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**LEARNING FOR RESULTS,
ISSUES, TRENDS AND
LESSONS LEARNED IN
BASIC HUMAN NEEDS
Literature Review**

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Performance Review Division

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Canadian International
Development Agency

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développement international

Canada

**LEARNING FOR RESULTS:
ISSUES, TRENDS AND LESSONS LEARNED
IN BASIC HUMAN NEEDS
LITERATURE REVIEW**

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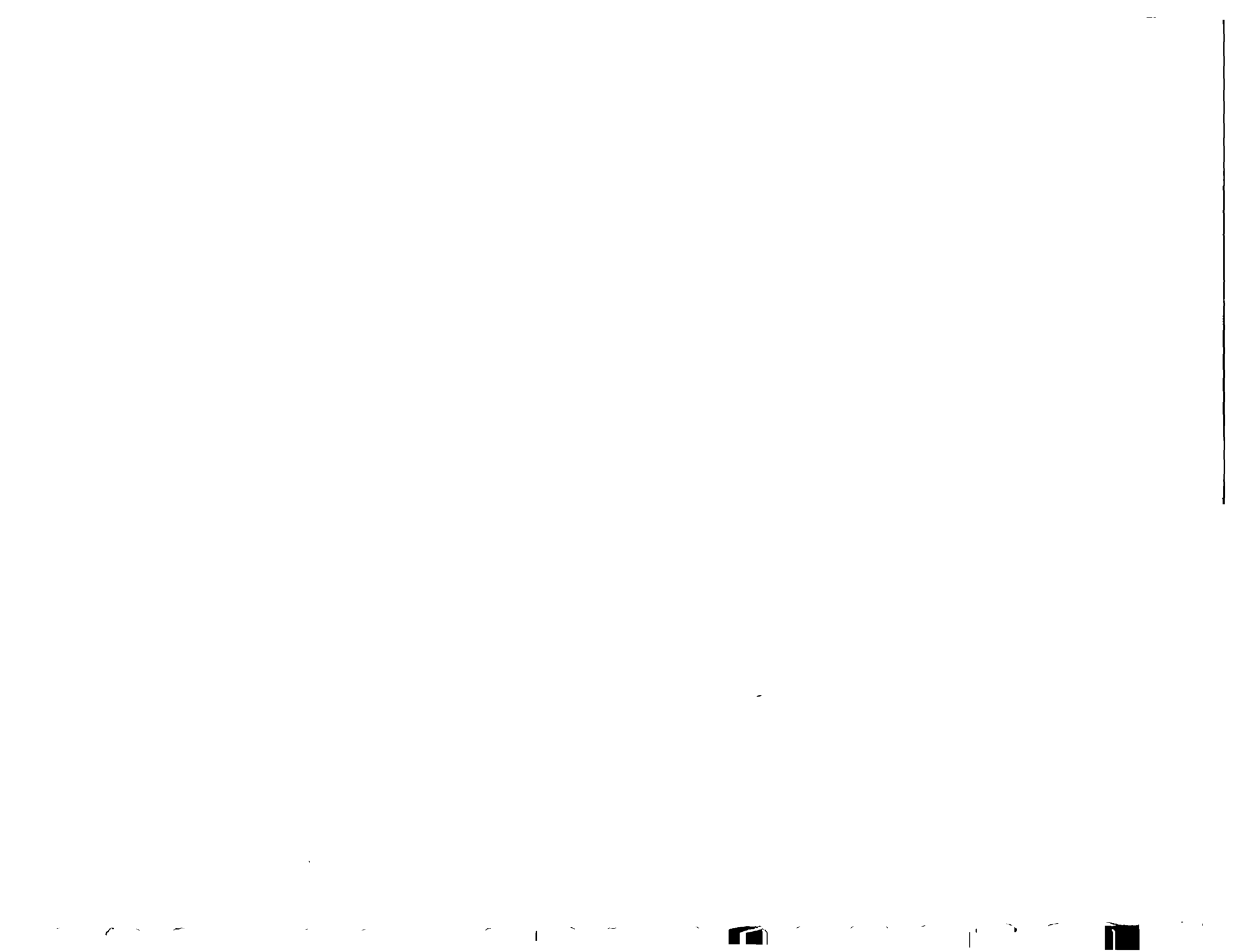
**For the Performance Review Division,
Canadian International Development Agency, Hull**

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Executive Summary

Policy Commitment

In its 1995 statement, Canada in the World, the Government of Canada designated basic human needs as one of six program priorities for its new overseas development assistance (ODA) policy. Defining basic human needs as including primary health care, basic education, family planning, nutrition, water and sanitation, and shelter, as well as emergency humanitarian assistance, the Government declared that: "Canada will commit 25 percent of its ODA to basic human needs as a means of enhancing its focus on the security of the individual."

The Persistence of Poverty

Amid stunning technology and dazzling economic growth, poverty persists in the world today on an alarming scale. As the Human Development Report 1995 states: "In developing countries, one person in three lives in poverty. Even basic social services — primary health care, basic education, safe drinking water and adequate nutrition — are not available to more than one billion people."

It is estimated by the United Nations Development Programme that 1.3 billion people in the developing world currently live on less than one dollar a day. They are especially vulnerable to disease, starvation, the drug and sex trades, and regional and ethnic "poverty wars," all of which have consequences for, and often origins in, the industrialized nations.

The Need for Performance Review

In this context, it is essential that Canada's performance in its ODA program with respect to basic human needs be reviewed in detail. Such a review is necessary in order that CIDA and its development partners in Canada and overseas can plan and deliver programs in basic human needs which achieve optimum results — and value for money for both Canadian taxpayers and program beneficiaries in developing countries. CIDA's Performance Review Division has been directed to carry out a thematic review of the Agency's work in basic human needs.

The present study is both an early output, and also a contribution to the design, of the larger thematic review. The purpose of the present study was to identify recent issues, trends and lessons learned in basic human needs programming in the international development community at large and in CIDA's own experience. A sample of 120 documents drawn from the international development literature and from CIDA project, program and policy reports provided the database for the analysis presented here. Issues, trends and lessons learned were identified with reference to the Performance Review Division's Bilateral Performance Measurement Model, which is now referred to as the Bilateral Performance Review System.

Learning for Results: Challenge and Opportunity

Against a backdrop of volatile and rapid global change, and scarce public resources, CIDA's overall challenge is to plan and implement programs in basic human needs which are based on learning for results. Programs and projects in this area must be knowledge-driven and adaptive. They must become learning enterprises shaped through experimentation, piloting and demonstration. At the same time, however, these programs and projects are obliged by the sheer scale of poverty in the world to maximize the spread of their benefits. Once tested and refined, these interventions must be replicated, multiplied and diffused, and their operations rendered, to the greatest extent possible, self-sustaining.

Neither the world's poor nor Northern taxpayers can afford only elegant policy documents, and innovative, small-scale pilot projects, on basic human needs. Large-scale results must be achieved, and all learning must be put at the service of these results. This is the nature of the challenge, and the opportunity, facing CIDA.

Lessons for Basic Human Needs Programming

The present study has identified some of the key lessons learned over the past five years in basic human needs interventions, drawn from donor-agency experiences, a survey of the international literature, and a survey of CIDA evaluations of BHN projects. Some lessons are new; others are well-known. And many of the lessons learned are similar for the different data sources surveyed here. These lessons relate to three areas: strategy, structure and methods. Lessons on strategy involve broad and significant choices in types of development intervention, and overarching issues in aid programming. Lessons on structure are concerned with organizational systems, procedures and accountabilities for ODA administration and delivery. Finally, lessons on methods refer more specifically to techniques employed to maximize the effectiveness and impacts of program and project implementation. These lessons are as follows:

Lessons on Strategy

- Basic human needs interventions must work at the policy (macro), institutional (meso) and project (micro) levels, with each level reinforcing and optimizing the impacts at the other levels.
- The gender dimension is central to the success of basic human needs programming, and all such interventions must be guided by comprehensive gender strategies.
- Sustainability of basic human needs demands significant contributions to recurrent and capital costs by local consumers and governance structures.
- Basic human needs cannot be met through social development alone; economic development interventions must be implemented in parallel with social interventions, though not necessarily by the same organizations.
- Donor agencies and developing countries should link and coordinate basic human needs interventions with interventions in good governance and democratic development.
- The global scale of deprivation is so great that basic human needs interventions must move rapidly and self-consciously from experimentation and piloting to replication and diffusion.
- Contribution, not attribution, is what matters in generating impacts in basic human needs. Development agencies should focus on collectively raising standards of service and access and tracking related impacts, rather than seeking recognition or "waving the flag" for their individual efforts.

Lessons on Structure

- Donor agencies should consider creating special implementation units to design, implement and monitor basic human needs projects. Special expertise, operating and personnel procedures and incentives should be incorporated into these units.
- Aid agency personnel and their contractors should be made accountable and rewarded for generating results: immediate outputs, short-term impacts (outcomes) and long-term impacts (effects).
- There are multiple stakeholders along the "aid chain" to whom development professionals are accountable in basic human needs programming, including, in the North, legislators and taxpayers and, in the South, local governance structures and poor households. Northern government treasuries should not be the only focus of accountability.
- Greater attention should be given to ways and means of creating authentic, effective partnerships between Northern and Southern agencies engaged in basic human needs work.
- Measurement, monitoring and performance review in basic human needs must be based on, generally, a learning-oriented organizational culture; detailed, critical research of local conditions; comparative standards of service, access and performance; and continuity over time, both prior to interventions via baseline studies, and after interventions through post-project impact assessments.

Lessons on Methods

- Aid-agency personnel must be trained in and rewarded for facilitating authentic local participation in basic human needs interventions. ODA organizations should rededicate themselves to participation as a central feature of all basic human needs work.
- Local governance structures should make decisions, administer finances, set and collect fees, and ensure maintenance and standards of service with respect to the provision of basic human needs. The building of local capacity for this purpose is fundamental to long-term sustainability of service and access.
- Non-governmental organizations have demonstrated around the world an impressive capacity to promote basic human needs through small-scale projects. They must build their capacity to replicate and diffuse their projects to larger numbers of beneficiaries, usually in alliance with governments and multilaterals.
- New roles need to be found for the private sector in providing and sustaining basic human needs.
- New forms of results-based management techniques should be tested, refined and disseminated inside and outside of official development assistance agencies with respect to programs and projects directed at basic human needs.

Conclusions

The findings of this review suggest that there is much that CIDA can and should do now to prepare to design and deliver programming in basic human needs which generates maximum results. At the same time, there are strong arguments for examining in more detail, through a major thematic review, some of the critical issues, trends and lessons identified in the present study. Such a major review could contribute to a more thoroughgoing organizational change to build CIDA's capacity to successfully meet its 25 percent commitment to basic human needs.

A results-oriented approach to basic human needs will be fundamental to this success. It is crucial now that the learning from the past be mobilized in the service of the results of the future. Learning for results is the way forward.

Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BHN	Basic Human Needs
CCDP	Cambodia Canada Development Program
CDPF	Country Development Policy Framework
CEA	Canadian Executing Agency
CFLI	Canada Fund for Local Initiatives
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CPB	Canadian Partnership Branch
CPF	Country Program Framework
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (OECD)
DFAIT	Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade
GAD	Gender and Development
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
HDI	Human Development Index
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (The World Bank)
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IPPF	International Planned Parenthood Federation
ISAID	United States Agency for International Development
LFA	Logical Framework Analysis
NGO	Non-Government Organization
ODA	Overseas Development Administration (United Kingdom)
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PA	Poverty Assessment
PER	Public Expenditure Review
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PTL	Project Team Leader
PSB	Professional Services Branch
R/CDPF	Regional/Country Development Policy Framework
RBM	Results-Based Management
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Economic, Social and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute on Social Development
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organization



Sommaire

Engagement de principe

Dans l'énoncé de la politique étrangère publié en 1995, Le Canada dans le monde, le gouvernement fait de la satisfaction des besoins fondamentaux un des six volets prioritaires de sa nouvelle politique d'aide publique au développement (APD). Définissant ces besoins comme étant les soins de santé primaires, l'éducation de base, la planification familiale, la nutrition, l'eau et l'assainissement et le logement, il déclare que le Canada consacrera 25 % de son APD aux besoins fondamentaux afin de mettre davantage l'accent sur la sécurité humaine.

Persistance de la pauvreté

Malgré les merveilles de la technologie et l'impressionnante croissance économique, l'ampleur de la pauvreté est alarmante. Dans le Rapport sur le développement humain 1995, on signale que, dans les pays en développement, un personne sur trois vit dans la pauvreté. Plus d'un milliard d'êtres humains n'ont même pas accès aux services sociaux de base, à savoir les soins de santé primaires, l'éducation de base, l'eau potable et une nutrition adéquate.

Le Programme des Nations Unies pour le développement estime que 1,3 milliard de personnes dans les pays en développement vivent actuellement avec moins d'un dollar par jour. Ces gens sont particulièrement vulnérables aux maladies, à la famine, au trafic de stupéfiants et à la prostitution, ainsi aux « guerres de pauvreté » régionales et ethniques. Autant de problèmes qui ont des conséquences pour les nations industrialisées, problèmes dont celles-ci sont souvent la source.

Nécessité d'un examen du rendement

Dans ce contexte, il est essentiel d'examiner attentivement le rendement du programme d'APD au chapitre de la satisfaction des besoins fondamentaux pour que l'ACDI et ses partenaires canadiens et étrangers puissent planifier et mettre en oeuvre des programmes atteignant des effets optimum et présentant un bon rapport qualité-prix tant pour les contribuables canadiens que pour les bénéficiaires des pays en développement. La Direction de l'examen du rendement a été chargée de réaliser un examen thématique des activités de l'Agence dans le secteur des besoins fondamentaux.

La présente étude constitue la première étape de cet examen et contribue à en définir les idées directrices. L'objectif visait à déterminer les récentes questions et tendances ainsi qu'à dégager les leçons tirées par la communauté des donateurs en général et l'ACDI en particulier, et ce en appliquant le modèle de mesure du rendement des programmes bilatéraux, maintenant appelé « système d'examen du rendement des programmes bilatéraux ». Cent vingt documents, choisis parmi la littérature sur le développement international et les rapports de projet, de programme et d'orientation de l'ACDI ont servi à réaliser cette étude.

Apprentissage axé sur les résultats: défis et possibilités

Avec comme toile de fond un monde en constante évolution et des fonds publics qui s'amenuisent, le grand défi consistera à planifier et à mettre en oeuvre des programmes s'articulant autour de l'apprentissage axé sur les résultats. Ces programmes et projets doivent tirer parti des connaissances acquises et être souples. Ils doivent devenir des occasions d'apprentissage grâce à l'expérimentation, aux projets pilotes et aux projets témoins. Toutefois, les programmes et projets doivent, en raison de l'ampleur de la pauvreté, profiter au plus grand nombre. Une fois mis au point, ils doivent être repris, multipliés, diffusés et devenir, dans la mesure du possible, autonomes.

Ni les pauvres ni les contribuables du Nord ne peuvent se contenter d'élégants documents stratégiques et de petits projets novateurs. Il faut élargir la portée des résultats et exploiter à cette fin l'ensemble des connaissances. C'est là le défi que doit relever l'ACDI et une occasion à saisir.

