The Roles of Communication and Equity in the Transformation of Development Assistance in the 1990s

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"No part of this dissertation has been submitted for a degree or other qualification to any other university or institution of learning."
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Abstract

Development may be defined as a human enterprise, an interactive inter-cultural process which seeks to actualise the highest potentials of human life (Casmir, 1991; Korten, 1986). The failure of development assistance programs over the past fifty years to promote long term development has led to an increasing concern with the efficiency and effectiveness of aid delivery.

Development literature refers to a range of dimensions which characterise the changing approach to the effective and efficient delivery of development assistance programs in the 1990s. The most popular of these dimensions appear to be: sustainability, empowerment, participation, good governance, democracy and human rights. An historical review of development assistance over time and an analysis of each of these dimensions shows that there are some fundamental aspects of development assistance which have not changed over time: the need for effective communication; and equity, particularly gender equity.

To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of aid delivery, it seems that development workers need to focus on the fundamental elements of the development relationship and be trained as competent cross-cultural and gender sensitive communicators who are able to establish synergistic and equitable relationships with aid beneficiaries, and use a range of communication channels and implementation methodologies to do so.
Chapter 1:  
Introduction and Methodology

1.1 Introduction

During the 1990s aid donors all over the world have been reviewing their aid programs and attempting to implement new mechanisms for aid delivery and establish new donor-recipient relationships. There appear to have been two main reasons for this review: the recognition that development assistance over the past fifty years has not led to an improvement in the quality of life for most of the world's poor people; and the current world economic climate which is leading donors to reduce funding for, and commercialise, aid. Thus there is an increasing emphasis on efficiency and effectiveness at all levels of aid delivery (Thomas, Law & Hussain, 1996).

For example, in 1997 the Australian Commonwealth Government commissioned a review, known as the Simons Review, into the effectiveness of its aid programs. The Review called into question aid programs which often have a variety of incompatible objectives and delivery mechanisms which are not effective in bringing about long term poverty reduction or eradication (Thomas, Fairfax & Rynveld, 1997). The Review recommended that future Australian aid should focus on poverty and that fundamental changes should be made to the way in which aid is delivered (AusAid, 1997). The Review's recommendations focussed on changes in government policy which guides and shapes aid delivery. However, it did not specifically address how aid agencies might make fundamental changes to the ways in which they manage aid assistance programs.
Numerous development academics and aid agency workers have commented on the complexity of the field of development assistance, its 'nebulous' nature. This complexity can and does lead to confusion at times and for this reason, I think it is important to identify fundamental elements of aid delivery which can be used by agencies to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of aid delivery.

Internationally, the transformation of development assistance in the 1990s has been characterised by an increasing popularity of concepts such as sustainability, empowerment, participation, good governance, democracy and human rights which are used to guide the design and implementation of development assistance programs. These concepts reflect the recognition that fundamental issues of poverty need to be addressed through creative dialogue between aid donors and aid recipients.

If aid advisors, planners, administrators and field workers are to make valuable contributions towards the eradication of poverty, based on knowledge, understanding and insight, they need to understand why poverty eradication has become the primary focus of development assistance in the 1990s. They also need to know how the dimensions of transforming development apply and on what foundations these have been developed.

The purpose of this paper then, is to first examine why poverty has become an overriding concern in development assistance. It will look at the various dimensions of development assistance popular today and identify two underlying factors which I believe are common to all of them - communication and equity (specifically gender
If aid workers use communication and gender equity as guiding principles in aid delivery, this could reduce and make it easier to discriminate between incompatible program objectives and to prioritise program activities.

The paper has been structured into five Chapters: this introduction; an overview of the transformation of development assistance in the 1990s; an examination of the importance and roles of communication in the delivery of development assistance; an analysis of the importance of equity, specifically gender equity, in development assistance programs; and a concluding section which contains recommendations according to which aid workers may improve their capacity to make aid assistance programs more successful in the long-term, as well as suggestions for future research.

1.2 Methodology

The research for this paper took the form of an extensive literature review. A great deal of information exists about development and in particular, about poverty, communication and equity. I am aware that basing my research on literature biased my work towards rhetoric rather than reality. Thus the purpose of this literature review was to become as familiar as possible with as much of the literature and rhetoric as possible and to condense it into a comprehensive overview of the subject area.
1.2.1 Goals of the Literature Review

The goals of this literature review were threefold:

• To place the research project into perspective by examining current literature;
• To ensure that future research projects in this area do not duplicate research that has already been conducted; and
• To identify the major problems and solutions which have been encountered or developed by others as these can be used as a basis for future development assistance policy making, planning and project implementation.

1.2.2 Assumptions Underpinning the Literature Review

The primary assumptions which underpinned the research for this project were:

• Poverty is a relationship between people and nations based on inequity;
• Therefore the provision of development assistance to eradicate poverty is about relationships;
• As human relationships are essentially processes of communication;
• Therefore equity and communication must be prime considerations in the formulation of development assistance programs aimed at poverty eradication; and
• That for all the ideas and examples presented in this paper, there is the political will to encourage and support development at all levels.
These assumptions were formed over a number of years during the course of my studies in development management.

1.2.3 Sources of Information

A number of sources of literature were used to gather information related to the major topic areas. These were:

- Introductory textbooks for the fields of development management and communication;
- Books on specific topics related to gender and development, communication for development and the transformation of development;
- Specialised journals, in particular, the Australian Development Journal;
- Publications of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade;
- Various publications of the United Nations and the World Bank; and
- Internet websites, in particular those developed by Oxfam and OneWorld.
Chapter 2: The Transformation of Development Assistance in the 1990s

In this Chapter, I shall look at why approximately one-third of the world's population lives in abject poverty despite the expenditure of billions of dollars on development assistance programs over the past fifty years. The major constraints to development in the past seem to fall into three categories: theoretical; political; and program. I will then examine the dimensions of the transformation of development assistance in the 1990s which have reacted against these constraints and are characterised by a focus on increasing decision making opportunities for the poor through opening up communication channels and ensuring equity at all levels of aid delivery.

2.1 A World of Poverty

A poverty curtain has descended right across the face of our world, dividing it materially and philosophically into two different worlds [the First and the Third World], two separate planets, two unequal humanities - one embarrassingly rich and the other desperately poor. (Haq, 1976).

The term "Third World" refers to the world's poor countries and the term "First World" to the world's rich countries. Third World countries are those that are disenfranchised in a world dominated by industrialised, developed and wealthy nations. The Third World today constitutes over half the world's nations – encompassing many different cultures, religions, language groups and ways of life - all have widespread poverty in common.
In 1985 the poorest one fifth of the earth's population received 1.6 percent of the world's income and the wealthiest one fifth received just over 74 percent of the world's income (Isbester, 1993:18). In 1990, the World Bank estimated that one third of the world's population lived in poverty. In Africa and India the proportion was closer to one half. Overall, the standard of living in First World countries was reported to be between ten and twenty times that of most people in Third World countries. In 1991 global economic wealth was estimated to be US$23 trillion. Third World countries accounted for only twenty-two percent of this wealth even though these countries had nearly eighty percent of the world's population and constitute half of the world's nations (United Nations, 1995). In 1996 the United Nations estimated that the total wealth of the world's 358 billionaires equalled the combined incomes of the poorest forty-five percent of the world's population (2.3 billion individuals). Bill Gates, the world's richest man, has enough money ($18 billion) to actually purchase the world's six poorest countries (Keegan, 1997). The United Nations' 1996 figures indicated that one hundred countries had experienced economic decline or stagnation over the past few decades and that in seventy countries, people were poorer in 1996 than they were in 1980 and in forty-three countries, were poorer than they had been in 1970.

There are a number of compelling reasons why we should be concerned with poverty and its eradication. The three most often cited are (eg. United nations, 1995; Isbester, 1993; Mies & Shiva, 1993; World Bank, 1993):

- Exponential population growth (which rapidly drains the earth's resources) has been positively related to poverty. Rising affluence, on the other hand, has been positively linked to a dramatic reduction in population growth;
Environmental degradation is a world-wide problem but it is in the world's poorest nations that some of the worst destruction is occurring today; and

Moral: the Third World is thought to be poor because of First World exploitation which does not fit the United Nation's concept of human rights.

It is heartening to note that many experts agree that poverty can be eradicated, it is not just a pipe dream. There is ‘enough to go around’ in terms of food and other resources, for all the people on this planet (Avery, 1995).

2.2 Poverty is a Relationship

Poverty is a relative term. As John Isbester (1993) argues, poverty is a relationship: a person is only poor if others are rich and their poverty can be directly measured against that richness. For example, a family existing on $5,000 per year in Australia would be considered poverty-stricken when the average family income for other Australians is $30,000 per annum. However, a family subsisting on $5,000 a year in Africa would be considered very wealthy as the average yearly income for most families is less than $350 per annum. Thus there is no universal material (e.g. level of income) criterion of poverty. However, poverty is universally characterised by an inability to make choices (Isbester, 1993; Mies & Shiva, 1993). For example, people living in poverty are usually excluded from decision making at all levels except the very personal. They are not involved in the formulation of international, national, regional or perhaps even local community policies which will affect them and are

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1 Isbester (1993) cites the Pygmies of the Congo's rainforests as a group of people who live at a subsistence level in a self-contained society and who do not consider themselves to be poor. However, a favela dweller in South America, who has access to far more services and goods than the Pygmies, is desperately poor. The favela dweller coexists in an urban environment with the very rich and is excluded from the benefits of the international economic system which the rich enjoy. The Pygmies on the other hand, have nothing but themselves to measure their lives by and so do not judge themselves in terms of wealth or poverty. Hence the homeless in wealthy countries, although they may receive far more income and have greater access to welfare services than favela dwellers, suffer just as much from poverty because their lives can be measured against even greater wealth.
denied access to resources or services which could improve their lives – the profits from international trade, education, health care and so on. The lives of poor Third World citizens then, are characterised by their limited choices and limited opportunities for decision making.

