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**LOCAL PARTICIPATION IN THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION  
OF DFA PROGRAMS: SOME LESSONS FROM THE FIELD**

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## List of Acronyms

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| AAAS:    | American Association for the Advancement of Science                              |
| AFR:     | Africa Bureau  |
| AIC:     | AIDS Information Centre  |
| APCP:    | National AIDS Prevention and Control Project, Uganda                             |
| APE:     | Uganda, Action Plan for the Environment  |
| APE:     | Association de Parents d'Eleves, Mali  |
| ASDG I:  | first Niger Agriculture Sector Development Grant                                 |
| ASDG II: | Agriculture Sector Development Grant II, Niger                                   |
| BEEP:    | Basic Education Expansion Project, Mali  |
| BPE:     | Bureau Projet Education  |
| CCA:     | Comité de Coordination d'Action  |
| CEDECOM: | Central Region Development Commission  |
| CFA:     | (franc de la) Communauté Financière Africaine                                    |
| CLUSA:   | Cooperative League of the USA  |
| CRT:     | Criterion-Referenced Tests   |
| DAI:     | Development Alternatives, Inc.   |
| DFA:     | Development Fund for Africa  |
| DNEF:    | Direction Nationale pour l'Enseignement Fondamental                              |
| EEC:     | European Economic Community  |
| EIL:     | Experiment in International Living   |
| ERP:     | Economic Recovery Program  |
| E/WID:   | Education/Women in Development   |
| FAEF:    | Fond d'Appui à l'Enseignement Fondamental, or Support Fund for Primary Education |
| FCFA:    | francs (see CFA)   |
| FHA:     | Food and Humanitarian Assistance Bureau  |
| FHA/PVC: | /Private and Voluntary Cooperation   |
| FLUP:    | Forestry and Landuse Planning  |
| FUE:     | Federation of Uganda Employers   |
| GNCC:    | Ghana National Chamber of Commerce   |
| GOG:     | Government of Ghana  |
| GON:     | Government of Niger  |
| GOU:     | Government of Uganda   |
| GRM:     | Government of the Republic of Mali   |
| IDA:     | Institute for Development Anthropology   |
| IPN:     | Institut Pédagogique National, Mali  |
| IQC:     | Indefinite Quantity Contract   |
| IMF:     | International Monetary Fund  |
| M&E:     | Monitoring and Evaluation Unit   |
| MEMEP:   | Ministry of Energy, Minerals, and Environmental Protection                       |
| MEN:     | Ministry of Education  |
| MOH:     | Ministry of Health   |

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| <b>MTWA:</b>    | <b>Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife, and Antiquities</b>                        |
| <b>NEAP:</b>    | <b>National Environmental Action Plan</b>                                    |
| <b>NGO:</b>     | <b>nongovernmental organization</b>  |
| <b>NPA:</b>     | <b>nonproject assistance</b>   |
| <b>NPCSR:</b>   | <b>National Planning Committee for School Reform</b>                         |
| <b>NRA:</b>     | <b>National Resistance Army</b>  |
| <b>NRM:</b>     | <b>natural resource management</b>   |
| <b>PA:</b>      | <b>participation assessment</b>  |
| <b>PAAD:</b>    | <b>Program Assistance Approval Document</b>                                  |
| <b>PAIP:</b>    | <b>Program Assistance Identification Proposal</b>                            |
| <b>PAMSCAD:</b> | <b>Programme of Actions to Mitigate the Social Cost of Adjustment, Ghana</b> |
| <b>PMU:</b>     | <b>Project Management Unit</b>   |
| <b>PREP:</b>    | <b>Primary Education Program</b>   |
| <b>PVO:</b>     | <b>Private voluntary organization</b>  |
| <b>RCs:</b>     | <b>Resistance Councils</b>   |
| <b>RIG:</b>     | <b>Regional Inspectors General (Niger)</b>                                   |
| <b>RMS:</b>     | <b>Rwenzori Mountaineering Service</b>                                       |
| <b>STD:</b>     | <b>sexually transmitted disease</b>  |
| <b>TASO:</b>    | <b>The AIDS Support Organization</b>   |
| <b>TIP:</b>     | <b>Ghana, Trade and Investment Program</b>                                   |
| <b>UNRISD:</b>  | <b>United Nations Research Institute for Social Development</b>              |
| <b>WB:</b>      | <b>World Bank</b>  |

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Background**

The Development Fund for Africa (DFA) was originally enacted late in 1987. Three years later, in FY 1991, the DFA was made a permanent part of Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. The DFA provides for long-term development assistance to sub-Saharan Africa, and it permits greater flexibility in programming so that US development assistance to Africa can be more coherent and effective. New initiatives in the legislation include helping to shrink the role and increase the effectiveness of the public sector, encouraging private sector growth, and promoting consultation to take account of local perspectives in a program that builds upon the needs and capabilities of African people.

In the authorizing language for the DFA, Congress stipulated that "[T]he Agency for International Development shall take into account the local-level perspectives of the rural and urban poor in sub-Saharan Africa, including women, during the planning process for project and program assistance . . ." The legislation further directs that "[L]ocal people, including women, shall be closely consulted and involved in the implementation of every project under this section which has a local focus." To fulfill the participation mandate, Congress directed AID to consult with African, United States, and other private and voluntary organizations that have demonstrated effectiveness in or commitment to the promotion of local, grassroots activities on behalf of long-term development in sub-Saharan Africa.

In response to discussions within AID/Washington and between AID and US-based PVOs concerning local participation in DFA-supported activities, the Africa Bureau's Development Planning Office organized a field mission to assess some of the experiences to date. The purpose of the assessment was to document case studies of different approaches that USAID missions have taken to assure local consultation and participation in their development activities. Results of the assessment are intended to help USAID missions to carry out the DFA mandate as it relates to local participation, and assist PVOs and NGOs to participate actively and effectively in assuring sustainable improvements in the lives of Africans. The assessment was designed, therefore, not as an evaluation of specific projects, nor an evaluation of USAID's implementation of the DFA's consultation/participation mandate. Rather, the assessment aims to understand and document case studies of different approaches that field missions have taken to assure local participation in their development activities.

The countries and specific activities that are the basis for the case studies were chosen to include a broad range of programs across the critical sectors identified in the DFA legislation and a mix of activities containing both project and nonproject assistance components. A goal of the assessment was to identify the types of consultation and participatory mechanisms utilized in determining the policy conditionality of programs with large components of nonproject assistance. The countries and DFA-funded activities examined in the case studies are:

Mali                      Basic Education Expansion Project (BEEP)

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| Niger  | Agriculture Sector Development Grant II (ASDG II) |
| Ghana  | Trade and Investment Program (TIP)                |
|        | Primary Education Program (PREP)                  |
| Uganda | Action Plan for the Environment (APE)             |
|        | AIDS Prevention and Control Program (APCP)        |

A four-person team visited each of the above countries between May 5 and June 4, 1992. The itinerary included approximately one week in each place. In all cases, the team collected information on the degree of local participation in the design and implementation of the activities selected for study. Data collection techniques included review of project or nonproject assistance (NPA) documents, and interviews with project personnel, host government officials, and local nongovernmental organization (NGO) agents. To the extent possible, the team conducted site visits to areas where project or NPA activities were expected to have an impact to discuss the activity and the issues of participation with program implementers, local association representatives, beneficiaries, and community leaders.

### Findings

The case studies yielded, not unexpectedly, considerable variability in the degree of participation in project and NPA design. The only conclusion that can be drawn is that the country- and project- or program-specific circumstances have a great deal of influence on the extent and nature of design consultations. For instance, where AID was the lead donor or breaking new ground, the data collected indicate that the longer the design period, the greater the likelihood that consultation will occur with a broad range of groups and individuals. In contrast, USAID missions spent less time and effort on design consultations for follow-on types of activities and those where other donors or the host country had designed the overall program. Consultations were also less extensive for programs with limited scope or focused sectors of intervention where a few, well-known groups are acknowledged spokespersons. In the multi-donor adjustment frameworks that characterize most of AID's major country programs, there is a potential problem in that AID must meet its needs for donor coordination within the framework of the legislative mandate for participation and consultation of the poor in program design. Finally, the existence of regular communication between mission staff and local organizations on a variety of topics can reduce the need for design-specific consultations, as well as provide important input to overall strategy and country program decisions.

As with consultations in the design of DFA-supported programs, the assessment team found great variety in the degree and type of local involvement in implementation. First, the team found that there is little correlation between the amount of consultation in design and the degree of participation in implementation. Second, the ease or difficulty of engendering local participation in development programs varies by development sector. Certain types of development activities have inherently greater potential for broad-based, local involvement than others. Participation may also become more difficult when the scale and scope of programs are expanded.

Participation by the ultimate beneficiaries is not the same as participation of and through organized (nongovernmental) groups who were said to represent—and might actually be comprised of—the beneficiaries. It is possible to target the African poor majority, as stipulated in the legislation, by selecting particular components of larger programs, such as AID's focus on primary education within the general educational reforms in Mali and Ghana. On the other hand, a mechanism intended to broaden direct benefit incidence, but which relies on indirect means to do so, is the provision of support for NGOs, either through dollar set-asides or local currency reflows. This approach is important when the choice of sector alone will not automatically target the poor majority, as is the case with many productive sector activities. However, the fact that funds are provided for intermediaries, particularly NGOs, does not *a priori* make a program participatory.

The findings of the assessment indicate that involvement by local organizations and institutions is dependent upon the historical and sociopolitical evolution that such groups have experienced in specific countries. There are not only enormous differences in the structure, focus, and capacity of these organizations, but the total number of such groups and how they operate is unique from country to country. This is a reality not specifically treated by the DFA legislation, but it is perhaps the most important consideration that individual USAID missions must take into account when programming activities to carry out the congressional mandate. The assessment team did not in any way undertake a systematic survey of all the PVOs and NGOs operating in each of the countries visited, but the report raises some of the wider, social, economic, and political issues that affect country-specific programs intended to involve PVOs and NGOs. In each case, some tentative lessons, which may serve as hypotheses for further, more systematic investigation, are drawn.

Engendering participation is time consuming and labor intensive, but the team found widespread agreement among USAID mission personnel with the congressional mandate calling for increased local participation and evidence of many innovative and successful strategies that are putting the law into practice. The USAID structure, with decentralized management and resident missions, is an important advantage in that it gives USAID personnel the opportunity and leeway to devote the time and attention needed to foster the communication that is key to effective participation. Decentralized administration and field-based personnel also offer individual USAID missions the opportunity to confront many of the country-specific obstacles and constraints to participation cited above. Contextual understanding of this sort is something that can only come with experience and direct contact.

AID's strategic choice to pair project and nonproject assistance in sectoral reform programs can open opportunities for participation. In acting as a facilitator of change, rather than simply offering financial rewards and penalties, AID not only increases the likelihood that policy changes are accepted and implemented in government, it also begins the process of involving groups of interested persons in implementing and supporting new policies.

## **Challenges for the Future**

Despite the substantial progress and positive efforts made toward increasing local participation in DFA-supported projects and programs, the full potential of genuinely participatory actions remains unfulfilled. Many of the constraints that limited participation in the past still exist, and there is always the problem of securing the total commitment to participation that is needed from all parties involved. Spurred on by both the DFA mandate and its own deepening interest in democratization—particularly broadening civil society and indigenizing the policy change process—the Africa Bureau must think systematically and develop a more coherent approach to the indigenous NGO sector in sub-Saharan Africa. It must reemphasize to field missions the importance of these actors and the importance of maintaining contact with them. It must think through the relative allocation of resources to these organizations for achieving the results to which the bureau is committed under the DFA and for longer-term organizational strengthening of the NGO sector. It must also engage in a dialogue with the US PVO community about the latter's role vis-à-vis indigenous NGOs. Both see the DFA as an important source of financing, but wish to retain autonomy. This may at times put them in a competitive posture. AID should work to foster collaboration.

Finally, this report can only provide a flavor for the diverse responses to the DFA mandate regarding participation. The Bureau has engaged the services of an American Association for the Advancement of Science Fellow to take the preliminary findings of this study and validate them through a more systematic inquiry. In that process, additional guidance on this important aspect of AID's development program in sub-Saharan Africa should emerge.

## **LOCAL PARTICIPATION IN THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF DFA PROGRAMS: SOME LESSONS FROM THE FIELD**

This report discusses and assesses the mandate of the US Agency for International Development's Bureau for Africa to consult with and assure participation of local people in their own development. It reviews the history of the Development Fund for Africa, from which this mandate has arisen, gives the background and methodology to the current study, highlights the major findings of the case studies undertaken, synthesizes the conclusions from those studies, and suggests next steps to be taken. The full case studies—the result of field visits to Mali, Niger, Ghana and Uganda—are then appended to the synthesis report.

### **I. Background**

#### **A. The DFA Legislation**

The DFA was originally enacted into law as part of the FY 1987 Year Appropriations Act. As part of an appropriation, it was a temporary measure, and it only briefly outlined the terms of the Development Fund for Africa (DFA). In FY 1991, the United States Congress amended the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 by adding Chapter 10, which authorizes the DFA, and provides for long-term development assistance to sub-Saharan Africa. Congress mandated that the DFA be used "to help the poor majority of men and women in sub-Saharan Africa to participate in a process of long-term development through economic growth that is equitable, participatory, environmentally sustainable, and self-reliant" (Section 496 (c)(1)). The DFA permitted greater flexibility in programming so that US development assistance to Africa could be more coherent and effective. New initiatives in the legislation include helping to shrink the role and increase the effectiveness of the public sector, encouraging private-sector growth, and promoting consultation to take account of local perspectives in a program that builds upon the needs and capabilities of African people.

In the 1990 authorizing language for the DFA, Congress stipulated that "[T]he Agency for International Development shall take into account the local-level perspectives of the rural and urban poor in sub-Saharan Africa, including women, during the planning process for project and program assistance under this section." Congress further specified that: ". . . the Agency for International Development should consult with African, United States, and other private and voluntary organizations that have demonstrated effectiveness in or commitment to the promotion of local, grassroots activities on behalf of long-term development in sub-Saharan Africa . . ." Private and voluntary organizations are defined in this section to include "(in addition to entities traditionally considered to be private and voluntary organizations) cooperatives, credit unions, trade unions, women's groups, nonprofit development research institutions, and indigenous local organizations, which are private and nonprofit."

The legislation further directs that "[L]ocal people, including women, shall be closely consulted and involved in the implementation of every project under this section which has a local focus." Participation by women is carefully stipulated in the DFA, which states that,

"(T)he Agency for International Development shall ensure that development activities . . . incorporate a significant expansion of the participation (including decision-making) and integration of African women in each of the critical sectors described [elsewhere]." The critical sectors are the following: (1) agricultural production and natural resources management; (2) health (with special emphasis on the needs of mothers and children); (3) voluntary family planning services; (4) education (with special emphasis on primary education); and (5) income-generating opportunities.

Three of these critical sectors—natural resources management, maternal-child health, and family planning—have been targeted since the inception of the DFA in 1987 to receive at least 10 percent of the total funding appropriated for use under the DFA.

#### **B. Africa Bureau Policy and Action**

The commitment that AID made to Congress in return for the flexibility and consistency of support embodied in the DFA was a change in the way that AID does business in sub-Saharan Africa to (1) produce results that will improve the lives of the next generation of Africans and (2) respond to the realities of the countries in which AID has development assistance programs. In the spirit of this commitment, AID set about to delegate as much decision-making authority to its field missions as possible, so as to make these units responsible for producing results, and to ensure that they, who are closest to the realities of the respective countries in which they are located, have authority to structure the assistance allocated to that country according to its needs.

The Bureau for Africa has thus relied on providing information and assistance to field missions to ensure that the terms of the DFA have been implemented, but have not preempted field authority by issuing policy strictures. One example of the way that information and assistance was provided was the PVO Initiatives Project, which had among its major tasks to share information among field missions, PVOs, NGOs and other interested parties on successful experiences, pitfalls to be avoided, and methods and other aspects of consultation. It held advocacy training and other workshops for African NGOs to improve their skills. It made available microgrants to PVOs and NGOs in partnership to strengthen the linkages and capacities of both groups to bring about impacts at the grassroots level. Another example of communication to the field is the supplement to the Agency guidance on Non-Project Assistance, which includes requirements for social soundness, institutional soundness and political feasibility analyses, as well as an assessment of the effects of any proposed policy changes on vulnerable groups. A number of methodological approaches to such analyses are considered valid by the Africa Bureau in undertaking these assessments. They can include survey research, focus group interviews, and key informant interviews as well as secondary data analysis. Without pretensions to excessive scientific rigor, the Bureau—and the Agency—must be concerned with the representativeness of the information used to make predictions about the feasibility of a given activity.

There are additional Agency policy guidelines to which the Africa Bureau adheres in its implementation of the DFA. These include the policy papers on "Local Organizations in

Development," "Private Voluntary Organizations," "Cooperative Development," "Women in Development," the Project Assistance Handbook, the Non-Project Assistance Handbook and the policy papers on sectoral programs.

### **C. US PVO-AID Dialogue**

As the US private voluntary organizations were key actors in the creation of and support for the DFA, AID has recognized that it has a special relationship with this community. In this spirit, a PVO Liaison Task Force was set up shortly after the 1987 passage of the legislation. Among the topics taken up by the task force, consultation, and the obverse, strengthening local organizations in their capacity to advocate, have been taken up in various ways at the periodic meetings between AID and the PVO community. In late 1991, however, specific questions were raised regarding AID's implementation of the sections of the legislation cited in the Background to this report. It was agreed that AID would work to develop some case studies of field performance in implementing this legislative mandate, and, simultaneously, the PVO community would undertake some similar, independent case studies. This material would be shared in a discussion or series of discussions as part of the ongoing dialogue.

### **D. Assessment of Local Participation**

In response to discussions within AID/Washington and between AID and US-based PVOs concerning local participation in DFA-supported activities, the Africa Bureau's Development Planning Office organized a visit to assess some of the experiences to date. The purpose of the assessment is to document case studies of different approaches that USAID missions have taken to assure local consultation and participation in their development activities. Despite limitations in terms of time and number of activities examined (see methodological section below), the assessment team found a broad range of participatory actions and mechanisms. This report presents the individual case studies, representing six programs in four countries, and a synthesis of the trip findings. The results presented here are intended to provide background material for continued dialogue among AID, US PVOs, and indigenous African NGOs. It is hoped that the assessment will help USAID missions to carry out the DFA mandate as it relates to local participation, and assist PVOs and NGOs to participate actively and effectively in assuring sustainable improvements in the lives of Africans.

## **II. Local Participation Assessment Methodology**

The present assessment of local participation in DFA-supported activities emerged out of efforts to understand the mechanisms USAID field missions are using to comply with the mandate to consult local peoples in the design of project and nonproject assistance (NPA) activities, and to involve them in the implementation of those activities that have a local focus. Under AID's approach to implementing the DFA, authority for deciding on the process by which activities are implemented—including the means and extent of local-level consultation—is delegated to the field. Thus, required reporting to headquarters has emphasized results rather than process as a means of both lightening the field workload and underlining the delegation of

authority. Anecdotal evidence had suggested, however, that considerable innovation has taken place, and experience is being gained at the mission level from which many parties could benefit. The assessment was designed, therefore, not as an evaluation of the projects, nor an evaluation of USAID's implementation of the DFA's consultation/participation mandate. Rather, the assessment aimed to understand and document case studies of different approaches that field missions have taken to assure local participation in their development activities.

#### **A. Case Selection**

The countries and specific activities that are the basis for the case studies were chosen purposely through an initial review of country-program progress reports, then through consultation between the Africa Bureau's Office of Development Planning and individual USAID field missions. The selection criteria were to include a broad range of programs across the critical sectors identified in the DFA legislation and a mix of activities containing both project and nonproject assistance components. Emphasis emerged from discussions within and between the Africa Bureau and the US PVO community that had raised concerns about the level of local participation in the design and implementation of nonproject assistance grants. A goal of the assessment was to identify the types of consultation and participatory mechanisms utilized in determining the policy conditionality of programs with large, nonproject, budgetary support components.

Selection criteria also emphasized that programs be far enough into implementation to allow a useful assessment, and be known to have entailed a degree of local participation, so that the sample was understood not to be necessarily representative of the entire DFA portfolio. Not all of the selection criteria applied to each case ultimately chosen for study. For example, several of the programs selected were not as far into implementation as would have been desired; but the six eventually selected do represent a range of sectoral programs, and each illustrates aspects of local participation. The countries and DFA-funded activities examined in the case studies are:

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| Mali   | Basic Education Expansion Project (BEEP)          |
| Niger  | Agriculture Sector Development Grant II (ASDG II) |
| Ghana  | Trade and Investment Program (TIP)                |
|        | Primary Education Program (PREP)                  |
| Uganda | Action Plan for the Environment (APE)             |
|        | AIDS Prevention and Control Program (APCP)        |

#### **B. Team Selection and Preparation**

As noted above, the decision to undertake an assessment of local participation initiatives in the design and implementation of DFA-supported activities emerged from discussions between officials in the Africa Bureau and representatives of the US PVO community. The Senior Advisor for Social Science in the Africa Bureau's Development Planning Office, Ms. Joan S.

Atherton, coordinated the negotiations with USAID missions for case selection and assumed overall responsibility for planning the assessment and leading the team in the field. In each country, the assessment was carried out by a four-person team that, in addition to Ms. Atherton, included two representatives from US PVOs. Dr. Paul Nelson, Associate Director with Church World Service/Lutheran World Relief's Washington, DC Office on Development Policy, was a team member in all four countries. Mr. Daniel Devine, Resident Consultant for World Education in Bamako, Mali, accompanied the team on assessments in Mali and Niger; and World Education Vice President, Ms. Jill Harmsworth, joined the team for assessments in Ghana and Uganda. The fourth team member, Dr. Curt Grimm, community development specialist and Senior Research Assistant with the Institute for Development Anthropology (IDA), participated through a delivery order to the Rural and Regional Income Generation Indefinite Quantity Contract held jointly by IDA and Development Alternatives, Inc.

Before departure for the field assessments, the team (excluding Mr. Devine) held a team planning meeting on April 23, 1992 at AID/Washington to discuss the study's objectives and methodology. At this meeting the team received background documents concerning each of the activities selected for case study, discussed the terms of reference, assumptions and hypotheses, drafted questionnaires to guide the assessments, and met with the Niger and Uganda Country Development Officers to discuss their country programs.

### **C. In-Country Operation**

The team conducted the field portion of the assessment between May 5 and June 4, 1992. The itinerary included approximately one week in each of the four countries. The countries and dates visited were the following:

|        |                     |
|--------|---------------------|
| Mali   | May 6—13, 1992      |
| Niger  | May 13—20, 1992     |
| Ghana  | May 21—27, 1992     |
| Uganda | May 28—June 4, 1992 |

In each country, the team collected information on the degree of local participation in the design and implementation of the selected DFA-supported activities. Data collection techniques included review of project or NPA documents and interviews with project personnel, host government officials, and local NGO agents. To the extent possible, the team conducted site visits to areas where project or NPA activities were expected to have an impact to discuss the activity and the issues of participation with program implementers, local association representatives, beneficiaries, and community leaders.

### **D. Methodological Constraints and Limitations**

With only one week in each country—and in some cases the team was looking at two programs per country—the limited amount of time available for each case study was the primary constraint faced during the assessment. Efforts were made to review as many background

documents as possible, and interviews elicited previous participatory actions, but the investigation was unavoidably superficial and impressionistic. Some aspects of participation within the individual programs may be overemphasized while others are given less treatment than they deserve, or may not even have been reported. This acknowledged lack of scientific rigor reflects the study's limited objectives: to provide information and background for further discussion and more in-depth investigation.

Another factor that may account for some unevenness in the analysis and discussion of the case studies is the team's differential experience and familiarity with the case study countries. For instance, two of the team members had each spent several years in Mali. They were knowledgeable of the socioeconomic and political context and familiar with the USAID mission and its program. At least one team member had previous experience working in Niger and Uganda, while the visit to Ghana was a first for all four assessment team members. Given the limited time available in each country, prior country experience was an advantage during the assessment and it may account for some variation in the analytical depth of the individual case studies.

The study did not allow for an in-depth look at the entire community of NGOs and of the associations referred to in the DFA legislation—credit unions, women's organizations, labor unions, farmers' groups, etc.—in any country. Comments about the capacities of NGOs to carry out the consultative role described in the legislation are derived largely on the basis of the particular organizations involved in the particular activities studied in each country. Some information about the NGO sector in each country more broadly was elicited—mostly through the NGO umbrella organizations in each country—but time did not permit a thorough review of organizations.

The assessment targeted programs and projects where USAID missions were known to be engaged in consultative and participatory strategies, and had the advantage of each USAID mission's help and guidance in meeting and interviewing key AID, government, and nongovernmental sources. With this advantage come certain limitations that should be noted. Because the team began by contacting sources known and consulted by the missions, the entree into the NGO community was slanted toward those involved in operational work with AID. This was slightly, but not completely, offset by capitalizing on the personal and institutional connections that the PVO representatives on the team had in each country. Time limitations and the vagaries of individual NGO personnel's schedules sometimes did not allow discussion of the issues as widely with other NGOs—those not already involved in cooperations with AID—as would have been desired. This constraint was felt most keenly in Ghana.

The relatively recently enacted DFA legislation anticipates long-term development assistance. Current DFA-supported activities across the continent are not very far into implementation and many, including several of the case studies examined here, are still in the planning stages. The lack of time limited the range of possibilities for assessment and the ability to assess whether longer-term results were achieved. Additionally, as was mentioned above, the assessment specifically targeted several programs utilizing nonproject assistance to support policy

reforms. These activities were selected because of acknowledged concerns about the role of consultation and local participation in programs of this nature, but by including them the team encountered the more difficult task of trying to assess the impacts of policy reforms. Limited implementation experience and the unknown longitudinal impacts of structural reforms combine to restrict the assessment's ability to do more than provide an initial view of the DFA's participatory process.

### **III. Brief Description of Case Study Programs and Projects**

The full country case studies appear as appendices to this report, and a brief description of each activity examined is provided here as background to the section on findings below.

#### **A. Basic Education Expansion Project (USAID Mali 688-0257)**

The USAID/Mali-funded Basic Education Expansion Project (BEEP) is part of a larger, multi-donor education sector development effort, known as the World Bank Fourth Education Project, with total funding of US \$56,000,000, of which US \$12,000,000 is allocated to nonproject budgetary support. AID's current, five-year program concentrates on increasing enrollment and improving the quality and efficiency of primary school education in the more populous central and southern Regions of Koulikoro, Segou, Sikasso, and the District of Bamako.

The BEEP project was begun in 1989 with \$7,000,000 in project funds and \$3,000,000 in nonproject budgetary support. The BEEP was amended in 1991 with an additional \$10,000,000 in project funds to help extend the project to the Koulikoro region and increase support for certain project activities. The USAID portion of the multi-donor program includes the following components:

1. Improvement and extension of the Ministry of Education's (MEN) in-service pedagogical and management training program for regional directors and inspectors and local school directors and teachers;
2. Reorganization of a Monitoring and Evaluation Unit (M&E) to improve the MEN's analysis of financial, personnel, and educational data for better central and regional educational planning and management;
3. Creation of a Girls' Schooling Unit within the MEN to devise and implement a national action plan for the promotion of girls' education;
4. Assistance for communities to repair and improve old schools through the *Fonds d'Appui de l'Erseignement Fondamental* (FAEF), or Support Fund for Primary Education, which provides matching funds for community-initiated physical improvements;

5. Procurement of commodities such as textbooks and school equipment to improve the quality of primary school education, and:
- 6 Assistance with various pilot projects such as support for the development of maternal language education, and the revision of ruralization programs.

**B. Niger Agriculture Sector Development Grants (USAID/Niger 683-0257/0265)**

The first Niger Agriculture Sector Development Grant (ASDG I) was authorized in 1984. It had three broad objectives: (1) to promote agricultural production by diminishing policy constraints to development in the agriculture sector; (2) to provide resources to the Government of Niger to support ongoing development activities in the agriculture sector; and (3) to contribute directly to economic stabilization by minimizing the adverse impacts of austerity and structural adjustment measures on agricultural/rural development programs. Of the \$53 million allocated for ASDG I, \$44.8 million will eventually be converted to CFA as resource transfers. To date, \$39.8 million has already been released and a commensurate amount in CFA deposited in a counterpart fund in the GON Treasury for joint, mutually agreed upon, programming. The 6th tranche of \$5 million, dedicated entirely to NRM activities, will be released in the near future. The remaining \$8 million was used for technical assistance, training, evaluation, audit, policy studies, and credit union development in a complementary project assistance activity.

