TRIP REPORT: MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT VISIT TO BANGLADESH

VOLUME I

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AVSC	Association for Voluntary Surgical Contraception
CA	Cooperating Agency
CDS	Center for Development Services
CPR	Contraceptive prevalence rate
CWFP	Concerned Women for Family Planning
FP	Family planning
FPAB	Family Planning Association of Bangladesh
FPMD	Family Planning Management Development
FPSTC	Family Planning Services and Training Centre
MSH	Management Sciences for Health
MIS	Management Information System
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OPH	Office of Population and Health
PFI	Pathfinder International
QES	Quality, Expansion, and Sustainability
SOW	Scope of Work
TAF	The Asia Foundation
TA	Technical Assistance
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Responding to the concern of USAID/Dhaka to promote Non-Governmental Organization sustainability, five international and local Cooperating Agencies (CAs) funded by USAID to help Bangladeshi NGOs deliver family planning services launched an important initiative in June 1993 to develop the management capability of the NGOs as institutions. The Cooperating Agencies included The Asia Foundation (TAF), Association for Voluntary Surgical Contraception(AVSC), International, the Family Planning Association of Bangladesh (FPAB), the Family Planning Services and Training Center (FPSTC), and Pathfinder International (PFI). Improving management capability was seen as an important and critical strategy to achieving institutional sustainability.

With the technical support of the Family Planning Management Development Project (FPMD) of Management Sciences for Health (MSH), these Cooperating Agencies (CAs) began conducting Management Development Assessments (MDAs) as a means of determining and planning technical assistance (TA) to strengthen the management capability of 110 local NGOs which they fund to provide clinical and community based family planning services.

Institutionalizing this capability within the CAs was one of three major technical assistance subprojects undertaken by FPMD to enhance the technical and managerial skills of the CAs. The other two are the development of a programmatic management information system and the improvement of skills in training impact evaluation.

In a series of five consultations over a period of 18 months a FPMD technical team has led the CAs through the MDA process. The MDA process consisted of the following steps: 1) the formulation of a conceptual framework for conducting the MDAs; 2) the production of assessment tools (questionnaires, interview guides, feedback protocols); 3) the development of analytic procedures (from tabulation to presentation of results); and, 4) the design of practical approaches to utilizing assessment results for management development.

The fifth and final consultation occurred in November 1994, bringing to completion this component of the FPMD project. Activities involved a review of MDA results, further improvements of the MDA instruments, a one-day presentation of the MDA process to other donor and NGOs, and the drafting of technical assistance plans and strategies (including techniques for consulting with NGOs in management development) for the CAs to provide to the NGOs.

FPSTC, TAF, and Pathfinder have each developed a comprehensive MDA process for rapidly and efficiently assessing the management capabilities and level of sustainability of the NGOs they support. AVSC successfully designed and implemented a "mini-MDA" to analyze family planning services in hospitals and health centers. FPAB applied the MDA approach to conduct a self- assessment. The following paragraphs highlight the unique accomplishments of the CAs.

The Asia Foundation completed MDAs for the 26 NGOs it supports and prepared feedback presentations for joint planning of technical assistance for management development and a comprehensive TA plan which provided a number of TA options to be provided to the NGOs. It also integrated parts of the MDA into its on-going operations, such as an annual MDA assessment of the NGOs, inclusion of the TA and MDA recommendations into the NGO annual plans, and changing of various TAF policies and procedure manuals.

The Family Planning Service and Training Centre completed 28 MDAs, initiated individual feedback, and drew up plans to assess its remaining 23 NGOs by March 1995. It finalized a scoring methodology to tabulate the MDA results, graphed the NGOs in a rank order fashion, and then "mapped" the technical assistance needs of the NGOs in order to cluster the NGOs around common management development needs as well as common strategies for providing technical assistance to develop management capabilities.

Pathfinder International completed 30 of 31 MDAs and compared the results by rank order graphs and in tabular form. In using the MDA results to plan technical assistance to strengthen management capabilities, Pathfinder summarized key problems found to be most common among the NGOs in order to consolidate (or cluster) the TA needs when possible, and planned exchange visits among the NGOs as well as three management development workshops for 1995. The MDA results will be used to modify policies concerning human resources evaluation and incentive plans. Pathfinder also completed a detailed paper documenting its MDA experience, procedures and outcomes.

AVSC, because of its different program approaches and needs, developed a mini-MDA to assess family planning service operations and to screen new family planning clinics which it will assist with funds, equipment and technical assistance.

Starting from a common conceptual framework introduced by the FPMD team, the CAs worked independently in tailoring the MDA process and methods to their respective needs based on the types of NGOs they support, the specific programs of their cooperative agreements with USAID, their philosophies concerning family planning and institutional development, and individual staff capabilities. Commitment, ownership, creative learning, and competition became the hallmarks of FPMD's consultative process. As the CAs mastered the MDA process, results were increasingly shared, and outputs gradually converged.

The results were presented on November 14 to an audience which included USAID, MSH, guest NGOs, and donor organizations. Annex I contains a list of invitees; Annex II lists persons contacted during this consultation. Annexes III and IV, under separate cover, include the complete presentations of each CA and a review of the MDA process.

The lessons learned from this 18 month undertaking are summarized below:

■ Rapid management assessments can provide powerful information and guidance for action if there is a systematic approach to collecting and analyzing data. Although there is a degree of subjectivity in the assessment process, a clear and realistic conceptual framework for conducting the assessment, together with clear and simple indicators and practical instruments for collecting and analyzing data can lead to results which are objective and useful.

