



Working Paper

51

EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF NGOs IN RURAL POVERTY ALLEVIATION

UGANDA COUNTRY STUDY

John de Coninck

**with additional material by
Roger C. Riddell**

**Results of ODI research presented in preliminary form
for discussion and critical comment**

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WORKING PAPER 51

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Overseas Development Institute

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Roger C. Riddell**

February 1992

ISBN 0 85003 159 1

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PREFACE

This Working Paper forms part of a substantial ODI research project which sets out to assess the impact of Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) in poverty alleviating projects in different geographical and institutional settings. It follows the publication in 1990 of *Working Paper No. 37 'Judging Success: Evaluating NGO Approaches To Alleviating Poverty in Developing Countries'*, and is one of four country similar studies.

The other three, also to be published as Working Papers, are studies of Bangladesh, India, and Zimbabwe. They are the result of lengthy evaluations and country analyses undertaken during the course of 1990. The titles are as follows:

- 49 Evaluating the Impact of NGOs in Rural Poverty Alleviation:
India Country Study, Mark Robinson
- 50 Evaluating the Impact of NGOs in Rural Poverty Alleviation:
Bangladesh Country Study, Sarah White
- 52 Evaluating the Impact of NGOs in Rural Poverty Alleviation:
Zimbabwe Country Study, Ann Muir

The Working Paper is arranged in three parts. The first part is designed to place four case study evaluations of NGO projects in Uganda in their context through a discussion of the country's particular development and poverty problems and performance. It also describes the manner in which the government, official and non-governmental initiatives help to address these problems.

The second, more substantial, part of the Working Paper presents the results of the four case study evaluations. These are:

- the Uganda Women's Finance and Credit Trust Ltd, based in Kampala and funded in part by Christian Aid.
- The West Acholi Cooperative Union engineering workshop, located in Gulu town 350 kms north of Kampala and financed by ACORD.
- the Multi-Sectoral Rural Development Programme based some 90 miles east of Kampala and run by the Busoga diocese of the Church of Uganda, and funded in part by Christian Aid.
- The Mityana Programme, located some 70 kms west of Kampala, run and financed by ActionAid.

The final part of the Working Paper draws together conclusions from the case study evaluations and assesses their wider significance for NGO poverty alleviation programmes in Uganda.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have contributed to this report, both in Uganda and at ODI. Regrettably, all cannot be named here, but special thanks are due in the first place to the collaborators who worked on the case studies: Mary Nannonno, from the Ministry of Industry, for the evaluations of the MSRDP and the UWFCT; Sam Kayabwe, from the Makerere Institute of Social Research, for the study of the ActionAid programme in Mityana; and Alan Tulip, who helped with the evaluation of the WACU workshop in Gulu. Without their support and professionalism, none of the evaluations would have been possible.

These case studies also depended on the active collaboration of all the NGOs whose projects were assessed: in all cases, they did not hesitate to make time, hospitality and other resources generously available. At UWFCT, Sarah Mangali, the General Manager, encouraged our work, the programme officers made the field visits rewarding and the Trust's clients agreed to spend long hours with us. In Busoga, the MSRDP staff (and especially Margaret Egonda) also extended generous assistance both in Jinja and in the field: aid post personnel and the local population not only collaborated in the survey but extended their hospitality in the various project areas. In Gulu, WACU staff were equally generous, as was ACORD in providing invaluable logistics support. Finally, ActionAid and their staff (especially Christopher Muyingo and Faustine Vuningoma) made sure our stay in Mityana was as interesting as it was pleasant.

John de Coninck is based in Kampala as a freelance consultant, having worked for ACORD for many years in Uganda. The research project under which this Working Paper has been prepared is funded by the Overseas Development Administration, the Leverhulme Trust and five British NGOs: ActionAid, Cafod, Christian Aid, Oxfam and Save the Children Fund. Their support is gratefully acknowledged. Financial assistance to cover the fieldwork in Uganda was provided by Barclays Bank.

SUMMARY

After years of political unrest, economic turmoil, and a succession of mass killings, Uganda is ranked amongst the poorest countries in Africa today. While the restoration of peace across most of the country since 1986, together with historically high rates of economic growth, have restored some confidence in the future of Uganda, the country's public administration is still racked by inefficiency and absenteeism, and economic growth does not yet appear to have led to a decrease in the numbers in poverty. It is in this difficult context that NGOs are operating in Uganda. Most foreign NGOs left the country during the Amin regime and since their return in the 1980s, many have concentrated on emergency and relief work. However, in more recent years, more and more foreign NGOs have attempted to switch to development work, while there has also been a significant growth in indigenous non-denominational NGOs to add to the churches who were important in providing services to Uganda as state structures collapsed in the 1970s and early 1980s.

The bulk of this Working Paper reports the findings of the evaluations which took place during 1990 of four NGO projects in Uganda. The first is the Uganda Women's Finance and Credit Trust which was founded in 1987, and run by Ugandan women based in Kampala. By 1990 the Trust had funded over 120 projects for some 1,500 women who would otherwise have found it difficult to obtain access to credit. The second is the West Acholi cooperative Union engineering workshop, located in Gulu town. The workshop has exhibited both adaptability and flexibility in producing a range of agricultural equipment for the region, but its future is in doubt, both because of the difficult political environment in which it is situated and because of management weaknesses. The third project is the Multi-Sectoral Rural Development Programme run by the Busoga diocese of the Church of Uganda. A key element of the programme consists of the establishment of medical aid posts which are not only community-based but are run on an imaginative, and in many ways successful, cost-sharing approach to health care. The final project is the Mityana Programme, run as a multi-sectoral initiative in three sub-counties, covering agriculture, health, water and education. The ODI evaluation is principally concerned with the skills-training and income-generating component of the programme, aimed at encouraging non-agricultural economic activities, especially for the women and the youth of the area. While the project illustrates the transition from a 'welfare' to a more 'participatory' vision of the development process, the impact of programme would appear to have been limited.

The Working Paper ends by making a number of more general observations about NGOs in Uganda, while stressing that the lack of hard data makes it impossible to draw anything but tentative conclusions. Nonetheless, NGOs in Uganda appear to have made a significant contribution in three ways. First, their relief activities have undoubtedly helped to relieve widespread suffering. Second, NGO involvement in long-term development has, in certain areas, provided facilities and services which otherwise would not have been available, particularly in the health and sanitation fields. Finally, NGO work suggests that successful development projects require a high level of participation from the intended beneficiaries, an active contribution in their implementation and management, and should rest on the utilisation of local resources and skills.

For the future, the Working Paper suggests that NGOs are likely to have a crucial role to play in strengthening civil society with diverse and effective pressure groups able to sustain and reinforce mechanisms of democratic control.

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1. OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

Uganda has a population of around 17½ million. In 1989, its gross domestic product (GDP) was estimated to be \$4.46 billion, giving a GDP per capita of \$272 in that year. With such a low level of per capita income, Uganda is classified as one of 42 'least developed countries': according to World Bank data, it is the 22nd poorest country in the world - and the 13th poorest in Africa - in terms of GNP per capita (World Bank: 1989a: 64).¹

The tragedy is that at the time of Independence in 1962 Uganda's relative standing was far higher: in the 1960s, it was viewed as one of the most promising economies of sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). From 1963 to 1970, economic growth averaged 6% a year and Uganda had the fourth highest GDP per capita in the whole sub-Saharan region. From 1970, however, the country was racked by political and economic turmoil, and a succession of internal conflicts and mass killings which had a prolonged and devastating effect on the economic, social and civil life of the country. Indeed normal life broke down, with neither the government of the day or the civil service able to run the country as state structures collapsed.

At the start of the 1970s, major parts of the modern sectors of the economy were in the hands of the Asian community. Idi Amin's expulsion of some 80,000 Asians (although initially a popular move) transformed both the economic and cultural fabric of major areas of society, leading as well to a series of problems which persist down to this day, such as the abandonment and closing down of a wide range of productive enterprises, and confusion created over the ownership of both commercial and residential properties: some people were 'given' these abandoned properties, often to 'sell' and 're-sell' them, others simply moved in and occupied abandoned commercial and residential properties, while buildings and machinery were cannibalised.²

With the 1979 'Liberation War' and Idi Amin's fall, Uganda attempted to reconstruct its economy. After a period of initial optimism, however, the second Obote regime (referred to as Obote 2) ushered in a period of further violence and destruction. In 1986, President Yoweri Museveni's Government came to power inheriting an economy in ruins, a social structure severely strained and a civil service unable to administer the country. The extent of the devastation wrought is apparent from the fact that in that year the country's GNP was below the level reached in 1968, and per capita GDP was 35% lower than it had been at the time of Independence, 25 years previously. The years of war and internal conflict have displaced hundreds of thousands of people and left thousands of children orphaned. To add to this - and in common with many other countries in Africa - Uganda has been particularly badly affected by the AIDS virus, creating further social upheaval, and swelling the already large number of orphans and elderly people with no one left to support them. Even today,

¹ On the Purchasing Power Parity index, however, Uganda's GDP per capita in 1987 is given as \$511 and, using the recently developed Human Development Index, Uganda is ranked as the 28th poorest country.

² The West Acholi Cooperative Union engineering workshop in Gulu, one of the four case studies discussed in this Working Paper, was originally built and owned by Asians.

parts of the country are still emerging from this prolonged period of bloodshed, social chaos and economic decline. For the last four years of the 1980s, banditry, civil unrest and widespread displacement of people from their homes have still characterised life in parts of the North and East of the country.

In contrast with many other African countries, however, Uganda's deteriorating economic record has not led to widespread starvation or famine. This is both because, with rich soils and all-year round rainfall, the country is very fertile, and because of a relatively plentiful supply of land, landlessness is not a widespread problem in most of Uganda (see below). What is more, since the installation of the Museveni Government in 1986, not only has the country been charged with a degree of optimism and hope for a better future, but peace has been restored to much of the country, and the economy has been experiencing the most rapid and sustained growth for over 20 years. All the major OECD countries, as well as the leading multilateral agencies, have returned to Uganda to provide increasing amounts of development assistance, while both the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank have become the country's major creditors, lending the Government many hundreds of millions of dollars.

Some figures indicate the progress already. GDP growth averaged an impressive 6.6% a year in the four-year period 1987 to 1990, with per capita GDP rising by an average of 3.6% a year. Aggregate trends of economic growth performance, of course, provide only the crudest indicator of wealth; they tell an even more inadequate story about the extent and depth of poverty. While extreme caution is need when using and interpreting all data on Uganda, those reproduced in the Table 1 suggest a marked downturn in relation to a number of key social indicators, an assessment reinforced by trends of reduced state spending on health and education over the long term (with considerable implications for NGO activities in the country). In 1988-89, for instance, real financing of the recurrent budget of the Ministry of Health was only 17% of the level of funding achieved in 1970-71, and only 10.5% in per capita terms. Likewise by the mid-1980s, real state expenditure on education was less than one third the level reached in the late 1970s. Overall, government revenue (from its own sources) at the end of the 1980s amounted to only some 10% (in real terms) of the levels achieved in the early 1970s.

1.2 Poverty in Uganda

Trends in aggregate per capita growth rates, and even a cursory knowledge of recent history, indicate not only that Uganda's people are poor but that poverty has increased over a 20 year period, leaving the population increasingly vulnerable and deprived. Average per capita income levels moreover conceal the extent and depth of this poverty, since Uganda suffers from a skewed distribution of income. Although the most 'recent' data on income distribution are some 15 to 20 years old, they still provide a useful guide to contemporary inequalities. The figures indicate that the top 10% of households have access to over 30% of national income and that 40% of the lowest income households have access to only 17% of total national income.

Preliminary results from the pilot study of Uganda's 1988 Household Budget Survey confirm both a wide spread of expenditure patterns and marked differences in expenditure levels

Table 1 Indicators of overall deterioration in living standards

	25-30 years ago	15-20 years ago	1989 estimate	
Gross primary school enrolments: % of group	67	44	58	
Teacher/pupil ratio (pupils per teacher) secondary schools	19	23	19	
Population per doctor	11,107	9,200	21,903	
	1973-77	1978-82	1983-88	
Infant mortality rate	92	114	101	
Under 5 mortality rate	180	200	180	
	1960s	1970s	1980	1988
% of rural population with access to safe water	18	16	5	13

Sources: World Bank (1989c: 316-317) and UNICEF (1989)

between and within rural and urban areas of Uganda. In 1988, the average urban household spent 2¼ times as much as the average rural household with a large proportion of rural households clustered in the lowest expenditure groupings. Thus, over 90% of all rural households spent 30,000 USH or less a month in 1988, compared with less than 60% of urban households.³ Only 2% of rural households spent more than 50,000 USH a month, compared with 30% of urban households.⁴

The preliminary results of the 1988 Household Budget Survey also confirm regional differences in expenditure, most notably between the Northern and all other regions: average expenditure in the Northern region at 11,908 USH a month was only 67% of the national average, and was 30% lower than the average expenditure of 17,353 USH of the next lowest (Eastern) region.

³ The 'old' Ugandan shilling (USH) was officially valued at 1,450 to one United States dollar in 1986. Following the introduction of a 'new' shilling in 1987 at a parity of USH 60 to the US\$. Since then there has been a succession of devaluations, some very substantial. The rate dropped from USH 223 to the dollar in 1989, to USH 440 by July 1990, and USH 655 by mid-April 1991. The objective has been to narrow the gap between the official and parallel rate (now legal for certain types of transactions), which in the mid-1980s was running at a level two to three times the official exchange rate.

⁴ Republic of Uganda, Ministry of Planning and Economic Development (MPED) and The Statistics Department (1990a) *Report on Household Budget Survey Pilot Survey (1988)*, Entebbe: The Statistics Department.

Expenditure levels can provide an indicator of poverty to the extent that one is able to link actual expenditure to the value of minimum needs, as well as analyse the proportion spent on different expenditure items. A June 1990 Ugandan study of income needs calculated that an urban family of four people, two adults and two children, would need a minimum monthly income ranging from 57,570 USh in Kampala to 31,380 USh in Masindi, simply to cover basic requirements. As actual household size is significantly higher, these figures would need to be inflated by at least 20%. If these minimum income figures are at all accurate they suggest that at least 60% of urban households are living in a serious state of poverty.

Further insights into (mostly urban) poverty can be obtained by contrasting minimum income needs with wages and salaries. The most recent (1988) manpower study estimated total formal sector employment at 378,000, amounting to just over 5% of the total labour force. Of these, no less than two-thirds were in government employment. Average Government wages and salaries paid in 1988 came to USh 3,127 a month, ranging from USh 1,175 (for the lowest paid) to USh 7,963 (for a principal judge). In private sector employment, the average stood at USh 7,312.

Comparing these figures with the estimated minimum income requirements highlighted above reveals a yawning gap between the two. One indication of the degree of inadequacy is provided by Chew who compares civil service salaries with just one basic food requirement, *matooke*. He comments thus (1990: 1004):

In November 1988, a bunch of *matooke* sufficient for a family of four for three days cost about 1,000 shillings in Kampala. The monthly basic salary of a newly recruited messenger with a family of four would permit him to purchase enough *matooke* to last his family only five days. The monthly salary of the head of the civil service would last 19 days.

Another indication of the low levels of remuneration comes from the price of transport. In Kampala at the end of 1990, the fare for the shortest bus ride was USh 150, making the minimum monthly charge for public transport USh 6,525.⁵

Average figures tell only part of the story: as in other countries, poverty tends to be more acute in some rural areas than in others, while within each region there is a spread between poorer and less poor individuals, households and groups. The Manpower Survey estimated that 6.6 mn (92%) of the total labour force of 7.2 mn lives in the rural areas, and of these, almost 80% are engaged in agricultural activities or 'attending to domestic duties'. Banugire (1990) judges that overall, some 70% of the rural population is made up of poor peasants, 20% middle peasants, living at levels more or less above the poverty line, and 8% richer groups, capable of 'substantial accumulation'. There are, however, marked regional variations: studies in one Buganda village, for instance, indicated that 50% of the population were poor including 37% of middle peasants, compared with ratios respectively of 83% and 3% in a study of one village in the north of the country (1990: 212).

⁵ Ugandan civil servants and other formal sector employers have had to show much inventiveness in supplementing wages by growing their own food and establishing small businesses. Inevitably, corruption has also reached endemic proportions.

The depth of rural poverty is confirmed by a base-line survey carried out by the UK NGO ActionAid in Mubende district in 1988, one of the most fertile areas of the country, but one which has suffered from neglect and mismanagement. The survey results showed that some 75% of farmers' cash income comes from selling crops or livestock and beer, and almost 20% from occasional wage labour. Yet one third of farmers were able to sell nothing, and almost 70% were only able to earn up to 3,000 USh in an extended period of over six months (ActionAid, 1988: 26ff).

In the same year, UNICEF undertook a baseline survey in one part of Mbarara District in Western Uganda. While the results confirmed the overall extent of poverty in this particular area, it also highlighted differences within the area, as well as identifying causes which tend to reinforce poverty. These were related to an often complex relationship between three dominant factors: lower levels of education, limited access to land, and limited access to other productive assets needed to raise agricultural productivity levels.

The UNICEF study did not highlight two additional aspects of poverty which are common to most analyses of small-scale farming in Uganda, namely the absence of credit and marketing and transport problems. Lack of transport and distance from marketing outlets is a key constraint inhibiting the shift from subsistence to cash crop farming, especially for those with very little land, limited access to credit.⁶

The study also revealed a positive correlation between the 'better-off' and a higher capacity to cope with poverty, either by having the means to do so (use of hired labour, access to protected water sources) or through knowledge (such as about immunisation of children, awareness of oral re-hydration methods) (Vella & Ndiku, 1989).

The comment was made above that the absence of widespread or permanent famine in Uganda is widely attributed to favourable climatic conditions, the quality of the soil and to the widely-held view that there is little overall land shortage. In reality, however, the issues are more complex. One of the most visible signs of poverty common in many developing countries is food shortage, manifested in malnutrition and usually measured by the health status of children. Although no national surveys have been carried out, the UNICEF study judged that among the poor majority, about one quarter of children were underweight and/or stunted. In other districts, and especially as one moves north, malnutrition has been widespread among children and adults for many years. The World Bank reported that in 1988, 30% of people coming to refugee camps in the north of the country were severely malnourished, while annual surveys for Kitgum District show that the proportion of severely and mildly malnourished children rose progressively, from 25% in 1986 to 41% in 1988 (*Health Information Quarterly*, June 1989, pp.40-44). What is more, undernourished children are not only a feature of the north of Uganda: in 1990, Oxfam reported that malnutrition was occurring in the southern Masaka district where it had previously been unknown.

The principal cause of food shortages and these severe incidents of malnutrition has been political, social and civil unrest. In 1988/89, an estimated one million people were displaced

⁶ Problems of gaining access to credit are discussed in the evaluation, below, of the Uganda Women's Finance and Credit Trust Ltd.

from their homes and not able to practice agriculture. More recently in 1990, well over half the populations of the districts of Soroti and Kumi were moved from their homes to camps. In some instances there has been widespread destruction of homes and agricultural assets, in others, such as in Lira, cattle raiders have all but destroyed the traditional way of life of tens of thousands of people.⁷ Clearly these types of incident both create and increase vulnerability to poverty, and they have almost become a 'semi-permanent' feature of life in districts such as Gulu, Kitgum, Soroti and Kumi.

Superimposed on these problems is that of land. There would appear to be little controversy over the statement that 'Uganda's 11 agro-ecological zones are, in general, adequately endowed in terms of food and non-food cash crops, with very minor exceptions' (Banugire, 1990: 207). One manifestation of this is the absence of widespread landlessness across the country, another is that cultivators are still able to move in and farm land which is currently idle. However these factors need to be contrasted with three others. First, in some areas, like Ankole and Karamoja, food is in chronically short supply: they are 'deficit regions, at any time' (Jamal, 1988: 685). Second, the land tenure system and population pressure have certainly led to land concentration and alienation in parts of Uganda, such as in Kigezi, areas of Buganda, and Bugisu, and resulted in large-scale out-migration for many years. But most importantly, the evidence from the base-line surveys is consistent with the view not only that access to land is a critically important determinant of the level of poverty and the health status of a household, but also that the (large) poorest groups simply do not have access to **sufficient** land in order to provide an income which will raise them above the poverty line. As the ActionAid survey in Mubende district points out (1988: 47):

Plots of two acres **cannot sustain** a family having no other source of income and our data show that over 79% of cultivators (not including those with other occupations) having no livestock cultivate 2 acres or less. This group of stockless small cultivators, who make up about 10% of the sample, represent what is probably the poorest group in the target area.

As in other countries, poverty in Uganda is manifested in a variety of other ways. These include poor housing status, lack of access to clean water, to health facilities and services, and to schooling. Inadequate housing is problem throughout the rural areas. In addition, World Bank analysis shows that over 60% of Kampala's population are slum dwellers living in medium-density slum settlements with external cooking facilities, no electricity, unsafe water and crude, if any, latrine systems. Only 27% of Kampala households have access to piped water into their houses or to their property. Overall in Uganda, only 8% of homes are supplied with electricity and a permanent water supply, the figures falling to 4% and 3% respectively in the rural areas. The World Bank judges that overall, perhaps less than 10% of rural households have access to any form of safe drinking water; with marked regional differences, the situation is even worse in many parts of the country.

⁷ The Agricultural Sector Survey, produced by the Planning Department of the Ministry of Animal Industry and Fisheries, gives a 1989 figure for the cattle population of Lira at 8,500 compared with almost 250,000 less than five years ago. The issue is discussed further in the West Acholi Cooperative Union case-study, below.

The most serious problem of the health care system is not the theoretical spread of facilities but its poor state of repair, together with inadequate numbers and training of (usually demoralised) staff, and the lack of drugs and equipment. At the start of 1989, 50% of Ministry of Health established posts remained unfilled (UNICEF, 1989: 53). The impact of these shortages tend to be spread disproportionately across the country. Thus, whereas in the East and Central regions, 90% women obtain prenatal care, the figure drops to 70% and below for West Nile and the West (Ministry of Health, 1989: 59). Similarly, 1989 estimates from the Ministry of Health suggest that whereas 48% of all children (12-23 months) had by then been fully immunised, with regional differences, figures range from almost 80% of children in Kampala to a low of less than 30% in West Nile (*Ibid.* pp.64).

Education statistics are known to be unreliable, yet like other social sectors, education is in deep crisis. The Government recently acknowledged that 'there has been a considerable decline in the quality of education' (Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, 1990c: 126), with declining facilities and untrained and poorly paid teachers. UNICEF data (based on Ministry of Education figures) suggest that only around 70% of children of the relevant age group are in primary school, but, as with health provision, there are wide regional differences. A major problem is the cost of schooling: one consequence is that there is substantial gender discrimination in school enrolments. At the start of primary school, 45 girls are enrolled for every 50 boys; by the end of primary, the ratio is 35 to 50, and by the fourth year of secondary school, there are only half as many girls enrolled as boys.

The problems of poverty in Uganda extend well beyond the lack of essential services. A generation and more of war, civil disturbance and social breakdown has left hundreds of thousands of people physically, mentally and psychologically scarred. Precise numbers are unknown, but the World Bank has suggested that some one million people (over 5% of the country's population) are physically or mentally disabled in Uganda.

Regrettably, however, this dimension of the poverty problem is not going to ease: personal trauma and family crises are likely to rise because Uganda has been struck especially severely by the spread of the AIDS virus. The Ugandan AIDS Control Programme listed in March 1990 a total of 15,569 AIDS cases but estimated in late 1990 that as many as 1.2 mn people were sero-positive. One indicator of the future extent of the AIDS virus in Uganda comes from analysing the HIV serological status of women attending antenatal clinics. On average, 22.6% of such women were infected with HIV in the first quarter of 1990, with regional figures rising as high as 31% for the major Kampala clinics and hospitals. Thus more and more children are being born with the virus, and more and more are now dying of AIDS: twice as many babies under one year died of AIDS than those aged one year.⁸ Today in Kampala, practically every family has HIV+ relatives or has experienced an AIDS death. And as parents die so children are left orphans to be cared for (if possible) by members of the extended - and increasingly over-stretched - family. In some villages, children are living with grandparents or on their own, with no one physically capable of tending the fields and growing the crops necessary merely for subsistence.

⁸ Estimates by the US Demographics organisation, Futures Group, suggest that as a result of AIDS, Uganda's population would only rise by 14% to 20 mn by the year 2015, instead of the projected rise to 32 mn (*The Guardian*, 31 January, 1991).