The stated purpose of the second Agriculture Sector Development Grant (ASDG II) is "to enhance the ability of individual rural inhabitants to gain control over resources they habitually use, and to manage and profit from them in a sustainable manner." Sectorally, the grant emphasizes natural resource management (NRM); institutionally, it includes attention to developing both Government of Niger (GON) and NGO capacities. The grant, authorized in August 1990, is composed of two components: a \$5 million project component that funds technical assistance, evaluation, studies, audit, training, and commodities; and a \$20 million nonproject component to be released in four tranches with each tranche triggered by the GON's satisfaction of policy conditions. The conditions for the release of the first tranche have been clearly specified, but conditions for the remaining tranches will be refined annually, based in part upon an assessment of the impact of policy and programmatic changes in the previous year(s), as well as upon studies conducted under the companion technical assistance project. No tranches have been released to date. Under the NRM component, there are five elements: (1) harmonization of various efforts to develop a national NRM strategy and action plan (including conservation of biodiversity) and the adoption of such a plan; (2) investigation of the effects, and modification as required, of the current resource tenure arrangements; (3) decentralization of NRM; (4) strengthening the NGO role in NRM program implementation; and (5) a change in forester roles from regulatory agent to a change agent/extension worker. In the institutional component, there is to be a combination of training and technical assistance to strengthen capabilities, along with legal and regulatory reform as required.

**C. Ghana Trade and Investment Program (USAID/Ghana 641-0125)**

The USAID/Ghana-supported Trade and Investment Program (TIP) is an \$80 million initiative designed to assist the Government of Ghana and private exporters to improve the balance of payments by expanding exports of nontraditional items. To promote an expansion of nontraditional exports, TIP will address a number of key constraints that have been identified as impediments to production of export commodities and their marketing. The program will provide a \$60 million sector cash grant that will be complemented by a \$20 million project providing technical assistance and training. The cash grant will be disbursed in a series of tranches that will be conditional upon the Government of Ghana's (GOG) institutionalization of policy reforms that relieve current constraints on exports and private-sector investments. The project will provide short-term technical assistance to assist the GOG to develop policy alternatives, strategies, and action plans; institutionally strengthen key organizations; and promote awareness regarding trade, investment, and economic issues.

TIP's three-pronged approach aims to increase significantly Ghana's nontraditional exports by:

- (1) Strengthening the policy and institutional framework necessary to increase private-sector investments and exports;
- (2) Improving the incentives available to the private sector; and
- (3) Improving the ability of individual firms and entrepreneurs to export.

**D. Ghana Primary Education Program (USAID/Ghana 641-0119/0120)**

The Ghana Primary Education Program (PREP) is a five-year program funded by USAID/Ghana. It began in 1990, and the first funding was released in 1991. The total budget of \$35 million includes a \$3 million project activity. The majority of funds are \$32 million in budget support, which will generate the equivalent in local currency to the Government of Ghana for support of several agreed upon aspects of the primary education system. The US dollar funds will be disbursed in five tranches, subject to the satisfaction of a set of conditions that are specified in the program agreement with the Ministry of Education. The program was designed in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, and is very much in line with the Government of Ghana's objectives for reform of the education sector.

The goal of PREP is to establish a high quality, accessible, equitable and financially sustainable Ghanaian primary education system by the year 2000. It targets four aspects of the primary education system:

1. *High Quality*, measured by student achievement;

2. *Accessibility*, as measured by national enrollment rates;

3. *Equity*, as measured by the enrollment and retention rates of groups of children who are currently under-represented; and

4. *Financial Sustainability*, as measured by the ability of the Ministry of Education to fund a sound primary education system from its own financial resources.

Over a five-year period the program is expected to benefit 63,000 primary school educators, 14,000 supervisory personnel, and approximately 2.1 million children. The equity component places special emphasis on reaching children—particularly girls—in districts that are poorly served by the primary school system at present. PREP is implemented by a small team of 11 staff in the Ministry of Education, who form the Project Management Unit (PMU). Staff from USAID work closely with the PMU. Together they are responsible for close monitoring of the program's progress towards objectives. They are measuring the increased supply of school books, quality of teachers, increases of enrollment (especially of girls) and progress towards greater equity. The baseline survey conducted at the outset includes a measure of parental satisfaction with primary schools, so that changes in attitude can be monitored.

**E. Uganda Action Plan for the Environment (USAID/Uganda 617-0123/0124)**

The Action Plan for the Environment (APE) program is a \$30 million grant to the Government of Uganda, intended to support the more effective and sustainable management of natural resources in selected areas. The APE employs a mix of policy-related nonproject assistance (\$10 million) and project assistance (\$20 million). The NPA is to be released in three tranches tied to the government's fulfillment of resource-management-related conditions. The APE policy component focuses on policy changes in three areas: development of a National Environmental Action Plan; upgrading of several protected areas from National Forest status to National Parks; and institutional support to the two key ministries (Ministry of Energy, Minerals and Environment Protection; and Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife, and Antiquities).

Project activities under the APE include: three long-term advisors to the National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) secretariat, two other technical advisors placed in the two line ministries responsible for NEAP, and shorter-term technical training and advice; and training and technical support in the Forest Department, Department of the Environment, Game Department, and Uganda National Parks, all under the Ministry of Energy, Minerals and Environment Protection. The APE's final project component focuses on rehabilitation and resource conservation. It uses project assistance and local currency counterpart to fund subgrants to PVOs and NGOs for subprojects supporting sustainable resource use; rehabilitation of protected areas; a natural resource information system; and environmental impact assessments. The current proposal is that grants to NGOs/PVOs will be administered through an umbrella grant structure managed by a US-registered PVO. Activities focusing on sustainable resource

use or environmental preservation will be eligible; buffer zone projects, tourism development, public conservation education, applied research, and biological inventories are examples of the kinds of activities to be supported. Grants are divided into those larger than \$25,000, and those that will never be greater than \$25,000 each throughout the life of the project. These latter grants are unrestricted as to the type of NRM intervention undertaken. In addition to the PVO/NGO grants, project activities include \$140,000 in foreign exchange and \$2.2 million in local currency counterpart to support infrastructure improvement and rehabilitation in and around reserves and parks. These improvements would include boundary demarcation and road rehabilitation. Local currency support (\$290,000) is also provided for environmental assessments of ongoing public projects, to be carried out by indigenous environmental consulting firms.

**F. National AIDS Prevention and Control Project (USAID Uganda 617-0127)**

In January 1991, USAID/Uganda and the Experiment in International Living (EIL) signed a three-year operational program grant in the amount of \$12 million. The purpose of the grant—the National AIDS Prevention and Control Project (APCP)—was to limit the spread of the HIV/AIDS infection in target populations. The grant was part of the USAID mission's overall strategy in AIDS prevention and control activities, and complemented ongoing support to the GOU's Ministry of Health (MOH) and National Resistance Army (NRA) in their own AIDS prevention and control programs. All such programs emphasize techniques to induce and sustain behavior change, concentrating on reducing the number of sexual partners and increasing condom use. The anticipated outcomes of the grant are "a statistically significant self-reported behavior change in the Project's target groups toward reducing the risk of contracting HIV/AIDS; a statistically significant increase in the demand for condoms in the Project's target groups; and a lower rate of HIV transmission in [the] Project's target group than in the population in general."

The grant specified that EIL would make subgrants to organizations that would undertake the activities listed below. For the most part, the subgrantee organizations capable of undertaking these activities were identified during the design period. The activities and the associated organizations included in the grant are:

- Peer education in sexual behavioral modification to minimize the risk of AIDS transmission—EIL and Federation of Uganda Employers (FUE)
- HIV/AIDS testing and counseling to modify sexual behavior that will minimize the risk of AIDS transmission—AIDS Information Centre (AIC)
- AIDS counseling and community outreach to care for those already infected with AIDS and to help sensitize those not already infected to change their sexual habits—The AIDS Support Organization (TASO)

- AIDS prevention in the military through dissemination of information and education—EIL/NRA
- Support to the Uganda AIDS Commission in the Office of the Prime Minister to oversee, plan and coordinate AIDS prevention and control activities throughout the country—GOU
- Establishment of a sexually transmitted disease advisory council that will develop a comprehensive plan and funding strategy involving training, public media campaigns, technical assistance, and pilot programs—GOU/MOH
- Research and analyses to support AIDS prevention policy formulation and programming—EIL
- Development of a pilot project providing foster care to AIDS orphans—EIL in conjunction with other US and/or local private voluntary organizations.

Of the original \$12 million, \$9.4 million were planned for disbursement as subgrants, based upon budget estimates submitted by groups identified to carry out the activities listed above. An additional \$500,000 was added in September 1991 to expand the activities assisting AIDS orphans and other vulnerable children.

#### **IV. Principal Lessons Learned from the Country Case Studies**

##### **A. Forms of Participation**

Participation in economic development programs is not a clear or universally defined concept. Participation means different things in different contexts, and interpretation can be confusing. At times, "participant" is used broadly to encompass everyone deemed to be recipients or beneficiaries of assistance in any form. In this sense participation extends to refugees and other recipients of humanitarian aid, or passive beneficiaries of social welfare programs. At other times, participation is more narrowly defined to include people who are actively engaged in specific activities to enhance their own (individual or corporate) well-being, and receiving benefits from their involvement. This usage implies participation in development actions, but it does not necessarily mean participation in the development process. Participation takes on a more restricted and processual definition in some recent economic development literature that challenges previous development practices and strategies. Quoting Marshal Wolfe and the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), Goulet writes, "participation designates the organized efforts to increase control over resources and regulative institutions in given social situations, on the part of groups and movements hitherto excluded

from such control."<sup>1</sup> This type of participation may result from efforts by government officials or other authorities to involve local peoples; it may swell from grassroots movements by the people themselves; or it can be promoted by third party individuals or organizations. But for development specialists such as Goulet, authentic participation implies "locating true decisional power in non-elite people, and freeing them from manipulation and co-optation."<sup>2</sup>

The DFA legislation does not provide a clear definition for the type of participation it promotes. The text calls for consultation in design and involvement in implementation of projects with a local focus. It does not prescribe the precise methods or approaches USAID missions should undertake to ensure greater participation, nor does it specifically hold as a goal the transfer of decision power over resources to non-elite people. What the DFA mandate calls for is consultation and local participation, specifically with the rural and urban poor, to ensure that the limited funds available for assistance meet the needs and capabilities of poor people in the most effective manner. In the context of this congressional directive, innovation is clearly permitted and no single approach is construed to be appropriate. As noted above, however, it was the conviction of the Congress that a broad range of NGOs had a comparative advantage in representing and conveying the point of view held by potential local participants in DAF-funded activities.

### 1. Participation in Program Design

The case studies yielded—not unexpectedly—considerable variability in the degree of participation in project and NPA design. The only conclusion that can be drawn is that the country and project or program-specific situations have a great deal of influence on the extent and nature of design consultations. For instance, where AID was the lead donor or breaking new ground, the data collected indicate that the longer the design period, the greater the likelihood that consultation will occur with a broad range of groups and individuals. In contrast, USAID missions spent less time and effort on design consultations for existing or ongoing activities. In several cases, other donors or the host country had designed the overall program and AID agreed to participate in the multi-donor effort after reviewing and approving the preexisting design. Consultations were also less extensive for programs with limited scope or focused sectors of intervention where a few, well-known groups are acknowledged spokespersons. Finally, the existence of regular communication between mission staff and local organizations on a variety of topics can reduce the need for design-specific consultations as well as influence overall strategy and country program decisions.

Programs such as Niger's Agriculture Sector Development Grant II (ASDG II), and Ghana's Trade and Investment Program (TIP), where AID is the principal donor, had design

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<sup>1</sup> In Goulet, Denis, *Participation in Development: New Avenues*, *World Development*, Vol. 17, No. 2, p. 165, 1989.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*, p. 168.

phases that lasted for a year or more, and both have benefited from a great deal of participatory input. During the design of these two NPA programs, officials at the individual USAID missions deliberately sought, through different means, counsel and advice from some of the groups potentially involved in or impacted by the activity.

During the preparatory phase of ASDG II, USAID and representatives from concerned GON ministries convened two design committees to develop the components addressed by the program. Representatives from both committees participated in the Dosso Conference on Nigerien NGOs in April 1990, and the committees separately commissioned studies to gain more information on specific issues relevant to their sectoral planning. The committee exercise began with open forums to discuss pertinent experiences, constraints, and objectives, and gradually moved to the development of concrete goals and interventions. This design method was participatory by nature—committee members represented diverse constituencies and interests—and it sought to make sure that the potential and benefits of the policy reform process were accepted and understood by GON policy-makers and other concerned groups.

With the design of the Ghana TIP, the assessment team similarly found that the USAID mission devoted a great deal of time and attention to the consultation process. During the two year preparation of the TIP, there have been extensive interactions between USAID, representatives of the for-profit private sector, and the Government of Ghana. These have taken place in workshops and formal consultations, as well as numerous informal meetings and dinner gatherings.

A problem identified by the assessment team during its examination of the Ghana TIP design was that although the USAID mission sought to consult with some of the potential beneficiaries (associations of exporters and commercial farmers), the process did not extend to all groups likely to be affected. In particular, groups of smallholders, local cooperatives and women's organizations—the groups the DFA legislation specifies for consultation—do not appear to have been systematically included in the design effort. The difficulties involved in making decisions about whom to talk to, whom various groups purport to represent, and whether a representative structure even exists for all groups, are discussed in greater detail below.

The consultation opportunities afforded by long design stages are considerably reduced when programs move quickly through the preparatory phase. In contrast to the ASDG II and TIP experiences, the assessment team found far less evidence of concerted and systematic consultation with diverse groups during the design of the Mali Basic Education Expansion Project (BEEP) and the Uganda National AIDS Prevention and Control Project (APCP). In both cases the design was completed very quickly, although previous funding relationships existed between USAID Uganda and a number of the groups involved in APCP.

The BEEP design was rapid and truncated in order to take advantage of the opportunity presented by the World Bank's Fourth Education Project. The justification for the speedy preparation was the desire to join in and reinforce World Bank sectoral conditionality with the BEEP's nonproject assistance component and use the projectized funds—through materials

procurement, technical assistance, and training—to help facilitate the transformation of Malian education that the Fourth Education Project envisioned.

If anything, the APCP was designed even faster than the BEEP. The rush to design this project was imposed by the desire to have the grant signed during the January 1991 visit to Uganda by AID Administrator Ronald Roskens and Secretary of Health and Human Services Louis Sullivan. The hurried preparation led USAID/Uganda to restrict its consultation to a small group of organizations that had previously received USAID grants for AIDS education and control. Most of these organizations are NGOs and their individual perspectives are the essence of the APCP. In its current stage, the APCP is branching out to incorporate some new associations involved in AIDS prevention and control. The process of setting up this program served as a catalyst for the establishment of a forum in which interested NGOs, whether recipients of US assistance or not, can discuss their fight against the scourge of HIV/AIDS.

The other two case studies, Ghana's Primary Education Program (PREP) and Uganda's Action Plan for the Environment (APE), also have specific circumstances that affect the extent of consultations undertaken during design. Although the PREP was designed relatively quickly, it responds directly to a larger education reform program instigated in 1987 and designed by the Government of Ghana. The Ghanaian Ministry of Education conducted an extensive baseline study that captured the concerns about the education system as expressed by Ghanaian parents. The ministry has taken the lead in education reform and to a great extent the PREP responds to the objectives and perspectives put forth by the host country, though AID emphasized decentralization, primary education, and other aspects that enhance the probability of local participation. With the APE, although the design phase was carried out over several years, as with the experiences with ASDG II and TIP, USAID/Uganda did not undertake a broad-based consultation program to the same extent as the missions in Niger and Ghana. The project's focus seems to have been chosen in response to consultation with several international conservationist PVOs and the multilateral institutions involved in the National Action Plan for the Environment program. Only after several fundamental decisions regarding the sector and nature of AID's involvement were made did consultations take place with specific groups regarding program process. In this regard, the APE highlights the important distinction that needs to be made between consultation with international organizations and groups more directly representing potential local participants or affected people. Consultation with international PVOs is not a substitute for consultation with local groups.

While the data collected show a great deal of variation in the length of the preparation stage and the type and degree of consultation during the design process, the data on hand do not necessarily show that programs with less consultation in design have correspondingly low levels of local participation in implementation. In fact, as will be discussed further below, of the six case studies, the highest levels of local involvement in implementation occur in the three social-sector programs that were rapidly designed—the BEEP, PREP, and APCP. It is, therefore, too soon to draw conclusions or make recommendations that program design be long and drawn out in order to assure greater participation in development activities. More projects and programs need to be examined before definitive statements can be made about the relationship between

length of design consultations and responsiveness to local needs, as well the difference, if any, in the role of participation in different development sectors. This is an area of inquiry that may be more appropriately addressed by some of the follow-up activities that will build upon the findings of this assessment.

What is clear from the assessment mission, however, is that USAID mission staff involved in designing at least four of these projects and programs did take the consultation process very seriously. Program designers are utilizing diverse techniques to comply with the DFA mandates. Formal and informal committees, meetings, and workshops with host country nationals representing diverse interests were held during the design of four of the six case studies. For the two education programs included in the assessment, the AID components were integrally linked with larger education reform projects supported by the World Bank and other donors and, at least in the case of the Ghana PREP, initiated by host country officials. Extensive baseline studies and a preparation process that included consultations with a range of interested parties had already been completed when the USAID design teams began their work. Given this situation, the USAID-supported designers appropriately collaborated with existing institutions to verify the validity of actions already planned and to identify how AID might best contribute to the overall program.

Supporting a project or program already begun by another donor raises an issue for AID's promotion of participation. Clearly, AID should not reenact a process of consultation and planning already carried out by another donor. But where other donors have not consulted extensively with local organizations, it is tempting to "buy into" a program of policy change or a project initiated by another donor without insisting on consultation. When participating in multi-donor programs, AID has the opportunity to encourage participatory strategies more broadly by being the donor that pursues local views and perspectives most vigorously.

Where a project is tied to a World Bank adjustment program, the issue can be more problematic. The desire for donor coordination in support of programs and strategies worked out in country consultative groups sometimes appears to shape AID's programs strongly. In Ghana, the TIP's promotion of nontraditional exports is tied to a post-adjustment private investment growth strategy laid out in the government/donor policy framework endorsed in the World Bank-led Consultative Group.

AID must meet its needs for donor coordination within the framework of the legislative mandate for participation and consultation of the poor in program design. Given the high profile that donors have for Ghana as a "model" reforming country, one wonders whether the agenda for the TIP could have been changed substantially even if broader consultation produced alternative emphases or approaches. The issue of potential conflict between other donors' objectives and the mandate to be guided by consultation with the poor may be most acute for AID programs in the productive sectors. It is in these sectors that the programs for reform are particularly seen as flowing from a donor-dominated program for liberalization, rather than from the expressed needs and priorities of the poorest segments of the population.

## **2. Participation in Program Implementation**

As with consultations in the design of DFA-supported programs, the assessment team found great variety in the degree and type of local involvement in implementation. First, the ease or difficulty of engendering local participation in development programs varies by development sector. Secondly, involvement by local organizations and institutions depends on the historical and sociopolitical evolution that such groups have experienced in specific countries. Using information gathered during the assessment mission, the team examined both of these issues to understand how participation is affected. The role participation can play in different types of development programs is dealt with below, and the country-specific, contextual situations that may promote or inhibit involvement by NGOs are considered in Section IV. B.

Certain types of development activities have inherently greater potential for broad-based, local involvement than others. This was an assumption prior to the assessment mission and, as was mentioned above, the decision to focus on programs with nonproject assistance components was taken because local participation in this type of activity was assumed to be problematic. Another assumption that is widespread within the development community is that participation becomes increasingly more difficult when the scale and scope of development programs are expanded. As Goulet argues, "[T]he supremely difficult transition is, precisely, that which takes a movement from the micro arena to the macro without dilution or destruction."<sup>3</sup> Many small-scale projects that address specific issues have been highly participatory and extremely effective. With the DFA legislation, Congress aspires to duplicate these successful experiences through increased local participation in the monetarily and programmatically larger AID portfolio. Although it will be several more years before a conclusion on this approach can be made, the assessment team found that some large programs are able to incorporate local involvement into project implementation.

The two case studies involving education reform programs, the Mali BEEP and Ghana PREP, are both good examples of increased local involvement in a development sector not previously known for grassroots participation. The history of formal, nonindigenous education in Africa is one of top-down, highly centralized operations that are often at odds with the social and economic concerns of the rural majority of a nation's inhabitants. Enrollment rates, particularly for girls, have been declining over several decades. School curricula were seen by many poor people to be growing increasingly unresponsive to their needs, and teacher performance assessments that emphasized form over substance led to, among other things, systems clogged with repeaters. To counteract these and other negative trends, donors and host country educators have combined forces on a series of reforms designed to make schools more attractive and responsive.

The nonproject assistance components of BEEP and PREP encourage greater decentralization within the education ministries, and both projects focus on activities structured

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<sup>3</sup> 1989, p. 169.

to promote increased local involvement in education. Structural reforms include budgetary shifts from secondary to primary education. Project assistance in each program targets areas that have been traditionally neglected (primary education as the sector of intervention and specific geographical regions that previously lacked adequate support). Most importantly, both programs have taken actions to encourage and strengthen the ability of local institutions—such as the parents-of-students associations—to set school curricula and to improve and maintain physical plants. The methods used to increase community involvement include training programs that instruct teachers on improving relations between schools and community; making funds available for local NGOs or parents associations to improve or replace school buildings; and large-scale procurement programs that fully equip schools with the materials needed for quality education. The BEEP and PREP have also instituted new monitoring and evaluation programs that follow the results of reforms in terms of student outcomes, and that allow for timely assistance to be directed toward specific problem areas.

Many past successes with participatory development have involved projects that focus on income-generating activities. Although most of these have been limited to working with a small number of people in well defined regions, or with very focused types of activities, there is hope that the experiences can be translated so that they become effective on a larger scale. All three case studies that involve income-generating activities—Niger's ASDG II, the Ghana TIP, and the Uganda APE—have only recently, or not yet, begun implementation and, therefore, this assessment of local involvement in program execution looked at predecessor grants and/or generated hypotheses as a means of assessing the effectiveness of the approaches proposed. In terms of their ability to increase participation, the common feature of these three programs is the role nonproject assistance is conceived to play in instituting policy reforms that will promote and improve the environment for broader participation by the intended beneficiaries. All three have specific conditions for the release of cash grants that expand the possibilities for local participation and/or the involvement of nongovernmental groups. Program by program examples of the anticipated outcomes of these conditions include the following:

#### **ASDG II**

- preparing and implementing a decentralization program for NRM;
- revising the Rural Code to provide greater local control of local resources;
- with NGOs discussing revision of the regulations that govern their activities; and
- continuing reforms related to credit unions and rural cooperatives, as negotiated in ASDG I.

#### **TIP**

- strengthening the policy and institutional framework necessary to increase private-sector investments and exports;
- improving the incentives available to the private sector; and
- improving the ability of individual firms and entrepreneurs to export.

## **APE**

- developing a National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) to identify and analyze major environmental problems and develop a comprehensive national strategy for dealing with them;
- upgrading of several protected areas from National Forest status to National Parks and installing broadly based representative Management Committees for each;
- returning a proportion (now 20 percent) of commercial (including tourist) activities to the local-level management of parks and forests; and
- establishing an advisory committee of local Resistance Council and other representatives to register their participation in park management.

The TIP primarily concentrates on nonproject assistance to improve the environment for private-sector investment (as well as some project funds for technical assistance and training). The two natural resources management (NRM) activities, ASDG II and APE, both incorporate either dollar or local currency grants to US PVOs and indigenous NGOs for specific NRM actions. In Niger, the predecessor NPA, ASDG I, encountered difficulties with the administration of local currency counterpart funds. Although it had been understood that these funds were primarily set aside for agriculture and NRM activities by nongovernmental groups, the profound budgetary crisis in Niger led the GON to use the money deposited in the Treasury for purposes other than those agreed upon. NGOs faced serious financial problems in the implementation of their projects because of the lack of resources in the government of Niger's Treasury-held local currency established under ASDG I. The NGOs and USAID both realized that the most appropriate vehicle to promote NGO/private-sector initiatives in NRM was a commercial bank to safeguard the availability of and to administer local currency derived from ASDG II. The NGOs thus fully support the decision to create a special NGO/private-sector fund, constituting at least 30 percent of ASDG II's net resource transfer, to be set aside in a jointly managed, interest-bearing account in a commercial bank for uses concurred in by both the GON and AID.

The Uganda APE's project component focuses on rehabilitation and resource conservation. According to the design document, it uses project assistance and local currency counterpart to fund subgrants to PVOs and NGOs for projects supporting sustainable resource use, rehabilitation of protected areas, and environmental impact assessments. Grants to NGOs/PVOs will be administered through an umbrella grant structure, managed by a US-registered PVO. This PVO will establish a Grant Management Unit, which will solicit, review, and, with Mission approval, award grants. Projects focusing on sustainable resource use or environmental preservation will be eligible; buffer zone projects, tourism development, public conservation education, applied research, and biological inventories are examples of the kinds of activities to be supported. The Grant Management Unit will also provide training, workshops, and seminars aimed at building NGO capabilities, and will carry out procurement for grantees. As of May 1992 the US PVO management entity of the grants program had not yet been selected. The team was, however, able to examine the implementation of a "predecessor" grant made to a local NRM NGO and gain some insights into one model of participation that might obtain under the APE subgrants. It was also able to examine in some

detail the process by which local views are being incorporated into the NEAP formulation, and the role that AID has played through its APE NPA.

The plan for NEAP formulation calls for extensive consultation with both the private commercial sector and community groups. The latter include: local resource users (e.g., farmers, herders, fishermen, loggers, and traditional hunters); Resistance Councils (RCs); and indigenous NGOs and local community organizations (church groups, women's groups, Wildlife Clubs, and farmers' associations). The timing of community participation is also specified in the NEAP timetable, so that their input would assist the task forces in (1) defining the priority environmental problems and issues; (2) recommending solutions to these problems and issues; and (3) reviewing the findings and recommendations. Formal interviews with the RCs are specified, as is special attention to local-level women's organizations, in the consultation process. The NEAP preparation structure is, on paper at least, highly participatory, and actions to date suggest that the preparation process is unfolding as envisioned. The one concern that has been raised is that by adhering to a set and very speedy timetable, some of the intended opportunities for participation may be lost. For example, the task forces had a very short time to undertake fieldwork, and might have been able to solicit more input had they had even an additional month.

The Uganda AIDS Prevention and Control Project operates through an umbrella grant structure similar to that put forth for the APE. In January 1991, USAID/Uganda and the Experiment in International Living (EIL) signed a three-year cooperative agreement. The grant specified that EIL would make subgrants to organizations that would undertake AIDS education and prevention activities. At the time of this participation assessment, five major subgrants had been awarded to NGOs organized around AIDS prevention and several GOU agencies active in AIDS education and prevention planning. Because of savings realized in the finalization of the budget estimates used at the time that the overall umbrella grant was designed, there has been a solicitation of additional activities for funding under the EIL cooperative agreement. Small grants have been made for proposal preparation by the Islamic Medical Association of Uganda and the Church of Uganda, for example. It is anticipated that an advisory committee will be constituted by EIL, and criteria for proposal/subgrantee selection will be drafted to guide the selection process for remaining funds. These selection procedures were not written into the original cooperative agreement, because at the time the grant was made there were no "unallocated" funds. At that time all subgrantees and their activities had been preselected.

