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Meeting with our Partners

PRIP's 5 year Evaluation

- Feedback and Comments

7th. March 94 at WVA, Dhaka

Contents

1. Setting the Scene	
1.1. Introductions	1
1.2. Transparency and Accountability of PRIP	2
1.3. The Phases of PRIP	3
1.4. 5 year Evaluation	4
1.5. Present Plans of PRIP	4
1.6. Explaining PRIP more clearly	6
2. Learning from our Experience	
2.1. Project Progress and Results in relation to Objectives	7
2.2. Impact of the Project on the NGO Community	10
2.3. Concentration and Focus in transition from PRIP 1/2 to PRIP 3	12
2.4. Management	12
3. Thinking of our Future	
3.1. Need for Further Thought	13
3.2. Need for PRIP type services	14
3.3. Options for delivering PRIP type services	14
3.4. Problems	15
3.5. Funding for such services	15
3.6. Discussions	15
4. Further Research	18
<i>Appendix</i>	
Participants	19

NOTE: Presentations that were made through Overhead Projection Transparencies are shown as boxes in the text.

Comments from participants are shown in *Italics*.

Meeting with PRIP partners
7th. March 94
5 year Evaluation - Feedback and Comments

Report of Meeting

1. Setting the Scene

1.1. Introduction

Aroma Goon welcomed the participants (please see list at end). The participants were, for the most part, the same people that had given their time to the Evaluation interviewers. She said that the purposes of the meeting were three:

- | |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. to highlight important parts of the Evaluation 2. to do a reality check with the partners about the evaluation 3. to think together about the future of PRIP |
|---|

She emphasised that the meeting should be participatory, frank and constructive. She pointed out that the participants in the meeting came from the partner organisations with which PRIP worked, from the Advisory Committee of PRIP, from interested donors, from USAID, and from PACT Headquarters.

Aroma introduced Lou Mitchell, Chief Executive Officer of PACT Inc.

Lou Mitchell

Lou Mitchell remarked that PACT worked in 11 countries throughout the world, and in each one was a support to different elements of the NGO sector. In some countries PACT worked with NGOs in the field of Environment, in some with NGOs working in Small Business, but only in PRIP did PACT work with the whole of the NGO sector. He was very interested to see the future directions of PRIP and wanted to listen to the opinions of the NGOs about this.

Aroma introduced the Agenda which PRIP hoped to get through in the meeting, and handed over to the facilitator, Richard Holloway.

1. Setting the Scene
 - 1.1. Introduction
 - 1.2. PRIP transparency and accountability
 - 1.3. The phases of PRIP
 - 1.4. Year 5 Evaluation - follow up
 - 1.5. Present Plans of PRIP
 - 1.6. Explaining PRIP more clearly

2. Learning from our Experience
 - 2.1. Project progress and results in relation to objectives
 - 2.2. Impact of project on NGO community
 - 2.3. Concentration and focus in transition from PRIP 2 to PRIP 3
 - 2.4. Management

3. Thinking of our future
 - 3.1. Need for further thought
 - 3.2. Need for PRIP type services
 - 3.3. Options for delivering PRIP type (or other) services
 - 3.4. Problems
 - 3.5. Funding for such services
 - 3.6. Discussions

- 4 "Market Survey"

The facilitator checked that the documents required in the meeting were:

- the Evaluation (containing the AID Evaluation Summary at the back),
- the Comparison between ADAB and PRIP
- the "PRIP in 1994" booklet.

1.2. Transparency and Accountability of PRIP.

He emphasised that this meeting was the latest in a series of meetings in which PRIP was transparent to its partners, and shared its evaluations and its planning with them. Those at the meeting were, for the most part, those who had given time to the evaluators in interviews. They had the right to hear what the Evaluators had done with their information.

He emphasised that PRIP can only operate if it provides services valued and used by its clientele. It cannot continue if the services which it offers are not required or not desired by the NGO sector in Bangladesh.

He listed the following benchmarks in PRIP's transparency:

Aug. 90	PRIP 1st Evaluation - widely distributed
Jan. 92	NGO Feedback meeting (at CARITAS) where should PRIP be going?
Feb. 93	SO/NF Consultation meeting (at PRIP) laying out our plans for PRIP 3
Mar 94	5 year Evaluation - follow up (at WVA) What have we learnt, what about our future?

1.3. The Phases of PRIP

It was important to understand the context of PRIP in order to have a useful discussion about the Evaluation and about the future of PRIP. The facilitator thus led the meeting through some basic information about PRIP. PRIP was, presently, at the start of the 2nd. semester of Year 6.

