



HUMAN AND INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Interventions and Learning

The experience of the

Indo Swiss Project Sikkim



The use and sharing of information contained in this document is encouraged, with due acknowledgement of the source.

Contribution

Cherian Joseph and C. Kameshwar Rao in collaboration with Mrs. Namrata Thapa, Dr. Tilottama Bajgai, Mr. Padam Subba & Mr. Puchung Bhatia members of HID Core Group

Design, Layout and Printing

Charita Impressions, Hyderabad, (A.P.) Ph : 040-27678411

Photos

Dr. Cherian Joseph, Dr. C.K. Rao

Publisher

Intercooperation; Delegation-India, Hyderabad

Citation

Indo-Swiss Project Sikkim (2006) HID Interventions & learning the experiences of the Indo-Swiss Project Sikkim Intercorporation India Program series 3, Intercooperation Delegation, Hyderabad, India.

Copies available from

Delegation - Intercooperation India,
8-2-351/R/8, Road No.3, Banjara Hills
Hyderabad 500 034, India
tel: +91 40 2335 5891
email : info@intercooperation.org.in

	Abbreviations and Acronyms	I
	Acknowledgements	II
	Foreword	III
	Executive Summary	IV
1.	Indo Swiss Project: An Introduction	1
2.	HID: The Concept and its Practice in ISPS	4
3.	HID Interventions in ISPS: An Overview	14
4.	HID Outcomes: Shifts and Changes	26
5.	Learnings from the Intervention: Reflections and Insights	36
	References	42

Contents

Abbreviations and Acronyms

CD	Capacity Development
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
HID	Human and Institutional Development
IC	Intercooperation
ICAR	Indian Council for Agricultural Research
IDCC	Inter Departmental Coordination Committee
ISPS	Indo Swiss Project Sikkim
LEWs	Lady Extension Workers
MIS	Management Information System
MLO	Middle Level Officer
MPCS	Milk Producers Co-operative Society
MUAHWs	Milk Utility Animal Health Workers
NGOs	Non Governmental Organizations
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRI	Panchayat Raj Institution
PTD	Participatory Technology Development
RMDD	Department of Rural Management and Development
SAJAG	Samaj Jagran Group
SDC	Swiss Agency Development and Co-operation
SHGs	Self Help Groups
SIRD	State Institute for Rural Development
SMU	Sikkim Milk Union
SVA	Senior Visiting Advisor
VLWs	Village Level Workers

This publication is written by Dr. Cherian Joseph, Dr. C.K. Rao, together with Mrs. Namrata Thapa, Dr. Tilottama Bajgai, Mr. Padam Subba and Mr. Phuchung Bhutia.

The authors would like to thank Indo Swiss Project Sikkim for giving the opportunity to document experiences on HID. The authors would also like to thank the members of the core group for taking active part in collecting the information and providing to the Authors.

The authors would like to extend sincere gratitude to the department of Animal Husbandry, Livestock Fisheries and Veterinary Services, Horticulture and Cash Crop Department, Sikkim Milk Union, Rural Management and Development Department and State Institute of Rural Development for providing support in publishing the document.

The respondents from Milk Producer Cooperative Societies, Field Based Trainers, members of SHGs & PRIs and farmers have provided very valuable information for which the study team would like to thank them.

Finally, it is worthwhile to thank ISPS support office team members in providing assistance to bring out the document

Dr. Cherian Joseph is an independent consultant who has worked in the area of human resource development for over twenty years with development organizations and corporate firms. He facilitated and steered some aspects of the HID interventions of the project. Email :hranewdelhi@gmail.com.

Dr. CK. Rao is a livestock expert with many years of experience in implementing development projects. Prior to joining Intercooperation in Delegation office he has been managing, on behalf of Intercooperation, the different project components of the Indo Swiss project Sikkim. Currently he is associated with Intercooperation Delegation office in Hyderabad. Email: raoveni@gmail.com

For Intercooperation, HID is a process guided by our values and principles-poverty reduction and strengthening of social capital being the overarching ones. It comprises both the 'Human' and 'Institutional' dimensions and the interaction between these.

HID aims at developing the conditions that will continue to deliver results in the long run and for that reason, must be understood in terms of a process. These processes contribute to :

Developing skills and behaviour of individuals so that they lead, manage, serve and strengthen their institutions.

Strengthening institutions to make them more responsive, effective, and efficient to serve in various domains: social, economic, technical, political and religious.

Promoting an improved relationship between stakeholders and their institutions around shared values and redefining roles and responsibilities to promote equity.

HID needs to be implemented in approach intervening at three distinct and strongly interlinked levels. While there is often a tendency to concentrate HID support on organisational aspects, Intercooperation considers human capital development as a postulate for building up social capital.

At an individual level, capacity building emphasises self-awareness, confidence and self-esteem, empathy, participation, internalisation of values and HID principles, communication, personal organisation, analytical and critical capabilities, etc. Therefore, human development is particularly relevant for marginalised groups such as women, ethnic minorities, religious minorities and the extreme poor.

At an institutional level - the "I" dimension - efforts are oriented towards the definition of visions and missions, the development of approaches, strategies and methodologies, working methods and organisational development, networking, project cycle management, resources mobilisation and management, knowledge management, etc.

Organisations can be defined as groups, associations, networks formed in order to address specific interests of concerned people. They are subject to laws, policies and cultures by institutions representing the common and public interest of a country. Organisational development is generally understood as the strengthening of its management capacities, which includes human resources capabilities, administrative and financial management, planning and monitoring capabilities, etc. Institutional development should address interventions such as policy and laws reform, policy dialogue, governance, etc.

This document presents a structured and comprehensive account of the HID approach, challenges and outcomes in the Indo Swiss project Sikkim (ISPS). In our quest to develop approaches and partnership models that help achieve poverty reduction in an effective and sustainable manner, the HID approach followed in ISPS stands out for its reach and constant effort to learn and improve its effectiveness. We hope this document is useful for our partners in Sikkim, other state governments and development practitioners who may walk this path in our common quest to develop ourselves into better individuals, institutions and organisations that live and promote values of equitable and sustainable development.

December 2006

Rupa Mukerji

The Indo Swiss Project Sikkim a project was set up under a bilateral agreement between the Government of Sikkim and the *Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation* to improve the *livelihoods* of small and marginal farmers in rural Sikkim by fostering income generating capacities and strengthening need based service delivery systems of selected departments of the Government of Sikkim. The support structure for this project was provided by Intercooperation a Swiss Foundation for Development and Intercooperation based in Switzerland.

The project began in 1993 with an initial assessment process to identify the key areas for programme intervention. It began with a strong technical component focused on developing technical competencies of the Departments of Animal Husbandry and Horticulture as these two departments addressed the needs of the small and marginal farmers who constituted the larger segment of farmers in Sikkim.

While in the First Phase the project focused on the creation of infrastructure, promotion of production and processing capacities and development of technical concepts with stress on increased training exposure of partner staff for enhancing technical and related methodological competencies, in the second Phase the project focus shifted to improving extension skills in partner departments for improving the interface between government departments as service providers and the poor farmers as their clients. The push was to strengthen delivery of need based services by the partner departments of animal husbandry and horticulture to the small and marginal farmer and the strengthening of user groups. In Phase Three the emphasis was on promoting Human and Institutional Development (HID) processes to enable partner departments to sustain the programmes initiated; to develop and strengthen capacities for self governance at the panchayat level (in partnership with the Department of Rural Management and Development); and to consolidate the learnings and gains from the project.

This document seeks to capture the experience of the project in implementing HID as it worked with its partners to develop and implement programmes that would promote income generating capacities of small and marginal farmers and strengthen and enhance the effectiveness and quality of service delivery to them.

The document begins with an introduction to the genesis of the project, and the focus of the various phases of the project. Chapter 2 dwells on the understanding of the concept of HID as articulated by SDC and IC .It goes on then to clarify how the project initiated the HID process and the thematic thrusts that the project chose to focus on. The chapter also recalls how the project revisited ongoing activities across the project to grasp more clearly the HID elements and content of all that was being done. The HID focus of the project was rearticulated.

As ISPS moved from Phase 2 to Phase 3, (2001 to 2002) a number of fresh initiatives were introduced in the programmatic activities with partners, initiatives that sought to address and expand the social content of the change process, and not just the technical content, which the project had focused on to a greater extent in the earlier years. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the endeavours that were launched around this period or a little later. These were largely fresh initiatives taken up with each partner. The chapter presents the overview under two broad heads, one the experience with partners and the other the experience in the context of inter-partner activities. The write up presents the initiatives taken up with each partner separately and then introduces the efforts which were inter-partner.

In Chapter 4 the document looks at the more important HID outcomes of the interventions described in the earlier chapter. The analysis and discussion primarily looks at the outcomes from the perspective of the HID Foci the project had set itself. The discussion highlights the human and institutional changes that followed or are beginning to happen as a result of the efforts of the Project – changes at the level of the community, farmers groups, and department functioning, individual officer attitudes and at the level of policy. This is discussed with reference to each partner and then with regard to the inter-partner interventions.

Chapter 5 concludes with Learnings from the Intervention: Reflections and Insights. The write up seeks to capture the learning from the experience with reference to:

Human and Institutional Development: Interventions and Learnings, The ISPS Experience.

- the dialogue process
- capacity development
- partner engagement with HID
- internalization and sustainability
- macro-level insights
- the change process
- and the project office.

The document concludes with highlighting what at this point of time are fairly discernible as the impact of the HID process.

In Indo Swiss Project Programs Human and Institutional Development program has been recognized as an overlapping vector in all its programs. This program is meant for improving the effectiveness of project programs being implemented by its partners.

Interventions intended to bring the poor and marginalized out of conditions of deprivation, vulnerability, and resource scarcity, often fail to make the expected impact. Common reasons for this failure to impact on conditions of poverty include un-sustainability of the intervention; the non-involvement of the poor in the decision making processes concerning their own development; the inadequate development of appropriate capacities – technical, methodological and social, to manage and sustain development efforts; and the indifference if not hostility of administrative authorities to ensure mainstreaming of initiatives that alter the existing ways of working or which require greater accountability for outcomes and results.

Indo Swiss Project Sikkim, managed by Intercooperation supported the HID component in four programs of the project namely Livestock Development, Horticulture Crops Development and strengthening of Panchayat Raj system.

This document seeks to capture the experience of the project in implementing HID with its partners to develop and implement programs that would promote income generating capacities of small and marginal farmers, strengthen, enhance the effectiveness and quality of service delivery to them. This publications also describes the process and experiences of introducing the HID concept and some key lessons learnt from implementing the program in its components.

Human and Institutional Development

Interventions and Learning

Indo Swiss Project Sikkim



Interventions intended to bring the poor and marginalized out of conditions of deprivation, vulnerability, and resource scarcity, often fail to make the expected impact. Common reasons for this failure to impact on conditions of poverty include un-sustainability of the intervention; the non-involvement of the poor in the decision making processes concerning their own development; inadequate capacities – technical, methodological and social, to manage and sustain development efforts; and the indifference if not hostility of administrative authorities to ensure mainstreaming of initiatives that alter the existing ways of working or which require greater accountability for outcomes and results.

The last two decades have hence seen development practitioners; analysts and writers increasingly emphasize the need for people-centred development. This marked a departure from the production centred development approach that had characterized most development efforts well into the 80's. It is also acknowledged that an ideological commitment to the people-centred approach further requires translation into practice by creating relevant technical and social capacities at different levels to enable participation and engagement of the poor in their growth. It also requires that authorities, agencies and NGOs involved with the development chain also internalize and practice concepts, values, skills, methods and techniques that support and strengthen people-centred, participatory, need based, sustainable development.

The Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation (SDC: the development arm of the Government of Switzerland), articulated its understanding and approach to development within the framework of what it termed as **Human and Institutional Development (HID)**. This understanding and approach emanated from its own experiences in the third world, the continually expanding debate between development practitioners, analysts, and the needs and expectations expressed by the poor in communities where they worked.

This document presents the experience of human and institutional development in the working of a SDC supported project in the state of Sikkim, which was implemented by the Swiss Foundation

for Development and Cooperation Intercooperation. It explores how HID was introduced, how it was worked on the ground, the major outcomes and results that followed and the learnings that emerged.

The Genesis of Indo Swiss Project Sikkim

In the early 1990's a senior civil servant from Sikkim visited the Malabar Milk Union in Kerala, a southern state of India. He was impressed by the success of the milk union. SDC had extended considerable support, both technical and social for the development of the union and its member co-operatives. The civil servant saw the potential for similar collaboration in Sikkim. The idea led to meetings and visits between SDC and the Government of Sikkim. It culminated in the signing of an agreement between the Government of Sikkim and SDC in 1993, setting up the Indo Swiss Project Sikkim (ISPS), under the framework of the bilateral agreement between the Government of India and Switzerland on development co-operation. With this ISPS began work, the first bilateral project to be launched in Sikkim. Intercooperation, which had steered development projects in different **third world countries** was mandated to provide the support structure of the project.

Sikkim is a landlocked state, in the lap of the eastern Himalayas, "bounded on the north and north east by Tibet, on the east by Bhutan, on the west by Nepal and on the south by the Darjeeling district of West Bengal." ⁽¹⁾ One of the smaller states of the Indian Union, it is only 113 kilometers long and 64 kilometers wide. It enjoys a very high forest cover of around 82 percent, and had a population of little over 500,000 in the early '90's. The 2001 Census of India recorded a population of 540,000.

Nearly "60 percent of the population is less than 24 years old, over 80 percent households have electricity as against 60 per cent for all India; 85 percent households have drinking water (piped or hand-pump), and 73 percent households have a toilet or a latrine facility as against 36 percent for the whole country". ⁽²⁾ But Sikkim "has the fifth highest incidence of poverty among the states (of India) with 41.4 percent of the population below the poverty line." ⁽³⁾

In Sikkim: The People's Vision, ⁽⁴⁾ a study of the socio-economic conditions of the state commissioned by the State Government, (in

2001) the authors wrote that the “cornerstone of the development strategy pursued so far has been a super active government in all areas of economic activity. This has put the government under severe fiscal stress”. They went on to write that to achieve the goal of eco-friendly, sustainable development, it is necessary to empower people with the right education and skills, build up an appropriate infrastructure and initiate fiscal consolidation and reform. The strategy for this they stated “consists of fostering a public-private sector partnership in key infrastructural areas”. They underlined that the “state’s strength in horticulture and animal husbandry is to be promoted,”⁽⁵⁾ among other key areas.

The Vision document also stated that “given the pattern of resource endowment of the state, the focus of promoting income generating activities should be on processing of raw materials produced within the state, such as horticulture and animal husbandry.”⁽⁶⁾ The ISPS had however, much earlier in 1993, identified that animal husbandry and horticulture were critical income generating sectors for the small and marginal farmers. The project had hence chosen these as the main focus areas for initiating development interventions.

Deriving from this understanding the ISPS had spelt out at the start of the project, that its **Overall Objective** as “*within the frame of sustainable natural resource management aim to improve the livelihood of small and marginal farmers in rural Sikkim by fostering income generating capacities and strengthen need based service delivery systems of the Government of Sikkim’s Department of Animal Husbandry and the (then) Directorate of Horticulture.*”

The Project Phases

The project was implemented in four phases from 1993. Beginning with a Pre-phase from 1993-1996, it was followed by Phase 1 from 1996-1999, Phase 2 from 1999-2002. Phase 3 which began in 2002 concluded in March 2006.

The Pre-Phase

The pre-phase focused on identifying areas for the collaboration. Various socio-economic aspects of the rural economy were studied in order to identify possible interventions to be taken up in Phase 1. The objective of the Pre-phase was to arrive at a common understanding

on the potential and constraints of a sustainable livestock production and complimentary farming components.