The team found that in its investigation of participation in program implementation, it needed to underscore the distinction between participation by the ultimate beneficiaries and participation of and through organized (nongovernmental) groups who were said to represent—and might actually be comprised of—the beneficiaries. It is possible to target some activities—whether project or nonproject—toward the African poor majority, as stipulated in the legislation, by making key design choices. The best example of this were the choices made at the outset of the two education activities. Although AID was, in each instance, part of a parallel financing arrangement with other donors, each mission selected the basic education component of its host country's overall program. This selection almost automatically determined a broad

benefit incidence among AID's target population. The missions also built in conditionality, technical assistance in companion projects, and even commodity assistance that would, by virtue of the design itself, engender beneficiary participation in the direction of the activity and therefore in their own development. The conditions related to decentralization in the Ghana PREP, and the support fund for primary education (*Fonds d'Appui de l'Enseignement Fondamental, FAEF*) in the Mali BEEP both illustrate this approach.

A second phenomenon, which may be intended to broaden direct benefit incidence, but which relies on indirect means to do so, is the provision of support for NGOs, either through dollar set-asides or local currency reflows. This second approach is important when the choice of investment within a sector alone will not automatically target the poor majority, as is the case with many productive sector activities. Situations in which information related to changes in the enabling environment, or to a new technology (e.g., NRM) may also require an intermediary between donor programs and local-level beneficiaries. However, the fact is that funding intermediaries, particularly NGOs, does not *a priori* make a program participatory.

## **B. Participation and PVOs/NGOs**

The assessment team spent a great deal of time discussing issues of local participation with US PVO and African NGO representatives in each of the countries visited. One of the most striking results of these consultations was that there are not only enormous differences in the structure, focus, and capacity of these organizations, but the total number of such groups and how they operate is unique from country to country. As was mentioned briefly above, the historical evolution of NGOs in each of the countries visited is tremendously dependent upon sociopolitical variables that have determined the types of groups formed and their methods of operation. This is a reality not specifically treated by the DFA legislation, but it is perhaps the most important consideration that individual USAID missions must take into account when programming activities to carry out the congressional mandate. To explain this contextual situation better, we present a brief country-by-country review of the variety of NGOs, their capacity to advocate for diverse perspectives and to implement programs, and the opportunities and constraints faced by US PVOs and USAID missions in their attempts to promote local participation. The assessment team did not in any way undertake a systematic survey of all the PVOs and NGOs operating in each of the countries visited and, therefore, the following discussion is necessarily impressionistic and anecdotal. Its purpose is to raise some of the wider, social, economic, and political issues that affect country-specific development programs. In each case, some tentative lessons are drawn that may serve as hypotheses for further, more systematic investigation.

### **1. NGOs in Mali**

The assessment team found extraordinary vitality and enthusiasm among members of Mali's PVO/NGO community. The current social, economic, and political conditions create fertile ground for a rapid expansion in the number of NGOs and in their importance and influence. Two events were frequently cited as contributing to the dramatic changes taking

place. The most important of these was the March 1991 revolution that toppled the one-party government of General Moussa Traore. The transitional administration immediately promised multi-party, democratic elections, and these were carried out in the first half of 1992. The fresh political openness gave voice to new representatives and national leaders with diverse interests and agendas. Correspondingly, laws that had previously restricted the establishment of NGOs were eased, and numerous groups and associations emerged to seek a place in the nation's future.

The second factor contributing to a changing climate for NGO activity arose out of various administrative and economic reform programs begun by the previous government. Since the late 1980s, in an attempt to reduce government expenditures and the overburdened civil service, the Malian administration discontinued its long-held policy that guaranteed government employment for all high school and university graduates. Additional structural adjustment programs led the government to lay off thousands of civil servants in 1989 and 1990. The existence of huge numbers of young, educated people unable to find employment ultimately contributed to the social unrest that provoked the revolution, but it also fostered the creation of new NGOs. With credit for entrepreneurial activities virtually nonexistent, little hope for employment in Mali's depressed private sector, and with relaxed regulations on the establishment of nonprofit associations, many Malians have turned to creating and joining NGOs as a possible solution to some of their economic problems. In this regard, the profusion of new organizations in Mali is part of the widespread strategy of diversification that characterizes peoples' attempts to generate income throughout sub-Saharan Africa. The extent to which specific aspects of Malian law favor the creation of nonprofit versus profit-sector organizations was not thoroughly investigated during the assessment, but it is an area of research to be explored during the follow-up activities.

The existence in Mali of numerous NGOs and an increasingly sophisticated coordination of these groups through umbrella associations such as the *Comité de Coordination d'Action des ONGs* (CCA-ONG) provides a unique opportunity for USAID and other donor agencies to experiment with new approaches to participation and development. The process has begun with programs such as the PVO/NRMS Project, the PVO Initiatives Project, World Education's Urban Revitalization program, and the anticipated involvement by NGOs in the BEEP school improvement program. Ultimately, however, the number of NGOs that can expect to receive donor assistance is limited, and there is bound to be a bust that puts an end to the current boom that is creating new associations at a breakneck pace. There are few internal sources of funding available for NGOs, and the prevailing enthusiasm and spirit of volunteerism are likely to fade as the ever present, grim, economic realities replace the exhilarating rhetoric of the revolution. It may also be prudent to view the new NGOs in Mali with this caution: while many of the organizations are genuinely committed to specific causes and have a base of constituents for whom they advocate, others may have been created more for personal economic needs, given the dismal employment situation mentioned above. These groups may have highly competent administrators capable of effective project implementation, but they do not necessarily bring with them the diversity of views sought by the DFA mandates on consultation and local involvement. This caution further stresses the importance of regular, ongoing communications, rather than

project-specific discussions, with a broad variety of local and international organizations so that USAID representatives can stay up-to-date on evolving, country-specific situations.

### **Hypotheses from the Mali Case**

- **Democratization lays the groundwork for the emergence of substantial numbers of NGOs, but the response to this environment depends upon the existence of a trained and motivated human resource base.**
- **The legal and regulatory environment may promote the formation of not-for-profits that are really for-profit enterprises in disguise. Donors who wish to assist with the enrichment of civic society need to study this issue and recommend legal/regulatory reforms that will permit the emergence of both types of groups within society.**
- **A blurring of for-profit and not-for-profit entities, coupled with the retention of organizations from the old regime, such as the urban community organizations, raise the question of whom NGOs actually represent, and how effectively.**

## **2. NGOs in Niger**

Niger is currently in a state of transition, anticipating the full implementation of social, political, and economic reforms agreed to during the National Conference of Fall 1991. The assessment team detected a "wait and see" attitude prevailing among representatives of government agencies, NGOs, and donors. This outlook derives from the optimistic hope for democratization, decentralization, and economic liberalization offered by the National Conference, but it also reflects knowledge of Niger's historical tendency for centralization and top-down impositions of decisions and administrative flow.

In many respects, the evolution of NGOs in Niger since independence has followed a course similar to that in Mali and many other African nations. While there exist many associations and interest groups throughout the rural and urban areas, the Nigerien government traditionally has kept tight control over the actions of US PVOs and the interaction between foreign organizations and local NGOs. Historically, the Nigerien administration has tried to incorporate all development activities into a state structure. This approach was successful to such an extent that the US PVOs active in Niger began to operate much like bilateral donors. The majority of their programs involved collaboration with various government agencies rather than implementation alone or in collaboration with nongovernmental peoples or groups. The attempts to control the development process were even more rigorous in Niger than in other countries and, therefore, the development of a dynamic NGO community has been severely constrained. There are only a handful of US PVOs active in Niger and very few local NGOs that have cooperated with the PVOs or other donors to any significant degree.

Over the past several years, Niger experienced social unrest and protests calling for a multi-party democracy as in Mali and other francophone African countries. But unlike Mali, the protests led to a popular referendum known as the National Conference, rather than violent revolution. Although it was presented to the world as a sign of democracy, of opening up, of decentralization and corporate divestiture, only about 200 of 1200 delegates represented rural areas, and they were hand-picked, not elected. Whether the statements mandated by the National Conference and some encouraging evidence that the development process is "opening up" are indications of true reform, or just backpeddling actions to appease foreign donors and Niger's people, remain to be seen. These questions are the root cause of the current atmosphere of anticipation and abeyance. Niger has not witnessed an explosion of newly created, nongovernmental associations like Mali, and the few that do exist have no greater capacity for consultation or participation at present than they did previously.

Despite Niger's past and current sociopolitical climate, USAID staff have made some conscious efforts to consult with international and local NGOs on the design of programs such as ASDG II. The US PVOs contacted by the assessment team were more than satisfied with AID's solicitation and implementation of their wishes. But, the fact is that there are very few PVOs or NGOs operating in Niger, and most local NGOs do not even have mission statements corresponding with project guidelines. Although the GON has officially opened the door to establishment of local NGOs, there remains a very serious question as to the individual commitment of policy-makers throughout the system to even basic acceptance of the concept of NGOs.

#### **Hypotheses from the Niger Case**

- **It is difficult for nonindigenous PVOs, and doubly so for external donors, to have broad-scale consultation with representatives of local groups when the host government remains ambivalent at best toward the concept of NGOs (much less toward NGOs as advocates).**
- **Local development NGOs must attain a certain organizational level and exhibit a certain financial health before they can turn their attention to advocacy. These attainments are more likely to come through increased experience in implementation of activities of immediate visibility and value to their constituencies.**
- **Extrapolating lessons for policy dialogue from localized experiments in participation may hold promise as a second-best solution, but consultation in this circumstance will always be "derived" in terms of its national applicability. (What works for the Hausa may not work for the Tuareg.)**

### **3. NGOs in Ghana**

Ghana has been in the forefront of sub-Saharan African countries that have significantly redirected their economies and, like many other nations on the continent, has embarked on a course that is intended to return it to democratic rule by the end of 1992. Before the economic recovery program begun in 1983, Ghana pursued a highly centralized development course. Both democratic and military regimes promoted development through the state structures, crowding out the for-profit, private sector and stifling the formation of NGOs and associations. For example, the Ghana National Chamber of Commerce was given an official, quasi governmental function in the issuance of licenses for export. This effectively deflected its advocacy function, and it is only in the last few years that it was relieved of the licensing responsibility and reformulated as an association of private business persons. In the rural sector, cooperatives—to the extent they existed above the informal, community-level entity in Ghana—were viewed as competitors to state input supply and marketing organizations and officially discouraged.

Ghana's current decentralization policy creates the conditions for new groups to expand their role in the nation's development. Quasigovernmental, regional development agencies, such as the Central Region Development Commission (CEDECOM), have embarked on ambitious programs, and export-oriented, for-profit firms are taking advantage of donor-initiated policy reforms and projects to increase their production. Multi- and bi-lateral donors are energetically assisting these groups because the slower-than-expected growth in Ghana's internal economy is seen as the major hindrance to the nation's economic recovery. To counteract this problem, donors, who have promoted the Ghanaian reforms as the model for development elsewhere, are concentrating much of their assistance in activities designed to stimulate exports, such as the Trade and Investment Program (TIP).

Nonprofit PVOs and NGOs also appear to be seeking to expand their activities and aspiring to gain positions of advocacy, but their views and programs do not necessarily correspond to those put forth by donors and Ghana's business community. Broad differences of opinion exist about the success of Ghana's structural adjustment programs and about possible solutions to ongoing problems. Some of the NGOs feel too little effort has been given to strengthening local organizations and mid-level networks of associations with grassroots support. They perceive donors to be overly committed to a flawed model and unresponsive to the needs of many Ghanaians.

In a situation similar to that encountered in Niger, the assessment team also detected a certain degree of hesitation and anticipation among NGOs in Ghana who are awaiting the outcome of political elections and legal reforms regarding their status. Unlike Niger, however, the Ghanaian NGOs are fairly vocal (as seen in a March 1992 World Bank-financed roundtable workshop on NGOs and structural adjustment) and the current debate about the role of development NGOs in Ghana's future is likely to continue.

#### **Hypotheses from the Ghana Case**

- **In countries where for historical and political reasons NGOs oriented toward economic productivity have been effectively discouraged, neither international**

**PVOs nor donors can anticipate effective consultation in the near to medium term. To obtain longer term development objectives, some attention must be turned to understanding the factors that continue to militate against such organizations and condition assistance and/or provide assistance to overcome the obstacles.**

- **Surveys and focus groups may have to substitute for interactive consultation where local groups have been effectively suppressed.**
- **In instances such as the PREP, in which the government undertakes widescale consultation before embarking on its own course that donors are then invited to join, it is of questionable value for USAID or any other donor to embark on duplicative design consultation. Attention can be focused on assuring participation during implementation.**
- **Even in environments relatively hostile to NGOs, parents are viewed as nonthreatening advocates for their children's welfare. These parental groups can be the basis for effective consultation, though their status as "NGOs" tends to be overlooked by international PVOs, donors, and host governments.**

#### **4. NGOs in Uganda**

**In Uganda, the assessment team found several indigenous, special-interest NGOs that were highly motivated, capable of implementing development programs, and anxious to provide consultation on issues related to their interests. In this country stricken by several decades of extreme political and economic turmoil, and more recently ravaged by the AIDS epidemic, a small number of grassroots organizations have taken it upon themselves to try to deal with some of the problems affecting portions of the population. All of the organizations involved in the AIDS Prevention and Control Project, and regional development NGOs such as the Rwenzori Mountaineering Service, have well defined agendas that are responsive to local constituents and preexisting organizational structures that allow donors to work with the groups to design and implement programs tailored toward specific needs. In contrast to the situation encountered in the West African nations visited (except in post-revolution Mali), establishing and operating NGOs in Uganda was not historically as hampered by numerous legal and political obstacles. This historical fact, and the Ugandan government's inability or unwillingness to address specific issues that concern groups of people, have combined to create the conditions that foster the successful development of motivated NGOs.**

**Where the interests of USAID and international PVOs in Uganda coincide with those of local NGOs, the assessment team found a high degree of collaboration and consultation. This is particularly true with the implementation of the AIDS Prevention and Control Project. Other issues that are given a high priority by USAID and the conservation-oriented PVOs, specifically environmental and biodiversity protection and NRM do not necessarily achieve the same level**

of cooperation with local NGOs, or even take the needs of local people into account. When the conservation efforts are carried out in a region where a specific NGO is active, in the Rwenzori mountains for instance, collaboration with a local NGO such as the Rwenzori Mountaineering Service is very close. For the country as a whole, however, various conservation PVOs appear to be in the forefront of programs to preserve Uganda's spectacular environmental resources without clear evidence that Ugandans place the same degree of concern and priority on conservation as opposed to other natural resource issues, such as agricultural soil fertility. The assessment team was left with some questions about whether conservation of biodiversity is held to be as important a development priority as maintaining agricultural productivity or enhancing fuelwood stocks. Some of the NGO representatives interviewed by the team expressed resentment over USAID's commitment of financial resources to a development subsector that they did not feel was of the highest priority. The difficulties being encountered by USAID-grantee PVOs in activities related to the APE suggest that participation in this sector may be very hard-won.

#### **Hypotheses from the Uganda Case**

- **A critical mass of NGOs has emerged in an environment that has been permissive of group action for a relatively long time. This NGO proliferation has allowed special purpose groups to flourish.**
- **A corollary to the specialization theory is that single-purpose organizations are able to reach the critical level of organizational and financial sustainability relatively quickly—they have a clear mission, which they can convey in fund-raising, and they can learn lessons from predecessor multipurpose organizations.**
- **International PVOs' objectives may not coincide with local NGOs' (e.g., conservation vs. sustainable exploitation of the resource base). In such cases, it is incumbent on all groups to be clear about whom they represent, and on the donor community to assess carefully whether consultation to take into account local-level perspectives is, indeed, occurring.**
- **In the face of open and representative local governmental units, such as the RCs, USAID may fulfill its consultation mandate without recourse to a PVO or NGO intermediary. This may become increasingly possible as governments democratize and decentralize.**

#### **C. NGO/PVO Perceptions of USAID**

During meetings with representatives of the indigenous nongovernmental community in Africa, the assessment team became aware that most people have very limited information about USAID. Many Africans know little about the agency, even in countries where the US is one of the largest bilateral donors. Some view USAID as an institution representing the interests of

the US government, that deals only with high ranking officials of their own national government. At most they think that consultation with the NGO community stops at the level of intermittent dialogue with US PVOs working in Africa. They are critical of the fact that USAID staff rarely find the time to attend NGO consortia meetings, for example. Donors—particularly USAID—are often perceived to be overly concerned about possible weaknesses in the financial controls of African organizations, tending to ignore the more important question of their accountability to a grassroots constituency.

#### **D. USAID and Local Participation**

##### **1. Successful Aspects of Participation**

Among USAID field personnel, the assessment team found widespread agreement with the congressional mandate for increased local participation in the design and implementation of DFA-supported programs. Many were committed to participatory approaches to development long before the advent of the DFA mandate, and have based their careers—and the USAID programs designed and implemented along the way—on this commitment. The USAID staff interviewed in the four countries visited unanimously supported the assessment and actively sought the team's counsel on current mission approaches to increase participation as well as suggestions for other strategies based on the findings elsewhere. These discussions and others with host country individuals frequently led to the extremely important conclusion that **engendering participation is time consuming and labor intensive.**

Successful collaboration with local individuals and groups is more often than not due to the efforts and commitment of individual USAID project officers and others employed through USAID support. The USAID structure, with decentralized management and resident missions, is an important advantage in that it gives USAID personnel the opportunity and leeway to devote the time and attention needed to foster effective participation. Many of the innovative and successful strategies currently employed to encourage participation are the result of having experienced and dedicated USAID personnel in the field and working closely with local individuals and groups.

Another positive attribute of decentralized administration and field-based personnel is that it offers individual USAID missions the opportunity to confront many of the country-specific obstacles and constraints to participation cited above. Although guidelines originating with the central agency are useful to provide basic concepts and tactics, the variable social, political, and economic context from country to country requires detailed knowledge and comprehension for participatory actions to be accepted and successful. Contextual understanding of this sort is something that can only come with experience and direct contact.

AID's strategic choice to pair project and nonproject assistance in sectoral reform programs can open opportunities for participation. In the Mali BEEP and Ghana PREP, for example, programs go beyond requiring budgetary shifts toward primary education and certain categories of instructional materials, and offer assistance such as teacher training and financing

to support local parents' associations or implement pilot "equity projects." In acting as a facilitator of change, rather than simply offering financial rewards and penalties, AID not only increases the likelihood that policy changes are accepted and implemented in government, it also begins the process of involving groups of interested persons in implementing and supporting new policies.

## **2. Constraints on Increasing Participation**

As more and more host country NGOs begin to collaborate with USAID missions, one of the more difficult points that remains to be resolved is the issue of whether some type of registration system (based on that between AID and US PVOs or something different) is required before support can be provided. In one regard, this is something of a Catch-22 situation. A restrictive registration process requires demonstrable evidence of administrative capabilities corresponding to US Government criteria, but these credentials often require a degree of support and training before they can be achieved. For the time being, the decentralized nature of USAID management has allowed for case by case determinations without, at least from the findings of the assessment team, negative consequences. The issue of NGO registration has been raised by some USAID representatives, however, and this is a subject for further research during the follow-on activities.

In some African countries and in some sectors there is a lack of strong local leadership among the communities named in the DFA legislation. Grassroots groups are not always well organized and willing to play an advocacy role; they may be reluctant to engage in a dialogue with government and donors about development and policy issues. USAID faces this very real constraint especially in some single-party African states that have discouraged the formation of NGOs, and sometimes accompanied the discouragement with repressive measures to stifle any criticism of the existing order.

Finally, there are some constraints that relate to the way AID operates and to the fact that the commitment to local participation is a relatively recent one. AID's staff rotation system and the length of time required to get some programs up and running means that there is sometimes a lack of continuity that can negatively affect participation. The agency's reliance upon outside contractors sometimes leads to the use of consultants who are not familiar with the groups who should be consulted in specific country contexts, and training in the skills required for effective consultation is not an area that receives systematic attention.

## **V. Follow-up Actions and Recommendations**

### **A. Follow-up Actions**

Several activities have been programmed to follow up the initial assessments made in the case studies and synthesis report. Over the next 12 to 24 months, the Africa Bureau will host an American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Diplomacy Fellow. The

Fellow will assist with the formulation and implementation of AID policy and guidance on the issues of local participation in DFA programs. Through the fellowship, the Africa Bureau will expand and make more systematic its collection, analysis, and sharing of information on initiatives taken by individual USAID missions to assure that the participation mandate is being carried out. The Fellow will also interact with representatives from US PVOs and relevant host country and African NGO officials to identify critical issues and constraints that promote or inhibit greater participation in development activities. It is anticipated that at the end of the fellowship period the Africa Bureau will have an improved understanding and appropriate guidance regarding the operationalization of the local participation mandate in the design and implementation of DFA-supported programs and projects.

In addition, the Africa Bureau has renewed its commitment to a dialogue with the US PVO community on development issues in sub-Saharan Africa. It has moved to examine how it can make needed administrative and accountability strengthening available to African NGOs in a cost-effective way by drawing on the management resources of the central Food and Humanitarian Assistance Bureau. The Africa Bureau, through mission data collection and reporting and through the Cornell University Policy Reform and Poverty Project, continues to monitor the impact of structural adjustment on the poor and to make the results of this monitoring widely available. With its initiatives in democratization and improved governance, the Bureau has identified the enhancement of civil society—including the growth of nongovernmental voices in the policy formulation and reform process—as one of four key objectives. Clearly, there are issues that remain to be addressed, such as the roles and relationships between PVOs and NGOs that AID should encourage and support. These will be examined and discussed in a range of ways and fora over the coming months.

US-based PVOs are also initiating several independent assessments or monitoring efforts, focused on participation as well as on other issues related to DFA implementation. The American Council for Voluntary International Action (InterAction) has received a Cooperative Agreement from the Africa Bureau to serve as a mechanism for information sharing, cooperation, and discussion of ideas and strategy between the PVOs and the bureau.

## **B. Recommendations for Immediate Action**

1. The USAID field missions should begin by *making a deliberate effort to engage in dialogue with indigenous organizations* in the countries where they work. This needs to go beyond some superficial consultation with US PVOs, which are not necessarily in contact with a broad spectrum of local organizations and are not empowered to speak on their behalf.

a. As a first step, African organizations propose a concerted effort to reduce the information gap. They suggest that *USAID staff attend meetings convened by the NGO consortia that have been formed in most African countries*. It would help the staff to become aware of the range of local organizations that exist in country, and their activities and needs. USAID could also make use of this forum to circulate information about policies, programs, research activities, and publications. (When consulted about this, USAID staff have responded that some

umbrella organizations are more effective than others, and that working through such organizations is only one avenue toward effective communication with NGOs. The team found instances, as in Mali, in which such attendance is reasonably regular. However, there is also an issue of maintaining autonomy, and currently some NGO groups in Africa are even questioning whether their expatriate counterparts are legitimate members of such groups.)

b. The commitment of indigenous organizations to the development process is very high, and they are concerned about long-term solutions (even in the context of emergency relief work). *Donors and implementing agencies—as well as expatriate PVOs—should recognize the NGOs value and encourage them to be more effective and build their skills, treating them as equal partners in development efforts.*

2. *USAID should spend time at the outset of the design process thinking through the question of who should be consulted, and then identifying articulate spokespeople who are concerned about program policy and implementation and have a grassroots constituency.* More often, some sort of survey or baseline study is carried out. This may provide some very useful information, but it is not a substitute for dialogue. However, in those countries characterized by repressive environments, in which spokespersons for local views have been discouraged, reliance upon academic survey work is an acceptable proxy.

3. An extremely effective way to help African organizations play an advocacy role, empowering them to articulate the concerns of their grassroots constituencies, is to *encourage cooperation among African organizations.* Donors can foster the formation and growth of networks. As a first step, *USAID should continue and expand its support for the development of partnerships between organizations* (collaboration between international and national organizations, for example, linkages between national organizations and local community groups, and south-south partnerships between organizations in different countries).

4. USAID should continue the activities begun under the PVO Initiatives Project to *build advocacy skills among indigenous NGOs.* This support should be provided on a demand-driven basis. Priority should be given to those organizations with a well-defined mandate and established track record of responding to constituent needs. The Africa Bureau may wish to encourage the FHA Bureau to take the lead in devising a mechanism for this skill-building, into which AFR could buy.

5. The challenge for USAID and other donors, including US PVOs, is to *identify the African organizations that have a vision of indigenous participatory development, and to provide long-term support for their efforts.* AID should also consider means of efficiently and effectively supporting improvements in the organizational and financial management capacities of indigenous NGOs, especially under circumstances in which NGOs constituencies are still too weak to demand a high level of accountability. In the long term, this will make NGOs more viable and independent, permitting them to attract and diversify sources of support. The FHA/PVC office may have a comparative advantage due to economies of scale in procuring such support services, with contributions from the DFA.

6. USAID, international PVOs and African organizations need to *be wary of creating a situation of donor dependency*. As donors become increasingly disenchanted with the development programs of African governments, there is a danger of coopting NGOs and replicating the discredited trickle down approach to grassroots development through new channels.

7. African organizations must avoid being coopted by donors or by international PVOs. They should be concerned about the long-term sustainability of their programs, and what will happen when donors no longer favor NGOs as the preferred channel of development assistance. They need to *seize the initiative and define their own model of indigenous development—promoting their own research and advocacy, building negotiating skills, developing their own human resources and capabilities, and enhancing the capacity of their own institutions*. This will ensure that they are not the passive recipients of fashionable trends among donors.

8. *Continuity of staff in resident missions during the design and implementation phases tends to enhance local participation*. The team found several instances in which mission management had worked to assure that short-termers brought in for project design became long-termers with principal responsibility for implementation. In other cases, foreign service nationals or local-hire contractors (both indigenous and expatriate) provided valuable continuity. This kind of stability clearly facilitates an ongoing consultation with representatives of local peoples and perspectives.

9. *Training and guidance for USAID staff in cross cultural skills and the process of consultation should be improved and made mandatory*. It is currently inadequate, especially in comparison with the excellent training that is given to staff in many other areas. Some staff come to the agency with a strong interest in participation and experience from prior work (for example in the Peace Corps); others may learn the necessary skills on the job. But this is not a skill area that receives systematic attention.

10. As part of its concern with an appropriate enabling environment, *USAID staff should undertake evaluations of the legislative and regulatory environments that govern the formation and operation of NGOs in their respective countries*. Necessary changes can then become part of the policy dialogue or policy conditionality.

11. It is incumbent upon *all PVOs and NGOs to be clear about who they represent, and about their respective mandates, as they interact with USAID*. In addition, in the case of each group, *USAID should carefully investigate the representativeness and constituencies claimed*, so that there are no misunderstandings regarding with whom and at what level consultations have occurred.

12. *Missions should look for ways to build related PVO/NGO activities into sector policy grants, using either dollar resources or local currency reflows*. Possible models include the Niger ASDG II NPA and the Uganda APE NPA programs. The Mali BEEP, though it is projectized assistance, presents yet another model.

### **C. Recommendations for Further Study**

Among the questions recommended for further and more thorough investigation are the following:

1. A number of unresolved issues surround the definition of consultation. It appears to be construed as some subset of participation. Does it always take the form of dialogue? Does taking account of local views necessarily result in any changes in the project/NPA design? What if different groups—both legitimately representing local constituencies—advocate for diametrically opposed positions? What responsibilities do donors, PVOs, NGOs and host governments assume in the consultation process?

2. Do both consultation, and the larger category of participation (by PVOs and NGOs in particular) always imply a monetary relationship with USAID? How can AID address its concern that just talking with NGOs and/or local peoples in order to elicit their views raises expectations of eventual monetary support?

3. What should be the relative proportion of assistance devoted to institutional development of African NGOs vis-à-vis the funds provided to those same organizations for the immediate delivery of goods and services that will result in nearer-term results? The commitment that AID has to the Congress is to program the DFA, and report on results, defined as improvements in the lives of people. Some proportion of the DFA is devoted to longer-term development results. One means of achieving longer-term development impacts may be to strengthen local organizations so that they can have a positive effect on the lives of Africans.

4. What is the relationship between US or other international PVOs and indigenous African NGOs? What is the objective toward which these groups are moving, and are they doing so coherently, and in a manner that USAID and other donors can support? What steps are the PVOs and NGOs taking to draw some sort of consensus on their roles and relationships?

5. As local governments become more representative and democratic change takes place in Africa, as is currently the case in Uganda (and may arguably be the case at the village level in Mali), will the aspect of the DFA legislation remain valid that specifies NGOs as the most appropriate means of assuring that grassroots views have been transmitted?