PRIP 1 (past)	Year 1	Semester 1 Semester 2	Sept 88 - Feb 89 Mar 89 - Aug 89
	Year 2	Semester 1 Semester 2	Sept 89 - Feb 90 Mar 90 - Aug 90
	◦ 1st Evaluation ◦		
PRIP 2	Year 3	Semester 1 Semester 2	Sept 90 - Feb 91 Mar 91 - Aug 91
	Year 4	Semester 1 Semester 2	Sept 91 - Feb 92 Mar 92 - Aug 92
PRIP 3	Year 5	Semester 1 Semester 2	Sept 92 - Feb 93 Mar 93 - Aug 93
	◦ 2nd Evaluation ◦		
	Year 6	Semester 1	Sept 93 - Feb 94

<i>PRIP 3 (future)</i>		<i>Semester 2</i>	<i>Mar 94 - Aug 94</i>
	<i>Year 7</i>	<i>Semester 1</i>	<i>Sept 94 - Feb 95</i>
		<i>Semester 2</i>	<i>Mar 95 - Aug 95</i>
<i>PRIP 4</i>	<i>Year 8</i>	<i>Semester 1</i>	<i>Sept 95 - Feb 96</i>
		<i>Semester 2</i>	<i>Mar 96 - Aug 96</i>
	<i>Year 9</i>	<i>Semester 1</i>	<i>Sept 96 - Feb 97</i>
		<i>Semester 2</i>	<i>Mar 97 - Aug 97</i>
	<i>Year 10</i>	<i>Semester 1</i>	<i>Sept 97 - Feb 98</i>
		<i>Semester 2</i>	<i>Mar 98 - Aug 98</i>

1.4. 5 Year Evaluation

PRIP had just gone through a five year evaluation conducted by three external evaluators (an American, a Philipina, and a Bangladeshi). This team admitted freely that they had had difficulty understanding PRIP - and had only really understood it once they had worked through with PRIP the variety of support that PRIP had given to a particular sector from a number of different projects, and a number of different angles.

The Evaluation was commissioned by PACT and USAID, its only donor, and large parts of the evaluation deal with USAID interests in following indicators in the Log Frame (logical framework analysis).

USAID and PACT agreed that some parts of the Evaluation were contradictory and inconsistent. Some feedback had also been received from those interviewed that the Evaluators did not seem to be listening to what they had to say.

1.5. Present Plans of PRIP

It was important to clarify PRIP as presently designed:

PRIP 1/2/3 Goals and Objectives		
PRIP1&2	Goals	PRIP 3
Help active developmental NGOs in Bangladesh build up their technical, strategic, and managerial capacity to benefit the rural poor, especially women.		A sustainable NGO sector serving the development needs of the poor in Bangladesh

Objectives

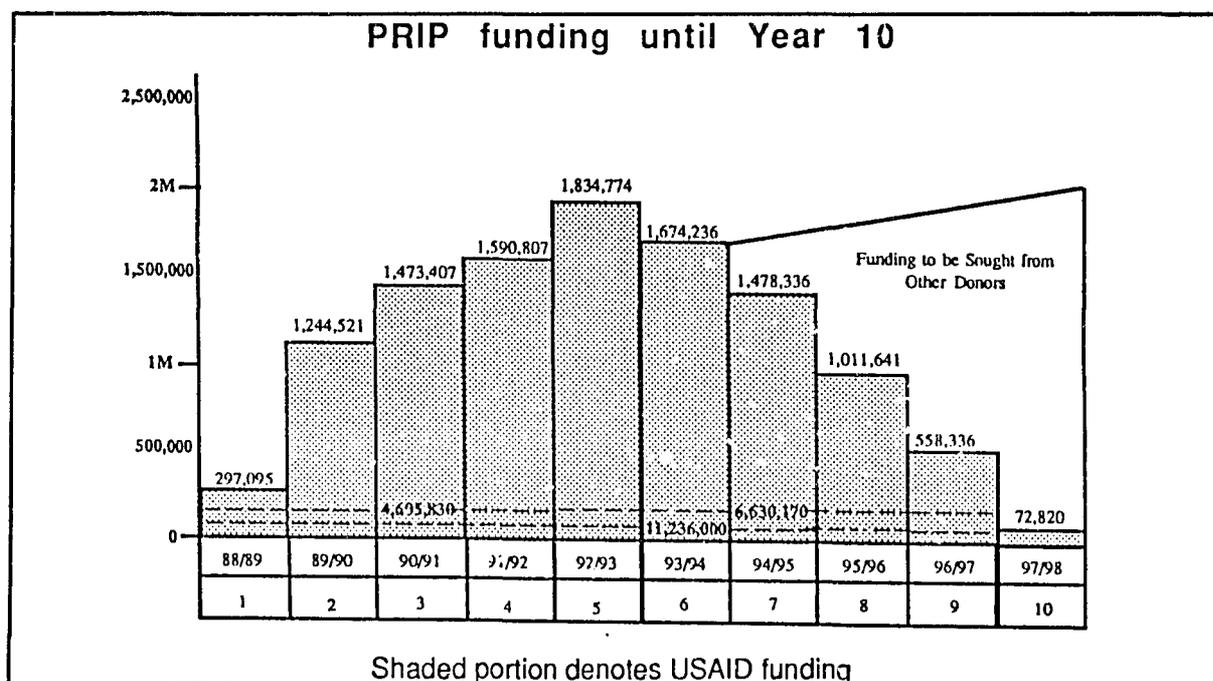
- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Support Support Organisations | 1. Support Support Organisations |
| 2. Strengthen Learning Groups | 2. Strengthen Networks/Forums |
| 3. Help Demonstration Projects | 3. Establish PRIP as a Bangladeshi entity. |
| 4. Fill Gaps/Identify opportunities | |