■ Despite differences in the MDA tools developed by the CAs, conclusions drawn from the assessments are compatible and consistent, indicating that the overall methodology was reliable. The results also make sense on an intuitive and experiential basis, indicating that the MDAs produce valid results.

■ Emphasis on the development of detailed procedures for analyzing the results of MDAs for individual NGOs and groups of NGOs was key to the successful implementation of the MDA process. Although analysis is often the most difficult part of an assessment methodology, it is unfortunately often the least developed. From the outset, this consultative process recognized the importance of developing analytic procedures and skills.

■ The MDA process should be dynamic, that is, it should evolve to reflect the changing environment within the CAs and within the Bangladesh Family Planning Program. For example, the MDA instruments are not only useful in looking at NGO sustainability. They can also serve practical needs such as preparing annual CA and NGO workplans; defining priorities for technical assistance to improve management capabilities of the NGOs; improving monitoring and supervision policies and procedures; increasing CA staff knowledge of sound managerial practices; improving human resources management and Management Information systems (MIS); and, motivating CA and NGO staff to solve problems previously not well defined or understood, helping transform the role of project officers from monitors to consultants.

Ideas for the future development of the MDA process were suggested by participants at the Novemebr 14 workshop as well as by the CAs, FPMD consultants and USAID:

■ Focus on the relationship between improved management systems and program performance of the NGOs in utilizing the results of the MDAs.

■ Open the MDA process to other organizations in Bangladesh working with NGOs in family planning and in other health and development areas. A number of organizations showed interest in a follow-on meeting to further expand the boundaries of the MDA process and share their experiences in assessment methods and development action.

■ Enhance the compatibility of the TAF, FPSTC and Pathfinder tools and techniques through closer integration of the questionnaires and analytic processes. Having mastered the MDA process, the CAs can review each others' materials and methods as resources and alternatives for refining their own instruments and procedures.

- Use MDA results to develop incentive plans which further motivate the NGOs to explore new ways to achieve financial sustainability (e.g. revolving drug fund, new cost recovery plans, etc.), improve community participation, expand program activity in family planning and in other health service areas, such as primary health care.

- Use MDA tools to develop and implement strategies for targeting potentially high performing NGOs, planning for the graduation of existing NGOs as their indicator scores on the various management components approach mature levels, and for enabling CAs to use their resources most effectively in supporting NGOs.

- Create a universal MDA toolkit for application in NGOs, private and public sector organizations from a synthesis of CA instruments and procedures.

- Use the MDA process to train CA project officers in consulting skills in order to increase effectiveness in providing technical assistance in management development.

The MDA process has provided a practical framework for addressing the issue of institutional sustainability. It has transformed a difficult and often amorphous concept into clear and measurable milestones which can be used to determine the kinds and amounts of resources needed to improve the chances for growth and viability during periods of uncertainty, stress and change. A systematic and objective approach to assessing a wide range of management capabilities, the MDA enables donors to target institutional development resources where they will have long-term impact on local organizations which they support.

The overall contribution of the MDA subproject to strengthening the CAs to manage the NGO component of the USAID NGO portfolio still needs to be reviewed. Therefore, in April 1995, when the MIS and Training Impact Evaluation (TIE) components of the CA support activities are completed, and FPMD's internal evaluation of the overall project has been completed, FPMD will examine the entire project to determine its overall impact and usefulness, as well as to assess future needs in supporting the NGO sector role in family planning in Bangladesh.

II. BACKGROUND

Achieving strategic goals

The five Cooperating Agencies in Bangladesh (The Asia Foundation, AVSC International, the Family Planning Association of Bangladesh, the Family Planning Services and Training Centre, and Pathfinder International) which receive USAID funds to support family planning service delivery through 110 NGOs share three strategic goals for the 1993-1997 period. The goals are to improve Quality, Expand services and strengthen Sustainability of family planning services, a strategy known simply as QES.

The approach to strengthening sustainability is to rapidly and efficiently conduct management development assessments. The MDAs help identify organizational strengths and weaknesses of the NGOs and guide the CAs in targeting technical assistance to the NGOs to develop specific management skills and systems. Until the MDA process began, the CAs support to the NGOs mainly concentrated on the family planning project activity. As a result of the MDA initiative, CA support will broaden to include the general institutional and organizational development of the NGOs.

Under a buy-in from USAID/Dhaka, FPMD was contracted to provide technical support to the CAs to help them achieve their strategic QES goals. In a series of meetings in 1992 and 1993, the CAs, FPMD and USAID agreed that FPMD's technical assistance would be directed to enable the CAs to develop the skills for strengthening NGO managerial capability as a means to achieving institutional sustainability, improve technical training of field workers and managers through new methods of training impact evaluation, and increase the overall decision making ability by developing a programmatic MIS for the entire NGO-based component of USAID's family planning portfolio.

Summary of previous technical assistance missions

The first area of support -- improving managerial development as a means to institutional sustainability -- was originally focused on developing CA skills to conduct strategic planning, which had been identified as a requirement for long-term sustainability. In February 1994 the CAs, FPMD and USAID agreed that strategic planning was premature for the majority of NGOs, and that at the present stage, CAs could be most effective in strengthening basic NGO management skills and systems. Emphasis shifted from developing the MDA as a means of generating information for strategic planning to analyzing information generated by the MDA, developing a procedure for providing feedback to a NGO and developing realistic technical assistance interventions to increase a NGO's management capability. The following section summarizes the hilights of the implementation of this MDA development process over the 18 month period.