Farming practices in Sikkim

Phase 1

Phase 1 promoted interventions to enhance the income generating capacity and eventual improvement of the livelihoods of small and marginal farmers. It focused on the creation of infrastructure, promotion of production and processing capacities and development of technical concepts. It contributed to the development of approaches, strategies and programmes in the field of animal husbandry and horticulture.

Phase 1 also saw the creation of task based groups in partner departments like the Breeding Cell, the Disease Investigation Cell in Animal Husbandry, a Ginger Task Force in Horticulture, etc. and stress on increased training exposure of partner staff for enhancing technical and related methodological competencies, including managerial capacities. But as was to be articulated later, was not an area of focus. Processes for enhancing people’s participation in the ongoing programmes also did not receive much attention.

Phase 2

In Phase 2 ISPS continued to focus on improving the livelihood of small and marginal farmers by:

- fostering income generating capacities
- strengthening need based delivery systems

The project sought to promote these through a variety of measures. This included the development of field level application of innovative technical programmes in animal husbandry and horticulture; the introduction of relevant approaches, methodologies and organizational structures and processes, and

through the provision of technical expertise and targeted financial support to facilitate the envisaged interventions.

Phase 2 saw a shift to improving extension skills in partner departments for improving the interface between government departments as service providers and the poor farmers as their clients. The push was to strengthen delivery of need based services by the partner departments of animal husbandry and horticulture to the small and marginal farmer and the strengthening of user groups. The focus was hence on improving management processes, MIS development, and strengthening inter-face between service departments and users.

Phase 3

In Phase 3 the emphasis was on promoting HID processes to enable partner departments to sustain the programmes initiated; to develop and strengthen capacities for self governance at the panchayat level; and to consolidate the learnings and gains from the project.

In the earlier phases of the project, support to partners had largely concentrated on technical development. While this had developed expertise in partner departments, insufficient attention

had been placed on encouraging partner departments to build systems that placed appropriate resources, both human and material, at the required point, and to cater to the continuing development of their human resources.

Further, partner departments, did not focus much on the social dimensions of service delivery management, which are critical to the effectiveness and sustainability of a programme. From the latter part of Phase 2 and through all of Phase 3, these HID issues became a major focus of the project.

Phase 3 also saw a clear alignment between the declared intent of the Government and the project. Two policy documents published by the Government, **Sikkim the People's Vision** (referred to above) and the **Sikkim Human Development Report 2001** emphasized the importance of public-private partnership in development, the need for greater decentralization of development planning and implementation, the reduction of subsidy driven development and the urgent need for a more people responsive, customer oriented, working of delivery services.

Phase 3 Programme Objective

To improve effectiveness/efficiency in partner organisations based on an improved service orientation so as to enable partners to render improved appropriate and gender sensitive services in a changing environment.

The HID Approach

The HID approach emphasizes that holistic, sustainable development for the poor and marginalized requires that the systems, structures and programmes for the development of the poor are worked with their participation and that these in turn are institutionalized also with their participation.

David C. Korten, one of the major contributors to development theory highlights that such sustainable development is possible only through people centred development processes. He explains that people-centred development practice requires, “the need to strengthen institutional and social capacity supportive of greater local control, accountability, initiative and self-reliance. The transfer of capital is seen as less central. A high priority is placed on a process of democratization. The people are encouraged to mobilize and manage their own local resources with government in an enabling role”⁽⁷⁾. He adds, “where such decentralized, self-organizing approaches to the management of development resources are seriously undertaken, they result in more efficient and productive resource management, a reduction in dependence on external resources, increased equity, increased local initiative and accountability, and a strengthening of economic discipline. These results do not come easily, but sustainable broadly-based development never has”.

Human and Institutional Development (HID) is a people centered and people oriented approach. Its framework for action hence calls for the creation of :

- Structures, functions and processes that are people based;
- Forms of governance that are integrative and inclusive;
- Political and behavioural values that are equity and growth oriented;
- Dialogue that is open and inclusive and engages all stakeholders and
- Development of social (including political), methodological and technical competencies that promote sustainability.

SDC, Intercooperation and the Concept of HID:

In 1996 when SDC prepared its India Country

Programme for 1996 – 2003, it stated that it would “continue to shift away from the role of “doing” towards “facilitating,(and) enabling” ; this means having more patience than in the past and creating a “learning ground” with its partners. This calls for an enhancement of the HID components as a vectoral activity in all interventions”. These statements acknowledged a very important shift in the approach of SDC to development. Later in the same document SDC explained that it had moved “away from technical approaches towards an orientation where the human being and the institution become the focal point.” The objectives of HID were that “SDC facilitates and promotes learning and change processes of actors in development. It supports individuals, groups and institutions to develop their social, methodological and technical competencies aiming at self-responsibility, participation and autonomy as well as at improving effectiveness and efficiency.”⁽⁸⁾

A few years later SDC further clarified its understanding and stated that “striving for sustainable development is only possible if people, and also co-operation with people and their organizations is a central factor.”⁽⁹⁾ This gradually evolving understanding of HID, based on considerable exchange and dialogue within SDC and with its partners led to HID being described as: **the promotion of attitudes, behaviour and competencies within us and our partner organizations, that encourages, enables and sustains autonomy and life.**⁽¹⁰⁾

SDC India also identified that capacities required to be strengthened and developed at three different levels; at the level of the individual, the level of the organization and the level of the system. For SDC, the following assumptions are at the core of its understanding about Human and Institutional Development is:

- **Contributing to and creating enabling environments for the poor and the marginalized so that they can make and pursue their choices in human development,**
- **Decentralization and devolution of governance structures to support and develop participatory structures and processes,**
- **Supporting, promoting and strengthening learning processes for**

developing competencies of the actors in the development arena, and

- **Promoting behavioural and attitudinal changes in communities, organizations and individuals in consonance with people-centered, sustainable development.**

Intercooperation (IC) from its own practice of HID in its work articulated a very similar understanding of HID. In a recent paper IC states:

- For Intercooperation, HID is a process guided by previous values and principles (amongst which poverty reduction and strengthening of social capital are the over-arching ones) which contributes to:
- Developing the skills and behaviours of individuals in order that they better lead, manage, serve and strengthen their institutions.
- Strengthening the institutions in order to make them more responsive, effective, and efficient towards the individuals or organisations they are supposed to serve in various domains: social, economic, technical, political and religious.
- Promoting an improved relationship between stakeholders and their institutions around shared values, and redefining roles and responsibilities to promote equity.

HID aims at developing the conditions that will have results in the long run, and, for that reason, must be understood in terms of process. Intervening at three distinct levels, HID has nevertheless to be implemented according to a systemic approach, all these levels being strongly interlinked." (11)

Intercooperation much like SDC expresses that HID requires to be addressed at three levels:

- The level of the individual
- The level of the institution and the at
- The level of the relationships between the institutions.

To operationalise this conceptual understanding of HID into action posed a formidable challenge for ISPS. Conversion of concept into concrete steps to actualize informed change seemed exceedingly difficult.

Initiating HID: The First Steps

In the pages that follow ISPS shares what was attempted, how it was done, the results and the learning. The write-up seeks to reflect the process the project went through as it sought to work out what it ought to do, how to do it and why. The write-up also attempts to reflect critically on the entire process.

For the project, as briefly referred to earlier, while HID had been a major concern, and while it was clear that it encompassed very valuable ideas of participation, dialogue, decentralization, transparency, etc; in the early years the project had found it difficult to find tangible ways of operationalizing HID with the partners. This was all the more difficult as the partner was the government. How did one operationalize HID with departments of government, with the bureaucracy, in the interface between people, people's groups and the government? It was from the latter part of Phase 2 that the project was able to initiate the first perceptible steps for implementing HID with partners.

To start with, the project shared with partners at different levels, HID as the project understood it then. This was done at dialogue events with partners, particularly after the Phase 2 internal project evaluation. In these events, the findings of the evaluation and future plans were shared. The project related new initiatives and plans with the emerging HID concerns.

Similarly at meetings to discuss project agenda with different constituent groups, HID would be introduced and related to the concerns of sustainable development and democratic participation of people in the decision making process from policy making to implementation of projects. The focus at this stage was to disseminate the understanding of HID and why ISPS saw this as critical to future project plans. The most difficult aspect in explaining HID to partners was to explain HID in terms of visible steps and actions, minus the abstract, theoretical content.

Initiating a change process

The next step was to build a strategy for engaging partners in implementing HID. While awareness creation had been initiated and would continue, it was now important to create conditions and possibilities that would reflect in the working of government, particularly the partners of ISPS, changes that reflected shifts

from an administrative “ordering” of development to a participatory, sustainability oriented development management.

Towards the end of Phase 2, ISPS engaged a consultant (from mid-2001) to work with the project to enable the project to work out how HID would be taken up and followed through. The consultant highlighted that certain assumptions underlay a process of change. These were:

- Any change to be sustainable required that the need for change had to be recognized by those who are expected to change;
- To effect change, those expected to change, need to participate in the management of the change process. Without this, change is unsustainable.
- Change relating to governance and management structures and processes are extremely difficult to initiate, and even more difficult to pursue in a sustained manner. The latent and manifest obstacles are multiple.
- To pursue such change requires a long term time frame, unending patience, and the willingness to continue to invest in the effort even in the absence of loud indicators of the desired change.
- In large groups when change happens it is more likely to happen in small portions, but if these are not picked up, supported and celebrated, others will not follow.
- In bureaucratic structures, attitudinal and mindset changes can contribute to significant shifts in work processes and orientations; but these attitudinal changes do not happen easily.
- Given ways of working based on long internalized authority orientations and perceived superiority, change could happen only through a sustained and unsettling process of unlearning and relearning. This is extremely slow and with high possibilities of no returns.
- And if and when such attitudinal changes happen, even if only a small crack in the mindset, for such shifts to be sustainable and to be internalized into the everyday

work habit and thought, requires structural and systemic changes and corrections that support and facilitate the new mindset. This again is more difficult to realize in government systems unlike other organizational systems.

The Thematic Thrusts

As the dialogue to orient partners to the overall HID concept continued, there was also extensive dialogue within ISPS, in particular between the Programme Co-ordinator, the Sr. Visiting Advisor (SVA) and the HID Consultant. The discussion was extensive. Numerous questions were raised. Answers were often inconclusive. There were areas of conceptual discomfort. But gradually a clutch of issues emerged which were articulated as the main thematic concerns for introducing HID.

The thematic thrusts were fundamentally concerned with developing in a medium term perspective of three to four years a basic HID orientation among project partners to enhance skills for significantly improved service delivery and for mainstreaming the changes essential for people centered development management. The concerns were:

Promotion of consistent dialogue. It was felt that within government there was inadequate dialogue on development management between personnel as individuals, within groups, between departments etc. As part of this thinking,



Field staff interacting with the farmers in search of appropriate solutions

even as ISPS was working on how to take HID forward, the project was already organizing as many opportunities as possible for dialogue with the partners and between them. This marked a clear departure from the earlier orientation of ISPS, where technical inputs had been the

main focus of communication with partners. The thrust now shifted to facilitating debate, sharing information, seeking opinions, and encouraging questioning. Most of this was unusual in the monosyllabic participation that generally characterized government meetings.

Part of the focus was also to enhance skills for dialogue, to create an orientation to reach decisions by consensus after deliberating together facts and results. ISPS consciously expanded the dialogue to include all stakeholders and clients in particular, and to shift the venue of dialogue away from offices to the field.

Each of these aspects involved considerable shifts in orientation of the personnel of the partner departments and in their actual conduct of dialogue and even within ISPS.

- **Customer Based Analysis of Outcomes.** Another major objective of the HID effort was to develop in partner personnel both the orientation and skills for analysis of results and outcomes from the perspective and view point of the intended clients. It also included the objective that government personnel come to recognize and serve people and the community as “clients” and not “as beneficiaries”.

By and large the government personnel did not focus much on the outcomes of the programmes and efforts they implemented. A target orientation of head count without reference to whether the concerned programme brought any change to the condition and needs of the poor, or whether the intended results were achieved, was predominant. There was not much inclination to visit the field, to understand conditions, and to develop programmes based on the needs and priorities of the poor. Government officers limited their “responsibility” to the specific part of work assigned to them as individual officers. The notion of responsibility was defined by the slot filled in the hierarchy, and an extremely narrow definition of task accomplishment.

A major concern hence was to enable personnel from partner departments to break away from such thinking, and to acquire the concern and skills for assessing outcomes and consequences of their work on the lives of the poor and to accordingly develop and deliver more appropriate and effective programmes.

- **Developing Coordination for Action.** Another key concern was to enable personnel to understand the importance of greater coordination at the intra department and inter department level. The focus was on building collaborative orientations, developing behavioural skills for such collaboration and to identify viable means for institutionalizing, even in small measure such collaborative processes. It was this concern that led to the decision to have mixed groups of participants drawn from all the partner departments as a standard practice for the proposed training programmes for middle level officers. (The idea of participants from the same department coming together in a programme where they were expected to express their views and discuss with each other, was itself a departure; but to bring participants from different departments together and to discuss mutually relevant issues, was path breaking.)
- **Promoting Development Understanding.** The fourth aspect of this approach evolved in clarity as the intervention got underway. It was not particularly well sensed or articulated at the outset. It related to promoting in government personnel a clear understanding of the meaning of development in the context of the lives of the poor and the marginalized and the role that government personnel were required to play to facilitate the process of development.

It was realized that the larger segment of government personnel looked at development as the sanctioning and distribution of grants and subsidies. It was recognized that acquiring a basic understanding of the purpose and intent of the development process was essential to change such an orientation.

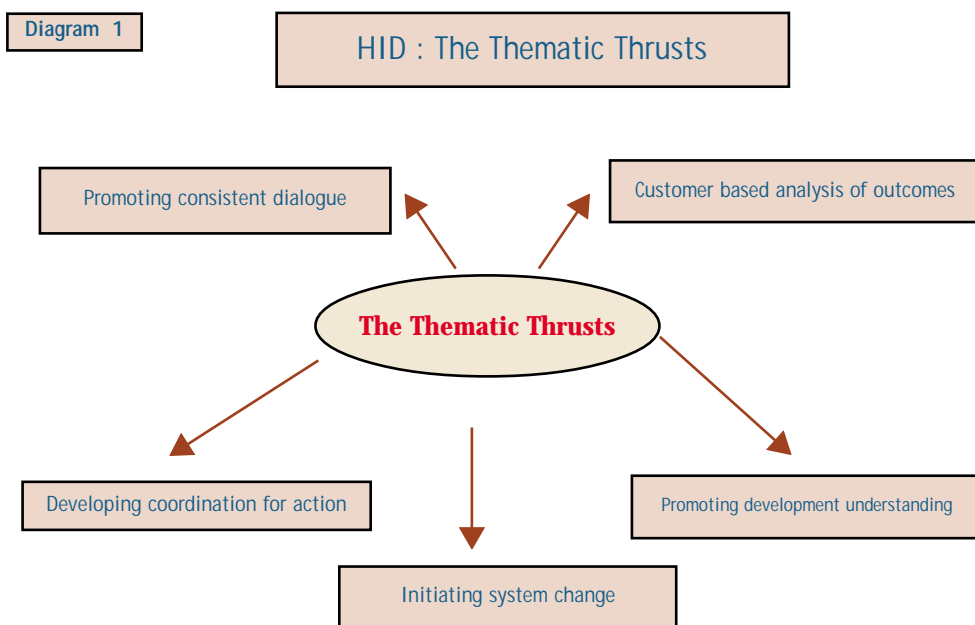
- Initiating System Change.** As part of the overall HID intervention it was also felt that at a later stage, an action research effort could be launched with the consent and involvement of government, to research and then to recommend systemic changes that would contribute to a more effective delivery machinery. The broad idea was that a programme of a department could be taken up for study from inception to implementation and that the decision making process be followed through and studied through the various stages and levels till implementation, to understand the impact of decision making on the final results for the community.