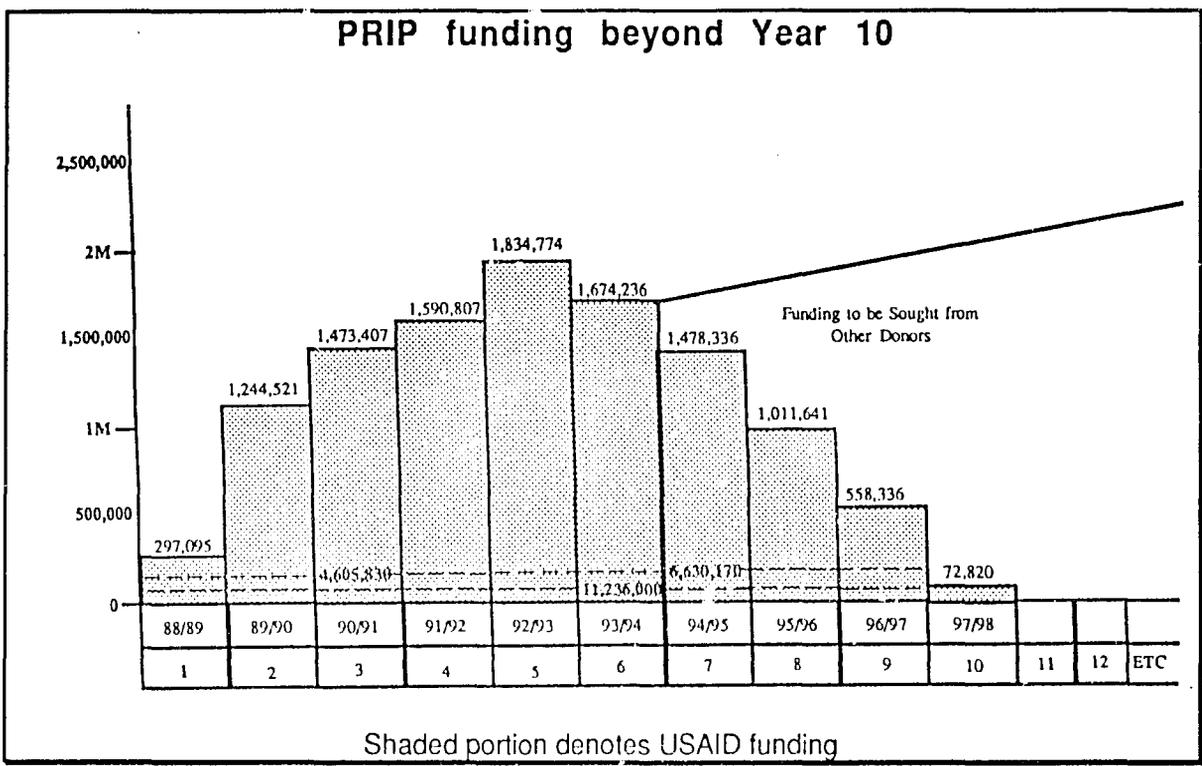
PRIP 1/2/3 Program Areas

- | PRIP 1&2 | PRIP 3 |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Institution Building | 1. Institutional Development. |
| 2. Local Control | 2. Strategic Coalitions |
| 3. Increasing Income | 3. Improved Programming |
| 4. Self-Reliant Services | 4. Disaster Management |
| 5. Disaster Preparedness | 5. Indigenization* |

*The word "Indigenization" gave trouble to some people. It meant:

"An organisation to continue the work of PRIP governed and led by Bangladeshis".