Isbester (1993) believes that people in rich countries bear some responsibility for the poverty of the Third World for two reasons: the process of colonialism, imperialism and industrialisation instigated by rich countries greatly increased the levels of poverty in the Third World; and those with wealth have a moral responsibility to alleviate the suffering of those who are less privileged. In this light, the process of poverty eradication can be seen as a dynamic relationship between relatively wealthy and relatively poor nations. Most First World nations have accepted shared responsibility for this and devote a certain percentage of their gross domestic product to development assistance programs.

2.3 Eradicating Poverty Through Development Assistance

Over the past fifty years thousands of billions of dollars have been spent by First World countries on development assistance programs aimed at encouraging growth and development in the Third World (Hughes, 1997). Despite this large expenditure, data from the World Bank and the United Nations indicate that the gap between the rich and poor is increasing\(^2\). These data show that in all but a dozen Third World countries, economic growth rates are lower in the Third World than in the First and there is a net flow of resources from the Third World to the First (Broad & Landi, 1997). It is not surprising then, that First World governments, citizens and non-
government organisations (NGO's) are becoming increasingly critical of the efficiency and effectiveness of development assistance. The United Nations responded to this situation by declaring the 1990s the 'Decade of Action' in eradicating poverty. However, before poverty can be eradicated, we need to know why development assistance programs have so far failed to benefit the poor as the solution to a problem usually lies within the problem itself. In the next section I shall take a brief look at the history of development assistance and identifying the primary causes of success and failure.

2.4 The History of Development Assistance

The conventional history of development assistance begins after World War II with the independence of approximately one hundred and sixty countries, over half the world's nations, from the control of colonial powers. These countries became known as developing countries or the Third World because their level of industrialisation and wealth was relatively low.

In the years immediately following the War, a Modernisation Theory (Isbester 1993), also known as the Human Deficit Model (Hornik, 1988), of development was used to guide development interventions\(^3\). The Modernisation Theory focused on the deficiencies of Third World countries and held that the reparation of these deficiencies – provision of democratic institutions, of capital, of technology - would automatically lead to economic growth and development. This theory supported a top-down approach to development where the First World, (democratic,
technologically advanced and capital rich) led and directed Third World development because the First World way was thought to be the best way of achieving wealth. The theory emphasised economic growth and gave very little attention to issues related to social development or the international political and economic order. Nor did it address the unique developmental requirements of different countries and cultures. Nonetheless, it still seems to be the most popular theory used to guide development assistance programs today (Momsen, 1991).

The Modernisation Theory advocated a welfare approach to the provision of development assistance (Momsen, 1991; Hornik, 1988). Citizens of developing countries were seen as victims of underdevelopment and as passive recipients of aid. Consequently the implementation of development programs took the form of a one-way, top-down handout of material goods and services to deprived population groups. Although welfare oriented development assistance programs were often superficially successful in the short-term, their benefits were limited and did not usually last long. The major shortcoming of this approach, was that it did not address the enlargement of human choices and therefore did not tackle the root cause of poverty (United Nations, 1995).

By the 1970s the Modernisation Theory and the welfare approach to development was considered by many NGOs and some government agencies to be somewhat shallow and superficial as development assistance programs had rarely proven effective in the long term (Snyder, 1995; Momsen, 1991; Hornik, 1988). Two decades

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2 Over the years sociologists, economists and others have formulated detailed arguments and numerous models and theories of poverty. However the most popular theory for underdevelopment among the social scientists of developed countries today is still the Modernisation Theory.

3 Robert Hornik (1988) and John Isbester (1993) believe that the outcomes of these post-War development programs were not as important as their existence and initiation. In the Cold War era, the United States and its allies relied heavily on gestures of goodwill to developing countries to ensure additional allies in the event of a war between the superpowers. Thus many of the programs initiated may have been unrealistic to begin with and also lacked long-term commitment by the initiators to see them through.
of development assistance had taught that the problem of underdevelopment and poverty was not just related to a lack of modernisation but to the powerlessness of the poor to alter the political and economic structures which determined their development progress (Hornik, 1988). The First World's "roll-up-your-sleeves-and-do-development" optimism which characterised the welfare approach to development assistance, no longer fit the complex requirements of development which had become apparent by the 1970s (Hornik, 1988). Nonetheless, the majority of development assistance programs remained firmly grounded in the welfare approach (Heyzer, 1997; Momsen, 1991).

Those NGOs and government agencies which were dissatisfied with the welfare approach, began to focus on equity and efficiency in development assistance during the 1970s and 1980s. These second generation development projects were characterised by:

- Recognition that development problems were fundamentally political problems (resource access and power inequity) and that the best solutions lay in the political organisation of the poor; and
- Recognition that aid donors did not necessarily know what was best for the poor – the communication process had to be two-way rather than one-way (top-down).

By the 1990s however, development agencies were being forced to accept the unpleasant fact that development assistance had rarely succeeded in eradicating poverty, only in alleviating it for short periods of time (see Ellis, 1997; Schoeffel, 1997; Snyder, 1995; Hornik, 1988). Analyses showed that the reasons for failure fell into three broad categories: theory; political; and program.
2.4.1 Theoretical Constraints to Development

The primary theoretical constraint to development has been the continued use of the Modernisation Theory to foster development (Murphy, 1997). The theory was empirical and assumed that problems which can be analysed can be solved in a logical, sequential manner. It further assumed that economic growth would automatically lead to the eradication of poverty as the benefits of growth would 'trickle down' to the most poor and needy citizens of the Third World. Forty years of development experience have proven this assumption wrong. The Modernisation Theory does not recognise resource constraints or lack of power on the part of the poor as factors inhibiting development, nor does it accommodate the political and bureaucratic realities of both donors and recipients (Murphy, 1997). As we have seen, the singular focus on economics rather than on human choices meant that poverty could not be eradicated, only, perhaps, alleviated.

It seems to me that proponents of the Modernisation Theory erred badly in that they did not communicate appropriately (if at all) with Third World citizens and therefore developed a theory of poverty which lacked foundation in the real-world existence of the people it was supposed to be dealing with. Without an understanding of, and respect for, recipient's priorities for development and the influence of culture on the development process, these aid programs 'missed the mark' because they were not properly targeted at real needs. Second, the theory did not address any issues of equity. The poor were given some increased life choices through the provision of better quality education, housing and health services but generally speaking, they
were still denied the power to participate in the making of political or economic decisions.

2.4.2 Political Constraints to Development

Over the past four decades it has become clear that no matter how brilliant a development project may seem, it is ultimately under the control of current political interests. In essence:

... poverty results from a distribution of power which excludes significant numbers of people from decisions about the distribution of wealth. Poor people generally remain poor because they lack power to negotiate a more equitable distribution. (Murphy, 1997:35).

Unless there is political commitment to a project, (reflected in the provision of an adequate budget, talented managers, overt political support, and ongoing evaluation), it will fail. In the past, superficial political support has been mistaken for real support or projects have proceeded despite a lack of political commitment in the hope that some good will come of it anyway (Hornik, 1988). In simplistic terms, it seems to me that governments that are not truly committed to poverty eradication are not truly committed to equity.

2.4.3 Program Constraints to Development

Penelope Schoeffel (1997, 1996, 1995) has documented various development projects which have failed because they were based on untested assumptions about public institutions, community organisations, the capabilities of the poor and government support. Basing an intervention on untested assumptions, she says, is like trying to put a roof on a house before the supporting infrastructure has been built.
To overcome these problems, Schoeffel (1997) recommends that aid programs be based on social assessment and participation. First, social assessments should inform economic and technical analyses by outlining how reforms might be encouraged and received. Second, the participation of all key stakeholders in public discussions regarding proposed development interventions should ensure transparency and consensus building when formulating policies and strategies for development.

According to UNICEF (undated), communication breakdowns are the primary cause of program failure. These are:

- The message may reach only some of the target audience because only one or two communication channels are used (eg. posters and leaflets);
- People may receive the message but not understand it (use of technical terminology, wrong dialect or language);
- People receive the message but misinterpret it and apply it incorrectly;
- New knowledge may conflict with existing attitudes and beliefs and therefore may never be put into practice;
- People may be unable to act upon new knowledge if they do not have the resources available to do so; and
- People may receive the information but discontinue its application if they feel the results are not satisfactory.

Clearly, unless agencies are communicating properly with all key stakeholders, assumptions cannot be tested, and social assessments will be superficial resulting in inefficient and ineffective development programs.
2.5 Transforming Development Assistance in the 1990s

In the 1990s, it became apparent that First World development assistance had failed to make significant inroads into the eradication of poverty in the Third World. Consequently, the ideologies and processes of development have been in a state of upheaval as development agencies seek to improve aid delivery through restructuring relations between themselves and recipient nations (Thomas, Law & Hussain, 1996).

From a review of the literature about the failure of development assistance, it seems to me that this restructuring of relations is underpinned by the need to achieve equity and two-way communication as core factors of development assistance programs. As Helen Hughes, Professor Emeritus at the Australian National University (1997) reports, relations between industrial and developing nations are changing from aid donor and recipient to sophisticated social and economic relations between equals. ‘Experts’ from donor countries are being withdrawn and local governments and NGOs are taking more responsibility for development. Communication for development is becoming two-way rather than one-way (top-down).

The most obvious effect of the restructuring of relations between First and Third World nations has been a change in the focus of many development programs from economic development to human development as a priority (United Nations, 1995). In Australia for instance, overcoming humanitarian concerns was officially recognised as the primary purpose of aid assistance in 1996 (Downer, 1996). Aid planners, policy makers and advisors for many donor nations now adhere to the rhetoric that:
Development is a people process and development assistance is about forging links between people for the sake of poverty reduction, transferring resources and technology, as well as recognising and enhancing mutual benefits. (Rollason, 1997:19).