Such an action research would entail study of the time span in decision making, the operationalization of decisions, the degree of engagement with the community, the

only towards the end of Phase 2 that the project conceptually came to grip with these concerns and struggled to translate these concerns into action. So from late 2000 to well into 2001, the project focused on the planning, designing and initiating of interventions that would address these concerns.

Questions and doubts

For the programme personnel of ISPS, HID was at this stage still very much an abstract. There were many doubts, some expressed, some unexpressed. The more common doubts were - how could HID change mind sets, attitudes or ways of working .How could changes be sustained? How would training make any difference? Why would government officers change their approach to development and improve service effectiveness in the absence of administrative reforms that enforced accountability? Why would the poor who benefited from state subsidies make the effort



key factors for delay and poor quality in service delivery, and the fit of the programme with the needs on the ground.

In a broad sense these thematic concerns were not new to the project. They did find expression in the earlier phases of the project .But it was

to engage in participative processes to take decisions on development?

To these doubts the Consultant and the SVA responded by elaborating that HID would require considerable innovation and experimentation. They underlined that attitudinal change could

never be assured. They emphasized that interventions designed with stakeholder involvement and focused on responding to their needs would have some long-term impact on the values, attitudes, and behaviour and action orientation of those involved and exposed to the process.

Looking back, with the advantage of hindsight, it is fairly clear that the initial choice of what to initiate as HID activities was influenced by this sense of uncertainty within the project of what HID meant in concrete terms. There were no “templates” or “guidelines” on how to introduce and start up HID. What was available was an opportunity to think and create together.

Initial choice of activities

The initial choice of activities was also influenced by the just concluded internal evaluation of Phase 2 in which among others, the ISPS Programme Coordinator, the SVA and the Consultant had participated. The evaluation provoked them to think of the need to activate the middle level of the officer cadre in partner departments who had extremely crucial roles in influencing work cultures in their departments, in the orientation of the department to the needs of small and marginal farmers, and in the way farmer needs were identified and responded to. They were also alerted to the need for government to have in its senior positions officers with the capacities to review and critique proposed development plans, to develop need based, people relevant development programmes, to co-ordinate and oversee development management without duplication of efforts and resources and to facilitate dialogue and debate within the system and with the community. It was felt that the partner departments would benefit greatly from inputs which enhanced internal capacities to provide leadership in sustainable development.

All these were the influences and part of the backdrop that led to the initial ideas of what to do. The proposal hence suggested that the following be taken up as the initial HID activities:

- 1. Conducting multi-phase training programmes for selected officers (from partner departments) who had**

important roles to play in the ongoing programme activities being supported by ISPS.

- 2. Formation of a resource group (a small group of officers drawn from Government) to contribute to development analysis and planning. This was perceived as a long-term investment to strengthen human and institutional development capacities within government, to ensure that basic work could be done within government without depending on external experts for fundamentals.**
- 3. The third was that of the action research. It was well understood that such an action research would and could only be done with the active and fullest participation of the concerned partner, from the start to the end of the project. It was recognized that such a work would get off the ground only when the partner was prepared to engage in such an endeavour. It required that the partner recognize the need for change in the system and be prepared to engage as an equal in conducting the action research and to own the responsibility of taking forward ideas that would emerge from such an action research.**

The first two ideas gradually took shape. In early 2002 the first phase of the multi-phase programme for middle level officers (MLO) from partner departments was launched. It was planned as a three phase programme. The broad objectives were to:

- Provide an orientation to the critical role to be performed by them for promoting development of the poor, in particular, small and marginal farmers.
- Enable them to shift from a target orientation to ensuring that services provided tangible sustainable results for the community.
- Expose them to the inadequacies and shortcomings of the “file based” understanding of the field reality and the importance of gathering first hand information of people’s needs and requirements.

- Shift them from the hierarchical, order driven administration of development to a dialogue based, participatory process of development involving intensive collaboration with the community and continuous coordination with fellow officials and partner departments.
- Orient and equip them with the abilities to collaborate and work in co-ordination with each other to achieve common goals.

The other idea of forming a small group drawn from the partners, equipped with a strong HID orientation, with skills in dialogue management, field data collection and analysis, the ability to conduct diagnostic studies, and the capacity to contribute to participatory policy planning and development etc, was discussed with the Govt. of Sikkim. The idea found favour and was approved by the Joint Project Committee, the governing body which oversaw the project implementation. Efforts to form the group began late in 2001. Initially only project partners were approached. They were asked to forward names of officers in the age group of 30-45 years, with an inclination to involve in developmental action; the willingness to involve in learning processes; and with strong competence in their own field of specialization.

The response was slow. The project in the meanwhile identified three officers from the middle level officers who were undergoing the MLO training programme at that point. A few more potential candidates were identified from the partners. But the number was small. At this juncture it was decided to approach other departments involved with the social sector.. Small groups of officers were invited from these departments for half day briefings.

They were introduced to ISPS, the ISPS agenda and the HID concerns of ISPS. Interested officers were asked to forward their names. This process continued through most of 2002. By October 2002, a group of 14, consisting of 7 women and 7 men was finalised. The Government of Sikkim issued a Gazette Notification and the HID Core Group was formally constituted at an Inaugural Event held at Gangtok on 18 November, 2002.

The third intervention that of conducting an action research study on decision making was perceived to be rather premature. It was felt

that partners required greater exposure to HID processes and that to conduct a meaningful action research greater clarity was essential about what could be achieved for the partners by conducting such a study. Further, it was realized that partners needed to believe in the need for change. Given this understanding, this idea was put on hold.

Revisiting the HID Understanding

As the training with middle level officers got underway, and as the work with the Core Group also moved ahead, both of which will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter, the project awoke to a disturbing realization.

A disturbing equation

Though conceptually HID was articulated as an umbrella agenda across all activities being undertaken by ISPS, in actual practice the HID content of different activities in ongoing programmes was not being recognized as HID. The work with Middle Level Officers and the Core Group was perceived as HID, both within the project and by partners. HID was being equated with training. Training which focused on promoting participative functioning was perceived as HID.

On sensing the nature of this understanding of HID in the project, the ongoing activities across the project were revisited to grasp more clearly the nature and content of all that was being done. The issue was discussed in the project, and extensively between the Programme Co-ordinator and the Consultant. By early 2003 on the basis of field visits and internal discussions, the HID focus of the project was rearticulated. This fresh appreciation projected the HID focus of the project on the basis of the on going interventions in the field. It enabled the project to begin to recognize that HID was not just training or more broadly just capacity building.

The reworked HID foci

The reworked foci were now more simply expressed. They were:

1. **The promotion and facilitation of dialogue and sharing and dissemination of information on a variety of concerns within partners, between partners and also with other important actors concerned with the development agenda of the state.**

2. **Developing capacities of partners – technical, social and methodological.**
3. **Building partnerships for sustainability of the development interventions and for mainstreaming them.**

These foci were to be pursued at two levels.

- At the level of government.
- At the level of the community.

And at each level, there were different activities that were being taken up which contributed to the Human and Institutional Development of partners. The diagram below provides an

overview of the main activities the project focused on and supported after the review of its approach. This reframing of the approach and reworking of the thematic agendas led to ISPS better recognizing and strengthening initiatives in Human and Institutional Development of partners.

The following diagram provides a bird's overview of the activities that were addressed under each thematic concern. In the next chapter, these are presented in greater detail. The outcomes and experience are dealt in the subsequent chapter.

Diagram 2

THE ISPS

The Thematic concerns

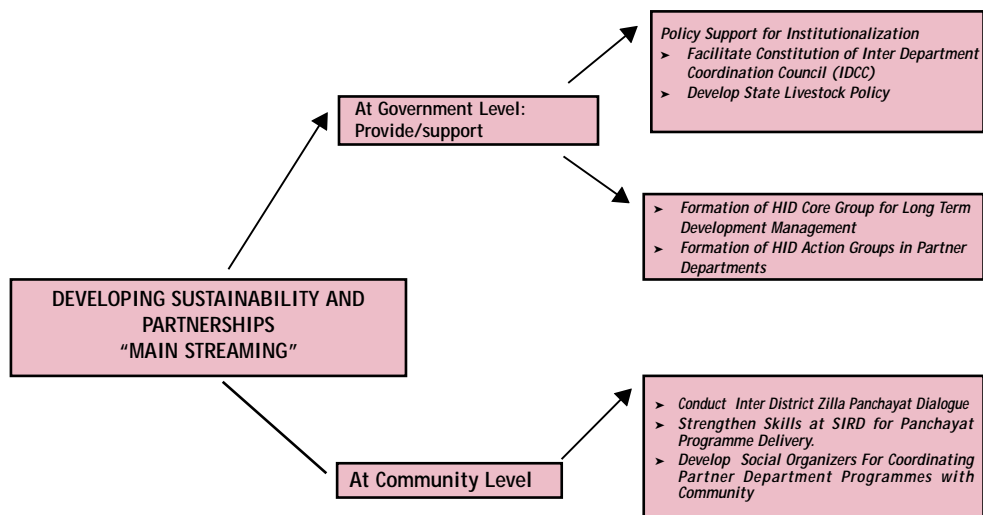
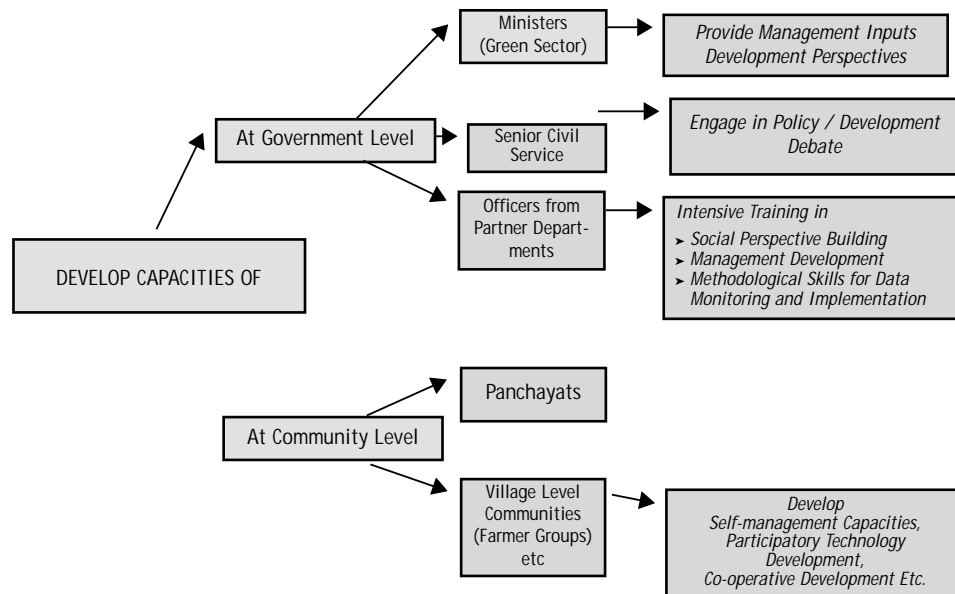
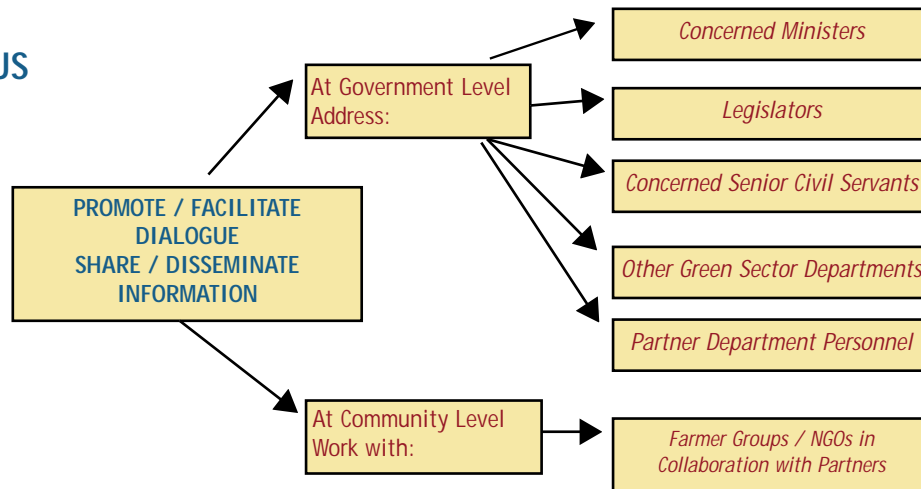
Promote and Facilitate Dialogue
Share and Disseminate Information and Knowledge

Within Partners,
Between Partners and With Other Concerned Actors

Develop Capacities
Social, Technical, Methodological

Build Partnerships
Between Partners for Sustainable Relationships

HID FOCUS



As ISPS moved from Phase 2 to Phase 3, (2001 to 2002) a number of fresh initiatives were introduced in the programmatic activities with partners – initiatives that sought to address and expand the social content of the change process, and not just the technical content, which the project had focused on to a greater extent in the earlier years. The discussion that follows refers largely to endeavours that were launched during this period or a little later. These were largely fresh initiatives taken up with each partner. The more critical ones are briefly described. What was done, and how it was done is explained, while the discussion on outcomes follows in the next chapter

It must be emphasized that this write up covers only major initiatives taken up with each department, and not all. Major initiatives with each partner are presented first. Inter-partner efforts like the MLO programmes and the HID Core Group are presented subsequently.

Partners and the HID experience

HID in the Horticulture and Cash Crop Development Department

Farmers in Sikkim are fairly dependent on the cultivation of cash crops such as potato, ginger, and cardamom. For small and marginal farmers, ginger is one of the most important among these crops. But over the last decade and odd, they have been battling with reducing yield because of serious pest and disease problems. "In some cases, the problem is so severe, that some, often marginal farmers, stop cultivating ginger since they cannot afford losses." ⁽¹²⁾

To address this problem, in the first phase (1996 – 1999) the project focused on establishing research capacities in ginger disease management and building extension capacities in the Department. The intervention at this stage also made a major effort to ensure the use of quality, disease free seed by farmers, as this was one of the most effective means of combating the spread of diseased ginger. However for years this had not been adequately addressed. Under the seed distribution programme, seed was procured from large seed growers, and as "many growers did not practice seed selection," ⁽¹³⁾ it resulted in the use of "poor seed, diseased crops and low yields – a cycle that was difficult to break."

It was during Phase 2 that some critical

initiatives to develop competencies in the department were launched. As a consequence, major improvements were brought about in the Government of Sikkim Demonstration Scheme for ginger, under which small growers received free seed. The staff of the department was introduced to new methods of training farmers. Illustrated posters and leaflets depicting the pests and diseases were prepared and disseminated. And possibly the most critical, the department was introduced to participatory approaches in extension through the Adapted Research Demonstration method.

Dr. Grahame Jackson who was closely associated with this stage of work, highlights in Experiences in Collaboration, a documentation of the work undertaken during the first two phases, that the main success was "that seed source farmers are now monitored and district staff are backstopped by a laboratory with trained staff who can recognize disease symptoms and make isolations for more critical determinations". But as Phase 2 drew to a close, it was also recognized that the next stage of work required a "two pronged approach - on the one hand re-orienting horticultural staff in participatory process, while on the other hand enhancing local capacity through farmers' grower groups, empowering them to take control of ginger disease management". ⁽¹⁴⁾ The conditions were just appropriate for the introduction of PTD.