1.6 Explaining PRIP more clearly

Many times PRIP staff were called upon to explain PRIP in a short sentence, and found it difficult. It was not a project of which it was easy to give a short and clear explanation. The following was offered as one attempt:

PRIP supports strategically important initiatives and activities of NGO Support Organisations and NGO Networks or Forums through training, technical assistance, and flexible funding so that they can build the competence of development NGOs to meet the development needs of the poor in Bangladesh.

Another attempt was the draft brochure/booklet which was provided as a background document to the meeting - "PRIP in 1994". The participants were asked to look at this and think whether this was a clear explanation of what PRIP did.

One suggestion was to combine Disaster Preparedness and Disaster Response in one heading of Disaster Management.

This was the end of the first section - **Setting the Scene.**

2. Learning from our Experience

2.1. Project Progress and Results in Relation to Objectives

The Evaluation had looked at how far PRIP had been proven successful as far as the Log Frame was concerned.

August 90	USAID agreed project viable and feasible Move from PRIP 1 into PRIP 2 - no changes in Goal or Objectives - Program Areas and Strategy clearer
August 92	USAID agreed project fulfilled its objectives a year ahead of schedule Move from PRIP 2 to PRIP 3 - change in Goal and Objectives - change in Program Areas and Strategy
Dec. 93	Evaluation agrees PRIP 3 well on the way to meeting its objectives after 1 year - plus other activities as well suggests further research on Indigenization

The Evaluators had, however, made the point that they could not assess project impact because of a lack of baseline data.

One of the aspects of the project that the Evaluators had identified which had some bearing on its ability to meet its objectives was the particular Learning Process Approach of the project. The Project did not have a blueprint. The Learning Process Approach was a process of exploring what was needed and possible. It:

- started with action
- innovated as activities took place - and quickly learnt from experience

In contrast to the usual "Ready, Aim, Fire" technique, in which the firer knows in advance exactly what he is aiming at, the Learning Process Approach uses a "Ready, Fire, Aim" technique, in which a ranging shot in the general direction of a fuzzy target is made, the results evaluated, and the aim considerably tightened for the next shot.

PRIP used this approach a lot in the beginning. As time has passed and as skills and experience have developed, PRIP's work has fallen into more regular patterns.