Leçons relatives à la programmation en matière de besoins fondamentaux

Cette étude a permis de dégager certaines leçons clés à partir de l'expérience d'autres donateurs et de l'ACDI (évaluations de projet) au cours des cinq dernières années et d'un examen de la littérature internationale pertinente. Certaines leçons sont inédites, d'autres bien connues. Et, dans de nombreux cas, les leçons sont similaires, malgré que les sources d'information soient différentes. Les leçons portent sur trois volets : la stratégie, la structure et les méthodes. Celles ayant trait à la stratégie concernent les choix généraux et significatifs au regard du type d'intervention et les thèmes fondamentaux des programmes d'aide. Les leçons relatives à la structure portent sur les systèmes organisationnels, les procédures et les responsabilités en ce qui touche la gestion de l'APD et l'exécution des programmes. Enfin, les leçons concernant les méthodes visent plus particulièrement les techniques utilisées pour maximiser l'efficacité des programmes et projets et leurs retombées. Voici ces leçons :

Leçons relatives à la stratégie

- Les interventions doivent avoir des retombées aux niveaux macro (de la politique), meso (des institutions) et micro (du projet), celles-ci devant se renforcer mutuellement et maximiser les retombées aux autres niveaux.
- Le succès de la programmation dépend de la prise en compte de la problématique homme-femme, et toutes les interventions doivent reposer sur des stratégies globales dans ce domaine.
- Pour assurer de façon viable la satisfaction des besoins fondamentaux, les autorités et les consommateurs locaux devront contribuer de manière significative au paiement des coûts périodiques et des coûts en capital.
- Les projets de développement social ne peuvent à eux seuls satisfaire les besoins fondamentaux; des projets de développement économique doivent être mis en oeuvre parallèlement. Cependant, ces deux types de projets peuvent être réalisés par des organisations différentes.
- Les donateurs et les pays en développement doivent coordonner leurs interventions en matière de besoins fondamentaux à celles relatives au bon gouvernement et au développement démocratique.
- La pauvreté mondiale est telle que le passage de l'expérimentation et du projet pilote à la reprise et à la diffusion des projets doit se faire rapidement et délibérément.
- Il importe davantage de contribuer à la satisfaction des besoins fondamentaux que de s'en attribuer le mérite. Les agences de développement doivent se concentrer collectivement sur le relèvement des normes de services, l'accès et la détermination des retombées connexes, plutôt que de chercher à faire reconnaître leurs mérites ou de se glorifier de leurs efforts individuels.

Leçons concernant la structure

- Les donateurs doivent envisager la création d'unités de mise en oeuvre spéciales chargées de concevoir, de réaliser et d'assurer le suivi des projets liés aux besoins fondamentaux. Ces unités doivent pouvoir compter sur des ressources spécialisées, des méthodes d'exploitation et des procédures de gestion du personnel, ainsi que sur des mesures incitatives.
- Le personnel des organismes d'aide et leurs entrepreneurs doivent être tenus de rendre compte des résultats (extrants à court terme; effet; impact) et en être récompensés le cas échéant.
- Les spécialistes du développement doivent rendre compte des activités liées aux besoins fondamentaux à de nombreux intervenants dans la « chaîne de l'aide », y compris, au Nord, les législateurs et les contribuables et, au Sud, les autorités locales et les ménages pauvres. L'obligation de rendre compte ne doit pas s'appliquer qu'aux seuls Trésors des pays du Nord.
- Une plus grande attention doit être accordée aux moyens d'établir de véritables partenariats efficaces entre les organismes du Nord et du Sud oeuvrant à la satisfaction des besoins fondamentaux.
- La mesure, le suivi et l'examen du rendement doivent reposer, de manière générale, sur une culture organisationnelle axée sur l'apprentissage : études critiques détaillées sur les conditions locales; normes de service, accès et rendement comparatifs; continuité, avant l'intervention au moyen d'études de base et après, grâce à des évaluations des répercussions finales.

Leçons concernant les méthodes

- Le personnel des agences d'aide doit recevoir une formation pour faciliter la participation des collectivités locales aux projets et en être récompensé le cas échéant. Les organisations d'APD doivent recentrer les projets sur la participation.
- Les autorités locales doivent prendre les décisions, administrer les finances, établir et percevoir les frais, se charger de l'entretien et voir à l'application des normes de service. La création de capacités locales est essentielle à la viabilité à long terme des services et de l'accès à ces derniers.
- Les organisations non gouvernementales ont démontré partout dans le monde leur grande capacité à promouvoir la satisfaction des besoins fondamentaux au moyen de petits projets. Elles doivent renforcer leur capacité à renouveler leurs projets et à en faire profiter un plus grand nombre, généralement en s'alliant aux gouvernements et à des organisations multilatérales.
- De nouveaux rôles doivent être définis pour le secteur privé.
- De nouvelles techniques de gestion par résultats doivent être mises à l'essai, peaufinées et diffusées tant à l'intérieur qu'à l'extérieur des agences d'APD.

Conclusions

Il ressort de cette étude que l'ACDI peut, et doit, agir maintenant pour se préparer à concevoir et à mettre en œuvre des programmes aux effets optimum. En outre, de solides arguments plaident en faveur d'une analyse plus détaillée, au moyen d'un examen thématique d'envergure, de certaines questions, tendances et leçons névralgiques dégagés dans la présente étude. Un tel examen thématique pourrait permettre à l'ACDI d'opérer un changement organisationnel plus profond afin de renforcer sa capacité à respecter son objectif, soit consacrer 25 % de l'APD à la satisfaction des besoins fondamentaux.

Une approche axée sur les résultats jouera un rôle fondamental dans le succès des projets liés aux besoins fondamentaux. Il est maintenant crucial que les leçons tirées de l'expérience soient appliquées. L'apprentissage axée sur les résultats est la voie de l'avenir.



1. Introduction

1.1 *Canada's Commitment to Basic Human Needs*

In its 1995 statement, Canada in the World, the Government of Canada designated basic human needs as one of six program priorities for its new overseas development assistance (ODA) policy. Defining basic human needs as including primary health care, basic education, family planning, nutrition, water and sanitation, and shelter, as well as emergency humanitarian assistance, the Government declared that: "Canada will commit 25 percent of its ODA to basic human needs as a means of enhancing its focus on the security of the individual."¹

The Government stated that this commitment would be implemented within the context of a broader effort to: clarify the mandate of the overall ODA program; strengthen the Government's relationships with Canadian, multilateral and developing country partners in ODA delivery; improve the effectiveness of aid-delivery through greater program coherence and focus, and emphasis on projects that are knowledge-driven and self-sustaining; and clearly demonstrate and report on the results of the ODA program to Canadians. To this end, the Government's primary ODA instrument, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), is actively moving from an activity-based management approach to a results-based management approach.

1.2 *Declining ODA Resources*

The new ODA policy was introduced at a time when the Government also made significant reductions in the Canadian aid budget. Competition for scarce ODA funds is intense, and spending on basic human needs must compete with spending on other priority-program areas in ODA, as well as with spending on trade and export promotion and on domestic programs.

Aid budgets are shrinking everywhere. Among OECD countries, ODA fell in absolute terms after 1992, with bilateral aid most severely affected. Total ODA as a percentage of GNP among DAC member countries fell to a low of .29 in 1994, about half of its level of .56 about fifteen years earlier. Moreover, the proportion of bilateral ODA for OECD nations spent in the least-developed countries fell to 20 percent in 1994, a significant drop from 24 percent in 1981.²

In the case of Canada, patterns have been similar. ODA as a percentage of Canada's GNP fell from .48 in 1984 to .43 in 1994, when total aid fell to Cdn. \$3 billion (having peaked in 1991 at Cdn. \$3.5 billion). And Canadian ODA in 1997-1998 will be about 20 percent lower than the 1993-1994 level of spending. Furthermore, between 1980-1981 and 1993-1994, Canadian ODA spent in the least developed countries fell from 37 percent to about 29 percent.³

Currently, Canada spends 9.5 percent of its ODA budget on what OECD terms "social infrastructure," which includes education, health, public administration, water supply and sanitation, and other social infrastructure. Canada spends another five percent on food aid and four percent on non-food emergency aid. The total of these expenditure categories — which include more elements than CIDA's definition of basic human needs — is, according to OECD data, about 19 percent, well below Canada's target of 25 percent for basic human needs programming. In contrast, expenditures for all OECD countries on these sectors average about 34 percent.⁴

¹ Government of Canada, Canada in the World, Hull, 1995, p. 42.

² Development Cooperation Directorate, "Strains and Choices in the Global Aid Effort, Bilateral and Multilateral," OECD, Paris, April, 1996.

³ Development Assistance Committee, Development Co-operation-1995 Report, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Paris, 1996a.

⁴ DAC, Ibid, 1996a.

1.3 Sustained Taxpayer Support for Basic Human Needs

Nonetheless, a majority of Canadians and other OECD citizens remain strong in their support for aid targeted to basic human needs and poverty reduction. Public support for humanitarian assistance is even higher⁵. Notwithstanding the economic insecurity caused by unemployment and economic restructuring in rich countries, taxpayers continue to believe that a world with more than one billion people in absolute poverty is morally unacceptable.

1.4 The Need for Performance Review

In this context, it is essential that Canada's performance in its ODA program with respect to basic human needs be reviewed in detail. Such a review is necessary in order that CIDA and its development partners in Canada and overseas can plan and deliver programs in basic human needs which achieve optimum results — and value for money for both Canadian taxpayers and program beneficiaries in developing countries. CIDA's Performance Review Division has been directed to carry out a thematic review of the Agency's work in basic human needs.

The present study is both an early output, and also a contribution to the design, of the larger thematic review. The purpose of the present study was to identify recent issues, trends and lessons learned in basic human needs programming in the international development community at large and in CIDA's own experience. A sample of 120 documents provided the database for the present study. Findings were drawn from donor-agency experiences, a survey of the international literature, and a survey of CIDA evaluations of projects in the basic human needs area. Issues, trends and lessons learned were identified with reference to the Performance Review Division's Bilateral Performance Measurement, now referred to as the Bilateral Performance Review System.

1.5 Learning for Results: Challenge and Opportunity

The present study has identified some of the critical issues and trends in basic human needs around the world today, and key lessons learned in development interventions in this area. Understanding these lessons, issues and trends can help CIDA and other development agencies chart a new course for the future in this very important area of endeavour. Against a backdrop of volatile and rapid global change, and scarce public resources, CIDA's overall challenge is to plan and implement programs in basic human needs which are based on learning for results.

Programs and projects in this area must be knowledge-driven and adaptive. They must become learning enterprises shaped through experimentation, piloting and demonstration. At the same time, however, these programs and projects are obliged by the sheer scale of poverty in the world to maximize the spread of their benefits. Once tested and refined, these interventions must be replicated, multiplied and diffused, and their operations rendered, to the greatest extent possible, self-sustaining.⁶

Neither the world's poor nor Northern taxpayers can afford only elegant policy documents, and innovative, small-scale pilot projects, on basic human needs. Large-scale results must be achieved, and all learning must be put at the service of these results. This is the nature of the challenge, and the opportunity, facing CIDA.

⁵ Actionaid, *The Reality of Aid 1995*, Earthscan, London, 1995.

⁶ On an adaptive, knowledge-driven approach to development programming, see Dennis A. Rondinelli, *Development Projects as Policy Experiments*, Routledge, New York, 1993 (second edition)





2. The Persistence of Poverty

2.1 "Unprecedented Human Progress and Unspeakable Human Misery"⁷

Amid stunning technology and dazzling economic growth, poverty persists in the world today on an alarming scale. As the Human Development Report 1995 states. "In developing countries, one person in three lives in poverty. Even basic social services — primary health care, basic education, safe drinking water and adequate nutrition — are not available to more than one billion people."⁸

It is estimated by the United Nations Development Programme that 1.3 billion people in the developing world currently live on less than one dollar a day. They are especially vulnerable to disease, starvation, the drug and sex trades, and regional and ethnic "poverty wars," all of which have consequences for, and often origins in, the industrialized nations.

2.2 *The Promise of Progress*

Some progress has been made in human development over the past 30 years, and it should be celebrated. In the developing world, life expectancy has been increased by a third during this period, and infant mortality has been more than halved. In addition, the population with access to safe water nearly doubled. And, over the past two decades, basic immunization has saved the lives of three million children every year.

Reports UNDP: "Even though the South has a per capita GNP that is a mere 6 percent of the North's, it now has a life expectancy that is 85 percent, and nutritional levels and adult literacy that are 81 percent, of those in the North."⁹ These and other gains have been achieved, in part, through overseas development assistance.

2.3 *An Agenda of Need*

However, as the planet approaches the 21st century, the scale of human deprivation in developing countries is both breathtaking and alarming:

- about 17 million people die annually from infectious and parasitic diseases;
- 130 million primary-level and 275 million secondary-level children are not in school;
- 800 million people do not get enough food, and 500 million are chronically malnourished;
- more than one third of all children are malnourished and underweight.¹⁰

These numbers outline an agenda of need which cannot be ignored.

Furthermore, there is a gender dimension to poverty and deprivation. Quoting again from the Human Development Report 1995: "Women still constitute 70 percent of the world's poor and two-thirds of the world's illiterates. They occupy only 14 percent of managerial and administrative jobs, 10 percent of parliamentary seats and six percent of cabinet positions. In many legal systems, they are still unequal. They often work longer hours than men, but much of their work remains unvalued, unrecognized and unappreciated. And the threat of violence stalks their lives from cradle to grave."¹¹

⁷ United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Report 1995, Oxford University Press, New York, 1995

⁸ UNDP, *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁹ UNDP, *Ibid.*, p. 15.

¹⁰ UNDP, *Ibid.*, p. 16

¹¹ UNDP, *Ibid.*, p. iii.

2.4 An Obligation to Act

ODA matters. Development cooperation, reports the Commission on Global Governance, "is likely to be for many one of the ways to escape from a low-income, low-savings, low-investment trap. There is no substitute for a politically realistic strategy to mobilize aid flows and to demonstrate value for money, including cofinancing between official aid donors, the private sector, and NGOs with a view to widening the support base."¹²

As the Human Development Report 1995 puts it: "The key human development challenges for the next century will require global compacts. These challenges include reducing population growth, providing basic social services to all deprived people, accelerating job-led growth, creating an external environment conducive to growth, particularly by dismantling trade and investment barriers, and making global compacts for alleviating poverty and improving the physical environment."¹³

In its recent statement, "Shaping the 21st Century: The Contribution of Development Cooperation", OECD's Development Assistance Committee proposes a global partnership effort among countries and peoples to achieve the following goals:

- a reduction by one-half in the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by 2015;
- universal primary education in all countries by 2015;
- the elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005;
- a reduction by two-thirds in under-five infant mortality and a reduction by three-fourths in maternal mortality, by 2015;
- full access by those who require reproductive health services by 2015.

These are acknowledged to be ambitious goals. However, the OECD has argued that, through authentic international partnerships and extensive use of locally-owned development strategies, they are also achievable.¹⁴ This program of action is drawing strong support from donors in North America, Europe and Japan.

Who among us would deny the obligation to act to reduce deprivation and poverty? Clearly, efforts to do so must be coordinated on a global scale. But what actions should be taken, under what conditions, and with what expected results? These questions are of profound concern to CIDA and other development agencies as the new millennium approaches.

¹² Commission on Global Governance, Our Global Neighbourhood, Oxford University Press, New York, 1995, p 343

¹³ UNDP, Ibid., p 15

¹⁴ Development Assistance Committee, "Shaping the 21st Century: The Contribution of Development Co-operation," Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development, Paris, 1996b





3. Lessons for Basic Human Needs Programming

3.1 Background

Following World War II, some forty years ago, bilateral, multilateral and national development agencies began their efforts to reduce poverty and promote growth in the developing world. The 1950s and 1960s witnessed ambitious initiatives to increase national production through industrial growth, with little attention being paid to income distribution within countries. These programs focused on large-scale infrastructure projects in energy, transportation and agriculture. The 1970s were, in contrast, marked by an effort on the part of the international community to promote growth with equity, through targeted interventions focused on the poor, such as integrated rural development, to meet basic human needs.¹⁵ In the 1980s, donor agencies, led by the World Bank and the IMF, turned to structural adjustment programs (SAPs) as their dominant mode of assistance, obliging developing-country states to reduce their deficits, privatize state enterprises, deregulate industry, promote exports and liberalize their trade arrangements.¹⁶

The first half of the 1990s has, for its part, been a period of reflection, consolidation and retooling by development agencies around the world. Falling ODA budgets have prompted a greater emphasis on accountability and value-for-money in aid spending. While development professionals have always been concerned about achieving results, intervention decisions in past decades were often driven by disbursement objectives and a concern with expanding activities, as opposed to objectives driven by a concern for achieving results.