1.3 Approaches to Poverty Alleviation: Government and Official Aid Agencies

There are four major dimensions to the Ugandan government's attempts to address the problems of poverty. The first is to continue its efforts to bring peace to the country in order to enable the displaced population to return to their homes. The second is the attempt to restore the country's public administrative structures, in order to execute the detailed decisions made in relation to poverty alleviation. They are, thirdly, to maximise the rate of economic growth, and fourthly, to rehabilitate and expand a range of social and infrastructural services to today's inadequately served population. These cover the fields of water and sanitation, housing, health and education, as well as agricultural and agriculturally-related services.

Peace and security provide a basic pre-condition for alleviating poverty. As noted above, the government of President Museveni has brought a degree of peace and security to Uganda unseen for almost a generation: it would, however, be premature to argue that this pre-condition has been totally met, especially in the northern and north-eastern parts of the country, where efforts to alleviate poverty tend to be spasmodic and subject to interruption. Continual civil unrest reinforces both the isolation of these areas and their relative backwardness, and forces government and other agencies to switch from long or even medium-term initiatives to short term projects essentially aimed at survival.

Leaving aside these regionally-specific security-linked problems, the government has achieved some successes, especially in rehabilitating major parts of the economic and social infrastructure, thereby restoring the pre-conditions for exploiting the productive potential of the economy. These successes owe a major debt to the contribution of the donor community which, especially since the mid-1980s, has not only provided increasing quantities of aid to Uganda,⁹ but has been influential in the running of a number of state programmes. Indeed, aid donors and their projects pervade all major sectors of the economy, which could now be called aid-driven.¹⁰ The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have been particularly influential, both in relation to the funds they have provided and in the manner they have influenced macro-economic policy-making. Uganda's major Western bilateral donors, as well as the IMF and the World Bank, appear satisfied with the progress since 1986/87 in relation to economic performance. Thus in April 1990, an IMF team which visited Uganda to draw up the country's structural adjustment programme to the year 1993, expressed the view that 'the economy was on course to recovery' (Bank of Uganda Quarterly Economic Report, Volume 2, April - June 1990).

⁹ In the two years, 1987 to 1988, OECD statistics indicate that total official aid to Uganda amounted to \$646 mn; in the years 1988/89 to 1989/90, figures from the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development suggest that it rose to \$1,050 mn.

¹⁰ In the financial year 1989/90, external aid funds provided 92 bn US\$ to the national budget, contributing over 50% of total government expenditure, an amount in excess of what the government raised in taxation. The ratio of aid to total imports rose from some 10% in 1977/78 to as much as 60% by the end of the 1980s. There has been a similar rise in the ratio of official aid to GDP over the same period (from about 1.5% at the start of the 1980s to almost 10% by the end of the decade). In 1990, Government revenue only amounted to some 6% of GDP, mostly through export and other direct producer taxes. This is the lowest ratio recorded by the World Bank for any country in SSA.

Satisfying financial bench-marks, of course, may not necessarily coincide with the task of alleviating poverty: this would depend on the sustainability of high GDP growth rates and on whether the pattern and path of economic growth being followed is leading to a marked reduction of poverty. In practice, there are grounds for arguing that the policies being advocated and promoted by the external agencies are not sufficiently addressing the major structural weaknesses of the economy. These include the almost total dependence for earning foreign exchange upon coffee (whose price has almost halved since 1986), an already high and rising level of dependence upon imported oil, the dominance of external finance to fund both budgetary and capital expenditure, a high and in practice unpayable foreign debt, and an inefficient parastatal sector. Not only has the growth which has occurred over the past four years been funded in large part from foreign sources, but the expansion which has occurred provides little guidance for assessing longer term growth prospects as it has originated mainly in the re-establishment of enterprises and agricultural smallholdings that had been abandoned during the years of anarchy and chaos, and in construction activities boosted by aid funds. What is more, this is likely to continue in the medium term. As the World Bank, looking forward to 1992/93, comments 'Growth initially will be based mainly on the return to abandoned farms, rehabilitation of existing capacities and on raising their overall utilisation' (IDA, 1990: 10).

Furthermore high inflation, together with significant devaluation, has had a severe adverse effect on poor people not producing cash and/or export crops, even if inflation rates have rapidly fallen in recent months. These developments also need to be seen in the context of a significant fall in real wages and a minimal expansion in formal sector employment. Smallholders have benefited from recent bumper crop years but, to the extent that they have produced a surplus for sale, depressed prices have limited the cash gains made and available data suggests that prices of many basic consumer goods (including food) have risen faster than prices received by farmers over the more recent 1988-90 period.¹¹

Inadequate though the data are, they provide support for the increasingly-shared view in Kampala that the economic growth which has so far been achieved has not led to any significant reduction in poverty or to a rise in the real incomes of poor families and households, and that it has widened income distribution. Indeed one of the main reasons the World Bank has been so involved in launching and trying to attract funds for its poverty and social costs of adjustment (PAPSCA) project in Uganda is precisely because so many of the poor appear to be by-passed in the current growth spurt.

... there is concern that, in the short run, the **urgent needs of some of the victims of the period of civil unrest and economic decline will not be addressed**. These include victims of the wars - widows, orphans, and the disabled; AIDS orphans; and children and other residents of disadvantaged districts, including those living in dangerously unhealthy urban slum areas. These groups are unable to participate in the recovery program, and unless their needs are addressed, their economic and social conditions **will continue to deteriorate**. (IDA, 1990: 34, emphasis added.)

¹¹ *Key Economic Indicators*, 2nd Issue, June 1990, MPED, Statistics Department, with additional updated figures supplied by the Statistics Department.

The immediate aims of PAPSCA (launched in July 1990) are 'to address the needs of those who are in precarious economic and social conditions' (*ibid.*). There are, however, major concerns about the whole thrust of the programme: the budget (\$106 mn) appears to be minute in relation to the size of the problems which need to be addressed, but it also underfunded as a result of a reluctance of a number of key donors to participate to the extent envisaged.

Important though the international aid effort in Uganda has been, aid dominance of Uganda's economy carries with it dangers, some of which are already manifesting themselves. The first is that aid donors' policies have do not necessarily coincide with the priorities of the government in relation to poverty alleviation. Secondly, as elsewhere, donors have a bias to fund projects which have a higher likelihood of succeeding, such as infrastructural projects and those located in or around Kampala.¹²

Thirdly, there is a more profound concern about the wider implications of the extent and manner of donor insertion into the economy. While specific donor projects are aimed at increasing the efficiency of the public administration system, most donor projects are characterised by attempting to circumvent the problems of civil service inefficiency through paying a range of 'allowances' to civil servants, worth many times their basic salaries, in order to ensure efficiency. Because donor projects are so numerous and extensive, the (unintended) result is to perpetuate and even deepen the problems of public administration inadequacy by lowering the efficiency of the government's own development efforts. What is more, this raises the crucial question of the extent to which Ugandans themselves will be able to sustain these projects once donor enthusiasm wanes. To the extent that project suffer, current donor achievements in rehabilitating and expanding social services for the poor could turn out to be little more than a temporary, and therefore artificial, respite to the problems rather than a permanent solution.

Summarising this discussion, the first conclusion must be that in spite of the efforts of Government and donors alike, the problems of widespread poverty in Uganda continue and are likely to persist for many years to come. Major advances have certainly been made in restoring peace, and in rehabilitating large areas of an economy that lay in ruins, while improvements in re-vamping and extending some basic services are now being recorded. Yet the economic gains made so far have been predominantly dependent upon the good will of the donor community and on the relatively simple tasks of rehabilitation. Deep-seated structural problems remain: the North of the country remains largely untouched by the growth which has occurred, while overall, income distribution is probably becoming even more skewed.

Clearly, for poverty alleviation to be accelerated, more funds will be needed to provide a greater range of basic services to the poor and to increase opportunities for raising income levels. What is unclear is the extent to which current policies are the most appropriate means

¹² As a 1990 UNDP report on Uganda puts it (UNDP, 1990a): Lack of a government policy leads to competition between donors (for staff), between donor-funded projects and, even more seriously, with the Government [. . .] Priorities are set, in practice, by donors (not by the Government) who are anxious to see results from 'their projects'.

to achieve the government's goals. It is against this backdrop that the role, function and potential of the NGO movement in Uganda will now be discussed.

1.4 NGOs in Uganda

The absence of reliable and comprehensive information on NGOs active in Uganda impairs any attempt to evaluate their general contribution to poverty alleviation in the country. It is also constrained by their diversity and by problems of definition in an environment where 'non-governmental' forms of social organisation continue to play an important role in defining social and economic behaviour. Thus, in many regions of Uganda, there are numerous forms of voluntary and reciprocal exchanges within different localities: collective and cooperative labour practices not only continue to flourish, they also adapt well to change. Finally, research has been generally very limited in Uganda in the past two decades and NGOs themselves have evaluated the impact of their activities in only a handful of instances. Any overview, therefore, has to be based on fragmentary data and anecdotal evidence; the four case studies selected for this study cannot in any way claim to fully represent the wider reality. Nevertheless, they illustrate certain key characteristics of NGOs active in Uganda, their problems and achievements.

1.4.1 Historical background

The central role of the State in the country's political economy, its specific task to *control* development and its traditionally authoritarian nature have all shaped and played an important influence on the development, nature and characteristics of the non-governmental movement in Uganda.

The early part of the colonial period witnessed the establishment of some of the NGOs most active in the country to this day: in Uganda (as in the neighbouring countries), the churches assumed much of the responsibility for embryonic health and education services, well before the state moved into these areas especially after World War II. Mission-based NGOs continue to form an important section of the non-governmental movement in the country to this day: the Multi-sectoral Development Programme in Busoga was selected as one of the case studies in part to reflect the prominence and contemporary role of Church-linked organisations in development.

The colonial Government's attitude to these NGOs was ambivalent: on the one hand, missions relieved it of some of its responsibility for health and education, particularly in the rural areas and, through a network of prestigious secondary schools, it inculcated 'appropriate' attitudes in the country's indigenous elite. On the other, the diffusion of some of these services fostered the emergence of nationalist movements, which, in turn, spawned new types of non-governmental voluntary associations with a clear political agenda. These were the urban associations, trade unions and cooperatives which, in Uganda, spearheaded political opposition against colonialism.

In the 1960s, the relative prosperity of newly-independent Uganda favoured a rapid development of NGOs: mission-based organisations found their work increasingly aided not only by the funds available to their parent congregations in Europe or the

United States, but also by a new breed of NGOs which developed funding relationships with them. Thus, the early activities of Oxfam and Cafod, for instance, were almost exclusively linked with various missions (whose expatriate priests and administrators seemed to provide foreign non-governmental funders both with a measure of accountability and social familiarity).

Simultaneously, however, increased public revenues allowed the State to extend its role in the management of economic development and the provision of services. To some extent, the role of NGOs was therefore circumscribed (government now took direct control of mission schools) and mostly confined to 'traditional' fields: welfare, 'charitable' activities and the provision of health facilities. Even if, during the 'golden era' of Uganda, the State had little choice but to leave the extension of these services to NGOs, especially in the more remote rural areas, the assumption always was that NGO involvement would be *transitional*, pending state take-over once resources allowed. And at the more political level, major parts of the traditionally voluntary movement - trade unions and the rapidly expanding cooperatives - were coopted by the State. The case study outlining ACORD's assistance to a cooperative workshop in Northern Uganda illustrates some of the consequences of the para-statal nature of the cooperative movement.

The advent of the Amin regime in 1971 signalled the gradual isolation of Uganda from the international NGO movement at a time when the basis for its spectacular worldwide growth of the 1980s was being laid. As economic collapse was accompanied by gross abuses of human rights, most foreign NGOs withdrew support or kept well away. Meanwhile, and contrary to developments taking place in a number of neighbouring countries, the new regime could not allow an indigenous NGO movement to evolve. Largely by default, therefore, the churches thus continued to play a prominent role in the non-governmental movement in Uganda, reinforced by the recourse of non-confessional NGOs to church structures, then considered as the only means to reach the general population. Church activities were generally tolerated until the last two to three years of the Amin era when the assassination of Archbishop Luwum indicated that they too could no longer play a role which was not strictly sanctioned by the regime.

If political developments had served to reinforce the role of the churches within the non-governmental movement, an increasing volume of funds put at their disposal and the decline in the capacity of the State to provide services meant that they again took on the dominant role in Uganda's social and economic life which they had played in the 1950s and beforehand. The churches now not only provided inputs for the economy, but also consumer goods, they provided training and extension services to the local population and, where possible, gave political asylum.

In contrast, the 1979 Liberation War and the fall of Idi Amin heralded a period of intense interest in Uganda on the part of the international community: offers of help poured in from many quarters and international NGOs were not to be left behind. During 1979 and 1980, for example, a number of British-registered NGOs (ACORD, Oxfam, ActionAid, Save the Children Fund) swiftly either established or re-established a physical presence in Uganda. The rapid changes of regimes during that time, and

the widespread feeling that Milton Obote's return to power had been fraudulently engineered, appear to have done little to undermine interest in Uganda on the part of international NGOs. By 1980, more than 50 foreign NGOs were active in the context of the 'Karamoja emergency', later followed by similar operations in the West Nile region and in the infamous 'Luwero Triangle'.

As the political, economic and security situation further deteriorated in the early 1980s, NGOs together with the churches again assumed a *substitutive* role for State services. A missionary hospital, for instance, had by now become the main national referral and training facility in the country - in spite of its isolation in the North of the country - and missions increasingly focused on the upkeep of the local infrastructure such as health centres and even main roads. These years proved to be trying times for NGOs: the practical difficulties of work in a country riven by instability and with an infrastructure close to total collapse were enormous, and costly. Political and security considerations also hampered, or even profoundly altered the nature of programmes - as the ACORD and ActionAid case studies demonstrate - and a number of NGO staff lost their lives in the course of their work.

The advent of the NRM Government and the return to a degree of political stability in most of the country has led to a review of the previous 'laissez-faire' government attitude towards NGOs; it has also permitted a rapid expansion of the local NGO sector, now able to build upon the small start it had made in the early 1980s. The Uganda Womens Finance and Credit Trust (UWFCT) study illustrates some of the achievements and problems faced by these new NGOs and the more general issues arising from their rapid growth.

1.4.2 NGOs in Uganda: numbers, income, types

Besides the more obvious division into local and expatriate NGOs, and setting aside their sectoral interests which are discussed below, NGOs active in Uganda could be grouped as follows:

- *Localised indigenous organisations* which are undoubtedly the most common in the country, though the least documented. They include the large numbers of self-help voluntary associations known to exist and small, usually unregistered, groups working in one or two villages. Also referred to as grassroots or membership organisations (in view of their voluntary membership and of the internal nature of their accountability mechanisms), they are often established with a specific task in mind and may have a limited life span: the wide range of activities in which they are involved include communal agricultural work, the protection of a spring, forming parent-teachers associations. They are usually not dependent on external funding.
- *Larger local agencies.* These normally have their own employed staff, they often work at regional or even national levels and sometimes receive funds from external sources. Some may be involved in their own project work or, in a few cases, be service agencies. Two of the case studies (the UWFCT and the Busoga Diocese Multi-sectoral Programme) fall into this category. These

agencies often attempt to promote grassroots groups (as 'service organisations') although some have developed their own 'operational' programmes. A number have the capacity to work in emergency situations (Church organisations, Uganda Red Cross).

- *Non-operational expatriate agencies.* These are agencies which have usually established a funding link with local non-governmental organisations, but which generally do not maintain a representation in the country. British NGOs supporting the work of the two agencies mentioned above would fall into this category, as would those NGOs primarily supporting Church-related structures.
- *Operational expatriate agencies* which maintain an office with their own staff in country and, though they may fund local structures as well, generally implement their own programmes which may be of a short-term rehabilitative or disaster relief nature, and/or involve long-term development work. Their budgets tend to be the largest within the NGO sector, apart from a handful of agencies funding the Churches, and they often have strong links with official donors. The ACORD and ActionAid case studies illustrate their work.

No accurate estimate exists of the number of NGOs active in Uganda, due to the breakdown in Government administration and, until recently, the complex and incomplete registration procedures for NGOs in Uganda. As far as local NGOs are concerned, the first edition of a directory published by DENIVA (the local NGO network) in December 1990 listed 250 formally established NGOs, although a further 50 had by then hoped to be also included. Even this number is too small, however: a new registration Board established by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, for instance, had, 3 months after starting work, received application from 600 NGOs, mostly 'grassroots groups'. As for foreign NGOs, the Ministry of Planning lists 24 of them but, here again, this is known to be a considerable underestimate. Hanley (1989) lists 18 British NGOs alone working in Uganda.

Estimates of income at the disposal of NGOs are, unsurprisingly, even more uncertain. Ministry of Planning figures indicate disbursements of approximately \$9.5 mn in 1987/88 and slightly less the following year but these again are considerable underestimates. Indeed, the cumulative disbursements of British NGOs in Uganda in the last few years alone exceeds this sum and some individual programmes involve considerable expenditure. In 1988/89 and 1989/90, Oxfam alone spent £3.8 mn in Uganda. SCF spent U£1.6 mn in Uganda in 1989/90. ACORD's annual budget in Uganda is approximately £750,000. Last year, ODA's support to UK NGOs' work in Uganda alone amounted to approximately £3 mn. The European Community (EC's) contribution to NGOs (excluding relief programmes) was ECU 2.7 mn in 1989.

1.5 Key Issues Faced by NGOs in Uganda

1.5.1 NGOs and the State

□ *A laissez-faire environment*

Since their return, or establishment, 'en masse' in 1979, expatriate NGOs have benefitted from almost complete freedom of action at political and developmental levels so long as the perceived basic interests of the State have not been threatened. Generally, NGOs have not had the influence or desire to question the Government's political supremacy, with the possible exception of the churches (which are traditionally identified with political parties) and political confrontations have rarely taken place. Criticism of successive regimes by NGOs have generally been extremely muted, especially since Government rhetoric has consistently been 'pro-development' and stressed the needs of the 'common man'. What is more, the recent thrust towards liberalisation and privatisation of the economy has helped to place emphasis upon and protect the role of NGOs in national development, and foreign NGOs have benefitted in Uganda from large-scale support from bilateral and multilateral agencies. The only challenge has come when, in one or two instances, NGOs have confronted the political authorities directly. The response has then been swift: the Obote 2 Government, for instance, forced NGO representatives to disprove reports of atrocities in Luwero. The ICRC has on occasion found working in Uganda difficult because of Government interference, and NGO relief operations have often been hampered by political factors.

One consequence of this laissez-faire attitude (which also facilitated the activities of less reputable agencies in the country) was that NGOs have had far less impact on public policy and policy debates (with the possible exception of health care, discussed below) than growth in numbers might suggest. For its part, the Government has provided little guidance, assistance or encouragement to NGOs. However this freedom of action has now been questioned by the NRM Government for two main reasons: first the rapid growth of NGOs has led the authorities to demand a measure of control (from an administrative and security perspective, rather than a developmental one) and, secondly, because of new administrative and political initiatives (embodied by the Resistance Councils system) intended to reach down to the local level where NGOs are predominantly working. One result was the 1989 NGO Registration Act which created a Registration Board under the authority of the Minister of Internal Affairs whose main functions are to register NGOs and 'monitor' their work (mainly by attempting to control their access to the local population through local officials and Resistance Committees).¹³

The NRM government has introduced an entirely new pyramidal structure of Resistance Councils and Committees from village level to the National Assembly.

¹³ These moves towards control must be kept in perspective: to date the NGO movement in Uganda does not represent a challenge to the authorities at the political level and the main local NGOs remain urban-based Western-type agencies rather than, say, organised peasant associations. Control is also severely hampered by the Government's limited administrative capacity.

Originally established in liberated areas as a mechanism to organise popular resistance, their role has been fundamentally revised since mid-1987 to include, in addition to political mobilisation and generally acting as a communication link between Government and people, overseeing Government policy in the area, the settlement of disputes and other law and order functions, the provision of services and the formulation of development plans. Furthermore higher RC levels have been given corporate status to enable them to engage in economic activities.

In a context where the 'traditional' apparatus of the State at local level (extension services, for instance) has continued to exhibit the characteristics of a centralised, inefficient and often corrupt structure, the RC system has increasingly been seen by development agencies - and particularly NGOs - as an ideal (and often indispensable) vehicle for development work at the local level: resistance committees (RCs) can, in other words, articulate local interests and needs, be held accountable by constituents and allocate resources equitably. A major problem remains, however, in that the new structures have been established without providing the resources which would be necessary for a discharge of most of their functions: RCs do not generally have access to technical expertise, do not generate their own finances (except through fines and other *ad hoc* levies), are open to corruption (especially so long as most RC officials are not openly remunerated) and generally lack experience. As one NGO annual report for 1987/88 notes:

[. . .] it should not be assumed that RCs will necessarily represent the interests of the poor and the oppressed. There is strong evidence that, in some cases, the opposite prevails. [. . .] [We] should therefore perceive the RCs as instruments for social education and political representation with and through which our partners should work, rather than as partners in their own right.

Nevertheless, many NGOs actively and directly collaborate with the RCs: they have political legitimacy, are intimately familiar with the local environment, can 'mobilise' people and do not need to be paid! Collaboration takes place in such diverse areas as borehole pump maintenance, the enumeration of orphans and the distribution of relief. Of the four case studies presented here, three programmes depend, to a greater or lesser extent, on active support from the RCs.

□ *Coordination mechanisms*

The absence of any clear policy towards NGOs and the severe lack of human and financial resources have severely reduced the effectiveness of coordination mechanisms announced by Government, and has led to competition among Ministries for access to NGO resources. Policy affecting NGOs often appears to be determined in a somewhat *ad hoc* fashion by one Ministry without informing others, and NGOs are generally not consulted prior to taking decisions which indirectly or even directly affect them.

The structures for a range of coordination fora have been established. First are a series of monthly meetings convened by the Aid Coordination Secretariat in the Prime

Minister's Office, both for local and foreign NGOs. Issues discussed since 1986 are normally of a practical nature, such as operational difficulties in areas affected by insecurity, duty-free restrictions imposed on NGOs by the Ministry of Finance, and immigration and exchange control regulations. Second is the National Council for Voluntary Social Services (NCVSS). Established in 1953 and originally used as a conduit for Government funds, this government body is currently under the auspices of the Ministry of Rehabilitation. Although it counted more than 200 affiliated NGOs with welfare activities in 1988, within the NGO community the Council is considered to be of limited effectiveness, as a result of lack of resources and administrative constraints, and viewed by some NGOs as promoting an outmoded social welfare orientation.¹⁴ In addition, NGOs themselves have attempted to share common problems and sometimes coordinate activities through DENIVA (the Development Network of Indigenous Voluntary Associations), which defines itself as 'the consortium of all local NGOs and grassroots community groups actively engaged in development-oriented programmes in Uganda'. Established in 1988, DENIVA's main objectives are to act as a forum for local NGOs, to represent their interests to Government and to coordinate activities among themselves. Finally, emergency operations in a particular region of the country and specific sectorial interventions have strengthened coordination efforts. Perhaps the most promising collaborative venture has been the creation of the Uganda Community Based Health Care Association (UCBHCA). This was set up in 1986 to coordinate community-based health care work throughout the country at the instigation of NGOs active in this field. The Association aims at devising training curricula and provides medical supplies, information and evaluation facilities for its 104 member organisations throughout Uganda. UCBHCA is funded by its member organisations and UNICEF; it is chaired by a representative from the Ministry of Health.

In spite of these structures and recent developments, and exacerbated by competition for resources, coordination mechanisms both among NGOs and with Government remain weak. Meetings are held infrequently, often poorly attended, sometimes not taken seriously and policy issues are rarely discussed. This no doubt reflects the *laissez-faire* climate described above, although coordination of efforts between *individual* NGOs and a particular Government department does take place within the framework of a specific programme, often informally and often at the local rather than the national level. At the programme level, success is often dependent on collaboration with local officials and NGOs increasingly recognise this. Active collaboration is thus sought, sometimes with the NGO providing finance and advice to local government personnel, participating in meetings of District Development Committees and, as we have noted, working closely with the RCs.