TECHNICAL CONSULTATION 1 (JUNE 15 TO JULY 9, 1993): A workshop introduced the MDA framework and development process. The framework enables the CAs to measure the evolution of an organization through **launch, growth and mature phases** using a series of management indicators on which to measure progress. Three CAs developed assessment indicators and questionnaires and field tested them in order to evaluate their reliability, feasibility and validity. At the outset of the MDA process, everyone agreed that compatibility rather than uniformity in output would characterize this development effort. This approach would permit the CAs to tailor the development effort to the needs of their NGOs and their individual needs and resources.

TECHNICAL CONSULTATION 2 (SEPTEMBER 26 - OCTOBER 14, 1993): The CAs focused on using the results of the field test to revise the instruments and developed procedures for analyzing results. Methods for tabulating the results were designed and tested; and some CAs

began to analyze the tabulated results. A one-day workshop was conducted to emphasize the role and purpose the MDA to the overall goal of strategic planning.

TECHNICAL CONSULTATION 3 (MAY 1 - 19, 1994): Pathfinder and FPSTC focused on completion of MDAs, analyzing initial results and developing methods of giving feedback. TAF worked on the analysis of its 26 MDAs, the development of recommendations, standardization of a format for giving feedback to NGOs, and the development of criteria for assessing an NGO's readiness for strategic planning. FPMD also provided technical assistance to AVSC to develop a mini-MDA and discussions were held with FPAB regarding possible assistance to clarify the roles of volunteers and staff.

TECHNICAL CONSULTATION 4 (JULY 7 - 21, 1994): FPSTC and Pathfinder continued to work on the analysis of the results of MDAs conducted, the development of recommendations for TA to the NGOs, and the initial design of technical assistance plans. FPSTC also received assistance in the process of preparing and reporting the results of the MDAs to the NGOs, and Pathfinder received assistance on graphing composite results in order to create a rank ordering of the NGOs for each management component and a ranking for all components. Assistance to AVSC focused on implementation of a mini-MDA and interpreting results. Assistance to FPAB concentrated on assessing issues concerning the role of volunteers.

The following sections summarize the results of the present visit, Technical Consultation 5 (November 5 - 17, 1994).

III. ACTIVITIES

Technical consultation 5 brought the FPMD technical assistance for MDA development to closure with individual CAs. FPMD helped organize a forum for the CAs to disseminate the results and benefits of the MDA process.

The scope of work for this consultation was carried out as follows:

FPSTC reviewed and completed the analysis of individual MDAs; finalized procedures for scoring MDAs in order to quantify results for comparative analyses of MDAs; and developed guidelines for preparing strategies and plans for providing technical assistance to NGOs.

TAF reviewed and refined the technical assistance plans developed for each of the 26 NGOs in the TAF portfolio; analyzed the patterns of assistance which emerged, identified the human resources to provide the assistance, and finalized guidelines for the MDA process. A half-day session was conducted on Consultative Methods to prepare TAF Program Officers for their expanded roles with NGOs, and a meeting was held in Dhaka with seven NGOs to discuss the MDA and its ramifications.

Pathfinder reviewed and consolidated MDA data collected from the 30 NGOs; developed a technical assistance plan for the NGOs using the data collected; and finalized a summary report of the year's activities and accomplishments related to the MDA development and implementation.

AVSC reviewed the potential use of the MDA for government run family planning clinics.

All the CAs' staff prepared presentations to USAID and invited organizations to explain the use of the MDA methodology within their organizations in the management of their NGO portfolio.

IV. RESULTS

The initial strategy of promoting compatibility rather than uniformity in the MDA process permitted each CA to develop different dimensions of the MDA with respect to implementation methods, presentation of results, and utilization of results. This strategy increased the breadth of contributions to the management development assessment process and provided a richer array of tools and techniques for the CAs and other organizations to use in the continuing evolution of the MDA process.

This section provides illustrations of the results of the MDA process drawing on the particular outputs of the CAs which participated in the entire MDA development process. Four result areas are highlighted: analytical methods in developing the MDA process; assessment of strengths and weaknesses in the six management components; utilization of findings for providing technical assistance to develop NGO management capability; integrating the MDA process into the general management procedures of the CA itself; and tailoring the MDA process to meet individual organizational needs.

Although each CA achieved comparable results in each area, for the purposes of this report the experiences from FPSTC, Pathfinder, TAF and AVSC during this fifth and final technical consultation highlight, respectively, the four main results from the MDA process.

A. Analytical Methods in Developing the MDA Process:

FPSTC has completed 28 MDAs, of which 16 full reports have been prepared and 24 have been scored using a new system finalized during this consultation as a means of obtaining comparative rankings on the three milestones: launch, growth and mature. The reports consist of the tabulation form, the MDA analysis form, the feedback report to the NGO, and the scoring sheet. The data from the scoring sheet are used to make bar graphs which rank the NGOs on individual management components as well as on composite scores on all management components.