Introduction of Participatory Technology Development

Participatory Technology Development (PTD) is an approach that seeks to develop agricultural technologies appropriate to a situation with the full involvement of local farmers, both women and men. It is strongly process oriented. It actively encourages the coming together of farmers and experts whether scientists or others, to design and conduct field experiments and to find together viable relevant solutions to local problems.

Prior to initiating the PTD process in Phase 3, a group of officers from the Department of Horticulture were sent to visit PTD programmes in South India. The purpose was to familiarize them with the underlying purpose of the approach, the process involved and the role (the officers) would need to play as facilitators and as participants in a collaborative venture with farmers and experts to tackle the problem of

ginger disease. Other workshops were also organized to propagate the PTD concept within the department and with farmers and local NGOs where the PTD initiatives were to be undertaken.

PTD was introduced initially in 5 villages in 2002, and 5 more were chosen in 2004, and by 2005, another 7 more villages were added. In the selected villages, farmers decided who among them would participate. Women farmers were actively encouraged to join given their major role in ginger cultivation. Farmers who were selected formed Self Help Groups (SHGs) for conducting the PTD. And at every stage Department Officers, ISPS project personnel and the Consultant supporting the PTD experiment, engaged with the farmers to prepare and orient them to this participatory process. In all places where PTD was taken up, local NGOs and a locally based Social Organizer were also identified and given inputs to enable them to support the farmers in dialogue and field trials and to be capable of providing the link with the local agencies after the withdrawal of project support. Farmers were also given extensive training exposure to understand the steps in the process, and to design the experiments they wished to conduct to see how ginger disease could be reduced or eliminated. The farmers were trained to record progress, to discuss and debate in their group, to share learning and to gain new understanding, and to decide on further steps to determine the most appropriate solution for ginger disease management in their context.

After the third platform meeting (a meeting where scientists, department staff, farmers, the local NGO and social organizers gather to review progress) in February 2006, ISPS held discussions with the department to work out how the PTD programme in ginger could be internalized. A number of possible alternatives were prepared by ISPS. Since then the department has decided to continue the programme with their own funds. Farmers who participated in the PTD experiment, also emphatically voiced the need to continue the PTD at various public gatherings like the PTD mela (a fair like gathering), at platform meetings and during the visit of the head of SDC India to Sikkim.

HID in Animal Husbandry

The terrain of Sikkim is not conducive to extensive agriculture. However, it offers enormous scope for livestock as one of the main

planks for promoting rural livelihoods. But unlike other parts of the country where a generalized package of practices in livestock is appropriate, Sikkim demands a highly focused approach to optimize livestock productivity.



Breeding bull used for improving the quality of local cattle

Small and marginal farmers represent about 50 percent of landholdings but hold only 10.3 percent of the total operational land area.⁽¹⁵⁾ They however own 76% of milch animals, 86% of draught animals, 90% of poultry, 87% of sheep and goat, and 90% of pigs. But livestock productivity has been low, making livestock an uneconomical asset for small and marginal farmers. However, the strong connection between agricultural needs and cattle compels the small and marginal farmer to continue to keep cattle. For the small farmers this has actually meant higher expenditure as cattle take a longer time to reach the desired body weight before they are marketed for meat unlike other meat animals which require less expenditure before they are marketed for their meat.

Initially ISPS had focused on improving the productivity and quality of cattle and for this concentrated on breeding programmes. This they recognised had limited success though the cross bred population reached 48 per cent.⁽¹⁶⁾

The project also focused on improving livestock health management. It helped establish district level laboratories to improve disease diagnosis and developed technical capacities of staff of the laboratories. An MIS was worked into place for ensuring continuously updated, district wise information on disease incidence and patterns, to provide accurate information for policy decisions and operational action.

By Phase II, recognizing that the service orientation of department personnel required to be strengthened, officers were exposed and trained in PRA techniques. A number of field based discussions and reviews were undertaken to enable field staff to understand first hand from villagers their needs and difficulties. The personnel were encouraged to disengage from the dispensary based approach that had traditionally, dominated the approach of the department and to engage with livestock farmers on issues of productivity, fodder availability and, timely, quality delivery of medical attention for the livestock.

Progress was slow. Disengaging from the earlier file and desk administrative orientation was not easy. But changes took place gradually. Within the department, because of continuous ISPS interaction, internal meetings involving senior officers and field staff to discuss various activities set a new practice. In the field, community interaction with field functionaries steadily increased.

The Multi Utility Animal Health Workers (MUAHWs) experiment

A further innovation was introduced in Phase 3. As farmers had acknowledged their willingness to pay for good services for their livestock, the Project launched a pilot effort of Multi Utility Animal Health Workers (MUAHWs). The idea was to develop and run a paravet system managed by the community with more effective out reach than the paravet service provided by the department and to supplement what the department provided. The Department was to

provide technical and operational support and to monitor its implementation. The MUAHWs were to be selected locally in villages which agreed to volunteer for the experiment and coordination committees were to be set up at the village level to oversee, and facilitate the work of the MUAHWs.

The experiment was launched in ten villages. The coordination committees did not get formed. A review of the experience by a group of officers who had completed the programme for the middle level officers pointed to a number of issues.

The programme though helpful to the farmers, succeeded mainly where it was linked to the Milk Producers Co-operative Societies (MPCS). Panchayats did not give much support to the programme when linked through them. Local officials felt threatened. They were afraid that if the MUAHWs were to succeed they would not be relevant and hence they feared for their jobs. On the other hand for the MUAHW, this as a sole employment was not an adequate income. For the MUAHW this was a supplementary income. Recent feedback further suggests that some MUAHWs continue to practise as there is local demand for their services.

As the project moved through these various interventions in the livestock sector it became increasingly clear that insufficient stakeholder involvement, and the mismatch between poor farmer needs and services provided, were the major reasons for insufficient progress in improving the condition of poor livestock farmers.

A CD Intervention

Sakhukhani is a small milk cooperative society located in the district of East Sikkim. The society was collecting around 100 litres of milk when the Cooperative Development (CD) program began in the year 2002. At the time of starting the CD program, the main problems noticed from the society was collection of poor quality of milk because of which the milk turned sour on reaching the dairy plant, lack of ownership of members in the society and the non availability of relevant livestock service delivery system. All these factors affected the motivation for farmers to participate and engage with the society.

After introducing the CD program the staff visited the society frequently to enhance awareness of clean milk production, the importance of fodder development and to educate farmers about the roles and responsibilities of the members in the cooperatives. To improve the livestock service delivery system the farmers nominated a member, Mr. Taram Sharma to undergo training in livestock service delivery system organized by the Department of Animal Husbandry and Sikkim Livestock Development Board. The department also devised a mechanism to provide backstop support to all these grass root level workers by visiting them, inviting them for monthly meetings and

assisting them in procuring medicines from the market.

Mr. Sharma after successful training started to provide localized services to ailing animals and conduct Artificial Insemination for cows. Initially the department offered a monthly payment of Rs.1000 during the first year and Rs.500 per month from the second year. The Department of Animal Husbandry however stopped extending this incentive after the first two years.



Farmers practicing fodder chaffing

Mr. Taram is earning approximately Rs. 1000 per month from the supply of medicines and providing service. The conception rate from the AI has reached 75%, which is very high as per the standards.

Regarding the support of CD Program, the efforts gave good results. The quality of the milk coming to

society has gone up from 7.0 SNF to 7.8 percent SNF. The farmers in the society now do not have to wait for payments and they receive the money from the union between 5-10th of every month. They do not hear any more from the union about spoilage of their milk.

The above box is not a case study but we have presented in our annual report based on our personal experience.

¹ SNF indicates the adulteration of milk with water. Higher the figure better the quality.

PTD with livestock farmers

At this stage the project turned to its learning from the PTD experience in Ginger initiated discussions with the Department to explore the possibility of introducing the PTD process in the livestock context. The department responded positively.

An exposure visit was organized for a group of officers from the Department of Animal Husbandry. They visited Aho Centi a village in East Sikkim where the PTD programme had been

initiated in 2003. The farmers from the SHGs participating in the Ginger PTD pointed out their gains from applying PTD principles to the management of their livestock. Most of them kept livestock. The gains were simple but critical.

Farmers in the village had been in the practice of feeding excessive grains and cakes to their cattle to boost milk production. However through their interactions, sharing and analysis they realized this was uneconomical. They recognized the need for an alternative feeding system to

reduce cost of production. They shared that they learnt of how exclusive dependence on inferior local quality fodder species led to lower milk yields. Similarly, indigenous methods of healing, which were neglected by the department, had been effective when used by them.

On the basis of this feedback, and further discussions in the department, it was agreed to initiate PTD efforts in five villages, Bashilakha, Aho and Rishipaley of East Sikkim, and Tarku and Deythang in South Sikkim.

The PTD process was explained to farmers and they were emphatically informed that no direct financial benefit would be provided. Interested farmers facing problems in livestock management were invited to form a SHG. In the selected villages farmers readily came forward to participate in the research. Like in the Ginger PTD, a Social Organizer was identified for each group and trained to provide support to the group. The department formed a group of officers called the PTD Facilitation Group, to interface between farmers and department, with the mandate to facilitate problem analysis in villages. A Technical Group was also formed with subject matter specialists from the department, the Sikkim Milk Union and ICAR, with the mandate to provide technical support to the groups.

A village-wise problem analysis was presented at a Multi Stake Holders Platform where apart from the PTD Facilitation Group and the Technical Group, specialists from research institutes also participated. At the platform event, a basket of options were generated and experiment designs formulated.

The PTD facilitation group is now engaged in providing regular backstopping. Laboratory scientists from ICAR visit the groups regularly to provide technical support and to also organize and conduct training programs. Farmers are involved in conducting experiments to learn how to reduce cost of production and to improve the production and quality of milk. The outcome of the experiments was discussed in a Second Multi Stakeholder Platform held recently, where farmers presented their results and discussed further improvements to achieve the desired results.

Livestock sector policy

Post 2003, in a critical policy initiative, ISPS provided support to the Department of Animal Husbandry for preparing a pro - poor livestock

sector policy. The focus was to delineate the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders for ensuring quality services and to promote farmer centered policy planning and offers from the state.



Management of small ruminants by a small farmer

ISPS supported the process of policy development by facilitating the participation of all stakeholders, in particular the poor and marginal livestock farmers, to enable them to provide inputs on their needs and requirements from a livestock policy. Similarly, field level functionaries were also brought into the process of information gathering and analysis. Policy development was made a bottom-up process and not a top-down, expert-driven process that most policy development exercises adopt.

HID In SMU

During the second phase of the project, Sikkim Milk Union (SMU) was one of the critical areas of the collaboration. SMU which received milk supplies from a wide network of village level Milk Producers' Co-operative Societies (MPCSs) was performing poorly. On the request of the Government of Sikkim the project entered into collaboration with SMU for its revival and development. Though milk producer co-operatives constitute the Sikkim Milk Union, the co-operatives had little say in the appointment of the management of the SMU or in its decision making and policy. The CEO of the SMU is appointed by the Government. Most other officers, except one or two are on deputation from the department of Animal Husbandry.

The SMU has hence a dual character. As an organization it functions like a state public sector undertaking. Its identity is however projected as that of a co-operative, given that farmers' milk producer co-operatives are members of the Union.

As SMU faced problems on multiple fronts, in milk procurement, milk processing, in marketing, in financial management, in human resource management, ISPS supported the preparation of a detailed Turn Around Plan for SMU following exhaustive diagnostic studies on various aspects of SMU's working. The plan focused on technical, financial, human and institutional developments for the development and growth of SMU.

This discussion now looks briefly at the main human and institutional development efforts that were undertaken in SMU.

Management Inputs

As funds from a variety of sources were mobilized for a phased repair and replacement of plant machinery at the milk processing plant in Gangtok and at Jorethang (a small unit for milk collection and chilling located in South Sikkim), ISPS arranged for a variety of management inputs to improve the overall management of the plant and the Union. The inputs included:

- In-house management development programmes.
- Development of monitoring systems covering production, marketing, logistics, financial management etc.
- Development of key performance indicators to adjudge performance and process quality.
- Development of financial management systems.

While these inputs addressed primarily the management structure of SMU, it was realized that the co-operative structure of the Union required considerable strengthening. The members of the milk producer co-operatives lacked an understanding of what it meant to form a co-operative and how they needed to work and manage the co-operative.

The Co-operative Development (CD) programme

The milk producers' co-operatives also had no influence in the working of the Union. There was inadequate awareness and understanding of what they could contribute and how. Within the milk producer co-operatives as well as at the level of the union, there wasn't a matured understanding of accountability to members.

Taking these issues into account, ISPS launched an intervention to strengthen co-operative development. This intervention came to be commonly referred to as the CD programme.

The programme was initially launched at Gangtok and at Jorethang. To start with, CD Teams were formed at the two locations. Each CD team comprised two men and one woman supervisor. Along with these supervisors, 17 women were also selected and trained by ISPS on various aspects relating to principles of co-operatives, the functioning of co-operatives, the role of members etc. The women were designated as Lady Extension Workers (LEWs). This group was also given inputs to improve communication skills for community interaction.

To develop in the producer co-operatives, participation of the farmers in the process and to create a sense of ownership, the LEWs were asked to report to the respective Presidents of the MPCS's where they were posted. Their monthly salaries were released by the SMU to the Presidents of the co-operatives to the concerned LEWs.

The capacity building of the CD teams and LEWs consisted of multiple modules. All of them were exposed to a particular module, after which their capacity to implement the learning was assessed through dummy exercises. This was followed by a round of inputs to fill gaps in learning and understanding, following which they were sent to the identified MPCS's to work with them. After completing training of a particular module, the team would return to prepare and develop another module depending on the needs expressed by villagers and based on their experience of delivering the earlier module in the field.

The program was conducted in all 128 member cooperatives of the Union.

At the end of the third year an evaluation was conducted to review the impact. This was presented to the SMU Board, which consisted of elected Presidents from the member MPCS's, apart from some representatives of the government. The Board appreciated the work and decided to adopt the CD programme as an ongoing internal process. They however scaled down the number of LEWs from 17 to 4.

The SMU Board

The other major HID intervention related to the structure of the Board of the SMU. Though, as mentioned earlier, the identity of the SMU was supposed to be that of a co-operative. The Government not only appointed the Managing Director of the SMU, it also appointed the Chairman of the Board. And often such appointees were not even members of any of the member co-operatives.

The Project raised this issue at various levels, and explained that if the SMU was to function as a co-operative, it was necessary that member co-operatives elect from amongst them the Chairman of the Board for a given term. It was stressed that this elective relationship would enable farmers to appreciate that the SMU was their institution, not a departmental undertaking of the government to be kept afloat with subsidies.

The CD programmes had also contributed in the meanwhile to creating in member farmers awareness that for SMU to become an effective co-operative, they were required to participate more actively. All this led the Government to finally amend the Co-operative Act⁽¹⁷⁾. The amendment stated that the Chairman of the Union would be elected from amongst them by the member co-operatives.

ISPS also sought to initiate another critical structural change. As the Managing Directors appointed to SMU by the Government were usually individuals from the Department of Animal Husbandry, invariably Veterinary Doctors, with few management skills and little experience of facilitating the working of a co-operative union, SMU faced a major shortcoming. The Project therefore suggested that as an experimental measure, a dairy plant professional with management skills and co-operative management experience be appointed to the position of Managing Director of SMU. The Project offered to conduct the search and to support additional costs involved in such an exercise.