Although the concept of human development is imprecise, there is a general acceptance that it connotes steady progress towards improvements in the human condition. This entails, most obviously, the eradication of poverty through an enlargement of choice and the consequent expansion of wellbeing and opportunity for all (United Nations, 1995).

A review of the development literature published in the 1990s shows that there are a number of (often overlapping) dimensions to human development, each of which is thought to be an essential factor in transforming development assistance to ensure poverty eradication.

Although academics and aid practitioners generally recommend that development interventions be designed and implemented in accordance with these dimensions, Hornik (1988:xiii) warns that:

...while we talk about shifts in ideas about how development should be done, those movements may hide a practice that is changing more slowly ... 
[despite] current rhetoric ... the reality fits most often with earlier development models.

Nonetheless, these dimensions are shaping the future of development assistance, and all highlight the paramount importance of communication and equity in ensuring successful development.
2.5.1 Sustainability

UNCED's Agenda 21 document, released in 1995, recognised that sustainable development can only occur if people can take control of their lives and actively participate in development. This is because people with local understanding are best situated and best informed when it comes to formulating appropriate and effective sustainable development policies (Young, 1997).

In terms of human development, sustainability may be described as a development process that seeks lasting satisfaction of human needs and improvement in the quality of human life (Allen, 1980). Or, in the words of James Gustav Speth, Administrator of the UNDP (1995:2):

*Sustainable human development is development that not only generates economic growth but distributes its benefits equitably ... It gives priority to the poor, enlarging their choices and opportunities and providing for their participation in decisions affecting them.*

Integrating an understanding of social and cultural dimensions into development planning should ensure that sustainable development initiatives are appropriate and suited to the needs of the particular community affected.

It is also important to promote sustainable institutions if development interventions are to succeed. Strengthening of local and national groups and institutions, and contributing to the autonomy of NGOs is vital if a stable, organised power-base is to be formed. Without such a power-base, the poor will remain vulnerable (Snyder, 1995).
2.5.2 Participation

Participation is perhaps the most important dimension transforming development assistance today as it focuses on incorporating all aid beneficiaries and stakeholders into decision making processes on an equitable basis. It entails establishing what communities value and is about ordinary people defining their own destinies. It stands in contrast to more traditional forms of development which have concentrated on the modernisation and westernisation of the Third World. It is based on the understanding that:

People in the rich countries will not solve the problems of the Third World by themselves. The destiny of the Third World is in the hands of its members, to make of it what they will. It is they who will determine their future, not North Americans or Europeans. To think otherwise is to perpetuate a peculiarly modern form of cultural imperialism, to conceive of the rich as puppet masters, manipulating the strings that make the rest of the world dance. They do not. But the prosperous countries and their institutions - their governments, their armed forces, their corporations, their voluntary associations - powerfully affect the constraints within which the Third World will determine its future. (Isbester, 1993:29)

The focus is not on delivering an 'off the shelf' aid program, but rather on the process of development. Participatory development is closely related to the concept of empowerment in development, which is discussed later in this chapter.

The following example highlights the importance of participation in development (World Bank, 1995).

In the early 1990s the World Bank's agricultural extension agency realised that it would be unable to meet the diverse needs of modern farming in the third world unless a fundamental change in approach was effected. In short, the World Bank had to involve farmers in development project policy, planning and decision making. The
Bank had to work towards educating and enabling farmers to define and solve their own problems and to determine and take responsibility for their required agricultural extension services. The Bank's experiences in these countries, prior to the adoption of a participatory philosophy, were:

- Unresponsiveness to the variation in farmer's needs;
- Lack of ownership of developmental changes by the beneficiaries;
- A failure to reach the poor and women farmers;
- High and unsustainable public costs; and
- That when agricultural programs incorporated farmer's traditional knowledge along with modern research, the risk of serious mistakes was greatly reduced.

When the value of local knowledge is not appreciated, and local people do not participate in development initiatives, disasters can occur. In Ethiopia for instance, World Bank agriculturalists aggressively promoted the replacement of indigenous *teff* with maize despite resistance by local farmers. In the event of drought, frequent in Ethiopia, the maize proved far less drought resistant than *teff*, resulting in famine. Data collected subsequently also showed that *teff* was nutritionally superior to maize (World Bank, 1995).

There are three key elements to participatory development: stakeholder commitment; institutional frameworks; and two-way communication.

*Equal Opportunity*

Extensive consultation from the outset of any development program is crucial to ensure that there is sufficient commitment to change on the part of all stakeholder
groups. Consultation is critical in making people influential and responsible partners in an aid program rather than passive beneficiaries of aid. Experience has shown that such an approach increases the level of ownership beneficiaries experience in the development process and over eventual outcomes. This in turn leads to increased sustainability (World Bank, 1995).

Although participatory development should involve all stakeholders in the process of planning and implementation of development initiatives, in most, if not all, societies some groups have more power and influence than others. In societies where equal opportunity is denied to some groups (on the basis of class, gender, ethnicity, religion and so on), participatory development can promote equity in encouraging input from those groups who may otherwise be excluded from the development process. This implies a high level of proactivity on the part of aid agencies and governments.

Participatory development cannot be successful without equal opportunity and equal opportunity cannot be achieved without an understanding of the structures and networks of social relationships within a specific community.

The Institutional Framework

There is no single model for creating participatory development mechanisms. Different approaches are used in different countries by different agencies. Issues which need to be addressed when establishing an institutional framework for participatory development include (World Bank, 1995):

- Instituting incentives and mechanisms for accountability on behalf of all stakeholders;
• Identifying the legal and regulatory mechanisms which will guide the development project;
• Identifying the legal and regulatory changes which are required, if any;
• Training aid agency staff in participatory methods;
• Building the capacity of local stakeholder groups; and
• Ensuring that some stakeholder groups do not exclude others from participation.

Two-Way Communication

Two-way communication is imperative if a real learning process is to occur (a fuller definition and discussion of the role of communication in development will be given in Chapter Three). It facilitates a thorough understanding of existing knowledge, attitudes and practices in communities as well as an identification of potentially relevant development strategies. Recipients of aid need to be empowered through knowledge to ensure sustainability of development changes over time. Two-way communication involves a gathering and dissemination of data at all levels and stages of a development projects and between all stakeholder groups. It is a difficult, time consuming and complex task. Two-way communication can take many forms, from grassroots advisers 'in the field' speaking with individuals to mass media programs.

In short, participatory development puts the responsibility for decision making about sustainable human development in the hands of those directly affected. It ensures that aid activities are responsive to local conditions, and are more accountable and more effective. To realise these benefits however, there must be equal opportunity, an institutional framework and effective communication.
2.5.3 Empowerment

Empowerment can be defined as ‘the state of people being enabled to take their destiny into their own hands’ (Snyder, 1995:6) and it entered the development vocabulary in the mid 1980s. Empowerment holds personal autonomy or self-reliance at its core as the very poor in all Third World countries have limited opportunities for exercising autonomy by making social, political or economic choices. Specifically, empowerment is about gaining access to productive assets, access to basic needs such as health and education services, and participation in decision making (Snyder, 1995).

Participation and empowerment are tightly linked. The United Nations (1995b) viewed poverty as a people’s participation gap and empowerment was seen to be the key strategic approach in abolishing poverty. Empowerment signifies:

- Gaining community competence (the skills to make informed decisions that people can agree on and enact together);
- A two-way flow of information for data-driven interventions (facts, rational analysis, empirical approach); and
- Acquiring objective and material power (equal decision making, equal access to goods and services) (Rothman, 1995).

Confidence is also an important element in empowerment. People need to believe in themselves and to be believed in by others. Recognition gives confidence and invisibility undermines it (OneWorld, 1998).
2.5.4 Good Governance, Democracy and Human Rights

Good governance, democratisation and human rights are increasingly being viewed by the west as axiomatic to development (Kilby, 1994).

As we have already seen, all development occurs in a political context. Thus it is generally believed that good governance is an essential precondition for human development. Good governance may be defined as:

... the effective management of a country's social and economic resources in a manner that is open, transparent, accountable and equitable. (Bilney, 1994:17).

A number of researchers have found that without efficient administrative systems and effective government policies, development assistance will have limited effectiveness. As a result, some major aid donors have started using aid as a lever to demand good governance in certain Third World countries⁵ (Thomas, Bliss & Skeat, 1995).

Numerous First World countries have used the promotion of democracy as a criteria to determine aid allocation (Bilney, 1994). Democracy is about political participation and is characterised by: all adult men and women having the right to vote; respect for the rights of individuals; freedom of speech and association; the protection of minority rights and equal opportunity regardless of gender, race or physical disability; and an executive responsible to a freely elected legislature (Vicziany, 1995; Larmour, 1994; Regan, 1994).

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⁵ Called 'tied aid'. Not all conditions placed on the delivery of aid assistance by First World countries are in the best interests of the recipient. It is beyond the scope of this paper to explore the complicated political manoeuvring associated with tied aid.
According to conventional wisdom, democracy and good governance are intrinsically linked as political participation is thought to promote accountability, efficiency and effectiveness at all levels of government (Bilney, 1994). In a democratic society, people should be able:

- To contribute local knowledge to development activities thereby ensuring that project outputs are relevant to meeting their needs;
- To question officials and contractors to ensure greater honesty and efficiency; and above all
- To organise at a grassroots level and participate in government decision making and resource allocation.

The usefulness of these three factors relies on open and effective communication and equity as all affected people must have an equal say in decision making.

A combination of democracy and good governance should result in low levels of corruption and a smooth development process (Blackett, 1995). Botswana is an example of a Third World country with a stable democracy, low levels of corruption and an excellent human and economic development record. Income disparities are low and infrastructure is sound (Blackett, 1995).