Another characteristic of the 1990s has been an effort by some development agencies to reflect on how they can most usefully blend policy-level interventions with project-level interventions. The experience with SAPs showed that policy-level conditionalities could, in fact, help boost growth in some sectors and create benefits for the wealthy and middle classes in some countries. However, SAPs were also shown to generate negative effects on the livelihoods of low-income urban workers, subsistence farmers, and poor women and children. Micro-level, targeted interventions were shown to be necessary to enhance the living standards of such groups.

A third characteristic of the 1990s has been the new, or renewed, emphasis placed by some aid agencies on organizational learning. Rather than continuing to suffer from rigid, slow and linear programming systems, some development agencies have introduced planning and implementation systems which are faster, more flexible, and, much more knowledge-driven than in the past. The past five years in particular thus offer instructive lessons for the future. Drawing on the international development literature and CIDA's own extensive experience during this period, the present study has identified some key lessons learned in basic human needs programming.

These lessons relate to three areas: strategy, structure and methods. Lessons on strategy involve broad and significant choices in types of development intervention, and overarching issues in aid programming. Lessons on structure are concerned with organizational systems, procedures and accountabilities for ODA administration and delivery. Finally, lessons on methods refer more specifically to techniques employed to maximize the effectiveness and impacts of program and project implementation.

¹⁵ The first time this term appeared in the international literature was nearly 25 years ago, and was made prominent in the 1970s by many organizations including UNICEF, the International Labour Organisation and the United Nations Development Programme, as well as Scandinavian donor agencies.

¹⁶ This periodization is elaborated by Dennis A. Rondinelli in Development Projects as Policy Experiments, 1993.

3.2 Lessons on Strategy

Basic human needs interventions must work at the policy (macro), institutional (meso) and project (micro) levels, with each level reinforcing and optimizing the impacts at the other levels.

Experience at the macro-level in recent years has shown the great power of policy and legislative change in influencing national development achievement. Yet work at this level which is unconnected to real communities and households runs the risk of becoming either geared only to elites or being rendered irrelevant altogether. And, as the mediating level between the other two, the meso-level—which involves institutional strengthening and capacity-building—is crucial for effective policy implementation and diffusion of innovations both “upwards” and “downwards.” Development agencies which learn to blend, balance and coordinate activities at all three levels will generate the widest and most sustainable results for basic human needs.

The gender dimension is central to the success of basic human needs programming, and all such interventions must be guided by comprehensive gender strategies.

The actual work of meeting basic human needs in the household is performed, overwhelmingly, by women. Efforts to promote family health, family planning, nutrition, hygiene, and access to clean water are the responsibilities of women. Gender roles and traditions determine decision-making with regard to user fees and other household support for basic education and other services. No intervention in the basic needs area, therefore, can be implemented without a comprehensive gender strategy. And women beneficiaries, in particular, must be centrally involved in the planning, monitoring, and evaluation of BHN projects.

Sustainability of basic human needs demands significant contributions to recurrent and capital costs by local consumers and governance structures.

Northern donors are coping with declining aid budgets. Southern tax systems, in most jurisdictions, remain underdeveloped. If it was true before, it is truer now: after some initial external subsidies, the poor must find the resources to sustain their own basic human services. Furthermore, they usually must contribute to the capital and recurrent costs of several systems and services at the same time (ie. schools, health clinics, water supplies, sanitation, and so on). Clearly, their ability to pay—as well as their willingness to pay—must rise along with their greater access to services. Their incomes cannot stagnate; they must rise, as well.

Basic human needs cannot be met through social development alone; economic development interventions must be implemented in parallel with social interventions, though not necessarily by the same organization.

In order for the incomes of the poor to rise, so that these consumers will be able to sustain their new basic human services, economic development interventions are necessary. Projects which have concentrated solely on social development interventions have not been able to solve the ongoing financing problem of improved access to and standards of services. In rural areas, on-farm and off-farm income-generating projects are both essential to boost household incomes. In urban areas, microenterprise, small business and labour in the formal economy are ways in which household revenue can be increased. The gender dimension of economic development is important in both cases and ensuring that women in particular retain some control over the disposition of new income to the household has been found to be crucial to project success. In general, it may be necessary to form different project coalitions and recruit different implementing agencies for social and economic development interventions, both require special, and quite different, expertise.

Donor agencies and developing countries should link and coordinate basic human needs interventions with interventions in good governance and democratic development.

At the macro-level, there can be no equity without the authentic political participation of the poor. This requires basic freedoms and the rule of law, social peace and stability, and a transparent, legitimate state. At the meso-level, the political parties and social movements representing the poor must have sufficient leverage and capacity to negotiate sustained benefits for their constituents from elites. At the micro-level, poverty groups must learn how to govern their communities and self-manage basic services, and must acquire sufficient authority and autonomy to do so.

The global scale of deprivation is so great that basic human needs interventions must move rapidly and self-consciously from experimentation and piloting to replication and diffusion.

The history of development assistance can, to some extent, be accurately called a history of pilots and experiments. For political, organizational, management and personnel reasons, ODA projects have too seldom been transformed from demonstration status to replication and diffusion on a much larger scale, either within countries or within sectors. When projects have successfully traversed this divide, their impacts have been impressive. Given the scope of the problem globally, and the limited ODA funds available in the late 1990s, it is simply unaffordable for aid agencies and their partners not to scale-up in as rapid and knowledge-driven way as possible whenever pilots and experiments are successful.

Contribution, not attribution, is what matters in generating impacts in basic human needs. Development agencies should focus on collectively raising standards of service and access and tracking related impacts, rather than seeking recognition or "waving the flag" for their individual efforts.

The satisfaction of basic human needs should not be held hostage to the costly political "turf wars" which plague donor communities in many countries, and which, indeed, undermine the effectiveness of development organizations internally, as well. The challenge is for development professionals to work together, within and across agencies, to provide basic human services to as many citizens as possible. Rewards and incentives for aid personnel should be directed at contribution, not attribution. Donor agencies, in particular, should not withhold support for an important intervention because determining attribution is difficult. The impacts themselves are what is important, not the politics of recognition.

3.3 Lessons on Structure

Donor agencies should consider creating special implementation units to design, implement and monitor basic human needs projects. Special expertise, operating and personnel procedures and incentives should be incorporated into these units.

Changing the culture of large, bureaucratized ODA organizations toward a direction based on learning and results is challenging. Basic human needs is an ideal area of work for testing new structures, systems and procedures which express such a new culture. To this end, development agencies should consider setting up specialized units on basic human needs which aggregate and maintain expertise in baseline studies, program design, implementation, and performance review during and after programs. Personnel in these units should be rotated on a less frequent basis, travel to the field more frequently, and be rewarded for facilitating the achievement of impacts in basic human needs.

Aid agency personnel and their contractors should be made accountable and rewarded for generating results: immediate outputs, short-term impacts (outcomes) and long-term impacts (effects).

More generally, aid agencies should take steps to ensure the accountability of staff and contractors for achieving specified outputs, outcomes and effects for programs and projects in the basic human needs area and in other areas of development. Results-based management and contracting approaches must be elaborated and refined. Performance review personnel will become valuable resources in assisting all units and staff to change over to these new approaches.

There are multiple stakeholders along the "aid chain" to whom development professionals are accountable in basic human needs programming, including, in the North, legislators and taxpayers and, in the South, local governance structures and poor households. Northern government treasuries should not be the only focus of accountability.

While there is a natural tendency on the part of ODA managers to emphasize their accountabilities "upwards" to their own executives and, beyond, to their government's treasuries, basic human needs is one area where there are other important stakeholders, as well. Among these are Northern taxpayers, a majority of whom indicate that they support the use of aid for poverty re-education and basic human needs. There are also legislators who represent these taxpayers. At the other end of the "aid chain" there are local governance structures (eg. district assemblies and administrations, village and neighbourhood development committees) and poor households who are definitely interested parties as well. ODA staff must be trained to be accountable to this multiplicity of stakeholders.

Greater attention should be given to ways and means of creating authentic, effective partnerships between Northern and Southern agencies engaged in basic human needs work.

In the case of some Northern donor agencies, "partnership" is more rhetoric than reality. Aid staff often interpret the need for financial accountability as the dominant objective in relating to contractors, Southern governments and non-governmental organizations. However, in the basic needs area in particular, experience shows clearly that successful interventions have benefited from authentic partnerships at key points along the aid chain. Trust, mutual gains and shared decision-making characterize real partnerships. Aid personnel should be rewarded for facilitating such partnerships in the basic human needs area.

Measurement, monitoring and performance review in basic human needs must be based on, generally, a learning-oriented organizational culture; detailed, critical research of local conditions; comparative standards of service, access and performance; and continuity over time, both prior to interventions via baseline studies, and after interventions through post-project impact assessments.

Ministers and chief executives must lead ODA organizations to become both learning-oriented and results-oriented at the same time. Yet the key professional resource group in this transition process is the evaluation, or performance review unit. This unit must be given the mandate and resources to carry out pre-intervention studies (baseline surveys, special studies), to support and verify ongoing monitoring during implementation, and to conduct impact assessments following interventions. In the basic human needs area, comparative data on service costs, local administrative arrangements, service standards, participation methods and other aspects of programming would usefully inform performance reviews. Such knowledge can be produced in alliance with skilled, committed Southern professionals based in developing countries.

3.4 *Lessons on Methods*

Aid-agency personnel must be trained in and rewarded for facilitating authentic local participation in basic human needs interventions. ODA organizations should rededicate themselves to participation as a central feature of all basic human needs work.

Much is known about how development professionals can facilitate genuine, broad-based participation in basic human needs interventions in both rural and urban settings. Northern aid managers need training in how to give up control over project stakeholders and become knowledge-driven facilitators and nurturers of participation, rather than disbursement-driven directors and managers of inputs and outputs. After a decade of experience with support to top-down structural adjustment programs, ODA organizations must rededicate themselves to participation as the key feature of any intervention in basic human needs.

Local governance structures should make decisions, administer finances, set and collect fees, and ensure maintenance and standards of service with respect to the provision of basic human needs. The building of local capacity for this purpose is fundamental to long-term sustainability of service and access.

Building local governance structures to manage and sustain basic human services is a crucial element in basic human needs interventions. Especially critical is capacity-building through training and technical assistance in financial management, user-fee systems and collection, consumer relations, and coordination of maintenance. Such local-level work must be supported by national policy and legislative change in the macro-environment that legitimizes and partially subsidizes the operations of the new structures in their early stages. It may also be useful to build, in parallel, local-level economic development capacity through, for example, a regional development corporation, a cooperative, or a financial institution. In the final analysis, local governance structures are fundamental to sustainability and to democracy.

Non-governmental organizations have demonstrated around the world an impressive capacity to promote basic human needs through small-scale projects. They must build their capacity to replicate and diffuse their projects to larger numbers of beneficiaries, usually in alliance with governments and multilaterals.

Scaling-up requires new skills and resources. Managers rather than entrepreneurs, administrators rather than innovators, are needed for large-scale replication of previously tested approaches. Non-governmental organizations may therefore need to hire from networks other than their own to acquire such a new skill-mix. In addition, quantitative and more formal research capacity is required to monitor the progress of large-scale implementation. Management information systems which can address operational needs on a daily basis are essential. Putting such capacity in place is feasible, but it takes a concerted and focused effort by NGOs to do so.

New roles need to be found for the private sector in providing and sustaining basic human needs.

In some parts of the world, small entrepreneurs have been mobilized to provide maintenance services to new water supply and sanitation systems, or to provide the systems themselves. Many jurisdictions have permitted the flourishing of private schools at various levels in the education system, to compete with the public-school system. Some of these initiatives have ensured both quality and access; others have not. At the same time, the private sector is broader than small entrepreneurs. Large corporations, both national and multinational, should contribute to the meeting of basic human needs, as well, in ways other than through the provision of employment or the generation of dividends on their shares. Corporations should be encouraged to engage in charitable giving programs in Southern countries, which enhance local capacity to meet basic human needs, encourage company staff to contribute to community affairs and improvement, and generally take their corporate social responsibility to the welfare of local citizens seriously.

New forms of results-based management techniques should be tested, refined and disseminated inside and outside of official development assistance agencies with respect to programs and projects directed at basic human needs.

Many donor agencies and their constituencies in the non-governmental and consulting sectors have made good progress recently in formulating new ways of managing development interventions in a more results-driven manner. However, these efforts have to date not been shared widely to encourage learning and exchange of ideas among the major stakeholders. The time has come to do so. Results require learning, and all learning must be put in the service of results.



4. *Issues and Trends in the International Literature*

4.1 *Background*

The international literature on basic human needs is vast. This literature includes works on basic human needs *per se*, as well as publications on closely related themes, such as poverty and participatory development. This literature also includes publications addressing sectoral areas, such as primary health care, basic education, family planning and reproductive health care, sexually transmitted diseases, nutrition, water and sanitation, and housing.¹⁷ Aid-agency reports, academic and professional journals, and popular books are all encompassed in this literature. These written works may be global, national, region, or local in scope, addressing policy, institutional or project-level concerns. The literature on basic human needs generally spans a period of two decades or more.

The present study selected a sample of 65 recent publications on basic human needs for review. This sample, identified through the electronic and hard-copy databases of development agencies and universities,¹⁸ was constructed on the basis of its potential to highlight issues, trends and lessons-learned in the design, management and evaluation of basic human needs interventions. The sample was drawn from journal articles, agency reports and books published within period 1990 through 1995. The sample did not include literature related to humanitarian assistance or food aid. Appendix A lists the literature reviewed for the present study.

4.2 *Basic Human Needs and the International Community*

The past five years have seen basic human needs receive prominent attention in debates and discussion in the international community. This discourse has focused on such themes as social development, sustainable development, poverty, human rights, population, and shelter. Much effort has been made by the international community to not only reassess the scale of global human deprivation, but also to consolidate the lessons learned from two decades of development interventions in this area.

Several United Nations agencies publish global annual reviews addressing aspects of basic human needs. The most prominent of these annuals is UNDP's Human Development Report, which tracks key national statistics through its Human Development Index (HDI). The HDI is the average of three sub-indices constructed on life expectancy, educational attainment and adjusted real GDP per capita. Other global annual reviews related to basic human needs are: the World Bank's World Development Report, UNICEF's State of the World's Children Report, and the ILO's World Labour Report. In addition, the World Health Organization and UNESCO publish annual statistical reviews in health and education, respectively.

Basic human needs, under various labels and with different frameworks, has been discussed at major international fora over the past five years, as well. These fora include: the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, the 1995 World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen, and the 1995 World Conference on Women in Beijing. Basic human needs in the urban context will also be examined at the 1996 Habitat II conference on shelter in Istanbul. Among the common themes of such conferences to date have been the call for people-centred, sustainable development, for gender equity, and for global cooperation by rich and poor countries. These meetings have also recognized the need to use both governments and markets in the development process.

¹⁷ For example, CIDA's Selective Bibliography on Basic Human Needs, published by the Agency's International Development Information Centre in late 1995, contains 230 references which relate to all of the themes and sectors listed here

¹⁸ These institutions included, primarily, CIDA, the International Development Research Centre, the World Bank, and Carleton and Ottawa universities.