During this period, the focus of FPMD's technical assistance to the MDA process centered

on the completion of methods to analyze the MDAs and to utilize MDA results as inputs to the planning of technical assistance in NGO management development. As FPSTC wants to integrate TA in management development into its monitoring system, the consultation process and its similarities to and differences from project monitoring were also analyzed.

In addition, time was allocated to preparing a presentation on FPSTC accomplishments and plans concerning the MDA process to the CA and donor community involved in supporting NGOs in Bangladesh at a half-day workshop entitled "Promoting Sustainability of NGOs".

FPSTC will complete the remaining 23 MDAs by March 1995. During the next 12 months, it will develop plans for providing TA to individual NGOs and clusters of NGOs, for integrating TA into the ongoing monitoring system, and will begin the process of providing TA from April 1996.

1. Methods for Comparative Analysis of Results

There are two major pathways in the analysis of MDAs: using the MDA to identify strengths and weaknesses of individual NGOs, and using the MDAs to identify patterns of strengths and weaknesses which characterize the portfolio of NGOs supported by the CAs. During this period consultative support focused on the second of the analytic methods.

FPSTC developed a scoring system following the last consultative visit in July 1994, and using QuatroPRO spreadsheet software, prepared a series of graphs based on the 16 completed MDAs. The scoring system was reviewed and discussed, and modifications were introduced to increase the objectivity of the scores on the various management components.

The scoring method is based on the percentage of indicators at each milestone (Launch, Growth, Mature) level for each management component. That is, the percentage would be based on the percentage of indicators for each management component, at each level. A composite score for all management components was also developed using the same principle.

Using the scoring results, FPSTC prepared graphs to present the comparative ranking of all the NGOs on each management component as well as for all management components combined. The results provided a concise but powerful means of obtaining an overview of the strengths and weaknesses for the entire portfolio of NGOs supported by FPSTC.

Scoring also permits FPSTC to objectively assess the NGO management capability and compare the NGO's management capability with that of the projects FPSTC supports. Preliminary results indicate that overall management capability of the NGOs is relatively low compared to the projects.

2. Methods for Planning TA to Develop Management Capacity of NGOs

In developing the planning approach to providing TA to NGOs, three needs were identified: a) methods for using MDA results, b) approaches for supporting individual NGOs, and c) approaches for supporting groups or "clusters" of NGOs, which emerged as a potentially efficient way to deliver TA.

a. Using MDA Results

FPSTC reviewed the major steps in the planning process and how the MDAs fit into it. These steps included the Situational Analysis, Identification of Problems, Setting of Priorities, Formulating Objectives, Developing Action Plans, Establishing Monitoring Systems, and Evaluating Results. The planning process was compared with the MDA cycle and each step in the MDA process.

The FPSTC Program and Project Officers then reviewed the methodology for situational analysis using the MDA.

- Step 1 involves the use of MDA data to determine strengths and weaknesses, and identify areas of potential TA. The situation analysis can be conducted for each individual NGO as well as for the entire portfolio of NGOs to get a overview of the TA needs.

- Step 2 consisted of organizing the data to facilitate the analysis of strengths and weaknesses and TA needs. The analysis would focus on identifying major deficiencies, and then identifying patterns among the deficiencies: most prevalent, most important and most feasible to address.

- Step 3 dealt with the preparation of Management Assessment Maps which would summarize the results of the analysis. The first map is called the NGO Management Status Map. Presenting all the graphed results for each NGO by management component in a serial rather than ranked approach, it permits a rapid overview of the general strengths and weaknesses of each NGO. The second is an FPSTC TA Map which provides a comprehensive overview of the TA required in the six management component areas. Using these maps enabled the program and project officers to track the technical assistance provided to the entire portfolio of NGOs supported by FPSTC.

b. Providing TA to Individual NGOs

The approach to providing TA to individual NGOs was considered via a case study of one NGO which had completed an MDA and received feedback. The FPSTC Program Officers analyzed the strengths and weaknesses to identify specific solutions for strengthening management capability, selected specific activities by which to deliver technical assistance,

assessed resource requirements to deliver TA, and determined if these resources were available at FPSTC or if FPSTC needed to seek additional resources. The results were then reviewed and the following steps were formulated to guide the planning process:

- Step 1: Analyze possible causes of and interrelationships among the weaknesses.

- Step 2: Analyze the local environment of the NGO through a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats).

- Step 3: Develop the NGO ownership of the TA process.

- Step 4: Determine the most efficient techniques for providing TA.

- Step 5: Assess Project Officer skills to determine if they are applicable to the TA requirements.

- Step 6: Identify additional resources to complement those of FPSTC staff.

c. Providing TA to NGO Clusters

FPSTC identified the "cluster" approach as the most efficient way of providing TA. Preliminary analysis of the ranking of the NGOs on the six management components suggests there are distinct patterns or clusters, which could be exploited in organizing TA. FPSTC focused on ways in which to operationalize this concept. The following steps in operationalizing the cluster concept were reviewed:

- Step 1: Define the cluster. The agreed-upon definition was that a cluster represented a group of NGOs sharing some important characteristic related to their management capacity.

- Step 2: Limit the size of clusters. This is necessary as size has important implications for managing the TA process. For example, size could be based on the number of NGOs which can be reasonably managed by a project officer, or on the number of representatives from the NGOs benefitting from the TA.

- Step 3: Determine criteria for organizing the clusters. This also has important implications for ensuring that the cluster approach makes sense to FPSTC and the NGOs. For example, in some cases NGOs could be more effectively clustered by shared strengths than by common weaknesses.