Prior to 1990, very few aid donors talked about human rights whereas today, it is generally accepted that all development interventions are about human rights (Alston, 1995; Ware 1995). In very broad terms, the human rights approach to development involves: basic values of fairness; pluralism; non-discrimination; and
justice. The United Nations Declaration on the Human Right to Development and various human rights instruments all assert that:

... there is an inalienable right to development; that the promotion of the realisation of human rights is the rationale of development assistance; and that participation is both an interdependent means and end of development. (Dias, 1995).

The World Conference on Human Rights, held in 1993, resulted in the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action which stated specifically that poverty inhibited the full enjoyment of human rights and the eradication of poverty should therefore be a high priority for the international community (Thomas & Tylman, 1995).

2.6 Summary

In this Chapter, I have tried to demonstrate that the causes of failure of development assistance in the past, and the dimensions of transformed development assistance today, are both underpinned by the equally important need for donors to achieve equity and effective communication in their work. It seems to me that these two factors, while they may often seem invisible, are preconditions for effective development and poverty eradication rather than short-term poverty alleviation. The other precondition for effective development is political will, although this is largely out of the control of aid agencies and aid workers.

In Chapters Three and Four then, I shall look more specifically at issues of communication and equity in relation to aid donors.
Chapter 3: The Roles of Communication for Development

In this Chapter, I shall look at the two main roles of communication in development: its relationship-building role; and its mechanistic information-transfer role. I will explain why the relationship-building role is the most important, even though information-transfer is usually emphasised within aid programs, and why aid workers need to be skilled in fulfilling both roles if a development intervention is to be successful in the long term.

3.1 The Roles of Communication in Development

All human relationships, essentially, are processes of communication (Collins, 1993). The process of communication is complex and involves the dynamic exchange of ideas, information and knowledge between people. It takes verbal and non verbal forms and occurs at different levels - formal, informal, intellectual and emotional. It is a circular process which involves a sender, a receiver and a message. Senders and receivers each occupy their own, individual, psychological environments through which they perceive and interpret experiences. These psychological environments are shaped by many factors, including upbringing, culture, gender, education, and religion. Communication then, is all about the linking or sharing of psychological environments by senders and receivers. Unless the two are linked, the meaning of the message will be lost and proper communication will not have occurred (see Collins, 1993).
Communication is such a diverse phenomenon that it is hard to fully grasp its impact. In the past, and in many instances today, communication in development has been viewed solely as a mechanistic operation, based on the exchange of tangible information. Thus development communication was characterised by a giving of knowledge from those who 'have' to those who 'have not'.

The dimensions of development transformation in the 1990s however, necessitate a different view of communication for development – that of relationship building. For instance, empowerment, sustainability and participation all rely on a two-way flow of information as well as long-term cooperation, respect and synergy. The emphasis is on partnership rather than on education-by-experts. Relationships as communication are therefore seen as more important than information sharing.

The Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council, a global forum composed of development professionals and various support agencies, mandated a series of case studies for water supply and sanitation development assistance programs in 1993. All of the eight case studies concluded that successful programs relied on effective communication efforts. Further, that communication was more than just information or education. Rather, communication was a two-way process in which aid donors and members of the target audience came to understand one another's beliefs and knowledge. This sharing of psychological environments meant that when information for change was prepared (mechanical processes), the messages were clear, appropriate for the target audience (as they built on local knowledge and meet needs as perceived by the audience) and led to cooperation and real change (OneWorld, 1998b).
Not surprisingly, communication now occupies a front-line position in almost every sphere of development activity and is becoming an area of dispute for control and influence of every society at every level (Burch, 1996). For example, the expansion of the global communications system, and the struggle for control of it, will radically transform development from now on. As communication is central to development assistance, aid donors should possess a thorough understanding of communication in its mechanical and relationship-building roles if it is to be used effectively in eradicating poverty.

3.2 The Relationship-Building Role of Communication for Development

3.2.1 Cultural Factors

In very simplistic terms, any culture can be seen as a system for creating, sending, processing and storing information. And as communication is the means by which information is transmitted and coded, it underlies culture (Hall & Hall, 1990). Thus the most basic skill that people working in a cross-cultural environment (such as development assistance workers) must cultivate is intercultural communications.

[Communication]… is the most important tool we have for getting things done. It is the basis for understanding, cooperation and action. In fact the very vitality and creativity of an organisation or nation depends upon the content and character of its communications. (Harris & Moran, 1991:30).

Cultural differences can act as barriers and impede the process of communication and interaction between people because so many variables are unknown to the communicators (making it more difficult to link psychological environments). In order to overcome these barriers, it is important to understand the differences between
one's culture and that of another. Cross-cultural management texts generally agree that cultural differences, if understood and appreciated through appropriate briefing, training and preparation, can actually serve as resources rather than handicaps. These texts assume that to convert 'disorganised resources' into useful and effective enterprises, one must be an effective communicator (see Harris & Moran, 1991; Kast & Rosenzweig, 1985).

Experience has shown that serious and costly errors occur in instances where people have not been concerned about the ways in which culture influences behaviour and communication. Instead of adaptation and progress, this lack of deep understanding has led to non-constructive conflict (Black & Mendenhall, 1995; Fukuyama, 1995; Hames, 1994; Harris & Moran, 1991). The anthropologist Edward Hall (1977) writes that an understanding and appreciation of cultural differences is particularly important for westerners as they tend to equate difference with inferiority, which consequently generates antipathy among those of non-western cultures.

Some of the main determinants of effective intercultural communication will be examined briefly below.

**Insight**

Based on extensive experience in international consulting, Philip Harris and Robert Moran (1991:32-33), believe that people can overcome cultural barriers to communication if they internalise the following assumptions:

- No matter how hard a person tries, they cannot avoid communicating (verbally and non-verbally);
• Communication does not necessarily lead to understanding (whether messages are being interpreted in the same way by both senders and receivers);
• Communication is irreversible;
• Communication occurs in context (the time, place and media used for communication will influence the interpretation of messages); and
• Communication is a dynamic process (a person will be a sender and receiver at the same time as communication is a continuous and active process).

Eight variables have been found to be particularly important in the cross cultural communication process (Samovar & Porter, 1976). Those working in cross-cultural environments need to be aware of these and learn the cultural specifics associated with each one for the country or community within which they are to work. Each of these variables is determined by culture and influences the meanings one attributes to behaviour and perceptions in general. They are:

• Attitudes (psychological states which predispose individuals to think and behave in certain ways);
• Social organisation;
• Thought patterns (forms of reasoning - not all cultures operate according to the Aristotelian logic of the west);
• Roles of groups and individuals within a society;
• Language (fluency, need for interpreters);
• Space and time (not all cultures value personal space as much as westerners do or perceive time in linear terms); and
• Body language, including gestures and eye contact (different forms of body language mean different things in different cultures).
Self-Awareness

Unless westerners are aware of both subtle and obvious cultural differences, communication misunderstandings are bound to arise. It is therefore important that those working in cross-cultural contexts possess a high degree of self-awareness, particularly with regard to:

- Their knowledge of the social customs of the country or community in which they are working;
- The types of skills they need to communicate effectively within the country or community they are working within; and
- The prejudices and stereotypes they hold about the people they are working with and how these will affect their cross-cultural interactions.

Listening

It seems the importance of listening in effective cross-cultural communication cannot be overstated. Research has shown that listening is the competency most used in cross-cultural communication (see Harris & Moran, 1991). A good listener will hear a message in its entirety and analyse the meanings behind the words in full. Above all, write Harris and Moran (1991:38-39), listening is:

... a sharing of yourself. It is impossible for one to become an active listener without becoming involved with the speaker. Listening demonstrates respect and concern ... Without it our isolation grows and our own ability to open up and listen diminishes ... [it also] provides feedback to the speaker concerning the latter's success in transmitting his message clearly.

Listening then, is essential if individual’s psychological environments are to be linked.
Cross-cultural training (CCT) seems to be the most popular method by which to equip people to communicate and work effectively and efficiently in cross-cultural situations. Experts on CCT have stated, emphatically, that such training is a necessity not a luxury for the staff of any organisation working outside their home culture (e.g. Black & Mendenhall, 1995; Black, Gregersen & Mendenhall, 1992; Gertsen, 1990). These experts believe CCT is a tool that can lead to the development of communication skills that allow individuals to: communicate with respect; to be non-judgmental; to accept the relativity of one's own knowledge and perceptions; to be empathetic; to be flexible; to listen; and to tolerate ambiguity. CCT is most successful when it takes the form of experiential rather than book learning.

3.2.2 Promoting Synergy

The dimensions of human development outlined in Chapter Two (empowerment, sustainability, participation and so on) favour collaboration and a teamwork or partnership approach to the provision of development assistance. As we have seen in section 3.1 above, communication is the only way people can 'connect' and establish meaningful and productive relationships. Communication for relationship-building then, is all about building rapport through the sharing of insight and experience, skills and strategies which can combine to form creative solutions to the difficult problems of underdevelopment. Ultimately, relationship-building should result in synergy where 'the whole is greater than the sum of its parts', and where there is an emphasis on cooperation for mutual advantage (or win/win solutions to problems).

According to Harris and Moran (1991:324), there are three characteristics of synergistic relationships. These are:
• Relationships are free-forming and adaptive. People are more important than tasks, boundaries are unstructured, power and responsibilities are evenly distributed, there is a balance between individual integrity and collective purpose, participants play many roles and there is a continual sharing of concerns and values between individuals;
• Participants are willing to exercise initiative, take risks, be assertive, be autonomous, informal and authentic; and
• Participants are able to tolerate ambiguity, differences and uncertainty without closure.

Aid workers can foster synergistic relationships if, in their communication, they continually emphasise: cooperation for mutual advantage; non-aggression; a willingness to promote individual and group development; a win/win approach to activities; wealth-sharing; the utilisation of community resources and talents; encouraging the development of new skills and knowledge; an open two-way system of communication; respect for religious, moral and philosophical beliefs and value systems; and mutual reciprocity (Harris & Moran, 1991).