Some significant progress has been made in recent years on donor commitments to measure and report on their spending on poverty reduction and human development. Among bilateral donors, Canada, Denmark, the European Community, Finland, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom have all taken steps to improve their performance on these issues. Among multilaterals, the OECD-DAC, UNDP, and the World Bank have worked to improve their allocations, reporting and delivery systems for poverty and basic needs programs (Actionaid, 1995).

4.3 Delivery Issues

4.3.1 Target Groups

Targeting geographic areas for BHN and poverty-reduction programming is common practice among donors, governments and NGOs alike. Simulation research using transfer-program data from households in Venezuela, Mexico and Jamaica found that targeting smaller geographic units (villages as opposed to regions or states) yields optimum results. In the case of price-subsidy programs, targeted schemes were found to perform better than untargeted schemes. However, the study also found that problems associated with incentive effects and political economy must be considered by implementing agencies (Baker and Grosh, 1994).

The literature indicates that there are effective ways and means of targeting women in poverty alleviation and basic human needs interventions. For example, one World Bank project helped to build local NGO capacity to deliver management training to poor women in Bangladesh, India and the Philippines (Viswanath, 1995). The effectiveness of grass-roots women's labour associations, such as SEWA in India, in providing training and credit to poor urban women to boost their incomes and social power is also widely documented (see, for example, Noponen, 1991).

With respect to the needs of children, Helleiner (1991) has recommended that the IMF consider the impacts of its programs on the nutrition and health of children under five and recognize the positive role of public expenditure on productive and social programs to meet the basic needs of the poor. More recently, research on early child-care and development programs confirms positive impacts on children under five in developing countries with respect to malnutrition, cognitive development, and preparedness for primary education (Young, 1995).

4.3.2 Delivery Channels

Debate continues on the comparative advantages and disadvantages of each of the three different delivery channels for BHN programs: governments, NGOs and the private sector. Some recent regional and country studies offer evidence that, under certain conditions, government interventions to combat poverty can work. Based on research in India's Kerala state, Kannan (1995) argues that state-directed social protection programs for the poor, in combination with a government strategy for employment for the poor, can succeed in reducing poverty significantly.

Arellanolopez and Petras (1994) suggest, from a different perspective, that the experience in Bolivia of NGO service-delivery to the poor, in combination with the reorganization of the state, actually helped to undermine grassroots organizations representing the poor. It is also not clear, they write, that NGOs in Bolivia are more successful in overcoming poverty than state agencies were in the past.

However, in a comprehensive impact assessment of 16 NGO projects, the Overseas Development Institute found that NGO performance in poverty alleviation is strong. In successful projects, the study found that incomes had increased, often substantially, consumption had improved, and

productive investments had been made. Successful projects were characterized by genuine participation, effective management, and skilled and dedicated staff. Factors in the macro environment which were found to facilitate project success include an expanding local economy, access to resources, and broad support from local elites. The study also showed that another determinant of success is careful project preparation and design (Riddell and Robinson, 1992)

4.4 *Cross-Cutting Issues*

4.4.1 *Poverty Reduction*

There is a rich and challenging literature on basic human needs and poverty reduction, on the one hand, and economic growth, on the other hand. Political scientists, economists and development-studies specialists have all written widely on this subject. The link between human development and economic growth is increasingly discussed in the literature, prompted in part by the annual appearance of UNDP's Human Development Report. Many commentators agree that economic growth is essential for human development, but it is not sufficient in itself. They argue that a productive link can be created between economic growth and human development through: investment in the education, health and skills of the population; more equitable distribution of income and assets; well-structured social expenditures by government; and empowerment of citizens — especially women — in politics, society and the economy. The 1996 Human Development Report will examine in detail the relationship between economic growth and human development (UNDP, 1995).

However, different authors reach different conclusions when they review the evidence on basic human needs and growth. Afrentiou (1990), for example, finds no empirical evidence to support the positive claims by basic-needs advocates that BHN enhances economic growth, population control and popular participation. Diversions of resources to basic needs may or may not result in increased investment and productivity, depending on the nature of local conditions, he finds.

In contrast, Spalding (1990), finds in the literature considerable evidence to support the view that a basic human needs approach can improve human capital, strengthen economic development, and develop local political institutions both in and outside the state. Basic human needs and economic growth are not incompatible. She argues that, ultimately, BHN is a useful initial step in mapping out the social prerequisites for development but it cannot address the root causes of poverty.

In a major empirical study of more than 100 countries and a 25-year data set (1960-1985), Moon and Dixon (1992) find no evidence that basic needs compromises growth. "To the contrary, we find that basic needs attainment facilitates long-term economic growth" (Moon and Dixon, 1992: 191). They also find that rapid growth does not, overall, produce substantial basic needs improvements. If the "trickle-down" process occurs at all, it occurs very slowly. Still, the authors are not able to conclude if BHN is a "preferred option" that will subsequently generate faster growth than non-BHN approaches. This matter, they say, demands detailed longitudinal research.

Much discussion of basic human needs today is subsumed under discussion of poverty reduction. One of the characteristics of this component of the literature is its twin focus on structural adjustment and poverty reduction. Many commentators argue, like Killick (1995), that although structural adjustment programs often harm the poor, the former are nevertheless necessary for the eradication of poverty. Others point out, as do Stein and Nafziger (1991), that World Bank policies of adjustment — which stress user costs, cuts in social programs, tight monetary policy, and increased exports — all disadvantage the poor, and that the Bank's recently claimed shift away from austerity and markets and toward basic human needs and participatory development is "more rhetorical than real."

Widely praised work by UNICEF first drew attention to the need for "adjustment with a human face," and encouraged all international agencies, including IBRD and the IMF, to incorporate human and environmental objectives into an integrated framework of long-term development and adjustment policy (Jolly, 1991). A recent World Bank discussion paper recommends focused, limited public spending on social-safety nets during periods of adjustment and transition (Subbarao et al, 1996). In its 1995 World Report, Workers in an Integrating World, the Bank (1995a) proposes that countries provide state-funded labour-market adjustment programs and other social programs during economic restructuring processes. Social funds have been used in Latin America and other regions to mitigate the negative effects on the poor of adjustment and to maintain political sustainability (Graham, 1992).

There would now appear to be a general consensus that poverty reduction entails: appropriate public policy at the macro-level; purposeful institution-building in the government, NGO and private sectors at the meso-level; and targeted anti-poverty programs at the micro-level (see, for example, Streeten, 1991). Among bilaterals, the UK's Overseas Development Administration subscribes to this general approach (Wilmhurst et al, 1992). Among UN agencies, recent work by the ILO in particular emphasizes the importance of blending socially-sensitive macro-economic policies with more direct micro-policies to promote employment and a redistribution of assets and income towards the poor (Rodgers, 1995).

Among the more effective micro-level approaches to poverty reduction is microcredit lending, or microfinance, which is receiving substantial attention and resources worldwide on the part of international agencies, national governments and some NGOs. Ashe (1992) has surveyed microlending programs and has highlighted their potential for sustainability and replicability. The Grameen Bank in Bangladesh is a well-known, large-scale example of NGO microfinance (Holcombe, 1995). It is worth noting here that some definitions of basic human needs programming include the provision of credit to the poor for income generation or business development. However, other definitions of basic human needs (including the definition in Canada's ODA policy) do not include this element.

Elsewhere, literature related to poverty reduction points to the importance of learning processes, which stimulate interaction between the development agency and the community, and the need to incorporate flexibility in project planning, use of pilot programs, understanding the perspective of the poor, and demand-assessment utilization (Salmen, 1991). Other studies have sought more specifically to understand both the willingness and the ability of community members to pay for new basic-needs services.

Some research has assessed how effectively large aid agencies are organized to address the problems of poverty. Examining the World Bank and USAID, Clements (1993) found that these agencies could achieve more in this area by establishing independent units devoted only to poverty alleviation. Staff of these units, he suggests, should develop detailed knowledge of local societies, have lower pay scales, and be engaged for longer tours of duty.

Recent research at the University of Sussex's Institute of Development Studies has suggested that standard definitions of poverty (eg. private consumption, common property resources, and state-provided commodities) must be supplemented by other indicators of well-being. In particular, these other indicators are needed to capture the heterogeneity of the poor as well as the gender dimensions of poverty. Participatory approaches to defining poverty are useful but rely heavily on the skills of professional practitioners. An interactive blending of standard and participatory approaches to defining poverty is required at this time (Baulch, 1996).

Another set of issues relates to the strategy of the World Bank and some other multilaterals of pursuing the twin objectives of labour-intensive growth and basic social services. Based on the Asian experience, this strategy may not be effective for other regions of the world. Differing political, cultural and social norms can render this strategy inappropriate. Instead, more radical interventions — based on, for example, land and asset redistribution, and pro-poor credit reform—may be necessary, though they can also lead to conflict with local elites.

Donors must, therefore, get serious about poverty reduction. They must understand the complex nature of poverty and implement precise, impact-oriented interventions that will make a measurable difference. As one observer has put it: "placing poverty reduction at the centre of donor allocation decisions, however, requires a change in the reality not just the rhetoric of aid" (Baulch, 1996:8).

Overall, there is widespread recognition across the international community that poverty reduction on a global scale demands greater attention to two key questions: "1) How to make best use of available resources, so as to respond to human need. At present neither the state nor the market is able to respond to the enormous demand; and 2) how to enable the poor to both contribute to and share in the benefits of growth" (Actionaid, 1995:8).

4.4.2 *Gender and Development*

The literature on gender and development and basic human needs tends to involve two distinct streams of debate. One of these streams relates to a renewed global effort, expressed in the 1995 Beijing World Conference on Women, to reframe development theory and practice in a way that, as Bhasin (1994) puts it, promotes feminine values such as nurturing, environmental sustainability, peace, and community management, and devalues the power, aggression and consumerism associated with male-dominated institutions. A related effort seeks to establish women's rights as human rights, including freedom from violence, full political and economic rights, and the right to basic food, education, shelter, and health-care (see Kerr, 1993). The expression of this strategy at the project level is the gender and development approach to project planning, implementation and evaluation, which focuses on the relative access of both genders to power and resources in the household, community and project (eg. Plewes and Stuart, 1991). Much literature, often employing GAD methodology, has documented the unequal burden shouldered by women in poor countries during periods of structural adjustment (Beneria and Feldman, 1992).

A second stream in the literature examines gender issues in relation to particular basic human needs sub-sectors in basic human needs, including health, education, water supply and shelter (some examples of which are provided in section 4.6 below). In particular, investing in basic education and health care for women has been found to pay dividends for households and for societies as a whole. In particular: "Social returns [to society at large] on investments in women's education and health are significantly greater than for similar investments in men" (World Bank, 1995b:3). Public policies which modify laws and redirect government spending can promote gender equality. Public spending on education, health, agricultural extension services, and infrastructure can especially advance the status of women and girls. Targeting women and girls in development on interventions can work, especially in the areas of basic services and employment (UNDP, 1995).

Global fora and analyses have pointed to three areas which are critical for women's advance: female education, reproductive health rights, and access to credit (UNDP, 1995). These themes were given prominence at the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, the 1995 World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen, and the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo.

In another issue related to gender and development, projects involving poor women are found to be limited in their impacts when efforts are not made to mobilize participants into popular organizations to engage in politics and make broader claims on society's resources. For example, a critical assessment of one project in The Philippines traces the project's reliance on local elites to its failure to support popular organizing, with the consequence that project participants remained economically marginalized (St. Hilaire, 1990).

On gender and evaluation, the OECD Development Assistance Committee has assessed the extent to which gender issues are discussed in donor-sponsored evaluations. This study found that: "between 1989 and 1993, the number of evaluations which included a 'full' discussion of gender issues increased from 14 percent to 37 percent. The number of evaluations that fail to address gender at all fell from one-half to a quarter" (Actionaid, 1995:16). Gender equity issues have been integrated extensively into the social-development programming of DAC members. However, this has not occurred in the energy, transportation or other infrastructure sectors

4.4.3 Social Policy

In an important new paper, Moser (1995) has described the different frameworks and indicators of social as opposed to economic policy in explaining poverty and prescribing measures to reduce it. Social policy, which seeks to advance such objectives as equitable distribution of wealth and popular participation, recognizes the institutional and organizational contexts in which people live rather than, like economic policy, assuming that individuals are "free-floating" in the market. Social policy addresses the human needs for survival, security and self-respect, and recognizes the importance of the relationships among the levels of the individual, the household and the community in measuring well-being and vulnerability. Economic policy, for its part, tends to focus solely on the individual, or single-function indicators, at the household level.

Moser (1995:169) argues that social policy, like economic policy, "is not a sector and consequently cannot be 'sectorized'". It therefore must be "mainstreamed" within existing institutional structures, rather than located in a single "social policy" institution. A comprehensive, integrative framework involving government, private sector and NGO structures is thus necessary for social policy implementation. A crucial task is to coordinate service delivery strategies for different target-groups: individuals, households and communities. The distinction among these different levels of target groups is especially crucial in formulating strategies for empowerment and sustainability of benefits and services.

Recent analysis of social policy in Latin America by IDRC underscores the timeliness of Moser's arguments. In their book, Social Policy in a Global Society, Morales-Gómez and Torres (1995) show that the new challenge for social policy in that region is "to bring social and human development to the centre of their economic development agenda" (Morales-Gómez and Torres, 1995: 18). The region's economic and political dependency and growing class inequalities are particular barriers to overall social well-being in that part of the world.

4.5 General Issues in Basic Human Needs

4.5.1 Community Participation

Successful BHN programming at the micro-level can only be achieved through authentic, sustained and broad-based community participation. Recent work by the World Bank is especially instructive in this matter. A survey of 121 evaluations of rural water projects in 49 countries found a positive correlation between participation and system operation, economic benefits, population coverage, and environmental benefits. Women's participation, however, was found to be high only if it had been specifically targeted and supported. The study identified three barriers to participation: agencies' unwillingness to give up control over implementation, lack of staff incentives to encourage new arrangements, and an unwillingness to invest in community capacity-building to manage the water services. Future project designs should be based on local ownership and control, and should be demand-responsive rather than supply-oriented (Narayan, 1995).

In a landmark document, Participation Sourcebook, the World Bank provides its officers and consultants with a set of tools, issue papers and case studies designed to maximize local participation by the poor in projects in all sectors, at all points in the Bank project cycle: identification, planning, appraisal, implementation and evaluation. The handbook advises IBRD staff on how to switch their role from acting as external expert to becoming a participating stakeholder, who facilitates the social learning of the poor. Task managers are advised on ways of "creating a learning mood" where information can be shared and consensus can emerge, and on ways of fulfilling their new roles of initiating, facilitating, participating, sharing expertise, navigating and nurturing the participatory process — all functions for which aid personnel are rarely trained or rewarded. The handbook also contains a section on how Bank staff can relate to, support and benefit from NGOs as intermediating organizations between the poor and national governments (World Bank, 1996).

In the rural context, one widely employed project planning strategy is participatory rural appraisal (PRA). This approach involves a shared analysis by rural residents and outside professionals of development conditions and problems and options for action. With origins in activist participatory research, farming system research, applied anthropology, and rural rapid appraisal, PRA has been implemented in various forms in more than 40 developing countries. PRA methods include transect walks, mapping, seasonal calendars, wealth-ranking and many other techniques. Knowledge generated by local people through PRA has been found to be highly valid and reliable compared with traditional field research methods. Studies suggest that the power and accuracy of PRA analysis can be explained by the shifts inherent in the approach from individual to group, from verbal to visual, and from information extraction to the empowerment of participants (Chambers, 1994a,b).

4.5.2 Good Governance, Democratic Development and Basic Human Needs

Good governance and democratic development can enhance the possibility of meeting and sustaining basic human needs among the poor. However, most programs in good governance have not made the link with basic human needs. In effect, they have failed, as Goetz and O'Brien (1995) suggests, to ask the question: "What is good government for?" In particular, they argue, the World Bank's two recent policy initiatives in poverty reduction and good governance have both avoided addressing issues of power, equity and distribution, while advancing objectives related to structural adjustment and fiscal reform.