The SMU Board and the Government did not accept this idea. It was fairly obvious that the individual selected for the position would in all likelihood be from outside Sikkim, as the requisite experience for this position would not be available in Sikkim. Both the Board and the Government were apprehensive about such an

appointment and felt that a professional from outside the state would not understand local compulsions and conditions. It was also felt that it would be politically unpopular as the position of the MD was an important one which called for considerable interaction with farmer groups who were an important political constituency.

HID in the Department of Rural Management and Development

The collaboration with the Department of Rural Management and Development commenced only at the start of Phase 3 in 2002. This collaboration emerged from a long period of dialogue between ISPS and the Department. This was an agenda of strategic consideration for ISPS as SDC, India, considered "the decentralization process a tremendous opportunity to empower rural disadvantaged groups", and "a vital vehicle towards equitable and sustainable development in India."⁽¹⁸⁾

This implied that the poor need to be encouraged and empowered to participate in the processes and structures of decision making which impinge on their growth and future. In keeping with this understanding a programme was launched with the Department of Rural Development for strengthening the Panchayati Raj Institution.



SAJAG Facilitating panchayat planning process

The Government of Sikkim had in 1993 passed the Sikkim Panchayat Act which committed the state to decentralization of political governance and related devolution of power in keeping with democratic decentralization envisaged in the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments at the national level. The state government sought to activate two tiers of governance below the state level, the gram panchayat at the village level, and the Zilla panchayat at the intermediate district level.

Capacity building of panchayats

Initially (2003-2004), the project decided to

focus its attention on four panchayats, two each from the South and West Districts. In each panchayat, every month, two day programmes were conducted for members of the wards that constituted the panchayat. From each ward, 4-5 members were selected to attend. The programmes focused on:

- The objectives of the panchayat
- The working of the panchayat.
- The role the panchayat could play in local development and strengthening of service delivery of local functionaries

The programmes were also attended by local functionaries and youth club members.

Later some regular participants were formed into a group called SAJAG or Samaj Jagaran Group. The group was formed to promote and sustain community mobilization for participation in the panchayat and to contribute to the capacity development of villagers to participate actively and purposefully.

On the basis of the experience of this capacity development process, during 2004-2005, the project picked up four more villages, two from the East District, and one each from the North and West Districts.

From the start, the State Institute for Rural Development (SIRD) was a partner in the entire process and involved in conducting the training. Though SIRD was typically oriented to conducting class room based teaching and not training, after involving with ISPS, the concerned group from SIRD experimented with experiential learning processes and began to impart training in the field along with ISPS personnel. As two of the SIRD faculty and one of the ISPS programme personnel had participated in the MLO programme on Promoting Collaborative Management Skills, they found it easier to be open to experimentation with learning processes that sought to maximize participation of the local ward members in the awareness and capacity building effort.

Some young men and women from SAJAG, and village level workers (VLWs) who had participated in the PRI programmes, were brought together and provided inputs to form a field-based Trainer Group. The selected individuals were those who were keenly interested in promoting and strengthening the panchayat raj institution and who were committed to enabling the poor and

marginalized to use the panchayat as a vehicle for their transformation. This Trainers' Group is expected to continue and sustain the capacity building process with the selected panchayats and provide other back-up inputs.

District level workshops

The Project also organized during 2004-2005, District level workshops in each district, bringing together Zilla Panchayat members of the district with representatives from the line departments. Through these two day workshops the intention was to enable both the members and the line department functionaries to have a clearer understanding of decentralization, the roles to be fulfilled and the basics of district plan preparation.

One of the outcomes of the district meetings was the formation of a Task Force by the government to prepare a Handbook for Decentralized Planning so that field level functionaries are enabled "to take decisions in matters related to the day-to-day life of the people." ⁽¹⁹⁾

Since then Interface Workshops have also been organized at Sub-Divisional level. These workshops involved a mix of the concerned panchayat and zilla panchayat members, field functionaries and district heads of social departments. The purpose of these workshops was much the same, to enhance the interaction, to appreciate the roles to be played and to agree on action for meaningfully implementing decentralization and development.

Strengthening SIRD

As the SIRD is expected to build the capacities of elected representatives and line department officials, strengthening SIRD was a major concern of the project from the beginning of the collaboration. Visits to similar institutes in other states were arranged to familiarize the SIRD faculty group (who were involved with the PRI training) with work being done in other states. To further strengthen SIRD in the decentralization and local governance component, a decentralization cell was set up. The concerned faculty also benefited immensely from the experience of working in the field, the continuous interaction at the grass roots with panchayat members, with farmers, women's groups, line functionaries etc, and from the experience of designing and delivering monthly training modules for the capacity development.

The Inter Partner HID experience Programmes for Middle Level Officers

In the earlier chapter the broad objectives of the training for middle level officers from partner departments was presented. This capacity building of selected officers from the partner departments was seen as essential for a variety of reasons.

1. Within the state system the officers rarely, if ever attended a programme together for acquiring an overall understanding of the role expected of them in development.
2. A common understanding of development was absent.
3. The community, the poor, was largely regarded as beneficiaries, not as clients, customers and stakeholders.
4. Mainstreaming of the initiatives introduced by ISPS required considerable proactive involvement of officers, in particular of those officers holding critical positions relevant for facilitating implementation and changes in the approach to development management.
5. There was little understanding of the need for the poor to be able to participate in the development process. Officers generally saw themselves as best placed to take the required decision and the farmers as ill-informed and without relevant knowledge.

It was with this in mind that the MLO programme on Promoting Collaborative Management Skills was launched. Three groups of officers participated in this programme between Jan 2002 and March 2004. Each group consisted of around 12 to 14 officers, and underwent a three phase programme spaced out over a period of around nine months. In the first two rounds of the programme only officers from partner departments were invited. For the third round the programme was opened to officers from other social sector departments also.

The programme design

In the first phase of the programme the participants were exposed to group processes, the need for dialogue between themselves, between them and the community and the value addition to their role effectiveness by working as a team. The first phase was used to make

them aware of the difference between administering development and participatory development management. Participants were encouraged to open up, discuss between them and to appreciate that socio-economic change in their state impinged on how they facilitated and supported the process.

In the second phase basic concepts of development were introduced. Field visits were made to remote poorer communities and villages. Field interactions were organized with small and marginal farmers to understand their perception of their needs and their assessment of the impact of various interventions. As part of this field learning the group would gather information on the impact of a particular programme or undertake a field survey on a particular theme to understand the context and condition of the concerned community. Between the second and third phases, the participants were asked to work on small projects in pre-formed teams. This led to an actual experience of working in inter-departmental teams and then having to prepare a brief report for presentation in the third phase. The third phase would then conclude with a critical review of their analysis and further visits and conceptual wrap-up on the development process.

A case for change

In the introduction to the report of the last phase of the third programme, the HID Consultant who facilitated the programmes, wrote, "Bureaucracies do not easily change their systems, their methods, their practices, their norms or processes. Yet, the three phase promoting collaborative management skills programme sought precisely to address you on the need for change: in how we design, manage and deliver development to the poor, the less privileged, the less powerful. This programme focused on the need for change as there is considerable scope for improvement in our delivery of development to the community. This calls for change in our perception of our role, in the way we work, in the conduct of dialogue, in the management of resources, in our coordination of tasks, in our collaboration with each other and across departments.

Change is also critical in what we perceive to be our goal, whether individual or departmental, because we are invariably tied down to extremely narrow, indifferent and safe definitions of our goal without relation to the outcomes that need to be achieved.

Across the three phases this programme has sought to establish a case for change, and provide directions on how that can be effected. Therefore the true success of this programme lies not in how satisfied you are with the inputs, or the training methodology, or the skills of the Facilitator. The true success of this programme lies in whether you will commit yourself to practice what contributes to and facilitates development; to that which brings meaningful change in the socio-economic conditions of the poor, the less privileged, the remote, often unseen and unheard.

To do this you would need to consciously work on change at the level of your individual self, and then at the levels of influencing your immediate colleagues and your surrounding environment. This is the challenge.

None of this can be done overnight. Change takes considerable time, and considerable trying. Change requires patience, but also persistence. Change requires vision but also step by step action. Change requires assertiveness but also understanding.

If as a result of your participation in this three phase programme, you have acquired a fresh perspective on the purpose of development interventions, and how you as a government officer can better fulfill that, and you make consistent efforts to do so, this programme would have achieved its desired outcome.⁽²⁰⁾

The above excerpt captures the spirit and intent of what was sought to be achieved through the programmes that were organized for officers from the partner departments. By the time the third group was underway requests for similar programmes were received by the project head from non partner departments also.

To review the process and to seek feedback from participants across the three groups a short event was arranged in Sept 2004. This provided a platform for those who had participated in the MLO programmes to meet as a group to share experiences, and to discuss future possibilities for working together.

The HID Core Group

The creation of the HID Core Group was influenced by a variety of factors. Projects like ISPS are often faulted for failing to develop appropriate human capital with the capacities to take forward the development process

independently, particularly after the withdrawal of the donor or project body that launched a programme.

Why the Core group

In the case of Sikkim, the project partners of ISPS were departments of the Government. Given the fact that NGOs working in socio-economic development were not only very few in Sikkim, but limited in the coverage, and that livestock, and horticulture were not their major areas of intervention, ISPS had to work with the Government. Also, the original request and invitation had come from the Government. Therefore, continuation of the work initiated had to also come from within the government system.

The senior most civil servants in critical positions had been extremely supportive of the project and its objectives. But this was not sufficient. They would not always be there. The project had been fairly lucky that three key civil servants, the Chief Secretary, the Development Commissioner and the Finance Secretary had been keen supporters of human and institutional development to strengthen delivery services of the partners.



Core group practising to become change agents

A long-term perspective required that others in the partner departments, who were at the intermediate level in the structure of departments, but likely to be future key decision-makers, be involved as active participants in the intervention. Developing capacities in the intermediate level of officers to provide leadership for informed development choices in the years ahead was perceived as an important contribution the project could make to the state system. So at one level the project sought to create through the MLO programmes a wider net of officers in the partner departments who would be aware and better disposed to support people

centred choices, processes, and structures for development. But at another level the project felt that a small group of officers, from the intermediate level should be provided a more intensive package of inputs, so as to enable them to facilitate and support development policy debate, dialogue, analysis, implementation and review. It was this perception that led to the creation of the HID Core Group.

There were some who doubted the viability and efficacy of the idea. It was felt that such capacity development should be provided to NGO personnel. It was felt that they would contribute more in the years ahead.

The project thought differently. Looking to the immediate future there was little to suggest that NGOs would emerge as major players in the livestock and horticulture sector which served the bulk of the poor in the state. The bulk of funds for these sectors, including for decentralization and self-governance initiatives came from government. All this convinced the project that intensive capacity development effort was required to prepare a small but cohesive group to contribute in the years ahead. This led to the idea of the HID Core Group.

As mentioned in the last chapter, the process of finding individuals who could be selected for the group took nearly a year. It was initially limited to the partner departments, but later it was decided to invite expressions of interest from the Departments of Social Welfare, Technical Education, and Forests etc. The final group of 14 was decided in consultation with the Chief Secretary and Development Commissioner as Co-Chairpersons of the ISPS Joint Project Committee, the Programme Co-ordinators from partner departments, the ISPS project head, and the HID Consultant.

The capacity development process

The capacity development process was broken into seven phases. Beginning with a short introductory phase after a formal inauguration, the group transited through personal growth processes, team building events, value clarification, consensus decision-making, communication and presentation skills, and then onto substantive conceptual learning in development theory and intervention. They travelled to Andhra Pradesh in the summer of 2003 to visit projects working with the poor in severe drought and resource scarce conditions. They interacted with NGOs and local government

officials, to understand in particular how government had brought changes to its development effort and how government collaborated with NGOs in various situations. On the basis of the experience, the group made an extensive presentation to senior officials of the Government of Sikkim on their return.

In another phase the group did a mini survey over a couple of days in a relatively poorer and remote area of East Sikkim. The mini survey provided hands on experience of the survey methodology as they went door to door in small groups for the survey. The data gathered was then coded, analysed and findings discussed and consolidated with professional inputs from a specialist in survey methods.

Case studies of actual development interventions from the third world experience were worked on in all the phases. A number of behavioural instruments and experiential exercises were used at different stages for reflecting on the development of relations within the group and to enable them to confront shortcomings and weaknesses at the individual and group levels.

As the capacity development progressed, the group undertook small studies. The Finance Secretary entrusted the group with the responsibility of conducting a study on the expenditure incurred on government vehicles in the state. The group had to co-ordinate a major data collection task across all the departments and agencies of government, and then build an analytical framework. In between the phases the Group also met for short one / two day events to review work, analyze shortcomings, to plan improvements and co-ordinate further work. A newsletter was also launched to share within the state the focus of human and institutional development.

From 2002-2005 the group underwent a major process of exposure for acquiring new understanding, perspectives, and knowledge, for gaining some applied skills and for grappling with attitudinal change. Two members dropped out. One moved out of the state and another individual did not participate after a point

In the next chapter what the group feels and how they see the future will be presented.

Other HID Initiatives

All through the years from 2002, the Project sought to address policy makers. As indicated in Diagram 2, under each of the broad thematic concerns, there were a variety of efforts.

Vis-à-vis policy makers, the major focus was to inform and share understanding. The major efforts are briefly listed below:

1. Concerned that there was insufficient co-ordination between green sector departments in policy and plan implementation, ISPS placed before the Government of Sikkim the need for a high level body to fulfill this role. Based on this idea the Government constituted an Inter Departmental Coordination Committee (IDCC), comprising of Secretaries representing all green sector departments, the Finance Secretary and the Development Commissioner. The main objectives of the committee as agreed upon are to ensure that all green sector departments agree on a common plan, and pursue individual departmental priorities within this. This would enable them to avoid overlapping of operations in the field, help complement each other, and ensure that the resources available with each department are most efficiently utilized.
2. In early 2002, a two day workshop was arranged for the members of the Joint Project Committee. This included the Chief Secretary, the Finance Secretary, the Development Commissioner, the Secretaries of partner departments, Programme Coordinators from the partner departments and other senior officials connected with the ongoing programmes. The workshop was organized to share the understanding of HID and to discuss the proposed activities to promote HID in the project.
3. A 3 day, part-day event was organized also in 2002 for the Chief Minister and a few other senior Cabinet Ministers, to place before them the HID Agenda of ISPS, and the planned activities. The group discussed the effectiveness of the ongoing development process and how it could be strengthened. The event closed with a few senior civil servants joining the discussion with the Ministers.

4. A three day event was organized in early 2005 for Senior Officers from partner departments, who were not directly involved with ISPS programmes in their departments, but whose involvement and understanding for mainstreaming was essential. The group visited field activities and also discussed the concept and relevance of HID for the development process.

5. These above events apart, the project continuously organized events with partner departments to share with senior officials from the departments the experience and learning from the field.

One such event was the Dialogue Event for Integrating HID Activities, held with all partners together in November 2004. The two day event gave senior officers from the partner departments and the officers involved in different HID initiatives, a common platform to discuss what they had done, the difficulties they faced and what changes had been effected to improve the HID effort. It also provided an opportunity to clarify the meaning and dimensions of HID based on their experience in the field.

6. In an interface event where members of the Core Group and the middle level officers had interacted with the Programme Coordinators from partner departments it was pointed out that it was important that the experience of the project be communicated within each partner department. For this it was felt that an HID action group be formed in each partner department consisting of the members of the core group and the middle level officers who had attended the respective programmes.

The department of Animal Husbandry formed such a group. This group contributes to mainstreaming ISPS programmes in the department and to disseminate to officers of the department information about the programmes and its benefits.