Thus aid workers must be synergistic professionals who can actively promote a better future through effective collaboration in sharing ideas and insights for creative, sustainable problem solving.
3.3 The Mechanistic Role of Communication in Development

In this section, various elements of a mechanistic approach to communication in development will be discussed to show, in part, how communication processes can be used to reach the very poor and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of development programs which can help them.

3.3.1 Giving the Poor a Voice

Experience has shown that the lack of a 'voice' can marginalise whole communities. Cees Hamelink (1998:2), Professor of International Communication at the University of Amsterdam, writes that:

Among the essential conditions of people's self-empowerment are access to and use of the sources that enable people to express themselves, to communicate those expressions to others, to exchange ideas with others, to inform themselves about events in the world, to create and control the production of knowledge and to share in the world's sources of knowledge.

The existence of a communication disparity between rich and poor means that large population groups do not realise their basic right to express their opinions and ideas, have limited insights into the workings of the world, and are prevented from receiving and seeking information. As a result, these people cannot control the decisions that outsiders make about their daily lives nor can they make informed judgements about the way things are; effectively they are disempowered. Hamelink (1998) believes that people must be capable of making autonomous decisions, should be active and critical participants in their society, and be capable of determining whether the existing social order should be accepted or not. Anything less, says Hamelink, is a violation of human rights.
3.3.2 Other Functions of Mechanistic Communication Processes

In addition to providing marginalised peoples with a 'voice', effective communication processes in development interventions can serve a number of other functions as well.

Organising and Maintaining

If used properly, communication processes may serve three sub-functions writes Robert Hornik (1988). These are: serving as an organising structure; maintaining an innovative process over time; and reinforcing changes in behaviour over time. For example, mass communication processes, such as radio broadcasts, can organise development action as they are often seen as 'authoritative' and can deliver the same message to many people at once. They therefore set the pace for development. Consistent two-way communication over time can also sustain development efforts and changes in behaviour through a continual exchange of information and experience.

Equalising

The history of development projects has shown unequivocally that in terms of access to goods and services, and levels of income, the better off do better and in particular, urban dwellers do better than rural dwellers (Hornik, 1988). Unequal distribution of resources is inevitable in all cases where resources are limited. Effective communication systems have the potential to provide the same access to information for both rich and poor, urban and rural dwellers. This is particularly true of mass
media. With its potential to provide universal access, can overcome the problem of limited resources. In India for example, a Satellite Instructional Television Experiment was used to provide information to villages that were out of range of other communication distribution methods. As satellites are distance independent the costs are largely the same regardless of the actual location.

However, the equalising potential of mass media can only be realised if there is political commitment to the development project (eg. satellite broadcasts will be useless if no receivers have been installed), and if efforts are made to equalise the benefits (for instance, all community members should be allowed to watch the satellite broadcasts).

**Improvement in Quality**

Access to relevant and useful information will allow for informed and therefore better decision making. The ability of the poor to express issues of importance to them, to communicate their needs and requirements, and to educate aid workers should ensure that development activities will be relevant, effective and efficient.

**Accelerating Interaction**

In many Third World countries, rural people rely heavily on communication with more populated areas. When rural people are located at a great distance from main population centres, the establishment of communication processes in the form of public meetings or seminars, talk-back radio programs, telephones, faxes and computers can accelerate interaction and perhaps improve its quality (Hornik, 1988).
Providing ‘Feedforward’

As we have seen, communication systems may be used to provide local people with a voice, to speak about what affects them. For example, publishing letters to the Editor in newspapers and magazines or running ‘chat’ shows on radio or television where people can express their thoughts, opinions, complaints and questions on various subjects. This sort of ‘feedforward’ activity can influence policy decisions and also allow people access to specific information which is of value to them (Hornik, 1988).

3.3.3 Information Technologies in Communication for Development

The functions of communication listed above highlight the fact that the First World is very enthusiastic about information technologies (IT). The Information Revolution is seen by some as being more important than the Industrial Revolution and there is a widespread acceptance that the expansion of telecommunications infrastructure and increased use of IT is necessary for both economic growth and an improved quality of life (Struzak, 1998).

In the development literature, there appears to be a great deal of optimism about the potential for communication technologies to eradicate poverty once and for all. For example, Bernard Woods (1996) a Communication Consultant, states that assistance programs being run at a village level in numerous countries around the world are showing that people of all ages and education can use these technologies for the purposes of education and training, diagnosis of human, animal and plant ailments,
the management of small businesses and local governments, and resource planning. These applications, says Woods, effectively empower people for their own development.

The World Summit for Social Development held in Copenhagen in 1995 recognised that:

... the new information technologies and new approaches to access to and use of these technologies by people living in poverty can help in fulfilling social development goals and therefore recognise the need to facilitate access to such technologies. (cited in Woods, 1996:51).

While communication technology may have the potential to empower people and enhance human development interventions, I do not think it is very appropriate for poverty eradication in most Third World countries. There are a number of reasons for this. First, telecommunications infrastructure does not reach the very poor. In most Third World countries this infrastructure is concentrated in large urban areas and often functions ineffectually. Thus rural areas, which constitute about eighty percent of the poor, have restricted access to the most basic telecommunications service – telephones – let alone to computer-based technologies (Struzak, 1998). Over half of the people living in Third World countries have never made a telephone call and many probably never will (Williamson, 1998).

Second, the cost factors associated with the installation of telecommunications infrastructure (satellites, power and telephone lines and cables etc) are high. Most
Third World governments do not have sufficient funds to budget for such expensive capital works projects and First World nations have drastically reduced development assistance for telecommunications from US$27 million in 1990 to US$2.2 million in 1995 (Hamelink, 1998; Struzak, 1998).

Third, much of the information transmitted by IT comes from western sources and is therefore not neutral. Anglo-American media dominate the world’s television services, the Internet, radio and print media (Thussu, 1997). As a result, a First World agenda is promoted and this is not conducive to building confidence among or empowering the very poor. Daya Kishan Thussu (1997), a teacher of journalism and international communications in Coventry, England, describes the bias inherent in IT as ‘digital dictatorship’ of the First World over the Third.

In my opinion, while IT is an attractive and apparently highly efficient means of information dissemination, they bypass the need for relationship building in development and therefore cannot be successful on their own. In fact, Hornik (1998) cites numerous examples of cases where aid programs focussed entirely on the use of IT for development have failed miserably because they were not based on a common understanding between donor and beneficiary in the first place.

3.3.4 Forms of Communication for Development

All coordinated action depends critically on reliable and accurate communication, and two broad categories of mechanistic communication are considered essential for development workers. According to Milton Esman (1991:57), one of the world’s foremost scholars on development administration, these are:
• Information about the external environment in which they are operating. This includes the natural conditions, the needs and priorities of the targeted audience, the activities and intentions of other organisations and political actors who are also involved in the area; and

• Information internal to the donor agency such as its general orientation and philosophy about development, and especially about the capabilities, morale, and performance record of personnel.

Since the critical test for development interventions are their beneficial impact on their target audience, evaluation and feedback loops should form essential components of a communication system.

For aid workers, effective communication involves the transformation of information into messages which can be accepted, understood and put into practice by the target audience. It is also about aid workers being able to receive and understand messages from the target audience and put these into practice. UNICEF (undated) has developed a twelve-step guideline for aid agency staff to use when establishing a two-way communication process within development assistance programs. The steps are as follows:

1. Define clearly what behaviour is to be promoted;
2. Decide exactly who it is that needs to be influenced;
3. Find out whether new behaviour requires new skills;
4. Learn about present knowledge, beliefs and behaviours of the target audience;
5. Find out whether there have been previous attempts to implement a similar project in the past;

6. Investigate the target audience's current sources of information;

7. Select the communication channels and media which are most capable of reaching and influencing the target audience;

8. Design messages which are easily understandable, culturally and socially appropriate, practical, brief, relevant, technically correct and positive;

9. Develop and test educational materials;

10. Synchronise the project with other development projects and services already being offered by other groups and institutions;

11. Evaluate whether intended behavioural changes are actually occurring; and

12. Repeat and adjust messages at regular intervals over several years.

To ensure communication remains at optimal levels, Esman (1991:60) recommends that development workers:

... take advantage of multiple channels and demonstrate an openness to nonroutine and nonconventional sources, useful information will flow; otherwise reporting can degenerate into mindless procedures.

There should also be a balance of passive channels of communication which rely on beneficiaries' willingness to seek assistance or information (such as information centres) with active channels (such as radio broadcasts, extension officers, and training courses).

A different mix of communication channels will be appropriate in different developmental contexts. Development workers may choose from:
• Interpersonal channels\(^6\): liaising with health workers, religious and community leaders, women’s and youth organisations, school teachers, trade unions, other development organisations and government officials;
• Mass media: radio, television, newspapers, magazines and comic books; and
• Small media: posters, leaflets, brochures, videos, t-shirts, street theatre, and badges.

3.4 Summary

In this chapter I have attempted to demonstrate, once again, why communication is so important in development assistance programs. I have done so by focussing, in turn, on each of the two major roles of communication in development: mechanical information-sharing; and relationship-building.

As all human relationships are essentially processes of communication, communication underlies culture and all human/intercultural interactions will be subject to the quality of communication. Thus relationship-building is considered to be the primary role of communication and information-sharing the secondary role.

Information-sharing in development has a number of important functions: it can empower marginalised communities by giving them a voice; it can organise and maintain development initiatives over time; it can promote equity in contributions towards and benefits derived from development programs; it can improve the quality of development; accelerate constructive interactions between various groups

\(^6\) The variety of interpersonal communication channels for development are discussed more fully in Appendix A.
involved in development; and provide valuable ‘feedforward’ to ensure development interventions 'stay on the right track'.