Some practitioners, especially in the NGO community, advocate designating basic human needs as basic human rights to which all citizens are entitled (Facio, 1995). This concept may hold considerable potential for organizing the poor to claim the resources they require to sustain their livelihoods.

4.5.3 Evaluation of Basic Human Needs Programs

There is a growing literature on approaches to evaluation in BHN programming which involve micro-level organizational self-assessments and other participatory evaluation techniques. Hofferbert and Hofferbert (1992), for example, advocate low-cost, "barefoot evaluation" methods, based on experience with water supply systems in Nepal. Such approaches are consistent with recent analysis on participatory research and participatory rapid appraisal, which seeks to give new tools to aid personnel in facilitating the involvement of local stakeholders in project assessment (see, among others, Chambers, 1995).

Institutional assessment at the meso-level is also the subject of discussion in the literature. Lusthaus et al (1995), in an IDRC publication, provide a set of tools and measures for such assessments. Marsden and Oakley (1990) have proposed a set of indicators of participatory management structures in NGOs and community-based organizations active in social development and anti-poverty programs.

At the macro-level, evaluation research on basic human needs takes two forms. One form is statistical modelling, using international and national data, to test, refine and construct indices of basic human needs, poverty and human development (eg. Ogwang, 1995; Ram, 1992; Clavijo, 1992; Khan, 1991). There is considerable debate over the methods used to construct UNDP's HDI, in particular (UNDP, 1995). The other form of evaluation research at the macro-level involves national evaluations of programs (eg. Laurel and Wences, 1994; Gaiha, 1991) or delivery channels, such as NGOs (Muir, 1992; De Connuck, 1992; Robinson, 1991; White, 1991).

It is notable that the literature displays very few cases of "meta" evaluation in basic human needs and poverty reduction. Meta evaluations could compare, for individual countries and within and across regions, different macro-level studies involving statistical indices, national program evaluations, and delivery-channel assessments.

4.6 *Sub-Sectoral Issues*

4.6.1 *Primary Health Care*

Recent research shows that health remains in a crisis state in developing countries, notwithstanding (or sometimes because of) past development interventions — especially for the most vulnerable groups, notably women and children. Among the most urgent health problems which must be addressed by national governments and donors are: health and the environment, food and nutrition, maternal and child health, control and elimination of preventable disease, workers' health, substance abuse, and AIDS (Delph, 1993).

4.6.2 *Basic Education*

Herrn (1995) examines the many links between education and poverty. Education is related to, among other things, consumption and production in the home, own-market production and incomes, labour supply and earnings, fertility, and migration. A new agenda of research is called for, he argues, to achieve clarity on issues related to schooling and earnings, household productivity, women's education, and unemployment.

Basic education — preschool, primary and secondary school — is receiving increasing attention by donors in the 1990s. UNESCO is the UN instrument for promoting awareness of the importance of basic education worldwide (Bélanger, 1993). Yet, while "Education for All" remains a compelling call to action, it must also be recognized that basic education cannot alone solve the problems of unequal development in the South (Morales-Gómez, 1991).

Bacquelaine (1994) traces the concept of basic education back to the ILO's original formulation of basic human needs twenty years ago. She reviews research which shows that, in rural areas in particular, there is a positive relationship between higher levels of basic education and increased productivity, perhaps also related to improved skills and changes in attitudes. However, she finds that research on urban areas of developing countries does not show a similarly clear relationship between education and productivity. Bacquelaine stresses that basic education should be viewed as one element in a broader strategy to alleviate poverty. Education does not, she emphasizes, guarantee access to resources.

In basic education, there is widespread recognition that households must play a greater role in the governance of schools. This increased participation can result in schools that are more accountable and results-oriented and parents that are more satisfied. In terms of educational finance, public spending on primary education has been found to generally favour the poor. But measures must be taken to increase the efficiency of government expenditure in basic education, as well. And new sources of public and private finance must be found to improve education quality and access (World Bank, 1995c).

The World Bank (1995b,c) has called for developing countries to place a higher priority on ensuring universal, high-quality basic education, with special emphasis on the provision of schooling for girls. In many countries, such as Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, there are strong local values against investing in the basic education of girls (Theobald, 1995). Research from Malawi and elsewhere shows that gender structuring and stereotyping reduce female-student achievement levels in school. Such negative influences on school performance must be addressed both in the classroom and in the home (Davison and Kanyuka, 1992).

Literacy remains a "bottom-line" pre-requisite for full economic and political participation. Literacy programs must be relevant to the larger context in which learners live and work. For maximum effectiveness, literacy programs must be reinforced by a network of post-literacy learning opportunities. Literacy teaching methods must be appropriate to diverse cultures and linguistic groups. In most countries, the training of literacy instructors must be improved, as well (Ahmed, 1992).

4.6.3 Nutrition

Nutrition and development is still the subject of much analysis. Behrman (1993), for example, has found evidence of greater productivity effects arising from investments in nutrition in developing countries than for formal schooling among poorer individuals. Improved nutrition can also positively influence school performance among poor students. Vigorous nutrition policies and programs thus can address both productivity and equity concerns, and merit serious consideration by national governments and donor agencies.

4.6.4 Water and Sanitation

It is estimated that more than half of the rural population of developing countries still do not have access to adequate potable water supplies. Rondinelli (1991) proposes to spread and sustain decentralized community management of rural water services through: appropriate incentives to encourage local participation, institutionalization of effective operation and maintenance systems, cooperative organizational relationships in planning and management, availability of efficient technology, and strengthened and evaluation systems.

Studies in urban water and sanitation demonstrate, how, as neighbourhood incomes rise, progressive improvements can be made to enhance the level of service in this sector. Implementing agencies need to adopt a demonstration/consolidation/expansion model in order for this approach to succeed (Choguill et al, 1993).

4.6.5 Shelter

Nearly half of the world's population lives in cities, and urban residents will outnumber rural citizens by 2015. Some 600 million urban dwellers presently do not have access to adequate shelter, water and health services (United Nations Centre on Human Settlements, 1995). Three hundred million citizens of cities and towns across the developing world presently live in absolute poverty (UNDP, 1994). Many organizations have recognized the need for a renewed global effort to address these problems. The Habitat II conference in 1996 in Istanbul will debate strategies related to the provision of shelter for the urban poor. Among the issues on the Habitat II agenda are: human settlements and women, the role of government in human settlements, youth and human settlements, and human settlements and the environment.

Municipal support in building the capacity of NGO, community-based organizations and the private sector to provide affordable shelter and other urban services is an important theme in the current literature (Wegelin and Borgman, 1995). Special attention must be given to meeting the needs of the most vulnerable groups, such as the homeless street children of Rio de Janeiro, through special organizations which provide customized education and support (Leite and Esteves, 1991).

In their excellent book on urban housing and health in developing countries. The Poor Die Young, Hardoy et al (1990) also call for new partnerships involving governments, community organizations and the private sector to provide basic services to the poor and reduce deprivation. The authors cite many creative and innovative projects piloted by NGOs and low-income citizens. However: "The problem is that these examples remain the exceptions; they are not currently the conventional approach and governments have not institutionalized them on a large scale. What is needed is a vast multiplication in the number of such innovative projects...ensuring that tens of thousands of local solutions can be developed by local institutions which match local needs and resources" (Hardoy et al, 1990: 264).

In terms of income-generation and employment, the past five years have seen much growth in the number and size of microenterprise support programs to the informal sector in developing-country cities. In Bolivia, the Banco Sol is the world's first fully-private commercial bank serving the microenterprise sector. The bank serves more than 60,000 customers and manages a loan portfolio of \$32 million. Borrowers include a significant proportion of women who are heads of families. In the urban areas of Latin America, it is estimated that up to 80 percent of microentrepreneurs are women (Calmeadow-Foundation, 1994).

Research indicates that this informal sector is economically and organizationally complex. In Kenya, for example, households participating in the urban informal sector also generate revenue through agriculture. In the same case, in informal-sector manufacturing, local entrepreneurs form "agglomerations" of production units (Livingstone, 1991). This complexity must be taken into account by agencies planning urban microenterprise interventions.

4.7 *Lessons Learned*

The international literature on basic human needs published over the past five years points to a number of lessons related to intervention strategies and organizational structures in particular.

Among these lessons are the following:

Lessons on Strategy

- 1) Basic human needs interventions must work at the policy (macro), institutional (meso) and project (micro) levels, with each level reinforcing and optimizing the impacts at the other levels.
- 2) The gender dimension is central to the success of basic human needs programming, and all such interventions must be guided by comprehensive gender strategies.
- 3) Sustainability of basic human needs demands significant contributions to recurrent and capital costs by local consumers and governance structures.
- 4) Basic human needs cannot be met through social development alone; economic development interventions must be implemented in parallel with social interventions, though not necessarily by the same organization.
- 5) Donor agencies and developing countries should link and coordinate basic human needs interventions with interventions in good governance and democratic development.
- 6) The global scale of deprivation is so great that basic human needs interventions must move rapidly and self-consciously from experimentation and piloting to replication and diffusion.

Lessons on Structure

- 7) Donor agencies should consider creating special implementation units to design, implement and monitor basic human needs projects. Special expertise, operating and personnel procedures and incentives should be incorporated into these units
- 8) Aid agency personnel and their contractors should be made accountable and rewarded for generating results—immediate outputs, short-term impacts (outcomes) and long-term impacts (effects).
- 9) Non-governmental organizations have demonstrated around the world an impressive capacity to promote basic human needs through small-scale projects. They must build their capacity to replicate and diffuse their projects to larger numbers of beneficiaries, in alliance with governments, multilaterals, and the private sector, as appropriate.
- 10) New roles need to be found for the private sector in providing and sustaining basic human needs.

These lessons and others should inform CIDA's future work in the area of basic human needs.

4.8 Conclusion

Recent literature on basic human needs offers development agencies a rich source of lessons-learned, performance analysis, and intervention strategies. Of particular relevance to Canadian ODA policy and the mandate of the Canadian International Development Agency are the literature's findings and trends related to poverty reduction, social policy and basic human needs, its research on the effectiveness of various delivery channels, and its exploration of a wide range of impact-assessment techniques. Also of importance to CIDA are the components of this literature examining the gender dimension of basic human needs and ways and means of encouraging authentic community participation. The literature reviewed here appears to be less instructive on basic human needs in relation to sustainability, good governance and democracy, and capacity-building.



5. Issues and Trends in CIDA's Experience

5.1 Background

The present study also reviewed a sample of documents of the Canadian International Development Agency relevant to basic human needs. Documents in this sample, again selected for their potential to shed light on issues, trends and lessons learned in BHN interventions, including evaluation and monitoring reports from 20 bilateral projects in Africa, the Americas and Asia, and 35 policy statements and papers, research reports, sectoral studies, institutional evaluations, and country reviews produced by the Agency over the past five years. For the purpose of the sample, basic human needs was defined as including primary health care, basic education, family planning and reproductive health care, nutrition, water and sanitation, and shelter. Documents on food aid and humanitarian assistance were not included in the CIDA documents reviewed for the present study (see Appendix B).

In collecting these documents for review, the present team encountered its first important finding: CIDA's management information system on basic human needs is inadequate. Notwithstanding some gains in recent years in "coding and counting" BHN projects and allocations, CIDA units vary widely in the way they define interventions and spending in this area; the individual perspectives of the officers and managers involved appear to influence the process considerably, resulting in inconsistencies and gaps. In terms of policy and sectoral documents, there is no central registry which houses all relevant studies on BHN. Much material is in a sense "fugitive," and is found with individual staff, is circulating in informal networks, or remains in the possession of outside contractors. A comprehensive registry accessible to all CIDA personnel would contribute to a more learning-oriented organizational culture and democratize the power associated with the information contained in relevant reports.

Another notable characteristic of the CIDA documents reviewed here is that, almost by definition, they use frameworks that pre-date the recent introduction of a results-based management approach at the Agency. Most evaluations and monitoring studies in the sample focus on project effectiveness, efficiency and rationale, and do not report results in the new framework of the proposed Bilateral Performance Review System. In some cases, therefore, such documents are likely to have under-reported on BHN development results, though they may have reported extensively on project management and finance issues. Such discontinuity in frameworks is expected at this historical moment in CIDA's evolution, and should be rendered minimal over time. In general, project documents provided information on delivery issues while policy, program and sectoral reports provided information on cross-cutting and sub-sector issues.

5.2 Policy and Organizational Context

5.2.1 External Policy Environment

The external policy environment in which CIDA operates displays tendencies both for and against basic human needs allocations. Policies in favour of basic human needs have been advanced recently by a number of multilateral agencies, notably the UNDP, the ILO and UNRISD, as well as OECD, the World Bank, and the Commission on Global Governance. These policies, given prominence by high-profile international conferences and reports, can and do influence Canadian ODA spending.

At the same time, however, economic globalization — with its orientation to corporate rights, consumerism and formal-economy production — tends to focus policies in a different direction: toward competitiveness, middle-class growth, and trade-oriented aid, rather than efforts

targeting BHN. The present preoccupation of Canadian governments with high levels of both public debt and unemployment has resulted in dramatic cuts to our own social programs and increased the pressure to use ODA to serve Canadian trade and competitiveness objectives. These tendencies are reflected in Canada's recent foreign policy statement and in CIDA's policy discourse and spending decisions.

5.2.2 CIDA's Internal Environment

Basic human needs is presently characterized by low visibility in CIDA's internal environment. There is no comprehensive, official policy on basic human needs. Nor are there up-to-date sub-priority policies (with the very recent exception of health), or an adequate number of in-house specialists in those sub-sector areas. These features are clearly at odds with the organizational capacity necessary for CIDA to successfully optimize the results of its 25 percent commitment to BHN.

Furthermore, the Agency's management information system for tracking BHN spending, effectiveness and results remains underdeveloped. Despite efforts to improve the "coding and counting" of interventions in BHN and other priority areas, this system is still characterized by inconsistent procedures, incomplete information, and lack of coordination across channels and programs. Moreover, much of CIDA's corporate memory in BHN actually lies outside the Agency, with consulting firms, NGOs and institutions. Those CIDA staff who do possess valuable experience in this area are frequently rotated into new positions, and the continuity necessary to improve programming is, consequently, too often foregone. All of these characteristics of the present internal environment work to undermine CIDA's learning and results in basic human needs.

At the same time, there has been considerable innovation in BHN programming in recent years, as well. Among the more notable examples in this regard are the international immunization program of the Canadian Public Health Association, user-driven rural water projects in Ghana, NGO support programming in Pakistan, as well as a host of other grass-roots NGO projects in the Americas and elsewhere, and, recently, basic needs planning in South Africa. There has also emerged within the Agency a vibrant policy discourse and formal and informal networks of staff and consultants on themes closely related to basic human needs, including: poverty reduction, participatory development, gender equity and social policy. Among officers engaged in these activities, there is much readiness and support for a comprehensive policy and programming initiative on basic human needs.

5.2.3 The Need for a Policy on Basic Human Needs

The need for a policy on basic human needs is recognized by many officers and managers in the Agency, across all branches. A recent consultation paper found that such a policy would need to address the priority sector objectives set by the international community, encourage capacity development in the public sector and in civil society, reach groups most in need (women, children and youth, especially), and mobilize resources to achieve the 25 percent spending target. The policy should seek to encourage policy dialogue and donor coordination and interventions where Canada enjoys a comparative advantage in expertise and experience. The implementation of this policy would require the creation of an internal steering committee, extensive staff training, a beneficiary-oriented framework for monitoring results, policy papers on sectors and methods, and a system of accountability for achieving the 25 percent target as well as new, composite indicators in the BHN area (Beaulieu, 1996).