- Step 4: Choose areas for TA compatible with the cluster approach. This is important in order to make sure TA provided to NGO clusters has the desired

impact. TA which focuses on skills may require different approaches from TA which focuses on knowledge or attitudes.

■ Step 5: Choose methods of providing TA compatible with the cluster approach. This is important to ensure that the type of TA and the method of providing the TA are compatible. Observation study tours may be more suitable for some types of TA than meetings or workshops which usually spring to mind when the cluster concept is mentioned.

B. Identifying Areas for Management Development: Pathfinder International

Having completed its 30 MDA's, Pathfinder was able to was able to initiate the process of taking corrective action to address management weaknesses. Since Pathfinder focused the MDA primarily on the family planning project, the questionnaire could be implemented and analyzed within one day. Feedback could be provided immediately and NGO project managers and Pathfinder Program Officers could discuss their initial findings and conclusions. As a result some of the NGOs immediately started to improve upon some of the weaknesses identified by the MDA.

During this technical consultation, Pathfinder staff consolidated individual MDA findings in order to develop a profile of commonalities among the NGOs as a basis for planning technical assistance which used economies of scale whenever possible, as well as identified those strong-performing NGOs which could assist with the TA process. This consolidation of findings proved to be a two-step process. The first step was to list the most salient problems identified by the MDA for each individual NGO, and by each of the six management components. The second step was to consolidate the salient problems identified by the MDA results, and provide a detailed profile of NGO management weaknesses within each of the six components of the MDA milestone matrix. The profile for the six components is shown below:

1. LEADERSHIP

a. Project leaders are not fully aware of project activities

b. Lack of new ideas and initiatives

c. Difficulties with Social Marketing

d. Quality, Expansion, and Sustainability objectives are unclear and not sufficiently known

2. MISSION AND PLAN

a. Lack of sufficient techniques to set annual targets

b. Lack of PAC involvement in approving the targets, since Pathfinder staff and USAID generally are mainly responsible for this.

In general, this area was significantly advanced, and had few problems. Therefore, individual training by the project officers is recommended and has been specified in the annual work plans of the NGOs where improvement in this area has been indicated. In addition, exchange visits between NGOs who need assistance and those NGOs doing well in this component will also be scheduled.

In the case of the mission and plan component, Pathfinder also felt that this component was strongly oriented towards "project" versus specific "NGO development", and that some additional endpoints on the milestone indicator should be included. In particular, two endpoints, one stressing a plan as to how outside funding and cost recovery would be improved, and another emphasizing activities oriented towards NGO sustainability were decided to be included in the next version of the MDA survey instrument.

3. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

a. Poor fee recovery programs

b. Lack of quarterly PAC meetings in a documented fashion

It was agreed that this section should also include additional endpoints in the MDA milestone matrix that measured the actual management/participatory role of the PAC as well as some measurement of community satisfaction with the NGO program. Although it could be argued that community commitment in terms of financial backing is indicative of satisfaction, it was felt that sustainability depends at least, if not more, on satisfied community members (clients).

4. FINANCE

a. Lack of a written plan for spending money generated by the community

b. Low performance in projected donations and subscriptions

The primary reasons for low ratings on the finance component were usually due less to weak systems in accounting or budgeting, than to the simple fact that planned financial support through community donations and subscriptions was poor at most NGOs.

5. HUMAN RESOURCES

a. Lack of job descriptions, or job descriptions that were obsolete or in English.

b. Performance evaluations that were quantitative in nature versus qualitative and related to

specific accomplishments. In addition, the quantitative evaluations were often subjective and were not always shared with the employees. As a result few incentive programs exist and explicit recognition of outstanding performance was rare. This pattern was also true at the central office level.

c. Lack of annual training plans and related development programs for individual employees.

6. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND LINES OF COMMUNICATION

a. Composition of the PAC. Members do not adequately represent the community nor bring to the NGO new perspectives or added expertise.

b. The PAC does not always sufficiently review and approve the annual program and budget, or provide tangible commitments to support the NGO (e.g., in-kind support such as renovations, health fairs, advertising, etc.).

c. Physical condition and layout of the NGO facility.

d. Lack of a management information system that provides both the PAC and other NGO members with sufficient data and analysis to better manage the goals of the NGO.

Almost invariably the common problem identified here was lack of sufficient participation at the PAC level in developing the project proposal. Although the project proposal is also a function of Pathfinder International and USAID, it was felt that the community should be considered an integral part in this process.

Another observation was that some of the endpoints in this particular component had more emphasis on the project goals versus the development of the NGO. It was agreed that some additional endpoints would be added to the milestone MDA matrix for this component.

Approaches to Providing Technical Assistance

Once the major problems which could benefit from technical assistance were identified, it became a matter of determining what NGOs should receive technical assistance, by whom, and when. As mentioned in the previous trip report (July 1994), the ways in which TA was to be provided included:

1. Direct feedback to the NGOs

2. Incorporation of the findings and planned resolutions in the NGO annual plans

3. Organization of workshops

4. Exchange visits among the NGOs

5. Direct training by the Pathfinder Program Officers

Designated Program Officers and the FPMD consultant developed a TA plan for the coming fiscal year 1995. In order to carry out this TA with as few incremental budgetary costs as possible, the majority of workshops will be included in annual or semi-annual meetings already held with the NGO Executive Committee representatives and NGO Program Directors. The cost of exchange visits between NGOs will be the responsibility of the NGOs from within their currently approved budgets. And direct training by the Pathfinder Program Officers will take place during regularly scheduled supervision visits to the NGOs.