Nevertheless, NGOs rarely feel accountable to the local authorities in whose area their projects are located, and they often operate in a policy vacuum. In many instances, cooperation between NGOs and Government mirrors *an unequal relationship* between a state whose administrative capacity is so limited and its level of organisation and

¹⁴ A National Council of Women, under the Ministry of Local Government, was established in 1978. It currently has 40 affiliated organisations; its status and functions are presently under review.

coordination (between the various ministries with which NGOs communicate, for instance) so reduced that NGOs can, if they so wish, take advantage of their position. Yet lack of coordination reduces NGO effectiveness: their initiatives are often poorly integrated with Government's, information does not always circulate, experiences are not discussed and efforts are sometimes duplicated.

□ *Substitution and replication of Government services*

The combination of diminishing state involvement in the provision of a wide range of services and the relative autonomy given to NGOs working in Uganda has led to attempts by the non-governmental sector to either *replace* or *revitalise* extension and other Government services. The implications of this for individual programmes and their sustainability are discussed in the case studies. In general, however, reservations have been expressed (by Government as well as by some NGOs) about the emergence of parallel structures, especially where 'operational' NGOs are developing their own extension system in the belief that Government structures do not possess - and cannot be expected to possess in the medium term - the required approach, skills and resources. Emergency programming has provided perhaps the most extreme examples of NGOs constituting 'un Etat dans l'Etat': this was especially visible during the Karamoja relief operations (described below) which mobilised considerable NGO resources in the early 1980s and effectively allowed the Government to divest itself from its responsibilities in the area.

Related to this issue, and mirroring the practice of official aid agencies discussed above, a number of NGOs pay or 'supplement' the totally inadequate salaries of Government personnel involved in their programmes. Likewise, NGOs have attracted civil servants into their ranks as employees. Work for an NGO is often sufficient to meet all immediate family needs (this is rarely the case in Government service and in much of the private sector), provides some social prestige and consequently has become a sought-after form of employment.

Thus, as Government resources dwindle, NGOs programmes become more all-encompassing and acquire a higher profile, in part by default: the provision of health care provides the clearest example of this in Uganda, although road maintenance, agriculture extension and 'academic' research are all areas where NGO involvement has gradually substituted itself for reduced Government services.

In sum, NGOs complement Government activity, fill unoccupied territory and increasingly take on activities previously undertaken by Government. In performing these ever-expanding functions, however, NGOs do not seek to undermine the legitimacy of the State: most indeed espouse the principle that the poor have to be brought *into* the existing development process.

□ *Relations with official donors*

Often viewed within the framework of privatisation, NGOs are frequently perceived by bilateral and multi-lateral donors in Uganda as more efficient and more reliable than government agencies, at the very least complementing 'at grassroots level'

whatever can be achieved through official development assistance to Government. In addition, in the early 1980s and at times of political upheavals, funding NGOs provided some donors with a political 'insurance policy', providing assistance without providing political legitimacy to the regime. Thus, most bilateral donors with a programme of assistance to Uganda, including Britain, have channelled some of their resources through NGOs,¹⁵ and the EC has fully funded a number of European NGOs' activities in the country. The closest operational collaboration is probably with UNICEF, whose approach and sectoral priorities are close to those of many NGOs. To date, the most formalised collaborative venture between official donors and NGOs is the PAPSCA initiative, mentioned above. NGOs also feature in the Lomé IV agreement with the EC, and they have been given an important role in World Bank-funded proposals to reconstruct northern and north-eastern Uganda.

The attitude of official donors towards local NGOs has been much more circumspect: there are, as yet, few direct contacts (especially with grassroots organisations) and the intermediary role of a foreign NGO is still usually seen as indispensable to ensure 'adequate' management and accountability. Nevertheless, new developments are taking place, such as the EC micro-projects programme and a \$7 mn official aid programme to be implemented by a local NGO. PAPSCA has also attracted the attention of local NGOs.

1.5.2 The rise of local NGOs

The recent expansion of the local NGO sector has stemmed in large part from a greater degree of political freedom in the country. Other influences have been the experiences of Ugandan returnees with NGOs (and other donors) outside the country and the increasing desire, on the part of foreign NGOs, to find local like-minded partners to whom funding and training could be extended. The State has also 'sponsored' an emerging network of often constituency-based Development Associations, which are frequently led by local political figures.¹⁶ These factors go some way in explaining the emergence of local, often urban-based, agencies (quite distinct from localised voluntary associations, now increasingly acquiring a formal status) whose institutional and operational models have been inspired by Western NGOs and which often depend on one or two highly trained members of the 'elite'. This growth has, however, been met with a degree of scepticism among Ugandans: in the get-rich-quick and magendo culture that has developed since the advent of Idi Amin, 'altruism' has, at times, become suspect, especially in the eyes of the urban population. A few cases of financial improprieties among local NGOs (and the Churches) have done little to remove the suspicion that some local NGOs are mere fronts for other types of activities. Similarly the sometimes flamboyant lifestyles of NGO expatriate personnel, living in the smartest neighbourhoods and driving

¹⁵ The ODA disburses about one seventh of its budget in Uganda through a dozen UK NGOs.

¹⁶ The State has also for some time made liberal use of NGO rhetoric. As Mamdani (1985: 48) graphically puts it: 'Peasant labour is demanded for a whole series of "community" projects, as their pockets are emptied to comply with equally compulsory demands for "contributions" to another assortment of "development" projects. The air is charged with calls for "self-reliance" as "fund-raising" campaigns abound'.

ostentatious 4-wheel drive vehicles lead to a questioning of the primary motive for establishing an NGO.

In official circles too, local NGOs have received a mixed welcome: although allowed to operate, often given duty-free privileges and seen to mobilise valuable foreign exchange, they are sometimes perceived as competitors with Government for scarce resources and patronage, as superfluous to the RCs, or as agencies whose close links with foreign NGOs can undermine national integrity (especially when the origin of their funds is unclear).

Most local NGOs are still primarily project-oriented and involved in welfare-type activities. Increasingly, however, other types of agencies are emerging: on the one hand constituency-level associations; on the other, development agencies (some with a 'service' capacity providing training for local NGOs). A few local NGOs have established their institutional credibility (such as UWFCT) and have attracted interest on the part of official and non-governmental agencies.

The relationship between local and foreign NGOs is not without its difficulties: indigenous NGOs resent what they see as the hegemony of international NGOs (made all the more powerful by their access to official donors) in spite of their rhetoric of 'partnership', their differing reporting and other requirements (forcing local NGOs to be more accountable towards donors than their 'target groups') and their emphasis on project-related activities rather than on institution building. Foreign NGOs, on the other hand, complain of the poor administrative capacity and lack of institutional 'maturity' of local NGOs, their poor representativeness, their failure to adhere to reporting guidelines, and of cases where local NGOs are disguised fronts for private business ventures.

Some of these frustrations result from a relationship with foreign NGOs which, in view of the perceived shortage of local NGOs with credibility to attract foreign funding, focuses attention on only a few agencies. In addition, funders are sometimes seen to discourage local NGOs' attempts to diversify their funding sources and thus dilute the influence of one or two donors to avoid excessive clientism. Yet local NGOs are very dependent on foreign funds to some extent because of their failure to fund-raise locally (apart from NGOs with a political connection and the churches): in some cases this leads to activities being tailored to donor priorities and procedures, to window-dressing to ensure funding or, occasionally, to the emergence of 'briefcase NGOs'.

This explosion of 'Western-type' NGOs appears to have been matched by a rapid increase in the numbers of 'grassroots groups', although such growth is impossible to quantify. Their isolation, their very limited resources, their inability to use the most fashionable development jargon, and an institutional profile quite unlike that of well-established NGOs, all limit their access to external support. Increasingly, however, both local and foreign NGOs actively promote group creation and strengthening. The ActionAid case study illustrates this type of work, replicated by many other NGOs, the Churches, local prominent individuals and RCs, and focusing on localised structures such as the many women and youth groups. These 'grassroots' associations

have particular needs and a few programmes are being developed to assist them. One is the PVO Development Initiatives Project financed by the American NGO Experiment in International Living since 1988 to provide training, management assistance and seed money for child survival, food production and natural resources conservation projects implemented by local groups. Another is the EDF micro-projects programme, started effectively in 1986, to provide material assistance to local groups and RCs.

In spite of recent growth and in comparison with many other African countries, however, the local NGO movement remains small and very dependent on foreign funding.

1.5.3 The particular place of the church

The Churches continue to play a prominent role within the non-governmental movement in Uganda. While in large measure this involvement is historical, it also reflects the Churches' access to financial resources, their political leverage and, increasingly, the breadth of their programmes. Both Catholic and Protestant Churches maintain a centralised facility to plan activities and liaise with donors. Most local dioceses, however, have developed their own activities and established direct links with funders - often under the personal leadership of a bishop, as illustrated in the Busoga Programme case study.

This decentralised approach (much favoured by foreign donors who often spurn the central coordination offices) goes some way in explaining the diversity of approach and the range of activities promoted. Thus, some large Catholic missions - often staffed with expatriate personnel - retain a reputation for their paternalistic and evangelical stance and for their isolated and 'island' approach to development. Increasingly, however, Church-linked activities are attempting to move away from project-oriented activities with a narrow geographical and technical focus towards programmes with an innovative content and a participative methodology. Thus in at least six of the 15 Catholic dioceses in Uganda, there appears to have been some shift in emphasis towards training animators and away from welfare and handouts.

In many areas, separate and parallel delivery systems with their own extension staff have been developed, often to replace the less efficient State services: the Busoga Diocese study again provides an example of this. The Churches' involvement in health delivery is especially significant: their pioneering work in relation to the AIDS epidemic, in particular, has received much support inside and outside Uganda, as have their activities in the general field of Primary Health Care and agriculture. Income-generating activities have ranged from the promotion of seed crops through the installation of oil mills to mechanised farming schemes in several dioceses. Of interest also is the Catholic Church's Centenary Trust - a credit institution with a number of branches throughout the country whose activities are briefly described in the UWFCT case study.

Churches, however, collaborate little with each other,¹⁷ and equally little with non-church linked NGOs (or indeed Government). In spite of this, their developed village-level networks (which include hundreds of womens' and youth groups throughout the country as well as the local Church structures) and their well-established infrastructure at district, regional and national levels will continue to assure them a prominent position within the non-governmental movement.

1.5.4 Sectoral interests and target groups

Reflecting the very broad spectrum of agencies active in Uganda, NGO activities range from evangelical proselytism to conscientisation and empowerment programmes. The NGO sector is, however, generally characterised by its usually rather limited political perspective: issues of power and control have been less prominent than attempting to address the symptoms of poverty. In part this mirrors a situation where social differentiation in most parts of Uganda is still considered embryonic. While areas of activity have tended to follow development fashion (with increased recent interest in environmental issues, for instance), they encompass a wide range of relief, welfare, rehabilitation and development work. Programmes with a sectoral focus (especially in water, health, agriculture and education) co-exist with multi-sectoral programmes of the type illustrated by two of the case studies. NGOs have recently placed more emphasis on income-generating activities (including credit), research (landlessness, AIDS, the financing of Primary Health Care), with women's activities now attracting attention (womens' groups, womens' legal education and networking). NGOs have tended to move away from programmes geared to the provision of inputs and increasingly to engage in programmes stressing community participation and the training of change agents, as is the case with the ActionAid Mityana Programme.

□ *Target groups*

Many NGOs tend to assume a commonality of interests within their 'target' population and often fail to look for signs of social differentiation. Furthermore, recent upheavals fostered the impression of a socially homogeneous population in many parts of the country. As one observer recently noted (Hanley, 1989: 9):

In a society which has experienced so much disruption for such a long time, it would appear that almost all the population would be vulnerable.

Where NGO 'targeting' occurs, it tends to focus on clearly identifiable groups facing exceptional difficulties. These would include war and AIDS orphans, displaced persons and refugees, and the disabled (including an estimated 450,000 children nationwide). These groups provide a focus for many of the NGOs active in Uganda, and UK NGOs work in all these fields in the context of relief, rehabilitation or

¹⁷ An important exception to this are the Joint Medical Stores established by the Catholic, Protestant and Islamic Churches to provide medical supplies to a wide range of programmes and health facilities throughout the country.

development programmes either at national or local level, with or without a local partner NGO. In selecting target groups, a number of NGOs have also attempted to concentrate their activities in the more remote areas, reflecting the country's deep regional differences - and especially the North-South divide.

□ *Sectoral priorities*

Although they have been active in a wide variety of domains, the efforts of NGOs have been most prominent in the two areas of health services delivery and disaster relief.

By the early 1970s, Uganda had a health delivery system which was acknowledged to be far superior to that of neighbouring countries. From then onwards, however, services deteriorated and, by the late 1970s neared collapse. Throughout this period, the non-governmental sector provided much needed facilities: of 924 health facilities in the country in 1984, 133 (14%) were in non-governmental hands, but this included no less than 42% of the hospitals, a quarter of the dispensaries with maternity units and 38% of the dispensaries. Similarly, with regard to primary health care, Uganda had been at the forefront of the delivery of services for mothers and children in the 1960s, largely thanks to the work of NGOs: by the early 1970s, this lead had been entirely eroded.

NGOs are currently involved in a vast array of medically-related activities. Apart from mission-based hospitals, these include provision of emergency services, health training and planning, community-based health care-programmes, immunisation programmes, and AIDS work. Although the case-studies here look closely at the role of NGOs in long-term development projects, it is important to note that many NGOs active in Uganda - especially foreign NGOs and the Churches - have and still do devote a considerable proportion of their resources to disaster relief work. Indeed, in a number of cases (illustrated by the ACORD study), development projects have had to be set aside - or abandoned altogether - to be replaced by relief or 'rehabilitation' programmes as one disaster has followed another.

The role of NGOs in emergencies has been the most publicised form of NGO action in Uganda - for some NGOs the **response to conflict situations** has become the hallmark of their work in the country - and, perhaps more importantly, the involvement of international NGOs in disaster relief has conditioned their perception among the general public. As the country lurches from crisis to crisis, relief work is likely to remain a priority area for a number of agencies.

NGOs have been well placed to deal with emergencies in Uganda and in most cases they have proved able to act swiftly and to raise substantial resources (mostly through sub-contracting arrangements). Their ability to work on both sides of a conflictual situation has also been an asset. Emergency work has become a **permanent** feature for some and their involvement has mostly consisted of the provision and distribution of relief goods. In some instances, attempts have been made to link relief efforts with food for work and other 'rehabilitation' schemes, followed by development activities,

particularly where the necessarily short term (and often dependency creating) impact of relief has become evident.

The record of NGOs in disaster programming in Uganda has not, however, always been an unequivocal one, as has been particularly illustrated by the 1979-82 Karamoja famine. Intra-agency competition, a limited understanding of local conditions and the insistence on employing inexperienced expatriate personnel, disregard for local authorities and local expertise, the adoption of an authoritarian approach, a willingness to act unreservedly as UN subcontractors, a general lack of self-criticism, and logistical incompetence all contributed to severe shortcomings in an operation which, furthermore, fostered the worst forms of dependency. The subsequent Luwero relief programme did not spawn the media circus witnessed in Karamoja (Government was able to control access to information very effectively for many months) and the scale of the disaster only became fully apparent in 1986. The lack of media access perhaps explains in part the absence of the NGO scramble that had characterised the Karamoja emergency: agencies had also learnt from this experience, inter-agency cooperation mechanisms were said to be effective and the difficult working conditions in Luwero - with numerous incidents with troops, frequent bans on relief by the army, and an abduction of relief workers on at least one occasion - precluded an amateurish approach.

The arrival of the NRM has not signalled the end of NGO involvement in emergency situations: since 1986, NGOs have participated in disaster relief (for both Ugandans and refugees) in Northern and Eastern Uganda, in Western Uganda and again in Karamoja in the late 1980s and, most recently, for Rwandese refugees in the South West of the country.

1.6 Case Study Selection and Methodology

The inclusion of Uganda as one of the countries for a study of NGOs active in poverty-alleviation projects has proved to be of particular interest in several respects, one of which has been to reflect the impact of external factors (war conditions, a dilapidated infrastructure, a retreating state) on a non-governmental movement witnessing rapid expansion. Yet, precisely because of this, the selection of appropriate case studies has faced a number of constraints:

- Since NGOs have been heavily involved in relief, rehabilitation and social welfare programmes, long-term development programmes with an economic focus are not numerous and are generally of recent creation.
- The political and administrative chaos of the past decades has entailed a loss of continuity both within the NGO movement and within Government: few remain who can have an intimate long-term perspective on relevant developments.
- Civil strife has also led to the destruction of documentary evidence (as shown especially in the context of the ACORD case study).

Each of the projects selected has a (funding) link with British NGOs, although only two out of the four projects have had a direct operational input from a British NGO. The projects were chosen in consultation with the Uganda NGOs, and therefore were not selected at random. Each, however, illustrates some of the salient features of NGOs active in the country: the role of the Church and the emphasis on health care (Busoga Diocese study), the emergence of local NGOs with nationwide ambitions (UWFCT), the involvement of international NGOs in area-specific, multi-sectoral programmes (ACORD and ActionAid), often with earlier relief activities. The four case studies also illustrate different types of relationships with the State, different degrees of vulnerability to recent instability in the country and their activities are located in diverse regions of Uganda. As a result it is not possible (nor is it the intention) to make generalisations from these evaluations about the role and impact of all NGO income-generating projects in contemporary Uganda.

In spite of these provisos, and although they can in no way be viewed as representative of even this type of NGO work in Uganda, the four case studies presented here illustrate some of the more salient characteristics of the non-governmental movement and its impact in the country.

In defining a methodology to conduct this study, care was taken to involve partners at the outset and to develop a research programme that would answer NGOs' perceived needs as well as the requirements of the ODI project. NGO staff were thus intimately implicated in the design of the research exercise and in its implementation in the course of 1990. In two cases, workshops were held to discuss evaluation conclusions and outline future strategies; separate papers were also written to address some of the issues which all four participating NGOs felt were of special interest to them. The details of the approach used is outlined in each of the case study reports; suffice to add here that the ODI exercise appears to have provided an external input which was welcomed by all the collaborating NGOs, in part because the evaluations were not linked to funding decisions and could address problems identified by the NGOs as well as ODI concerns.

2. THE UGANDA WOMEN'S FINANCE AND CREDIT TRUST¹⁸

2.1 Overview

2.1.1 Background

The Uganda Women's Finance and Credit Trust (UWFCT) grew out of an initiative of Ugandan women concerned with the plight of poor women with no access to formal financial institutions. Its activities started in earnest in mid-1987 and centre on the provision of credit facilities to individual women or women's groups wishing to initiate or expand micro-businesses. UWFCT also provides business management training, and a range of technical and other extension services to its clients. Clients and other women are also encouraged to join the Trust's own savings scheme with a view to promoting savings mobilisation and providing part of the funds used in the credit scheme.

By mid-1990, 120 projects had been given loans and approximately 1,500 women had provided the savings scheme with US\$ 6 mn.¹⁹ These projects (run by individual women as well as groups) cover a wide range of income-generating activities with emphasis on agriculture, animal husbandry, small-scale industries and crafts. Geographical areas of concentration include Kampala and its environs, Masaka in Southern Uganda and Mbale and Kamuli in the East.

The Trust presently has a complement of 11 full-time staff in its offices in Kampala and has recourse to the part-time services of two collaborators in the field. It has received funding from a variety of mostly foreign sources, such as the EC, SIDA, Christian Aid and other NGOs.

2.1.2 Evaluation methodology

The case study presented here is the result of fieldwork conducted in all areas of UWFCT geographical concentration over the course of a five week period in April/May 1990. Altogether 47 clients (including 12 groups) and three prospective clients were interviewed on the basis of a wide-ranging questionnaire whose content reflected the lack of any previous evaluation and was jointly devised by UWFCT and ODI. The distribution of interviewees broadly reflects the distribution of Trust beneficiaries to date, although some emphasis was placed on early projects to allow, wherever possible, an evaluation of their 'success' and future potential. Twenty-two of these projects involved agricultural activities, 14 animal-keeping (poultry, piggeries, dairy cattle), eight small-scale industries (carpentry, shoe-making, tailoring, handlooms and hatcheries) and three commercial activities (nursery schools, drug store).

¹⁸ This case study was undertaken with the assistance of Mary Nannono, WID focal point officer of the Ministry of Industry, Kampala.

¹⁹ Rate of exchange (September 1990): £1 = 840 US\$. Since July, a 'parallel' rate has been legalised for certain transactions. The parallel rate at this time stood at £1 = 1,300 US\$. By December 1990, the number of projects had risen to 170.

To complement these interviews, discussions were held with most Trust employees, and the relevant UWFCT Programme Officer accompanied most field visits. The main research findings were presented at a one-day workshop held with Trust staff in June 1990.

2.2 Case Study Description

2.2.1 History and structure

UWFCT was founded in 1984 with the general objective of helping low-income women without access to banking services with training, credit and technical assistance to develop income-generating activities. UWFCT was established by a group of Ugandan women as a result of international contacts acquired through their professional activities at a time when the country was becoming increasingly politically isolated. Thus the founder (and now chairperson) of the Trust was one of Uganda's delegates at the 1985 UN NGO Forum at the End of Decade for Women Conference in Nairobi and the vice-chair presided over the drafting committee for Uganda's country position paper at the same conference. The former -as well as the Trust's managing director - have considerable experience in Uganda's banking sector, while the latter is one of the country's prominent lawyers. UWFCT was set up as an affiliate of Women's World Banking (WWB), the organisation created in the wake of the 1975 Mexico conference to promote women's access to credit and banking.

WWB's moral support seems to have played an important role in helping this group of local women establish the Trust at a time when the political and economic outlook in the country looked particularly bleak. It was also thanks to WWB that the first contact with an external funder - NOVIB from the Netherlands - was established. The Trust's early aspiration was to launch a Loan Guarantee Fund, as is the normal policy of WWB affiliates. Funding constraints and the high rate of inflation combined to prevent this, and gradually, the Trust altered its approach by placing lending to women at the centre of its activities.

Early efforts to establish the Trust's programme were aborted as political upheaval made development work virtually impossible in an increasingly hostile environment for NGOs, especially local NGOs. In 1985, for instance, all of the Trust's documents were looted and it was only after the NRM take over in January 1986 that UWFCT was able to relaunch its programme. Up to 1987, however, it had no full-time staff: all work was carried out on a voluntary basis by Board members.

With NOVIB's approval of a first grant of \$26,450 for lending, training and start-up costs in June 1987, field activities got under way and the first 23 projects were funded. By June 1989, 88 projects had been funded. The Trust has been able to attract foreign funding for most of its activities. The first NOVIB grant was followed by a second (\$78,125) a year later, and Christian Aid approved a first grant of £25,000 in December 1988. Other donors have included the European Community (EC), the Swedish development agency (SIDA), Experiment in International Living (EIL), the United States Embassy and a few local industrialists. By mid-1990, the Trust had lent

over US\$ 23 mn (over 80% of which came from foreign donors) to 120 projects run by predominantly individual women or groups of women.

The UWFCT is managed by a 12-strong Board of Directors selected from Trust members (currently 50, to be increased in the long run by the inclusion of credit beneficiaries). The Board largely consists of the original founder members. It appoints the managing director and has overseen the sub-division into four sub-committees (finance, projects, training and a working group charged with regular supervision of the Trust's activities).

2.2.2 Policy and objectives

The broad context and *raison d'être* of the Trust lies in the condition of Ugandan women today. Thus (Status Report, 1988/89: 2):

UWFCT has found itself in a situation whereby the problem is not that women are not aware of income-generating activities. Many are ready to work and are in fact potential entrepreneurs who just lack the right tools of development to turn them into better entrepreneurs. According to UWFCT, those tools still are (a) working capital, (b) training, (c) technical assistance. And,

Women tend to be invisible as they have no control over resources and their essential contribution to the country's economic life, taking place as it does in the 'informal' sector, is neither officially nor unofficially recognised.²⁰

It is from this basis that the Trust aims at tackling the root of underdevelopment for women (*ibid.*):

Our experiences in trying to mobilise savings among these poor women show that rural women have very small savings indeed. As a poor saver tries to build up her savings, a crisis crops up and she uses them to meet the crisis (illness, school fees, funeral expenses). (Thus), low levels of productivity and risk bearing capacity coupled with cash needs to meet immediate needs is the plight of the rural poor women.