In the absence of a clear policy on basic human needs, daily practice will, by default, define policy. In such circumstances, as one observer of CIDA has noted, "lower level administrators

become policy makers in that what they do operationally becomes what the policy turns out to be "(Rawkins, 1994: 167). The high-priority status of basic human needs, and the 25 percent spending target in Canada's new foreign policy, require a more systematic and comprehensive approach. CIDA needs a BHN policy — as soon as possible.

5.2.4 Coding and Counting

There are problems with the Agency's definitions and coding of basic human needs. In particular, CIDA's definition of BHN includes shelter and emergency food aid, while the current United Nations definition excludes shelter but includes some emergency assistance. This discrepancy represents a potentially troublesome problem in CIDA's future reporting on its results to the international community.¹⁹

In addition, various CIDA branches seem to have used different formats and different coding conventions in preparing their results summaries for the Executive Committee Fall Retreat in 1995. These different approaches thus weaken the reliability of the data when results are aggregated to the Agency level as a whole and reported to Parliament and the public.

5.2.5 The Contribution of NGOs

While bilateral programs account for much of CIDA's spending on basic human needs, about one-half of the Agency's allocations in this area are, in fact, channelled through non-governmental organizations and institutions. Over the past five years, the contribution of NGOs to BHN programming has been substantial, characterized by considerable innovation, and supported by serious organizational commitment. In some bilateral programs, however, there is a tendency to underestimate, undervalue or ignore altogether the record of engagement in basic human needs by the non-governmental sector. Instead, the discourse at CIDA on BHN must include NGOs and draw on their experience.

5.2.6 Learning and Basic Human Needs

Overall, the present study found that, especially in bilateral programs, CIDA has tended not to learn from its experience in BHN. Basic human needs projects which do not include basic elements, such as beneficiary participation and the gender dimension, have ignored decades of experience in the field. Projects which fail to incorporate more recent lessons learned with respect to user fees, for example, do not achieve optimum results either. The result of this inability to learn from the past is that mistakes are repeated and value-for-money objectives fall short. This situation is simply no longer affordable. The meeting of the basic needs of the poor is too great and urgent a task, and ODA resources are too limited, to permit the status quo to continue.

There are exceptions, though, and these exceptions deserve careful study. Successful water projects in northern Ghana and rural development projects in northeastern Thailand, for example, have been the result of ongoing incorporation of lessons learned over a period of many years. Strong partnerships between CIDA and local agencies, appropriate personnel skills and continuity of CIDA and non-CIDA personnel, together with management commitment to maintain a space for analysis and improvement, all appear to have contributed to the Agency's ability to learn and to deliver progressively better results over time.

¹⁹ Van Rooy (1995) finds that, for the period 1992-1995, CIDA's disbursements on basic human needs averaged almost 14 percent based on the UN definition, and 21 percent of all disbursements when its own definition was applied

5.2.7 Accountability, Results and Indicators

A debate is ongoing within CIDA today on how to assess accountability for development results, an issue which is of great importance for BHN programming. If CIDA is committed to achieving sound and sustainable development results in BHN, it must explicitly and formally recognize the need to negotiate project results and performance indicators at the goal, purpose and outputs levels with recipient country organizations and Canadian partner organizations. A recent (April 1996) PRD Discussion Paper, entitled "Towards a Results-Based Accountability Framework for CIDA" proposes such an approach.

How to develop a cost-effective, reliable set of indicators to measure results is a related challenge facing CIDA. Through discussions with other donors, Performance Review Division has found that this process should be an iterative one, and, Agency-wide, can take up to five years to complete. Experience elsewhere has also shown that a small number of focused indicators, which are simple and cost-effective to measure, is the optimum way forward for development agencies (McAllister et al, 1996). Special efforts must be made to clarify the limitations of attribution of impacts by interventions, to ensure measures of sustainability, and to assess manageable risk (see Brown, 1995).

Ultimately, in the basic human needs area, performance indicators and comparative standards must be developed for all BHN sub-sectors and for integrated basic human needs interventions. A new specialized BHN unit in the Agency, together with Performance Review Division, could take the lead in carrying out these tasks.

5.2.8 Leadership for Action

Addressing the current deficiencies at CIDA in policies, systems and programs in basic human needs requires pro-active and decisive leadership by the Agency's senior management. If such leadership is not forthcoming, the spending commitment of 25 percent and the related quality and quantity of results achieved, will not be successful in the eyes of either Canadian taxpayers, Southern beneficiaries or Canada's Auditor-General. In recent years, senior management of CIDA has been responsive to Canadian trade and competitiveness objectives. Will it be as responsive to the call for a new global effort to meet the needs of the poorest of the poor?

It is also necessary, at the same time, for other stakeholders involved in Canadian ODA to take action. There are formal and informal networks inside and outside CIDA, in Canada and abroad, which could be mobilized to advocate and monitor CIDA's BHN spending and programming. There are many consultants, NGOs, universities and colleges, and other institutions that could contribute to such an effort. In particular, such a coalition for basic human needs could exchange experience and policy perspectives "up and down" the different levels of programming — macro, meso and micro — as well as across nations, and between the state and civil society. The global challenge of meeting basic human needs demands that all practitioners in this area serve as leaders in their respective sectors, organizations and programs.

5.3 Delivery Issues

5.3.1 Target Groups

The project evaluations reviewed for the present study rarely discussed target groups or issues related to them in detail. This finding is surprising in light of the importance of target-group involvement in development projects that is widely evident in the international literature and in CIDA's own field experience.

One notable deficiency in this regard concerns information on the background and needs of project beneficiaries. Most project evaluations reviewed here indicated that very little of this type of information had been available to project stakeholders in either the planning or implementation phases. In some projects, there was evidence that interventions had reached groups with higher standards of living than the ones originally targeted by the project

5.3.2 Delivery Channels

Basic human needs projects funded by CIDA are delivered through a wide range of channels or mechanisms, including: non-governmental organizations, educational and professional institutions, private-sector companies, and Agency mechanisms such as program support units and special funds. The documents reviewed for the present study do not provide sufficient evidence to permit conclusions about the comparative effectiveness or appropriateness of these various delivery channels.

However, the reports reviewed here do suggest that there are certain characteristics which are associated with successful project delivery. These characteristics include: decentralized project management structures, reciprocal and complementary knowledge and expertise on the part of partner organizations, integration of the project into local structures, thorough understanding of the needs of beneficiaries, and formulation of relevant project strategy in response to those needs. Any type of executing agency or instrument which can ensure that these features are part of their approach has every likelihood of succeeding in its delivery role.

Another issue related to delivery channels is that of the expertise of the executing agency. In some project evaluations reviewed here, concerns were raised by the evaluators about the quality of expertise available through the implementing organizations. Some project designs call for very different types of expertise within the same project framework. For example, a project might require institutional strengthening of a line ministry (eg. in Education, or Health), and promotion of socio-economic activities with village women, at the same time. The choice of an executing agency with expertise in one of these areas but not in the other places the project at a disadvantage.

It should not be expected that all executing agencies will possess all the requisite skills and knowledge for a given project. Economic components such as micro-enterprise support or income generating activities demand a different pool of expertise than do social development components. What is essential is that, first, all the necessary skills are contained in the project team or network, which may be constructed through consortia or other associative arrangements. In particular, especially in the BHN area, there are strong arguments for mobilizing the expertise of Southern partner organizations and individuals to provide the necessary services. Southern experts are familiar in detail with their own regions and their fees are more cost-effective than those of Canadians.

It is also essential that the organization which holds the contract possesses the vision, breadth and depth to coordinate and unite all sector specialists and associated organizations in the project delivery group toward a common goal. Generalist project managers, who are skilled in "people-management" and knowledgeable about a wide range of sectoral issues, are valuable assets in such situations. Executing agencies must provide these managers with a mandate and support to lead in this manner.

5.3.3 Project Management

The present review identified a number of issues at each point on the project management cycle in the field of basic human needs. These points included: planning and design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting.

Planning and Design

There is considerable evidence in the project evaluations reviewed here that CIDA's projects in BHN often suffer from underplanning. Several evaluations reported that implementation problems could have been avoided or solved, thus saving all stakeholders much time and money, if the planning process had been more thorough. Too often BHN projects have neglected detailed technical and social studies, assessments of partner capacity, and risk analysis, and all parties have suffered from these deficiencies. Such detailed front-end work may appear costly at face value, but actually may save hundreds of thousands, and even millions, of dollars worth of mistakes

Projects also were frequently allowed to proceed with unclear goals, purposes or objectives. In part, this is a consequence of the way in which CIDA's Project Management By Activity regime was implemented in all program areas. Activities were assumed to be proxies for impacts, which they are decidedly not. CIDA's new emphasis on clearly stating at all of these levels what the results of the project will be is thus timely and appropriate.

In addition, sectoral lessons learned have not been consistently integrated into project planning and design. In water and sanitation, for example, where much is known about effective methods, several projects reviewed here seemed to be designed in a manner completely detached from this body of knowledge. Their lack of success ultimately demonstrated this failure to learn.

At the same time, some project planners were shown to be unable to identify complimentary strategies and methods in the case of interventions with various components. Each component requires special expertise, and may, in fact, require separate implementing agencies. But the overall task is to coordinate and integrate these various, sometimes diverse, components toward one unifying goal. This is the art and science of project planning and management, and some executing agencies have been able to do it and others have not.

There is also the problem of some project planners not being aware of the policy environment in which the project operates. Few projects reviewed here showed an understanding of the dynamics and limits of the policy environment in which they operated. Reflecting this deficiency, only a few projects out of the 20 reviewed here demonstrated any substantial impact on policy formulation.

Implementation

One issue with respect to implementation is the challenge, to CIDA especially, of ensuring accountability without resorting to micro-management. In the projects reviewed for the present study, there were several cases where CIDA had overseen underperforming projects but had not moved directly to oblige the contractor to make changes. The consequence of this "hands-off" policy was drift and unsatisfactory performance. Clearly, CIDA must be able to hold the CEA accountable to produce results. Again, the new results-based management approach emerging at CIDA has the potential to go some distance to addressing this issue. CEAs should be paid on the basis of their performance and that of the project. If payment is delayed or otherwise moderated in light of unsatisfactory performance that can be attributed to factors within the CEA's control, then it is likely the CEA will respond reasonably quickly and take the necessary action. CIDA should stay at the level of purpose in its management—and not micro-manage objectives or activities—and maintain a firm hand on purpose-level performance.

Another issue is community participation. It is widely acknowledged that community and social mobilization must precede community development in order to create a sense of ownership and incentives for long-term project responsibility and sustainability. This is as true in the water sector as it is in primary health care or shelter or other BHN sectors. A related issue in the BHN experience at CIDA is the tension between technical and social dimensions. While precise, leading-edge technical analysis is needed, so too is sensitive and sophisticated social analysis. Again, the art and science of project management is to broker, balance, and blend these two dimensions rather than allowing either to dominate.

The capacity of CIDA's local partners to deliver their inputs and methods is an issue in implementation, as well. One factor here relates to activities by other donors, which, in several projects, drew resources and energy away from CIDA's interventions, thus overextending the partners on the ground. Coordination both within CIDA and externally is therefore essential.

Overall, the present review found that the evaluations themselves were generally inadequate in assessing the respective accountabilities and performance of various project stakeholders. Future performance reviews should emphasize this part of the evaluation mandate. CIDA and the CEAs should, and can, be made accountable for: integrating lessons learned in project design, updating key project documents, including a clear strategy for achieving long-term sustainability, and integrating beneficiary participation at all points on the project cycle. Project management training, as well as evaluation terms of reference, should reflect these imperatives, which are consistent with the guidelines for effective programming put forward in Canada and the World.

Monitoring and Evaluation

One issue which arose from the present review is the failure of some project teams to officially negotiate and document changes to the project design as their project is proceeding. In cases where this problem was found, project approval memoranda, project memoranda of understanding, and project management plans did not reflect modifications which CIDA understood to be crucial to project success. This problem led to imprecise evaluation and monitoring mandates, not to mention confused relations with partner governments and implementing agencies. CIDA teams must do better.

Staff mobility, inside and outside CIDA, sometimes has negative consequences in BHN projects. New personnel may bring new energy and skills but they may also bring inconsistent and contradictory visions and styles which can cause the project to falter. Some of this may be unavoidable, but the network of project stakeholders must work hard to minimize these negative effects and maximize the positive features of new personnel, in the service of a common, consistent project vision.

The projects reviewed here were weak in reporting on results, and so too, in this regard, were the evaluations of those projects. CIDA's new emphasis on results requires a serious effort to develop performance indicators in all the BHN sub-sectors, as well as in integrated BHN. These indicators must be quantitative and qualitative, and must be generated for the macro, meso and micro levels of the project. Recipient countries are mainly responsible for performance on goal-level indicators, CIDA for performance on purpose-level indicators, and CEAs for performance on output-level indicators.

A new regime of results indicators should also enable CIDA and its partners to develop standards of performance that could be compared across projects, programs and channels, and with other aid agencies. In basic human needs, such standards could and should be developed for all BHN sub-sectors and for integrated BHN. Presently, project evaluations rarely go beyond an analysis of administrative costs versus project activity costs. In the future, outputs and impacts should actually be measured in terms of unit costs (eg. the cost of providing one health clinic per participant in the project area).

Reporting on Results

Several of the evaluations reviewed for the present study assessed the achievement of outputs, but without reference to their links with outcomes at the purpose level. These reports judged projects to be successful because they had produced the required outputs on time and within budget. However, the reports did not document the impacts, short-term or long-term, related to project outputs, nor did they assess outputs with respect to sustainability. This issue is especially problematic in institutional strengthening and technical infrastructure projects.

One issue with regard to end-of-project evaluations is that they are usually carried out too soon after the project's termination to permit impact assessment. In basic human needs programming, the long-term is most important. Realistically, most end-of-project evaluations can only, at best, assess short-term impacts. Since that is the case, such evaluations should focus to a great degree on sustainability questions. Performance Review Division of CIDA should take this up this issue, and perhaps assume responsibility for long-term impact assessment.

5.3.4 Funding Channels

Bilateral Programs

A new and comprehensive effort to address basic human needs must be made by CIDA's bilateral programs, where the bulk of Canada's ODA is allocated. Branch missions and strategies, Regional and Country Development Policy Frameworks (R/CDPFs), and poverty profiles are among the tools bilateral programs can use to align their work with the 25 percent BHN target.

Among CIDA's three A's (Africa, Asia, and the America's), the Agency's Africa and Middle East Branch is unique with respect to BHN in that it has stated that it will allocate 30 percent of its budget to basic human needs. One promising initiative of the Branch is a comprehensive regional programming strategy, entitled Children of Southern Africa: the Window of Hope (1995). Based on extensive stakeholder consultation, this strategy calls for baselines for each sub-priority, the integration of lessons learned, the use of a wide range of programming options, (direct intervention, policy development, partnerships and alliances) and innovative delivery mechanisms (social recovery funds, debt-swaps, the use of information technologies) and the incorporation of Canadian experts and suppliers. Its proposed implementation plan is aligned with results-based management principles. This initiative deserves support and study by a wide range of Agency managers and officers.

Another promising effort is the CDPF for Vietnam. Also based on a consultative process, this framework is an Agency-wide programming document that identifies results expected, performance indicators and an accountability framework. It also links the interventions of the various CIDA channels. This new-style programming instrument should be widely monitored in order that its lessons-in-process be made available to others, and to replicate its approach elsewhere.

In the Americas, one initiative at the project level which is also promising is the new Eastern Caribbean Education Reform Project. Employing a results-oriented management plan and incorporating a comprehensive performance review framework, this initiative seeks to generate results at the policy, institutional and community levels. This project is worthy of attention.