C. Integrating the MDA Process Into CA Management: The Asia Foundation

The Asia Foundation has completed its 26 MDAs, tabulated, analyzed and interpreted the results of 19 MDAs and prepared feedback presentations and met with the staff of 25 NGOs to give person to person feedback; developed individualized draft TA plans for the 26 NGOs; and summarized the TA requirements of all NGOs by levels of assistance and patterns of management development needs.

A six point strategy has been introduced for managing the TAF subgrantee portfolio in the future, using the MDA process as the guiding rationale. The principal points of the strategy are:

1. Annual NGO Assessment

Using the MDA as the primary instrument, but expanded to include indicators related to programmatic aspects of the subgrant, TAF program staff will conduct an annual assessment of the NGOs' performance, with active participation from NGO staff in the assessment. The assessment will look at subgrant activities and the organization as a whole. For the first year, the MDA completed in 1994 will be used as a baseline to develop a first annual workplan. Thereafter, the assessment will be conducted using the annual workplan as the basis for measuring progress toward stated objectives.

2. Annual Workplan

The workplan for each year will be developed jointly with NGO staff, based on the outcome of the assessment. Realistic objectives will be established for areas identified which are required by the terms of the subgrant and those for the entire organization which the NGO and TAF believe will contribute to the sustainability of the NGO. Activities specified to achieve those objectives will be developed. The workplan will include the specification of technical assistance from various sources.

3. Standards Manuals

A revised TAF Standards Manual will be used to assist the NGO to manage the subgrant, with potential use by the NGO to develop wider organizational operational procedures and systems. The manual will likely include a NGO self-assessment tool which will permit the NGO to take greater responsibility for assessing its performance and taking actions on its own to strengthen its management systems.

4. TAF Project Officer Visits

The quarterly monitoring visits currently conducted by TAF Program Officers to measure compliance of the sub-grant will be replaced with periodic visits which look instead at the achievement of objectives specified in the annual workplan, and which provide assistance to accomplish specific activities. TAF will implement more of a "consultative approach" with NGOs. In addition, TAF Program Officers will coordinate provision of TAF inputs from specialized TAF program staff, i.e., MIS, Training, Evaluation/Planning.

5. Regional Peer Management Meetings

These meetings will be conducted regularly and will serve as a forum for NGO Project Directors and the Executive Committees to share information and discuss issues of mutual concern.

6. Advanced Management Training

Pending the identification of funding, opportunities will be provided for Project Directors and Executive Committee members for training in a range of management issues.

D. Tailoring the MDA Process to Organizational Needs: AVSC International

AVSC is examining the potential for using the MDA mini-assessment at government family planning clinics as well as in private sector clinics as the MDA has so far proven to be a useful tool in understanding management strengths and weaknesses and in enhancing development assistance.

In addition, AVSC interest in assessing some of the managerial operations of family planning clinics which it supports would benefit from parts of the MDA as follows:

1. The mini-assessment should probably be conducted with one of the hospital administrators so that it is less threatening to hospital management. This concerted effort was also thought to have the greatest potential for the hospital management's willingness to accept the results as well as work towards bringing about any managerial improvements that might be indicated by the assessment.

2. The mini-MDA could be used as a self-assessment tool. It might be conducted solely by the hospital management as an initial diagnostic tool to identify problems which AVSC could

help solve.

3. The mini-MDA might also be used in conjunction with another managerial assessment instrument developed by AVSC International.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Group Presentation on the MDA Process

On November 14, 1994 FPSTC, Pathfinder and TAF each presented their approach to the MDA process, the results they obtained from the MDAs, and how they intend to use the results to benefit local NGOs which they support. AVSC made a brief presentation on the application of the MDA approach to conduct mini-MDAs for organizations they fund, and FPAB summarized their ongoing activities using the management component framework utilized under the MDA. Participants and invited guests included the staff of CAs, USAID and several interested parties from the population-related donor community.

The presentations illustrated several important points:

- Despite differing approaches used by the CAs to operationalize the process and carry out MDAs, the conclusions being drawn by the CAs from the analysis performed were similar. This confirmed the "robustness" of the MDA and demonstrated its applicability to a variety of organizational settings.

- The MDA process is dynamic. It will continue to evolve and be adapted to the changing environment within CAs and within the Bangladesh Family Planning Program. The MDA process highlighted important linkages between the strategy of the organization, the management of the organization, and program performance.

- The MDA process is linked to immediate practical outcomes. All the CAs confirmed the usefulness of the MDA for the ongoing management of their NGO portfolios. Some CAs were able to present a revised framework for managing their subgrants, largely based on the MDA. NGO Project Directors and Executive Committee members were also motivated to take action to improve management systems directly after the completion of the MDA of their organization.