6. How prevalent are the situations that the participation assessment team found in its six cases? Do the lessons learned stand up when a larger sample is drawn?

7. Do the Congress, the Executive Branch and the US PVO community still share a common vision regarding the objectives and the terms under which aid is provided to sub-Saharan Africa through the DFA?

## **VI. Conclusions**

Two years after the DFA was fully authorized, with a more detailed and specific mandate for participation in the design and implementation of AID projects, this assessment undertook an initial examination of the operationalization of the mandate. A four-person team visited four countries in the course of a month, and studied one or two activities in each country. The team looked at a variety of activities—some nonproject assistance, some project-level, some that had been in implementation for a year or more, and others whose design was just being completed.

The findings suggest a range of variability in the extent to which the mandate is being carried out. They suggest that there is a correlation between the duration of the design and the depth of consultation. There is little correlation, however, between the degree of consultation in design and the degree of participation in implementation. There also seems to be reasonable optimism about the potential for consultation and incorporation of local felt needs into sectoral nonproject assistance programs (e.g., Ghana PREP, Niger ASDG II and Uganda APE), as well as in more conventional projects or grants (e.g., Mali BEEP and Uganda APCP). Building consultation and response to local needs into policy-based programs that address either macroeconomic issues or private-sector development issues remains more problematic.

Spurred on by both the DFA mandate and its own deepening interest in democratization—particularly broadening civil society and indigenizing the policy change process—the Africa Bureau must think systematically and develop a more coherent approach to the indigenous NGO sector in sub-Saharan Africa. It must reemphasize to field missions the importance of these actors and the importance of maintaining contact with them. It must think through the relative allocation of resources to these organizations for achieving the results to which the bureau is committed under the DFA and for longer-term organizational strengthening of the NGO sector. It must also engage in a dialogue with the US PVO community about the latter's role vis-à-vis indigenous NGOs. Both see the DFA as an important source of financing, but wish to retain autonomy. This may at times put them in a competitive posture. AID should work to foster collaboration.

Finally, this report can only provide a flavor for the diverse responses to the DFA mandate regarding participation. The Bureau has engaged the services of an American Association for the Advancement of Science Fellow to take the preliminary findings of this study and validate them through a more systematic inquiry. In that process, additional guidance on this important aspect of AID's development program in sub-Saharan Africa should emerge.

**Annex A - Mali Basic Education Expansion Project (BEEP)**

**Assessment of Local Participation in the Basic Education Expansion Project (USAID Mali 688-0257)**

**I. Project Description**

The USAID/Mali-funded Basic Education Expansion Project (BEEP) is part of a larger, multi-donor education-sector development effort, the World Bank Fourth Education Project, with total funding of US \$56,000,000, of which US \$12,000,000 is allocated to nonproject budgetary support. USAID's contribution to the program totals \$20,000,000, of which \$3,000,000 is in nonproject assistance.

The fundamental purpose of the education sector program is two-fold: to increase the enrollment of students and to improve the quality and efficiency of Mali's educational system. To accomplish these objectives, the World Bank's Fourth Education Project is attempting to restructure the educational system by shifting emphasis from secondary to primary school education, improving the physical condition and increasing the number of schools, and strengthening the capacity of central, regional, and local educators to implement a good primary school program. The current, five-year program is concentrating its efforts in the more populous central and southern Regions of Koulikoro, Segou, Sikasso, and the District of Bamako.

The BEEP project was begun in 1989 with \$7,000,000 in project-related funds and \$3,000,000 in nonproject budgetary support. The BEEP was amended in 1991 with an additional \$10,000,000 in project funds to help extend the project to the Koulikoro region and increase support for certain project activities. The USAID portion of the overall program includes the following components:

1. Improving and extending the Ministry of Education's (MEN) in-service pedagogical and management training program for regional directors and inspectors and local school directors and teachers;
2. Reorganizing a Monitoring and Evaluation Unit (M&E) to improve the MEN's analysis of financial, personnel, and educational data for better central and regional educational planning and management;
3. Creating a Girls' Schooling Unit within the MEN to devise and implement a national action plan for the promotion of girls' education;
4. Assisting communities to repair and improve old schools through the *Fonds d'Appui de l'Enseignement Fondamental* (FAEF), or Support Fund for Primary Education, which provides matching funds for community initiated physical improvements;
5. Procuring commodities such as textbooks and school equipment to improve the quality of primary school education; and

- 6 Assisting various pilot projects such as support for the development of maternal language education, and the revision of ruralization programs.

## **II. Local Participation Assessment Methodology**

This assessment of local participation in the BEEP emerged out of efforts to understand the mechanisms USAID field missions are undertaking to comply with congressional mandates to involve local peoples in the design and implementation of project and nonproject assistance activities under the Development Fund for Africa (DFA). Although some guidance has been made available to USAID missions for enhancing participation, discussions between field missions, AID/Washington, and with others in Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs) suggest that considerable innovation and experience is being gained at the mission level. The purpose of this assessment is to understand and document case studies of different approaches that field missions have taken to assure local participation in their development activities.

The local participation assessment team is composed of four individuals: Joan Atherton, team leader and Senior Advisor for Social Science, AFR/DP/PSE; Curt Grimm, community development specialist and Senior Research Assistant with the Institute for Development Anthropology; Paul Nelson, Associate Director with Church World Service/Lutheran World Relief's Office on Development Policy; and Daniel Devine, Resident Consultant to World Education in Bamako, Mali.

The team conducted the assessment in Mali between May 7-13, 1992. Information on the degree of local participation in the design and implementation of the BEEP was collected through interviews with project personnel, host government officials, local nongovernmental organization (NGO) agents, and through a limited series of site visits to schools to discuss the project and the issue of participation with school staff, local parents of students association (*Association des Parents d'Eleves*, APE) representatives, and community leaders.

## **III. Design: Project and Nonproject Assistance**

AID's design of the BEEP was rapid and the process truncated in order to take advantage of the opportunity presented by the World Bank's Fourth Education Project. By preparing the BEEP quickly, to coincide with the Fourth Education Project, AID was able to join in and reinforce World Bank sectoral conditionality (outlined below), and to use AID's on-ground resources, through material and technical assistance and training, to help facilitate the transformation of Malian education envisioned in the Fourth Education Project.

The Fourth Education Project's conditions call for:

1. maintaining education spending at least equalling 25 percent of the GRM budget;
2. increasing primary school spending as a share of the education budget, and reducing the higher education share;

3. increasing the share of education budget devoted to educational materials;
4. increasing student-teacher ratios by mobilizing teachers and classrooms more efficiently;
5. adopting programs of investment in rehabilitation of schools, and conditions of local competitive bidding.

The choice to associate the BEEP with the WB Education IV project severely constrained the potential for consultation with local community associations and NGOs in the conception and design of the BEEP. Conditionality for release of the \$3 million in nonproject funds is identical to the World Bank's, although verification of performance and release of tranches are not bound to the Bank's determinations. Consultations consisted basically of collaborative efforts with the World Bank, and negotiations with the national education ministry. There was neither extensive direct knowledge and experience with the actors in Malian education (AID had been inactive in the sector), nor opportunity for more than cursory field study or consultation during project design.

As a result, AID relied heavily on World Bank sectoral studies prepared for the Fourth Education Project. These studies together with a sector paper prepared by AID yielded this diagnosis of the problems of the education sector:

- national budgetary priorities overemphasize secondary and university at the expense of primary education;
- enrollment rates in the public schools are extremely low, and declining;
- classroom resources (desks, texts, etc.) are inadequate and in many cases nonexistent;
- previous curricula, teaching styles, examinations, and administration stifle learning and innovation;
- there is excessive repeating of the early grades, resulting in limited openings for new students;
- schools have failed to respond either to local community needs and desires or to national labor market needs and opportunities.

While this analysis of the sectoral issues at the national level is widely agreed upon, AID and Ministry personnel interviewed were less agreed on their understanding of the issues in Malian schools at the level of communities, parents, and students. Varied views were expressed, for example, about the prevailing motivations for schooling, and how they are/are not changing. Parents' reasons for withholding children from the public schools are not clearly understood, or agreed upon, nor does there appear to be a substantial empirical base available to AID for making judgments on such questions.

None of this is intended to dispute AID's judgments about the national-level problems in the sector. But one can engage in some informed speculation about what other reform and project measures may rise to greater prominence during extensive contact with parents, teachers, local associations, and NGOs. Our limited discussions with local parent associations and NGOs raised concerns with school costs as a barrier to enrollment; with the disposition and absence of local control over the revenues earmarked for schools collected through local taxation; with dissatisfaction toward the local *Associations Parent-Eleve*; with the schools' role in breaking down traditional values and family and village mutual support systems. But no one is certain how these systemic, qualitative issues relate to the problems diagnosed in primary education by the Fourth Education Project.

The project as designed and implemented aims to create a framework that will allow greater participation in the multiple levels of decisions about Malian schools. Several of the aspects reviewed below suggest that there is considerable potential for such participation. In the absence of extended consultation to ascertain local participants' motivations and priorities, the commitment expressed by the Mission and the BEEP team to solicit and respond imaginatively to feedback during the project is especially important.

#### **IV. Participation and BEEP Implementation**

##### **A. Teacher Training**

Teachers and their supervisors—regional directors and inspectors—are the principal participants and clientele of the pedagogical and management training program. The program, which has trained 45 Malian trainers, plans 48 seminars this year, including 9 in management, and the majority concentrating on rapid coverage of teachers in the first and second grades. Because of the enrollment bottleneck and particular instructional needs of students in the first two grades, top priority has been given to training teachers in grades 1 and 2.

Teacher training aims to increase the quality of participation in the school system by teachers, students, and parents. The program responds to the perception that schooling is archaic, rote, stifling to student and teacher alike, rather than interactive, stimulating, rewarding, and potentially engaging to parents and communities. Training is also to introduce practical, production-oriented learning into the school system, "linking schools to life."

Training aims to inculcate the attitude that lessons and instructional techniques should flow not from dictates of the system and teacher, but from needs and potential of students. The attitudinal change is backed by instructional techniques. Instruction is to incorporate more teacher-pupil exchange and pupil-pupil interaction. Teachers are reminded, moreover, that they need to engage in community relations as the agents of the school system in communities. Teachers are to bring parents into the school to see their children's work and for special events (sports, culture). According to BEEP staff, the new parental engagement should develop

ownership of the school as a community institution and generate enthusiasm about children's attendance and performance.

The team was not able to observe teacher training sessions, nor has enough time passed for AID or the Ministry to evaluate the impact of training systematically. We focus therefore on the intended relation of training to the local actors in the school system. The change envisioned in instruction is monumental; the teaching techniques described by BEEP staff are radically different from the instruction we observed and heard described, as would be the priorities of regional supervisors. If teachers in the Malian schools adopt the strategies outlined in training sessions, classrooms will become very different places.

The schools' and teachers' relations to parents and communities are vital to sustaining these changes and to the dynamic of local involvement and support that the project seeks to nurture. The significance of parental and community engagement with the schools raises an important qualitative question about the objectives of teacher training. As articulated to the team, training stresses the need to bring parents into the schools to develop a sense of identification with and pride in the school and in parents' own children's learning. Awards ceremonies and other public events are among the practical suggestions for overcoming the distance between school and parent.

This conception of teachers as agents of community relations does not extend, however, to facilitating a dialogue between teacher and parent about community needs, priorities and concerns. While some AID staff and NGO contacts express the view that parents withhold children from school because they distrust or dislike the schools, the community relations strategy presumes implicitly that parents are simply unenlightened. If parents are discontented because of their own perceptions of schools and school instruction, one can hope that the reformed approach to classroom teaching will help satisfy their concerns. But without an active effort by teachers or school directors to elicit parents' concerns, there is no guarantee that the revolution in instruction, however desirable, will satisfy skeptical parents.

More concretely, without a mechanism of local control or accountability, the continuation of new instructional methods depends on continued attitudinal and financial commitments from "above," i.e. by donors and the MEN. The team is impressed by the commitment of the BEEP team in the MEN, and the energy with which AID is implementing the training. The best assurance that schools and their staffs will continue to make schooling lively and relevant, however, would rest in the teachers' and directors' relations to the communities in which they work. These relationships may deepen as teachers initiate contact with parents. But the project as the team understands it introduces no new mechanism or incentive for local dialogue.

If parents are convinced that they have a say in their children's schooling, it is at least possible that they will express their wishes in some way other than choosing not to enroll their children. Building this parental confidence would be a slow, difficult process. But without an explicit, sustained effort to facilitate active parental participation and acceptance of some local

accountability by school staff, many parents will likely continue to express their discontent or suspicion only by withholding their children.

## **B. Monitoring and Evaluation Unit**

The monitoring and evaluation unit (M&E) supported through the BEEP has been established within the Ministry of Education's National Pedagogic Institute (*Institut Pedagogique National*—IPN). An evaluation unit previously existed at IPN, but the BEEP has allowed the expansion of personnel within the unit and a reorientation of the unit's roles, responsibilities, and M&E methods. Before the multitude of changes introduced through the BEEP and the overall Fourth Education Project, the IPN's evaluation policy was a formal, highly centralized conduit for information to flow from the local level up regarding school enrollment and teacher capacity. Researchers within the unit considered themselves to be academic-style evaluators responsible only for collecting and analyzing information which was then turned over to higher authorities.

The BEEP support for M&E within the IPN has brought considerable change to the unit. An increase in unit staff has not only allowed more effective monitoring and evaluation, but by moving to create a multi-disciplinary team the unit is now capable of undertaking new roles and functions. As in the past, M&E unit members include formal evaluators, but new personnel include specialists in statistical analysis, educational planning, and individuals with local-level classroom experience. Corresponding with the personnel changes, the M&E unit has undergone a restructuring of activities. Information is no longer collected simply for transmittal to higher levels. The unit has begun to apply its research skills and the information collected and analyzed to the development of solutions and practical approaches to the problems that are identified. The object of evaluation has also shifted from interest only in enrollment and the capacity of teachers to implement a predetermined curriculum over the course of a year, to a concern with the quality of the education received by the student and increased enrollment.

M&E unit members have participated in the new in-service training program and they are now charged with helping regional directors and inspectors and local educators to implement the objectives of the Fourth Education Project. Decentralization within the MEN and IPN has given the M&E unit the autonomy to become involved with the primary school reforms being introduced. The evaluators are attempting to set up a system so that the feedback obtained from the schools and throughout the educational system flows in a multitude of directions. Suggestions for ongoing reforms are passed to planners and other appropriate authorities, and information gained by the M&E unit throughout the system is passed directly to individual directors, inspectors, and teachers. When they arrive for an evaluation the unit members carefully explain that their role is to help and assist, not to simply evaluate and criticize. Part of this assistance is to promote the programs included in the Fourth Education Project and to help educators understand what the project entails and what it asks of them.

One of the M&E unit goals is to assess how the local population is participating in the primary education program and to help regional and local educators to increase participation.

The evaluators specifically ask school directors and teachers about their relationship with parents, the local APE, and the community at large. If problems are identified the M&E unit intervenes directly. Unit members suggest programs that have successfully increased participation in other areas, such as honor roll ceremonies and other school functions that get parents to come to the school. Regional inspectors accompany the evaluators and these individuals and the regional directors are given assistance in finding solutions to regional or local problems and in continuing with follow-up programs and monitoring. The M&E unit members are also charged with the promotion of the FAEF program. They ask school officials about their knowledge of the program and the status of their dealings with the local community concerning the implementation of FAEF activities. The evaluators attempt to straighten out any misunderstandings that might exist about the program, and they share with school officials information on techniques that have been successful in promoting FAEF elsewhere.

The M&E unit has established a longitudinal study to closely monitor 110 schools across Mali (22 in each region). Visits to each of these schools are scheduled twice per year for the life of the Fourth Education Project. A major component of the monitoring activity is to assess the mechanisms undertaken to increase local participation. Actions that prove successful will be highlighted in study reports that will be made available to planners and educators attempting to increase local participation in other communities and regions.

The monitoring and evaluation unit is key to understanding the impact of the rest of the BEEP programs. The current M&E unit members are extremely enthusiastic about their program and the new roles, responsibilities, and orientations that have occurred through BEEP support and other changes throughout the Malian educational system. They recognize the enormously increased potential of applied evaluation to improve the efficiency and quality of their duties. During the PA team's interview the unit members were adamant in their insistence that the new techniques would continue with or without outside donor support. The M&E unit members stated that they personally feel that they are the principal beneficiaries of the BEEP to date. They stressed their dedication to increasing local participation in the education process, and they eagerly discussed how the M&E unit has moved this issue to the forefront of its program. Given more time to conduct the assessment of BEEP's local participation activities, it would have been useful to interview some of the local school and regional education officials that have been evaluated recently by IPN's M&E unit. An understanding of how the M&E unit's new responsibilities and activities are perceived at the local and regional level would have permitted a less one-sided view of how BEEP's support for monitoring and evaluation is promoting local participation in primary school education.

### **C. Girls' Enrollment**

#### **Participants**

The main participants in the girls' enrollment component of the Mali BEEP are the members of the MEN E/WID Unit, who are staff members of the BPE, the DNEF, and IPN. (These individuals work closely with the USAID/Bamako WID Advisor.) Other participants

include the teachers who receive a day-long training module in the in-service training supported by the BEEP, those inspectors, school directors, and teachers who participate in Girls' Schooling sessions in the field, and the parents and teachers who participate in the competition to enroll and retain female students in the schools. Participants will also include Malian NGOs, who have been invited to submit proposals for social marketing activities to raise community awareness of the benefits of girls' schooling. The beneficiaries of these activities are the female students.

### **Description of Activities**

The Girls' Enrollment component of the Mali BEEP has two principal objectives: to raise the number of girls registering for school and to encourage girls (and their parents) to persist with their schooling. The latter will require some reduction in repeater rates in order to make room for more new entrants. As originally envisioned in the 1989 BEEP design, the activities to be undertaken to achieve these objectives were quite modest. They consisted mostly in establishing the E/WID coordinator position and carrying out a series of studies to determine the status of girls' schooling and the constraints to changing that status and developing materials for the in-service training curriculum. There were to be pilot incentive programs and inputs into other USAID training activities aimed at women's income generation.

As the project began implementation, the E/WID Unit recognized that a sufficient number of studies had already taken place regarding the status and constraints to girls' participation in formal and nonformal education, so a synthesis of existing knowledge was undertaken. The substitution of a synthesis for the originally proposed *de novo* study has allowed the Unit to write terms of reference for more specialized studies to fill particular knowledge gaps, such as the needs for schooling among pregnant girls (who were normally expelled from the formal school system). Time did not permit a review of the methodology used in undertaking the extant studies, so it is difficult to assess to what extent the subjects of the studies might have, through focus group approaches or other interactive means, not only imparted information but participated in shaping some of the analyses and recommendations for specific interventions.

The synthesis of the existing data base also allowed the Unit to move quickly to design a day-long module for the in-service administrator/teacher training. It was reported to the Participation Assessment team that teachers and administrators have reacted with some surprise at some of the gender biases shown in the training to be inherent in common schoolroom practices, but have been receptive to information regarding approaches that should help encourage girls to remain in school. As reported in the BEEP amendment, thousands of educational personnel—school administrators (regional directors, inspectors, and school principals) as well as teachers— have participated in the day-long gender training module between 1990 and the present. The administrators are from all regions of Mali, while to date teachers have been drawn from Segou, Sikasso, and Bamako.

Another national-level activity whose benefits may be widespread, but whose participation is specialized, is the production of radio and television spots promoting schooling for girls. A script has been written to be performed (on videotape) for a television public service

announcement. Radio announcements—also produced by professionals—have appeared in maternal languages as well as in French, explaining the practical applications and benefits to parents, as well as to girls themselves, of formal education. Three theater companies have been engaged to write sketches for live performances. Ten articles have been written, of which four have been published, on topics related to girls' schooling. Though participation in the production of these social marketing materials is confined to specialists, the materials are used in other activities of the Girls' Enrollment component, such as the competition discussed below.

A fourth activity of broad scope that is in its pilot phase is a national competition to achieve higher enrollment and retention rates. A competition limited to Bamako was held in 1991, and prizes were awarded at a public ceremony. This program is to be replicated throughout the regions in which the BEEP is active. In the pilot, the participants involved MEN E/WID Unit, educators and administrators in the Bamako schools, parents and other community members, and the students themselves. As the program expands, it will be useful to track more closely those at the community level who participate, and those who do not (at least on a school-by-school basis) better to understand the reasons for participation or lack thereof in this kind of competition and to formulate other actions that might attract the nonparticipants.

Recently, the E/WID Unit within the MEN publicized a request for proposals (RFP) among the NGOs for community outreach to sensitize parents and others to the value of schooling for girls. The RFP required each NGO to submit examples of materials that it proposed to use for this purpose. A two-phased approach within the NGO grants requires that each demonstrate that it has consulted with the members of the targeted community so as to understand more specifically the constraints to girls' schooling in that particular area, before receiving funds for actual outreach activities. Local participation in this activity is anticipated to be high, encouraged by the structure of the grant program. Other participants in the program include the NGOs, whose capacity to work on social marketing activities, and to specialize in educational issues, should be strengthened; and the MEN E/WID Unit, which will gain a working relationship with the NGO community, as well as advance toward the objectives of increasing female student participation rates in basic education.

An adjunct activity, involving a similar set of beneficiaries, entails contact between the E/WID unit and various women's groups that have been established for other purposes, such as a specific productive activity or adult literacy and numeracy training. In this case, although the women in these groups will not play a formal role in the outreach, they are sources of support for enrolling girls in school (at least as far as their own children are concerned). The local participation assessment team was informed that the members of the women's groups were very supportive of formal education for girls because the women in the groups realized in hindsight the value of literacy and numeracy for the kinds of activities group members are now undertaking.

Finally, as envisioned in the original project design, a community has been chosen in Segou as the site of a pilot incentive scheme. This community has no school at the present time. Consultations have taken place as to why girls are not enrolled in school. The principal reasons

given are 1) that there is no school in the community and 2) that the mothers need their daughters at home to do domestic work. The E/WID Unit is working with the BPE and other units of the MEN to make the community eligible for the FAEF for school construction. The community has also asked for help in improving the communal garden so that it could sell the produce to raise its contribution to the FAEF. Community members have volunteered contributions of labor directly to school construction, as well as indirectly, through labor in the community garden, because it is recognized that some skilled workers will need to be hired to construct the school properly. To address the second concern, the E/WID Unit has proposed the purchase of a mill to alleviate some of the labor shortage created by sending girls to school, and they have negotiated with the men in the community to transport water, which was also formerly a girls' task.

### **Preliminary Lessons Learned**

The Girls' Enrollment component of the BEEP offers several concrete examples of incorporating local participation in project design and implementation. It actually extends beyond the legislative mandate, as there is participation at several different levels, from the national (the MEN) to regional and local civil servants in the education structure to NGO groups whether national or local in scope, to the communities themselves. Some preliminary lessons from the brief assessment of this component include:

1. A strong national consensus that girls' rates of schooling should be raised preceded the inception of the BEEP, and of the Fourth Education Project. This had been achieved through a number of *journees de reflexion* on the theme of girls' education held in Mali under the sponsorship of UNESCO starting in 1984.
2. The policy-making level of the Ministry of Education must be engaged and strongly supportive of participatory approaches to initiatives to improve girls' enrollment/retention rates. It must also be open to experimentation (clearly, it is helpful if donor funds underwrite these experiments), such as the pilot efforts being undertaken by this project. The E/WID Unit within the MEN feels that it is still working to establish the policy-level support. One indication will be a permanent organizational unit within the MEN for girls' education and another may be the pace at which the National Action Plan is implemented.
3. Empirical research, while perhaps not a complete substitute for local consultation, can provide the basis for immediate action. It is useful to synthesize existing knowledge before automatically embarking on another round of studies related to constraints to girls' participation in formal and informal education.
4. Social marketing techniques can be readily adapted to a program of encouraging enrollment and retention of girls in school, and can enhance participation. NGOs can utilize these techniques, as can national entities such as the MEN, particularly when high-cost materials, such as national radio and television spots, are included in the techniques.

5. Cross-fertilization among components of an education-strengthening project or program helps to integrate gender considerations. The creation of modules for the in-service teacher training, or the referral of communities that lack physical infrastructure to the FAEF elicits other levels and types of participation, such as teacher involvement in assuring the right environment for girls' enrollment and persistence and for all community members—as well as other MEN personnel—in school improvements.
6. External advocates, such as the teachers and school administrators, or local NGOs, appear to be required to enhance girls' opportunities to go to school. Though there seems to be little resistance to schooling for girls in the four regions in which the BEEP now works, there is little active advocacy by parents, either individually or through the male- and elder-dominated APEs, to improve conditions for their female children, or to assure that the maximum number can be enrolled and will stay in school. The Segou pilot project, and others anticipated in the design, may shed some light on the degree to which students and parents are active or passive participants in enhancing schooling opportunities for girls. (The BEEP is not working in those regions where outright opposition to girls' schooling is thought to be highest, and where outside intervention has been assumed to be required.)

#### D. The Fond d'Appui a l'Enseignement Fondamentale

Part of the original World Bank Fourth Education Project was a *Fond d'Appui a l'Enseignement Fondamentale* (FAEF), designated for repair and improvement of primary schools' physical structure. Three areas of physical plant in need of attention in most schools are: classrooms, latrines, and water sources (wells or faucets). USAID has also allocated monies for this fund and has hired a Malian liaison assigned to the FAEF program office in the MEN.

The FAEF geographical zone—Bamako, Koulikoro, Segou and Sikasso—contains more than 900 primary schools, all in need of physical improvement. The FAEF funds are supposed to be distributed to the Association des Parents d'Eleves (APEs) charged with management of each school or cluster of schools. In principle, each APE designs and budgets improvements according to FAEF plans and specifications, then passes a formal request for funds through the APE hierarchy to the FAEF office, which submits requests to a permanent committee for approval and disbursement of funds into the account of the APE.

The APE system has existed since colonial times. A formal association of parents is supposed to work with teachers and directors in managing the schools, and individual associations are represented at various administrative levels by APE boards that deal with ministry officials and the hierarchical government structures and committees. In principle, annual taxes are collected by village or quartier chiefs, paid into the government treasuries at various levels, and 30 percent of the total revenue is then earmarked for schools, supposedly returned to individual schools through the APE system. The basic understanding is that local

contributions take care of school construction and maintenance while the MEN provides teachers' salaries.

The collaboration between the APEs and the Ministry has degenerated over the years, manifested through mismanagement, politicization and ineffectiveness. Attempts by the central FAEF office to put funds in place have been generally slow, but USAID is moving forward with its program to revitalize the FAEF system.

There remain, however, a number of difficulties to overcome before the FAEF program can begin to function as intended. Although the assessment team did not systematically collect direct evidence on the problems that beset FAEF and its efforts to promote participation in the system, there is some indication from anecdotal information about FAEF that the following continue to complicate the program's implementation:

- In some of the urban quarters of Bamako, FAEF has become a four-letter word. Some APEs have collected the required local contribution in cash, which disappeared in the APE system or through individual diversion of funds, the projects never reaching the FAEF office.
- Many of the APEs are not at all in touch with the schools or the community, acting as individual cliques which divert funds and ignore their responsibilities. Some have been in place for years, without conducting required annual reporting or elections.
- In rural areas, where tax collection actually is more successful, villagers do not see funds coming back to the schools, an assumption being that the higher administrative structures of the APE either do not represent the schools in allocation of funds, or allow the money to be diverted elsewhere.
- In urban areas, people have just stopped paying taxes, and are very wary of any call for contributions.
- The original Bank formula required a 50 percent contribution by the local population, which was lowered to 25 percent, preferably in cash. USAID would prefer a 25 percent local contribution in cash, labor, materials, or services, which is much more reasonable, given rural and some urban communities' financial capabilities.
- The entire system is overly bureaucratized and centralized, therefore cumbersome.
- The FAEF office is concerned about quarters or villages contracting with resident contractors or jobbers because it sets up possibilities for internal "arrangements" which could compromise technical specifications and financial management.