The Trust works to break this 'vicious circle' of increasing indebtedness and loss of meagre assets; it asserts that credit has 'a central role' to play in empowering women to generate income. The Trust aims to become a 'bridge' between the poor and the banking sector (Status Report, 1987/88: 2):

²⁰ UWFCT chairperson C. Kwoba-Abungu in speech to BRAC/NOVIB-sponsored NGO conference on credit programmes, Bangladesh, November 1987, p.2.

Many of these women already possess untapped resources and have the potential to operate income-generating and self-sustaining enterprises, once capital is injected to break their vicious cycle of poverty.

UWFCT lists its objectives as the following (Status Report, 1988/89: 2):

- a) To cater for the financial interest of women in the middle and low income sectors of the economy whose interests are not catered for by existing financial institutions in the country.
- b) To help those women expand on their micro-business as means of employment for themselves and others through giving them loans and other accompanying services using simple unbureaucratic and yet effective procedures.
- c) To provide technical assistance for those involved and encourage the upgrading of traditional technologies, applications of appropriate technology and better management techniques. This includes training women in new skills both in rural and urban areas.
- d) To encourage better management skills, leadership and legal awareness among women using both formal and informal but intensive personal training.
- e) To encourage saving, communal cooperation, and other good banking practices among women entrepreneurs for betterment of their lives at family and communal levels.²¹

The Trust's target group is defined as poor women who have not gained access to formal financial institutions as a result of five main factors: the absence of collateral, generally because property rights are denied to them; poor entrepreneurial skills; lack of knowledge; poor leadership, and, lack of technical knowledge in presenting financing requests and in keeping records.

A condition for support by UWFCT is that funded projects be at the very least mainly owned and operated by women, with women the direct agents and beneficiaries of any assistance (whether this be in terms of improved skills, employment, increased production or reduced workload). In selecting its projects, the Trust thus endeavours to ensure that (Status Report, 1989/90: 6):

- a) women are able to acquire skills/property.
- b) employment of women will be created or increased.
- c) women's workload will be reduced without reducing their income.
- d) generation of income will be continuous and not just a one-time cash benefit.

²¹

References to middle-income women have subsequently been dropped.

- e) women will own and control at least 51% of the businesses.

The Trust has listed the main immediate obstacles it has encountered in developing its activities as follows:

Financial constraints arising from fund-raising difficulties (including poor internal fund-raising prospects in view of the economic situation); paucity of donors active/interested in Uganda; difficulties associated with an indigenous NGO with a yet-to-be-established track record); particular difficulties in convincing donors to fund overheads rather than funding lending, training and technical assistance activities.

High training costs stemming from the necessity to train illiterate or semi-literate women in local languages.

The ineffectiveness of Government extension services demanding expensive Trust technical support, with especially high transport costs.

Administrative constraints, particularly the lack of reasonably priced office space.

2.2.3 Current activities

By mid-1990, just over 120 projects run by individual women or women's groups had been granted loans, directly affecting 400 women and their families; 1,500 women had joined the Savings Scheme. Over 300 additional projects had been identified for support. The Trust had run seminars and workshops, and staff members had given lectures in many parts of the country.

Provisional accounts for the 12 months ending June 1990 indicate that USh 27 mn had by then been lent; income stood at USh 64.9 mn (of which USh 55.8 mn came from grants/donations, mostly from abroad).

By 1990, the Trust was concentrating its activities in five areas: the central region in and around Kampala, two areas in the East (Mbale and Kamuli) and Masaka in the West. It employed 11 staff, mostly project officers with combined geographical and sectoral responsibilities. In addition, part-time coordinators worked in two of the concentration areas.

Loans are at the core of the Trust's activities. They are made available to women (individuals and groups) with no access to institutional finance in both urban and rural areas. No collateral is required but two individuals have to volunteer as guarantors, and 10% of the money loaned is usually required from potential creditors. The current ceiling per loan is USh 1 mn; the average in mid-1990 was Ush 264,000 per project, with a repayment period ranging from one to three years, and a grace period of three to six months.

By mid-1990, loans valued to a total of US\$ 32 mn had been approved (and US\$ 26 mn disbursed) to 121 projects, 15 of which were for women's groups. A wide variety of income-generating activities are considered appropriate for lending, such as horticulture and other cash crop growing, small-scale piggeries, poultry or dairy farms, crafts and small-scale industrial activities such as baking, carpentry or tailoring, or service activities (commerce, nursery schools).

Loan applicants are required to invest in the Trust's savings scheme for at least three months before their application is considered. A Trust Project Officer then visits the beneficiary and establishes a project proposal which is submitted to management and the UWFCT board. Basic management training is required and monthly visits are made by the Project Officer to the beneficiary thereafter. A loan is usually disbursed once the client has saved at least 10% of the amount requested from the Trust on her account and is disbursed in tranches, each instalment being approved once previous funds are checked to have been spent in accordance with the project proposal. In mid-1990, interest rates charged on borrowing stood at 30% per year, until recently well below the rate of inflation. This compares with market lending rates ranging from 41% to 50% for the Uganda Commercial Bank.

The repayment record of the Trust's clients has been consistently good. On the first 23 loans financed by NOVIB, for example, the repayment record as of mid-1989 was as follows: 15 on schedule or fully repaid; four rescheduled; two written off (including one where a dairy cow died), and, two non-applicable (still in the normal grace period). Technically, only one other client, out of the 121 total, had defaulted by mid-1990, although there were 30-odd clients who were in arrears but still repaying their loans (this was in part due to the limited administrative capacity of the Trust to do the necessary follow-up).

Complementing loans is the Trust's emphasis on business training. By mid-1990, the Trust had organised 12 business management seminars for approximately 500 women. These usually take place over a week and include Business Techniques, Financial Management, Marketing, and Record Keeping in addition to 'general awareness and assertiveness' training. Specific training is also extended to group leaders. 'Awareness seminars' have also been run over one-day periods, which have focused on banking and credit, and have involved both beneficiaries and other NGOs and institutions in related fields. UWFCT has recently devised its own curriculum for its prospective clients.²²

Also featured in the Trust's programmes are technical assistance and follow-up. Following a period when Government extension workers and hired consultants were used, this area of activity is now mainly provided by the Trust's full-time and part-time staff which include an agriculturalist, a veterinary doctor and an economist. Regular pre-feasibility and follow-up visits (in theory every month until the business is considered self-sufficient) are made to the various beneficiaries.

²²

By late 1990, a grant from SIDA had enabled the Trust to expand its training activities.

The Trust also started its own savings schemes in February 1988, in spite of persisting high inflation. By mid-1989, more than 1,500 women had joined these schemes, although about 600 accounts were dormant, possibly because the holders had saved with the expectation of near-instant credit. USh 6 mn had by then been accumulated, up from USh 2.8 mn the previous year. Gross interest earned was also at the level of 30%, but half of this is retained by the Trust to cover its own costs.

The only concrete and tangible support the Trust has received from Government has been specific tax-free privileges for its two vehicles, valued at approximately USh 4 mn. Nonetheless, the Government has expressed unreserved support for the Trust's activities which are viewed as consistent with official policy and as supplementing Government efforts at increasing rural productivity and self-sustaining development, through use of locally available resources. Early attempts by the Trust to have recourse to the services of Government extension staff did not, however, materialise. On the other hand, RCs at local level are extensively consulted when prospective clients are briefed and selected.

2.2.4 Future prospects

As a result of its programmes, the Trust expects to have a long-term impact through the following (UWFCT Files):

- a) Increased direct participation of women in the economic life of the country, with their role increasingly appreciated by men.
- b) Lending institutions being more amenable to financing women's micro-projects.
- c) Greater acceptance of women in the country's business communities.
- d) Development of a network of professional women to assist in the growth of businesswomen in Uganda.
- e) Transformation of the UWFCT into a viable credit and savings institution and, subsequently, into a fully-fledged bank.

UWFCT sees the coming period as one of consolidation, and future plans include a limited extension of the lending programme and the coverage of the Trust by increasing the number of projects by 30 to 40 per annum, by initiating lending activities in Mbarara and Masindi in early 1991, and later in Northern Uganda, or by establishing field offices (in Kamuli by the end of 1990, and later in Masaka and Mbarara).

UWFCT expects to become financially self-sufficient (through interest earnings from the Loans Fund) by 1998. In the meantime, budgets for the next three years anticipate expenditure of \$415,000 to \$435,000 per annum, mostly to be covered by external grants. The Trust also intends to revive its Loan Guarantee scheme whereby UWFCT

and WWB would act as part-guarantors (75%) for loans granted by commercial banks to women wishing to initiate or develop income-generating activities.

Other proposals include earmarking 10 women as potential leaders in the country who could become focal points for 'nuclei of growth' by giving them intensive leadership training; to involve communities rather than individual clients in the programme as is now the case; an evaluation of the Trust by its clients, and the eventual involvement of clients as Trust members responsible for project selection and monitoring. The Trust would also like to construct its own offices to reduce its overheads and, by letting part of it, generate its own income.

2.3 Evaluation Results

In spite of the short-time period of most of the projects surveyed (only a quarter having secured a loan from UWFCT more than 18 months previously), it is possible to draw a series of conclusions from the evidence gathered in mid-1990.

2.3.1 Realisation of immediate objectives

Reaching poor women?

In setting as its main objective the provision of financial services to disadvantaged women, the Trust endeavours to reach a section of the population that has been consistently neglected. ODI's analysis provides some evidence of success in reaching the target group. First, it is clear that projects visited are overwhelmingly owned and managed by women: in only three cases, could it be said that men controlled the business. Within Uganda's cultural context, this constitutes a considerable achievement. Secondly, the great majority of the 50 projects surveyed could be classified as belonging to the 'poor' (though not necessarily the 'poorest'): well over half of the clients had not gone beyond primary schooling, although only a handful had never attended school at all. Two-thirds of the respondents had no other regular source of income besides the Trust's project. These did not have access to institutional lending.

Typically, project holders live in peri-urban or rural areas, and are subsistence farmers with several dependent children. Most are married with husbands also involved in farming, retired or working far from home. However between a third and a quarter of the clients interviewed did not belong to this group. They were part of a first generation of beneficiaries who were selected in the very early days when staff constraints meant that current practices of rigorous selection and supervision were not followed. These people are mainly women who have a higher standard of education, other income generating activities, and have - or could have - access to other sources of finance.²³ Eight of the respondents had unsuccessfully tried to borrow from the Rural Farmers' Scheme (see Section 2.4), usually because of lack of security. Of

²³ These include banks (3), another NGO (1), and either relatives or their own savings (11).

those interviewed, a young woman manufacturing academic gowns in her parents' home in a Kampala suburb illustrates the type of client who, perhaps, needs Trust support least: this is a successful 'niche' enterprise already established at the time the loan was granted and with bright prospects. Other sources of credit were available to the client, a well-trained teacher who had already shown much initiative and resourcefulness in building up her business prior to receiving UWFCT assistance.

To a large extent UWFCT's success in reaching poorer women can be ascribed to the diligence of the staff in the selection of clients. This is due largely to UWFCT's main institutional achievement: its ability to retain the services of a motivated staff willing to work in difficult circumstances with limited resources.

Approximately half those interviewed had heard of the Trust through word of mouth via neighbours, friends or relatives, a quarter through talks given by UWFCT staff and the remainder through personal contacts with a Trust staff member or an existing client. This individual approach (the Trust has so far abstained from widely publicising its lending activities) allows for a personal relationship to develop between staff and client, a source of strength (though not without its problems, such as the over-involvement of field personnel) to the lending programme, constantly reinforced by regular follow-up visits.

The evaluation confirms that the Trust is universally perceived by clients as receptive, open, and supportive. They do feel, however, that its centralised structure makes it distant from those outside Kampala, and sometimes slow to respond.

□ *Provision of credit*

Clients interviewed had benefitted from approved loans ranging from US\$ 61,000 to US\$ 740,000,²⁴ a total of US\$ 13 mn, with an average per project of US\$ 275,667. Twenty eight applicants wanted a loan to start a new project, 19 to expand existing activities and three to resume former activities. Credit was made available for a wide range of purposes: the purchase of materials (to make shoes, build a hatchery, a piggery or fence in a dairy cow, for example), the purchase of services (tractor hire, agricultural labour, veterinary and other professional expertise, transport), the acquisition of animals, fertilised chicken eggs, stock for a pharmacy, various tools (carpentry sets, hoes, spray pumps), etc.

Results from the ODI survey strongly suggest that the clients' repayment record will continue to be good. The loan disbursement procedures adopted by the Trust and the clients' 'appropriation' of the projects are probably the main factors that account for this achievement. Of those interviewed, only one was about to default, although in a number of cases, rescheduling had been necessary, especially where crops had failed or where unforeseen social events had compromised business success. One person, for instance, had invested in tomato growing: the failure of the rains had wiped out her crop and her loan had to be rescheduled. Another had begun a piggery, but a

²⁴

Not all of these had been totally disbursed at the time of the interviews.

series of unforeseen and unexpected accidents reduced animal numbers until a last sow had to be sold to pay for the funeral of the client's husband.

Three procedures have been adopted by the Trust. First, the elaboration of pre-feasibility studies jointly by the client and a UWFCT staff member: the close involvement of the client in the design of the project enhances her feeling that the project is hers, not the Trust's. Second, the disbursement of a loan in kind or, when in cash, for specified physical items or services, such as building materials, veterinary support or transport costs. Third, disbursements by instalments, each tranche being released once the previous amount has been spent to the Project Officer's satisfaction.

'Appropriation' is reinforced by the client's own contribution to the business which is demanded in all cases: apart from the requirement of a 10% own contribution to the loan at the outset, clients are usually asked to provide a significant proportion of the inputs needed. This can take the form of labour, of land, or of existing plant in the case of an on-going business. Thus, for most of the agricultural projects supported by the Trust, clients' participation may include their labour, land (in some cases rented), tools and sometimes a variety of other inputs such as part of the required seeds or fertilisers. This approach also explains the general satisfaction of clients with the scheme, although some felt the loans provided were too small. A few complained of high interest rates, or wanted the Trust to undertake procurement for them. The main criticism was the time taken in processing applications (from three to 11 months).²⁵

In certain instances, credit has merely helped a business to tick over rather than stimulate expansion, particularly where credit has been used to support working capital rather than to purchase capital goods. However the principal reason for this appears to lie more in the poor (external) economic climate, although the lack of in-depth business counselling which the Trust's staff are in a position to give has been a contributory factor in some instances.

Promotion of management skills

Management skills are imparted to clients both through formal seminars and through regular follow-up visits when progress is reviewed and particular problems are addressed with individual clients. All the clients interviewed have benefitted from these, many receiving more than one Project Officer's visit per month, although a few (in more distant locations such as Mbale) only received one or two visits in the course of the previous year. 80% of the clients surveyed felt that this support had been very useful, and 40 (out of 47) kept business records of some kind, mostly to list income and expenditure items.

²⁵ This is much longer than for the Centenary Rural Development Trust (a credit scheme administered by the Catholic Church) whose training and supervision activities appear, however, to be much less developed than UWFCT's. The length taken by the Trust in processing applications would seem to compare roughly with the time taken by the Rural Farmers' Scheme (see below).

Many of the clients, however, felt that more training was needed, and some of the concepts imparted by the staff were clearly only utilised in a superficial manner. In a number of cases, for instance, it was stated that records were kept more at the Trust's insistence, not because they were seen as intrinsically important for the project's success, suggesting strongly that record keeping will cease once the Trust withdraws. Similarly, records were often kept but not analysed by clients, and various concepts discussed during training sessions (interest payments, own labour as a cost item, etc.) were not clearly understood. As a result, there were a handful of cases where the business appeared on the brink of making losses, or actually making losses without the client fully realising this.

A number of projects (in agriculture and weaving, for instance) appeared to have an uncertain future because of limited marketing research undertaken, an area where Trust support had been limited. However one of the main constraints originated in the poor external (macro-economic) environment, in particular high rates of inflation, which call for special skills on the part of the Trust's clients, such as accurate and periodic costings, cash flow management etc. which, again, seemed to be insufficiently addressed in training programmes.

Since late 1989, however, UWFCT has introduced its own training programmes which will benefit from follow-up and evaluation as experience is accumulated, providing that it is perceived not as an imposition on the clients but rather as a response to their felt and actual needs.

□ *Provision of technical assistance*

The provision of technical assistance (mainly through its specialised staff and Programme officers) is clearly an area of the Trust's work which is greatly appreciated by the clients interviewed, with over half the people interviewed feeling that they were much better technically equipped as a result of the Trust's intervention. This included advice, for instance, on such diverse areas as crop husbandry, piggery construction and management, and handloom use (with on-site installation).

The problem is that not all clients have been able to profit from specialised assistance for their particular requirements. Interviews showed that UWFCT's effectiveness would also have benefitted from three factors. First, the development of specific regional approaches stemming from the identification of common problems/needs (such as landlessness in Mbale, opportunities for off-farm employment; crop specialisation and diversification). Second, access to other credit schemes' experiences through both field visits and access to technical information. And third by better technical information at the disposal of programme officers (for instance on piggeries, or on ways to minimise risks on agricultural projects).

□ *Savings mobilisation*

Thanks to its personal approach, the Trust has succeeded in launching an institution with whom depositors identify: 'it is our bank', they often said. Of some importance, however, (and perhaps corroborating a point made above about gaps in business

training), none of the respondents felt that the return on their deposits with the Trusts (15%) was insufficient (at the time of the survey, the inflation rate approached 100%). A number of reasons were given by clients for wishing to save with the Trust, other than the requirement to save before becoming eligible for a loan. These ranged from mobilising resources, being forced to save for the future, being assured that the money would be secure and not embezzled, and, more generally, depositing with an approachable 'user-friendly' institution in contrast to commercial banks.

There is little doubt that a more decentralised structure would enable UWFCT to mobilise additional savings and most people who expressed an opinion deplored the fact that deposits and withdrawals had to be made either in Kampala or in the course of a staff member's visit.

2.3.2 Long term impact

Project-level impact

The Trust's work appears to have a considerable impact on its 'clients' status and feeling of self-confidence. Just over four-fifths of the respondents felt that their future was now brighter than would otherwise have been. Approximately two-thirds of clients stated that the project had increased their feeling of self-confidence and independence: projects had been 'appropriated' by the clients and were not seen as the Trust's, although a number of respondents were heavily reliant on UWFCT moral support sometimes to the point of dependence. For most, increased self-confidence stemmed from an opportunity to generate one's own income, from the experience of running the project and also from the interest shown by neighbours and visitors. For others, however, it was too early to tell.

A third of the women stated that they had attained a degree of economic independence. Their business development in most cases had successfully tackled cultural constraints: men were said to be supportive in about four fifths of the projects, but 35% declared the local community was envious. Confidence in the future was also expressed in terms of expansion and diversification plans for many of the respondents and six of them were planning to approach financial institutions to finance them, while another seven expected to use their own profits/savings.

The social impact of the Trust's work was enhanced by its 'spread' effect through its clients: 91% of the respondents, for instance, had informed other people about the Trust. As a result, 45 other individuals and five groups had opened savings accounts.

Working with groups also spread the Trust's impact and most of the groups visited were felt to be genuine groupings engaged in a viable venture: of the 12 groups visited, 10 pre-dated UWFCT involvement and all engaged in collective work (agriculture in nine cases). Of the groups visited, nevertheless, three could have or were operating just as well on an individual basis.

Of the women interviewed in the course of the survey, only three (6%) stated their project would have taken off without the support of the Trust, while another 22 (47%)

on-going businesses would have survived but without developing, and in some cases contracting.

Excluding 11 projects where it is too early to judge, three-quarters of the remaining projects could be termed 'successful', the remaining 25% 'unsuccessful'. 'Success' was defined in terms of a 'basket' of indicators given different weights: project sustainability, loan repayment performance and prospects, generation of income/assets and risks associated with the business.²⁶ The project success rate was broadly similar for agricultural, animal husbandry and industrial projects. Three quarters of the projects surveyed were profitable or nearing profitability. The rest had registered losses or were likely to do so in the immediate future. Clients interviewed were generally optimistic about their project's prospects: 41 (87%) thought their business could continue without UWFCT support; five others (11%) expected difficulties, and only one anticipated likely collapse. Although difficult to judge accurately, two-thirds of the respondents felt sufficiently confident about their business future to state that their project would provide them with a reasonable income. 45% of those interviewed said they were better off now than compared the period preceding the loan. 21% reported increased assets, such as additional deposits on their Trust account, raw materials, animals or land.

Successful projects appeared to be associated with the combined presence of two important factors. First, adequate project identification and subsequent support from the Trust resulting in the timely availability of inputs and the development of an activity with an assured market. Second, commitment on the part of a client (including a significant contribution to project costs) and the development of an activity either building on her existing technical skills or at least not requiring hitherto completely unknown skills.

Conversely, the main causes of failure stemmed, on the one hand, from the Trust's and client's performance: poor project identification leading to an over-optimistic prognosis and insufficient technical assistance (this includes marketing problems, investment in the production of a single risk-prone product, lack of raw materials including agricultural and veterinary supplies and poor agricultural practices). On the other hand, some failures were also due to unfavourable external factors (such as climatic conditions for agricultural projects, social factors such as illness).

Most projects had resulted in gainful employment, although two-thirds of respondents reported an increased workload. Nineteen permanent jobs had been created by 15 projects, and 120 casual jobs (usually for men) had been generated by 24 projects, mostly in agricultural work. The clients' increased workload appeared to stem from either a reluctance or a financial inability to hire sufficient staff, the former reflecting a wish to fully control the enterprise.

²⁶ With an emphasis on sustainability and income/assets generation, the UWFCT argues that this definition is too 'economic' and insufficiently reflects the enhanced self-confidence resulting from these projects for the clients.

□ *Institutional considerations*

Two broader issues need to be raised in attempting to assess potential long-term impact. The first relates to the limited resources of the Trust in relation to both the numbers of people it wishes to assist and its capacity to expand. The second relates to a lack of clarity regarding policy issues such as the definition of 'target groups', long term operational strategies and the exact nature of its assistance. Clients maintain that while the staff are very approachable and helpful, the Trust remains too slow to respond, and physically distant: when a problem arises, in many cases long (and very expensive) journeys have to be made to Kampala. A number of tasks would be more efficiently performed at regional, rather than national level: these include loan administration, banking procedures and follow-up work, allowing the central UWFCT office more freedom to give technical advice through its specialist staff and to service the regions by providing policy guidance, administrative and financial support. At a minimum, the provision of transport for Programme Officers and local banking arrangements would increase efficiency. A more decentralised structure could also enhance the planned participation of clients in the Trust's work, such as in project selection and monitoring, and reduce any 'metropolitan bias' in UWFCT's relationship with its beneficiaries (see Hanley, 1988: 29). Lack of appropriate technical advice also stems from the limited resources at the disposal of the Trust. With only one vehicle available for fieldwork, for instance, Programme Officers normally have to rely on public transport to reach clients, in many cases, walking miles from one client to another. The expatriate Training Officer can only be employed part-time and has no Ugandan counterpart. The General Manager is overburdened with routine administrative tasks. Offices are noisy and poorly equipped.

The reluctance of donors to finance overheads is much regretted at UWFCT. The Trust argues that overheads are higher in Uganda at present than elsewhere and that donors have to recognise the special circumstances arising (until recently) from a highly inflationary environment and an unfavourable exchange rate. However, UWFCT is currently extremely dependent on external donors who, for instance, provided more than 80% of the Trust's income in 1988/89. One reason for this has been its vulnerability to external economic factors. Thus the loan fund has constantly dwindled because of hyper-inflation and exchange rate policy. However, with the recent reduction in the inflation rate - currently 25-30% p.a. - and with NGOs now effectively allowed to receive foreign donations at the unofficial exchange rate, many of these constraints will be eased. In addition, UWFCT forecasts for the next four years indicate that dependence on foreign donors could be slightly reduced from 89% of the Trust's income in 1991/2 to 81%, through an increase in interest earned on the Revolving fund. There appears to be little scope for expanding local fund-raising since, in the Trust's opinion, this would only be possible if the Trust adopted a higher political profile which it considers would compromise its independence.

Overheads will also remain high: recurrent administrative expenses alone are budgeted at 26%-28% of the total budget for the next three years.²⁷ With clear donor reluctance to fund the office building project, UWFCT is thus likely to remain heavily dependent on foreign funding for the foreseeable future. Its growing reputation as an effective NGO reaching the poor in Uganda, on the other hand, is likely to facilitate continued access to these funds.