- The MDA has opened up a new way of thinking for the CAs about the NGOs with which they work and about the nature of sustainability. Implementing a technical assistance plan to develop the management capability of the NGOs, instead of focusing exclusively on the family planning project, has important implications for the type of skills the CAs staff will need to implement the plans, and in some instances, for the type of staff they employ. The MDA results also focused attention on major differences among the NGOs in each CA's portfolio, which had implications for the

types and levels of technical assistance that could be provided or which might be eventually requested. National NGOs were often the strongest because of their multi-donor support, training opportunities, and longer period of implementing development activities. They had the best chances of sustaining operations, consolidating resources and improving very specific areas, e.g., long-term planning, strategic planning, financial sustainability, etc.. In contrast, the local multi-site NGOs do not exhibit exceptional management capability in any one area, and as a group seem to be solidly in the growth stage of development. These NGOs are likely to take a longer period of time to reach a sustainable level compared to National NGOs. Local, single-site NGOs require assistance to strengthen all aspects of their management capability. Presently, most NGOs in this category have little chance for sustaining operations based on their own initiative, and are likely to remain in the launch stage unless major technical assistance is provided.

- The MDA has raised questions about the conventional wisdom that all NGOs should be sustainable. The effort required in terms of time and money may not be justified for NGOs which are at early stages of development managerially, particularly if the NGO staff do not demonstrate eagerness to invest in developing their management capability themselves. MDAs could be used to determine which mature NGOs can be "graduated". It can also help operationalize the term "graduation" with respect to different management support areas such as finance, supervision, etc. By the same token, it can help assess new NGOs in relation to their potential for graduation.

- CAs should jointly develop a manual or "toolkit" or series of papers on the MDA methodology. They should conduct a workshop for the donor community to present the MDA process and methods and discuss in greater detail the present and future direction of the MDA process for management development, in general.

Representatives from the USAID emphasized the MDA's usefulness as a management tool for NGOs in the FP sector. Constructive features of the MDA process include its ability to measure progress concretely, its practicality in getting results quickly, and its utility in enhancing relationships between the CAs and NGOs. Of special importance was the high degree of ownership of the MDA process by the CAs. In addition, the MDA process has important strategic implications as it enables both USAID and the CAs to address such strategic questions as:

What types of NGOs should CAs focus on, considering limitations of staff resources, capabilities and time?

Where does the MDA lead us in terms of improving performance and the goals of Quality, Expansion and Sustainability?

How does the MDA affect other aspects of the Bangladesh family planning program?

VI. FUTURE ACTION

For FPSTC, TAF, Pathfinder and AVSC the next critical phase in the MDA process will be to operationalize the plans for delivering technical assistance in management development, and to integrate the MDA tools and techniques into the routine management operations. This will involve inclusion of the results of the MDAs into the annual workplans of each NGO, as well as into the annual workplans of the CAs themselves. The CAs will have to determine how often to use the MDA in order to update the validity of the MDA instruments in identifying NGO strengths and weaknesses, and in bringing about changes that will significantly improve the "managerial maturity" of the NGOs. They will also need to incorporate the concept and approaches of management development into the NGO leadership and into their own roles as "consultants".

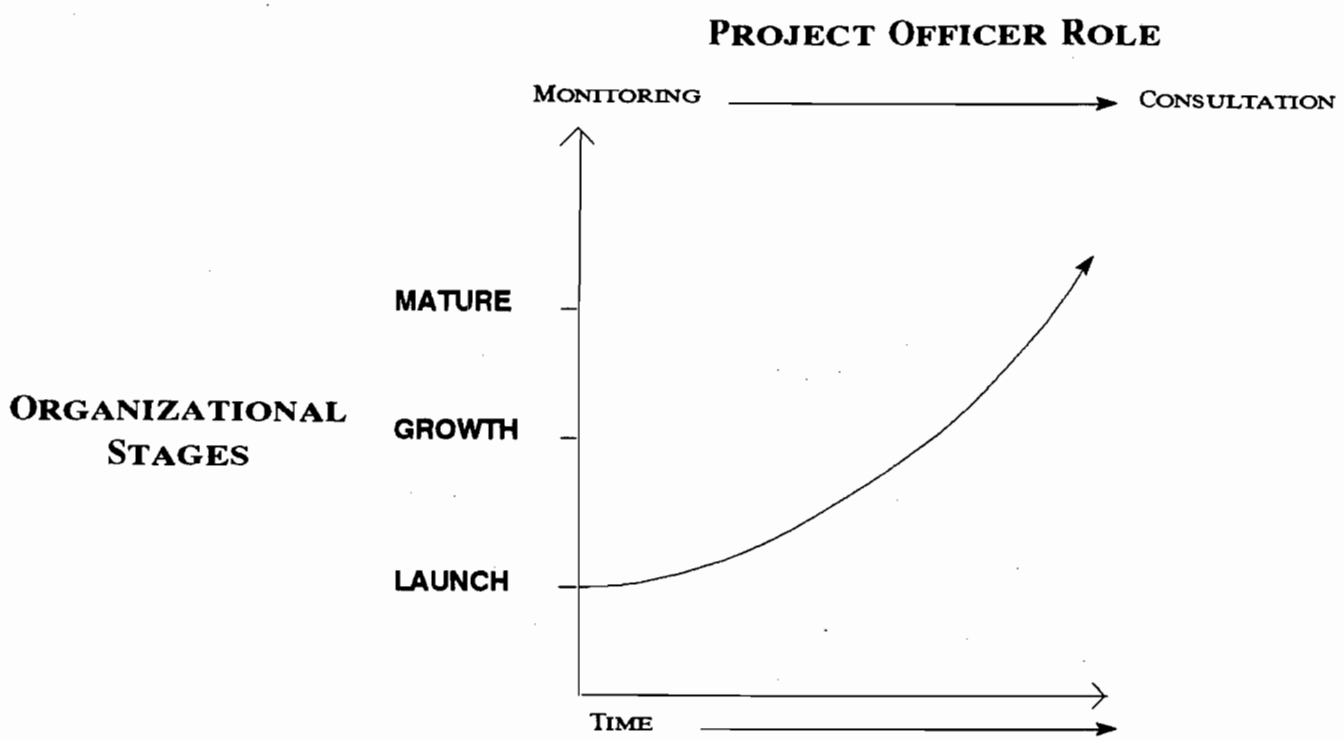
What was impressive to the CA staff members was how the MDA process itself facilitated communication with the NGOs about the importance of management development, so that even before technical assistance plans had been drafted, some NGOs had already set in motion management improvements on their own. The MDA process has given the CAs a new perspective on the NGOs, taking it beyond the subgrant and looking at how the Family Planning Program functions within the context of the organization. From this vantage, the MDA process has given the CAs a new perspective about their own organizations. CA staff now need to determine how to strengthen their internal management systems in order to have a positive impact on the day-to-day management of the FP program so that they promote the concurrently long-term sustainability of the NGOs.