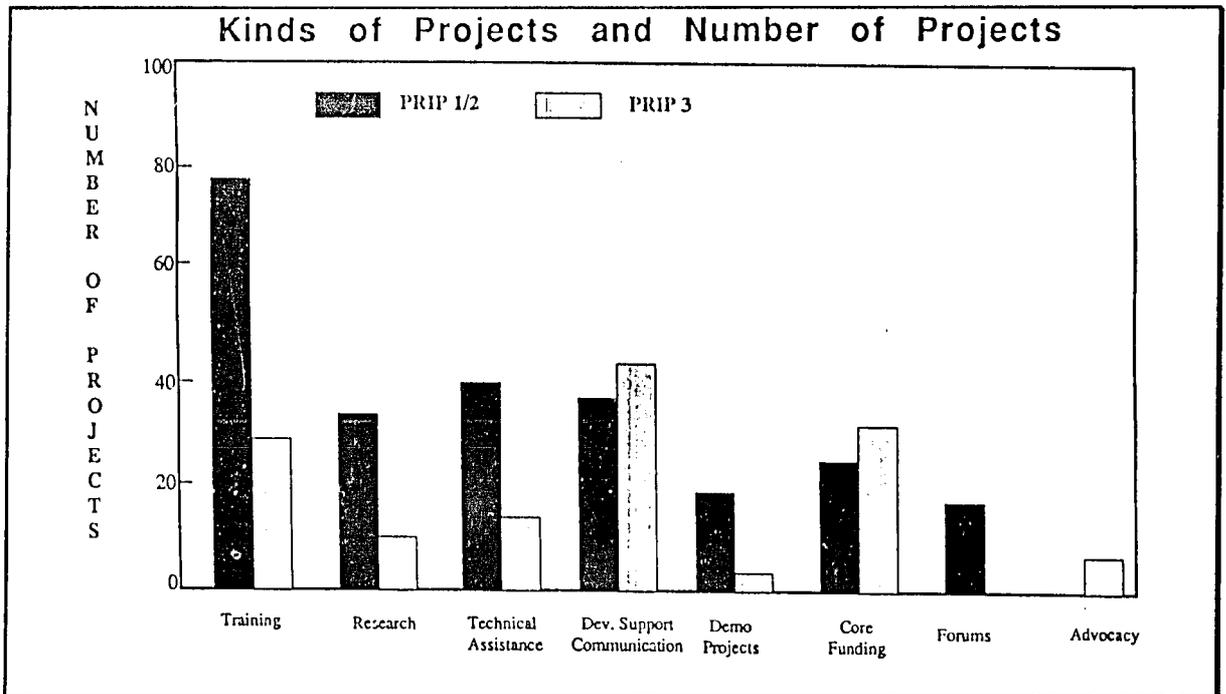
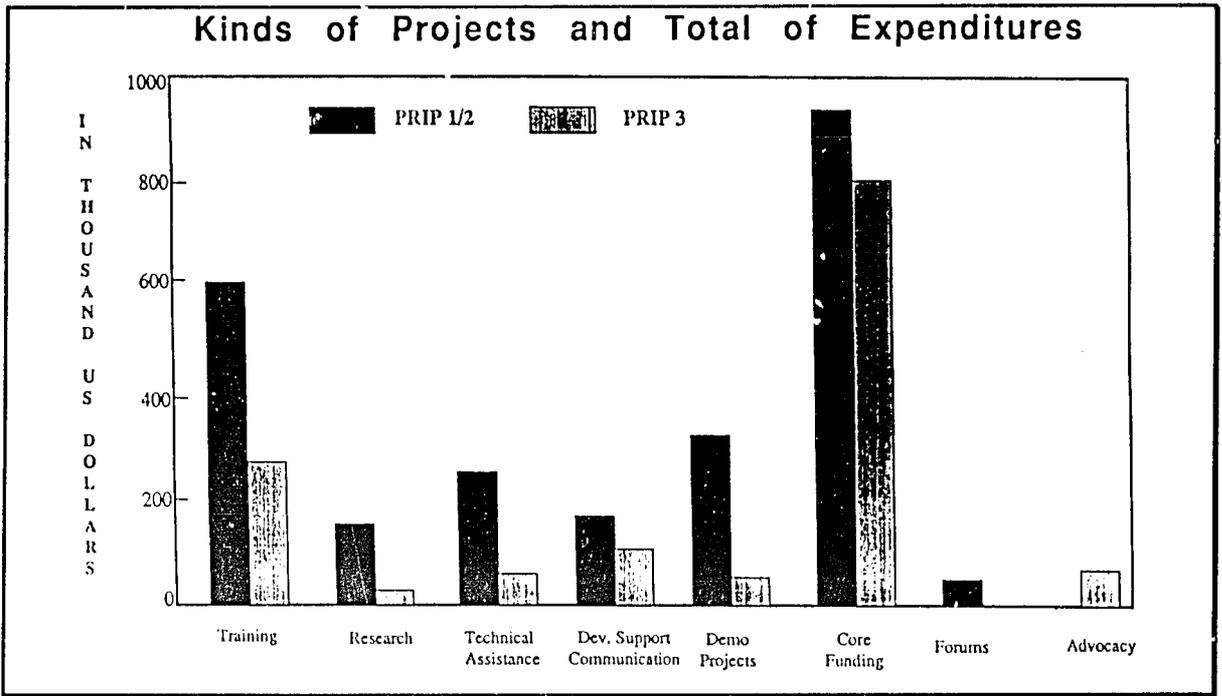
BUT innovation is still important - some areas (like Financial Self-Reliance or NGO links to the Business World) are still largely unexplored.

The Evaluation also produced some data on the percentage of expenditure on the different kinds of projects, and the amounts of money moved on the different kinds of projects. These figures represented only the Program part of the PRIP budget - and did not include the administration and overhead costs which were part of the previous graphs.

	PRIP 1&2		PRIP 3		All	
	%	\$'000	%	\$'000	%	\$'000
Training	27	605	18	248	25	853
Research	6	135	1	16	4	151
Tech. Assistance	10	210	3	32	7	242
Devpt. Supp. Comm.	7	147	7	87	7	234
Demo Project	11	231	3	38	8	268
Core Funding	38	882	65	758	47	1640
Forums	2	44	0	0	2	44
Advocacy	0	0	3	40	2	40
TOTAL		2254		1220		3474

The increase in the number of Core Funded Projects in PRIP 3 and the decrease in the number of other kinds of projects from PRIP 2 to PRIP 3 is connected - Core funded projects are likely to provide for a grant which includes a number of the other activities like Development Support Communications, Technical Assistance etc.

Demonstration Projects and Forums decreased from PRIP 1/2 to PRIP 3. The need for these projects had diminished as greater knowledge and experience of the NGO Sector and the actors in it were acquired by PRIP.