2.4 UWFCT and Other Credit Programmes in Uganda

The long-term impact which the Trust can expect to have in Uganda is mainly a function of three related factors: the quality of its programme, the existence - or otherwise - of alternative credit delivery systems and UWFCT's ability to publicise its work and influence policy makers and donors.

There is, to date, little information available as to the effectiveness of other credit programmes targeted at Uganda's poor, although credit provision to the disadvantaged has, in recent years, attracted the attention of NGOs, Government and the banking sector. The main 'formal sector' credit programme directed at the poor has been the Rural Farmers' Scheme (RFS), launched in 1987 for a three year experimental period by the Uganda Commercial Bank. The RFS was designed to provide unsecured credit for small scale agriculture, livestock or fishery enterprises. Upper limits for any project were thus set at two hectares under cultivation in any cropping season, 20 head of cattle, or one fishing boat. Lending has been extended, whenever possible, in kind, with borrowers usually providing land and unskilled labour. Interest charged was initially set at 10 points below the prevailing bank rate for applicants without security (15 points in other cases). One interesting feature of the RFS has been its emphasis on women borrowers with a target of 70% of all loans being extended to women.

Other credit programmes directed towards the poor have been implemented by NGOs, often within the context of broader rural development initiatives, as in the cases of ACORD and ActionAid programmes (see below). The most comprehensive of these has been the Centenary Rural Development Trust Ltd (CERUDET), established by the Catholic Church in 1984. Loan applications under CERUDET are vetted by Church Committees at village level and locally processed. Loans are granted to applicants for a variety of projects without security, the Church Committee being expected to apply sufficient peer pressure to ensure repayments. As with UWFCT, this credit programme is complemented by a savings scheme.

One study (Musoke and Amajo, 1989) of 151 women clients has attempted to measure the degree of success of both RFS and CERUDET specifically in reaching rural women (the sample also included nine UWFCT clients). It concluded that RFS had had little success: in six sampled branches, the overall proportion of women loan recipients (599) was only 31.7%.

²⁷ Financial constraints have not allowed the Trust to pay salaries at budgeted levels. Current salary levels are higher than in Government (where extension staff and teachers are typically paid a totally inadequate US\$ 3,000 to 5,000 per month) but still are only just sufficient to cover immediate day-to-day expenses. Clearly relatively low salary levels inhibit the appointment of more skilled staff.

The study ascribes this low participation rate to the high financial and opportunity costs incurred in the numerous and distant visits required to have a loan approved, the poor relationship between bank staff and their women customers in some of the branches (including cases of financial malpractice), the long procedures involved, problems with inputs provided and the poor supervision of projects. 28% of those interviewed felt that they had not benefitted from the loan. These findings are corroborated by anecdotal evidence from different sources which suggests that the failure of RFS to reach the poor arises because of difficulties in following procedures (notably concerning security provision), in targeting small loan applications and because of insuperable administrative hurdles faced by the poor. The RFS is currently plagued by lack of financial resources, in part due to a high default rate.

By comparison, Musoke and Amajo conclude that CERUDET is more successful in its lending programme thanks to its quick decision-making mechanism (with loans usually approved within a month), its decentralised structure and the good quality of its rapport with clients and project supervision. Women, however, only represented one quarter of the successful applicants.²⁸ No defaulters had been recorded and all women beneficiaries surveyed (42) except one stated that they had benefitted from the loan or that it was too early to judge the outcome.

It is clear that for the time being at least the Trust's initiative could not be replicated by Government: quite apart from the very limited resources at its disposal, its extension staff - plagued by low morale, limited skills and thus uncertain commitment - would be unlikely to take on the role of UWFCT field staff. Its limited effectiveness in agricultural extension has been noted for instance by Brett (1989a), while on the issue of loans for women, a recent UNIDO mission noted (see Mamozai, 1990: 31):

The unprofessional way in which women's income generating groups are addressed is mainly due to the fact that there is no adequately trained professional extension service capable to give advice on how to plan, establish, implement small-scale industrial projects; women are mostly dealt with (by) social and/or community development extension workers who themselves are poorly trained. Therefore even well-equipped projects fail.

The remaining issue concerns UWFCT's ability to expand its operations and to influence the work of other like-minded agencies. The Trust's effectiveness is increasingly recognised: an implementing role for UWFCT in the context of an IFAD-funded programme with the Ministry of Agriculture in Masindi District is being discussed and the UNIDO report quoted above asserts, for instance, that (*ibid.* p.32):

[The UWFCT's] 'know-how and experience should be integrated in the institutional set-up of whatever type of UNIDO project regarding small-scale industries.

²⁸ The Church has also established a Revolving Fund specifically addressed at widows and displaced persons in selected districts. The Musoke & Amajo study indicates that almost all loans extended under this facility went to women.

At present, however, UWFCT has only a limited capacity to expand its activities without compromising its approach. This must be recognised by donors and policy makers and the Trust allowed to have a voice in broader issues of policy development. Participation in seminars and meetings, and collaboration with other NGOs, the Women in Development Ministry and other government offices have begun to give the Trust an influence which complements and extends beyond its immediate project work.²⁹

2.5 Concluding Remarks

One of the main problems faced in the course of this evaluation (and foreseen at the outset) was that only 23% of the projects visited were more than 18 months old (time of first loan disbursement). However in spite of the relative newness of projects (a reflection of the recent character of the Trust itself), it appears that a considerable degree of success has been achieved at two levels:

- a) at the **project level**, the Trust has succeeded in making a range of services available to disadvantaged women, services which otherwise would generally not have been within their reach. It has launched a 'bank' with whom depositors identify closely and has extended credit to women who had no access to formal financial institutions. Some savings have been mobilised and, although still relatively few in numbers, most of the projects funded by the Trust can be termed 'successful' (75% in our sample), while 25% could be considered 'failures' - 11 projects being too new to be able to judge performance clearly. Men controlled the business in only three cases and most clients stated that their project had increased their feeling of self-confidence and independence.
- b) at the **institutional level**, a genuine local NGO has been established and is flourishing in spite of the teething problems to be expected in the early years of any new organisation, as well as those stemming from the uncertain Ugandan environment. Its work is innovative in Uganda and it effectively substitutes and complements inadequate Government extension services. UWFCT has been able to retain the services of a highly motivated and committed staff willing to work in sometimes arduous circumstances with minimal resources. This is an essential requirement if the Trust is eventually to fulfil some of its long-term objectives such as making other lending institutions more amenable to extending credit to women involved in micro-enterprises.

The costs of implementing projects have undoubtedly been high in relation to the credit disbursed (approximately 50% in 1988/89). Part of the reason for this certainly lies in inefficiencies within the Trust, yet of most importance has been the Trust's determination to reach women who would not otherwise gain access to credit (especially in sometimes remote rural areas) and by the emphasis placed on training, regular follow-up visits and technical

²⁹ See, for example, the proceedings of a recent national seminar on 'Ugandan Women and Institutional Credit: Realities and Prospects' organised by the WID Ministry and UNIFEM (September 1989) at which UWFCT was represented.

assistance (at a time when effective Government extension services have collapsed). The high rate of project 'success' and the 'spread effect' manifested in a number of locations in which projects exist, the innovative nature of the Trust's work in the Ugandan context, its ability to reach its 'target group', and the likelihood that overhead costs will soon begin to fall somewhat, place these high costs in their important wider perspective.

Even though the Trust's approach entails relatively large overheads servicing a relatively small number of clients and, in view of Uganda's current economic situation, a heavy reliance on external donor support, there are, at present, no prospects of the clients sustaining these costs. They appear justified to the extent that a necessarily onerous multi-pronged approach favouring close contact with the target group would seem indispensable to meet objectives. The innovative character of UWFACT's work, its increased reputation and influence would further justify support.

Appendix: Financial Information

1. Audited accounts (in US\$ '000s, rounded)	<i>5 months at 31-10-86</i>	<i>As at 30-06-87</i>	<i>As at 30-06-88</i>	<i>As at 30-06-89</i>	<i>As at 30-06-90¹</i>
Assets:					
fixed	400	10	331	4,466	8,351
current	6,917	81	1,190	15,923	41,092
(incl. loans)	-	-	(532)	(13,959)	(27,026)
	7,317	91	1,521	20,389	49,443
Represented by accum. fund ²		(83)	(953)	(13,073)	(36,073)
Income:					
donations	6,010	108	930	17,844	55,814
interest	-	1	8	279	2,043
interest on loans	-	-	-	3,789	6,581
special subs	3,289	110	1,619	-	-
membership	40	4	59	143	20
other	8	13	7	154	376
	9,347	236	2,623	22,209	64,834
Expenditure:					
professional fees	-	8	167	276	200
adv. & publicity	400	12	20	407	310
transport	75	4	59	143	20
stationery & printing	1,175	58	343	500	2,254
seminars, train. assist	-	4	531	3,118	9,638
secretarial services	330	11	33	-	1,635
salaries, welfare, housing	-	19	249	2,325	5,612
rent	-	-	-	2,699	2,873
others	50	33	158	655	13,648
	2,030	149	1,560	10,123	36,190
loan guarantee fund	6,500 ³	-	-	-	-
other	500	5	-	-	-
Balance:	317	82	1,063	12,086	28,644
size of savings scheme	-	-	470	2,793	5,998

Notes:

- ¹ Provisional
- ² Loan repayments and operating surplus
- ³ On deposit with WWB

2. Budgets (in \$s)⁴	<i>January to June</i>			
	<i>90/91</i>	<i>91/92</i>	<i>92/93</i>	<i>93/94</i>
1. capital fund (revolving funds-seeds scheme)	90,000	20,000	25,000	25,000
others	165,000	155,000	175,000	175,000
	255,000	175,000	200,000	200,000
2. Training:				
beneficiaries	49,506	35,205	35,205	35,205
staff	17,000	5,000	10,000	10,000
	66,506	40,205	45,205	45,205
3. Technical Assistance	- ⁵	20,000	22,500	25,000
4. Recurrent expenses:				
salaries & benefits	123,300	85,200	97,800	97,800
office	36,000	24,000	24,000	24,000
travel	32,400	20,600	27,600	27,600
	191,700	129,800	149,400	149,400
5. Non-recurrent:				
vehicles	-	35,000	-	-
furnit. & equip	10,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
	10,000	38,000	3,000	3,000
6. Contingencies (3%)	-	12,090	12,603	12,678
Total:	523,206	415,095	432,708	435,283
Source of funds:				
UWFCT interest & repayment	20,000	35,000	50,000	65,000
UWFCT fundraising & subs	-	5,000	5,000	5,000
External donors	503,305	415,095	377,708	365,283
	523,305	415,095	432,708	435,283
<i>Notes:</i>	⁴ Rates of exchange: \$1 = US\$ 1,400 Shs [June 1986]; 60 [May 1987]; 150 [July 1988]; 200 [July 1989]; 440 [July 1990].			
	⁵ Included under training.			

3. THE WEST ACHOLI COOPERATIVE UNION ENGINEERING WORKSHOP³⁰

3.1 Overview

3.1.1 Background

The Engineering Workshop attached to the West Acholi Cooperative Union (WACU) is located in Gulu town, the main administrative centre in Northern Uganda, 350 kms North of Kampala. It is by far the largest industrial unit currently operating in the town, indeed possibly in the whole Northern half of the country. The present workshop is essentially the product of assistance provided by ACORD³¹ since 1980: from a small repair workshop in 1979, it has developed over the years thanks mainly to ACORD managerial, technical and material support until 1988.

The West Acholi Cooperative Union was, throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the most important business enterprise in Gulu. Situated at the apex of the cooperative movement in the district, WACU's main activity was the marketing and processing of cotton, the main export crop in Northern Uganda. The WACU management is theoretically answerable to a Board representing the 100-odd primary cooperative societies in the district. In effect, it is run as a parastatal body and has at times come under the direct authority of the Ministry of Cooperatives in Kampala.

The primary aim of ACORD's programme of assistance (originally as part of an integrated rural development programme covering both Gulu and neighbouring Kitgum districts³² was to develop a local capacity to produce metal agricultural equipment to meet regional smallholder demand, especially for ploughs and other ox-drawn implements. Over the years, however, the workshop has diversified its product range and is now able to produce such items as hand-tools, maize mills, brick-making machines, etc. The workshop's current workforce stands at 28 (having reached a peak of 100 in 1987), with expected sales of US\$ 70 mn in 1990.

Since 1986, Gulu town and the neighbouring districts have been severely affected by insecurity as a result of dissidence against the Central Government, cattle raiding from nearby Karamoja and plain banditry. Although the workshop managed to remain open for most of this period, its potential was severely limited by the wholesale removal of cattle herds from much of Northern Uganda by rustlers: its main market has thus effectively disappeared.

³⁰ Fieldwork conducted in Gulu in November 1990 was complemented by an assessment of technical issues relating to ACORD's support to the workshop undertaken by Mr A. Tulip, an engineer formerly attached by ACORD to the workshop as trainer.

³¹ ACORD (Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development) is an international consortium of 20-odd European and Canadian NGOs, established in the mid-1970s to implement long-term development programmes in parts of Africa where the weakness of local structures preclude direct funding involvement on the part of its constituent agencies.

³² Then also known as West and East Acholi districts.

3.1.2 Evaluation methodology

The selection of the WACU workshop as one of the four case studies was based on three factors. First, although the workshop was never, *strictu sensu*, owned and operated by ACORD, the level of assistance provided assimilated it to the ACORD programme in Northern Uganda in a very intimate fashion. Since the end of ACORD support, the Workshop has effectively been 'handed over' to the Cooperative Union. Because of the relatively recent presence of NGO programming in Uganda, ACORD's involvement provides one of the few examples of an initiative now operating (albeit with great difficulty) without such support. Second, over the last decade, development activities have constantly been threatened by political instability: since 1986, this has been especially true for Northern Uganda. Third, the scale of the project brings into focus a series of questions relating to appropriate institutional and technological choices as well as to the impact of the national macro-economic environment on an initiative with regional ambitions.

Civil disturbances and insecurity have affected all aspects of life in Northern Uganda in recent years and this evaluation was inevitably constrained by the aftermath of recent events. From a practical viewpoint, fieldwork could not take place during periods of workshop closures during the last year and information gathering was hampered by the lack of documents covering certain periods owing to looting and losses during the war years. Travel in rural areas was precluded.

Apart from documentation still available in Gulu and ACORD's records, the material presented here stems from discussions with workshop staff, Ministry and cooperatives officials, and ACORD personnel in both Gulu and Kampala. Fieldwork conducted in Gulu in November 1990 was complemented by an assessment of technical issues relating to ACORD's support to the workshop undertaken for ODI by an engineer formerly attached by ACORD to the workshop as a trainer.

3.2 Case Study Description

3.2.1 The overall ACORD programme

Pressure from a number of NGOs within the ACORD consortium to initiate programming in Uganda had started building up even before the 1979 'Liberation War' had come to a conclusion. In the euphoria that accompanied Amin's departure, ACORD was thus one of the first foreign NGOs to commit itself to development work in the country. A first programming mission took place in mid-1979, leading to geographical, sectoral and organisational recommendations for a 4-year programme. Geographically, East and West Acholi districts in Northern Uganda were seen as the most appropriate for ACORD intervention. This was because 'the long term effect of Amin's repression over eight years had more serious consequences [there] than the damage done by war' (Pain and Baillie, 1979: 18). So far as sectoral priorities were concerned, the consultants recommended a focus on food production and storage, and rural trade and marketing, eventually leading to the development of an integrated rural

development programme based on community groups complementary to the work of Government, the churches and other NGOs.

Proposals for a multi-sectoral programme consisting of three inter-related components were drawn up in 1980. The threefold purpose was to (Final report, December 1980, p.3):

- boost agricultural production through (i) an immediate distribution of 80,000 handhoes for sale to members of primary cooperative societies in both districts and (ii) long-term assistance to the West Acholi Cooperative Union Engineering Workshop in Gulu to resume production of simple agricultural implements - particularly ox-ploughs - and later non-agricultural equipment as well, to meet, at least partially, the demand in Gulu and Kitgum districts.
- improve rural water supplies through assisting self-help groups in the form of imported materials and technical advice where necessary to (i) protect springs wherever possible with emphasis on West Acholi and (ii) dig shallow wells, particularly in East Acholi.
- provide equipment and technical assistance to rehabilitate rural health units in both districts and assist in the launching of a primary health care programme through the sensitisation of district medical personnel and the local population generally.

In accepting these proposals, ACORD decided to launch what was to be for an NGO at the time a large and ambitious initiative. The initial two and a half year budget amounted to £840,000 and was designed to fund activities in an area with 600,000 people living over more than 10,000 square miles. The distribution of hoes was seen, in particular, as an important way to overcome widespread shortages in the short term and to get the local economy back on its feet. Support for local government services to renovate the infrastructure (rural health units) and launch new initiatives (water supplies, primary health care) would go some way towards making up for years of neglect and the ravages of the war.

After a successful distribution of imported hoes - at a nominal price - to 80,000 members of primary cooperative societies, ACORD launched the longer term components of the programme. A permanent office with an expatriate Programme Coordinator and local support staff was opened in Gulu while other ACORD appointees joined the team to assist in the health, water and agricultural activities.

The programme was soon, however, to face a number of constraints and initial objectives proved hard to reach. The first difficulty stemmed from the apparent lack of active local support: as was noted in a 1985 evaluation (Roberts, 1985: 12) 'while there have been impressive achievements, (ACORD) has not been able to count on the level of receptivity and support from either the local government services or the local population upon which the original programme objectives were largely predicated'.

Secondly, the programme had failed to integrate its various components. Even if the fragmentation of local government departments had not resulted in major conflicts, the programme nevertheless gave (*ibid*, p.19) 'the impression (of being) slowly and in piecemeal fashion pulled in all directions by the very relationships it has contracted with the local administration'.

In view of these difficulties, and in an effort to avoid any risk of ACORD performing a substitutive function vis-à-vis Government, an attempt was made to re-focus the programme on its community development work (with emphasis on women's and youth groups) since this showed evidence of 'appreciable success in respect of local popular participation and involvement' (*ibid*, p.14). From 1985, ACORD thus reduced its support to local government departments and increasingly concentrated its work on existing groups (Overview of programme direction, November 1985, p.4):

the programme will include the development in the participants of the analytical skills and conceptual tools required for development planning and resource management so that, when the programme ends and technical support is withdrawn, essential skills to enable the groups to continue development action will remain.

Little of this could be put into practice at once: the mid-1985 coup suspended all programme work and the continuing insecurity experienced in both districts in the period 1986-1989 severely curtailed all activities, other than relief work which ACORD implemented in 1988/89 (with some reluctance, in view of its mandate as a 'development' agency). By 1990, however, activities in the rural areas could resume again: a cadre of Rural Development Workers, salaried by ACORD, had been deployed to promote group formation and savings and credit activities and little was thus left of the original design of the programme. The Engineering Workshop proved the exception: throughout this period, it continued to operate with ACORD assistance and it is to this element of the programme that we now turn.

3.2.2 ACORD's assistance to the workshop: rationale

From the outset, priority was given to agricultural rehabilitation and development since, within the framework of an integrated programme, this was seen as 'a pre-condition for advancement in other fields'. For all components of the programme, implementation initially depended on close collaboration with district government authorities and with other local structures such as the cooperatives (as specified by the agency's overall mandate). The underlying problem in promoting development work was identified as a lack of resources: a role for ACORD was thus to provide the necessary materials, while drawing on existing human resources. By reinforcing local structures, the long term viability of initiatives supported by ACORD would be assured. In other words (Roberts, 1985: 5):

Fundamental to ACORD's philosophy is the principle of responding to development needs in such a way as to promote the self-reliance of the communities concerned [. . .] The implication of this philosophy is that ACORD is not the principal protagonist of the development process in

any given context, but plays an essentially ancillary role, providing encouragement, technical advice and, where necessary, material support, but not the *will* to develop . . . [this] presupposes that local protagonists of the development process exist.

For the workshop, this meant supporting an existing structure - the Cooperative Union - rather than starting a manufacturing base from scratch. ACORD's second progress report in 1981 thus noted:

The workshop had survived through the last few difficult years thanks to Ugandan skills and determination without outside help: it must remain a Ugandan venture, ACORD never attempting 'to take the workshop over'.

Relieving the shortage of agricultural implements was seen as all-important in Acholi. However, while it was clear that such a shortage did exist (ox-ploughing, in particular, had been widely practised throughout Northern Uganda), little research took place at the outset to establish precisely the extent of this need, to examine emerging patterns of social differentiation among the region's peasants (although large-scale farms were known to be extremely rare and landlessness to be virtually non-existent) and to analyse its implications for a programme intending to produce ox-drawn implements (representing for most farmers significant items of expenditure).

After the immediate provision of imported hand hoes, it was anticipated that assistance to the workshop would lead to (*ibid.* p.9):

the expansion of a local manufacturing base [which] should contribute towards the lessening of the dependence of the Acholi farmer presently experiences on central Government resources and imports from outside Uganda.

To meet large-scale demand and thus to make an impact at the regional level, capital-intensive technology would be necessary. The programme design assumed that the rehabilitation of the country's economy (and, as a pre-condition, political stability) would be achieved in a matter of years and thus provide the necessary external environment for the workshop to develop. ACORD thus presupposed that (*ibid.* p.7):

there would be a short-term hiatus so far as Government's ability to promote reconstruction and development in the Acholi region was concerned but, second, that a substantial improvement in this respect could be expected in the medium term [. . .] lack of resources rather than lack of will was held responsible for the Government's inactivity in the short term.

3.2.3 Programme implementation: early progress

Originally built in 1963 and owned by Asians, the workshop and its equipment had been 'allocated',³³ following their forced departure in 1972, to the District Cooperative Union. With a surface area of 15,000 sq.ft., this was one of the largest units in Gulu's 'industrial area' and included stores, an office, sheds and residences. The equipment included four lathes, welding plants, and various smaller items. The original intention of the Union in applying for the allocation of the workshop had been to use the facilities to service its cotton ginneries. Activities expanded, however, and a manager (whose training in mechanical engineering had been funded by the Union) appointed. In addition to general engineering work, the workshop started repairing ox-ploughs and producing metal furniture, a few ox-carts and groundnut shellers. By 1976, however, the general economic decline in Uganda led to severe production difficulties, especially once local steel supplies dried up.

By the time ACORD's support had started, the workforce had been reduced to 14 (of whom four had some technical training). Machinery could no longer be maintained and production was confined to welding work and vehicle repairs. Nevertheless, the workshop was still open. ACORD's assistance was planned for an initial two and a half years (later extended by 6 months). Approximately one quarter of the £1 mn budgeted for the entire programme was earmarked for the workshop. This was to include managerial and technical support, the provision of heavy equipment and other tools as a grant (£95,000), and raw materials (£41,000) needed for the production of agricultural equipment, mainly ox-plough spares (20,000 to 50,000 ploughs were estimated to await repairs in both districts). These raw materials, imported from Kenya, were to be sold to the workshop for local currency. In the Agreement signed in late 1981 by ACORD and the Ministry of Cooperatives and Marketing, the three objectives of assistance were as follows. First to increase agricultural production in Gulu and Kitgum districts through the provision to farmers of locally manufactured agricultural implements. Second to promote the development of appropriate designs and skills for the local production of agricultural implements. And third, to diversify production, in a later phase, to cover non-agricultural fields.

Diversification would include production of ox-drawn tool bars (with planters and weeders) using a design where all the components would be available in Uganda once the local steel industry had resumed production, thus reducing the workshop's dependence on the provision of foreign exchange by ACORD. Production of eight to ten ploughs per day was envisaged. Other possible items to be produced included ox-carts, grinding mills, oil extractors, and various hand implements. Finally the workshop was expected to develop a capacity for the region to service borehole pumps, repair equipment in rural health facilities, produce wheelchairs, bicycle ambulances, etc.

³³ 'Allocation' was the standard (and *ad hoc*) administrative procedure used throughout the Amin years to transfer the use of 'Departed Asians' Properties' to Ugandan individuals or corporate bodies.

While the workshop would remain part of the Union, the Agreement provided for its 'financial autonomy', with the government undertaking to ensure that the equipment and materials provided 'would be used to meet the objectives of the project'. Materials and tools started arriving in early 1981, followed by a VSO volunteer seconded to ACORD as technical adviser in September. Existing equipment was repaired, the first plough spares produced and the workforce re-organised pending the arrival of heavy equipment (lathes, pedestal drills, a power press, etc) in early 1982. By then, a whole range of plough spares was being produced and design work on prototypes had started. Turnover had increased from USh 30,000 in January 1981 to USh 140,000 in November.

