

3. Will the project change any person's access to productive resources, or any person's control over what is produced (including income from his/her labor)?
4. Will participation in the project require changes in the uses of any person's time?
5. Will it change any person's access to consumption goods which affect individual welfare (including food, health care, education)?
6. Will it change any person's access to material support during emergency or crisis situations?

To obtain answers, data collection needs to address the following major areas of inquiry:

- o household structure and composition
- o individual income and access to productive resources
- o time use of members, and task allocation among them
- o allocation of consumption goods among members
- o sources of material support for households and individuals in emergency or crisis situations.

Specific items of data needed for the major areas of inquiry identified are as follows:

(1) Household Structure and Composition

What groups can be treated as household units

- o Those who live in a single house or compound
- o Those who eat from a common food supply
- o Those who contribute a significant portion of the real income in order to provide for each other's consumption
- o Those who provide labor on each other's behalf, or who can command labor from each other.

For each group, the following information is needed:

- o To what degree does this group intersect with the other groups?
- o On what basis are individuals included in the group?
- o What is the group size and structure?
  - o number of members
  - o number of children under three

- o number of members working
  - at household production
  - agriculture production
  - and cash employment;
- o number of members in each age/sex category
- o kinship structure, specifically
  - extended (many parent-child units or presence of three or more generations) versus nuclear
  - presence of one or both parents for each nuclear unit
  - presence of unrelated individuals
- o migration status of members (i.e., individuals reported as members of the unit but absent a significant amount of time at work or school)
  - how frequently and for how long they return.

(2) Individual Access to Income and Productive Resources

- o Characteristics of the individual
  - age, sex, and position in the household
- o Income producing activities
  - full or part time
  - seasonal or year round
  - performed in or outside the home
  - monetized or not

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- o income received
    - cash or kind
    - frequency (e.g., day, week, season)
    - reliability (windfall or regular income)
    - amount, relative to other income sources
  - o uses of income
    - are particular sources of income linked to particular uses
    - are particular categories of consumption expenditure considered the responsibility of particular individuals
  - o access to income-producing resources
    - what is the nature of the important resources (e.g., land, agricultural animals or equipment, skills and education, etc.)
    - how is ownership obtained (e.g., through spouse, natal family, allocation by a village administrator, purchase)
    - what is the relationship between ownership and userights
    - how are use rights obtained
    - what is the distribution of resource ownership, by sex, age, and position in the household
  - o access to employment
    - how do individuals obtain jobs (e.g., through traditional rights and obligations, by formal

application)

- are jobs scarce, or is labor scarce;
  - . does this vary by season
- how is employment distributed between the formal and informal sectors
- is access to employment determined by age, sex, marital status, caste or class.

(3) Time Use and Task Allocation

Time Use

o Characteristics of the individual

- age
- sex
- membership in various household groupings
- characteristics of the household groups to which he/she belongs

o Inventory of tasks performed

o Nature of tasks

- amount of time required
- performed only at specific times of day?
- performed only on certain days, or certain times of month or year?
- requiring minimum consecutive input of time?
- compatible with other tasks?
  - which ones?

o Variability

- variation in time input to a task, within the

week, and by season

- variation in the amount of time spent, by task.

o Time burden

- average and range of hours per day spent by individuals in work outside the home, work inside the home, leisure and personal care, and rest and sleep

Task Allocation

o Inventory of tasks performed

o Nature of the time demand of each task (defined in the previous paragraph

o Frequency with which important tasks are performed by persons of each age grouping, sex, and other relevant groupings

- Age: suitable grouping might be:

- (1) young children (3-6)
- (2) older children (6-12)
- (3) young adults (12-18, or to the age at which people typically marry or leave home)
- (4) adults (18-55 or older, depending on cultural perception of when old age starts)
- (5) elderly (55 and older)

Studies from a variety of cultures indicate children begin to make work contribution to the household at about three years of age.

- Sex: it may be meaningful to divide females into married and unmarried, and even to distinguish widows separately, since task allocation rules based on sex frequently vary on this basis.
- Position in the household: important categories may include: relative/non-relative; relative by blood/marriage
- Other groupings: these may include, in various settings, class, caste, special special skill, religion, ethnicity.

#### (4) Allocation of Consumption Goods

Differential employment opportunities or differential access to training and education have implications for investment in individuals within a household unit. Cultural patterns, such as early marriage of daughters who then leave the household or the payment of dowry or bride price, which affect the potential value of an individual to his or her natal household will indicate whether or not a systematic bias in the distribution of consumption, human investment goods is likely to exist. Data on individual consumption levels is quite difficult to obtain. Shortcut methods for assessing individual food consumption, for example,

have not proved reliable (Pinstrup-Andersen and Garcia, 1984). Indirect indicators of allocation patterns may be more feasible to obtain, and still useful for project planning purposes, since the outcomes of allocation processes are much easier to measure directly. Growth statistics by age and sex, and patterns of morbidity and mortality will provide powerful information on whether discrimination based on age or sex adversely affects some groups. Education levels, information on school attendance by girls and boys of different ages, and on use of clinics and health care services, indicate how such resources are distributed among individuals. It may be more difficult by such indirect means to identify characteristics other than age and sex (e.g., birth order, position in the household) which determine access to consumption goods.

(5) Sources of Material Support during Emergency or Crisis

What type of support networks exist for recourse in cases of emergency. To whom do people turn in cases of extreme need? Do they look to their natal families; kin in the same village; neighbors? Will the project change the nature of these systems

of emergency support by relocating people far from their natal homes, for example, or by substituting the concept of wage labor for the idea of labor based on mutual obligation?

The collection of data and the analysis of intrahousehold processes should be feasible in the context of existing USAID project planning processes. Depending on the size and scope of the project, one to six months should permit a reasonable approach to the issue.

Understanding the reasoning behind the analysis should contribute to improved project design even if the entire process suggested in this guideline cannot be undertaken.