It should be fairly obvious from the discussion so far, that HID is a comprehensive concept. Human and institutional development is concerned with the individual, the collective and the system. For both SDC and IC the HID approach implied commitment to enhancing the stake of peoples' involvement in decision making at all levels that concerns the choices and interventions for their development. It is hence concerned with the entire process of governance and how it is organized. HID is also therefore concerned with enhancing transparency in decision making, and affirms the development of the capacities of individuals, the collective and the system to be able to take better informed decisions to provide growth and development for the poor and the marginalized.

HID is about understanding the intent and purpose of social and economic development. It promotes the internalization of values and attitudes that underpin equitable and fair socio-economic growth and the working into place of norms, processes and structures that will help institutionalize the values and attitudes that promote democratization of power and decision making.

When from late 2002 a number of fresh initiatives were taken up by the project, initiatives that sought to increase peoples' ownership and involvement, to enhance the interaction between local officers of a department and other stakeholders, to create greater awareness among farmers of improved and effective practices whether in livestock or milk co-operative management, most of these initiatives were launched and worked on by the programme personnel primarily from the point of view that social aspects needed to be strengthened by the project. Not all of this was necessarily recognized as integral to the understanding of HID. Recognition of how all these are part of Human and Institutional Development is still evolving, and hopefully this document and the analysis and interpretation will contribute to simplifying the application of HID.

The following analysis looks at the more important outcomes of the interventions that have been presented in the earlier chapter. The analysis and discussion primarily look at the outcomes from the perspective of the HID Foci the project had set itself and which is presented

in Diagram 2. This discussion highlights what it perceives as HID outcomes to gain an overall understanding of the human and institutional changes that have followed or are beginning to happen as a result of the efforts of the Project.

The outcomes are discussed briefly with reference to each partner. As spelt out in Chapter 2, the HID foci of the project in broad terms were the following:

- ❖ Promotion and facilitation of dialogue.
- ❖ Development of capacities – social, technical and methodological.
- ❖ And building partnerships for sustainable relationships.

As touched upon earlier in this document HID interventions gained vigour in application only from 2002. Therefore in terms of a time frame it is a little premature to identify outcomes which signal significant and deep changes. It is also all the more difficult to objectively reflect on the value addition. The discussion that follows hence focuses on the small but visible shifts and changes that signal something more than shallow and transient change. That is the perspective with which this discussion is approached and to stress what is stated above, it looks critically at the likely long term implications of the impact in the community.

Outcomes in Horticulture: From Beneficiary to Customer

In its documentation of the PTD experience in ginger cultivation the project notes that "the improvement in ginger cultivation practices is a significant and apparent result. PTD farmers have been the most visible beneficiaries, while (farmers) from the same or adjoining villages, who have learnt from the PTD farmers, have recorded improved practices." ⁽²¹⁾. Clearly there are improvements in the "technical" dimension – farmers in the PTD groups learnt through their participation, the importance of healthy seeds, of the need for raised beds for cultivating ginger, the importance of spacing planting, disease treatment with methods like hot water treatment etc. In some cases farmers have had improved yields, like H.B. Subba a farmer in Makha, South Sikkim who harvested a distinctly higher yield of ginger from an experimental plot, than what

he got from a plot in which he did none of the innovative measures for disease control. ⁽²²⁾

Changes in farmers' approach

The PTD process brought farmers out of their individual positions to work and interact together for a common task that related to their economic condition. Through the Self Help Groups (SHGs) the farmers broke out of the isolation of trying to work on their problems separately and individually. Even the coming together to form an SHG was a voluntary act, requiring a personal initiative and a deliberate choice towards having to share and discuss with other farmers.

Once together in the SHG they had to discuss and decide with inputs and clarifications from the officers of the department, the other project personnel etc, what measures they intended to use for disease management. They had to learn how to record data on the experiment, come together to discuss the experience and results and then decide what to do next. To manage this and to participate in such a multi-stage process, the required inputs for capacity development were provided by the department in collaboration with the project and the consultant group.

The perceptible HID aspects were that they learnt to share information and dialogue between themselves. Since the project also had review meetings with scientists and department officers, the farmers gained experience in how to conduct dialogue with officers from the department, and with external experts, like scientists etc. There were occasions in public platforms when farmers spelt out how the steps they had preferred to practice in the experiment had clearly achieved the desired results unlike the methods the scientist had recommended.

The entire PTD work involved dialogue between farmers, department officers, scientists, other experts, project personnel, and local NGOs. It called for working together to find answers and did not adopt a method or practice because a scientist recommended a course of action. It also clearly sought to build farmers' capacities to discuss amongst themselves their common problems, to develop methods and techniques, to interface and discuss with external institutions and authorities, and to access from them the resources they required.

It also enabled scientists and other external experts to reappraise their knowledge and the nature and specifics of solutions they suggested. Fresh understanding and knowledge were acquired from cross learning.

PTD Group in Syampani

A small team from the Core Group which visited a few of the PTD SHG farmers of the PTD group in Syampani, Sorok, South Sikkim, had this to say, “PTD intervention has helped the group to develop the vision for the overall development of the village. The intervention has brought the department closer to the village – the group directly interacts with the concerned officers and... (this PTD group) visits different PTD villages in the state for experience sharing, which encourages capacity development and partnership building”. In another PTD group in Lower Aho, East Sikkim, the group learnt that prior to PTD there had been a “high incidence of ginger soft rot disease, absence of disease free seed materials, lack of disease

control initiatives and untimely supply of seeds (by the department). But after the PTD process got underway, “timely (supply) of quality seed materials was achieved. Awareness level regarding disease and its identification symptoms increased,” and there was “marginal improvement in disease control and yield...” and though the groups were formed in the village only in late 2003, the plots developed were “serving as demonstration farms for visitors and other surrounding farmers.”

From field report of sub-group of HID Core Group that participated in this documentation

Within the department

Another perceptible outcome is that within the Department, there is a greater realization among officers that farmers can and need to be involved in the efforts to improve various practices. It is now accepted and better acknowledged by officers that they have a responsibility to reach the right inputs to farmers and that farmers have much to contribute to developing new and effective practices. It is also now felt that the perception of farmers as incapable of contributing, as lacking any knowledge, as not being able to do things systematically, is erroneous and creates obstacles to interaction with them.

Officers, particularly the officers who participated in the experiments, now recognize that farmers are their customers, not just beneficiaries, This led department officials to commit publicly in November 2004 at an Inter-Partner event to discuss the HID initiatives, that the Department would now adopt PTD as an internal practice in its work with farmers across the state in all efforts to improve various farm practices and disease management initiatives. This was a small, but definitely significant action for the institutionalization of a critical practice that would lead to better farmer oriented policy and actions. Another institutional dimension, critical from the understanding of HID is the acceptance within the Department that regular field based review is required of all such

interventions and that these reviews, must include all stakeholders.

Another aspect which the PTD process facilitated was the encouragement to women farmers to actively take their place in the SHGs and to involve fully in all the stages of the PTD. It was also a learning for the Department and for the community too. The sub-group from the Core Group that visited PTD Ginger villages learnt that earlier women were discouraged by the manner in which such interventions were conducted. The PTD process breached a critical barrier and encouraged women to join and contribute as equals and to recognize that women were already substantially involved as farmers in ginger cultivation.

Outcomes in Animal Husbandry: Incremental Change

Among the partners, the Department of Animal Husbandry has possibly had the greatest degree of interaction with ISPS. Hence, over time, the impact of HID on the department has been witnessed in various facets of the working of the Department.

Small changes

In the early days of the project, ISPS had largely restricted itself to one-on-one meetings with officers of the department to propose and plan collaboration. This distinctly changed from Phase 2. ISPS sought and organized discussion of proposed work with all the concerned officials

and increasingly such discussions were taken to the field. Field level functionaries and farmers were brought into the discussion. Such field meetings evolved from information sharing into information seeking meetings which actively sought the participation of the small and marginal farmer in the process of dialogue, planning, implementation and review. All this had a deep impact on the approach of officials of the department, an impact which has brought them out of their offices, enhanced their involvement in extension services, and engaged them in dialogue with the field staff and the community.

Was this a continuously even and problem free process? It was not always problem free. There were setbacks, resistance and even hostility at times, hostility to the changes that the HID interventions influenced. But as the various interventions took shape, whether relating to the breeding programme, the Multi Utility Health Worker, the MIS and disease investigation cell, the strengthening of the Training Centre, and more recently, PTD in Livestock, the department found itself engaging in greater debate internally. Shifts have taken place in the approach to programme initiation and planning. There is now a definite inclination to understand and assess a context based on field visits and feedback from farmer groups before proposing a plan. All these have contributed to small but important changes in the system of the department.

A major evidence of the change that has happened in the department is reflected in the keenness the department demonstrated for introducing PTD in Livestock though it was rather late in the life of the project. Further, officers at different levels have engaged actively, including participating with scientists from research institutes to collaborate with farmers.

In the PTD Livestock initiative, though only one cycle of experiments was completed, and corrections and learning were being implemented as the project closed, the understanding is that the social and methodological gains are similar to what is evident with the PTD Ginger experiment.

Increased farmer awareness

Farmers have actively engaged in the search for answers, rather than assume the role of silent recipients. Information gathered indicates that

farmers have gained improved access to credit, and also to technical service providers. Farmers are far more aware now of different services offered for livestock. They are aware that it is their own resources which if used incorrectly would deny them growth and benefits.

Through dialogue at the village level, through greatly enhanced interaction with concerned technical officials, through the results of the experiments undertaken, and through the platform events with experts, social organizers and others, livestock farmers have acquired valuable learning about feeding practices, fodder cultivation and management, milk yield and health management etc.

Shift in approach of scientists

An important change that has happened concerned the scientists from the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) who were invited to provide technical support to the PTD process. Initially they were skeptical about the participation of the farmers. However as the PTD process unfolded, and the farmers engaged in the methodological steps required of them, and implemented the learning, the ICAR scientists began to appreciate the participative framework and methodology and have become eager supporters and input providers for the entire process. This has been a particularly important outcome as ICAR scientists were perceived to be laboratory oriented and usually reluctant to involve in field experiments. To participate continuously with farmers, social organizers, and department personnel in community meetings, in platform events, and to work together with others to find viable, appropriate solutions, is a major shift in the approach of the scientists.

Outcomes in Sikkim Milk Union: Strengthening Co-operatives

HID outcomes are rarely likely to trigger transformative changes as soon as initiated or attempted. Human institutions and organizations do not change easily. Ideologies, personal values, comfort with the existing structures, significant stakes in existing systems and practices, always present difficult hurdles for change. When such efforts for transformation are sought through participatory processes involving all stakeholders, change is all the more difficult. This reality has been a constant companion for the project in all that it has sought to do in terms of HID.

Some results from the PTD Intervention

The practice of maintaining proper feeding timing, measuring the quantity in local bamboo baskets (Doko), maintaining animal shed properly, feeding the cattle in clean troughs was adopted. There was some increase in quantity and fat percentage of milk resulting in improved income. The PTD intervention has helped in the setting up of a milk collection centre with a daily collection of 30 litres.

This intervention has been successful in creating awareness among other neighbouring farmers as well as making them more interested to get involved in such a programme.

With the PTD intervention they were exposed to modern animal management. They (farmers) started feeding their animals with chaffed fodder, maintaining proper feeding timings, daily recording in register, measuring the quantity in standardised local bamboo basket measures... They realized that feeding animals with chaffed fodder was more economical and effective since this reduced wastage.

From field report of sub-group of HID Core Group that participated in this documentation

Some critical outcomes

While through the CD programme the Project was able to create a modicum of awareness among farmers about co-operative principles and functioning, the Project recognizes that it was only a beginning. Member participation in the SMU is still in early days. The SMU as an organization has still much to do for strengthening its cooperative character. The CD programmes have made a critical contribution for that.

While the Project was able to stir a level of debate and discussion in government and among the milk co-operatives which led the Government to amend the Act pertaining to the SMU to ensure that the Chairperson of the SMU would be elected, the project was unable to facilitate a rethink on the need for a professional to lead the organization. But in the days ahead, when

SMU is confronted with the need to become more competitive in rapidly changing local market conditions - at that point of time, that this issue was raised and considered should help the organization respond more pragmatically.

Revival of 'sick' cooperatives

An outcome of the CD programme that yielded visible results was that as members became more active in their co-operative societies, the collection of milk increased, milk quality improved and income levels saw small, but gradual improvements. Particularly significant was the revival of "sick" co-operatives. The HID Core Group sub group which visited different farmer groups to gather information on the impact of HID interventions, identified two co-operatives at Yangsam and Bompul where societies in indifferent health had become active.

The Case of Hemlata Silwal a Lady Extension Worker

Hemlata, a graduate, but unemployed had been trained as a Lady Extension Worker. She had undergone the four modules training to promote awareness among farming households on clean milk production.

In a discussion she explained that the SMU had a system of milk purchasing which was not easily understood by the farmers. She hence went house to house in Yangsam and Bompal co-operative societies. She would show farmers the price chart, milk cows in front of them, then test the milk and calculate the price payable. She would explain to them the basis for pricing, the link between fat content and earning a higher price. In the process farmers often admitted that they adulterated the milk with water.

To educate farmers in this manner she would spend nearly 20 days in the field. A dedicated worker with strong people skills she felt that she received good support from her male colleagues. She was definitely successful in training villagers in clean milk production, in animal management and milk testing procedures. She would also explain to the villagers how improved milk production would benefit the village through higher earnings of members. Her dedicated and sustained work saw the revival of Yangsam and Bompal milk producer co-operatives.

In recognition of this contribution the MD of SMU confirmed her position in the SMU.

From field report of sub-group of HID Core Group that participated in this documentation

Outcomes in Rural Management and Development: Enabling Participation

Though the collaboration with the Department of Rural Management and Development only began in 2002, in the short period since then there have been some significant developments. For one, the work undertaken in the eight wards has spread awareness among villagers about the concept of panchayat raj, the role they need to

a small group of trainers in the field who have the capacity to design and conduct basic training for their fellow community members, who can provide a degree of leadership for capacity building, for panchayat level planning, and for organizing dialogue platforms with local officialdom.

At the state level, the District level workshops contributed to the recognition that sharing

An SIRD Perspective

From interviews with Ms. Sherab Dorjee, Joint Director, and Mr. Vishal Rai, Deputy Director, State Institute of Rural Development, Jorethang

Situation before ISPS intervention:

- Method of conducting training was monotonous and theoretical
- Training was more of class room lecture than participatory
- Low level of dissemination of information
- Ineffective training method

After ISPS intervention:

- Method of holding trainings became more practical and systematic
- Participatory approach was adopted
- Trainings became more interactive
- Was effective in empowering and mobilizing farmers/stakeholders
- Received financial support and good response from the higher ups
- Dissemination of information was efficient
- Started conducting outdoor trainings especially in the Villages and District Head Quarters
- System of field-based trainers was adopted.

From field report of sub-group of HID Core Group that participated in this documentation

play, the benefits that could accrue, and the responsibilities they need to shoulder. More importantly it has demonstrated the importance of grass root capacity building and awareness generation for actualizing community engagement with panchayat raj. It has also demonstrated that grass root mobilization outside the party structure is possible through such community engagement.

The intervention has created conditions for community level dialogue to understand their conditions, and to determine how best to address their priorities. The intervention has provided ordinary farmers, women and men, the confidence and the relevant understanding to interface with local functionaries. Mr. Santa Pradhan, the Director of SIRD points out that in panchayats where the intervention was taken up, local service delivery improved. There is now

understanding and gaining from cross learning is important for the effective growth of panchayat raj. All these initiatives have also demonstrated that decentralization and democratization are not just abstract concepts, but need to be translated into methodological actions that create and sustain participation. This has probably been the most important achievement of the PRI initiatives.