Funding Modalities

Contracts with:	PRIP 1 / 2 %	PRIP 3 %
• Individuals	35	25
• Firms		
• Training institutes		
• Off-shore institutions	10	
• Bangladeshi NGOs	55	75

2.2. Impact of Project on the NGO Community

The Evaluators commented that PRIP was seen by the NGO Community as "A different kind of donor", and noted these differences:

- itself a Support Organisation
- committed to the NGO sector
- part of the process itself, not an outsider
- more than the sum total of the activities funded
- providing moral support
- involved in the dynamics of organisational and sector growth
- providing a high degree of personal contact and collaboration

The Evaluation noted that Support Organisations and Networks/Forums had been increasingly benefitted, while benefits to direct implementing organisations had decreased:

Kinds of Organisations benefitted		
	PRIP 1&2 (4 years)	PRIP 3 (1 year)
Support Organisations & Networks/Forums	28	40
Implementing Organisations	65	25
Total Organisations Benefitted	93	65

The Evaluators had followed the work of two Support Organisations (CDS and CDL) down to the level of the smaller developmental NGOs with whom they interacted, and had discovered that the effects of PRIP on the Support Organisations was diffused, in turn, onto the smaller rural NGOs.

The Evaluators thus listed the effects of PRIP on the NGO community during PRIP 1/2 and PRIP 3.

PRIP 1/2

- SOs and N/Fs now practicing strategic management (6 specifically attributable to PRIP)

BUT: few had plans for financial self-reliance

- NGOs working together via N/Fs (13 specifically attributable to PRIP)
- Better GO/NGO relations (partly attributable to PRIP)
- ADAB improved (partly attributable to PRIP)

PRIP 3

- 72% rated PRIP assistance "extremely crucial" or "of great importance" to their organisation
- sense of NGO "community"
- Increasing GO/NGO relationships
- PRIPs work with SOs being relayed to smaller DNGOs in districts (e.g. CDS and CDL)

The Evaluation Team, however, made a strong comment on the effect of PRIP on the NGO community

"The team happens to believe that the Project has had a great and good effect on the NGO community in both PRIP 1/2 and PRIP 3. But how great and good we cannot say definitively. The absence of base line data makes such a judgement difficult."

This comment provoked some reaction from the participants.

- *Many said that baseline data was not relevant to this kind of project which was best described as a process.*
- *Others said that the Evaluators should have constructed their own baseline information from interviews if they thought it was so important.*
- *Others said that the project success was to be measured by its usefulness to the intended beneficiaries, not by progress against some baseline.*

2.3 Concentration and Focus in transition from PRIP 1/2 to PRIP 3

Part of the agreement between PACT and USAID at the time of the extension into PRIP 3 and 4 was that PRIP should focus and concentrate its work. The evaluators assessed this process

PRIP 1/2	PRIP 3
Scattered projects	projects clustered round specific organisations within program areas
Smaller contracts/ grants with individual agencies	individual grant size increased - and more concentrated
Fewer, smaller core grants	larger, bigger core grants
Less funding of SOs	more funding of SOs
More research and demonstration grants/ contracts	fewer research and demonstration project grants (networks formed around topics)
More funding foreign organisations and people	More funding Bangladeshi organisations and people

2.4 Management

The Evaluation commented as follows on PRIP's management

- insufficient involvement of Advisory Committee
- Internal management systems not sufficiently structured, and not adhered to
- exceedingly high work load - demoralizing impact on staff
- documentation of project decisions incomplete
- new MIS not yet sufficient
- need for better systems in PRIP 3 - more staff.

but, on the other hand, they noted

- personal approach valued
- informality and flexibility

This ended the second section "Learning from our Experience" and there was a break.

3. Thinking of our Future

3.1 Need for Further Thought

After the break the meeting looked at the options for the continuation of PRIP's work into the future. The evaluation had pointed out that the original plan (agreed by USAID) was to register an indigenous organisation by Dec 93.

In this connection, there was an accusation in the Evaluation which was worrying to PRIP staff. It said

"Much of what we heard from PACT Bangladesh staff on the subject of indigenization seemed to miss, or treat only slightly, many of the points NGO personnel or donors brought up in interviews"

PRIP staff did not believe this accusation was true, and that this should be checked with the participants in the meeting. PRIP staff fully agreed that further work needed to be done to get greater clarity on the future moves. The Evaluators said that the following points were **unclear**

- Position of PACT in the transition
- Co-funding arrangements (USAID and new donors)
- Likelihood of endowments
- staffing configuration for new entity
- Governing body decisions
- Financing of the new entity
(which needed to be in place before changing the entity)

and suggested that **the indigenization strategy** needed to be re-thought.