Canadian Partnership Branch

About half of all spending on basic human needs is channelled through NGOs and INGOs. The strengths and appropriateness, as well as the limitations, of NGO program delivery are well-documented. CIDA's evaluation of its NGO program found that this sector was particularly strong in poverty alleviation, North-South partnerships, understanding the needs of communities, flexibility, and cost-effectiveness in micro-level and meso-level projects. Clearly, CIDA must capitalize on this expertise if the Agency is to achieve its 25 percent spending target for basic human needs.

Partnership Branch has traditionally functioned in a responsive manner, and its efforts have not always been coordinated with bilateral country program strategies. Recently, there has been an adjustment to CPB's orientation to align it more closely with bilateral branch strategies and R/CDPFs. This effort toward improved coordination is welcome. The participation of Canadian NGOs and their Southern counterparts in consultations on bilateral program frameworks is especially important and timely, but should not be interpreted so rigidly as to suffocate innovation and creativity in the NGO sector. Bilateral programs should view NGOs as valuable assets in front-end experimentation, piloting and demonstration projects which test and refine new approaches for later replication. In this sense, NGOs are as much an essential part of "Team Canada" in ODA as are private firms, CIDA and DFAIT. This view parallels a strongly held orientation of the current Minister of Foreign Affairs toward the promotion of "horizontal linkages" among all Canadian stakeholders in overseas activities.

Multilateral Branch

The present review found no document which analyzed the Agency's contributions to various multilateral agencies in the basic human needs area. There is no question that Canada's funding of IBRD, OECD, UNDP, WHO, ILO, UNICEF and many other multilaterals does, in a general sense, contribute to promotion of BHN—as witnessed by the many policy reports and conferences on BHN issues sponsored by these agencies. However, it remains a problem to trace the specific impacts of Canadian money on such efforts, and, thereafter, the impacts of those initiatives on donors and national governments. There are also questions of subordination of BHN; for example, the World Bank and OECD seek first and foremost to advance market economics and, only secondarily, other matters such as BHN and poverty alleviation. It is necessary in each case to assess the real commitment, as opposed to the rhetorical commitment, to basic human needs.

About one-third of all of Canada's ODA is channelled through multilateral institutions. CIDA should consider whether or not serious work on BHN should be a condition of its financing of each of the relevant institutions. There are strong arguments for taking this route. Such conditionality would provide a measure of leverage to Canada. It also would be consistent with the views of half of Canada's taxpayers, who want to see aid directed to poverty reduction and basic needs, regardless of the channel used. If this approach were taken, evaluations of CIDA's multilateral contributions should be directed to assess impact on BHN as a central part of the evaluation mandate.

5.4 Cross-Cutting Issues

5.4.1 Poverty Reduction

CIDA's new policy statement on poverty reduction sets a clear and ambitious direction which relates directly to the basic human needs area. A number of policy documents refer to the need for the widest range of CIDA policies—including those on environmental sustainability, human rights, democratization and good governance—to be united and coordinated toward a common goal: poverty reduction (Beaulieu, 1995). This should apply to basic human needs, as well. But presently this coordination remains underdeveloped in all branches of the Agency

One of the issues related to poverty reduction which cuts across BHN project and policy documentation at CIDA is the issue of economic versus social development interventions. Many BHN interventions address only the social development aspect of households, communities and regions, including primary health care, basic education, family planning, nutrition, water and sanitation, and shelter. In the sample of projects reviewed here, such interventions rarely were found to include an economic development or employment component. Such a narrow conception of program strategy has resulted in households and communities not being able to afford the inevitable increase in user fees brought on when new services are introduced.

In contrast, a minority of projects reviewed here, were economic ones, particularly micro-enterprise initiatives in South Asia, which also have incorporated social components, or associated with other agencies or programs in that sector. These projects show great promise, though their management is, to be sure, complex and challenging. CIDA must reconsider designs which do not include an economic component or linkage in BHN interventions.

At the level of country allocations, there is considerable evidence to demonstrate, and CIDA widely acknowledges this, that Canada's aid program is not focused on the poorest inhabitants of the poorest countries. One study confirms that "a significant share of Canadian bilateral aid goes to middle-income countries rather than the poorest" (North-South Institute, 1994:15). This issue, with roots in the politics of Canadian ODA, is one which could prevent CIDA from becoming a world leader in BHN programming. Furthermore, a majority of public opinion remains in favour of aid for the poorest peoples of the world. This trend in public opinion is at odds with trade-oriented uses of Canadian ODA in middle-income countries.

5.4.2 Sustainability

In a large number of the project evaluation reports reviewed here, long-term sustainability was not addressed either by the evaluators or by the projects themselves. This partly reflects the historical period when these projects were designed, when sustainability was not seen as a crucial issue. In the small number of projects which were, in fact, found to be sustainable, evaluators attributed this success, in part at least, to the fact that these projects had been integrated into local structures and that communities were involved in implementation. These evaluations suggest that local ownership of results by beneficiaries is fundamental to sustainability.

However, many projects were judged by their evaluators as being unsustainable in the long term. These projects showed a lack of attention to activities which could have promoted sustainability, such as training for local operation and maintenance, and integration of the project into local structures. And projects which require their recurrent costs to be paid by national governments also may not be sustainable in light of changing political and budgetary priorities, and limitations on public spending in-country. Such deficiencies are not new; their continued presence in CIDA programming, though, is cause for concern.

Project sustainability is too rarely assessed before implementation. For example, in water projects, preconditions (such as local contributions to costs, local funds deposited in a bank account, formal written requests) can be established to advance sustainability. In the projects reviewed, too few interventions incorporated this approach, in spite of the fact that this lesson has been known for many years.

At the level of countries, it is the responsibility of national governments to establish a balance involving the use of natural resources, economic development, and the well-being of the population. Such a balance can only be achieved by considering issues of equity, universality and social justice. BHN interventions must be undertaken within such national frameworks and should strive to support this balance of factors (Beaulieu, 1995).

Canada was a signatory to the 20/20 proposal of the 1995 World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen, which called for both donors and developing-country governments to voluntarily allocate at least 20 percent of their budgets to social development (Coté, 1996). In pledging 25 percent of its ODA to basic human needs (though this includes food aid), Canada has moved some distance toward the Copenhagen proposal. CIDA will be held to this objective, but now negotiations must be used to convince recipient governments to allocate 20 percent of their national budgets to social-sector spending in a manner that truly benefits the poor (Husain, 1996).

To this end, the public expenditure review (PER) process, initiated by the World Bank in many countries, should be engaged by CIDA's bilateral programs, as it has in some countries. However, these processes have been undermined by poor management and monitoring systems on the part of Southern governments, which typically result in less allocation, ultimately, to the social sector. As Toye and Jackson (1996) point out, PERs should be linked to on-the-ground poverty assessments. In particular, donor agencies should use these studies to estimate the net impact of all government expenditures and taxpayer/user charges on the poor, and to facilitate among various stakeholders a dialogue and consensus on public-expenditure decisions.

5.4.3 Gender and Development

The review team was surprised and concerned to find that most of the project evaluations in the sample of the present study generally did not address gender and development (GAD) issues in detail. In most cases, except when projects explicitly targeted women as beneficiaries, the project evaluations contained very little information on results in relation to women. Most evaluations did not refer to a gender strategy in the projects they assessed. This finding is especially striking in light of the fact that the projects reviewed were BHN projects, which are focused on activities which women tend to manage, particularly those in health and education. After a decade of effort on women in development and gender equity at CIDA, surely more could have been expected from both the projects and their evaluations.

It is, of course, well-understood that women's participation in all stages of the project cycle is crucial to development success. And much is known about how to effectively facilitate such participation. In particular, the daily workload of women inside and outside the home as well as their cultural values must be examined carefully in project planning in order to create appropriate conditions for women's participation.

Nevertheless, some projects at CIDA (a minority in the present sample, and many others in other program areas) are in fact being planned and implemented using comprehensive gender strategies. However, the findings of the present study suggest that such approaches may not be well-known across CIDA units. It also can be concluded that, overall, project evaluations in the

BHN area have not addressed gender issues in a meaningful way. This may be a result of inadequately conceived terms of reference for evaluators or inadequate expertise in gender issues on the part of the selected evaluators. There is work to be done on this matter by CIDA.

At the policy level, CIDA documents reflect a strong relationship between gender equity and basic human needs. In the Agency's 1995 policy on women in development, reference is made to GAD being used to promote the practical needs as well as strategic interests of women. Such practical needs involve clean water, shelter, income, health care, and so on. Strategic interests may include legal rights, protection from domestic violence, and increased decision-making in organizations. Clearly, the advancement of practical needs and strategic interests are both necessary for sustainable gains to be made in gender equity.

5.4.4 Capacity Building

In the projects reviewed here, there is some evidence to indicate that, contrary to their objectives, some institutional strengthening projects have actually tended to encourage financial dependence on Northern funds. Several evaluations documented the difficulties faced by institutions after the withdrawal of Canadian financing upon the completion of the project. Insufficient attention was paid in these cases to assisting the institution draw up practical, short-term plans for moving toward financial sustainability. In the late 1990s, funding issues are crucial.

More generally, it was also found that several projects did not adequately assess the capacity of the local partner organization to carry on a full program of activities without their Northern partner. While some local agencies were able to absorb and disburse funds, the quality of their management and programming, without external support, proved to be inadequate.

There are many other issues related to BHN and capacity building identified both by project evaluations and by other CIDA documents. In particular, more is known now about capacity development, as distinct from capacity building, where the former includes efforts to reform the macro-environment in which institutions operate as well as structures and systems within institutions. Future interventions in BHN should adopt this broader approach.

Yet questions still remain. Capacity building of a line ministry (eg. Education, Health) or of an NGO may have merit, but such meso-level interventions cannot remain detached from micro-level activities. In fact, the findings of the present study would suggest that the true test of meso-level capacity building is actually micro-level impact, as well as, to a certain extent, macro-level impact. In basic human needs, interventions which are multi-level in this sense possess the potential to succeed.

Overall, capacity building is extremely important in the basic human needs area. Ultimately, it will be local organizations in the state and civil society that will succeed or fail in meeting and sustaining basic human needs among the poor. Short-term provision of services is exactly that—short-term. Sustainability of service in the long-term is only possible through effective and substantial institutional capacity development.

5.4.5 Benefits to Canada

A majority (52 percent) of Canadians agree that ODA funds should be spent, in priority, for basic human needs and emergency relief (Insight Canada Research, 1995). This finding reflects traditional Canadian values: mutual respect, dignity for all human beings, assistance for people in emergency situations, equity in access to social services, and individual responsibility and

efficient management of resources and cooperation within the international community. Canadians are also concerned with sound utilization of ODA resources and wish to ensure that the people most in need benefit from Canada's development efforts.

There is, therefore, a major constituency among Canadian taxpayers for CIDA taking a results-oriented approach to basic human needs and poverty reduction. This segment of voters, still a majority, wants accountability and results in terms of better living standards and quality of life for project beneficiaries. For this constituency, the purpose of aid is neither business nor trade. For these Canadians, ODA is certainly not about further aggrandizing local elites. A strong, clear policy, performance review framework, and organizational structure for BHN instituted by CIDA over the next few years would be welcomed and supported in an ongoing fashion by this constituency.

There is also the issue of tyed aid. As another study has observed: "Untying aid from Canadian commercial objectives is essential to allow CIDA to focus more concertedly on poverty alleviation. In fact, increasing the share of our aid to the poorest countries and to social programs or even small-scale income generation projects will diminish the scope for linking it to Canadian goods and services. Aid which is supply-driven is not the most effective way of meeting basic needs, and can be difficult for the recipient country to absorb (North-South Institute, 1994:21). Canada's proportion of untied aid is about 40 percent, while other DAC countries average almost 60 percent. (Van Rooy, 1995). There is room for Canada to do more in this regard.

At the same time, Canada has internationally-recognized expertise in social-policy development and programming. The promotion of this expertise in the context of basic human needs would be a worthwhile contribution to developing countries while using the services of Canadian firms. One potential growth area is for Canadian firms specializing in BHN to capture the benefits of more contracts with multilateral institutions, and some of this is occurring presently. In basic human needs, the benefits to Canada must be seen as service-oriented and not goods-oriented aid.

5.4.6 Participation

In the project evaluations reviewed for the present study, there was a remarkable and disturbing lack of detailed discussion of the issue of participation. The trend in the sample of projects appears to be that beneficiaries were not substantially consulted in the planning or evaluation phases of projects, performance which ignores two decades of learning on participation. This is especially cause for concern in the case of women participants in BHN interventions.

In contrast, however, the corporate evaluation of CIDA's NGO program recognized the important role of civil society in delivering basic services and building capacity among the poor to solve their own problems, and discussed the participation dimension in detail. The CIDA experience (as well as experience elsewhere) indicates, though, that while NGO capacity to promote participation is substantial, the sector often lacks the ability to replicate and scale up their innovative projects.

CIDA policy documents are often eloquent and insightful on the question of participation. One report makes a clear case in favour of promoting the synergy among the three levels of participation: macro, meso and micro. Micro-level participation cannot ensure long-term social change; this can only occur if there are changes in the macro-environment and in institutional capacity at the meso-level (Beaulieu and Manoukian, 1994). There is an important opportunity to employ good governance and democratization interventions at the macro-level to create a productive space in which basic human needs may be advanced at the micro-level.

In general, the political aspect of participation must be acknowledged and understood in detail. Elites and professionals (in both the North and the South) can siphon off the benefits of aid programs before they reach the poor. Authentic participation involves "levelling the playing field" for marginalized groups. CIDA officers need training in how to facilitate such participation throughout the project cycle, and should be rewarded for doing so.

5.5 *Sub-Sector Issues*

Overall, CIDA's in-house expertise in the sub-sectors of basic human needs appears to have been considerably weakened in recent years. The dismantling of Professional Services Branch, in the early 1990s, is a major factor in this regard. PSB housed specialists in education, social dimensions, shelter, health, participation, and other areas. These personnel were later dispersed into different Agency branches, or left CIDA altogether, sometimes returning as consultants. While the main branches now house some specialists in BHN sub-sectors, a critical mass of such expertise does not exist. This lack of expertise in BHN sub-sectors is a factor that could undermine the achievement of the 25 percent allocation target for BHN as a whole.

Directly related to this deficiency is a lack of current, comprehensive sub-priority studies on an Agency-wide basis in the BHN area. Most studies in the BHN sub-sectors are dated (population, 1991; water 1991). Two (education, 1995 and health, 1996) are very recent. There are no recent sector studies for family planning/reproductive health care, nutrition, or shelter. This places all CIDA units at a disadvantage in policy, program and project planning for basic human needs.

In general, CIDA's strongest areas of intervention, in sub-sector terms, have been in primary health care, especially immunization, and in rural water supply and sanitation. In the first half of the 1990s, its areas of least achievement have been basic education and shelter. This assessment applies to spending allocations, effectiveness and innovation.

5.5.1 *Primary Health Care*

CIDA is very active in primary health care, particularly through immunization against infectious diseases and AIDS treatment and prevention. Its main partner in primary health care (PHC) programming is the Canadian Public Health Association. Other notable partners in PHC programming are the Aga Khan Foundation, UNICEF Canada and CARE Canada, among others. At the time of writing, the Agency released a new Health Strategy, which seeks to address the international challenges in this field, particularly through maternal child care.

However, CIDA's efforts in PHC are hampered by a shortage of staff specializing in health. In 1995, there were only four such specialists in the entire agency (Van Rooy, 1995), an insufficient critical mass to fully implement the new Health Strategy. There have also been some tendencies in bilateral branches to invest in policy and institutional projects in the health sector that strengthen urban professionals and their systems, but whose impacts may not reach the poor in rural areas, or even the urban poor. Public expenditure reviews, undertaken in some countries in Africa and Asia, have been used to push local-country spending on health and education but, again, may not result in authentic transfer of PHC resources to the low-income consumer of services, unless they are blended with poverty assessments and participatory strategies. In general, bilateral projects in health must also guard against imposing Canadian health-reform strategies directly on developing countries, where conditions are, to say the least, very different.