Demand for spares seemed buoyant and this was confirmed by figures provided by District Agricultural Offices citing a demand in both districts in excess of 100,000 items.³⁴ By the end of 1981, ACORD could note that (Second Progress Report, December 1981):

should ACORD withdraw to-morrow, the workshop will not only survive, but certainly emerge in a much improved position. In spite of the somewhat slower start than initially anticipated to the production of spares for ox-ploughs, work at the Gulu workshop is set to have a significant impact on agricultural production in Acholi from the next planting season onwards.

Further progress was made in 1982: by mid-year, complete ploughs were being produced and the toolbar had also been designed. Turnover had reached USh 500,000 in June, and eight additional workers had been hired. Salaries had been increased and a bonus system introduced to safeguard salary parity with the Cooperative Union. Modest 'surpluses' (profits) had allowed the workshop to start reimbursing ACORD for raw materials, further heavy equipment was on order and a start had been made to product diversification (bicycle ambulances, for instance). Over the following two years, production continued to expand and to diversify (groundnut hullers, ox-carts, service work on such diverse items as road graders and ferries). A shop was opened adjacent to the workshop to sell ploughs spares and marketing drives were launched in the two districts. A second expatriate adviser was appointed to upgrade existing technical skills and further diversify output. Turnover and production figures for selected items are given in Table 2.

In the period February-September 1984 alone, over 300 ploughs were sold with ploughs and spares representing 71% of the workshop's output. The accounts for 1984/85 and 1985/86 show net surpluses of USh 16.2 mn and USh 11.8 mn respectively, with fixed assets estimated at USh 47.3 mn. The workshop's products were also proving competitive, even in the face of duty-free imports. These clear successes attracted wider attention: sales were made to destination outside the region (often to NGOs) and the Ministries of Agriculture, Planning and Cooperatives in turn

³⁴ ACORD estimated in 1984 that 12,000 out of 50,000 households in Gulu and 33,000 out of 56,000 households in Kitgum used ploughs.

Table 2 Output and sales to selected items produced by WACU engineering workshop

	<i>shares</i>	<i>ploughs</i>	<i>steel processed (tons)</i>	<i>sales (US\$)</i>
1981/82	2,590	19	6	2,102,000
1982/83	5,490	330	12	5,940,000
1983/84	-	-	20	10,277,000
1984/5	2,980	220	47	27,330,000
1985/6	5,000*	400	76*	77,300,000
1986/87	6,000*	500	95*	227,000,000*

* estimate

approached ACORD with a view to replicating the engineering workshop in other parts of Uganda.

3.2.4 Main constraints

If production growth and product diversification demonstrated considerable progress, the workshop was, however, proving a victim of its own success and was facing fundamental problems which compromised its sustainability. As the 1985 evaluation put it (Roberts, 1985: 29-30):

The problems which ACORD has encountered have been essentially two in number. They concern the orientation towards servicing local farmers which ACORD originally set for the workshop, on which only qualified success has been registered, and the long-term viability of the workshop as a self-reliant, i.e. financially solvent, enterprise. [. . .] The first problem is essentially a problem of distribution or marketing. [. . .] ACORD has felt frustrated by the difficulty of reaching the poorer farmers of the more outlying districts.

Marketing trips eased this problem to some extent but the workshop's productive capacity remained under-utilised as no private trader network was developing to take the workshop's products to distant villages. This also underlined ACORD's limited success, until then, in linking its assistance to the workshop with a comprehensive agricultural extension programme. In mid-1982, the agency had looked into ox-cultivation in Acholi, which suggested that its major limitation stemmed from the inefficient use of animals and equipment by poorly trained farmers, ill-advised by equally poorly trained Government extension workers. ACORD observed that (1984/85 Programme Proposals, p.11):

[. . .] it is clear that in examining the bottlenecks in marketing the workshop's output, we have hit upon a whole complex of problems in the agricultural field. These problems, which were not apparent when the programme was first formulated, are not only hampering the

success of the workshop, but are critical to the overall development of the area.

As a result it started to develop an agricultural extension programme primarily designed to support the work of Government ox-cultivation extension staff, to accompany marketing drives with demonstration sessions, to introduce credit to poorer farmers for the purchase of ox-drawn implements, and to promote improved crop storage methods. For the workshop, the marketing constraint was compounded by the seasonal nature of the demand for agricultural tools, leaving it to survive on service work from September to March, while demand was difficult to meet at other times. The workshop did not have sufficient capital at its disposal to afford carrying large inventories of finished products, and thus it started seeking bulk orders from elsewhere in the country. Cash flow difficulties led to erratic loan repayments to ACORD (by the end of 1983, the workshop had borrowed US\$ 12 mn, of which 4 mn had been repaid) and to difficulties in raising the 'local cover' for a \$60,000 IDA hard currency loan to the workshop negotiated on its behalf by ACORD for the purchase of steel in Kenya. The 1985 evaluation noted (Roberts, 1985: 32):

What is needed is that a comprehensive financial strategy be worked out for the workshop (to include): (i) a realistic scheduling of debt repayment, (ii) depreciation (iii) tooling, (iv) raw material costs, (v) product pricing and marketing, (vi) wages policy.

These constraints in turn reflected the greatest single obstacle facing the workshop: the calibre of its management was to prove an untractable problem for years to come. As the technical adviser had already noted in July 1982, 'The workshop is now well on its way to meeting the demands of the local farmers, but to ensure its future prosperity the right management team must be found'. The immediate problem stemmed from the lack of management skills which rapid growth demanded. Training in neighbouring Kenya for the manager and the despatch of a 'management advisor' by ACORD in 1984 did little to alleviate these difficulties. It soon became clear that production successes and the level of outside assistance (ACORD had been a 'fairy godmother', argued the management adviser) had in effect concealed the consequences of a large accumulating debt and made up for deep-rooted management deficiencies. ACORD's power to address and solve this problem was limited (Roberts, 1985: 30-31):

The problem of management is crucial to the prospects of the workshop achieving self-reliance. As things stand at present, the workshop is financially dependent upon ACORD and shows little sign of ceasing to be. Arguably the central reason for this is the performance of the workshop's manager who lacks technical competence [. . .] and commitment. [. . .] It is clear that neither ACORD nor WACU are able to solve this problem in the short term via a change of personnel. [. . .] In effect ACORD is burdened with the responsibility but has little or no power.

ACORD's proposals for 1984/85 thus stressed the need to move away from technical assistance towards improving management and marketing, through recruiting a Ugandan managing director and devising a coherent marketing strategy, essentially through intensifying 'efforts in agricultural extension with a view to mobilising the demand believed to exist in the Acholi region' (1984/85 Proposals, p.25).

Some progress was also made in late 1984 towards a power sharing arrangement between the Union and ACORD. A Joint Management Committee with representatives from the Union, ACORD and the Ministry of Cooperatives, would meet monthly to handle all matters arising from ACORD's assistance to the workshop. ACORD also acquired a say in day-to-day management and became signatory to the workshop's accounts.

It is clear therefore, that by 1985 the workshop was far from having reached the degree of self-sufficiency that ACORD had envisaged five years earlier. As The Programme Coordinator noted in December 1984 (Fifth Progress Report, p.7):

With all its equipment provided as a grant, with steel provided on interest-free credit (in a country with massive inflation), with expert assistance provided free of charge, with very low rent and power charges, the workshop is barely able to break even.

Proposals to rectify these problems were, however, soon overtaken by events: the overthrow of Milton Obote in June 1985 marked the beginning of a long period of uncertainty for the programme, from which the workshop was to emerge into a radically changed environment. After a hurried evacuation by ACORD's expatriate personnel, the first consequence of the coup highlighted the political significance which the workshop had locally acquired since the manager, long ACORD's *bête noire*, lost his position on political - rather than technical - grounds. With the return of staff, the latter half of 1985 gave the illusion of further progress: the workshop emerged completely unscathed from the coup, a competent manager (still in post in 1990) had been appointed and the level of debts was being considerably reduced - helped as it was by a rate of inflation then estimated at 400-450 percent a year. ACORD, for its part, could plan to reduce its level of support (by no longer extending credit, providing short-term managerial support, and completing the upgrade of the plant with a pneumatic system and new wiring) prior to completely phasing-out assistance in mid-1988.

Yet again things did not turn out as envisaged. Museveni's troops progress northwards, after capturing Kampala in January, forced ACORD, once again, to evacuate staff. All extension activities were once again suspended and the proposed rural credit scheme abandoned. By late March, three weeks after its capture by the National Resistance Army (NRA), Gulu was still a ghost town, the workshop had been looted of its finished products, many of its accessories and much of its raw materials with an estimated value of £14,000. The heavy equipment, however, remained intact and, after a four-month closure, production resumed to reach the highest recorded output levels ever the following month. Marketing trips resumed throughout both

districts and work started on renovating the premises, replacing damaged equipment and installing new fittings.

Soon, however, organised opposition to the new government (by Alice Lakwena's movement, among others) developed, and cattle raiding from Karamoja intensified. In mid-year, Gulu itself was attacked: this was the first of 20 attacks, with rebels taking the town for short periods on two occasions. All roads, except for heavily armed convoys using the main road South, became impassable. Insecurity prevented workshop staff from reaching the premises: continuing into much of 1987, working hours had to be cut to allow those workers who had not been arrested as suspected collaborators to reach home safely and morale was further eroded as the numbers of refugees in a besieged town without water or electricity reached over a third of the district's population (more than 100,000).

Most crucially for the long term prospects of the workshop, the cattle population in Northern Uganda had almost entirely disappeared: in Kitgum district, for instance, cattle numbers had dropped from 158,000 to just 2,000 heads in two years. Further, cattle was gradually considered as a security risk by the region's farmers. The workshop adviser could thus note in his final report: 'the original objective of the workshop as defined by ACORD is no longer viable.'

From September 1986, workshop sales of agricultural equipment were indeed reduced to zero, debts accumulated and the cash flow position became critical. Production continued at only 25-30% capacity and, for the three months ending October 1986, net losses amounted to USh 6.3 mn. By the end of the year, it was clear that the priority on satisfying demand in Gulu and Kitgum had to be abandoned and orders from outside Acholi actively sought. Demand for service work was also likely to remain depressed as the infrastructure was devastated, there were hardly any vehicles left on the roads and people were likely to have more pressing needs than metal gates and furniture. In spite of the difficulties and with a further loan from ACORD of USh 16 mn, the workshop remained open throughout 1987, providing shelter to refugees at night. The cutting off of electricity supplies to the region forced it to run expensive generators.

However, the ACORD adviser stayed in post and provided much moral support. Gradually, the workshop seemed to succeed in turning itself into a national ox-plough supplier by forging links with other cooperative unions in Northern and Eastern Uganda. However, this could only provide short-term relief, and increased transport problems (it often took 4 days to cover the 350 kms to Kampala with irregular convoys) further increased production costs. As for income, the unions proved to be poor payers and political upheavals finally engulfed the newly-found markets of the North and East in the second half of the year.

Through ACORD's good offices, however, other NGOs provided relief and 1988 saw more progress in diversifying markets: a 1,000 plough order was secured from Oxfam and a \$64,000 grant obtained from USAID to purchase the necessary raw materials. Orders were also received for brick and tile machines from ActionAid and the 1988/89 estimates anticipated the use of 175 tons of steel to manufacture, among others, 4,000

ploughs and 3,000 shares. By the end of 1988, the workshop employed 81 staff. 1988 also saw the end of seven years of day-to-day support provided by ACORD through its technical advisor. However its support to the workshop continued through attendance of Joint Management Committee meetings, logistical backup (especially for purchases outside Uganda), provision of foreign exchange facilities and contacts with other agencies as potential customers. The departure of the technical adviser, however, immediately led to fears about the consequences of the high turnover in trained staff, and, perhaps more importantly, about the workshop's loss of its 'political umbrella'. Indeed from 1989, the workshop increasingly became the object of tussles among prominent residents. Relations between the workshop and the Union management became strained, and 1989/90 saw a number of investigations by the Ministry of Co-operatives and the office of the District Administrator to investigate allegations of embezzlement and support to rebels.

The financial situation continued to be very precarious: losses mounted (with many debtors untraceable), and overheads remained high as a consequence of previous output levels. Orders were tenuous, reflecting the high production costs, the lack of expertise in other markets and the competition from low-priced imports. By February 1989, 22 staff had already been made redundant, and in March the senior foreman was killed. At 31st July 1989, total turnover for the year was USh 13.2 mn (475 ploughs had been produced in the 1989 calendar year), well below the planned level of sales of USh 77 mn.

Although peace was gradually returning to Northern Uganda, 1990 was to prove perhaps the most difficult year for the workshop yet. By the time of the evaluation, the workshop had to adapt to a much reduced level of support from ACORD, severe market constraints, a cash position that did not allow the salaries of a reduced workforce to be regularly paid, demoralised managerial staff and uncertainties stemming from official investigations. These led to a devastating closure of the premises by the local political authorities for a period of two and a half months. Owing to a very large order expected to be finalised (and finally withdrawn) during this period, workshop estimates indicate that the closure resulted in the loss of USh 50 mn of the USh 70.6 mn orders expected for 1990/91. Closure could not, however, mask the underlying problems that the workshop was continuing to face; especially lack of markets, aggravated both by the failure to open a representative office in Kampala and competition from donor agencies.³⁵

3.3 Evaluation Results

The workshop has thus been reduced to a hand-to-mouth existence. It has cut its workforce to 28 (down from 70 at the beginning of the year), of whom only 12 are productive. Lack of income from sales has precluded the accumulation of any reserves for re-investment, of

³⁵ At the time of the study, IFAD was selling imported ploughs at USh 6,000 in a neighbouring district (approximately \$7.50 at the open market rate), compared with USh 48,000 for a WACU plough.

which a conservative figures based on a 10-year depreciation period for heavy equipment, would be £20,000 a year.

Some success has, nevertheless, been achieved. Production has been diversified: a few block-making machines have been built, and the workshop has fulfilled large orders from by aid agencies for hand tools. At the time of the evaluation, it had just received an order *in extremis* for 40 brick-making machines financed by CIDA valued at US\$ 500,000 each. In addition, all local government departments, institutions and public services continue to depend on the workshop for service and maintenance.

3.3.1 ACORD's overall support

ACORD based its strategy on the provision of agricultural tools. However the main constraint on agricultural production may well have been weeding and harvesting, rather than ploughing, while marketing constraints were also shown to be significant for Acholi smallholders. More fundamentally, however, ACORD placed most emphasis on assisting an existing institution and ensuring that its assistance would not undermine its sustainability. This was to lead ACORD to critical problems for the whole enterprise, as Roberts had already noted (1985: 27):

The problem was that, in order to achieve the first (agriculture-oriented) element of this objective, ACORD sought to ensure that the management of the workshop was operationally as independent as possible of the WACU. Yet ACORD was in no position to assume supervisory authority over the workshop itself. It thus helped to create a situation in which the manager of the workshop felt comparatively free to ignore ACORD's views and advice, particularly with regard to the financial management of the enterprise, since he was both independent of ACORD and insulated from effective supervision by the Union. [...] In short, there has been a fundamental lack of lucidity on ACORD's part, a reluctance to accept that it does not control all the determining elements of the situation. The ambitious objective which ACORD has set for the workshop would only make sense were ACORD in a position to control the management of the enterprise. Yet it appears that ACORD has been unwilling to entertain more modest expectations of the workshop (and a more modest conception of its own role in relation to it) because of the central place which the workshop has occupied in ACORD's conception of its entire northern Uganda programme, as the centre-piece of the (itself notionally central) agricultural development programme.

In a sense these tensions illustrate the 'cultural' difficulties which ACORD - as an NGO - was experiencing in dealing with what should have been a 'business' initiative. The comments of one of ACORD's Programme Coordinators are revealing in this respect (Lundeen, 1986: 22-23):

As a development organisation ACORD is not interested in realising direct financial profits from the support it provides. However, as an

organisation that invested heavily in an income-generating activity, at one point in time, it did possess a certain degree of authority. When this authority was abdicated, accountability became theoretical, and when support was continued despite evidence of gross mismanagement, what initially was intended to be development assistance instead became subsidised relief. [. . .] the goal of establishing a locally sustainable small industry was being sacrificed.

There was one alternative and that would have been to invoke the 'banker's' prerogative: initially to retain adequate authority in decision-making; subsequently to withhold support and watch the workshop flounder; and, ultimately, to resuscitate the workshop under new management.

. . . National political influences and the power that was exerted locally would have been diffused, and it is unlikely that the same pressures would have been exercised twice. Additionally, a precedence for meaningful and logical action would have been set and might have strengthened the WACU to invoke its own authority to take a leading role . . .

The advantages expected to come from linkage with the Union (such as access to credit from the Cooperative Bank and marketing through the cooperative structure) also proved unfounded, as did support from the Union's parent Ministry. This is in spite of positive official attitudes for the project to the point of approaching ACORD to replicate the experience elsewhere in the country, and in spite of the NRM's stress on the development of a 'self-centred' and autonomous economy. Government was especially reluctant to intervene in local 'political' struggles and to resist the importation of heavily subsidised ploughs (either directly or through an overvalued exchange rate). In effect, as one official stated, the Ministry 'has stood back because ACORD was there'.

Research by ACORD into alternative technological approaches to the manufacture of agricultural equipment was also limited. Once made, the implications of the choice for a relatively capital-intensive technology and the infrastructural requirements were profound, if downplayed by the protagonists. Clearly, too, far too much was expected of the rehabilitation of the Ugandan economy. Similarly, the managerial implications - and the wider political consequences of establishing a large semi-parastatal plant in a small town - did not feature prominently in ACORD's early thinking.

3.3.2 Technical support

By 1990, the technical capability of the workshop had been severely circumscribed as a result of declining standards on the shop floor, management constraints and equipment deficiencies. Nevertheless, a relatively wide range of products was still being produced and, recognising the need to diversify, six new items had been developed since the technical adviser's departure - brick-making machines, slashers, rakes, trowels, charcoal stoves, groundnut hullers. Stocks were well maintained and

some purchases of materials and consumables were being made. The heavy plant was still in good working order, although some of the machinery was unutilised for lack of lubricants or locally available spare parts.

By the end of the year, only one skilled person and two semi-skilled machine operators (who had been trained by the ACORD technician) were still at the workshop. Of the rest, five had been suspended for using equipment on private work or embezzlement, four had failed to return from leave, probably for security reasons, three had been made redundant as a result of production decline, one had been killed and one injured in the fighting. As a result, workshop facilities were not fully used and not properly maintained (especially so far as preventive machine maintenance was concerned) and machine accessories were falling into disrepair eroding the workshop's competitive position. Only the brick-makers and groundnut hullers made good use of the equipment. Declining technical skills led to falling standards of products: ploughs were not as well-built as in past and new products had a poor finish, making them look 'more like the products of local artisanal workshops which do not have equipment to produce a better standard of work' (engineer's report for ODI, 1990: 3), thus further undermining the workshop's competitiveness. On the accounting side, none of the five staff trained in costing remained, leading to the ironic situation where an order for brick-machines was recently rejected by the customer for being too cheap!

3.3.3 Future prospects

By the end of 1990, the sustainability of the workshop seemed to be compromised by a series of interlinked factors.

First is the changing market and the ability to exploit opportunities. While the workshop retains an ability (unique in Northern Uganda) to mass produce simple items, and it has proved able to develop new products, these potential strengths have, however, been undermined by poor machine maintenance, deteriorating product range and quality and, especially, production increasingly oriented towards items with a 'low technological content' at the expense of items which would bring the equipment available to full use. With the level of skills, tooling and equipment in decline, production standards would be likely to continue to decline further and compound the marketing problem:

without the recovery of skills, the workshop would seem to be locked into a downward trend that will drive it into a market that it cannot survive in, irrespective of other problems besetting the workshop, (Tulip, *op. cit.*, p.7).

Second is the general quality of the management (and of the staff in general). Significant shortcomings relate to skills as well as attitude. The current leadership appears ill-equipped to deal with skills problems, in spite of its undoubted commitment, revealed, for instance, in poorly kept records, doubtful costings, and the lack of basic management tools, such as updated production figures. Accounting is

restricted to the compilation of information of little use and this is not utilised to help plan future production strategies.

The current management has clearly been demoralised by the investigations and the prospects of an end to the (now limited) support provided by ACORD. The workshop's leadership, however, also appears to be inflexible in approach and dogged by a bureaucratic and wooden approach to problem solving. Partly as a result, labour relations are poor. The workforce consists of too many unproductive staff, and few if any priorities are set.

Third is the institutional context. In theory, the Cooperative Union consists of five departments: a cotton ginnery, a ranch, the workshop, the transport department and the education department. Of these, only the workshop remains as a revenue earner: the ginnery was destroyed, the ranch ceased to exist and all the vehicles of the transport section were looted in 1987.

There can be little optimism for the future as long as the workshop remains a constituent part of the Cooperative Union, mainly because the Union is most unlikely to attract management of the right calibre, given poor remuneration, past practices and the 'Cooperative Union sub-culture' in Uganda. The workshop's links with the Union at present entail bureaucratic and inefficient management as well as poor remuneration (in addition to a 6% levy on turnover to the benefit of the Union) with little in return. What is more in recent years the workshop has moved from a situation where it was one of several Union departments to one where it has become its one and only *raison d'être*, as indicated in the audited WACU accounts:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Ginnery</i>	<i>Workshop</i>	<i>Ranch</i>	<i>Transport</i>
1985	- 91.0	+ 1.0	- 7.0	- 7.0
1986	- 396.0	- 2.0	+ 15.0	- 146.0
1987	- 8.8	+ 1.2	0.2	0.5
1988	- 1.2	+ 4.7	pm	pm
1989	- 20.0	+ 0.8	pm	pm

Cotton, the enterprise on which the Union was built in the first place, has become almost irrelevant in the region and the Union has turned into one of the 'paper organisations which only exist because the state has refused to allow them to disappear' (Brett, 1989b: 73). By mid-1989, WACU's accumulated losses amounted to US\$ 35 mn, including annual interest payments of US\$ 12 mn. A year later, losses had reached US\$ 78 mn.

3.3.4 Economic impact

Lack of data prevent accurate quantification of the workshop's overall economic impact. However up to the mid-1980s, it is clear that considerable progress had been made in producing agricultural implements that were in demand in the region, using appropriate designs, developing local manufacturing skills, and minimising the use of foreign exchange. As one of the ACORD management consultants noted (Bond, 1989: 2):

ACORD and its supportive institutions saw the workshop as supporting agricultural production in the Northern Region with the eventual reversal of the situation when the economy of the district will allow the workshop to support itself [. . .] this was very near to happening in 1985.

By then, tens of thousands of ploughs spares, hundreds of complete ploughs and various other implements had been produced and general engineering work was offered to the region at large. Employment had been provided, at one point, for 100 people.

Over the years, ACORD has spent close to £500,000 to the workshop: such an investment can only really be justified if it leads to the establishment of a manufacturing facility with long-term prospects. After 10 years, the workshop is still in existence and, had its local market not entirely - and totally unexpectedly - vanished, it might well have thrived. Yet, because of the scale of its operations and of the rigid nature of its technology, the workshop has found itself particularly exposed to external factors, with the uncertainties of the late 1980s bringing this particularly to the fore. As the technical adviser noted just before leaving Gulu in 1988 (Tulip, 1988: 5) 'at the end of the day, there are too many variables beyond the control of the workshop or ACORD with respect to the war and its effects, that will ultimately decide the future of the workshop'.

In relation to the management issue, the impact of political events on the workshop would have demanded unusually competent managerial resources to ensure its continued existence. Not only did the workshop not possess this, but management of such calibre would in any case have been unlikely to remain in remote and unsafe Northern Uganda in the first place, or to emerge from the Cooperative Union structure.

3.4 Concluding Remarks

Since 1980, the WACU workshop has shown remarkable resilience in spite of the most formidable difficulties. In the mid-1980s, it was offering a valuable service to the local farming community and had generated about 100 jobs. A wide range of good quality products were being produced and the future of the workshop appeared promising. At present, the workshop is still able to mass produce a wide range of items (the installed capacity for ox-ploughs is 100 per week) and most of the equipment is in good condition.