3.2. Need for PRIP type Services

PRIP staff agreed that there was a need to think through the issues more carefully, and in particular to look at the needs for PRIP services into the future

- What will be the future needs of the NGO sector?
- Will they be different from what PRIP offers now?
- Will PRIP be able to meet these needs? What form of PRIP?
- Will anyone else be interested in offering such services?
- Does anyone else have the experience and capacity to offer such services?
- Will anyone be interested in funding such services?

3.3. Options for delivering PRIP type (or other) services

The meeting looked at ways in which PRIP type services could be delivered

- PACT continues managing PRIP as is
- Another organisation takes over the work of PRIP (ADAB?)
- A number of different organisations all take on parts of the work of PRIP
- PRIP continues with a slimmed down version of what it is doing
- PRIP stops what it is doing
- PRIP becomes a Bangladeshi organisation - then
 - How does it relate to ADAB?
 - How does it relate to other SOs?

and the meeting looked at some of the problems involved in a transition from PRIP as it is presently constituted and funded.

3.4. Problems

1. USAID only funds for ten years
2. USAID wants other donors to share costs of PRIP and plans to reduce funding over next 4 years to achieve this
3. PRIP needs to accessing funds from other sources.
4. PRIP is a project of a US NGO - but donors want to fund Bangladeshi organisations
5. Other donors are uncomfortable about co-funding with USAID
6. PRIP requires large funds - approx US\$ 1m per year at present rates.

3.5. Funding for such services

Finally the meeting looked at the options for the funding of PRIP type services into the future

1. USAID carries on funding PRIP on present plans (but this is soon to diminish yearly)
2. USAID increases funding to PRIP and funds 100% until 1998 (i.e. Year 10)
3. PRIP raises its own money by charging for services
4. Other donors co-fund PRIP with USAID and gradually take over
5. USAID continues funding PRIP 100% till 1996 then a consortium of other donors takes over
6. PRIP can only find funding for a portion (or none) of its activities and ceases operation after USAID funds finish.
7. PRIP's activities are taken over (in part or in full) by other Bangladeshi organisations who seek other donor funds to carry them out
8. In the long term, PRIP is endowed

Following the presentations in this section of Thinking of our Future, there was a general discussion, of which the following are the main elements:

3.6. Discussions

- *One participant suggested that if PRIP was successful in its work, it would be likely that others would want to carry out the services that it is offering, and take its place. This was contradicted by another participant who said that such services would need to be funded by donors. Donors would be more likely to want to deal with one organisation offering such services, than a number of them.*
- *As Support Organisations or Networks grow, their needs from PRIP will change. An indigenized PRIP has to be aware of different organisations different needs.*
- *The participatory style that PRIP exhibits needs to be continued - this is appreciated by the NGOs.*
- *The need for PRIP services will not vanish. Moreover there is no ready source of funds for such activities except through PRIP.*
- *PRIP's role is clear - its services are indeed solicited by the NGOs, and its services have been effective. The roles of NGOs in Bangladesh will change over time (as they have in other countries) and PRIP has to be prepared to change along with them*
- *PRIP's future will depend a lot on the funders which are found to continue the work of PRIP*
- *PRIP has some funds in hand. If it goes for indigenization now there will be a slump in its activities. PRIP must use the funds in hand to prepare very well for the next step.*
- *Some have said that PRIP can sell its services - this is an illusion: those who can buy your services do not need you - those who need you cannot pay for you. PRIP's services should be for the sector, not for particular agencies - you should exist as a service delivery set-up.*
- *NGOs are regularly facing new problems - the most recent one is the attacks by the fundamentalists. PRIP is needed to help NGOs deal with these problems.*
- *If PRIP becomes a Bangladeshi organisation then it will be much easier for it to work in the field of NGO-GO relations, as it will be part of the process.*

- *Many donors work through consortiums: USAID does not want to do this which does not make them popular amongst donors. (Response - USAID cannot co-mingle funds with other donors i.e. supply a percentage of the costs of a particular activity. Its funds must be clearly identified with particular budget items. It can, however, and has, carried out "parallel funding" with other donors in which USAID funds one identified part of a budget and other donors fund other parts)*
- *Demands exist for PRIP type services, and no market survey is required. PRIP began without quantitative assessments, and such quantitative assessments are not required now. Keeping PRIP going would enable us to re-inforce the efforts made to date to promote private rural initiatives.*
- *PRIP can indeed sell its services, in contrast to a previous speaker. It can sell its services to Donors and Governments, both of which need expertise in the areas of PRIP's work. PRIP can compete for the provision of such services and develop into a professional organisation providing the linkage between top-down and bottom-up planning*
- - a. *Donors are seeking to indigenize their projects so that they can move on to something else*
 - b. *NGOs are losing skilled people to the GOB where bilateral projects are agreed*
 - c. *ADAB can in no way take the place of PRIP*
 - d. *PRIP will have to meet other donors' expectations when it seeks funding from them.*
- *PRIP's program is unique - there are few organisations like it - particularly in its introduction of strategic management for NGOs. PRIP's assistance has been more than financial assistance - its moral support has also been very useful*
- *Donors should think of endowments as a way to continue PRIP's services.*
- *ADAB is very different from PRIP. ADAB will increasingly become an advocacy organisation for its members of which PRIP is one. PRIP can channel funds, ADAB cannot: PRIP can provide TA, ADAB cannot. ADAB is increasingly becoming a bargaining agent on behalf of the NGO sector: PRIP is not performing those roles. PRIP will indeed strengthen ADAB*