To counteract some of these real or supposed problems, the BPE has reorganized its planning procedures in order to adjust the demand and supply for FAEF services and to ensure

strict technical and financial controls. It now appears that more FAEF projects are in action and new administrative procedures are having more success with management problems (such as poor planning and budgeting). While the FAEF program is still not operating at the desired level, there is growing optimism about the system's potential among BEEP staff members and MEN officials. It should also be noted that many of the above complaints about the FAEF system and the integrity of the APEs are more characteristic of the urban situation and do not necessarily reflect the complexity and diversity of the APE—community relations in the rural areas.

USAID's current strategy for improving the implementation of the FAEF evolves partly from an unsolicited proposal by World Education, and is geared specifically to improving "participation" at all levels. Briefly, World Education is working with about 60 local NGOs on an urban quartier improvement project, which has been successful (at least) in establishing voluntary civic groups that have been able to execute small physical improvement projects in the urban neighborhoods. The intention is to follow upon the NGO-quartier relationship to improve the effectiveness of the APEs as adjunct committees of the Quartier Associations. First of all, FAEF funds and formulas will be used to focus APE effort on specific physical improvement of the schools, for which the APEs will be trained by local NGOs, in turn trained by World Education. Eventually training (and end products) will become more sophisticated, dealing with long-term school management, especially in involving more parents in their children's education.

The Human Resources Development Office of USAID/Bamako called in MEN and, more importantly, APE officials to review the draft unsolicited proposal from World Education. The reviewers' recommendations were even stronger than the proposal, viz: start over from scratch—dissolve existing APEs, call for a General Assembly of all parents and choose (or elect) a new APE for each school, to be renewed periodically. Statutes governing APEs must be revised, internal by-laws have to be developed through consensus, and the relation of the APE to the school, teachers, students, and community have to be solidified by massive, voluntary participation in labor and decisions.

It is not proposed that the basic structure be destroyed. Rather, each level will consist of "representatives" of lower units. For example, a quartier with three primary schools will have 3 APEs, whose members choose the board of the quartier APE, which in turn selects its delegate to the communal APE, which delegates a representative to the Regional APE, which elects their spokesperson to the National APE. At all levels, participants would report back to the unit they represent, and be responsible for conveying the local-level decisions through the hierarchy. This, of course, implies that the participants at any level can be removed or re-elected on the basis of performance.

An essential element of the system is "transparent" management and decision-making, rather than cliques and cabals working behind closed doors. There are many logical "holes" in the system, such as: Malians do not like to vote—representatives are chosen by an age-old process of consensus; the structure is cumbersome but familiar—and how else to insure communication from school to Ministry and back? Voluntary activity is difficult to request of

people who must dedicate most energy to subsistence—nonpecuniary rewards are not always satisfying; political parties, recently formed, are naturally going to attempt to use the system to their publicity benefit; rural APE members are often illiterate and haven't a clue what's going on in the classroom—how can they make decisions?, etc. However, the problems are explicit, not simply implied. This alone is a starting point in negotiating solutions over the long term of the project.

As concerns the relation of the World Education/local NGO/APE project to FAEF, the funds will not be released to the APEs until they have re-formed and gone through training and prepared technical and financial dossiers, which include demonstration of competence to supervise technicians and reasonable calculation of local contribution. In addition, because the FAEF approval process is so cumbersome, dossiers will be submitted in lots by pivot NGOs supervising other NGOs so that the review committee and the FAEF office can meet less frequently and more productively.

A final note on "participation": neither World Education nor USAID initiated this unsolicited proposal. The NGOs working in the quarters reported that almost all civic groups place first priority on their school, and especially on school latrines. The small grants of the Urban Project were inadequate to meet demand, so other funds for latrine construction were sought. The NGOs want to respond to the request, but a coordinating organization was necessary, and World Education reluctantly accepted the umbrella role to respond to the NGOs desires.

It would be much easier for all concerned to place the FAEF funds within the APE project (rather than the Ministry), but a long-term goal is increased communication and participation of the various structures involved. Therefore, conceptually, at least, it would seem more appropriate for the APEs to begin dealing with the Ministry rather than in an improvised structure. Perhaps heavy demand will encourage efficiency in higher-level procedures and decision-making.

#### **E. Commodities—Community Support**

Amendment I to the BEEP added the Koulikoro Region to the program, providing each school with the minimum required equipment for all its students. Thus, the concept is treated separately in this assessment, because it may represent a distinctive approach to eliciting participation that is potentially less costly than physical infrastructure construction, but under some circumstances equally effective.

In adding the Koulikoro region to the original project design, USAID/Bamako has proposed an alternative to the approach used to provide educational infrastructure and equipment (largely through the FAEF), which is a slow process of community consultation and consensus-building regarding the use of matching funds for physical improvement of school sites, while the MEN, in a separate activity, provides books and some materials to the schools and parents' resources fill in the gaps. The activity in Koulikoro entails the development of a standard list

of the necessary minimum to completely equip a school, a survey of the schools in Koulikoro to assess which meet the minimum standards and, if they do not, what is lacking, and the provision of those materials. The needs assessment for this activity is being carried out jointly by the BEEP technical assistance team and the MEN. It sometimes includes meetings with community members and sometimes is a physical inventory only, depending upon who in the community is available to meet with the needs assessment team at the time of its visit.

This approach can potentially elicit considerable participation at the community level, and should be carefully monitored. The hypothesis appears to be that providing the minimum necessary physical infrastructure and equipment will substantially increase parental and teacher interest and confidence in the formal public school system, and will attract school-age children to enroll and remain in school. A corollary hypothesis might be that once the initial conditions are brought up to a minimum standard, parents and other community members will be willing to maintain the physical plant, and demand appropriate equipment to maintain this minimum. These hypotheses should be tested as the experiment unfolds.

#### F. *Ecoles de Base*

In some areas, only a fraction of school-age children can be admitted to the public schools for simple reasons of space and resources. As a result, a complementary network of private schools has developed. These *Ecoles de Base* are often tucked away in any space available, rented or given by the community, and most accept any student who can pay. Some of the organizers of the schools were trained as administrators by a local NGO (CARREC) under grants from several funders, including the World Bank. These "promoters" recruit teachers from the many unemployed educated youth, some of whom are trained teachers who cannot get on the government payroll. The promoters also recruit the students, who pay what their families can afford, often on a sliding scale.

Another form of *Ecole de Base* is a community owned school, more developed in the Segou region, where the teachers are "hired" by the APE and the school infrastructure belongs to the community. This type is favored by USAID and the Ministry of Education, having emerged as a principal recommendation of a USAID-funded seminar on *Ecoles de Base*. Most of the seminar participants were from the *Ecole de Base* community, including teachers, administrators, and promoters.

The GRM recognizes these schools and controls the curricula. Statistics and verbal reports indicate that the students in these private schools actually do better on standardized examinations than public school students, and it is obvious that parents are more involved in the schools because they have to contribute to keep open the option of primary education for their children.

Some policy makers—even some USAID staff—see these schools as an eventual panacea for many of the ills of the educational system. Because they are private and community-based,

the *Ecoles de Base* are obliged to respond to market considerations, which might eventually include curriculum reform. For example, if parents won't send children to school because they object to Francophone education, a private school could offer Arabic or Koranic education; parents who don't believe in submitting children to an education that is worthless in the rural milieu could pay for, and therefore insist on, a more relevant curriculum; girls who might be barred by parents or simply uninterested in standard schooling could attend a more culturally appropriate type of school, and so forth.

The biggest constraint for the *Ecoles de Base* is simply resources. Physical structures are often much worse than even the atrocious public schools; teachers are poorly paid and not always well-trained; desks, books, paper, chalk, water, and latrines have to come from fees, and the limit that parents can or will pay is often less than what is required to cover all costs.

USAID is examining possibilities for some sort of investment in these private schools. A USAID-funded study is presently being conducted to monitor the schools' impacts and to assess student learning and parental attitude as compared to the public schools. However, lines of contribution are not yet clear: USAID probably cannot contribute to facilities because the schools are private, theoretically for-profit; but it might be feasible to contribute teacher training, commodities (books, chalk, etc.), curriculum assistance, soft loans, or business training.

Some of the organizers of the *Ecoles de Base* have grouped into NGOs with a nonprofit mission statement. One promoter is a newly elected board member of the CCA-ONG, but an organized advocacy group does not yet exist, and this might be one area of possible intervention. As of this writing, the *Ecoles de Base* are scattered and unrelated, but apparently performing well.

### G. Ruralization

Mali exhibits a very poor enrollment rate in rural areas, especially those areas most removed from Bamako. One reason being discussed is that rural parents view the schools as organizations that are established solely to remove their children from the traditional culture and milieu. A response might be to "ruralize" education, i.e., provide schooling more appropriate to rural children.

USAID/Bamako's suggestions to date have created some controversy in communication with Washington. Teaching of maternal languages has been rejected; 4-H types of activities in existing schools were declared wanting in fundamental analysis; even construction of student living quarters at the Agriculture Production/Ruralization Facility was rejected as too cumbersome an endeavor.

Some experimental ruralization efforts are under way or proposed. UNESCO evaluated a pilot ruralization project (1989), but parents, teachers, and students all responded negatively. MEN asked USAID to fund a roundtable including other donors on the EEC's environmental education program in elementary schools. The BEEP has held several week-long workshops in

which parent, teacher, director, inspector, and national technicians' representatives participated in order to define objectives and areas to be covered by ruralization. There are two other projects ongoing in this area—one is radio solicitation to parents to enroll their children, especially girls, in school and the other is a Peace Corps effort to design a curriculum for ruralization in Koulikoro Region. Other proposals on the table that will help attract rural children to the schools include the development of maternal language materials, more emphasis on the utility of education for women and girls, community outreach, community support, and community publicity.

## V. Conclusion

The purpose of the team's visit and report was to assess how the Congressional mandate for local participation in the design of A.I.D.'s Development Fund for Africa's programs is being carried out. The Mali Basic Education Expansion Project had been selected as one of several case studies. The PA team collected information on the degree of local participation in the design and implementation of the BEEP through interviews with project personnel, host government officials, local NGO agents, and a limited series of site visits to schools to discuss the project and the issue of participation with school staff, local parents of students association representatives (*Association des Parents d'Eleves*, APE), and community leaders.

The assessment team found an extraordinary sense of vitality and enthusiasm for educational reform among BEEP staffers and others in the education ministry. The social, economic, and political conditions that emerged following the March 1991 revolution that toppled the one-party government of General Moussa Traore have favored the implementation of reform programs such as the BEEP. The transitional administration promised multi-party, democratic elections and these were carried out in the first half of 1992. The fresh political openness gave voice to new representatives and national leaders with diverse interests and agendas. The PA team found that USAID/Mali and the BEEP staff were caught up in the prevailing spirit and were committed to increasing participation in the education process.

A restructured in-service teacher training program is a fundamental component of the BEEP. Training aims to make teachers aware that lessons should not flow from the dictates of the system and teachers, but from the needs and potential of students. Teachers are encouraged to promote better relationships between schools and communities so that the concerns and needs of the communities can be incorporated into school curricula. One example of how far the education system had moved away from local needs was reflected in the dropping enrollment rate for girls. BEEP has taken a pro active stance toward girls' enrollment by establishing an Education/Women in Development (E/WID) unit within the ministry and providing it with the means to address the broad range of issues that have contributed to low enrollment.

The BEEP has continued the *Fond d'Appui a l'Enseignement Fondamentale* (FAEF), begun as part of the original World Bank Fourth Education Project, to help repair and improve primary schools' physical structure. USAID has changed somewhat the formula communities previously followed to obtain FAEF support. The original World Bank program required a 50

percent contribution by the local population. USAID is instituting a program where the local contribution is 25 percent (in cash, labor, materials, or services), a more reasonable approach, given most communities' financial capabilities.

To monitor and evaluate these and other reforms introduced through BEEP, the project has restructured the Ministry's Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Unit within the National Pedagogic Institute. BEEP has increased the number of M&E staff and the disciplines they represent to broaden the unit's research skills and types of information collected. The focus of monitoring has shifted from simple report preparation for higher authorities, to applied evaluation where unit members work directly with educators and trainers to improve the efficiency and quality of their duties.

Although the decision to associate the BEEP with the ongoing Fourth Education Project severely constrained the potential for consultation with local community associations and NGOs in its conception and design, the BEEP has had some success in promoting participation in implementation. A key recommendation formulated by the assessment team concerns the need carefully to follow the current approaches to increase local involvement in the education process. In the absence of extensive local-level consultation and contact with local actors in schools, the project needs to be open and responsive to feedback from participants. Without flexibility and adaptability, no one can be sure that the same problems will not persist and undercut AID's best efforts to reinvigorate and refurbish Malian schools.

## **Annex B - Niger Agricultural Sector Development Grants (ASDG)**

## **Assessment of Local Participation in the Niger Agriculture Sector Development Grants**

### **I. Description**

#### **Agriculture Sector Development Grant I**

The first Niger Agriculture Sector Development Grant (ASDG I) was authorized in 1984. It had three broad objectives: "(1) to promote agricultural production by diminishing policy constraints to development in the agriculture sector; (2) to provide resources to the Government of Niger to support ongoing development activities in the agriculture sector; and (3) to contribute directly to economic stabilization [by] minimizing the adverse impacts of austerity and structural adjustment measures [on] agricultural/rural development programs."

The policy conditionality of the ASDG I touched on many issues in Nigerien agricultural development, including reduction of agricultural input subsidies; market-determined cereals pricing; removal of parastatal monopolies and permission for profit/nonprofit input and product marketing firms to operate; liberalization of cross-border trade in agropastoral commodities; legalization of credit unions, elimination of the state-run agricultural credit facility, and exemption from certain fiscal regulations that apply to other financial outlets; restructuring of the seed and plant material production and distribution system and changes in the legal and regulatory framework necessary to grant usufruct rights to communities in selected forest management sites.

Of the \$53 million allocated for ASDG I, \$44.8 million will eventually be converted to CFA as resource transfers. To date, \$39.8 million has already been released and deposited in a counterpart fund in the GON Treasury for joint, mutually agreed-on programming. The 6th tranche of \$5 million will be released in the near future. The remaining \$8 million was used for technical assistance, training, evaluation, audit, policy studies, and credit union development.

In January 1990 the ASDG I program was decertified following a Regional Inspectors General (RIG) audit, and the program was "placed on hold" for more than two years, until May 1992. The RIG audit recommended a Nonfederal Audit of ASDG I subprojects that signaled discrepancies in the use of resource transfer funds. Difficulties arose when the GON used the money deposited in the Treasury for other purposes than those agreed on. The profound budgetary crisis in Niger, which contributed in part to the accountability issue in ASDG I, also led to an overhaul of the mechanism for managing funds, a carefully structured approach to selection of projectized or project-like activities to be funded under the sixth tranche and a number of ideas for the design of the follow-on ASDG II.

The specific PVO activities funded under ASDG I included the CARE Agroforestry Project (FCFA 215 m. from ASDG I funds), AFRICARE Fish Culture Project (FCFA 49.4 m.),

CLUSA credit guarantee fund (FCFA 343 m.), CARE Maradi Microenterprise Development Project (FCFA 600 m.), AFRICARE Gouré Rehabilitation Project (FCFA 695 m.) and a community-level poultry project (FCFA 43 m.).

Substantively, the policy agenda for the sixth tranche of ASDG I requires the continuation of policy measures put in place before the disbursement of earlier tranches. The bulk of the local currency is to be used to fund community-level NRM activities. At least 30 percent of the FCFA are to go to NGO-designed and implemented programs, and NGOs and government entities can compete for the other 70 percent. The overall objective of programs funded with sixth-tranche funds is to foster community management of natural resources. The funds are to be deposited in a commercial bank, and a reorganized Secretariat will manage them.

The implementation of ASDG I produced several broad lessons related to participation for the design of ASDG II: (1) the policy conditionality should be focused to address specific natural resource management (NRM) issues so that the reforms, if enacted and implemented, will result in a devolution of responsibility and authority for resource stewardship to the community level; (2) international PVOs appear better able than complementary government services to exploit the opening created by changes in NRM policies with on-the-ground programs; but (3) NGOs—particularly indigenous ones—need not only institutional strengthening and operating capital, but policy-level support for their efforts to establish with the GON the appropriate institutional environment for operation; (4) it is useful and important to track the impact that policy reforms are having at the micro as well as the macro level; and (5) funds must be safeguarded from diversion to other uses by the GON.

## **Agriculture Sector Development Grant II**

The stated purpose of the second Agriculture Sector Development Grant (ASDG II) is "to enhance the ability of individual rural inhabitants to gain control over resources they habitually use, and to manage and profit from them in a sustainable manner." Sectorally, the grant emphasizes NRM; institutionally, it includes attention to developing both GON and NGO capacities. The grant was authorized in August 1990 and is composed of two components: a \$5 million "project" component that funds technical assistance, evaluation, studies, audit, training, and commodities; and a \$20 million "program" component to be released in four tranches with each tranche triggered by the GON's satisfaction of policy conditions. The conditions for the release of the first tranche have been clearly specified, but conditions for the remaining tranches will be refined annually, based in part upon an assessment of the impact of policy and programmatic changes in the previous year(s), as well as upon studies conducted under the companion technical assistance project. No tranches have been released to date.

As noted above, the ASDG II design has two integrally related components—NRM and institutional strengthening for the organizations (governmental and nongovernmental) responsible for NRM. Under the NRM component, there are five elements: (1) harmonization of various efforts to develop a national NRM strategy and action plan (including conservation of biodiversity) and the adoption of such a plan; (2) investigation of the effects, and modification

as required, of the current resource tenure arrangements; (3) decentralization of NRM; (4) strengthening of the NGO role in NRM program implementation; and (5) a change in forester roles from regulatory agent to a change agent/extension worker. In the institutional component, there is to be a combination of training and technical assistance for strengthening, along with legal and regulatory reform as required. There will also be support to activities that directly affect local populations and the resource bases on which they rely. The particular elements of the institutional component include: (1) improving the planning, coordination and management capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock—including building information systems, establishing and carrying out personnel training, and assignment policies; (2) developing and implementing a program budgeting system that results in better GON deployment of donor as well as its own resources; (3) improved policy and regulatory environment for, increased access to resources for, and improved performance of NGO activities in NRM.

## **II. Local Participation Assessment Methodology**

This assessment of local participation in the ASDG programs emerged out of efforts to understand the mechanisms USAID field missions are undertaking to comply with congressional mandates to involve local peoples in the design and implementation of project and nonproject assistance activities under the Development Fund for Africa (DFA). Although some guidance has been made available to USAID missions for enhancing participation, discussions between field missions, AID/Washington, and with others in Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs) suggest that considerable innovation and experience is being gained at the mission level. The purpose of this assessment is to understand and document case studies of different approaches that field missions have taken to assure local participation in their development activities.

The local participation assessment team is composed of four individuals: Joan Atherton, team leader and Senior Advisor for Social Science, AFR/DP/PSE; Curt Grimm, community development specialist and Senior Research Assistant with the Institute for Development Anthropology; Paul Nelson, Associate Director with Church World Service/Lutheran World Relief's Office on Development Policy; and Daniel Devine, Resident Consultant to World Education in Bamako, Mali.

The team conducted the assessment in Niger between May 13-20, 1992. Information on the degree of local participation in the design and implementation of the ASDG was collected through interviews with project personnel, host government officials, local NGO agents, and a limited series of site visits to discuss the project and the issue of participation with local project agents and community leaders.

## **III. Retrospective**

If the explicit mandate for "participation" of various sectors of the population would seem logical, even a given, in the development world of 1992, the concept implies a breach of the established order in Niger—both traditional and modern—and therefore portends threatening

changes to vested interests. As innocuous and obviously appropriate as such a theme might appear, it is, in fact, a radical departure from long-standing policies and methods of operation in Niger.

Although large generalities about a population as heterogeneous as that of Niger might be crude, one sociological fact of note is that traditional Sahelian cultures are organized hierarchically, even feudally, in most areas of the country. "Individual rural inhabitants" in such a framework are, in many cases, subordinate to various allegiance groupings that continue to operate in addition to more modern government structures.

The French administration wisely recognized the adaptability of the traditional structures to their own tendency for centralization and top-down imposition of decisions and administrative flow. The mentality of chiefdoms and *noblesse oblige* fitted nicely into a colonial concept of order and governance. At independence, French-trained African leaders continued, and even elaborated, both traditional and colonial perspectives and methods of conformity to centralized directives. Often, it was a result of commercial and bureaucratic self-interest, but the philosophic backdrop to self-governance also contained many elements of sincerity on the part of the educated *evolués* who assumed responsibility for the backward masses of the country. To this historical flow add training and participation in the social democratization of Europe, especially European universities. A centralized and all-embracing government—a sort of public-sector corporation—became a given, a creed of sorts, which has directed recent Nigerien history since independence.

First of all, in the process of nation building, a unique political unit of all Nigeriens, condemned by the Berlin conference (and later British and French colonial frontier maneuvering) to live together in a geographical unit without much logic, was considered absolutely necessary. Not only were the government structure and the Party synonymous, but traditional structures were formally incorporated into the State. Recognized village associations, such as cooperatives, youth associations (Samaria), women's clubs (*Association des Femmes Nigériennes*), even religious groupings, became part of the state, directed from on high.

Secondly, as part of this statism, the government/party assumed responsibility for all services, all controls, all economic activity related to individual citizens. In theory, every important element of life would be taken care of by some party or state structure, within the "family corporation," as it were, and therefore NGOs or associations were precluded as totally unnecessary. At the same time, NGOs and other associations were precluded because they were seen as a means of empowering the rural populace, something that GON officials tried to discourage.

Enter the development assistance onslaught from afar. In efforts to either help or purchase Niger, depending on perspectives, this neat, centralized structure was convenient and amply reinforced with outside funds. A team of donors could decide "what those people need is. . ." (fill in the blank: water, trees, condoms, vaccinations, schools, etc.) and would handily plug donations into an existing structure, or invent another to receive funds, always a department

of the hierarchy established to serve the population. The Party served as lobbyist for groups or regions, the government hired every kid coming out of school and placed him somewhere in the family corporation.

An important element of the service mindset during the 1960s and early 70s was the creation of a government agency called *Animation Rurale*. Development workers in this agency prided themselves in their direct contacts with remote rural villagers, and with their training in social theory, they invented a new vocabulary for development: *informer, sensibiliser, animer, mobiliser, organiser, vulgariser, eveiller, conscientiser, etc.*

These words imply a ranking "subject" imposing an outside idea or technique or action on a subordinate object—the uneducated mass. Thinking and resolving problems or promoting production and a better life were performed elsewhere, then Animation Rurale took it down to the rural population, somehow convincing them to perform according to state strategy (which often included increased production of cash crops for export to the central government's benefit).

Animation Rurale was seen as the sales force of the state. They would sit with the technical services and administrative authorities, then go sell the latest idea or innovation to the villagers. Some occasionally brought back thoughts or "problems" from the villages, but their real role was to take things down to the villagers. Eventually, Animation Rurale became the local representative of the Ministry of Plan and other technical agencies, with the portfolio of organizing services and villagers to execute national decisions.

These decisions—ideas, solutions, plans, possibilities, or lines of action—came more and more from donors. An expatriate representative of a funder (or early PVO) was often scored on his contacts in the capital, his "collaboration" with high-ranking officials in selling priorities decided elsewhere, then executing activities through the corporate bureaucracy. Increasingly, the selling point became the national office of a technical service "buying into" an activity in order to receive operating funds for the service, including salaries, per diems, vehicles and certainly recognition nationally and internationally. Sophisticated service directors could follow donors' whims and present the donor's priority as a real national priority. Fundraising became a priority activity for all high-ranking officials. In all of this growth in sophistication, many government officials were well-trained, both in technical areas and in "the ways of the world."

The development community was no longer dealing with, for example, forestry agents who had been recruited out of the French army to carry guns and enforce laws on poaching and woodcutting. Real foresters (and engineers and agriculturalists and health workers) were placed at local levels and began demanding a say in technical decisions, and a piece of the financial pie in accordance with their status. Projects became "integrated," meaning *all* services had to participate on all levels—and share in the resources of the project.

During the Kountche administration, this already strong government and party juggernaut became overbearing to the Nigeriens and unbearable to donors. Outside interference was no longer considered unnecessary, it was forbidden: "We will decide what to spend your money on

and how to spend it, and we will control all activities, taking your technical advice into consideration."

In all this process over a long time, "individual rural inhabitants" were never implied or expressed as recipients of international assistance—even food was given to the army to distribute. Also, money and activities were less and less "controlled" to the satisfaction of donors—it was distributed along lines of political expediency.

The blow-up, the culmination of large-scale discontent, was the National Conference of Fall 1991, which aired the laundry of many years. Although it was presented to the world as a sign of democracy, of opening up, of decentralization and corporate divestiture, only about 200 of 1200 delegates represented rural areas, and they were hand-picked, not elected.

#### **IV. Participation in ASDG II Design**

##### **A. Previous experience and lessons learned**

As a policy reform-oriented, nonproject assistance program, ASDG II benefited enormously from the experiences and lessons learned over the course of the precursor program, ASDG I. To a large extent ASDG I paved the way for the current generation of USAID-funded nonproject assistance programs in Africa. Despite significant problems in the management of ASDG I's local currency fund, the combination of sectoral, nonproject assistance with a project component proved to be successful in generating policy reform in Niger. ASDG II was designed to continue the application of this approach, although notable changes have been made to the mechanism created to fund project activities.

The experiences encountered by NGOs who participated in ASDG I through the local currency fund led directly to the design of the particular funding mechanism for projectized activities under ASDG II. NGOs faced serious financial problems in the implementation of their projects because of the lack of resources in the government of Niger's Treasury-held local currency fund provided under ASDG I. The NGOs and USAID both realized that the most appropriate means to promote NGO/private sector initiatives in policy reform and NRM was by reserving a given percentage of the local currency outside the counterpart fund for activities of NGOs and the private sector. To avoid problems experienced by ASDG I with the Nigerien Treasury, ASDG II funds for the NGO/Private Sector Fund will be deposited in a private, commercial bank, which is separate from those funds to be allocated to public sector uses. The NGOs fully support the decision to create a special NGO/private sector FCFA fund, constituting at least 30 percent of ASDG II's net resource transfer, to be set aside in an interest-bearing account and managed following standard counterpart fund procedures.

ASDG I provided other lessons and experiences that contributed to the relatively high level of active participation by many different groups in the design of ASDG II. The earlier grant found that although nonproject assistance can be effective in getting policy reform conditions met and implemented, the logic behind the reforms and the potential benefits of

further reforms are not necessarily understood and incorporated by policy-makers and project implementors. To overcome this handicap, the ASDG II design team embarked on an innovative series of procedures to set the institutional and NRM conditions that comprise the major components of ASDG II.

## **B. ASDG II design committees**

During the preparatory phase of ASDG II, USAID and representatives from concerned GON ministries convened two design committees to develop the two components addressed by ASDG II—improved NRM strategies and institutional reforms for better development coordination and planning. Committee members met regularly during the design phase to review progress of previous programs such as ASDG I and other donor interventions in NRM and institution-building capacities. Representatives from both committees participated in the Dosso Conference on Nigerien NGOs in April 1990, and the committees separately commissioned studies to gain more information on specific issues relevant to their sectoral planning. The committee exercise began with open forums to discuss pertinent experiences, constraints, and objectives, and gradually moved to the development of concrete goals and interventions. This design method was participatory by nature—committee members represented diverse constituencies and interests—and it sought to avoid some of the errors of ASDG I by making sure that the potential and benefits of policy reform process were accepted and theoretically understood by GON policy-makers. USAID/Niger acknowledges that a great deal of effort was required to maintain the collaborative posture through to the end of the elaboration stage, but the design committee approach achieved its intention to broaden participation in program design.

Whether the participation realized by the committees during the formulation of ASDG II succeeds in internalizing the policy reform process or not is unknown at this time. The conditions that could lead to the reluctant acceptance of policy reforms—a desperate economic situation and critical lack of resources—exist in Niger today just as they did during ASDG I. It remains to be seen whether the implementation of reforms generates a sustained momentum with significant multiplier effects or whether minimal actions are undertaken only with the objective of securing the next release of funds.