We can ensure that information-sharing in development is as effective and efficient as possible if multiple channels are used in a two-way communication process. Routine and non-routine, and formal and informal methods should be used for information gathering and information dissemination. Aid donors should thoroughly understand their own internal environments and the external environment within which they are operating before attempting to design, plan and implement a development assistance program. A wide variety of communication channels can be used which fall into three broad categories: interpersonal; mass media; and small media.

Above all, development is an interactive inter-cultural process and aid workers should undertake extensive cross cultural training in order to attain a level insight, self-awareness and listening skills which will enable them to operate synergistically as cross-cultural communicators.
Chapter 4: Equity in Development

In this Chapter, I will look at equity in development, beginning with the most fundamental inequitable relationships within Third World countries: the relationship between men and women. As women comprise seventy percent of people living in poverty, and are largely excluded from decision making processes, I argue that unless gender equity is achieved within development programs, development will be lopsided and restricted and therefore not sustainable in the long term. Aid workers therefore need to address the gender related assumptions underpinning the planning of development assistance programs and utilise implementation methodologies that promote gender equity across-the-board.

4.1 Equity in Development

The preceding chapters have established that poverty eradication through providing equality of opportunity (to make decisions and choices) has come to dominate the development debate in the 1990s. On a global level, there appears to be a trend towards a restructuring of relationships between First and Third World governments from that of donor and recipient to sophisticated social and economic equals (Hughes, 1997). On a national level, this restructuring of relationships has been characterised by expanded conditionality of aid including moves towards democratisation, participation, good governance, and a respect for human rights which will support increased equality of opportunity for members of society (Rollason, 1996).
Over the past decade, many aid donors have recognised that the greatest inequalities occur between men and women, and to ensure equality of opportunity they must, in the first place, work towards gender equity. Their experience has shown that inequalities between men and women with respect to power, decision making, and in reaping the social and economic benefits of development initiatives have characterised most development programs (Thomas, Holloway & Hussain, 1996). This inequality exists despite the increasing emphasis on participation. Dan Connell (1997) writes that during the United Nations Decade for Women, only four percent of aid projects funded under the United States aid program involved the participation of women even though 'participation' formed a project criterion, and in half of these projects women were minority participants.

From a review of the development literature, it appears to be widely accepted that sustainable human development can never be achieved as long as women are denied equal access to goods, services and decision making processes. Unless fundamental issues, such as gender equity, are addressed through creative dialogue, it will be impossible to come up with creative solutions to the problem of poverty (eg. Crook, 1996; Snyder, 1995; Kerpan, 1993).

The first step in generating a new future ... is gaining the freedom to think in new ways. If we can see the design of the "superglue" and get it out into the light of day, the result will be an enormous freedom to hear what is actually being said, to listen in a new way, to recognise and identify the current culture or paradigm that is limiting us. This will give us the power to see, generate, and fulfil new possibilities, which will result in new futures. (Fittipaldi, 1993:236).

The 'superglue' that Barbara Fittipaldi refers to is seen by many as a cultural pattern of inequality which begins with the domination of man over woman and which needs to be challenged and changed if the future is to hold any promise.
Harris and Moran (1991:127) argue the case of gender equity in broad terms:

*It has been observed that one of the major problems of world leadership, whether political or corporate, is its male domination. Key decision makers tend to be chauvinistic and skewed towards the male perception of “reality” and the male approach to problem-solving. If we are to have synergistic leadership, male and female thinking and powers must be integrated. Perhaps the planet’s persistent, unsolved problems ... exist partly because our attempts to manage them have been so lopsided. That is, over half of the human race, women, are too frequently excluded from the decision making process and halls of power.*

According to Riane Eisler (1993), author, teacher and journalist, the fundamental changes occurring in development today can be characterised as a move from a ‘dominator’ to a ‘partnership’ model of human relationships. The dominator model views power as synonymous with maleness, and underlies a worldview structured in terms of ranking: man over man; man over women; nation over nation; and man over nature. Anything connected with femininity was considered secondary and peripheral to the ‘real’ or ‘men’s’ world. Eisler agrees with Harris and Moran that masculine leadership has proven incapable of handling the world’s economic, social and ecological problems. Sustainable human development therefore requires a holistic worldview, based on empowering partnerships or ‘power-with’ rather than domination or ‘power-over’. The first step in achieving a human development process based on partnerships, says Eisler⁷, is to ensure equality between men and women since this is the most fundamental and important relationship in any society. After all, men and women cannot exist without one another.

During her work on female leadership, Sally Helgesen (1990) has observed that in situations where women have a strong voice, ‘hierarchies of exclusion’ are replaced.

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⁷ A partnership style of social organisation is not new. Mounting archaeological evidence indicates that in prehistoric societies, such as the Minoan civilization on Crete, men and women were considered equals, there was almost no institutionalised violence (eg. War), and a fairly even distribution of wealth. See Eisler, R., (1988) *The Chalice and the Blade*. Harper & Row, California; or Stone, M., (1976) *The Paradise Papers*. Virago, London.
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by ‘webs of inclusion’ where the sharing of information for optimal decision making is the key. She also says that this ‘web’ permits a greater flow of information between people because it is less restricted.

Many Third World countries are today suffering from ‘brain drain’ due to the low levels of participation and utilisation of women in the development process. Moses Kiggundu (1989) of Carlton University in Ottawa, writes that in many areas women have more experience and knowledge than men, yet they are all too often excluded from the making and implementation of important decisions about these things. As a result, decisions made are not the best and social and economic development is restricted and inhibited. It is therefore essential, says Kiggundu, that systemic and long-term approaches are taken to deal with a society’s inherent gender biases.

From the discussion above, we can see that the concept of gender in development:

... raises fundamental issues of equality and differentials in social structure, infrastructure and access to social and economic resources. (Thomas, Holloway & Hussain, 1996: 2).

Incorporating gender concerns into development assistance programs (‘engendering’ development) should ensure that both men and women have equal input into and equal access to the benefits of development assistance. Nuket Kardam (1998), Associate Professor and program Head at the Monterey Institute of Development Studies, has stated that the experience of international women’s networks has led to the conclusion that developmental goals can only be attained if there is a consideration of gender issues at their core. I therefore contend that gender equality forms the first, most fundamental step in ensuring across-the-board equity in development.
4.2 Engendered Development

*For all societies, the common denominator of gender is female subordination. For women of the contemporary Third World the effects of patriarchal attitudes are exacerbated by economic crisis and the legacy of imperialism.* (Momsen, 1991:i)

Development experience has taught, over the past few decades, that the process of human development affects men and women differently. In almost every developing country, women comprise a large percentage of the poor and very poor and there is evidence to show that there is an ever-increasing feminisation of poverty (OneWorld, 1998; Heyzer, 1997; Snyder, 1991; Sen & Grown, 1987).

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) estimates that of the 1.3 billion people living in poverty, 70 percent are women (UNDP, 1995). Further, of the world’s 900 million illiterate people, women outnumber men two to one, women suffer more than men from malnutrition, women’s wages are approximately 30-40 percent less than men’s for comparable work, women constitute less than 10 percent of all administrators, managers, and members of parliament in developing countries (United Nations, 1995). Gender is therefore an important mediating factor to consider when considering resource allocation and access to development benefits in these societies.

Over the past 30 years or so governments and development agencies have recognised that effective (and perhaps efficient) development requires a gender perspective. As a result a variety of approaches have been taken to engender development programs. An increasing feminisation of poverty however, seems to
indicate that the need to incorporate a gender perspective into development has either been ignored or superficial and has not been effective.

Noeleen Heyzer, Coordinator of the Women's Program at the Asia Pacific Development Centre, (1997:127) writes that:

\[
\text{There is increasing evidence that women do not automatically benefit from anti poverty programs and that many growth-promoting strategies may make the conditions of significant numbers of women in poverty groups worse if certain adjustments are not made to planning assumptions and implementation methodologies.}
\]

It is imperative that adjustments are made to planning assumptions and implementation methodologies because the costs of ignoring the needs of women in development are many. They include: uncontrolled population growth; high infant and child mortality; a weakened economy; ineffective agriculture; a deteriorating environment; and a divided society (Momsen, 1991).

Aid agencies therefore need to ask themselves how to make the required adjustments to planning assumptions and implementation methodologies. However, before this question can be properly addressed, the history of development policies for women should be examined in order to ascertain what planning assumptions have already been made and what implementation methodologies have already been used.

4.3 The History of Development Policies for Women

A gender-based critique of development assistance programs began in the 1970s and gained momentum with the United Nations Decade for Women which was
declared from 1975 to 1985. By 1980 most development programs had begun to incorporate women’s needs into their programs and by 1995, when the fourth International Conference on Women was held in Beijing, gender had become a major element in the contemporary development debate.

4.3.1 The Welfare Approach

The welfare approach to female-oriented development initiatives, is the oldest and still, it seems, the most popular approach (Heyzer, 1997; Momsen, 1991). In development planning, women were seen as ‘victims’ and as passive recipients of development aid rather than as participants in the development process. Its main purpose was to enable women to be better mothers, as that was seen to be their main role in society. The primary method of program implementation was a top-down handout of goods and services.

4.3.2 The Equity Approach

By the 1970s there was increasing dissatisfaction with the welfare approach and many development agencies and governments began to focus on the integration of women as active participants into the development process. In Australia, the Women in Development (WID) policy was developed with a view to raising the status of women in developing countries through appropriate program design. Aid workers and contractors were trained to implement WID strategies within development programs, programs were evaluated according to WID objectives and special funding was provided for innovative women-specific projects (AusAID, 1997). The WID approach focussed mainly on women in an attempt to remedy women’s previous exclusion from the development process.
Development projects carried out under WID and aimed specifically at women, tended to be small and peripheral to the main aims of development. Programs generally promoted greater self-sufficiency rather than qualitative change in a development sense. The major planning assumption seems to have been that women's poverty was seen to be a problem of underdevelopment and not of subordination. Therefore increasing women's productivity was believed to be the most important factor in accelerating development (Momsen, 1991).