The CAs realize that the MDA as a rapid assessment instrument can not replace the accumulated knowledge of the CA as an institution or the experience of individual staff members. However, they recognize that the process has sharpened their approach to using information for decision making, has further developed their analytic capabilities, and has broadened their outlook with regard to achieving the strategic objectives of improving quality, expanding access, and strengthening sustainability. This strengthened analytic capability needs to be built on and used to maximum advantage by USAID, the Government of Bangladesh and by other donors as well in developing the NGO component of the national family planning program.

MDA feedback techniques helped alter the relationship between CA staff and the NGOs, moving away from the strict monitoring approach which had been the mainstay of interactions with NGOs and more toward a partnership. Program Officers have been able to use feedback as a means of helping the NGOs look at the organization rather than the subgrant, and as a means of addressing a wide range of topics which NGO staff could not previously discuss, such as the need for and benefits of long-term comprehensive planning and sensitive issues concerning the composition of the Executive Committees and the need for delegation. The experience of developing supportive relationships needs to be extended

among the CAs and other organizations and among the CAs themselves. Effective communication embodied in good action-oriented feedback needs to be generalized to all technical areas in which the CAs are engaged so that resources are used to optimum advantage, and so that each CA benefits from the experience and technical capabilities of its sister CAs.

The MDA process has introduce a new role for the CA program officers: that of consultant. The technical and communications skills they need in working with the NGOs on management development will be more complex than those required for monitoring and supervising family planning projects. Program officers need to continually analyze the types of skills they would need to carry out TA related to management development and how these skills will differ from those required in monitoring tasks. These skills will have to be adjusted to the many different environments in which they will likely find themselves and the different stages of development of the NGOs, as depicted in the figure below.



As consultants, the CAs will be entering into a different type of relationship with the NGOs which they support. In the area of management development they will have to start thinking of their relationship as a partnership and clearly define mutual expectations that go beyond current compliance with regulatory requirements of their subgrants for continuing support of family planning projects.

Finally, the MDA process has stimulated the impetus for staff development. The process of developing an assessment methodology using indicators, a survey instrument and tabulation of results are techniques which have opened up a new realm of strategic thinking and strategic action. This last benefit brings this subproject full circle to the initial starting point of FPMD's relationship with the CAs and the NGO program: improving the strategic management of the NGO component of USAID's population portfolio.

The MDA, in providing critical information about the NGOs and the environment in which they operate, allows the CAs and USAID to take a fresh look at these organizations with regard to the role they currently play and the role they might play within the context of the national family planning program. It has also led to a significant re-evaluation of the role of the CAs in relation to the way they support the NGOs and the type of support they provide. These are necessary elements of strategic management. The final step is a redefinition of USAID's approach to supporting the NGO program so as to complete the strategic transformation of the approach to ensuring the long-term contribution of the NGOs to the national family planning program.

ANNEX I:
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS AND GUESTS
WORKSHOP: PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY OF NGOs: PROGRESS TOWARD THE GOAL

COOPERATING AGENCIES

FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES AND TRAINING CENTRE

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Mr. Milon Bikash Paul	Deputy Chief Executive
Mr. Md. Habibur Rahman	Program Officer
Mr. Md.Ismail	Program Officer
Mr. K.M. Sayeduzzaman	Associate Program Officer
Ms. Hasina Nasrin Haq	Associate Program Officer
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Mr. Toslim U. Khan	Program Officer
Mr. Farhad Chowdhury	Program Officer
Mr A. H. Nowsher Uddin	Program Officer

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Dr. Hasib Mahmud	Program Officer
Mr. Wahiduzzaman Chowdhury	Program Officer
Ms. Rosy Hossain	Program Officer

AVSC, INTERNATIONAL

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Dr. Sukanta Sarker	Senior Program Officer
Mr. Golam Naseruddin	Assistant Program Officer
Ms. Nancy Piet-Pelon	Regional Director

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Mr. Rob Cunnane	Project Officer
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Ms. Louisa B. Gomes	Project Management Specialist
Mr. Quasem Bhuyan	NGO Coordinator

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Ms. Amy Durston	Project Officer

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ANNEX II:

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Mr. Md.Ismail	Program Officer
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