Also critical is the fact that an institution under the Department, with the mandate to support capacity building and awareness generation, was involved as a partner from the outset. The State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD) faculty had the opportunity to participate fully in the planning of the interventions, and in the field and district level training and dialogue. This experience, their exposure to specialized training and visits to institutions like the Kerala Institute for Local Administration, contributed to the

development of their own capacities. The group is small, but these small initiatives and steps provide the basis for sustainable growth and development.

The Middle Level Officers Programme and Attitudinal Change

At the start of the third and concluding phase for the third group of officers that participated in the middle level officers' programme on **Promoting Collaborative Management Skills**, the following questions were put to the group.

❖ **What changes do you think have taken**

place in you as a result of participating in this (multi-phase) programme?

- ❖ **Are there changes in Behaviour and Attitudes?**
- ❖ **If you believe there are no changes...Why do you think no changes have taken place?**

The group threw up some interesting insights into the impact of the programme. Some of these are quoted in the boxes along side. Their responses grouped under different heads provide an idea of the kind of impact the programme had.

About Interaction with Others

- Realized that colleagues have better ideas to share.
Dr. Sanjay Gajmer
- I am (now) appreciative of the efforts made by colleagues / office staff.
Ms. Priya Shrestha
- I'm more comfortable (now) with rigid people to discuss about any work.
Lecture and control over staff reduced.
Dr. T.B. Sunar
- (Now) Respect others views / opinions and share (my) views openly.
Mr. M.K. Pradhan
- Now I feel others know as much as I do and more, so I now work as a team.
Mr. Rinzing D. Lepcha

About Changes in Self

- (More) Task / goal oriented.
Anyone makes suggestion, I try to look at the matter through a broader viewpoint and give inputs.
Dr. Sonam Choden
- I had a dominating character. I feel I was always "Right" and "Perfect".
Mr. Rinzing D. Lepcha
- Have changed from being arrogant to flexible, realistic and practical.
Have learnt to listen more and speak less.
Ms. Sherap Tshering
- (Have) become more open, and improved punctuality.
Dr. Mohan Basnet
- (Earlier would) dominate colleagues by doing all the talking.
Dr. Sanjay Gajmer

About the Development Orientation

- (Now) give more importance to my work and to serve poor people.
Mr. M. Khatiwara
- I take serious responsibility of my actions and my work.
Ms. Priya Shrestha
- Personal benefits are not that important before the benefit of a farmer.
Dr. Sanjay Gajmer
- Qualities of activities are to be counted...set the programme for developmental process.
Dr. Mohan Basnet
- Respect indigenous knowledge of farmers.
Mr. M.K. Pradhan
- Try to understand the nature of the post and work (where) I am posted.
Mr. Renzing D. Lepcha
- Supported plans which could strengthen the cell even though it didn't benefit me as an individual.
Dr. Sonam Choden

Most of the participants were between 30-40 years of age. With a number of them there were perceptible changes. A very critical one in the context of the prevalent culture amongst them as officers was an increased willingness to speak up and express opinions and ideas. Expressing oneself freely was definitely not the culture.

Among women officers there was a definite reluctance to participate freely in group discussions at the outset. Younger women officers were definitely diffident. One witnessed this change, usually in the second phase and then significantly in the third phase. The methodology of constantly composing mixed groups of participants without attending to seniority, hierarchy or gender and encouraging them to work together for analysis, presentations, for small projects etc helped the process of opening up and more equitable participation.

For many a government job was essentially a control function. One received instructions from superiors and these were acted on or subordinates in turn instructed. For many the MLO programme brought about the realization that a task orientation requires that as an individual one performs a small part of a larger

task but that it is not accomplished till all contribute appropriately to that task. In the box above comments like those of Dr.Sonam Choden to looking at issues through a broader perspective refer to this changed understanding. It also led to the appreciation to that a "dominating" performance was not necessarily a hallmark of an 'effective' officer. These subtle changes were visible in the later phases of the programme.

Another possible very critical change was the appreciation of the view point that as government officers they could make a difference to the development projects and plans of the state and that they needed to reach out to small and marginal farmers to understand their situation and to develop programmes that responded to those conditions.

The feedback points to changes essentially in individual attitudes and perception of the role an individual has to perform as an officer in departments concerned with social and economic development. While such changes cannot be measured, such mindset changes can contribute to improvements in the working at the ground level. It is with this in mind that the project had tried to cover nearly 35 odd officers through the three programmes.

Limiting factors

The project was conscious of the fact that such mindset changes can be frustrated if the larger system is indifferent or unreceptive to such processes. The project was also aware that the project could not effect changes in the system that would compliment and support the people oriented approaches being advocated by the programmes. The system in question was a state government. It was with this in mind that a study was proposed to identify (in 2002) the key bottlenecks in decision making and how accountability should be determined for ineffective implementation, for excessive delays in action, etc. But at that stage, such an action research idea was realized to be too premature.

The perspective therefore in conducting the programmes was – sow seeds of understanding. Address individual officers; make them aware of the need for change in their thinking and in their functioning. Provide them a development orientation. Engage such officers in small activities, projects etc where they have an opportunity to work together, to take up specific development questions and provide a platform to them to present their findings to policy makers, whether the politician or the senior civil servant. This contributed to overcoming their hesitation to engage and present before higher ups.

The intent was also to demonstrate through such interaction to policy makers, the need to reflect on bringing changes in the working of departments, including systemic changes. The endeavour was to build, methodological and social competencies that compliment technical competence in order to strengthen the capacities for action of individuals and institutions, a step-by-step approach for modest changes in a complex system. The project sought to work with the officers at the level of the individual for personal change, at the level of the group to contribute to departmental change and at the level of inter group to contribute to inter institutional interaction – the three levels identified by both SDC and IC as important for taking HID forward.

The immediate outcomes of this programme intervention are small. But given the fact that efforts like PTD are being internalized by the Departments of Animal Husbandry and Horticulture, the officers from these departments who have undergone the MLO training are more

likely to be supportive and facilitative than indifferent and obstructive. The returns of this investment are likely to be seen only in the long term.

The HID Core Group: Facilitating Development

Shortly before the close of the project the HID Core Group completed its capacity development process. From the viewpoint of the thematic concern that ISPS decided to focus and work on post 2002, the Core Group was one of the main capacity development efforts undertaken. The HID Core Group is however yet to engage in any major development task. It did take up a few short studies to provide inputs to government. A major assignment was the study of expenditure incurred on government vehicles. This was a study of an administrative matter.

What then are the outcomes of the HID Core Group formation? Like in the case of the officers from partner departments who completed the programme on Promoting Collaborative Management Skills, there are important changes in the mental make-up of the members of the HID Core Group. Feedback taken from the group at different stages of the journey reveals a slow but definite evolution in thinking.

Changes at individual and group levels

In the concluding phase held at Siliguri from 18 – 20, December 2005, members made presentations on **Reflections of Self and the Capacity Development Process**. The reflections broadly covered the following themes:

1. Changes in the individual self.
2. Group relationship and team working.
3. The understanding of development.
4. The role of the government officer in the development process and
5. Any other feedback emanating from the experience of being a Core Group member.

The presentations brought out “that a number of significant proactive shifts and changes had taken place at the level of both individuals and group. The more important ones were:

1. Analytical thinking had become much stronger.
2. There was now far greater conceptual clarity about development and what and how government was required to do to facilitate, not administer, development.

3. Overall, members felt an enhanced ability to take risks in different ways within their work sphere, risks they would have been fairly hesitant to take earlier.
4. A perceptible, tangible sense of group had emerged. They were no longer just individuals from different departments. There was a sense and identity as Core Group member.
5. Dialogue and discussion was recognized as central to building and promoting collaborative processes, both within the group and with others.
6. A sense of responsibility for tasks taken up by the Core Group was gradually emerging. This was a difficult area, but members did now have a sense of responsibility for work to be completed. This was manifest in the willingness to give time for group meetings, agreement to meet on holidays, volunteering to take up different tasks for accomplishing a task, and the effort made to stay in touch with each other and to check with each other about ongoing work.
7. Most members also felt that their personal confidence to speak in public, including before superiors, and to enter into discussions, had increased considerably.

This posed a threat to their ability to work differently from others. It also posed a challenge.

3. Strong doubts persisted about their ability to influence changes in the system, particularly with reference to development planning and thinking.
4. All this affected their future as a Core Group. How would they be able to contribute? What could they do? What would they be allowed to do? Would they be able to remain as a Core Group with a distinct identity and purpose?"

Future role

How will the Core Group utilize the learning it has acquired in the days ahead - the capacity to work as a team, the skills to conduct a field survey, the ability to engage in development analysis and the ability to conduct community dialogue? A limitation they face is that as government officials it would be difficult for them to independently take up a task as a group, within the arena of government. They can however, given the positions they hold, and that they have a group identity, impress upon the government that they be supported to take up some specific development task, and that they be permitted to work together as small teams on such a task. When the idea of such a group was put across to the government, it was on the basis of the willingness of government to utilize a group with the capacity to facilitate the development agenda that ISPS decided to constitute and develop the HID Core Group. Even small moves by the government to use the group for development analysis and support, will be a big step.

There were some issues that disturbed them.

1. There was a sense that member commitment was still not sufficiently translated into effective contribution.
2. The "environment" and "culture" of their respective work places had not changed.

Launching a Community Based Poverty Alleviation Initiative

At the Inter-partner event organized by ISPS (Feb: 2006) to provide partners a platform to share with state level policy makers their experience of the project and the key progress made, the HID Core Group made a brief presentation. The presentation was made to the Chief Minister and other senior ministers and civil servants.

The group proposed that government assign them the responsibility to implement a pilot project in one gram panchayat (a panchayat

which registers high on poverty indicators) to utilize the resources of various departments in an integrated manner to tackle the multiple dimensions of poverty in the selected panchayat. The group spelt out that this would be a community planned and community driven initiative.

A few months after the project closed, the Government is understood to have assigned a development task to the Core Group.

It is not particularly easy to cull out the learnings that the HID experience of this project provides. For one, recognizing and articulating learning is difficult when one is so close to the doing. It is also difficult to recognize learnings without disengaging from the experience and having the privilege of distance from the action to be able to assimilate and reflect on what truly constitutes learning. The outcomes of HID processes also do not easily lend themselves to measure and quantification.

This attempt to put across the learnings suffers from these shortcomings. But in the midst of all the field meetings, platform events, community interaction, the training events and back to office reports, there have admittedly been flashes of understanding, of something becoming clear, of the realization that something happened because of a particular factor, or of what did not work out the way it should have, as something else was not done.

This write up is a collage of such understanding, with an attempt to cluster the learning thematically. It is both reflection and analysis.

Diagram 3 attempts to capture in simple visual terms the context in which the project worked on HID. The visual seeks to highlight that at the centre of the situation were existing structures, existing practices of dialogue and decision making, cultural conditions, and vested interests which prefer the working of state, institutions, etc in a particular manner and which would normally find reflection in the existing practices etc. All these are deeply enmeshed in values, attitudes and ideological orientations that the major and usually more powerful players hold. It is in such a context that HID interventions seek to promote participatory processes, equity concerns, and sustainable development for the transformation of the condition of the poor and the socially weaker sections of society. As mentioned earlier in this document this requires “creating relevant technical and social (including managerial) capacities at different levels to enable participation and engagement of the poor in their growth. It also requires that authorities, agencies and NGOs involved with the development chain also internalize and practice concepts, values, skills, methods and techniques that support and strengthen people-centred, participatory, need based, sustainable development.”

The reflections and analysis that follow seek to throw up learning the project had in the course of attempting to do the above.

The Dialogue Process

As this project comes to a close, if any learning is clear and unambiguous, it is that dialogue with partners for all aspects of development planning and management must be a continuous process. In a context or situation where such participatory dialogue is not a part of the culture of the partner, there will be impediments to such a process. But the process should be persisted with and the partner enabled to replicate such dialogue processes internally in its working as well with its partners.

The experience with the Departments of Animal Husbandry and Horticulture reflect this. It was a similar experience in the dialogue at the grass root level, whether with farmer groups, cooperatives or gram panchayats. Only sustained and persistent efforts to continue dialogue opened doors for experiment. The continued dialogue also impacted positively though gradually on the quality of service delivery partners.

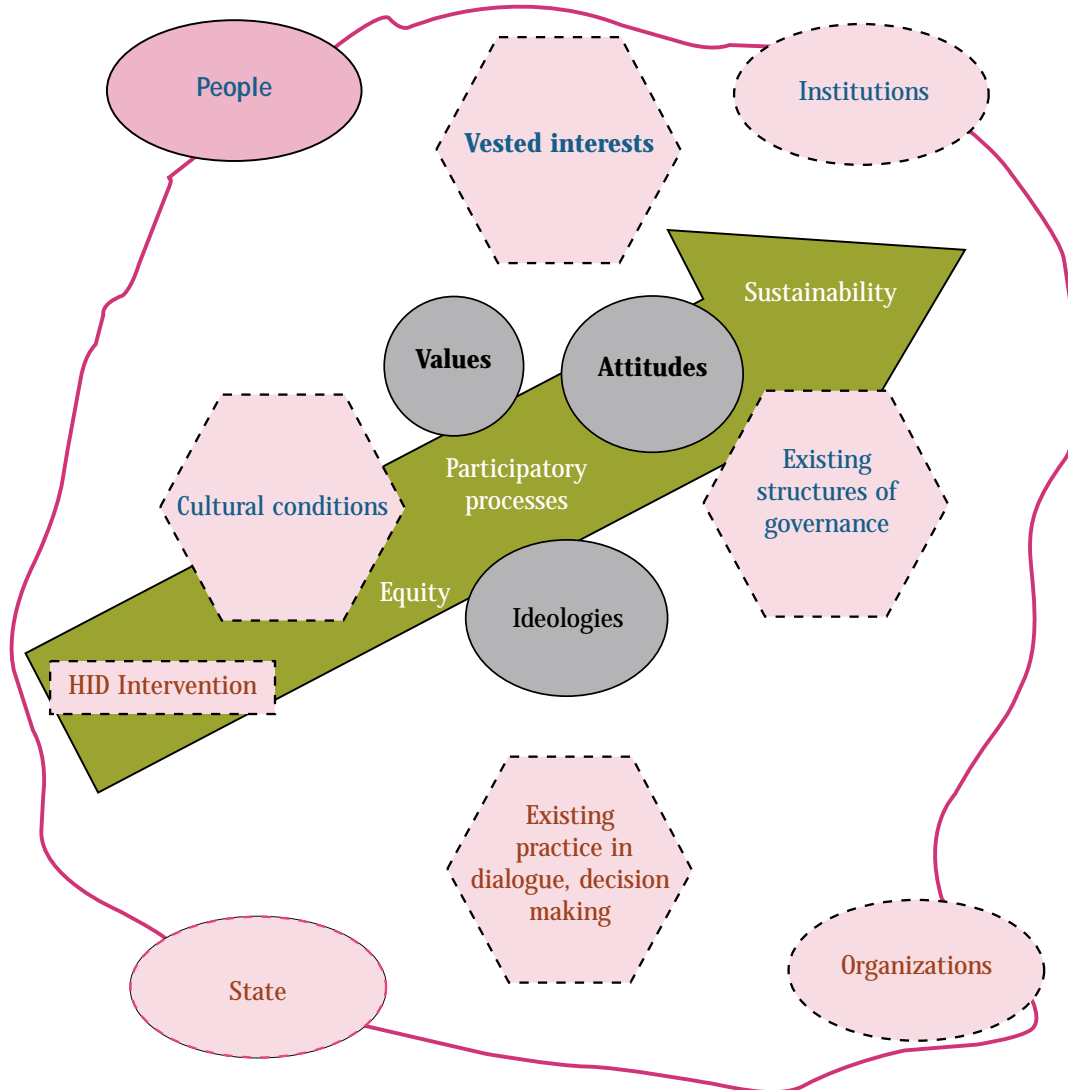
The information, data and understanding shared with others, whether civil servants or villagers, enabled them to participate by asking questions, expressing opinions, placing a different view point and by even taking a contrary standpoint. The project learnt that only through such a process is ownership of ideas and plans likely to gradually happen. The PTD experiments demonstrate this abundantly.