4.3.3 The Efficiency Approach

By the mid 1980s the concepts underlying the WID approach changed as the outcomes of aid projects demonstrated that a narrow focus on women and their productivity did not necessarily result in successful development. There was a recognition that gender sensitive planning and implementation of development programs was crucial to their success. This meant not only involving men and women as equal participants in development, but also gaining an understanding of what the roles, responsibilities and relationships of both men and women were within a given community. It also meant finding out what their perspectives on, and priorities for, development were. This type of feedback into the development process was necessary to ensure that existing systems could and would eventually change.

The fundamental planning assumption here was that women's contributions to development were equally important to those of men if development was to occur effectively and efficiently. Program implementation was based on the philosophy of participation (Momsen, 1991).
4.3.4 The Empowerment Approach

In the 1990s an empowerment approach to development became popular. This approach builds on gender-sensitised planning and implementation and encourages women to overcome gender inequity and poverty through increased control over decision making in their personal lives, communities and, to some degree, the world at large. Empowerment, as articulated by Third World Feminists, aimed to empower women through increasing levels of self-confidence and self-reliance.

As we have seen in Chapter Two, confidence is an important element in empowerment. The United Nation's conferences on women have been particularly influential in promoting confidence on a national level for women in Third World countries as they give value and prominence to engendered development work (OneWorld, 1998).

At the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, Australia acted as the regional lead donor nation for the Pacific region. The Platform for Action formulated at the Conference has since shaped Australia's new Gender and Development (GAD) approach to development-as-empowerment. The GAD policy is specifically committed to development initiatives that can:

... meet women's immediate needs and address the underlying causes of women failing to benefit equally from development. (AusAID, 1997:3).

The equality of men and women is seen as an integral component of universal human rights and therefore as an important development goal. Consequently aid programs should be designed and implemented to promote equal opportunities,
rights and access to resources and decision making mechanisms for men and women as participants and beneficiaries of development.

4.4 Planning Assumptions

In any development project, there are three main stakeholders: a First World aid agency; a Third World government; and a specific group of project beneficiaries. Assumptions are made by each group about the project and these assumptions influence project development and implementation.

4.4.1 Assumptions Made By Aid Agencies

The literature on women and development highlights three fundamental themes which must be considered if development project planners are to fully understand the dynamics of women's role in any given society. These themes are:

- How labour is divided by sex;
- How women's productive and reproductive roles are integrated within the home and also in wider society; and
- How development differentially affects women.

Donor agencies need to examine these themes internally and externally. An internal examination would focus on how the assumptions made by aid agencies are grounded in structures of gender hierarchies and cultural systems as these hierarchies and systems affect the ways in which the agencies can be responsive to development needs and also influence the effectiveness with which agencies can implement and manage development programs. An external examination would
focus on the target beneficiaries to ensure that the assumptions on which a
development assistance program is based accurately reflects the reality of the project
beneficiaries and prevents the projection of the donor’s cultural values onto
beneficiaries. If program planners do not understand these themes, they are likely to
make incorrect assumptions about their target audience, assume value-neutrality on
their own part and doom their project to failure in the long term.

Perhaps the primary planning assumption made by development agencies is that
men support families. (That is, they assume they know how labour is divided by sex
within the home). This is erroneous as it is usually men and women, together, who
support families. In many Third World slums, in fact, women are increasingly
supporting families alone. It is important to fully understand how labour is divided
within the home as the gender complexities related to the handling of income within a
household can affect: the quality of nutrition for family members; education;
employment; and general household stability.

Development agencies also often assume that women (and men) have the free time
to devote to new development projects, and they often ignore the heterogeneity and
differentiation of groups of men and women (Momsen, 1991).

4.4.2 Assumptions Made By Governments

Government policies and activities for development are also based on structures of
gender hierarchy. As Heyzer’s (1997:129) extensive research into gender, economic
growth and poverty shows:
... in countries with high degrees of gender inequity the ability of government programmes to promote women's access to even basic sources like education and health-care is mediated through gender culture and hierarchies.

Engendering the development paradigm by challenging the gender-related assumptions on which it is based is nothing less than revolutionary. In most countries it involves a radical rethinking about the premises for social, economic and political life. As they stand:

... the free workings of economic and political processes are unlikely to deliver equality of opportunity, because of the prevailing inequities in power structures. (United Nations, 1995:7).

According to the UNDP, to overcome such structural barriers to engendered development, governments need to change thinking through comprehensive policy reforms and to translate these into a series of affirmative actions.

4.4.3 Assumptions Made By Beneficiaries

Beneficiaries may make a range of assumptions about an aid agency, their government and a particular development project depending on their previous social, economic and political experiences with development initiatives. The only way that these assumptions can be understood is through communication: aid agencies and governments need to understand how the people think in order to ensure that development projects will be accepted by the target audience and proposed changes implemented.
4.4.4 Summary

Understanding gender related constraints to development is the first step in the process of removing them. Basing development projects on correct assumptions should therefore be an important component of any development initiative. To do so, there must be an understanding of:

- The cultural system and gender hierarchy within which the aid agency operates;
- The cultural system and gender hierarchy within which the Third World government operates. Specifically, how these structures affect development policy and practice;
- The cultural system and gender hierarchy within which the target audience operates (with specific reference to division of labour by sex, integration of productive and reproductive roles and the effect of differential development).

4.5 Implementation Methodologies

A number of implementation methodologies, all of which are congruent with the development dimensions of participation, empowerment, human rights and democracy discussed in Chapter Two, can be used to recognise and overcome gender related constraints to development. The most prominent of these will be discussed here.

4.5.1 Mainstreaming

'Mainstreaming' a gender perspective into an aid program requires equal consideration of the needs, priorities, and interests of both men and women in all
stages of the development planning and implementation process. As decision making is largely monopolised by men, mainstreaming aims to integrate women and their needs into all stages of development assistance programs: designing, planning, implementing, administrating, and monitoring, (Corner, 1996; Mitchell, 1996). The concept of mainstreaming arose at the time the WID approach evolved into the GAD approach to development.

Lorraine Corner (1996:39), a Regional Program Adviser for UNIFEM, describes the potentially transformative role of mainstreaming:

... when the waters of two streams of equal size but different compositions join together, the new stream resembles neither of its tributaries.

The general framework for mainstreaming gender in development assistance programs follows two broad paths (Corner, 1996: 41):

- Implementing gender-responsive policy, planning and programming; and
- Ensuring the participation of a critical mass of competent and committed women at all levels of decision making to ensure that their needs and concerns are effectively incorporated into assistance programs.

4.5.2 Gender Analysis

The best means to address gender equity will vary from country to country, depending on the particular social, economic and environmental factors which influence people's roles and decision making capacities. It is therefore vital that for each aid activity, an understanding of the gender roles which exist in specific contexts is attained. According to much of the literature, gender analysis may be the
one of the best strategies by which to reach such an understanding (AusAid, 1997; Oxfam, 1997).

The collection of socio-economic data disaggregated by sex is one method of gender analysis. Other methods involve the direct participation of the men and women in the affected communities in data collection as well as the design and implementation of development activities. To enable direct participation, there has to be communication: open, honest, constructive and two-way communication.

Gender analysis usually operates on two levels: strategic and practical needs. Practical needs include access to adequate clean water, health care and income. They are based on the already defined roles of people within a particular community and do not question prevailing divisions of labour or status (Mitchell, 1996). Strategic needs on the other hand, challenge the roles and status of people within society and focus on the means by which to achieve equality in political, economic, cultural and social spheres (Mitchell, 1996).

Gender analysis training has proved very useful for development assistance workers who are attempting to mainstream gender issues into aid programs. Angela Hadjipateras (1998), a Gender Research Consultant, writes that commitment on the part of aid agency staff is positively linked to the degree of female participation in an aid program. Gender objectives need to be accepted as a collective staff responsibility which is enhanced through training.

Gender training should cover the following areas (Corner, 1996):
• Knowledge of the donor's policy/policies regarding gender equity;

• Broad-based gender awareness such as: knowledge of the types of impacts development projects have had on women; an understanding of divisions of labour; the difference between practical and strategic development needs; and an understanding of the various dimensions of development (participation, empowerment etc);

• Analytical skills which enable workers to gather field data about people's roles and responsibilities, and their access to productive resources and other goods and services. These skills are especially important in order for workers to assess the potential impacts of projects on the target audience;

• Application of gender analysis throughout the project cycle; and

• Establishment of good relationships with other organisations and institutions which support gender equity in development.

Such training should enable aid workers to participate constructively in policy making for development assistance.

4.5.3 Institutionalising Gender

This implementation methodology works from the premise that the goal of gender equity cannot be attained if institutions, which are 'gendered' in that they typically place women in sex-stereotyped and subordinate roles, are not changed to equally reflect the interests of both men and women (Kardam, 1998; Goetz, 1995).

Essentially, institutionalising gender is about mainstreaming gender within organisations. It is a technical and political process which requires sometimes radical shifts in organisational cultures, ways of thinking, goals, structures and resource allocations (Kardam, 1998). The transformation of organisational cultures is an
invisible aspect of institutionalising gender and producing new legislation, policies, guidelines and data-sets which promote gender equity issues are more obvious aspects of it.

National Machineries for Women\(^8\) ensure that gender issues gain a hearing on a macro level by using a range of strategies to promote gender-sensitive policy and practice within institutions. These strategies include: advocacy; lobbying; setting up focal points in various government ministries; providing gender training; and publishing guidelines and checklists for gender-sensitive planning and evaluation (Oxaal, 1998).

4.6 Summary

In this chapter I have attempted to show that the concept of gender is fundamental to equity in development. A focus on gender addresses issues of equality and differentials in social structure across-the-board. As a common denominator of gender is female subordination, and evidence demonstrates that there is an increasing feminisation of poverty around the world, engendered development initiatives should focus first and foremost on promoting equality for women.