In spite of its attention to the issue of 'hand-over', the workshop had, however, not reached 'sustainability' by the time ACORD withdrew its support. This stemmed from a number of factors. First were 'external' factors arising from political instability in the country to which the type of investment ACORD had envisaged in the early 1980s was particularly vulnerable. Although the workshop continued producing through the most difficult years, the removal of almost the entire cattle herd from Northern Uganda meant that its prime market vanished almost overnight. In addition, it has lost most of its skilled personnel and the continued decrepit state of the infrastructure has undermined its competitive position. Second have been problems associated directly or indirectly with the Cooperative Union whose management practices are not conducive to profit maximisation and long term investments. Further, by the late 1980s, the workshop had become the only department of the Union which was still financially sound. Third, problems resulting from insufficient research and from the choice of technology which, while geared towards mass production, demands levels of organisational and technical skills which are in short supply, especially in war-torn Northern Uganda.

The immediate prospects for the workshop are poor since it does not at present benefit from the calibre of management, the level of technical skills and the financial reserves which alone would enable it to diversify production and seek new markets. As it is, the workshop is presently investing in low technology products for which it does not enjoy a competitive advantage. So long as the workshop remains part of the Cooperative Union - itself a semi-parastatal close to bankruptcy - these constraints are unlikely to be addressed in any satisfactory manner.

It is unclear in what form the workshop will survive although its survival is perhaps assured by virtue of the fact that it is parastatal which will not be allowed to collapse. For various reasons, it has lost most of its skilled technicians and its management is subject to an investigation. It is difficult to see the type of management required in the current very difficult circumstances emerging from the cooperative movement and it appears unlikely - at least in the short term - that the Union will want to divest itself of the workshop and allow it to function as an independent business. The workshop's sustainability is further compromised by its 'downmarket' technological approach, open to local competition by more efficient artisans in the 'informal' sector.

The potential for replication appears limited, although Government, eager to promote the establishment of small-scale industries at district level, has approached ACORD to replicate its initiative elsewhere in the country on several occasions. Quite apart from dramatically altered markets, this potential is constrained by the choice of technology and its attendant demands on the infrastructure and management skills which are likely to remain in very short supply in the foreseeable future. This limited potential for replication - in the present circumstances - further reduces the cost-effectiveness of what has amounted to a large scale investment on the part of ACORD.

ACORD's support to the workshop finally highlights the apparent tension existing between the humanitarian aims of the NGO and the 'hard-nosed' business approach that the project required. This tension was illustrated in the agency's approach towards management, the Union, and the basic objectives of its assistance: at times, it led to a situation where ACORD had the responsibility, but not the power, to act. A similar tension surfaced in the agency's limited capacity to deal with the political ramifications of this large project when its desire

to adhere to programme objectives appeared undermined by its wish to respect local decision-making.

Appendix: Financial Information

1. <u>Programme expenditure (£)</u>	<i>Jan 1981-</i>	<i>Jan 1984-</i>	1986	1987	1988
	<i>Dec 1983</i>	<i>Dec 1985</i>			
technical assistance	6,631	29,391	15,942	23,711	18,736
machine tool accessories	13,162	3,361	20,265	2,457	-
handtools	6,135				
heavy equipment & spares	75,719	13,408	16,708	-	-
raw materials ¹	41,479	29,878	932	-	-
management training support	-	744	72	2,359	1,182
rehabilitation & expansion	-	-	11,175	17,274	1,397
vehicle costs	-	-	-	2,734	6,402
contingencies	<u>10,829</u>	<u>4,945</u>	<u>1,340</u>	<u>5,854</u>	
workshop sub-total	153,955	81,727	66,434	54,389	27,717
Agricultural extension		20,911	13,093	677	16
Rest of programme	388,215	235,685	24,621	12,864	22,684
Back up (Gulu,Kampala)	220,343	175,637	72,892	32,573	32,502
Programme identification (1980)	35,439				
London costs	<u>86,133</u>	<u>38,051</u>	<u>12,803</u>	<u>13,146</u>	<u>10,000</u>
Total	884,085	552,011	189,843	113,649	92,919

1. Includes revolving fund.

2. Funding sources

Over the period 1981-1988, funding for the programme originated from a large variety of governmental and non-governmental donors from a number of European countries and Canada. Contributions from UK NGOs were received from Help the Aged (with co-financing by the EC - £77,000), Oxfam (£90,000), and the provision of a volunteer by VSO. Funding was also received from the ODA (£274,000).

4. THE BUSOGA MULTI-SECTORAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME³⁶

4.1 Overview

4.1.1 Background

The Multi-sectoral Rural Development Programme (MSRDP) is an initiative of the Busoga Diocese of the Church of Uganda in the Eastern part of the country. Launched shortly after the fall of the Idi Amin regime in 1979, the programme currently comprises seven 'sectors' (agriculture, animal husbandry and afforestation; health; women's projects; youth projects; water and sanitation; income generation; and communications and training), coordinated at central Diocesan level in Jinja by a team of professionals with specific sectoral responsibilities whose services are funded by external donors. Of these 'sectors', the medical sector is by far the most developed and rests upon a network of 51 aid posts³⁷ scattered throughout the Diocese.

Four factors underlie the selection of the Busoga diocese MSRDP (with particular emphasis on its health component). First, the programme reflects the important role of the Churches in the context of non-governmental activities in the country. Second, it illustrates the emphasis placed by many NGOs active in Uganda on the health sector. Third, the programme allows reflection on the link between health delivery structures and income-generating activities, at a time when the introduction of cost recovery measures in the Government health service is firmly on the national agenda. And finally, MSRDP provides an example of multi-sectoral NGO programming, of which there have been several in Uganda.

Although not directly designed to 'raise the economic status of the poor' (apart from the link between the general health status of the population and its productive capacity), the emphasis given to long term sustainability for the medical programme by MSRDP - through income-generating activities as well as user charges - provides it with a pertinent 'poverty alleviation' focus.

4.1.2 Evaluation methodology

The evaluation approach adopted reflects the lack of information on the level of community participation and overall effectiveness of MSRDP aid posts.³⁸ It is based on fieldwork conducted in 11 out of 51 'project areas', 45 of which currently have a

³⁶ This case study was undertaken with the assistance of Mary Nannono, WID focal point officer of the Ministry of Industry, Kampala.

³⁷ For convenience, aid posts resulting from the encouragement and support provided under the MSRDP will be referred to here as 'MSRDP aid posts': this label is not intended to deny 'community ownership' of the facility which is discussed below.

³⁸ The recent evaluation carried by CARE International provides some useful data on the preventive medical work carried out by outreach workers attached to most of the aid posts.

functioning aid post. The sample of 11 posts was drawn up in consultation with MSRDP staff in Jinja and reflects varying degrees of community participation and leadership, commitment and skills of service providers and quality of service delivery, and proximity to infrastructure (essentially urban centres and hospital locations). Some preference was also given to aid posts with income generating activities designed to provide additional funds for health services.

Field work concentrated on five categories of respondents: aid post staff (in charge of curative services), outreach workers (mostly village health workers involved in primary health care activities), members of the Development Committee and other community leaders, personnel associated with income-generating activities, and members of the community with no direct involvement in the medical programme. Field work was conducted in October-November 1990 on the basis of a semi-structured questionnaire drawn up in collaboration with MSRDP staff in Jinja. To complement this field work, discussions were held with MSRDP personnel at central level and with Government health staff.

4.2 Case Study Description

4.2.1 Genesis of the programme

The MSRDP was established in 1979 as the development arm of the Busoga Diocese of the Church of Uganda. Its programme area covers the three administrative districts of Jinja, Kamuli and Iganga in eastern Uganda with an approximate combined population of 1.5 mn. There are few other NGOs working in the area, especially away from the corridor along the main East-West road linking Kampala to the Kenyan border. The population of the 51 MSRDP 'project areas' (corresponding roughly each to a sub-parish) is estimated at 440,000. The MSRDP commits itself to reaching all members of local communities, whether or not they belong to the Church.

The initial phase of the programme was scheduled to last for three years but political instability led to its extension for another two years. This phase comprised nine project areas with four activity 'sectors'. A second phase covered the years 1985-1988 and, after an interim period of two years, a third phase covering 1990-95 was launched in the middle of last year. This is described as the ultimate one in the current programme and is planned to be the last period to receive foreign funding.

Growth has been rapid in the intervening years in order, according to the Diocese, to meet the demand for services and to make up for the slow rehabilitation of the Government infrastructure. As of late 1990, the programme employed 180 staff members (including 135 community development extension workers in the project areas and central level staff, but excluding staff attached to medical units, most of whom are paid by their local communities). With its extent, the breadth and scope, the programme is unique in Church-managed development programmes in Uganda.

Over the years, the multi-sectoral nature of the programme has developed to embrace seven 'sectors': agriculture/forestry/animal husbandry; water/sanitation; health; cooperatives/marketing; women; youth; and communications and training.³⁹

In the programme document covering the final phase, the MSRDP outlined its overall achievements in three ways. First, the 'creation of awareness in the communities arousing their interest in improving their quality of life by starting to mobilize available resources (. . . resulting in the creation) of a development movement'.⁴⁰ Second, the emergence of local leadership through MSRDP efforts, many joining and heading Resistance Committees (and thus promoting the mobilisation of people and the establishment of links with government structures). And third, the creation of a development structure working in conjunction with Church institutions, able to deliver goods and services from the diocesan centre to local communities.

4.2.2 Assumptions, rationale and programme structure

The original goal of the programme was to foster 'an increased measure of self-sufficiency in the things of everyday life in all our households in Busoga', and to show by example what could be achieved. According to the 1990-95 Plan:

It was futile to talk of a nation moving towards self-sufficiency until the leadership of that nation had demonstrated policies and strategies intended to lead that nation's community as a whole towards that self-sufficiency in the basic things of everyday life in their homes, for every member of their households.

The objective of making as many households as possible benefit from the programme militated against an experimental approach which would have concentrated on one or two 'programme areas' to start with. In spite of the withdrawal of support from one of the early external funders, the MSRDP opposed what it saw as an 'elitist approach' and quickly launched a wide range of activities covering as much of the Diocese as appeared feasible.

The promotion of self-sufficiency entailed a programming approach which stressed the sustainability of the activities it promoted and, as a precondition for this, the

³⁹ In the farming sector (crop, animal, tree husbandry), diversified food production for domestic use and sale (soya beans, maize, vegetables) is promoted. In forestry, youth group tree nurseries have been established in eight project areas with the practice spreading and resulting in over 100,000 trees being planted in project areas. Since 1983, a heifer project has enabled 48 beneficiaries to acquire cross-breed cattle. Women's clubs have been established in many areas (although they have often not proved successful in the long run). Small income generating projects (baking, fruit and poultry farming) have been launched, seminars and courses to improve mothercraft held. Forty five youth clubs are now in existence, training has been extended to 315 youth leaders. Work camps have been held and various small income generating projects for youth supported. Since its inception in 1983, the water programme has assisted in the sinking of 32 shallow wells. The MSRDP also runs its own training centre at Naminage with facilities to train development committee members and extension workers attached to the programme.

⁴⁰ Busoga Diocese, Phase III, Multi-sectoral Rural Development Programme, June 1990-June 1995, p.8.

participation of local communities in programme affairs (Implementation Plan, 1987: 16):

The MSRDP has from its inception stressed the need for the community to play an active role in the development of their community and more importantly to support, both financially and through active participation, the provision and expansion of services or projects covered by the MSRDP.

According to the Bishop of Busoga, who has continued to monitor and guide the programme, this long-term 'educative' approach was not at the outset appreciated by funders who stressed the achievement of quantifiable goals. It was also an approach that was to be undermined by the early provision of free (or highly subsidised) relief items and other commodities. The 'only viable option' which presented itself to respond to the complex situation of people in Busoga was to adopt an integrated approach. The MSRDP thus (Implementation Plan, 1987: 4-5:

[. . .] seeks to respond to a complex human situation to ensure wholesome development of the people. It is therefore integrated and multi-faceted. [. . .] To us [the] integrated approach to development has become an imperative [. . .] everything else is measured against that approach.

Self-reliance was therefore to be promoted through a range of interlinked activities, whether through education, family health or a number of productive activities. These sectoral activities are supported by professional staff at diocesan level providing technical back-up and training services. The programme is run by a coordinator and each sector has a 'sector head'. MSRDP is ultimately responsible to the Planned Development Board of the Diocesan Council. The Board appoints a Programme Committee specifically charged with the supervision of the MSRDP, comprising of diocesan clergy, ministry representatives, and external resource persons. This Committee is chaired by the Bishop of Busoga. Each sector is also linked to a separate advisory committee which also draws on external resource persons.

At the project level, a 15-person Development Committee (comprising five women, men and young people, some of whom must be from outlying villages) has been established in each programme area. The Committee chair, treasurer and secretary are elected by the local communities and charged with the supervision of all MSRDP activities in a particular project area. Other committee members are drawn from elected sub-committees representing the various sectors of the MSRDP. The Committee hires and rewards community workers in their respective areas. The full complement of community workers is normally six per project area: three village health workers (VHW) and three community workers, with plans for afforestation and youth workers.

4.2.3 The medical sector

□ *Curative services*

The activities of the medical sector of the MSRDP started a decade ago with support to the establishment of aid posts in 10 of the project areas. Initially, these were principally concerned with the provision of curative services, as it was felt that preventive health care issues could only be addressed to people who had access to curative services. As the Bishop commented in late 1990: 'our curative involvement in the medical sector was forced upon us by the poor, run-down (Government) medical infrastructure, whose rehabilitation was going to take many years'.

MSRDP curative services are centred on the aid post, a facility meant to belong to the local community. Its physical structure is erected through community contributions (although cement and roofing materials are normally provided free or, more often, at subsidised rates by the MSRDP), and its staff (typically a nurse or midwife and a nursing aid) are appointed and paid by the local community, mostly through user charges. The MSRDP only provides aid post practitioners with limited medical refresher training; it is the local communities who are expected to identify suitable, trained personnel.

Services provided vary from area to area: most aid posts function as dispensaries, providing treatment for the most common diseases. Some 10 units also provide maternity services and have a maternity ward. The quality of the staff and of the physical facilities also differs from area to area and, although many of the posts have up-grading plans, most commonly they consist of three or four small rooms constructed with simple local materials. Most posts are situated in remote rural locations: communications are extremely poor, and there is neither water nor electricity. Sterilisation is carried out with a small charcoal burner. Furniture is usually sparse, typically a bed or two, a desk, a couple of benches and a medicine cupboard.

Each aid post is managed by a health sub-committee with a chair and treasurer, the nurse or midwife in-charge acting as secretary. The committee supervises staff, the purchase of drugs, the building programme (if any) and other forms of expenditure. It also has the critically important role of deciding on the level of user charges.

In accordance with its general philosophy, MSRDP aid posts are meant to be financially self-sufficient. All expenditure (including staff salaries) has to be covered through user charges or other forms of income such as special projects or community donations, although they have access to some subsidised drugs from the MSRDP central pharmacy. Apart from some assistance with building supplies and supervisory services, there are currently no other subsidies extended to aid posts for their curative work.

The MSRDP views the aid post element as a successful part of the overall programme. It notes that 'this is one specific institution through which the programme has made

an impact on the local community in all project areas' (1990/95 Phase 3 document, p. 35).

□ *Preventive services*

The aid post also provides a focus for preventive work. In each project area, three village health workers have been appointed by the Committee and regard the post as a base for their work. Preventive work has focused on two initiatives, both fully funded by a single external donor: the Community Health Services project (CHS) funded by CARE International, and the Family Life Education Project (FLEP), funded by USAID (first through EIL, then Pathfinder, two US-based NGOs). The CARE project has shaped the present MSRDP preventive health activities in most respects. This project, covering a three year period from late 1985, has been funded by CARE USA with matching USAID funding bringing the budget total to \$761,900. The CHS project was essentially meant to support immunization and the control of diarrhoeal diseases to improve child survival prospects in 20 of the MSRDP project areas for an estimated population of 68,000 women of childbearing age and children under five years (the total population of the project area was estimated at 168,000 in 1989).

More specifically, it had six objectives: to increase the immunization coverage of children under 1 to 50% (for DPT, Polio, Measles, and TB); to increase the immunization coverage for women of child bearing age against tetanus; to increase the capacity of project village health workers and health unit staff to be active health educators; to increase the knowledge and skills of households in the administration of oral rehydration therapy; to support coordination efforts with other programmes elsewhere in the country; and, finally, to promote sustainability of project activities by helping to develop the management capacity of the communities and to promote CHS's full integration into the Government's programme.

The project has provided allowances for the field workers it has trained in areas such as teaching mothers to make rehydration solutions. Bicycles have also been provided by the project to aid posts to transport supplies. It was envisaged, however, that this support would be of a short-term nature, with each aid post expected to raise sufficient funds to sustain preventive as well as curative services. As the CARE programme document puts it (p 17):

The other sectors of the MSRDP such as the youth groups, women's groups and coops and marketing units are working closely with the Development and Health subcommittees to explore ways to support the expansion and maintenance of the health care system within the project areas. In most cases, small enterprise (income generating) projects are being launched (e.g. maize mills, poultry projects, tile manufacturing) in these communities and will continue to do so. The CHS will assist in the improvements to some aid posts that would allow maternity/deliveries to be managed by the midwives at the aid post. This service would be provided at a fee which would cover not only the supplies but also a portion of the salary of the worker.

The MSRDP feel confident that the communities will be able to support the aid post health care system as it has already demonstrated over the past seven years.

A baseline survey was carried out in January 1986 in the areas to be covered by the CHS project, with a second survey, undertaken for evaluation purposes, in mid-1989. The latter survey indicated that Village Health Workers were actively promoting immunization and other preventive health care practices (with 47% of the community members interviewed having received a home visit). 71% of the respondents had visited the health unit, mostly for immunization or for curative services. Of these, 93% said they were satisfied with the services, although 29% wanted more drugs, 17% wanted more staff, and 10% more beds and chairs. Only 1.3 % of the mothers said that the drugs were too expensive.

The evaluation expressed disappointment with the rate of increase in immunization, although it indicated that there had been substantial progress in mothers' understanding and knowledge of preventive measures and use of sugar and salt solutions. Their ability to prepare re-hydration fluids was, however, limited.⁴¹

The CHS project has been complemented (and to some extent superseded) by the Family Life Education Project (FLEP): this has initially funded one person for each post (nurse or midwife) and one village health worker for one year prior to community take-over. The project is specifically concerned with the dissemination of family planning knowledge and techniques, mainly through village health workers trained to teach local communities child spacing and to sell contraceptives (half the proceeds going in theory to the health worker, the rest to the aid post). The FLEP started in May 1986 with an initial grant of \$513,021. An additional two years have been funded with a budget of US\$ 54.8 mn.

AIDS-related activities have now been incorporated into the project, even if Busoga currently appears to be somewhat less affected by the disease than some other regions of the country.

□ *Supervisory and support structure*

In addition to staff with responsibilities at or around aid posts (nurses and non-medical staff, extension workers), personnel carry out supervisory duties (whether of curative or preventive activities) at two levels. First, local supervisors are appointed among aid post staff to supervise 8-10 units: they are provided by MSRDP with motorcycles to tour aid posts in their area on a regular basis, to provide advice, monitor and alert MSRDP offices if need be. Second, in Jinja, the programme is coordinated by a doctor (seconded from Government) and a small team of employees, all externally funded. There are no expatriate staff, although CARE originally provided a project manager for CHS.

⁴¹ Report on Survey findings, EPI coverage and EPI/CDD KAP, Community Health Services Project, Busoga Diocese/CARE. M. Campbell, M. Egonda, Sept. 1989.

Most (but not all) of the drugs and equipment used by the MSRDP aid posts are provided by the central pharmacy in Jinja. These drugs originate from a number of sources: foreign donors (the UK-based Busoga Trust has until recently been providing £1,000 worth quarterly), the Joint Medical Stores, and Government stores (Essential Drugs Programme). The pharmacy is meant to be entirely self-financing with aid post purchases (at cost plus transport and administrative charges) replenishing a Revolving Fund (originally funded by EZE) used to make further drug purchases.

Cooperation with Government

The medical sector of the MSRDP (with a far denser network of aid posts than is the case for public facilities) collaborates with the Government health department and, indeed, has received assistance from the Government. Indirectly this has been through tax exemptions for medical (and other) supplies. More directly it has occurred through the provision of seconded Government staff to some of the MSRDP aid posts, the provision of immunization equipment and vaccines and, in some areas, the provision of drug kits through the District Medical Office (DMO). Training materials have also been provided and Government officers have participated in some of the training sessions organised by the MSRDP. Collaborative planning between MSRDP and Government is encouraged through monthly meetings at district level. Government has recently launched its own community-based health care programme in one sub-county of Jinja district (not covered by MSRDP) and it continues to provide services, where possible, for cases referred from MSRDP aid posts.

4.3 Evaluation Results

4.3.1 Effectiveness of the health delivery system

All the posts visited in the course of the evaluation were in operation and provided a range of preventive and simple curative services. At the time of each (unannounced) visit, at least one member of the medical staff was present, although some of the posts were clearly treating very few patients. Discussions with staff, committee members and local communities focused less on technical medical matters, and concentrated on the potential, constraints and achievements of the aid posts as income-generating projects striving for financial sustainability.

The aid posts

Of the 11 posts visited, four were operating from permanent structures. These had been built using labour and local building materials provided by the community (either directly or through part of the posts' income derived from user charges). Three posts were operating from rented premises, four from temporary structures, of which two were decidedly run down. Permanent buildings were nearing completion in two locations. On average, each aid post consisted of four small rooms (a store, consulting room, office and waiting area) with rudimentary furniture (a table, a couple of benches, sterilising equipment, a cupboard, in some cases a bed usually without mattress). None had access to electric supplies.

The person in-charge was in all cases a trained medical person (one medical assistant, four nurses and six midwives); five of the posts had a second trained member of staff, either a nurse or midwife. In all cases a nursing aid or two (untrained staff) were also available.

The monthly reported average number of patients per aid post visited was 184, but there were wide variations from unit to unit (ranging from 40 to 600 per month - average population roughly 8,600. The most common ailments treated in each post were malaria, respiratory diseases, worms and diarrhoeal diseases, wounds, etc. In addition, preventive services were provided in all cases by teams of community workers and village health workers (normally six for each aid post). Services provided included nutrition and hygiene advice, family planning advice and materials, and immunization. These workers also render a useful follow-up service for the aid post-based staff. Some were still receiving a small monthly allowance of US\$ 1,000 per month from MSRDP, a charge which it is hoped will eventually be borne by the local communities. Extension workers had been provided with uniforms and, in some instance, with bicycles by the MSRDP. The MSRDP aid posts generally provided a range of services of direct use to the local communities, especially in those areas where alternative facilities are either non-existent or grossly inadequate. Only three of the posts visited are situated in or near a town or large trading centre where the very few government facilities are in existence. The quality of services in the latter is, however, severely compromised by low staff morale, shortages of drugs, high unofficial fees and other forms of corruption. In other cases, the only alternative medical facilities were provided by the private sector either by a trained health worker who had retired from Government service or, more often, by an untrained trader selling drugs.

Local community members interviewed particularly appreciated the following: the provision of immunization services and the consequent reduction in certain diseases, especially measles, whooping cough and tetanus,⁴² and the provision of simple and generally effective treatment facilities close to their homes (on average 3 kms), at reasonable cost, provided by friendly and understanding staff. Treatment on credit was especially appreciated, as well as dentistry and maternity services where these existed. Criticisms focused on the periodic shortages and narrow range of drugs, on poor attendance by non-resident and irregular staff, on understaffing, and on the lack of equipment and facilities. These criticisms find their echo with the practitioners themselves. Those interviewed complained of lack of accommodation, poor and delayed salaries, inadequate drug supplies, poor community support, inadequate income and competition from other health units. Extension workers made the same comments and, in two cases, complained of the rudeness of aid post staff.

In spite of these criticisms, MSRDP units clearly compared favourably with other health facilities in the area (where these existed) and were usually preferred by the

⁴² This is corroborated by the CARE evaluation. However, questions were raised about the quality of the services rendered by the VHWs since the knowledge, attitude and practice of those interviewed about immunization and the control of diarrhoeal diseases had improved less than expected.

local communities. A wider range of drugs (and occasionally better facilities) was the only factor which attracted clients to private clinics or pharmacies, although this only applied to certain areas even if some were also able to lower prices by offering 'partial' treatment.