## **C. Consultation with NGOs**

USAID/Niger was exemplary in its commitment to involve NGOs in the elaboration and implementation of the ASDG II program. During the design phase a letter was sent to 17 NGOs with agriculture and rural development programs in Niger (presumably the entire universe of possibilities at the time). The letter noted USAID's dedication to promoting the involvement of NGOs in NRM and asked individual NGOs to respond with their thoughts on the following issues that USAID was thinking about supporting:

1. creation of a NRM forum and documentation center;
2. promotion of indigenous NGO creation;

3. influencing GON policy regarding NGO activities;
4. financial support for NGO-administered NRM activities;
5. technical assistance to NGOs in the conception of NRM projects;
6. training programs in NRM for NGO personnel.

Several NGOs responded in writing and expressed their hope for and support of USAID assistance in all of the above activities. USAID staff followed the written communication with personal visits to each of the NGOs to discuss the design of the ASDG II program as well as more general discussions of the NGO experience with NRM activities in Niger. It was through this consultation and communicative process that the ASDG II design team opted to directly support NGO interventions in NRM and to require policy reforms that strengthen the institutional capacity of NGOs and other rural institutions to participate in Niger's rural development. For their part, the NGOs appear to be very pleased with ASDG II's policy reforms that will lead to changes in the regulatory environment in which they operate and they eagerly anticipate the release of special NGO/private sector funds for NRM project activities.

In the case of ASDG II, the program's objectives and interventions seem to coincide very closely with the goals and activities of Niger's NGO community. Much of the credit for this admirable situation must be given to the conscious effort on the part of the ASDG II design team to promote NGO participation in program design, but it may also reflect the particular historical position of NGOs in Niger. The number of NGOs registered in Niger is limited and only recently have laws been changed to allow the incorporation of national NGOs. In this situation, any support for NGOs is likely to be favorably received. This is particularly the case when that support involves financial assistance and the implementation of policy reforms geared toward strengthening NGO capacity. As the number and ability of these organizations increases, there is likely to be greater diversity within the NGO community and perhaps some differences of opinion regarding specific policy reforms and rural development priorities. One factor that may keep this divergence from occurring as quickly as it might in other countries is the convergence of interest on the environment as the key development issue in Niger. The GON, donors, and NGOs all agree that measures to conserve and protect the existing physical environment must be put in place just to maintain Niger's current economic situation.

#### **D. Local participation in ASDG II design**

Although increased local and community participation in rural development and NRM is a primary goal of ASDG II, local-level participation in the program design was not a specific objective. Consultations with rural inhabitants occurred in the design phase during visits to specific projects by design committee members, but these missions seemed to be concerned with discovering what was or was not working rather than eliciting local people's views on what to do. The approach taken is understandable given the nature of nonproject assistance programs

with broad policy reform agendas. Local people tend to be far more concerned with local issues and not necessarily cognizant of the long-term potential of national-level policy changes.

There are several areas where greater attention to participation on the part of local inhabitants might have had positive contributions to the design of ASDG II. This is particularly true for the program's ability to promote and increase the role women play in NRM and rural development in Niger. ASDG II has increased participation by women in NRM and rural income generation as an integral part of its objectives, but it is not entirely clear whether enough attention has been placed on exactly how this is to be achieved. A possible solution is to target women more specifically and directly through the special NGO/private sector project fund. USAID/Niger is currently addressing women's development issues, and recent studies have demonstrated a justifiable caution about promoting all-encompassing strategies given Niger's ethnic and economic complexity. The critique here is only intended to encourage the process already under way.

Another question that the lack of direct local participation in ASDG II design leaves unresolved is whether the activities and reforms envisioned by the program match the ideas and development priorities held by rural inhabitants. It is unlikely that the objectives held by both sides are radically different from one another—the USAID, GON, and NGO participants in the design process all represent years of experience gained from working with local people—but there may be slight differences in the sequencing of interventions or additional policy reforms that might have come from greater consultation with local individuals and groups. Unfortunately, the background of ASDG I has provided little experience in the field on how to encourage local participation. Better monitoring and evaluation of the subprojects under ASDG I could have been a mechanism to provide more systematic inclusion of local views. The insistence upon detailed description of monitoring and evaluation methodologies for all proposals considered under ASDG II's special NGO/private sector fund will, we hope, provide this type of local-level feedback in the design of future programs.

## **V. Policy Reform: Conditionality to Promote an Environment for Participation**

In addition to soliciting participation in design and financing participatory initiatives themselves, AID-funded activities can promote participation in a third, broader way, by promoting a legal, regulatory and institutional environment that fosters participation.

The institutional environment in Niger has been anything but conducive to nongovernmental initiative. As outlined in Section II above, centralized administration of government services, government-initiated cooperative structures, and strict regulation of local NGOs and associations have stifled initiative and change by either nongovernmental or locally based governmental authorities.

Conditions planned and negotiated for both institutional strengthening and NRM activities in ASDG II build on the experience gained during ASDG I, on insights gained from privately

managed NRM programs, and capitalize on the experience of several AID/Niger staff members in contact with NGOs. The conditions attached to NPA in both ASDG I and II illustrate some of the options available to AID in promoting a political environment conducive to participation and to a diversity of actors in the national political and economic life.

### **The Conditions**

Conditionality attached to ASDG I addressed primarily the standard measures being promoted to liberalize agriculture and trade throughout Africa: reduced input subsidies, privatized supply of inputs, liberalized cereals marketing and cross-border trade. In addition, ASDG I entailed agreements to restructure the agricultural credit system and to grant usufruct rights to communities involved in the management of pastures or forests.

ASDG II conditions focus more specifically on two areas: NRM and institutional changes. The conditions call for:

- (1) preparation and implementation of a decentralization program for NRM;
- (2) agreements for institutional changes in relevant GON ministries, formulation of a Rural Code, discussions with NGOs leading to revision of the regulations that govern their activities, and continued implementation of reforms related to credit unions and rural cooperatives, as negotiated in ASDG; and
- (3) continued progress on the policy reforms undertaken in ASDG I, including reforms related to credit unions and cooperatives, the elimination of export taxes, and the continuation of reduced subsidy rates on agricultural inputs.

Each involves a progressive set of steps, tied to the release of tranches of NPA, that include joint studies with AID; roundtable discussions with NGOs; development, discussion, and implementation of action plans; introduction and use of improved personnel systems in key GON ministries; and review and revision of regulations governing NGOs.

### **How Reforms Can Promote Participation**

Rather than reviewing the conditions in detail, this section elaborates four ways that conditionality under ASDG I and II may affect the environment for participation in NRM.

- (1) Remove or weaken regulatory barriers to local nongovernmental initiative. At a time when several of the international NGOs operating in Niger seem to be deciding to loosen their operational ties to government ministries, AID efforts to reinforce and institutionalize the government's less restrictive policy toward NGOs may be particularly helpful.

Two roundtable meetings between the GON and Nigerien NGOs are required under ASDG II conditions, as is a review of regulations on NGOs. Regulatory changes to follow from the review are not specified except for one: the new regulations will contain "specific permission for NGOs to operate in Niger and to serve in community development roles in rural areas, with direct contact with community organizations" (PAAD, p. 144). Apart from this stipulation, the conditions focus on a process that will engage the government and NGOs in discussions.

- (2) Reform government agencies to increase the likelihood that they will be responsive to local initiative. The changes required in government administration focus on decentralization, improved planning and administration, and reforms of the civil service aimed at increasing the ability of local populations to manage natural resources.

Decentralization is the one policy change most often affirmed by Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock and Ministry of Hydraulics and Environment officials the team interviewed. Measures to improve program planning and develop a system of job descriptions and assignments may improve the technical administration of the services. Their effect on openness to local initiative is hard to foresee: the notion that the country's development is to be planned by authorities in Niamey is in some ways at the root of the barriers to participatory action. Under the most positive scenario, government ministries will find themselves competing with other agencies to provide services effectively. While the possibility also exists that they will exercise the impulse to regulate local activities, the changed political atmosphere accompanying the National Conference makes this somewhat more difficult.

- (3) Encourage the government to get out (and stay out) of the business of administering cooperatives. Forming cooperatives to accomplish some well-defined objective(s) is sometimes an important step in the organization of a community. Recent activities by CLUSA and the reform process encouraged by the ASDGs have made some progress, but because of their history in Niger, coops will have to be not formed but re-formed or reconstituted by and for their members if they are to have their members' trust.

The flexible "rolling conditionality" built into the ASDG II agreement may be important here. Private agencies promoting cooperatives and credit unions in Niger suggest that the need may arise for further changes in banking law or regulations, to allow cooperatives and credit unions to fulfill the risk-sharing and financial roles they carry out at their best.

- (4) Create incentives to encourage full implementation of agreements already reached through the national political process, e.g., some of those agreed upon in the

1991 National Conference. Measures to give greater freedom of association and action, to groups in the Nigerien civil society, and to establish a rural code, will reinforce and operationalize principles already adopted in the National Conference.

Providing additional incentive for steps that may have political and other costs to the government allows AID to support the directions already set by Nigeriens' own political actions.

## VI. A Current Snapshot

If participation is a somewhat blurred topic to investigate, the current picture in Niger is even more unfocused, but there is no question concerning the effort of USAID/Niger to solicit, express, and even enforce participation on many levels in the design and implementation of ASDG II.

The current government of Niger is a caretaker government. Elections are due at the end of this year, and the entire structure of administrative and service technicians is in a state of abeyance, if not eternal flux at all levels. The administrative part of the old system exists somewhat intact, but its political counterpart is officially dissolved. Interim leaders have a series of political mandates imposed by the National Conference, most of which correspond to USAID guidelines on multi-level participation. Conditions precedent have been met at the national level, including high-level decrees and other legislation designed to encourage participation, especially of the "rural population," but also of NGOs, which, until recently, were considered anathema to the corporate system.

However, decrees, *arrêtés*, and policy announcements in Niamey, as well as consultative commissions on the national level, do NOT manifest themselves in overwhelming signs of welcoming local participation at the grassroots. A question in the fore at the moment is do the policy-makers really believe in statements mandated by the National Congress and the donors that insist upon changing long-standing structures? The answer is not self-evident. There is some cause for optimism, but, at the same time, centrist and elitist systems such as the one that has long characterized the Nigerien administration are not easily transformed.

Both international and local NGOs (few as they are) were indeed consulted on program design for ASDG II through conscientious effort on the part of USAID/Niger staff. The International PVOs contacted during our visit were more than satisfied with AID's solicitation and implementation of their wishes. The fact is, however, that there are very few PVOs or NGOs operating in Niger. Although the GON has officially opened the door to establishment of local NGOs, there remains a pronounced lack of experience in the creation and operation of such groups. The current, small consortium of NGOs is well-installed, but has been ineffective in lobbying or promoting NGOs, given past constraints.

At the moment, there exists no mechanism even to receive feedback from target populations, other than nascent political parties. It is doubtful that the juggernaut is going to

encourage the formal development of effective communication and implementation structures despite national-level agreement in principle.

An observation that might be appropriate in the near future: with the confusion in the current government, the inertia of local NGOs, and a period of radical transformation in the way international PVOs do business, it might be more appropriate to redefine NGO in a larger, rather than more limited sense. Groups exist everywhere, many are not nonprofit, but some are solid institutions that can be dealt with by funders through intermediaries.

In the long term, the election process and the establishment of a new government will be the only effective preconditions for judging commitment to local participation.

## **VII. Conclusion**

The purpose of the team's visit and report was to assess how the Congressional mandate for local participation in the design of A.I.D.'s Development Fund for Africa's programs is being carried out. The Niger ASDG II had been selected as one of several country case studies. In order to have a more thorough understanding of the design process, the team also took a brief look at the participatory aspects of the implementation of ASDG I, which increased its understanding of how the second half of the Congressional mandate—participation in implementation of those project or NPA activities with a local focus—was being realized. The PA team also investigated the existence, role, and abilities of associations, whether formally titled NGOs or not, in performing the interlocutory role that the DFA legislation has identified for them.

In brief, the PA team found that Niger has not historically been a very receptive environment for participatory development approaches. Dating from colonial times, the state has dominated development activities, and until the 1980s, the donor community supported this top-down, statist approach. The PA team found that there had been a growing recognition, however, that this development philosophy and modality was not having the desired outcome, at least in the agricultural and natural resources sectors of the economy. The policy reform agenda for ASDG I, and the activities supported with its Counterpart Fund, reflect the evolution of thought on the role of participation and local action vis-à-vis the state. Much of the conditionality relates to lifting state monopolies and expanding opportunities for private profit or nonprofit entities to operate in agricultural input supply, credit provision and product marketing. The NRM aspect, as embodied particularly in the ASDG I sixth tranche conditionality, moved this liberalization to the community level. It creates the opening for local-level management of the resource base, particularly forests. The Counterpart Fund largely supported GON/USAID projects, some of which, such as the FLUP, experimented with participatory approaches. A few PVO activities were also supported with counterpart funds, establishing a further basis of experience with participatory approaches on which ASDG II could draw.

In this difficult development environment for participation, the PA team found that USAID/Niger had risen to the challenge. The designers began by learning from the experiences of the predecessor grant, and of other aspects of its portfolio, as well as commissioning studies where information gaps existed. It established a committee structure for developing the two components of the project—the NRM and the institutional strengthening. These committees consisted of technical and program personnel in both USAID and the GON, and the objectives of the program, the general policy framework and conditionality, as well as the plans for technical assistance, training, commodities, and so forth, were all negotiated in the two-year long design process. The design committee members attended the Dosso conference on Nigerien NGOs in April 1990, and held systematic, one-on-one meetings with international and local NGOs to elicit their participation in the design of ASDG II. The Participation Assessment team recognized that, given conditions for community-level participation in Niger, it was difficult to actually consult local people. Some field visits by design committee members were undertaken, but by and large direct consultation was limited. This may lead to differences of view regarding the sequencing or timing of interventions viewed as desirable by local individuals or groups, or to changes in emphasis during implementation, for example, to more explicitly address the role of women in NRM.

The team found that the principal means by which USAID/Niger addressed the constraints to participation in NRM in formulating ASDG II were twofold: (1) it built into the policy conditionality itself incentives for participation; and (2) it left considerable flexibility in both out-year policy conditionality and the projectized PVO/private sector fund, once having set the overall program objective of improved NRM. In regard to the policy conditionality, there are four ways that opportunities for popular participation should be expanded: (a) removal/weakening of barriers to local private initiative; (b) reform of government agencies to respond to local initiative; (c) reconstitution of cooperatives and credit unions as private, voluntary associations regulated, but not controlled by government and (d) support for implementation of agreements reached in the 1991 National Conference. Overall, it is anticipated that the flexibility inherent in the ASDG II design will permit the A.I.D. agriculture program to take the lead where appropriate in working with the GON to permit more individual, private initiative at the local level and to respond to initiatives of the Nigerien movement toward democratization.

**Annex C - Ghana Trade and Investment Program (TIP)**

**Assessment of Local Participation in the  
Ghana Trade and Investment Program (TIP)**

USAID/Ghana 641-0125

**I. Program Description**

The USAID/Ghana-supported Trade and Investment Program (TIP) attempts to build on the positive economic trends that have appeared in Ghana since the introduction of the Economic Recovery Program (ERP) in April 1983. In the past nine years, real growth has occurred throughout the Ghanaian economy, and increasing stabilization of the administrative and banking sectors has generated a degree of confidence in Ghana's future. Despite impressive achievements, however, Ghana's economic development remains uneven and the current growth is not thought to be sustainable in the long term. Government spending and rapidly rising imports are expanding faster than growth in the traditional export sectors of Ghana's economy. Exports of these commodities, primarily cocoa, gold, timber, and electricity, are unable to bring financial resources into the country at the same rate funds are going out. With further growth in the export of these products limited, the expanding trade deficit threatens to undermine the advances made to date. Current projections estimate that the export sector must grow by 37 percent per year just to keep the trade deficit from increasing.

The Ghanaian export economy is currently constrained by the small number of traditional export products and the limited potential for large-scale increases in the production of these items. The four commodities—cocoa, gold, timber, and electricity—accounted for 87.5 percent of Ghana's exports in 1990. Growth of the traditional export sector is expected to remain at 7 percent through 1995, but with imports increasing by 10 percent annually, the already significant trade deficit will continue to expand. USAID and the Government of Ghana hope to address the trade imbalance by expanding the export sector to include a larger range of products and to promote greater involvement in the production and marketing of export commodities.

The proposed Trade and Investment Program is an \$80 million initiative designed to assist the Government of Ghana and private exporters to decrease the trade deficit by expanding exports of nontraditional items. At this point (May 1992), the TIP is still in the design stage. A Program Assistance Identification Proposal (PAIP) has been prepared and approved. The Program Assistance Approval Document (PAAD) was nearing completion at the time of the team's visit. The following assessment of local participation, therefore, only concerns the two-year design phase.

To promote an expansion of nontraditional exports, TIP will address a number of key constraints that have been identified as impediments to production of export commodities and their marketing. The program will provide a \$60 million sector cash grant that will be

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complemented by a \$20 million project component providing technical assistance and training. The cash grant will be disbursed in a series of tranches that will be conditional upon the Government of Ghana's institutionalization of policy reforms that relieve current constraints on exports and private-sector investments. The project component will provide short-term technical assistance to assist the GOG to develop policy alternatives, strategies and action plans; institutionally strengthen key organizations; and promote awareness regarding trade, investment, and economic issues.

In the initial stages, TIP will concentrate efforts to facilitate export of the following items that already comprise 85 percent of Ghana's small, nontraditional exports: pineapples, yams, tuna, frozen fish, shrimp, kola nuts, furniture, aluminum products, salt, scrap metal, rubber, palm oil, and artisanal products.

TIP's three-pronged approach hopes to increase significantly Ghana's nontraditional exports (NTEs) by:

- 1) strengthening the policy and institutional framework necessary to increase private sector investments and exports;
- 2) improving the incentives available to the private sector; and
- 3) improving the ability of individual firms and entrepreneurs to export.

## **II. Economic and Political Context**

A brief review of the key economic and political trends of the last decade helps our understanding of the design process for the proposed Ghana Trade and Investment Nonproject Assistance activity. Ghana has been in the forefront of sub-Saharan African countries that have significantly redirected their economies, and, as with many other nations on the continent, has embarked on a course that will return it to democratic rule by the end of 1992.

The Ghanaian Economic Recovery program was begun in 1983, and has gone through three phases. The first phase, during 1984-1986 was a "typical stabilization programme."<sup>4</sup> This stabilization resulted in a 6 percent average growth rate in those years, increased per capita incomes, and a sharp reduction of inflation. The Government of Ghana, and its principal financial partners (the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund) were not fully satisfied with the performance, and designed a follow-on adjustment phase (ERP II), which lasted from 1987-1991. The second phase continued adjustment of the macroeconomic policy framework, but also addressed sectoral policy issues in agriculture, industry, and the social sectors. A

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<sup>4</sup> Anyomi, C.D. "Economic Recovery and Structural Adjustment in Ghana: 1983-1992 An Overview." Paper given at Roundtable Conference on the Role of NGOs in Structural Adjustment in Ghana, Accra, March 1992. p. 4.

program of infrastructure rehabilitation to support the changed policy framework was also begun. A third structural adjustment phase, begun last year, is aimed at increasing private investment in the economy and sustaining the macroeconomic gains made in the previous two phases.<sup>5</sup>

The Government of Ghana's desire to compensate for certain costs of adjustment and to maintain political support for economic reforms led to the creation of the Programme of Actions to Mitigate the Social Cost of Adjustment (PAMSCAD), which essentially accelerated the Government's planned program of health and education investments using donor funds that were outside the terms of the Structural Adjustment Program negotiated with the Bank and the Fund. According to the GOG, social sector spending has been sustained and there have been positive rates of growth as well as real per capita income increases during the eight years of economic reform. In addition, the GOG asserts that the increased availability of necessary inputs for continued growth is due directly to adjustment. The GOG also argues that, just as income was not entirely equitably distributed pre-reform, so in post-reform socioeconomic stratification is expected. It is therefore counting on PAMSCAD to suspend a safety net under those at the lower end of the socioeconomic scale.<sup>6</sup>

Critics of the Ghanaian adjustment program have cited anecdotal evidence to suggest that the PAMSCAD has been unsuccessful in its objectives of mitigating the effects of adjustment on vulnerable groups and actually alleviating poverty. As a consequence, these critics maintain, the income gap has widened, and though there may be a greater availability of goods and services in the Ghanaian economy, the poor lack the income to take advantage of these changes. A course that favors free-market growth without government regulation, the critics believe, will further exacerbate inequities, depriving the poor of the benefits of growth. Although few take issue with the need for the economic adjustment that has occurred in Ghana, the nongovernmental organizations, for example, would like to strengthen their role in promoting popular participation in Ghana's development, and particularly in its economic policy formulation.<sup>7</sup> This incorporation of nongovernmental entities in the economic policy formulation process has important interrelationships with the unfolding political process discussed in succeeding paragraphs.

As with many sub-Saharan African nations that combined African socialism with Marxist philosophy and a propensity for one-party rule, Ghana's first 31 years of independence were dominated by a statist vision—that is, the state would provide but the state would also control. During those years, Ghana had sawawed back and forth between democratic republics and military rule, the latest turnover being the coup that brought Chairman J. J. Rawlings to power

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid. p. 5.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p. 12.

<sup>7</sup> Ntim, S. M. "Popular Participation and the Role of NGOs in Structural Adjustment Programme in Ghana." Paper presented at the Roundtable on Structural Adjustment in Ghana, Accra, March 1992, p. 9.

in 1981. In its first two years in office, the Rawlings government did not try to change the overall direction or philosophy, but when faced with financial insolvency and a complete loss of creditworthiness, the regime perceived itself as having no alternative than to undertake far-reaching measures to adjust the structure of its economy.

The implications of the statist course pursued until the mid-1980s included a competition, or crowding out of the for-profit private sector, and a stifling of the formation of associations, including development NGOs. For example, the Ghana National Chamber of Commerce was given an official, quas governmental function in the issuance of licenses for export. This effectively deflected its advocacy function, and it is only in the last few years that it was relieved of the licensing responsibility and reformulated as an association of private businesspersons. In the rural sector, cooperatives—to the extent they existed above the informal, community-level entity in Ghana—were viewed as competitors to state input supply and marketing organizations, and officially discouraged. This inhospitality, combined with cultural disincentives to the accumulation of visible, tangible wealth (which must be shared with one's relations), effectively limited group action and the emergence of a strong indigenous private sector, whether for-profit or not.

The GOG has now embarked on a democratization process according to an announced schedule, which has been adhered to as of this writing. The steps and timing are as follows:

|                                     |                  |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| Referendum (on constitution?)       | April 28, 1992   |
| Formation of political parties      | May 18, 1992     |
| Presidential elections              | November 3, 1992 |
| Parliamentary elections             | December 8, 1992 |
| Inauguration of the Fourth Republic | January 7, 1992. |

Additional media channels have also been permitted, with a proliferation of newspapers from one official organ to multiple daily and weekly papers.

Another important aspect of the environment for group action and advocacy (the inverse of consultation), is the GOG policy of decentralization and its implementation. The Government has flirted with decentralization since the 1970s, and, though the current iteration is, to date, closer to deconcentration—or at best devolution—of authority, it has been taken seriously and implemented with vigor in certain parts of the country or sectors. In Central Region, a quasigovernmental development organization, Central Region Development Commission (CEDECOM) has been formed, largely on the initiative of the Regional Secretary, who has capitalized on the leeway given him under the GOG's decentralization policy. In other words, he and his team of district officials have devised a way to accelerate implementation of the decentralization policy. Much hinges on revenue availability, however, and, as yet, authority to raise and expend revenue has been limited. The stage is also set, with the decentralization policy, for the formation and strengthening of the "missing middle" of NGOs—those that would link primary societies, or base organizations, to each other and achieve both economies of scale and a more substantial political voice. Although the team encountered one US PVO that had

begun to think about linking its network of processing facilities together, there was scant additional evidence of this mid-level coalescence around an economic activity or a cause had yet come to pass. The two- or three-year time period during which these aspects of decentralization have had to germinate is too short to assess the impacts of this policy shift on group formation and group action.

The period of the TIP design—1990 and 1991—has witnessed the creation of a considerably friendlier environment for associations of all sorts. The combination of the Ghanaian ERP (which, in its most recent phase, has emphasized attracting private investment and economic diversification), the steps toward political transition, and the active pursuit of a decentralization policy have had positive effects. The economic, political and administrative changes in incentives are not enough, however, to bring groups together and strengthen them institutionally. To cite the GNCC again, the assistance being provided by the International Trade Centre (ITC) of the UN is clearly as critical as certain changes in the bylaws to turning the Chamber from a dormant, government-sanctioned organ into a bustling, dynamic, information conduit for commercial development on the one hand and policy formulation on the other. The AID program design process has bolstered the GNCC by giving it "a seat at the table," something that could equally have been done with representatives of small-end producers and traders, as indicated in Section III.B. below.

### **III. Participation and Consultation**

This section of the report looks first at the consultative process adopted by the Mission in the design of the Trade and Investment Program. The benefits and strengths of the process are examined, and then the shortcomings and constraints. The section concludes with suggestions for enhancing the benefits of the approach that has been adopted, and possible ways for overcoming some of the limitations.

#### **A. Strengths and Opportunities**

The assessment team found that USAID/Ghana has devoted a great deal of time and attention to the consultation process, in the design of the Trade and Investment Program and in the design and implementation of other components of the country program. The TIP design process was begun in mid-1990, and is still under way. During this two years there has been extensive interaction between USAID, representatives of the private sector, and the Government of Ghana. This has taken place in workshops and formal consultations, as well as in numerous informal meetings and dinner gatherings.

The Director and his staff demonstrate a high level of enthusiasm for the consultation process and a real commitment to making it work, which the team found to be both unusual and infectious. The Mission is convinced that the program should be developed with Ghanaians, so that it is a shared program with goals and objectives that have been mutually agreed upon, that will result in long lasting benefits. In our experience, this concern on the part of the donor to ensure local buy-in and sustainability is quite unusual.

One of the benefits of the consultative process has been to encourage business people in Ghana to identify areas of common concern and begin to organize among themselves. They have begun to come together to discuss shared problems, identify potential solutions, and speak to donors and government on behalf of the interest groups that they represent. The development of groups and associations is a new and encouraging trend, which contrasts with an earlier period when the formation of private associations was discouraged, and people were reluctant to articulate concerns and criticisms.

Another benefit of the approach has been to stimulate dialogue between the business community and the Government of Ghana. One result of USAID Ghana's decision to have a private enterprise foundation coordinate TIP activities is that it forced groups such as the Federation Association of Ghana Exporters (FAGE), Association of Ghana Industries (AGI), the Chamber of Commerce and other organizations to come together under one umbrella. These groups, as well as the World Bank and the Government, attended a USAID-sponsored workshop at Akosombo in May 1992 to discuss the TIP. At that conference the Deputy Minister of Finance formed task forces to work on selected issues in the TIP plan that were still unresolved. An interesting outcome of the meeting was the fact that the business people found they were forced to adopt a broader viewpoint when they made arguments to the GOG, because they now represented a broader and more diverse constituency.

An interesting aspect of the Mission's approach has been the use of Ghanaian consultants to carry out some of the surveys and research associated with the design of the program. This enhances local participation in project design, develops the capabilities and experience of Ghanaian researchers and consulting firms, and builds a network of people with skills that can be tapped for project implementation. When external consultants are brought in, they are asked to report on their findings and discuss recommendations with a group of people that extends beyond the program staff of the Mission. Again, this broadens participation, stimulates debate, and promotes accountability.

## **B. Constraints and Shortcomings**

The concerted, sustained process of consultation with associations of exporters and potential exporters described above demonstrates the potential for involving local groups and their needs and priorities in the articulation of policy reform conditions. Indeed, Mission staff describe a process of facilitation reminiscent of the work of community organizers, including repeated meetings with producer groups, soliciting views, seeking consensus on priority reforms, and building capacity and confidence in their ability to lobby their government agencies.

But the consultation and resultant participation in program design have been selective, and opportunities to involve a broad range of organizations and interests representing less advantaged groups in the Ghanaian society who are essential participants in any economic program, have not been seized. Specifically, there has not been a parallel process of strengthening of and consultation with the kinds of groups and interests described in the DFA

legislation: small scale producers, employees and their associations, development NGOs and other groupings representing the poor.