5.5.2 Basic Education

Nearly a decade ago, Sharing Our Future (1987) proposed two priorities for education: literacy programs necessary for success in other development sectors, and skills training, particularly for professionals and managers. Many NGOs support small-scale literacy programs around the world, and this is, indeed, a contribution to basic education. At the same time, many bilateral projects provide professional and managerial training, which is not basic education. With a few exceptions, though, CIDA's bilateral programs have done very little to date in the areas of primary and secondary education. Perhaps this is not surprising given the historical tendencies of NGOs to promote basic literacy and universities, colleges and consulting firms to promote higher education, technical and management training. These are, after all, CIDA's long-time partners.

In general, it would appear that CIDA spending has tended toward the "high-end" of education. While many CIDA policy statements indicate a priority in developing the human resources of the poor and marginalized, one study has observed that "in practice the kinds of HRD activities which the Agency supported tended to concentrate on higher level training in the modern sectors of the economy" (Mundy, 1995). The present review must agree with other studies that, overall, CIDA has achieved limited gains in basic education.

One area of promise for the future is that of basic education for girls. Projects recently underway or now being planned in Southern Africa, Pakistan and elsewhere have been thoughtfully conceived. Another promising but different initiative is that of a new basic education reform project in the Eastern Caribbean, which seeks to make macro, meso and micro level impacts in that region.

5.5.3 Family Planning and Reproductive Health Care

In a finding that is remarkable in itself, the present review team was unable to locate any project documentation in the family-planning sub-sector. In this area, "the distance between policy and practice is strikingly wide," as another study put it (Van Rooy, 1995:45). For most of the period under study here, CIDA's two main channels were: UNFPA and the International Planned Parenthood Federation. However, in 1995, the Federation's funding was eliminated. This sub-sector would appear to have received limited support from CIDA.

5.5.4 Nutrition

Nutrition interventions per se are virtually invisible in current CIDA documents. However, food aid is not. A large proportion of CIDA's disbursements in BHN has been directed to food aid. Canada is the largest per capita donor of food aid in the world (Van Rooy, 1995). It is therefore crucial to improve the links between the emergency relief function of food aid and the goal of long-term development. The troubling tension between external food aid versus local food security must be explicitly addressed in future policies and programs.

5.5.5 Water and Sanitation

Of all of the sub-sectors in BHN, water and sanitation is the one in which CIDA appears to have directly implemented the most programming and has, in some countries, worked hard to progressively improve performance. Review of CIDA studies and projects in this sub-sector indicate the importance of the social component, the need for detailed baseline studies, establishing an evaluation framework at the design stage of a project, and ensuring adequate

allocation of resources to both the technical and social sides of the project of a water project is directly related to efforts devoted to its planning.

In general, the success sense; a more be sought.

Other lessons from sectoral analyses by CIDA are:

- 1) Access for all is too ambitious and unrealistic a target for CIDA in this sub-sector.
- 2) A better balance between macro and micro levels of intervention must be sought.
- 3) Planning too often neglects the operation and maintenance aspect, as well as elements of the participation of the population, particularly that of women.
- 4) Health and education components must be integrated into projects in this sub-sector.
- 5) Impact studies are rarely carried out by CIDA in this sub-sector.
- 6) All aspects of sustainability must be evaluated and strategies developed adapted to implement user fees.
- 7) Indicators of training have tended to place more emphasis on outputs and operational aspects than on actual learning and impacts.
- 8) Over the past 20 years, CIDA has funded 90 water and sanitation projects of \$1 million in value each. However, only 12 evaluations were found to be adapted to these projects.
- 9) For maximum results, community mobilization must occur prior to technical components.

Several projects reviewed here were originally classified under the broad water category but in light of current ODA priorities, it became evident that such projects should appear under categories, such as infrastructure and/or environment. As in any BHN sub-priority, careful analysis of a given project's activities, outputs and budget should be used to determine whether the project should appear in a particular BHN category.

5.5.6 Shelter

Shelter, in the BHN sense of the term, receives little direct attention by CIDA presently. Some NGOs run CIDA-funded projects with housing components, but reports of these initiatives are rarely aggregated, nor are their results comparatively analyzed. The present lack of a shelter specialist at CIDA and a sub-sector strategy in this area are obstacles to further work in this area.

The 1996 Habitat II conference in Istanbul recently stimulated CIDA to review its efforts in urban development and human settlements. Concerns with good governance and urbanization have led CIDA to increase the size and number of its projects on this theme, often implemented by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Institute of Public Administration of Canada, and the Canadian Urban Institute. Over the past ten years the Agency has spent \$700 million on urban management programming (Canadian Urban Institute, 1996).

The paradox of this type of programming is that it is usually aimed at municipal politicians and officials and the administration and infrastructure of cities as a whole, rather than at targeted ways and means of providing housing for vulnerable groups in the city. Micro-level studies are needed to determine the impact of such programs on basic human needs such as shelter. Still, meso-level capacity-building in urban strategic planning and facilitation by cities of community-group capacity-building hold promise to result in improved shelter for the poor.

5.5.7 *Integrated Basic Human Needs*

Projects which manage an integrated set of BHN interventions deserve their own category as a sub-sector. Such projects carry the promise of making a real difference in certain context, especially in working with the "ultra-poor."

During the next round of coding and counting project expenditures, several projects, such as the Cambodia Canada Development Program and the Pakistan NGO Support Project, should be included in the Integrated BHN Category because they address several sub-sectors. It is very important that, at the planning stage, such projects be assigned specific targets in order to avoid this category becoming a catch-all category used to code projects that pursue several objectives in more than one sub-sector. This has not happened with these projects, but there is potential for it to happen. The Integrated BHN category should not become an easy way to design complicated projects that will appear attractive to funders but would have in fact very little focus.

5.6 *Lessons Learned*

CIDA's experience in basic human needs over the past five years suggests a number of lessons related to intervention strategies, organizational structures, and delivery methods. Some of the most notable of these lessons are as follows:

Lessons on Strategy

- 1) Basic human needs interventions must work at the policy (macro), institutional (meso) and project (micro) levels, with each level reinforcing and optimizing the impacts at the other levels.
- 2) The gender dimension is central to the success of basic human needs programming, and all such interventions must be guided by comprehensive gender strategies
- 3) Sustainability of basic human needs demands significant contributions to recurrent and capital costs by local consumers and governance structures.
- 4) Basic human needs cannot be met through social development alone; economic development interventions must be implemented in parallel with social interventions, though not necessarily by the same organization.
- 5) Donor agencies and developing countries should link and coordinate basic human needs interventions with interventions in good governance and democratic development.
- 6) Contribution, not attribution, is what matters in generating impacts in basic human needs. Development agencies should focus on collectively raising standard of services an access and tracking related impacts rather than seeking recognition or "waving the flag" for their individual efforts.

Lessons on Structure

- 7) There are multiple stakeholders along the "aid chain" to whom development professionals are accountable in basic human needs programming, including, in the North, legislators and taxpayers and, in the South, local governance structure and poor households — and not only Northern government treasuries.
- 8) Greater attention should be given to ways and means of creating authentic, effective partnerships between Northern and Southern agencies engaged in basic human needs work.
- 9) Measurement, monitoring and performance review in basic human needs must be based on detailed, critical research of local conditions; comparative standards of service, access and performance; and continuity over time, both prior to interventions via baseline studies, and after interventions through post-project impact assessments.

Lessons on Methods

- 10) Aid-agency personnel must be trained in and rewarded for facilitating local participation in basic human needs interventions. ODA organizations should rededicate themselves to participation as a central feature of all basic human needs work.
- 11) Local governing structures should make decisions, administer finances, and collect fees, and ensure maintenance and standard of service with respect to the provision of basic human needs. The building of local capacity for this purpose is fundamental to long-term sustainability of service and access.
- 12) Non-governmental organizations have demonstrated around the world an impressive capacity to promote basic human needs through small-scale projects. They must build their capacity to replicate and diffuse their projects to larger numbers of beneficiaries, usually in alliance with governments and multilaterals.
- 13) New roles need to be found for the private sector in providing basic human needs.
- 14) New forms of results-based management techniques should be tested, refined and disseminated inside and outside of official development agencies with respect to programs and projects directed at basic human needs.

Some of these lessons are similar to those found in the broader development literature; other lessons are more specific to the CIDA experience. All of these lessons, however, should inform the Agency's future work in this area.

5.7 Conclusion

Canada's commitment to allocate 25 percent of official development assistance means that basic human needs must be taken seriously by all branches and at all levels of CIDA. However, a review of CIDA's recent experience indicates that, while there has been some promising innovation at the policy and project levels, generally, the area of basic human needs has received inadequate attention, support and resources relative to its importance as an ODA priority. In order for CIDA to optimize its impacts in the area of programming, a number of issues must be addressed, including, among others, the need to develop results-oriented strategies for BHN interventions; the need to improve the Agency's coding and counting system; and the need to establish a learning culture at CIDA to drive BHN and other priority-area results. A detailed performance review of CIDA's efforts in the area of basic human needs should be informed by the findings of the present study.





6. *Conclusions*

The 1.3 billion people who live today in extreme poverty in developing countries deserve the solidarity, partnership and generosity of those more fortunate. In spite of declining ODA budgets, both donor agencies and developing countries must do more to meet the basic human needs of this global constituency. For its part, Canada has pledged to allocate 25 percent of its aid budget for this purpose. This is a serious commitment that is being monitored by the world community.

Issues and trends in the international literature and in CIDA's own experience over the past five years indicate that much is known about what works—and what does not—in basic human needs programming. The lessons which can be drawn in this regard relate to intervention strategies, organizational structures, and delivery methods. Some lessons are well-known; others have emerged clearly for the first time. All deserve serious reflection and action by CIDA and other development agencies in the years ahead.

The findings of this review suggest that there is much that CIDA can and should do now to prepare to design and deliver programming in basic human needs which generates maximum results. At the same time, there are strong arguments for examining in more detail, through a major thematic review, some of the critical issues and trends identified in the present study. This review could contribute to a more thoroughgoing organizational change to build CIDA's capacity to successfully meet its 25 percent commitment to basic human needs.

A results-oriented approach to basic human needs will be fundamental to this success. It is crucial now that the learning from the past be mobilized in the service of the results of the future. Learning for results is the way forward.

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Appendix C

Options for Further Review

The present study has provided valuable insights into the state of policy and programming in basic human needs at CIDA and elsewhere. In general, currently the Agency's lack of a clear comprehensive policy on BHN, its lack of a clear counting and coding system aligned with international definitions, and its underdeveloped systems for incorporating lessons learned from previous projects, all are factors which must be addressed regardless of what form a detailed review takes.

At the same time, it is important to recognize the Agency's very rich base of experience in some aspects of past BHN programming and promising current and future efforts in results-based management and in BHN programming. New approaches to country development planning frameworks are also promising and should be built upon.

In light of the findings of the present study, it is unrealistic to expect that application of the RBM framework for results and accountabilities to assess past projects would yield particularly useful findings. Rather, it would be more productive for CIDA to incorporate into its detailed performance review of BHN dimensions of change-facilitation and action-research. That is, the review process itself should be used as an opportunity to improve present and future systems and performance at various levels of Agency operations for BHN. This approach should be taken for any type of detailed review.

Still, some options for the design of the review offer more potential than others. In the accompanying chart, five options are outlined: sectoral evaluations, country evaluations, regional evaluations, best-practices evaluation, and a global survey of stakeholders. The option recommended here is country evaluations in each region of Africa, the Americas and Asia, because of this approach's comparatively greater potential to generate insights into how future BHN programming could become results-based and learning-oriented at the macro, meso and micro levels. Further, country-level performance-improvement and action-research could mediate between and promote internal change at CIDA's policy and project levels at the same time.

The country-evaluation approach could be designed early this fiscal year, and data could be gathered in the field in mid through late 1996, with the study being written up at the end of calendar-year 1996. A final draft of the evaluation report could thus be tabled with CIDA in March 1997. There is no reason why other corporate-change activities at CIDA with reference to BHN could not proceed in some areas in parallel with this evaluation. Fiscal year 1997-1998 could become a year to consolidate and implement corporate, policy and program changes and a new performance review regime in basic human needs.

OPTIONS FOR A DETAILED THEMATIC REVIEW OF BASIC HUMAN NEEDS, 1996-1997

Option	Strategy	Issues*	Sampling	Recommended Implementation Approach and Research Design
I.	Sectoral Evaluations: programs, projects in three A's selected from the different CIDA funding channels	1 3	Sample will be constructed of projects in each sector selected, and would aim for wide representation of funding channels, regions and delivery structures	<p>Bilateral Data Gathering Instrument would be used as a framework for data collection, along with any sectoral/draft sectoral policies</p> <p>Qualitative and quantitative data would be collected through reading files, conducting structured interviews with project stakeholders and sectoral experts. The use of participatory research techniques would be favoured</p>
II.	<p>RECOMMENDED OPTION Country Evaluations CIDA projects funded under different channels.</p> <p>• one country in each of three A's or • two countries in each of three A's</p>	2 3 4	<p>Africa: Mali, Ghana, Cameroon, Senegal, Niger, Tanzania Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, South Africa</p> <p>Asia - Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Philippines, India, Pakistan</p> <p>Americas-Haiti, Bolivia, Jamaica, Peru, Honduras, OECS</p>	<p>Policy and planning documents (R/CPF, policies on CIDA's cross-cutting themes, etc.) would be measured against actual accomplishments in the field</p> <p>Qualitative and quantitative data would be collected through reading files, conducting structured interviews with project stakeholders and sectoral experts. The use of participatory research techniques would be favoured</p>
III.	Regional Evaluation • basket of three to four countries and of five to ten projects, selected from all CIDA funding channels	3 4	<p>South Africa Region has a RPF which has BHN as main thrust</p> <p>South Asia (Pakistan, India, Bangladesh)</p> <p>Central America</p>	<p>Same as above, but the RPF would be used as the main guiding document</p> <p>Qualitative and quantitative data would be collected through reading files, conducting structured interviews with project stakeholders and sectoral experts. The use of participatory research techniques would be favoured</p>

OPTIONS FOR A DETAILED THEMATIC REVIEW OF BASIC HUMAN NEEDS, 1996-1997

Option	Strategy	Issues*	Sampling	Recommended Implementation Approach and Research Design
IV.	Best-Practices Evaluation •Five to ten projects worldwide	2	Projects illustrating results and learning oriented planning/design, management, monitoring and interventions at the three levels (macro, meso, micro). Could lead to manual on BHN and RBM	Process indicators will have to be developed to guide data collection and analysis. Qualitative and quantitative data would be collected through reading files, conducting structured interviews and project stakeholders and sectoral experts. The use of participatory research techniques would be favoured
V.	Global Questionnaire to sample of project stakeholders – CIDA, CEA, RC, NGOs, etc.	2 4	Sample generated from project files	Analysis of responses to questionnaire based on documents above

* Issues to be primarily addressed by the different studies:

1. Determine the extent of CIDA's past, current and planned achievements in the areas of BHN, in each sub-sector
2. Best practices in BHN programming. what programming approaches produce the most sustainable results and under what conditions?
3. To what extent is past, current and planned BHN programming aligned with the new ODA policy ?
4. Effectiveness of CIDA's policies, procedures, planning and implementation approaches in achieving measurable and sustainable results in BHN programming. Degree of coordination of efforts of all CIDA programming channels toward a particular country program

Note: Countries could be selected on the basis of total bilateral disbursements, emphasizing in the sample countries with large Canadian ODA programs.



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