To fully incorporate gender equity into development assistance programs, aid donors need to alter their planning assumptions as well as utilise new program implementation methodologies. Most aid agency planning assumptions are grounded in structures of gender hierarchies. It is important that these are understood before they can be eradicated. The most effective implementation methodologies for

\(^8\) Institutional bodies or systems which promote the status of women. Approximately 90\% of countries have them.
promoting gender equity have proven to be mainstreaming, gender analysis and institutionalisation.
Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Discussion

This paper has highlighted the fact that development assistance programs are, first and foremost, about human relationships. Poverty is a relationship based on inequity and poverty eradication is about people working together to change the power differentials between rich and poor within and between nations.

With increasing levels of poverty worldwide and the apparent failure of development policies based on the concept of 'modernisation', there has been a transformation of development during the 1990s. This transformation has seen a greater emphasis on poverty eradication and on human development. The dimensions of human development which are popularly espoused in the development literature today include: sustainability; participation; empowerment; good governance, democracy; and human rights. These dimensions address a range of problematic issues related to development assistance: the use of an appropriate theory for development, not just economic growth, (theoretical constraints); the recognition that all development assistance programs are subject to prevailing political interests (political constraints); and the need to test assumptions before commencing with an assistance project (program constraints). I have argued in this paper that there are two constant and fundamental factors - communication and equity - which underpin all of these dimensions of development, and which can be used by development assistance workers to guide and prioritise aid activities.
Equity is fundamental to this process of transformation as the inequality of opportunity to make decisions is common to all poor Third World citizens. Since the greatest inequalities occur between men and women, achieving gender equity is the first step in creating a society with relationships built around equal opportunity. There are a number of reasons why gender equity is thought to be so important for development. First, there is a recognition that ‘male’ thinking and leadership have been unable to solve the world’s persistent problems; that the exclusion of women from decision making processes has led to a lopsided and ineffective process of development.

As all human relationships are essentially processes of communication, it follows that communication underlies and is central to all aspects of development. Communication can be viewed from two different perspectives: mechanical (focus on transfer of information); and relationship-building. Relationship-building is considered primary and information-sharing secondary as mechanical processes can only function effectively if a solid relationship based on mutual trust and cooperation has been established.

5.2 Conclusion

Although the field of development assistance is ‘nebulous’ by nature, and the dimensions of development assistance may change over time depending on the global economic and political environment, it is possible to identify fundamental principles of practice which can be used by aid workers to guide all development activities and to avoid many of the problems associated with aid delivery. I have
argued that these fundamental principles are communication (a relationship building role) and equity (beginning with gender equity).

Development assistance programs should be seen as communication processes aimed at building synergistic and equitable human relationships between and within nations. Aid workers therefore need to be process specialists if assistance programs are to be truly effective. Workers need to be excellent cross-cultural and gender-sensitive communicators who understand the principles of equity, empowerment, sustainability, good governance, democracy and human rights.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the literature review, I have formulated two recommendations for aid agencies which, if incorporated into aid program planning and delivery, should increase the effectiveness and efficiency of development assistance:

1. Development assistance programs focus on development as a communication process. Aid workers should therefore possess a thorough understanding of the functions and forms of the information-sharing and relationship-building roles of communication. Experiential training is perhaps the best method of transforming aid workers into effective cross-cultural communicators; and

2. Aid workers undergo GAD training to equip them to design and implement projects that promote equal opportunities and equal access to decision making processes of both men and women as participants in, and beneficiaries of, development. This training should ensure that workers are able to examine and address the gender-related constraints to development and utilise various
implementation methodologies such as mainstreaming, gender analysis and institutionalisation to overcome these constraints.

Finally, some suggestions for future research are to look at: how beneficiaries may be trained or encouraged to be excellent cross-cultural communicators so that they can participate more fully in development assistance programs; and what sort of training is provided to aid workers at present and how effective is it in terms of cross-cultural communication skills and equity achievement within development assistance programs.
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Appendix A: Who is Involved in Communication for Development?

Teachers and Educators

The education system is recognised as being the developing world’s broadest channel for disseminating information (UNICEF, undated).

In primary schools, teachers are in regular contact with children and their parents over a period of years and are influential members of their communities. Today’s children are tomorrow’s adults and more children in developing countries are enrolling in primary school. Thus there is an opportunity to use the school system to teach today’s child knowledge which will empower them to become effective decision-makers as adults. Furthermore, most primary school age children share what they learn at school with their parents. Not surprisingly then, in many countries schools have begun to work as partners and allies for development projects. For example, in Uganda, all primary schools now teach children basic health knowledge and skills as part of the science curriculum. The syllabus covers topics such as nutrition, safe water, sanitation, immunisation, treatment of common diseases, prevention of accidents and AIDS. Ugandan children are encouraged to be ‘agents of change’ at school by informing their friends and families about primary health care.

Adults too have increasing access to education systems. These may take the form of distance education, training courses or schools for adults. For example in Yemen, special literacy classes are held for women each afternoon once their work in the fields is complete. The women learn basic reading and writing skills using textbooks.
that cover subjects such as breast feeding, post-natal care, hygiene, sanitation and nutrition. Thus they also gain valuable health knowledge in the process.

Educators include: Ministries of Education; teacher training colleges; publishers of school textbooks; makers of educational films and videos; teacher's unions and professional associations; and teachers and trainers.

**Mass Media**

The mass media have, over the past few decades, revolutionised the capacity of developing countries to communicate with their own people. Radio now reaches most homes, even in the most isolated areas and television is found in most communities. With increasing levels of literacy, the print media also have increasing readership. Along with many others, UNICEF recognises that the mass media have special authority. They can raise public and official awareness of development issues, bring new information to isolated areas where development workers are few, they can communicate new facts and skills and assist in mass organisation of development workers and civilians.

The mass media however, are essentially one-way communication methods. This can be partially overcome if groups of people meet to listen, watch or read together, discuss issues which arise and use the media and associated discussions as a platform for action.

Each form of the mass media has its own distinctive characteristics. Radio has a larger audience than all other forms of mass media as it is cheap, is linguistically
flexible, easily accessible to illiterate audiences, and messages can reach millions of people at once and can be repeated numerous times at low cost. For example All India Radio broadcasts in 21 major languages and 246 dialects and reaches billions of people.

Television is believed to be the most powerful of all the mass media. By combining pictures with sound it can communicate messages more effectively than sound (radio) or print alone. However television receivers are very expensive as is programming. In most very poor countries television reaches less than 5% of families.

Nearly half of all the world’s newspapers are published in the Third World. They are read primarily by community and religious leaders, politicians, health and development workers, academics, civil servants, teachers and students. Thus they can, and do, play a key role in disseminating information and mobilising mass support for new development initiatives.

Books are a more permanent source of information and are therefore used mainly for training and reference purposes. In developing countries, comics have been found to be an extremely effective means by which to communicate messages to people with limited literacy.

Small media, such as videos, slides, cassettes, posters, photographs, flipcharts and folk media (such as puppet shows, role plays and music) can provide the opportunity for the audience to interact with the sender of the message. As a result they can be important media for direct communication.
Key stakeholders in the mass media include: broadcasters, producers, film-makers and script writers; editors, journalists, cartoonists and photographers; graphic artists and illustrators; and Ministries of Information.

Religious Leaders

Organised religion plays a central, integrating role in the social and cultural life of most developing countries and consequently exerts a powerful influence on the priorities of a society and the policies of its leadership. Religious leaders are usually in close and regular contact with most groups within a society and are often more respected and influential than government workers, development workers or other community leaders. Thus the support and assistance of religious leaders in development projects can be invaluable, if not a pre-requisite, for their success.

Trade Unions, Employers and Business Leaders

Trade unions, where they exist in the Third World, have usually been leading campaigners for better economic and social conditions for the people. Through their widespread and regular contact with governments, employers and workers, they are in a good position to gather and transmit information.

Employers are in regular contact, through the workplace, with their employees and business people are in regular their contact with customers and suppliers. These contact networks can also be used to effectively transmit and gather information. For example, sugar and salt manufacturers in Sri Lanka now print recipes for oral rehydration salts (to cure diarrhoea in infants) on their packets. In Bangladesh, a
match manufacturer prints the symbol of the country's immunisation program on its matchboxes.

**Health Workers**

The number of health workers in the Third World has almost doubled over the past two decades. These include doctors, nurses and practitioners of indigenous or alternative medical systems. Health workers maintain contact with all groups within a society, usually live within a community and are familiar with local customs and perceptions and are usually held in high esteem. They are therefore in an excellent position as communicators within a society.

**Artists and Entertainers**

Artists and entertainers have the potential to reach a broad cross-section of a given population. They are generally familiar, credible and accessible to the majority of ordinary people with their unique ability to educate and amuse people at the same time. For example two of Nepal's leading comedians, popular with rural and urban dwellers, use puppets and comic routines to teach people about oral rehydration therapy (exploiting the humourous side of diarrhoea but also explaining the grave consequences of diarrhoeal dehydration). They have also produced a cassette of humourous routines on child survival topics which is sold to the general public. Music has a unique appeal in that it allows a message to be repeated many times over without the audience becoming bored, it has tremendous emotive power and is highly participatory as people with little or no training can sing along or compose songs and jingles themselves.
Sports and other celebrities can also be used to give credibility to development messages through their endorsement of a project. For example, Turkey's immunisation campaign of 1995 was publicised by the two first division soccer teams running onto the football field carrying babies who were vaccinated on the field, in front of a large crowd of spectators and television viewers, before the game began.

**Government and Community Leaders**

Every arm of government, national and local, has the potential to raise public awareness about development issues. In countries where the mass media have limited outreach, political leaders are often held in high esteem due to their official position. They are therefore valuable allies in any development project. In particular, Ministries of the Interior or Home Affairs, are the key to mobilising the administrative infrastructure for any development effort in most Third World countries.