The Mission is developing a Title III program under which some local currency will be made available to NGOs involved in training smaller scale producers (Technoserve, Women's World Banking, and Aid to Artisans (Ghana). This Title III-financed training and finance is important, but it is not the same, for the present discussion, as consulting those who will be affected by the larger nontraditional export program, to ascertain and take into account their needs and priorities. Informal sector enterprises have been involved to a limited extent—comprising 10 percent of a sample of 300 groups—in surveys and focus groups intended to gather information about the needs of the private sector. But there has been no process even remotely comparable to the extended work done with producers' and exporters' associations.

Consulting with these less-advantaged groups presents serious challenges, discussed below. Prominent among them is the fact that these groups and interests, usually organized at the community level, are often not represented by easily identifiable regional groupings at a district or regional office, and are clearly not represented by a single national office. Even at the local level, they may also be relatively reticent because of the constraining effect of the political environment.

### C. The importance of broad consultation

Consultation with these groups is important for many of the same reasons it is valuable with manufacturers, producers or exporters associations. Without their direction and support, policies may not have the intended impacts, and may not have a domestic base of support and cooperation. If only those at the top of the benefit flow are consulted, declarations that benefits will be widely distributed appear to be only hopeful statements. Constraints at the levels of small producers (including women) and employees, which are likely to be of a different order from those of exporters themselves, cannot be addressed if they are not discussed.

What input might be gained if other actors in the relevant sectors of the economy are systematically asked: "What constrains you in getting a fair price for your contributions of product or labor?" The team's brief discussions with NGOs and others familiar with the constraints produced only illustrative responses. These are outlined below.

Small producers in agriculture, fishing, or wood products might raise issues about the operation of internal markets that exporters would not raise. Their terms for sale of their components or raw materials would be of concern, as would the reliability of the markets and the nature of the risks they would have to assume to produce to supply exporting agents. Changes in resource use and exploitation—of farm land, forest reserves, or coastal fishing waters—might affect their livelihood strategies in ways that would surface, if they were asked.

Employees of producers for export could be expected to have concerns about how reliably and how soon the benefits of the new strategy would reach them. Flexibility in working

schedules, to allow farm workers to continue to produce some food on their own land, is likely an issue. Wages would obviously be a concern. Day laborers on the pineapple farm the team visited are paid the agricultural minimum wage, roughly \$1 a day. It seems unlikely that they would see such a wage as full participation in the benefits of the anticipated boom in exports.

NGOs, named by the DFA legislation as a vehicle for consultation, were in general positive about the nontraditional export promotion program, when interviewed by the team. They did articulate concerns that should be fully explored, however. Income constraints on the poor majority of Ghanaians were seen as still denying them participation in the economic recovery that has put products on the shelves but not money in their pockets. An organization specializing in training and placing disadvantaged urban workers found job placement dramatically more difficult and less successful in the last three years. And NGOs expressed the concern that the networks of community associations with whom they are in contact—including religious and other groupings—would likely not be able to claim a share in the benefits of the export strategy.

The importance of broad consultation extends beyond the project's impact. Particularly at the present juncture in its political life, Ghanaian society can benefit from the kind of mobilization and organization that the Mission has helped to facilitate among associations of producers. As groups at all levels of society feel more free to voice their needs and priorities to government, it is vital that the voice of less-advantaged groups be present. A process of consultation and facilitation with some of the groups discussed above could help broaden participation in Ghanaian political life and increase public confidence in the legitimacy of decisions reached through that process. If large groups of the population are left at the margins of the political system as well as the economy, one can hardly expect them not to express their frustration by reacting and challenging an economic program they were not invited to help shape.

#### **D. Obstacles to Participation and Suggestions for Action**

Export promotion and trade policy reform may appear at first glance to be sectors that do not readily lend themselves to broader consultation with the groups specifically named in the DFA legislation. Other obstacles to broader participation were noted briefly above. The views of small-scale producers and workers are not represented by national associations, with well-informed spokespeople in national offices who are ready to articulate their interests. Nor are they practiced in expressing their collective needs to government and donor agencies in an organized manner. Consultation with these groups would place demands on the Mission that would be even more time-consuming than the participatory process that has been carried out.

Such a process was not begun and carried out parallel to the support and consultation with producers and exporters. As the Mission consulted almost exclusively with groups other than those specified in the DFA legislation, relatively less-advantaged groups now appear to be in an even weaker position than before, vis-à-vis other interests groups, in seeking government policies that respond to their priorities and needs.

However, a number of actions could be taken by the Mission to broaden participation and overcome some of the obstacles and constraints that have been recognized.

Through its activities in other sectors, the Mission has identified and initiated a relationship with a number of US PVOs, indigenous NGOs, and women's organizations. Some of these could be brought into a dialogue about policy issues, as well as program implementation. It is particularly important to consult them about the TIP design, which is closely linked to structural adjustment measures and Ghana's Economic Recovery Programme. NGOs are known to have concerns about the effects of ERP on the poorest segments of Ghanaian society, which they expressed publicly in a recent Roundtable Workshop on NGOs and Structural Adjustment.<sup>8</sup> While there may be broad agreement that drastic measures were necessary, there clearly needs to be more awareness of the hardships that have resulted and continuing debate about ways to minimize the negative impact of some policies on the poor. Perhaps more importantly for USAID's TIP design process, representatives of small producers and employees need to be found and included in the policy dialogue.

Secondly, certain components of the Trade and Investment Program could be designed to target more export products that have potential for benefiting small producers and women. These should be products with low barriers to entry, especially in terms of capital requirements. Special assistance could be provided to the small producers, including small loans, training opportunities, and help with marketing.

Another parallel course of action could be a systematic effort to build and strengthen the institutions that represent less organized and disadvantaged groups. Some of the NGOs and grassroots associations that we met and heard about need training and institutional support, so that they can define their roles more sharply and provide better services to their constituencies. US PVOs could be encouraged to place greater emphasis on developing local organizational capacity, either as part of their ongoing programs or through a specially designed umbrella project managed by an American organization.<sup>9</sup>

These actions would not only meet the immediate objective of broadening participation in the design and implementation of USAID programs. They would also make a valuable contribution to the political process that is now under way in Ghana, by engaging a broader range of groups in the debate about the country's political and economic future.

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<sup>8</sup> The workshop was financed by the World Bank and held in Accra on 23-25 March 1992. It was attended by over 100 participants from NGOs and grassroots organizations. Donors and government representatives were also invited to attend.

<sup>9</sup> The PVO/NGO Support Project in Senegal might be an interesting model for USAID/Ghana to look at, as well as the PVO Co-Financing Project in Mali.

**Annex D - Ghana Primary Education Program (PREP)**

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**Assessment of Participation in the  
Ghana Primary Education Program (PREP)**

USAID/Ghana 641-0119 and 641-0120

**I. Program Description**

The Ghana Primary Education Program (PREP), a five-year program funded by USAID Ghana, began in 1990, and the first funding was released in 1991. The total budget of \$35 million includes a \$3 million project component. The majority of funds are \$32 million in budget support, which will generate the equivalent in local currency to the Government of Ghana for support of several agreed upon aspects of the primary education system. The US dollar funds will be disbursed in five tranches, subject to a set of conditions that are specified in the program agreement with the Ministry of Education.<sup>10</sup>

The goal of PREP is to establish a high quality, accessible, equitable, and financially sustainable Ghanaian primary education system by the year 2000. There are thus four aspects of the primary education system targeted by PREP, namely:

1. *High quality*, measured by student achievement;
2. *Accessibility*, as measured by national enrollment rates;
3. *Equity*, as measured by the enrollment and retention rates of groups of children who are currently under-represented; and
4. *Financial Sustainability*, as measured by the ability of the Ministry of Education to fund a sound primary education system from its own financial resources.

As a result of PREP, USAID expects the system to become more efficient, as measured by lower dropout rates and fewer repeating students, but this is not included as a direct objective of the program.

The program, designed in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, is very much in line with the Government of Ghana's objectives for the education sector. Historically Ghanaians have been proud of a strong education system, known as one of the finest in Africa. In the 1970s and early 1980s the schools and universities went into serious decline, largely because of diminishing financial resources that were paralleled in other sectors of the economy. Under the Economic Recovery Programme (ERP) which has been in effect since 1983, stringent controls

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<sup>10</sup> The program is now in the third phase.

imposed by the IMF have severely limited government expenditure on education, as well as other services.<sup>2</sup> The rationale for PREP is that it will increase short-term spending on primary education, while at the same time addressing policy and institutional constraints, thereby contributing to long-term economic growth.

PREP is intended to support a series of educational reforms initiated by the Ministry of Education in 1986-1987. The reforms were designed to improve access and quality of education, introduce a more relevant and functional curriculum, increase cost-effectiveness and cost recovery, and involve parents and communities in education. Although the reforms were intended to be comprehensive, they were only partially implemented. More attention was given to restructuring and upgrading junior secondary and higher levels of the education system, and much less emphasis was placed on improving primary education. While the World Bank and other donors have provided support to the Ministry of Education under two Education Structural Adjustment Credits, USAID is the first donor to assist the primary sector.

Over five years the program is expected to benefit 63,000 primary school educators, 14,000 supervisory personnel and approximately 2.1 million children. The equity component places special emphasis on reaching children—particularly girls—in districts that are poorly served by the primary school system at present.

PREP is implemented by 11 staff members in the Ministry of Education, who form the Project Management Unit (PMU). Staff from USAID work closely with the PMU. Together they are responsible for close monitoring of the program's progress toward objectives. They are measuring the increased supply of school books, quality of teachers, increases of enrollment (especially of girls) and progress toward greater equity. The baseline survey conducted at the outset includes a measure of parental satisfaction with primary schools, so that changes in attitude can be monitored.

PREP was selected for this assessment because the team expected to find a high level of consultation with parents and teachers about proposed improvements in primary schools. Also, this is a program that has been in the implementation phase for a little over a year, unlike the Trade and Investment Program which is still in the design phase.

## **II. Equity Improvement Program**

Ghana's equity improvement program responds to inequalities of access to primary schooling associated with geographic remoteness in the north, with poverty, and with gender. In its conception, its overall design as a set of diverse pilot projects, and in some particulars of

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<sup>2</sup> Indeed, USAID states that the anticipated returns on investment in human capital would justify a much higher level of spending than has been allowed under the Economic Recovery Programme (PAAD 2-6).

the pilot programs, it exhibits some substantial efforts to promote participation by communities and parents.

The equity concerns flow from observed statistical inequities noted by the Ministry. Student retention, teacher stock and quality, and attendance, particularly by girls, were among the indicators observed. Relatively brief field visits by Ministry personnel confirmed the statistical inequities. Attitude surveys were another source of information in diagnosing the inequity problems: especially in the north, girls are often engaged to be married quite young, and parents and prospective husbands place limited value on their schooling.

The equity improvement program consists of pilot projects of six types, carried out in a total of 44 communities, more than half of them in the relatively underserved and impoverished northern regions. The six project types are: competitions among schools for improved retention of students, with a cash prize offered; scholarship programs; textbook supply; community involvement programs; furniture supply; and "remote area incentives" for teachers. Two other project ideas, housing improvement for teachers in remote areas and library construction, are being developed for use in a small number of additional communities.

The use of pilot programs represents an effort to test some diverse approaches to addressing a complex set of inequalities. At the end of the equity pilot program period, the Ministry is to make recommendations for more sweeping national policy changes, incorporating lessons from the successful interventions into a proposed national policy. The future of a larger national policy to improve equity in schooling is not clearly laid out. The pilot structure, however, allows community and family responses to a variety of interventions to help highlight the potentially successful interventions. As such it is a more participatory approach than the launching of a larger national campaign that might be conceived without a clear sense of the needs and priorities of underserved regions and populations.

Two of the pilot programs, "retention competitions" and "community involvement," illustrate the role that community initiative and support plays in the equity pilot program. In the retention competitions, four schools in each of four districts, and 5 in a fifth district, have been selected for an experimental competition. All are in remote areas. Between November and September, the school that improves its retention rate most will win a 500,000 cedi prize, to be used in the school. The competitions seem unlikely to become an ongoing or national tool for reducing dropouts. But in the pilot communities, they are offered as an incentive to get school staff, particularly head teachers, to engage themselves with the community. Teachers in most communities are canvassing families of school age children to talk about the children's schooling. Town meetings are being called to facilitate community discussions of the schools.

The "community involvement" pilots, in four districts, give the most explicit emphasis to the participation of the whole community. Town meetings are a vehicle for head teachers to try to stir up parental consciousness of the need for schooling. After a series of three town meetings, the program proposes a "parent day," in which parents visit the school to observe some special student activity, e.g., a science project, or a dramatic or cultural presentation. In

an interesting innovation, parents are invited to come and teach brief units on subjects of special knowledge, including trades and local history. Teachers in the community involvement pilots are expected to continue interaction with PTAs.

The pilots will provide an interesting test of the effectiveness of a wide variety of interventions—from supplying textbooks and furniture to incentives for teachers in remote districts to process-oriented community involvement programs—in addressing schooling inequities.

### **III. Criterion-Referenced Tests**

The Criterion-Referenced Tests (CRT) component of USAID/Ghana's PREP cannot be said to have emerged from broad-based consultations among beneficiaries and participants. Although the results of the testing program may eventually have a significant and positive impact on primary school education in Ghana, the program itself is inherently top-down in its structure. The CRT exercise is primarily to allow educators in the upper levels of the MOE to assess the impact of the primary school reform program in terms of student's understanding of basic subject matter.

The PREP unit is currently designing criterion-referenced tests to assess the English and mathematics programs in primary schools across the nation. The CRT design team started by reviewing the standard syllabus (including all textbooks, topics, and objectives) as set forth by the MOE for primary school teachers of these two subjects. The team came up with a set number of items or criteria (127 for English and 100 for mathematics) that every primary school student should know by the end of the sixth year. A selected group of teachers and educators were then asked to come up with 15 questions that addressed each criterion, from which the design team chose the 10 best. The criteria were then combined and the questions randomized to come up with ten different tests to be administered to primary 6 students. In July or August 1992, the PREP unit plans to administer the CRT to approximately 12,000 primary 6 students (representing 5 percent of the total in Ghana). The following year the MOE plans to increase the proportion of students tested to 30 percent, and then have 100 percent coverage by 1994.

Through CRT analysis, the MOE hopes to obtain a better understanding of how well Ghanaian students are learning their basic skills (the effects of the educational policy reforms) and to devise a mechanism to target assistance for regions, districts, and even individual schools, where problems are occurring. Results of the tests can be fed back to the curriculum development program and in-service teacher training.

Several problems remain to be worked out between the design of the CRT component and the effective implementation of the program. These have already been identified by PREP's CRT design team. The first is the need to establish more direct, institutionalized links between CRT analysis and curriculum development and teacher training. The positive potential CRT offers in this regard is recognized by all, but the precise mechanisms by which CRT results will be transformed into subject matter and training has not been completely defined. Since this

problem is already recognized, however, it seems likely that the first two years of pilot testing for the CRT will also be used to build firm connections between the analysis of exam results and the content and delivery of Ghana's primary school education program.

The second problem concerns the conceptualization and understanding of the purpose of CRTs tests among teachers and parents. Primary school teachers throughout Ghana have heard that new tests will be administered to primary 6 students, but because the program was conceived and designed at the MOE in Accra without widespread consultation, misunderstandings remain about what the tests are supposed to do. According to PREP staff members, a number of teachers are trying to obtain sample tests so that they can begin to instruct their students to better answer the specific questions. An information dissemination campaign needs to be undertaken to let teachers know that the tests are being implemented to assess Ghanaian students' grasp of basic educational skills, rather than to evaluate individual teachers. Although it is clear that CRT will identify teaching deficiencies, teachers need to know that the program can actually help them by guiding the development of more effective curriculum and providing input to restructure teacher training programs. Similarly, parents must be made aware that the CRT is not an advancement exam that must be passed before students can move into the junior secondary program. They should be informed that the tests are designed to assess the primary education program in their region and to identify elements that need assistance or improvement.

#### **IV. Monitoring and Evaluation in PREP**

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) unit of the PREP is dedicated primarily to monitoring PREP implementation and impact. A secondary objective is to feed into Ministry decision-making through its analysis of information and formulation of policy recommendations. It liaises with, but is not a part of, the MOE's extensive Planning, Budgeting, Management, and Evaluation Unit.

The overall education reform progress monitoring system works by passing information from the level of the school through at least two different channels. The first is the District Implementation Committee for education, which reports through its members' respective headquarters offices to the National Planning Committee for School Reform (NPCSR). The second channel is more specific to PREP, and to the other programs of external assistance. It also derives information from the school level, but that information is collected by Circuit Monitoring Assistants (CMAs), who are drawn from the Ghana National Service Corps, but are paid for their work on data collection. The CMAs report to the district level, which, in turn, reports to the regional level. Information reaching the regional level is aggregated at MOE headquarters by the Project Management Unit M&E staff and passed to the Deputy Secretary for Primary Education. That individual is a member of the NPCSR, and so can compare information received through project channels from that received through the decentralized reform implementation structure. The normal MOE/GES reporting system is yet another parallel channel for monitoring and reporting.

Much of the reporting in these three simultaneous systems is of a process nature. The PREP M&E unit also has a broader range of responsibilities in monitoring impact and formulating policy recommendations (possibly related to modifications in PREP implementation, or to MOE policy in basic education that are not part of the PREP). A review of the types of data to be collected and the methodologies proposed suggests that M&E will go well beyond a management information system.

The M&E Unit Coordinator is relatively new to his post, having begun work early in 1992. He was overall PMU Coordinator before, and had experience in using the data collected in the first year's M&E efforts to prepare the MOE's progress report regarding the satisfaction of conditions for the release of the second tranche. He has set out a timetable and a matrix of data collection and analysis activities. These are weighted toward the Equity Improvement Program, which is analogous to a controlled experiment within the PREP, and hence requires a more expansive monitoring and evaluation effort. The M&E Unit Coordinator regards his unit as providing technical support to the other aspects of the project—assisting them to identify what it is they need to measure, the appropriate methodology to use, and to do the initial analysis of the data. The M&E unit will then carry out a secondary analysis, which will synthesize the results and, in consultation with the specific unit involved (particularly as it pertains to the equity improvement pilots), formulate policy recommendations for the MOE to endorse and send on to the NPCSR.

In regard to the participation issue, specifically, there are several variables that are embedded in the various studies and data collection activities that will help to illuminate the role and intensity of community participation, and its impact on the desired outcomes of broadening school access and retention. For example, the M&E Unit will use qualitative as well as quantitative methods to learn from district-level implementors what has changed, how issues are being resolved, and other points pertinent to an assessment of the status of decentralized management capacity. Another example is that each equity pilot activity has a community involvement component, which will be a variable in the evaluations.

There are plans to use multivariate analysis, especially on the EIP pilot data, to ascertain those variables that have the most significant impact on access and retention rates. These variables will presumably form the basis for recommendations regarding formulation of an Equity Improvement Policy and its subsequent implementation. It will be interesting to see what significance community participation and decentralized school management have on the desired outcomes.

Other studies and data collections to be undertaken are summarized in the attached matrix prepared by the M&E Unit Coordinator in consultation with the USAID HRDO office.

## **V. The Ghana PREP and Local Participation**

The design of the PREP was a truncated process that was required to conform with the Africa Bureau's efforts to conform with a Congressional mandate to support basic education

around the world. Fortunately, the Government of Ghana had designed an overall educational reform program beginning in 1987. The GOG and the USAID thus found common ground in support to formal primary education reform. This had the effect, from the point of view of participation, of targeting A.I.D.'s support toward that part of the education system that would have the broadest spread effects and highest potential for impact on the rural and urban poor.

Notwithstanding the truncated timetable for program design, USAID was again fortunate that the GOG had undertaken a baseline study in 1986 as it began the overall reform program, and that other data were relatively abundant, so that the four-person team within the NPCSR who worked on primary education reform, together with its A.I.D. counterparts, were able to make a preliminary identification of issues, which were then verified in a month-long field reconnaissance visit by joint GOG-A.I.D. teams.

Several elements designed into the program respond to the development problems raised in the assessments cited above. Chief among them is the Equity Improvement Program, which uses a pilot approach to assessing different potential responses to some of the needs articulated. Other components that appear to respond to the needs of parents and communities that emerged during design studies include the provision of textbooks and other supplies and teacher training that is designed to provide more incentives for better teacher performance by fully qualifying teachers as well as imparting new pedagogical skills.

The PREP is fully supportive of, and is, in fact, keeping pressure up for, continued implementation of the GOG's decentralization policy. It is evident that the MOE is already in the forefront of GOG decentralization, with its District Education Planning and Management Committees actually in operation. These committees include representatives of parent-teacher associations, as well as other community and religious representatives, and appear in some of the instances cited to be effectively responding to local complaints and articulations of needs. A.I.D. should continue to encourage the MOE's broader view, and the apparent willingness of the district level to conceptualize participation as more than provision of land, physical infrastructure, and labor for schools, but as a concern for the qualitative aspects of childrens' education as well.

Finally, the ongoing attitudinal surveys that are to be undertaken by the PREP M&E Unit will provide an additional channel for and source of information on local participation and the motivation for high or low levels thereof.

**Annex E - Uganda Action Plan for the Environment (APE)**

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**Assessment of Local Participation in the  
Uganda Action Plan for the Environment**

(USAID/Uganda 617-0123/4)

**I. Program Description**

The Action Plan for the Environment (APE) program is a \$30 million grant to the Government of Uganda, intended to assist the more effective and sustainable management of natural resources in selected areas. The APE employs a mix of policy-related nonproject (NPA) assistance (\$10 million) and project assistance (\$20 million). The NPA is to be released in three tranches tied to the government's fulfillment of resource management-related conditions, described below.

NRM is considered a critical need in Uganda for reasons related to the productivity of its agriculture-based economy, the conservation of extremely rich ecological zones (conserving biodiversity, promoting tourism and the associated foreign exchange revenues), and the ability of the poor rural population to earn adequate livelihoods from agriculture and related activities.

The APE policy component focuses on policy changes in three areas: development of a National Environmental Action Plan; upgrading of several protected areas from National Forest status to National Parks; and institutional support to the two key relevant ministries (Ministry of Energy, Minerals, and Environment Protection; and Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife, and Antiquities).

The National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) is to "identify and analyze major environmental problems, and develop a comprehensive national strategy" for dealing with them, encompassing legislation, policy reforms, changes in existing resource-related projects, and new projects for NRM.

The NEAP process, which has been completed or is under way in many countries, was initiated by the World Bank in 1987. Preparation for the Uganda NEAP began in 1990, and the process officially started in August 1991. USAID's participation focuses on providing financial and technical support for a national process of discussion and policy analysis, reviewing of options and drafting of new policy. A NEAP Secretariat is to develop draft recommendations in each of eight issue areas. These recommendations are to be the framework for a process of discussion and review at the local level, envisioned as including local governmental, commercial, private voluntary, and community representatives.

APE project assistance will fund three long-term advisors to the NEAP secretariat, and two other technical advisors placed in the two line ministries. Shorter-term technical training and advice is also provided. Three million dollars in nonproject assistance will be released when

the NEAP Secretariat has been put in place, and counterpart local currency funds will pay salaries and operating costs for the Secretariat for two and a half years.

Certain protected areas are to be upgraded, and their management systems reviewed and revised, under a second set of conditions to the APE. The Bwindi Forest and Rwenzori Forest Reserve are to be (and have been) converted into National Parks, the highest protection status in Uganda. These parks, as well as protected forest areas (Kibale, Semliki, and Mount Elgon Forest Reserves) are to be managed under a new set of principles, institutions, and criteria, including:

- broadly based representative Management Committees for each;
- elevation of biodiversity conservation to be the primary management objective of the Management Committees, with all forms of exploitation to be regulated by the Management Committee. (Extraction of timber is prohibited except with explicit contrary action by a Management Committee.)
- return of a proportion (now 20 percent) of commercial (including tourist) activities to the local-level management of the forest;
- establishment of local advisory committees of local Resistance Council representatives, to register their participation.

Return of revenues to the forest/park locality, and explicit attention to the participation of communities living within or on the perimeter of protected areas are intended to address the historic tensions between local community livelihoods and park preservation. This theme is addressed further in the project component that provides mini-grants to local community and NGO activities including those in park and forest "buffer zones."

Institutional support involves assistance to Ministries and Departments with important NRM responsibilities under a recent ministerial reorganization/consolidation, particularly those with new or expanded responsibilities for managing upgraded Forest Reserves and National Parks. Conditionality was originally envisioned to encourage consolidation of the ministries and departments responsible for resource management, especially in protected areas. But the government's action to revise the number and structure of Ministries in July 1991 essentially met the planned conditions.

APE institutional support therefore focuses on funding and training to support the staff and activities of the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife, and Antiquities, and the Ministry of Energy, Minerals, and Environmental Protection. A total of \$732,000 in project assistance is to be provided for training and technical support in the Forest Department, Department of the Environment, Game Department, and Uganda National Parks, all under the Ministry of Energy, Minerals, and Environmental Protection.

Technical assistance and training in the Forest Department are to sensitize Forestry officials to possible alternative, sustainable uses of resources within the forest reserves. Assistance to the Game Department similarly aims to help the department orient its work toward establishing sound wildlife inventories, programs for utilization and conservation of buffer zones, conservation education, and study tours to programs elsewhere in Africa.

Institutional support in the Ugandan National Parks is more extensive. Four long-term advisors are to be financed:

- a Community Conservation Adviser, assisting the development of national policy and programs to work with local communities around protected forests and parks;
- a Chief Financial Officer, working with National Parks accounting staff for two years;
- a Park Support Advisor to assist in planning and management in tourism, education, and resource base management in the parks; and
- an NRM Advisor, coordinating project activities at USAID/Kampala.

The APE's final project component focuses on rehabilitation and resource conservation. It uses "project assistance and local currency counterparts to fund subgrants to PVOs and NGOs for projects supporting sustainable resource use; rehabilitation of protected areas; a natural resource information system; and environmental impact assessments" (PAAD, p. 29).

Grants to NGOs/PVOs will be administered through an umbrella grant structure, managed by a "competent US-registered PVO" (PAAD, p. 29). This PVO will establish a Grant Management Unit, which will solicit, review, and, with Mission approval, award grants. Projects focusing on sustainable resource use or environmental preservation will be eligible; buffer zone projects, tourism development, public conservation education, applied research, and biological inventories are the kinds of activities to be supported. Grants are divided into those in excess of \$25,000, and those that will never be greater than \$25,000 throughout the life of the project.

Since 1989, PVO/NGO activities in NRM have been funded under an AID regionally funded project administered by the Experiment for International Living (EIL). Funding is available in six priority resource management fields. Most of the 40 NGO subgrantees under the program are local Ugandan organizations.

In addition to the PVO/NGO grants, project activities include \$140,000 in foreign exchange and \$2.2 million in local currency counterpart to support infrastructure improvement and rehabilitation in and around reserves and parks. These improvements would include boundary demarcation and road rehabilitation. Local currency support (\$290,000) is also provided for environmental assessments of ongoing public projects, to be carried out by indigenous environmental consulting firms.

## **II. Participation in Choice of the NRM Sector**

The driving force behind the APE design was the feeling within USAID and the GOU (as well as within many conservation-oriented groups operating in Uganda) that protective measures were needed to conserve the environmental treasures of southwestern Uganda, or they wouldn't be there much longer. The Rwenzori Mountains, the Impenetrable Forest, and other areas targeted by the APE represent environmental features found in very few places on earth. Increased deforestation, threatening the region's principal watersheds, is just one of many environmentally destructive processes that endanger the natural resource base upon which many rural Ugandans depend. The APE was conceived as an attempt to reverse some alarming trends.

Another theme initially used to justify the APE's concentration of efforts in and around the southwestern parks was the hope that conservation of these natural resources would bring a resurgence of tourism to Uganda. Efforts to increase the foreign currency coming into Uganda underlie a number of USAID mission programs, including the APE. During the design phase, the tourism potential was a factor that contributed to the concentration on protected areas. This emphasis on the parks has continued, although tourism's ability to generate significant revenues was seriously challenged by several more recent studies, and rejected as a basis for the program by AID/Washington.

Although USAID/Uganda had extensive discussions with international conservation organizations, it does not appear that mission personnel actively sought consultation with local groups or their representatives during the design phase of this program. However, by including support for the NEAP, which is using a consultative process to prioritize environmental problems throughout the country, by involving local groups in the conservation efforts in the parks and buffer zones, and by leaving open the choice of siting and type of NRM activities supported through the PVO/NGO local currency grant component, the APE has the potential to broaden participation during its implementation stages.