In situations where stakeholders are at multiple levels, dialogue has to be pursued and persisted with at every level, however difficult. The Inter Departmental Co-ordination Committee provides an example. When ISPS first mooted the idea of a Committee of Ministers and Secretaries to co-ordinate green sector development, the response was low key. It took repeated efforts at multiple levels to finally initiate actions for the constituting the Committee.

The departments are primarily mandated for providing technical assistance to the farmers. The dialogue process however introduced a paradigm shift within the system as to how issues were to be discussed and decided upon. This shift makes it possible for social issues to be better understood and factored into the

The Context of the HID Intervention

Diagram 3



decision making process. However, how this institution will fulfill its mandate can only be ascertained in the future.

Another example of the value of creating opportunities for dialogue was seen in the JPC. As per the bilateral agreement senior civil servants are nominated by the government to the JPC. The project however introduced the practice of having junior officers involved with different initiatives to make presentations to the JPC to inform them of ongoing work. Through

this practice the senior civil servants were informed directly by their subordinates of specific work and also updated on fresh developments. This enabled the JPC to review issues better and to advocate policy changes.

Capacity Development

HID strongly emphasizes the need for developing capacities of partners to take development forward. Whether it was PTD, the Trainers Group for conducting training for panchayat members, the CD Programme for strengthening the

co-operative character of SMU, capacity development paid dividends. But what has come to the fore, is that such capacity development must relate to the work the individual or a group is engaged in, for it is in their being able to do it better, and to see the positive results of what they do, that motivates them to value the capacities and the learning. It also earns them the respect of their colleagues. And it is through the results so achieved that finally changes happen in mindsets and work culture.

The project also learnt that capacities need to be shared with others, and that the capability to develop others must be acquired by some. In developing the faculty group at SIRD, in getting ICAR scientists to involve in the PTD Livestock programme, in training Social Organizers for the PTD experiments, the project demonstrated and learnt that capacities not only need to be replicated, but a group or institution should be equipped to provide the necessary support for the future.

Partner engagement with HID

At the outset of the third phase when the project sought to engage the main partners in the HID process, a major hurdle to taking HID forward was the lack of understanding about HID of partners.

Building this orientation and understanding took time. Integrating this orientation with the technical components of the programmes took further time. But through various kinds of dialogue events, in small groups, in large groups, through presentations and training events, the project created a modicum of understanding in partners. It was through creating this shared understanding that partner involvement grew, at the level of the departments, and at the level of the community. This was the energy that propelled the experiments and the interest of different levels of individuals, groups and institutions.

A fundamental learning from this experience was that this required repeated clarification of the main content of HID and its purpose. HID had to be related to the work process and those involved had to experience at first hand how different means and methods, whether dialogue events with the community or understanding how a method like a SWOT analysis with colleagues on a problem, made a difference to the quality of the outcome. This also entailed

the willingness to work at the pace of the partner, and not to initiate fresh steps till the partner was prepared to go further. This was easier said than done as projects with time frames are also under pressure to show tangible results.

The learning was also that partner engagement for building understanding cannot be a sporadic, occasional effort. It has to be a continuous engagement even if the manifest response of the partner is not quite encouraging. This engagement requires time, patience, a budget and pragmatic commitment. The continuous sharing with partners and the credibility built by working together had much to do with the increased demand for new partnerships in the later phase of the project.

Internalization and Sustainability

How sustainable are these initiatives? Will the fundamental aspects introduced by the interventions be accepted and adopted by partners? How will partners sustain HID processes after the project closure? These and similar questions have constantly troubled the project.

The project has hence always been alive to the challenge of internalization and sustainability. Looking back at what was done one recognizes very valuable learnings.

- In working with the poor and marginalized, when livelihood issues are understood and addressed as defined by the poor, and HID interventions of structure and process are fashioned to serve those livelihood concerns, the community gets involved. Such interventions are then more likely to be sustainable as they acquire credibility.

The acceptance of the PTD experiments, of the CD programme emanated from this.

Where interventions have been built around livelihood needs of farmers, and their participation in its working, learning and implementation made easy, the farmers have involved actively. Subsequently their expectations have risen and they have demanded better services.

In all such cases, it was imperative that the groups made their own norms for their functioning. This created not just involvement; it led to owning what was

done – as their endeavour. This generated corresponding pressure on local service providers to deliver better.

Such involvement helps to develop models which have a higher possibility for replicability. The PTD programmes demonstrate this.

- The project also learnt that when women were provided space to participate as equal partners with men, whether it was the SAJAG groups in the panchayat intervention, or the CD programme, their participation made a critical difference for change to begin.
- For the poor empowerment happens when they experience the results of what they have done and acquire the ability to influence change in the direction and for the purpose desired by them.
- At the level of department officers and field functionaries, sustainability related to acquiring the capacity to deliver a required service effectively. This was seen in the case of those trained to manage the MIS in Animal Husbandry, the officers skilled in PTD methods in the Horticulture department and in the case of the faculty group exposed at SIRD to conduct panchayat training. They present examples of potential institutional sustainability.

Internalizing attitudes that value collaborative, participative, equity oriented approaches, and acquiring the willingness to act and perform differently from the manner in which something was done earlier, are at the core of what promotes sustainability at the level of the individual. While competency in the capacity to undertake different technical tasks is important, the project learnt that this is insufficient to assure a reasonable possibility for sustainability. Given appropriate technical competencies, attitudes and mind sets need to change to make sustainability possible, and the inputs must relate to the felt needs of the community. This learning is borne out through much of what happened in the Project through all the phases, and is a learning the Project has sought to repeatedly highlight to its partners.

Macro-Level Insights

As the project looks back over the years, there

is some critical learning which is best described as macro learning, insights which the project lacked when it initially launched technical co-operation with partners.

- Perceptive understanding of social issues and frames is critical to be able to design interventions that are viable. When ISPS had begun to work with the Sikkim Milk Union, it was not alive to the contradiction in the character of SMU; that of working and functioning as a state managed undertaking as against that of claiming to be a co-operative union with milk producer co-operatives as members.

The collaboration with SMU at that stage focused on technical collaboration and management improvements, without recognizing the implications of its co-operative union dimension for its working as an organization.

- It was only when the underlying social context was understood and appreciated that ISPS could work on appropriate HID interventions to strengthen SMU as a co-operative.

Keeping this learning in mind when the collaboration started with RMDD, ISPS never started with interventions directly. A year was taken to understand how the department worked and after having gained some understanding initiated interventions.

- Institutions, communities, grass root groups exist in a political environment. This cannot be ignored. HID efforts need to take this into account. The preference to operate SMU as a state run unit, and not as an organization managed by the milk producer co-operatives, stemmed from the political choices of the government.

Similarly the panchayat initiatives of ISPS would have been completely out of place in the absence of the commitment of the State in policy terms to encourage the growth and strengthening of decentralization.

- Partnerships between organizations require that they complement each other and not compete. ISPS was unable to create a sustainable relationship between the Indian Council of Agricultural Research

(ICAR) and the Department of Horticulture for the ginger disease management programme. Given that both did their own research, they tended to conflict in proposing solutions.

But the same ICAR provided valuable back stop support to the Department of Animal Husbandry and ISPS in the PTD Livestock programme. The project learnt that the institutional potential to complement in an activity is an important element for shaping viable, sustainable partnerships.

- In all the endeavours, ISPS learnt that is necessary to help create systems that are appropriate to those who have to manage it. And this is best ensured by engaging the intended customer from the start, be it a government department, or a grass root group.

The Change Process

ISPS did recognize from the outset that the process of change would be a long and difficult road. The project attempted to provide a direction and prepare a part of the road the partners would have to continue to travel on.

But in the course of accompanying its partners on that road, the project has experienced that change is slower than it was prepared for, and that it requires continuing, appropriate inputs to maintain the momentum for change. Change happens in small doses, in small incremental measure. Whether it is in the way the members of the HID Core Group changed from unlike individuals into a group with a sense of team, or individual farmers who gradually bonded together to work on common problems, or in the case of officers who learnt to work as a team to address people's problems, change has happened slowly over a period of time and not always as anticipated.

Structural changes are difficult to introduce in the context of working with the state. What is possible are attitudinal, programmatic and normative changes. But these take considerable time to work on. Change however is greatly easier to realize when the larger community comes to believe in the results they are stakeholders in. As when farmers insisted that the PTD Ginger experiments be continued, or when the milk producer co-operatives wanted the CD programme continued.

The Gender Dimension

It is commonly believed in Sikkim that women enjoy equal space and access like men to decision making in the public space. Women definitely work alongside men in the farm sector and is recognised, but the participation of women in decision making at the community level was not always particularly clear.

On many occasions when one visited communities in interior areas, one had to invariably ask women to come forward and express themselves or on occasion women had to be taken aside and then they would open up. In the earlier days of the partner events, women officers rarely spoke.

In the Core Group, in the course of a reflection process (in 2005) on the kinds of change experienced at the personal level, it emerged

that the women in the group felt that the capacity development programme had enabled them to become more confident to engage with the public situation and to demand and manage their need for their space. While initially the Coordinator of the core group was the senior most officer, a male, later one of the women took over as the Coordinator and this was a group decision.

Through PTD, the CD programme, the LEW activity, the MLO programme etc, the project addressed women and strongly encouraged their fullest participation at all levels. The project also always ensured that women were given equal opportunities to participate in training events, in farmer's exposure trips, etc, but the project did not directly work on gender inequities and on how to enable men and women in partnership to integrate and rework roles and responsibilities.

An HID Concern

Once convinced of the outcome of change for their livelihoods farmers are far quicker to embrace change and to strive to work with it than those who enjoy position and authority. Yet it becomes very important to work with

personnel who staff the state system as without their support socio economic change in the lives of the poor cannot be pursued where the state plays a critical role in providing supporting such initiatives with the poor.

In the Project Office

While for the project there has been considerable learning that relates to its work with partners, there are also insights that pertain to its own working.

The project was handicapped by a rather inadequate understanding of HID at the start of the third phase. Later as the social dimensions of the various interventions were planned and initiated, while there was considerable discussion between the project head and the consultant about the emerging experience, there was inadequate discussion with the larger team. HID hence came to be associated with training in participatory processes etc. While scope and impact was justifiably much larger if HID expertise were provided by a team member rather than a consultant.

This orientation led to the different programmes in ISPS pursuing their independent understanding of how HID was to be initiated and integrated in their work. Organized sharing within the project on the HID experience and the learning from their work could have been strengthened for improved integration. It is possible that the outcome would have been different.

As a consequence the project was not quite able to generate the level of cross learning between programmes that could have triggered greater dividends. This did affect the internal comprehension of HID and the ability of the project to put across HID in a common voice at times to partners.

The experience points to the need for frequent sharing internally for taking learning forward. It highlights the need to critique and reflect internally in a project group so as to enhance the ability to collaborate and complement each

other more effectively to fulfill commitments to partners.

Another critical personal learning that the project personnel have possibly gained from this experience is the need to meaningfully integrate technical development with human and institutional development processes, if the poor and the marginalized are to make informed choices and shape their own development.

Concluding Thoughts

The Indo Swiss Project Sikkim has concluded. At the level of the state there has been considerable appreciation of the contribution of the project to the working of the partners and the programmes that were implemented for more effective and efficient delivery of services by the partners to small and marginal farmers. But the true impact of the HID interventions can only be determined a few years from now if what was initiated is sustained and makes a difference to the socio- economic condition of the small and marginal farmers.

What is clear at this point of time is that when the project began work more than a decade back, the partners were far more desk bound with little people contact, believed in top down planning and rarely sought the feedback of those who were to benefit from the services they were mandated to provide. Today that seems to have changed in some measure. Their technical competencies have been enhanced and there is concern that these must be used to realise an improved quality of life for the poor. There is also recognition that development planning and delivery requires greater dialogue and participation of all stakeholders and cannot be a closed door, unilateral exercise.

These are small but hopefully critical steps forward in a complex system.

1. Lama, Mahendra P. 2001 Sikkim Human Development Report 2001. Social Science Press, Delhi.
2. Lama, Mahendra P. 2001 Sikkim Human Development Report 2001. Social Science press, Delhi.
3. Lahiri, Ashok K., Chattopadhyay. S., Bhasin. A 2001 Sikkim The People's Vision. Indus Publishing Company, New Delhi.
4. Lahiri, Ashok K., Chattopadhyay. S., Bhasin. A 2001 Sikkim The People's Vision. Indus Publishing Company, New Delhi.
5. Lahiri, Ashok K., Chattopadhyay. S., Bhasin. A 2001 Sikkim The People's Vision. Indus Publishing Company, New Delhi.
6. Lahiri, Ashok K., Chattopadhyay. S., Bhasin. A 2001 Sikkim The People's Vision. Indus Publishing Company, New Delhi.
7. Korten, David C. 1987 Third Generation NGO Strategies: A Key to People-Centered Development. *In*: Drabek, Anne Gordon (eds.) Development Alternatives: The Challenge for NGOs, World Development (Vol. 15) Pergamon Press.
8. SDC 1996 Country Programme for India 1996 – 2003. SDC New Delhi.
9. SDC 2000 Human and Institutional Development, Conceptual & Operational Framework SDC New Delhi.
10. SDC 2000 Human and Institutional Development, Conceptual & Operational Framework SDC New Delhi.
11. Cuvelier, Alain. 2006 Human and Institutional Development (HID): A process for Capacity Development :The experience of Intercooperation in South Asia, Working Paper ,Draft 4.
12. Boss, Matthias., Rao, Kameshwar., Chinnakonda, Dilip., Gurung, Nawraj. 2005 Addressing Sustainable Livelihoods in Rural Sikkim. ISPS Programme Series, Inter-cooperation India, Hyderabad.
13. Jackson, Grahame VH., 2005 Experiences in Collaboration – Ginger Pests and Diseases. ISPS Programme Series, Inter-cooperation India, Hyderabad.
14. Jackson, Grahame VH., 2005 Experiences in Collaboration – Ginger Pests and Diseases. ISPS Programme Series, Inter-cooperation India, Hyderabad.
15. Lama, Mahendra P. 2001 Sikkim Human Development Report 2001. Social Science Press, Delhi.
16. Government of Sikkim 2004. Quinquennial survey of livestock 2003-2004. Government of Sikkim, Gangtok.
17. Department of Law, Government Of Sikkim 2003. Notification number 6/LD/203 dated: 04.07.2003.
18. SDC 2003 SDC India Country Programme 2003 – 2010. SDC New Delhi.
19. Government of Sikkim 2005. Handbook for Decentralized Planning. Government of Sikkim Gangtok.
20. Middle Level Officers' Programme, 2004 Group 3 Phase III Report. Mimeographed.
21. Boss, Matthias., Rao, Kameshwar., Chinnakonda, Dilip., Gurung, Nawraj. 2005 Addressing Sustainable Livelihoods in Rural Sikkim. ISPS Programme Series, Inter-cooperation India, Hyderabad.
22. Boss, Matthias., Rao, Kameshwar., Chinnakonda, Dilip., Gurung, Nawraj. 2005 Addressing Sustainable Livelihoods in Rural Sikkim. ISPS Programme Series, Inter-cooperation India, Hyderabad.