- *CARE has entered the NGO community through PRIP. PRIP has helped CARE identify organisations who can take on some of the work, like rice/fish, that CARE has developed. CARE can perform its changing roles better with PRIP.*
- *Perhaps the Support Organisations should create a new organisation for their coordination, if PRIP is stopping.(Response: PRIP is not stopping - and an indigenous PRIP can perform just this role.)*
- *ADAB was involved in Networks. Should it not take on this role in the future. (Response: ADAB manages only two networks - Aquaculture Forum and Social Forestry, and, of these, the Aquaculture Forum is only a temporary administrative arrangement. ADAB is only one of many organisations which offer secretariats to particular forums. It is not intending to be the secretariat of all forums.*
- *Why was PRIP thinking of a consortium? Response: most NGO thinkers recommend a consortium of donors as a financing strategy in order to decrease an NGOs' vulnerability to any one donor's changing situation.*
- *More thought was needed in trying to decide on one option or another. SDC would like to be involved in the process of determining PRIP's future directions.*

4. "Market Survey"

The participants were referred to the section at the end of the Evaluation called AID Evaluation Summary, and at the end of that to the section called Action Recommendations. PACT and USAID had agreed that further research was needed, and they were both currently working on Terms of Reference. It was likely that this research would start soon, and the NGO partners and interested donors would be asked to be part of this research. As information was available it would be shared with the NGOs as before and the dialogue would continue.

Meeting with PRIP Partners

Participants

a. PRIP Partners

1.	Harun-ur-Rashid	-	CDL
2.	Manju Kader Khan	-	CDL
3.	A.N.M. Fazlullah	-	TMSS
4.	S.A. Halim	-	VERC
5.	Shamsul Huda	-	ALRD
6.	Jeffrey S. Pereira	-	CARITAS
7.	Ashequr Rahman Khan	-	ILD
8.	A.M.Sharafuddin	-	CAMPE
9.	Anne Ritchie	-	CARE
10.	Fahmid Karim	-	CARE
11.	Shamsun Nahar	-	Ain O Shalish Kendra
12.	A. Matin	-	IVS
13.	Md. Saidur Rahman	-	BDisPC
14.	Kazi Rafiqul Alam	-	Dhaka Ahsania Mission
15.	Mark Goldring	-	OXFAM
16.	Promod Unia	-	OXFAM
17.	Sharif A. Kafi	-	BDevPC
18.	Zia-us-Sabur	-	NGO Forum
19.	Zahin Ahmed	-	FIVDB
20.	Rokeya Kabir	-	BNPS
21.	Francisco Noble	-	ADAB Aquaculture Forum
22.	S.S. Rahman	-	Coalition for the Urban Poor
23.	Rasheda K. Chowdhury	-	ADAB
24.	Anwar Hossain	-	BARRA
25.	K.J. Wilson	-	GSS
26.	Saleem Samad	-	LMEAG
27.	Khushi Kabir	-	ADAB

b. PRIP Advisory Committee

28.	Azizul Huq	-	PRIP Advisory Committee
29.	Taherunessa Abdullah	-	PRIP Advisory Committee

c. International Donors

30.	Peter Arnold	-	SDC
31.	Niels Von Keyzerlingk	-	GTZ
32.	Engbert Grundemann	-	UNDP

- 33. Rita Emmanuel - Netherlands Embassy
 - 34. Ray Offenheiser - Ford Foundation
 - 35. Nick Roberts - EEC
- regrets received from ODA
CIDA

d. PACT

- 36. Lou Mitchell - PACT Inc.
- 37. Richard Holloway - PACT Bangladesh
- 38. Aroma Goon - PACT Bangladesh
- 39. Tarit Datta Gupta - PACT Bangladesh
- 40. Rahima Siddequi - PACT Bangladesh
- 41. Daniel Talukder - PACT Bangladesh

e. USAID

- 42. Gary Robbins - USAID