## **III. Participation at the National Level**

Participation is being anticipated and promoted in five aspects of the APE. Most of the participation in implementation will occur through the consultation process built into the steps for formulating the National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP). The second participatory aspect is a change in policy governing all parks and reserves under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife, and Antiquities that requires the use of a management committee with local representation in the development of a management plan for each park or reserve. The third dimension that may facilitate greater participation is the institutional support provided to the MTWA and to the MEMEP to reorient the park and reserve wardens and forestry officers toward extension functions more compatible with multiple uses of the resource base. Fourth, the decentralization of national parks' financial management entails a plan to transfer a percent of receipts to the local communities and, finally, the APE calls for the privatization of tourism concessions in and around national parks and forest parks, with special consideration given to local bidders. Each of these aspects is addressed below.

A. The NEAP formulation process was initiated in August 1991, with a Presidential ceremony and the formation of the Secretariat. Eight task forces—on subjects ranging from biodiversity to climate change to land management—were convened in November 1991. The task force composition includes representatives of government, the private sector (defined as "for-profit firms and institutions, agricultural cooperatives, and trade associations") and NGOs (defined as "recognized nonprofit, church organizations, and local community grassroots organizations"). As yet, the technical advisors that USAID had planned to provide have not been made available. The task forces and secretariat have nevertheless pursued their charge, and have, as of this writing, completed drafts of topic papers, from which issues papers have been derived.

According to the plan for NEAP formulation, the development of the topic/issues papers and recommendations was to have been based on extensive consultation with both the private commercial sector and community groups. The latter were to include "local resource users (e.g., farmers, herders, fishermen, loggers and traditional hunters), Resistance Councils, indigenous NGOs and local community organizations (church groups, women's groups, Wildlife Clubs, and farmers associations)." The timing of community members' participation is also specified in the NEAP timetable, so that their input would assist the task forces to 1) define the priority environmental problems and issues; 2) recommend solutions to these problems and issues; and 3) review the findings and recommendations. Formal interviews with the RCs are specified, as is special attention to local-level women's organizations in the consultation process.

The issues papers the task forces have now drafted will be the basis for discussion at regional workshops with local people that will begin at the end of June 1992. The NEAP Secretariat is responsible for organizing the workshops and publicizing them. It is expected that the Chair of each task force will attend each workshop, but it is unclear whether any of the technical personnel responsible for the issues papers and recommendations will attend.

The workshop findings will be reviewed by the relevant task force(s), and revisions will be made in the issues papers and recommendations for any "legislative, policy or institutional reforms; corrective environmental measures for current and future projects; and development programs related to natural resource management (APE PAAD:19)." Following on these revisions, a national conference on the draft NEAP will be convened. Those invited to the conference will include representatives from the GOU, the private sector, and "male and female participants from the NGOs." Input from this conference will eventually lead to a final draft.

Three other bodies are involved in formulation of the NEAP and subsequent investment plan deriving from the NEAP that merit mention. The first is the Advisory Committee, which is divided into three subcommittees representing donors, NGOs, and the private sector, respectively. This committee functions as an outside "ombudsman" body, which advises and advocates for the constituencies it represents. The second is the Steering Committee, a policy-level cabinet subcommittee comprised of the relevant ministers and chaired by the Prime Minister. The third is the Parliament, which will have to ratify the final NEAP once it has been

endorsed by the Cabinet. These three entities provide something of a check-and-balance structure for the NEAP as it evolves.

Overall, the NEAP preparation structure is, on paper at least, highly participatory. Actions to date, as recounted to the team, suggest that the preparation process is unfolding as envisioned. The one concern that has been raised is that by adhering to a set and very speedy timetable, the Plan may lose some of the intended opportunities for participation. For example, the task forces had a very short time to undertake fieldwork, and might have been able to solicit more input had they had even an additional month. It is not clear that the lack of scheduled US technical assistance to date has had any bearing on the participatory nature of the process, though, clearly, more staff available to the Secretariat affords more potential for public outreach.

B. Management committees for each park and reserve had only just been effected in order to meet the conditions for release of the second tranche of the APE nonproject assistance when the team was in Uganda. The management committees are to include representatives of the GOU (e.g., the chief park warden representing the Park Service), of local NGOs, of the local government, and of the local business community. The philosophy is to change the nature of the relationship between the park or reserve management and the local population from adversarial to collaborative, and to begin building a new kind of relationship by developing a consensus management plan. Although the policy had only recently been changed, the field visit to the Rwenzori National Park provided an example of what is to become the norm at all parks. The chief warden had constituted a management committee for the park, and was already creating a plan for park development and use. Membership in the management committee included RC-1 representatives and representatives of the Rwenzori Mountaineering Service (there may also be other representation of which the team is unaware), who were present in a meeting with the team and verified that they are participating in discussions on a plan for park management and for the use of resources within the park. These discussions include some thorny issues, such as allocation of the revenue generated from tourism within the park boundaries as between the Park Service and the Rwenzori Mountaineering Service. The APE also envisions management committees for the three forests that were upgraded from reserves to parks under the program. As yet, the Forest Department has not developed a similar national-level policy.

C. The third participatory aspect of the APE at the national level is the technical assistance and training for MTWA and MEMEP. The objective is to carry out the analysis to quantify the value of alternative uses of forest resources other than for timber extraction. These analyses will be used as the basis for establishing training programs that emphasize alternative uses and resource management approaches. By lengthening the list of acceptable uses of forest resources, there is an assumption that the list of acceptable users, or stakeholders in the resource, will also lengthen, and the forest and park wardens will take a more advisory, collaborative stance vis-à-vis local inhabitants. By the same token, it is expected that local communities, once having become involved in the development of the management plan, will, to some extent, take over the "enforcement" role that the forest and park services had been playing, at least regulating the use by outsiders to the local community. The theory, and the

provision for operationalizing the theory and approach, are detailed in the APE design document. Moreover, the few Ugandan officials whom the team had the opportunity to interview spontaneously articulated the views embodied in the APE document. As yet, however, this philosophy has been operationalized only through the initiative of individual park and forestry wardens, and awaits the technical assistance and training to be more systematically institutionalized.

D. The APE project appears to rely on a two-pronged strategy for the successful management of parks and protected areas. The first, mentioned above, is upgrading the areas' protection status, coupled with assistance to the relevant Ministries and Departments. The second is to try to overcome local encroachment upon and sometimes hostility toward the parks by seeking out and supporting ways to give local communities a material stake in the conservation of the parks. The project recognizes that local initiative and participation is crucial to both these strategies.

Return of some proceeds from park-generated tourism or other revenues is a condition of the APE, now agreed to by the government. It seeks to address an important source of local hostility to protected areas: that local communities suffer the loss of access to resources without any compensating gain from tourism revenues, except for indirect earnings they may manage to make on the park's periphery. Return of 20 percent of revenues is expected to be a significant incentive to local populations to assume a role in protecting and managing the protected areas. The revenue issue was raised by the one community bordering on a park visited by the team, and informants often referred to it as a high priority in discussions with other "buffer zone" residents.

Exactly how the funds are to be returned to the locality, and whom they will accrue to, is not clear at this juncture. Some suggest that the Park Management Committees are the logical vehicle for revenue reflows; one informant argued that the RC1 or RC2 councils be the direct recipients; and the members of the Rwenzori Mountaineering Service argued, not surprisingly, that in the case of the Rwenzori Park, they themselves should receive and manage the shared revenues. The mechanics remain to be worked out in this promising strategy to meet an often-voiced demand, and stimulate local participation in park management.

E. The APE promotes the privatization of tourism concessions in and around national parks and forest reserves. This strategy stems from the important realization, by many in the field of resource management, that simply "building the fence higher" around protected areas is neither a fair nor an effective strategy for their protection. The AID Mission has adopted the strategy with enthusiasm and with high hopes for its wide application, based on the record of the Rwenzori Mountaineering Service, in Kasese district on the southern edge of the new Rwenzori Mountains National Park.

The Rwenzori Mountaineering Service (RMS) was formed in 1987, organizing local residents, a few of whom had long served as occasional guides and porters for visiting hikers and climbers, to provide these and other services more effectively and more profitably. RMS

decided to organize and register as an NGO, planning to devote a portion of earnings to community projects, and hoping to interest foreign donors in supporting the enterprise.

Beginning soon after RMS's formation, AID built a relationship with the NGO through funding capital costs of the school, dispensary, and maternity center, and with small grants for NRM activities that predate the APE. The AID assistance has been driven by the expressed priorities of RMS, which are taken to represent the wishes of at least a substantial portion of the community. In the process, personal relationships and understandings have been nurtured, reflecting commitment of considerable Mission staff time to the work of a single community-level NGO. Visiting Mission staff reported back to RMS, on the occasion of the team's visit, on how the RMS-expressed priorities, and those of other people consulted, were reflected in the documents of the Missions new Country Program Strategy Paper.

It is easy to understand the USAID mission's enthusiasm for working with the RMS, whose efforts combine private enterprise, community development, and natural resource protection in a single initiative. RMS leaders are articulate, have planned carefully (e.g., for secondary education to improve their supply of educated, English-speaking guides), and appear to be genuinely committed to preserving the mountains that have been their people's home for generations.

### **Replicating the RMS Model**

RMS has some 800 members. It is headquartered in the town of Ibanda, but members include people elsewhere in Kassese district and in neighboring districts. It is governed principally by a 15-member Executive Committee, elected by an annual plenary meeting of members. A newly formed Board of Trustees, whose membership will be heavily weighted with founding members, is intended to ensure that RMS remains close to its original mandate.

The people living around the Rwenzori Mountains, members of a relatively small ethnic group, have been historically isolated from political affairs in the wider Ugandan context and, as a consequence, have not benefited from development assistance to the same degree as more politically powerful groups. This fact may contribute to the cohesiveness of RMS as an organization as well as to the self-motivation and dedication of RMS leaders and members. Additionally, there is a strong connection between RMS as a group and the Rwenzori Mountains as "their" territory and the natural resource upon which many depend for their livelihood. All of these elements make RMS somewhat unique in terms of organization and the choice of activities the group has undertaken. In addition to capturing earnings from the growing tourist business in the Rwenzoris, RMS has involved itself in negotiating limited access to minor forest products, in making some infrastructure improvements to hiking trails and overnight camps on the mountains; and in community development projects. These projects include a dispensary, a new secondary school, and a maternity center in Ibanda. The services RMS has helped to bring to the district are a function both of its organizing to profit from the tourist trade, and from extensive funding of small projects by USAID. The local official interviewed by the team

expressed his enthusiasm for the work RMS had done to bring income and social services to the district.

The Mission has seized on the RMS model as an important basis for community organization and resource management on the peripheries of other parks and reserves. Communities on the perimeters of some of Uganda's other parks and forest reserves have expressed preliminary interest in learning from the RMS of their experience and methods. But the hoped-for replication of this model for community engagement with the park faces some difficult issues.

First, Mission staff acknowledge that the same high level of AID financial support—some \$700,000 over three years—will not be available to other communities. One source felt that the heavy AID support to RMS could undercut their credibility as advisors or extension agents of their approach, which could be viewed as a success that relied heavily on unique donor support. It would be unfortunate, too, if overreliance on a donor's support had the unintended effect of weakening RMS' base in the community, and its focus on its own entrepreneurial and community development skills.

Second, the Rwenzori Park and environs are also more rugged and less accessible than other park areas. One source in the AID Mission observed that the RMS succeeded in gaining both incorporation and NGO status in part because of its remote location and marginal relation to the national political scene. Obstacles to its work may begin to appear, this Mission officer noted, if and when RMS begins to work outside of the Rwenzoris.

Third, there is a greater history of hostility by local populations toward parks near, for example, the Queen Elizabeth II National Park. Protecting land that would be useable for grazing or farming may be more difficult than reaching an arrangement with neighbors to the Rwenzori park. Finally, RMS has developed within a unique socioeconomic and political context, and it is not clear that the same organizational processes will work among other groups in Uganda with different historical and geographical situations.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

Although the APE was designed without the benefit of intensive consultations with a broad range of local groups, the program's implementation plan includes numerous opportunities for extensive local-level involvement. Support for the National Environmental Action Plan formulation process provides a forum where local environmental concerns can be raised, and a mechanism for incorporating diverse issues into a nationwide plan. Specific policy reforms that are required for the release of APE funds further enhance participation by including local representation on the management committees overseeing protected areas and by stipulating that a percentage of park receipts return to local communities. The privatization of tourism concessions gives local individuals and groups new possibilities to generate income as well as incentives to conserve the environmental features that are attracting visitors. Finally, the APE's NRM project component specifically targets NGOs to be recipients of subgrants for programs

designed to rehabilitate and conserve natural resources. Local organizations can tap these funds to address particular local environmental problems and issues, thereby increasing their institutional capabilities to undertake further environmental and other development-related activities.

**Annex F - Uganda AIDS Prevention and Control Program (APCP)**

**Assessment of Local Participation in the  
National AIDS Prevention and Control Project**

(USAID Uganda 617-0127)

**I. Project Description**

Uganda has been profoundly impacted by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). As of January 1991, at least 12 percent of the Ugandan population over the age of 15 was believed to be carrying the virus. Those affected by the loss of these productive members of society comprise an even larger number within Ugandan society, so that it may be said that very few people are not somehow touched by this health problem. Though primarily located in the eastern urban areas of Kampala, Jinja and Mbarara and in the corridor of the transnational highway linking Kenya with Eastern Zaire, Rwanda, Uganda, and Tanzania, HIV/AIDS has not spared the northern and western parts of the country. The disease has stricken all socioeconomic classes—in other words, HIV/AIDS is a national health and development challenge.

In recognition of the AIDS/HIV problem, USAID/Uganda supported a variety of interventions between 1988 and 1990, including programs of peer education and counseling among private firms, the outreach work of the GOU AIDS Control Programme and the National Resistance Army, counselor training, a program for support to AIDS-infected individuals and their families/communities, and a modest amount of HIV testing (10,000 persons). All of these were seen as alternative, complementary approaches to reducing the transmission of HIV by increasing awareness, particularly among high-risk groups. Most of these activities were relatively modest in their initial phases—both in terms of expected outcomes and level of support. By late 1990, though, the shape of a larger, longer-term USAID intervention AIDS/HIV prevention and control had emerged from the various pieces that had been supported during the prior two years.

In January 1991, USAID/Uganda and the Experiment in International Living (EIL) signed a three-year operational program grant in the amount of \$12 million. The purpose of the grant—the National AIDS Prevention and Control Project (APCP)—was to limit the spread of the HIV/AIDS infection in target populations (in Uganda). The grant was part of the USAID mission's overall strategy in AIDS prevention and control activities, and complemented ongoing support to the GOU's Ministry of Health and National Resistance Army (NRA) in their own AIDS prevention and control programs. All such programs emphasize techniques to induce and sustain behavior change, concentrating on reducing the number of sexual partners and increasing condom use. The anticipated outcomes of the grant are "a statistically significant self-reported behavior change in the Project's target groups toward reducing the risk of contracting HIV/AIDS; a statistically significant increase in the demand for condoms in the Project's target

groups; and a lower rate of HIV transmission in [the] Project's target group than in the population in general."

The grant specified that EIL would make subgrants to organizations that would undertake the activities listed below. For the most part, the subgrantee organizations capable of undertaking these activities had already been identified, largely on the basis of the work that had been done in the 1988-90 period. The activities and the associated organizations included in the grant are:

- Peer education in sexual behavioral modification to minimize the risk of AIDS transmission—EIL and Federation of Uganda Employers (FUE)
- HIV/AIDS testing and counseling to modify sexual behavior that will minimize the risk of AIDS transmission—AIDS Information Centre (AIC)
- AIDS counseling and community outreach to care for those already infected with AIDS and to help sensitize those not already infected to change their sexual habits—The AIDS Support Organization (TASO)
- AIDS prevention in the military through dissemination of information and education—EIL/NRA
- Support to the Uganda AIDS Commission in the Office of the Prime Minister to oversee, plan, and coordinate AIDS prevention and control activities throughout the country—GOU
- Establishment of a sexually transmitted disease advisory council that will develop a comprehensive plan and funding strategy involving training, public media campaigns, technical assistance, and pilot programs—GOU/MOH
- Research and analyses to support AIDS prevention policy formulation and programming—EIL
- Development of a pilot project providing foster care to AIDS orphans—EIL in conjunction with other US and/or local private voluntary organizations.

Of the original \$12 million, \$9.4 million were planned for disbursement as subgrants, based upon budget estimates submitted by groups identified to carry out the activities listed above. An additional \$500,000 was added in September 1991 to expand the activities assisting AIDS orphans and other vulnerable children.

At the time of this participation assessment (May-June 1992), five major subgrants—supporting the first five activities listed above—had been executed. Because of savings realized in the finalization of the budget estimates used at the time that the overall

umbrella grant was designed, there has been a solicitation of additional activities for funding under the EIL cooperative agreement. Small grants have been made for proposal preparation by the Islamic Medical Association of Uganda and the Church of Uganda, for example. It is anticipated that an advisory committee will be constituted by EIL, and criteria for proposal/subgrantee selection will be drafted to guide the selection process for remaining funds. These selection procedures were not written into the original operational program grant, because at the time the grant was made there were no "unallocated" funds—in other words, all subgrantees and their activities had been preselected.

Under the operational program grant, EIL is required to provide technical assistance to the subgrantees, or to arrange for such assistance as it cannot provide directly. Hence, EIL has engaged the services of Price Waterhouse to carry out a baseline assessment of financial management capacity as each subgrant is made, has provided training in financial management and has facilitated provision of external technical assistance in substantive topic areas, in training methods, and in information exchange with others (mostly outside Uganda) involved in like programs.

## II. Participation in Project Design

The AIDS Prevention Project was designed in a very short time, amounting to little more than a month, in November-December 1990. This was because of a somewhat artificial deadline imposed by the visit to Uganda of Mr. Roskens and Dr. Louis Sullivan (head of USAID and Secretary of Health and Human Services, respectively).<sup>3</sup>

During this intense and truncated design process, USAID/Kampala and the Experiment in International Living consulted a small group of organizations that had previously received USAID grants in local currency for AIDS education and control. Most are NGOs, but a small number of governmental bodies were also targeted by the Mission as potential recipients of funds under the new AIDS Prevention Project. They had already been invited by USAID to submit concept papers for expanding their work, and plans were discussed at some length during the design process.<sup>4</sup> Perceptions of the level and quality of participation in the design of this project are varied. The different viewpoints are examined below.

USAID views this as an innovative project that has adopted a community-based approach. It was designed to target major population groups affected by AIDS, through a group of Ugandan organizations—NGOs, governmental agencies, and organizations with religious

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<sup>3</sup> The grant was signed during their visit to Uganda in January 1991.

<sup>4</sup> Members of the core group were The AIDS Support Organization (TASO), the AIDS Information Centre (AIC), the EIL Peer Education Project, and a group of government health professionals working on STDs. The Federation of Uganda Employees was also consulted about future plans.

affiliations. There is widespread acknowledgement within USAID and EIL of the strong leadership role played by their Ugandan partners, especially The AIDS Support Organization (TASO). During the design process TASO contributed a sense of vision and practical grassroots experience that provided valuable guidance to others, including USAID. TASO believes very strongly that the situation facing Uganda is a unique one that needs to be approached from different angles with efforts that are rooted in local communities.

Staff at USAID responded by seeking to create an atmosphere for local organizations to work together and seek solutions together. They have tried to avoid imposing outside ideas and a top-down approach.

From EIL's perspective, participation by local organizations in project design was fairly limited. It consisted mainly of a series of consultations with a small group of agencies, which were pre-selected to target specific components of the project.

From the point of view of several Ugandan agencies, some aspects of the design and consultation process were quite frustrating. One of the frustrations concerned restrictions mandated by Washington, which prevent USAID funds from being used to provide care for people with AIDS.<sup>5</sup> Local organizations are faced with a very high demand for drugs and medical care among their clients, which cannot be ignored, especially since the health services in Uganda are so poorly equipped and overburdened. For TASO this presented a real dilemma during the project design phase, since its program is composed of a package of services that include psychological support, social support, and material support. Material support consists of basic drugs to treat the opportunistic infections associated with AIDS, and food and clothing to help their most needy clients, who lack income and family support. The package of services has emerged from an ongoing dialogue with TASO clients. TASO counsellors believe that they have to respond to immediate needs and build a relationship of trust—this is a prerequisite to delivering an educational message and initiating behavioral change. During the consultation process with USAID, TASO was obliged to emphasize the education and prevention aspects of its work and downplay material and medical assistance. In fact, while USAID grant money can be used to pay a clinician, it cannot be used for client welfare: drugs for AIDS-related infections and material support for families are specifically excluded. Senior staff members of TASO would like their funders or partners to support the model—not just some components of the model—and hope that USAID policy will change in the future.

Other Ugandan partners were frustrated by some aspects of the project design process. For example, government agencies found it difficult to accept that USAID funds could not be used to supplement the low salaries of doctors and health workers on the civil service payroll, particularly since other donors are willing to do this. This became a real obstacle to designing projects with government bodies.

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<sup>5</sup> USAID staff in Uganda also expressed frustration with this policy, and sympathized with the point of view of the Ugandan organizations.

### **III. Participation in Project Implementation**

The forum for consultation that was started during the project design phase has continued and been enhanced during the implementation phase. The project managers meet regularly with EIL and USAID, to give an update on their work and share ideas and information with each other. This practice began at a retreat, and now takes place at a quarterly meeting of grantees. The group is growing in size, as new organizations are funded through the AIDS Prevention Project. One of the new participants, the Islamic Medical Association, used this forum recently to present some interesting findings from a baseline survey among its constituents. Although the IMA will be the primary user of the research, it was useful to share the results with others.

EIL and several grantees commented that they found the meetings very valuable. USAID notes a very high level of professional interaction among the agency leaders. Some NGO representatives feel, however, that this kind of information exchange should be more broadly based and foster collaboration among field workers. This would help to ensure that programs are complementary, and that occasional duplication of activities is avoided.

EIL's role in project implementation is defined essentially in terms of financial management. As the umbrella organization, EIL is charged by USAID to ensure that the local agencies have the institutional capacity—particularly the management capacity—to carry out projects designed to expand activities that were previously much more limited in scope. This is done through an institutional assessment, initially conducted by Price Waterhouse and now done internally by EIL staff.<sup>6</sup> EIL also provides some training and a limited amount of technical assistance to grantees, for example in proposal development. Monitoring of project activities is expected to become more important in the future. None of the staff have a technical background in AIDS work, although there may soon be an expatriate EIL staff position for a trainer with a background in AIDS education. For scientific and technical help the grantees can turn to the USAID Project Manager, who is seconded from the Center for Disease Control. They value this support very highly, and the access that is provided to an international network of people concerned with AIDS research and prevention.

All of the organizations currently receiving project funds were recipients of USAID support grants prior to the commencement of the AIDS Prevention Project in 1991. They were supportive of the new plan to group the grantees under one umbrella organization, and they are actively involved in directing a coordinated effort to encourage AIDS prevention and education. For example, the subgrantees have strongly asserted that AIDS testing and counseling is a priority need. Their insistence has led to a rapid expansion in funding for the testing and counseling services provided by the AIDS Information Center. While many US-based AIDS experts contend that testing is not the most effective use of the scarce funds available for AIDS

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<sup>6</sup> EIL hired the person who had previously carried out the institutional assessments at Price Waterhouse.

prevention, the ability of the subgrantees to convince USAID/Uganda of the dire need for this service is evidence of the important role the subgrantees play in setting the agenda for the AIDS Prevention Project.

When the AIDS Prevention Project was designed there were no criteria for applications and no guidelines for proposals. The guidelines and criteria are only now being developed, for the second round of grant making. This will support the work of organizations that were not pre-selected, although the types of activities were clearly specified in the grant agreement with EIL. EIL is currently putting together a committee, which will be made up of members of the core group and other key advisors. The committee will be asked to review proposals, and give feedback and guidance to applicants. They would like to avoid rejecting applications, as far as possible. Final approval for funding will probably be given by EIL in consultation with the committee and USAID.

Again, perceptions of this aspect of project implementation are varied. EIL believes that USAID has been remarkably flexible, and that this is a real advantage for the grantees. In fact, they compare the AIDS Prevention Project to a relief project, which is trying to put out a fire. However, the local organizations are well aware of the long-term implications of their work. They are very concerned about the sustainability of their programs, and would like a commitment from their partners for long-term financial support. They find it hard to recruit qualified and experienced staff for one year positions, for example. Some organizations believe that it will be easier to develop proposals if there are guidelines and criteria; the changes they were asked to make during the last round often seemed quite contradictory.

Theoretically, grants are available to qualified organizations that submit acceptable proposals. The flexible funding mechanisms of the project allow the possibility for participation by groups that were not written into the original program design. The Church of Uganda and the Islamic Medical Association (IMA) are two groups that will soon be receiving project grants for AIDS prevention and education programs among their constituents. The case of the Islamic Medical Association illustrates the participatory character of the AIDS Prevention Project.

The IMA was formed in 1988 by a group of muslim medical professionals who sought to provide training and advocacy for improved medical services within the islamic community. The group established a small medical clinic and, given the AIDS situation in Uganda, it was not long before the executive committee of the association realized that IMA had to become involved in the fight against AIDS. IMA received a small grant from the World Health Organization's Global Program on AIDS, allowing the group to develop a video and start an outreach program to educate the muslim community about AIDS. These actions brought IMA in contact with the AIDS Prevention and Control Project. IMA has prepared an innovative proposal to expand their outreach program by utilizing the traditional Islamic structures of mosque and community leaders to promote AIDS education and prevention. IMA has already conducted a baseline survey to assess the extent of knowledge and understanding about AIDS among muslims in Uganda. The new outreach program will use the results of this survey to structure interventions that address specific aspects of the disease and its transmission relevant

to the muslim community. The incorporation of traditional islamic leadership structures is a unique approach, and it demonstrates the AIDS Prevention Project's willingness to let local NGOs take the lead in the AIDS education and prevention program in Uganda.

One final aspect of participation attracted a lot of attention during discussions about project implementation. This concerned the extent to which NGOs are able to reflect the views and needs of their grassroots constituencies. Some felt that issues of participation would have to be reexamined in the context of AIDS work. From the way that others (such as TASO) described their programs, it is clear that they respond to requests for assistance that are initiated at the community level. The AIDS Information Centre, for example, has started a post-test club to address needs for continued support that were expressed by clients. This is a new and very popular component of AIC's program, that was not part of the original plans.

#### **IV. Observations and Comments of the Assessment Team**

During their brief visit to four countries in Africa, the assessment team found that the AIDS Prevention Project came closest to fulfilling the intent of the DFA legislation, both in its design and implementation. Despite the critical perspective of some of the Ugandan partners, which are noted in section II above, they were indeed consulted. All had positive feedback about the consultation process, in addition to the reservations that they expressed.

The team felt that the project has a number of distinctive features, which are described below. Some of these may be unique to the AIDS sector, and some may be unique to Uganda. However, we believe that there are useful lessons to be drawn from this case study that could enhance participation in other projects and in other countries.

1. First of all, this project has benefited from strong local leadership, particularly from TASO. USAID readily acknowledges the important role that TASO and other local leaders have played in the development and implementation of the AIDS program. Their vision and commitment have guided this project from the outset.
2. Second, the project is characterized by a consultative process that began during the design phase and has been strengthened during implementation. The local partners are committed to coordination and cooperation among themselves, as well as with donors and national government.
3. Third, the local organizations believe very strongly that their programs should respond to the needs of their clients. They play an explicit advocacy role, articulating the views of the people they serve at a national level and also to international audiences.
4. Fourth, there is a real sense of urgency to dealing as quickly and effectively as possible with the AIDS epidemic. Some people compare this work to emergency relief, while others are mindful of the long-term implications and dimensions of the problems.

5. Last, the team observed a striking and unusual sense of humility among the people involved in this project—both donors and grantees. No one has a complete answer to the problem, and although different organizations believe very strongly that they are making an important contribution, they have a lot of respect for others who are tackling the issues in a different way. Sadly, this sense of humility and mutual respect is all too rare in the development community.