□ *Explaining performance*

Based on the number of patients attending the aid post per month, the quality of staff appears to assume a critical importance in explaining performance. Of the posts visited, the four 'best performers' all benefitted from the services of a qualified, confident and respected health worker, and, for two-thirds of those visited, health staff were described as committed and effective by local community members. For the remaining third, staff had either recently been appointed or were demoralised by low pay, suffered from poor community leadership or were otherwise poorly motivated. Two-thirds of those visited are in remote areas far from main roads, so working in a MSRDP aid post demands not only long working hours, and perseverance (especially in preventive work), but also often entails social isolation, rudimentary living conditions, as well as occasional harassment from inexperienced Committees.⁴³

At two of the aid posts with the largest numbers of patients, practitioners and local committees had launched an outreach service with outposts providing curative services one or two days a week. In addition all of the four 'best performers' provided either maternity and/or dentistry services. The provision of specialised services was much appreciated by local communities and the ability of the aid post to provide such services (only two posts provided dentistry and seven others maternity services) enhanced its performance in the eyes of patients. The provision of maternity services was often cited by the medical staff concerned as the first priority to improve effectiveness. Where provided, maternity services also substantially increase the post's income.

The location of the post and the level of competition from other facilities also affected performance: three of the four 'best performers' were far from urban centres and experienced little competition from the private sector (in spite of the distance, however, they had managed to retain the services of committed staff: for other posts distance compromised staff quality). The emergence of private clinics and pharmacies is a recent development in most rural areas in Busoga; as some of them obtain 'free' supplies diverted from government facilities, they pose a further threat to MSRDP aid posts.

Performance also depended upon the attitude of the community and the quality of its leaders. The three most successful posts had permanent structures built, in part, through community contributions and had attempted to start income-generating

⁴³ An internal evaluation report for the FLEP (W. Kisubi, W. Pressman, J. Mukaire, J. Kinty, September 1988) notes that only 24 out of 45 FLEP nurses or midwives posts had been filled because it was very difficult to attract people of the right calibre to the project areas. The recommendation of the evaluation team was to improve on the conditions of service for staff, including payment of salaries by MSRDP at the outset.

projects to enhance the aid post's income. The poor performers lacked effective community leadership, and local community members stated that they had never been approached to participate in building up the post. In those cases, committee members also expected to receive free medical treatment and high expectations of outside assistance to sustain the post were expressed.

4.3.2 Cost recovery and sustainability

Cost sharing

All MSRDP aid posts charge for their curative services while preventive services are generally free. Most drugs are obtained from the MSRDP pharmacy where they are sold at cost price. In some cases, they have had to be supplemented with purchases from the private sector through private dealers in Jinja or in the vicinity of the aid post. Charges for similar treatment are generally acknowledged to be lower at the MSRDP post than elsewhere. In addition, all the aid posts visited provided credit for those unable to pay immediately and, in certain cases, payment in instalments was accepted (except in one instance where the practice had been banned by the Committee). In certain cases a patient known to be indigent can be treated free of charge. One of the aid posts visited accepted payment in kind where necessary.

Through its extension agents and thanks to the close relationship health workers at the post have with the local population, staff often know a particular patient's personal history and are thus able to extend credit or waive fees in special cases. Nevertheless, 'defaulting' was often cited as a problem by medical staff and committee members. In some of the posts, Committee members are also treated free of charge. In two of the aid posts visited, part treatment was only provided if the patient was unable to raise the full sum.

Preventive services are generally provided free but, where a patient is deemed able to pay, an initial consultation fee of US\$ 100 is levied for family planning advice. Contraceptives are charged for, though many of the aid posts provide them free where it is considered essential to encourage users who could not otherwise afford them. In all cases, immunization services are free, except in one case where lost vaccination record cards could only be replaced by paying a fee of US\$ 20.

Interviews indicate that community responses to cost-sharing are overwhelmingly positive. Two-thirds of the respondents in all categories felt this was a good system, only 6% were opposed to it and the rest were without opinion. These responses should be put in a context where medical services have only been available at a fee in Uganda (whether officially or not) for perhaps the last 15 years (in the case of church-run facilities, a small fee has always been charged) and where non-western types of treatment have always been paid for, often quite dearly. Cost sharing fits well in a fee-for-service culture: it is widely accepted that 'nothing is free in this world' and most of the respondents saw cost sharing as necessary to improve the health status of the local community by providing an adequate service. A few added that only if a charge is levied would people appreciate this service.

Nonetheless, the fees charged at the aid posts post were generally acknowledged to be lower than elsewhere. So long as this remained the case and the quality of the treatment remained good, payment for the service was accepted. However some members of the community - and community leaders - did complain of high charges and some felt that treatment should be free: the main reason stemmed from a perception that drugs were obtained from the church free of charge or, more generally, that since this is a 'church aid post', services should be free. The main criticism made of the system was not the exclusion of some people because of lack of money, but because of lack of money at the time of illness. Resulting part-treatment was considered dangerous by some. If most people had access to the aid post, it was generally accepted that some sections of the community were excluded from medical care because they could not afford the charges (though this was acknowledged to be less so than for other health facilities for reasons already mentioned), or because they put a low spending priority on health. These included old people without relatives who could help, widows, and young people who had recently dropped out of school. Estimates of the size of this population varied from 'just a few' to as much as 25%.

Proposals to improve the system included accepting labour in lieu of cash, reducing charges to attract more patients, granting credit during lean agricultural seasons, charging lower fees for common ailments, introducing government subsidies (through the provision of free drugs to MSRDP posts rather than Government units), charging committee members for treatment, sensitising the community on the need for charges, and levying a small amount for family planning services.

□ *Other income generation*

In the aid posts visited, various attempts had been made - and more are planned - to initiate income generating activities to supplement the revenue of the post derived from user charges. All this is encouraged by MSRDP and no outside assistance had been provided. Past or planned projects included crop cultivation, tree nurseries, brick-making, poultry keeping, selling firewood, starting a canteen, and even fund-raising. Only three of these initiatives were operative when the posts were visited. Of these, one appeared to be more of a garden belonging to aid post's staff than a community project. The two other projects were on a very small scale and only one had resulted in a small cash contribution to the aid post's income.

Six of the aid posts stated having started a project which later collapsed (due to poor weather, lack of capital and limited land, the departure of concerned staff or poor management). The main reason given for the absence of a project was lack of capital, but poor community involvement was clearly a major factor. In almost all cases, these projects were not really community projects. Certainly labour was provided by members of the committee, but confusion had arisen concerning whether the proceeds should go to the committee members or the aid post. Very little capital had been made available and enthusiasm had waned very quickly.

This poor record demonstrates the limits of genuine community involvement in the aid post. While fees are accepted as necessary to receive a good quality service, if an aid post is in any way considered as 'belonging' either to an outside agency (such as the

church) or to the practitioners and/or the committee members, contributions for an income-generating project are - unsurprisingly - viewed in a different light as practice indicates that the benefits are more likely to accrue to particular individuals than to the community as a whole.

□ *Sustainability*

The failure to promote viable income-generating projects helps to explain why most aid post staff and committee members considered aid post income to be insufficient to meet all necessary expenses: in only three of the 11 posts visited was the level of income said to be sufficient to meet an adequate level of expenditure. In the absence of other income-generating projects, aid posts have to rely entirely on user charges for treatment and, where applicable, for maternity services. In some instances, contributions were received for construction work and, in a few cases, for other projects.

The number of patients attracted to the aid post is thus the critical factor in ensuring its financial viability. Large numbers of patients also guarantee low charges: the aid post visited with the highest number of patients (600 per month) was also the post with one of the lowest average fee per patient (US\$ 136) while, conversely, the post with the lowest number of patients (40) charged as much as US\$ 490 per patient, further weakening its 'market position'. In this case, lack of income compounded other problems (poor community participation and leadership, lack of regular staff attendance) while competition from private clinics further compromised its long term future.

The main items of expenditure for the 11 posts visited were drugs (33%), staff pay (15%) and construction costs (13%). Other expenditure (about a third) was accounted for by other supplies, such as charcoal for sterilisation purposes, transport, rent, and water carrying. The allocation of resources was in some cases the source of conflict between staff and committee members: the latter tended to emphasise the need to improve buildings (and to pay for entertainment allowances) while staff placed more emphasis on immediate expenditure items such as drugs and salaries.

Eight of the 11 posts visited had made a profit over the six months' period preceding the visit. In only three cases, however, were profits of any size - from US\$ 5,000 to 8,500 per month. Three posts had made a loss. In other cases, a very small surplus had been attained through keeping expenditure to the absolute minimum, often at the expense of service. Overall, average monthly expenditure of US\$ 27,405 was just below monthly average income of US\$ 28,650.

Aid posts have adjusted to their small revenue base in different ways. Some make very small purchases of drugs at a time which results to increasing unit costs, with transport costs in some cases exceeding drug purchase costs). Wages are generally low, typically US\$ 1,500 to US\$ 4,000 per month, often paid late (several months' delay for three of the posts). This clearly plays a major role in low morale, absenteeism (and thus fewer patients), and occasionally in resorting to private patients. Physical facilities are poor in some of the posts and, in two cases, the aid post is

indebted to local community leaders. Similarly, those extension workers who were no longer getting paid by the MSRDP complained of insufficient and, in some cases, unpaid allowances.⁴⁴

The aid post with the highest number of patients, on the other hand, had the highest monthly income (US\$ 81,735 compared with the average for the 11 posts of US\$ 28,651). This post had very limited competition, a successful preventive and curative service, a respected health worker, maternity service and strong community support indicated by contributions made for building work and an income-generating project.

Long term sustainability of the MSRDP aid posts will clearly depend upon perceptions of the local community, which will stem in part from the latter's level of involvement in the post's affairs. Of the community members interviewed in the vicinity of the aid posts visited, under a third stated that they had made a contribution to the establishment (or the running) of the post by providing either labour or money. Generally, the MSRDP aid post was perceived by local communities not as 'theirs' but either as belonging to the Church or, sometimes, as a quasi-private facility run by the practitioners and the Development Committee. Even among the community leaders interviewed, very few appeared to regard the post as their ultimate responsibility and there was a strong tendency to seek solutions to problems through requests for external assistance.⁴⁵ For instance, in response to questions about cost-sharing, almost a fifth of those interviewed (a higher proportion than for the general public) stated that medical services provided by the MSRDP should be free. Those who should be the best informed about the general principles underlining the MSRDP programme appeared to be the most resistant to them.

Mechanisms ensuring the accountability of the Development Committee (or the health sub-committee) towards the local community remain largely weak. Elections are held only irregularly, and some incumbents had held posts for many years. Some of the committees only met infrequently.⁴⁶

The longer term prospects for the 11 aid posts visited have been gauged by using the following criteria: number of patients; factors contributing towards its general performance (as outlined above); the profit/loss position; the existence of other income-generating projects, and the level of community support. On this basis, only

⁴⁴ CARE's evaluation of the CHS programme notes the poor prospects for the sustainability of the VHWS after its departure: the fact that their allowances was to be picked up by the community was only understood by the health committees right at the end of their three-year support programme.

⁴⁵ This will have been encouraged by the provision of free hand-outs (infant milk, blankets, etc) in earlier years. This is almost certainly accounted for more as a result of project design and the perception people have of the Church, than to any speculative lack of community cohesion resulting from the social upheavals of the past two decades.

⁴⁶ The CARE evaluation suggests that in its 20 project areas, only 70% of the committees were effective with meetings held monthly with the aid post staff. The evaluation asserts that the level of interest demonstrated by the committee is 'obviously' one of the most important variables in accounting for the success of the post's community-based health activities.

two of the 11 posts failed to have made at least some progress towards sustainability. Here long-term prospects were severely hampered by poor service quality resulting in limited numbers of patients (only two to three per day) and resultant low income levels, by the absence of other sources of income, and by the poor level of community support. Using the same criteria, two other posts had uncertain prospects.

The sustainability of the aid posts and their outreach work is also contingent upon the provision of efficient support and supervision by the MSRDP. The central pharmacy constitutes one element of this support: the revolving fund it administers (now amounting to US\$ 1.6 mn) has registered a good measure of success in making the supply of reasonably-priced drugs available to the aid posts. Monthly sales to MSRDP aid posts averaged US\$ 243,000 over a six-month period, mostly through small transactions of a few thousand shillings at a time. The pharmacy has, however, faced a number of problems. A poor repayment record of aid posts when granted credit has forced it to suspend credit facilities (except for recently-established posts); rapid increases in drug prices both from Government stores and from the private sector at a time when drug donations from abroad are no longer made have resulted in a reduction of drug consumption of 50-75% for certain items in the past two years. Bureaucratic delays and the use of the revolving fund for purposes other than the purchase of drugs by the MSRDP has led to delays and occasional frustrated visits by aid post staff wanting to purchase supplies.

The support provided by aid post supervisors also appears to be effective: routine visits are regularly made to other aid posts, often on a weekly basis, and supervisors are well placed to evaluate and advise on problems encountered by their colleagues. The rapid growth of the MSRDP aid post network, on the other hand, reduces the effectiveness of support from the Jinja-based staff and of training undertaken at the Naminage centre. Most Development Committee members, other than the Chair, Secretary and Treasurer, have, for instance, not benefitted from training sessions. The quality of records kept by aid posts is poor and reflects the lack of adequate management training for staff and committees; clinical training could also be improved.

The costs involved in running this supervisory and support structure are significant (approximately \$3,300 per post per annum), particularly salary and vehicle charges (see Appendix). What is more it does not seem feasible for these costs could be borne by the MSRDP itself from 1993 onwards (rather than external funders), as is currently planned, especially in view of the failure of centralised income-generating schemes to date.

□ *Social impact*

The social impact of the programme stems in the first place from the provision of medical services where these would not otherwise be available, or, if they are available, from high quality service and/or lower costs. The social impact of the programme also derives from its community focus: most of the community leaders interviewed expressed pride in their involvement with the aid post and considered it an impressive asset for their local communities. It constituted, in their eyes, a facility

which worked, relied on local contributions and exemplified community dynamism. In some areas the buildings are used as a meeting place or community hall. Also, village health workers and medical staff have a recognised social position in their respective communities, (although they are generally poorly paid) and are also regarded as an asset to the community.

Social impact could, in many cases, have been far greater with more community involvement. Of the 11 posts visited, only five seemed to enjoy the full and active support of the community; in other cases, the post was perceived as a Church or as a semi-private facility.

The MSRDP medical programme has resulted in employment for medical staff, ancillary staff and, where these are now supported by the post, extension staff. Numbers per aid post range from five to 10, making an approximate total for all MSRDP aid posts of 300 to 400 people sustained by their local communities through the provision of medical services.

4.4 The MSRDP Medical Programme in its Broader Context

The provision of health facilities constitutes one the main areas of intervention by NGOs active in Uganda, and because of its approach and its well-established character, the MSRDP provides an important illustration of this type of NGO intervention.

Its innovative nature lies in having established a successful network of aid posts whose curative work almost entirely relies on community participation, mostly through user charges. A number of Church-based programmes elsewhere in the country have followed the example set by the MSRDP in Busoga.

The attempt to sustain preventive work through income generated by curative services is, however, of more immediate relevance to many NGO programmes in the country. MSRDP's experience in this respect is still limited and no definite conclusions can be offered at this point. Nevertheless, a successful community-based approach to curative services does appear to provide one route in tackling (possibly only in part) the problem of recurrent costs incurred by preventive programmes which are so far usually borne by external funding.

The MSRDP experience is also relevant to current attempts by Government to introduce cost-sharing in the provision of medical services.⁴⁷ The planned inclusion of local committees attached to Government health units is said to have been directly inspired by MSRDP's work. In Busoga itself, Government established its own network of Primary Health Care Workers in one sub-county two years ago. These are fully supported by local communities and the extension of this scheme is currently under consideration.

⁴⁷ Plans were shelved, at least temporarily, at the end of 1990. However a re-introduction of cost-sharing (albeit in a modified form) seems inevitable in the medium term given the current economic and political climate in Uganda.

4.5 Concluding Remarks

Through its medical programme, the MSRDP offers, at relatively low cost, a service which, in almost all the aid posts visited, is appreciated by the local communities. Indeed in many areas, the MSRDP aid post provides the only health facility where professional treatment is available, and constitute the only channel for the provision of preventive services throughout much of Busoga.

While aid posts are community projects which are meant to be financially self-sustaining, preventive services receive substantial outside funding and in many cases, financial self-sufficiency for curative services has been achieved often by reducing costs -including salaries - to the bare minimum. This is a considerable achievement in itself, but the income of the aid posts is, in all cases, overwhelmingly dependent on user charges: attempts to involve the communities in income generating projects to supplement this income have, as yet, not proved successful. As a result, the effectiveness of a particular post is very dependent upon the number of patients it can attract: this partly depends on factors which can be controlled by the programme (such as the technical skills of the medical staff) but also on factors outside its direct control such as local population density, the disposable income of the local community and the level of competition from private medical facilities.

The degree of sustainability of many of these aid posts is promising, particularly where skilled and motivated medical staff are available. In only two cases are the long-term prospects of a post severely limited by poor service quality and insufficient community involvement. So far as preventive services are concerned, however, prospects for a successful 'handing over' of extension services appear to be problematic as this will depend upon sufficient income generation at the post since the provision of preventive health services for a fee is unlikely to be successful. Further, the medical 'sector's' support and supervisory costs will continue to have to be borne by donors, in all likelihood for the foreseeable future. The sustainability of the MSRDP medical programme would be enhanced if the programme paid more attention to the management skills that such an approach demand, both on the part of the staff and of the committees.

The level of community involvement in the aid posts is often limited. In spite of contributions to its construction, the posts are often perceived as Church or semi-private facilities run by the medical staff and Development Committee members. This limited 'appropriation' of the aid post by the local community stems in part from the higher level of subsidies previously extended by MSRDP (in part resulting from high overheads because too many staff were employed at the outset).⁴⁸ But it is also due to the failure of the development committee to elicit community support and reflect its aspirations through regular elections and other mechanisms fostering their accountability towards aid post users.

Some of these difficulties perhaps reflect the ambitious nature of the MSRDP, both in terms of its sectoral and its geographical coverage. Its multi-sectoral approach appears to have been severely constrained by lack of resources and management difficulties which have not allowed the various sectors of the programme to have the expected synergetic effect on the MSRDP

⁴⁸ This is said to have been caused, at least in part, by donor pressure.

as a whole: the addition of sectors has not necessarily led to an 'integrated approach to development'. As a result, a multi-faceted programme in parallel to government services has come into being but resources have been thinly spread and the medical programme alone has had access to permanent field staff. Limited resources at the centre have also compromised the MSRDP's ability to provide documentation and reports both for its own use and for external funders.

In the wider context, the experience of the MSRDP medical programme is of considerable interest since this was one of the first attempts to introduce a comprehensive community-based curative and preventive medical service at a regional level in Uganda. As we have seen, the MSRDP experience, taking place in a broadly representative region of the country, has already been instrumental in informing Governmental and non-governmental initiatives in this field, especially the possible introduction of cost-sharing in Government-owned medical facilities. It suggests that for most people, paying for health care is now seen as natural, and simple curative care is within the means of a large proportion of the rural population. A community-based approach (better suited to non-governmental rather than official delivery structures) also allows for the identification of genuine hardship cases and for appropriate measures to be taken. Cost recovery can provide the basis for the provision of simple curative care, provided adequate supervision and support is made available. Much will also depend on the level and quality of community involvement (health committees must be accountable to the local population and be provided with the necessary management skills).

Appendix: Financial information**External funders:**

CIDA, Canada
 EZE, Germany
 The Experiment in International Living (with USAID co-funding)
 CARE International (with USAID co-funding)
 Pathfinder (with USAID co-funding)
 The Busoga Trust (with co-funding from ODA's Joint Funding Scheme)

July 1990 - June 1993 budget (\$)**1. Overall programme:**

Programme costs:	
Afforestation:	121,698
Agriculture:	126,664
Health programme:	405,556
Women's programme:	160,146
Youth programme:	139,800
Communications:	125,473
Sub-total:	1,079,337
Programme coordination:	302,667
Total:	1,382,004

2. Medical Sector:

	<i>Year 1</i>	<i>Year 2</i>	<i>Year 3</i>	<i>Total</i>
Salaries	35,064	36,817	38,570	110,452
allowances	12,000	12,600	13,200	37,800
housing	21,000	22,050	23,100	66,150
office rent	7,200	7,560	7,920	22,680
vehicle purchases	50,000	-	-	50,000
vehicle running costs	14,400	17,640	21,120	103,160
equipment supplies	6,100	6,405	6,270	18,775
training	21,950	22,268	23,585	67,803
VHW allowances	43,200	30,240	15,840	89,280
Total:	210,914	155,580	149,605	566,100

Minus: local contribution (housing and office rent): 65,205 450,894

These items exclude contributions for the FLEP programme and from the Busoga Trust, whose three year fund-raising budget is: 1989/90: £113,500; 1990/91: £124,700; 1991/92: £136,800, giving a total of £375,000 (of which £15,000 is earmarked for medical supplies.)

5. THE ACTIONAID MITYANA PROGRAMME⁴⁹

5.1 Overview

5.1.1 Background

ActionAid has been involved in Uganda since 1981 and is currently implementing a multi-sectoral rural development programme in two separate areas of Mubende District west of Kampala, in addition to providing support to several local NGOs.

This case-study is concerned with one 'operational' programme: the ActionAid Mityana Programme (AMP) situated in the vicinity of Mityana. It is the oldest ActionAid intervention in the country. Originally conceived as a programme of assistance to the educational sector (mostly to primary schools), AMP has now developed into a multi-sectoral initiative covering three sub-counties around Mityana town with teams of extension workers covering the sectors of agriculture, health, water and education.

The choice of AMP programme was based on the following considerations. It constitutes one of the few examples of a well-established NGO initiative in Uganda: most of the current long-term development programmes in the country are quite recent, often three years at most. The programme also reflects a transition from a 'welfare' approach to development problems (adopted by a number of NGOs in the early eighties, particularly in the context of relief programmes) to a more 'participatory' vision of the development process. Additionally, the ActionAid methodology entailing work in a limited 'target area' relying on its own extension personnel as an operational agency to develop direct links with the local population is illustrative of a number of other NGO programmes in Uganda.

5.1.2 Evaluation methodology

In accordance with ActionAid wishes, this evaluation is primarily concerned with one aspect of the AMP, the technical skills and income generating component of the programme, the Technical Skills Training Unit (TSTU). The aim of the TSTU is to increase local revenues by encouraging non-agricultural economic activities (especially for women and youth) in the project area. This aspect of the programme was seen as particularly appropriate from AMP's perspective as progress has not been easy in this area in the past and a three year plan covering this sector is currently under discussion. The ODI evaluation was thus seen as a useful exercise which could inform future programming development.

Field work for this case-study took place in November-December 1990. It involved visits to view different aspects of the programme both within the current target area and in the 'phase out area', complemented by visits to other relevant technical training

⁴⁹ This case study was undertaken with the assistance of Sam Kayabwe from the Makerere Institute of Social Research, Kampala.

institutions in the area, and interviews of artisans in the 'informal sector' to better gauge programme impact.

5.2 Case Study Description

5.2.1 Project location and history

Mityana sub-district lies 72 kms west of Kampala. The current ActionAid project area covers three of the sub-district's sub-counties with a total area of 1077 km² and an estimated population of 73,200.⁵⁰ Mityana benefits from well distributed and normally abundant rains; it is part of the fertile crescent immediately north and west of Lake Victoria. However, the area suffered from relative neglect during and immediately after the colonial period. Since 1981, furthermore, it has been severely affected by military operations involving the then guerilla NRM and Government troops, who exacted a particularly heavy toll on the local population (Mityana is situated at the edge of the infamous 'Luwero Triangle').

Poverty in the area is widespread, and is perceived largely as a consequence of deliberate neglect, insecurity and general economic mismanagement. This view has been confirmed to some degree by ActionAid surveys indicating high levels of child morbidity and malnutrition, a very limited access to health facilities, and low literacy levels, especially among women. Agricultural production in the area is constrained by poor farming methods, limited marketing facilities and underutilisation of land resources. There are also signs of growing environmental degradation as a result of deforestation and soil erosion.

With the return of peace and stability since 1986, however, the essential minimum conditions that will allow the Mityana area to realise its considerable agricultural potential have increasingly been met. There are already many signs that this potential is starting to be exploited, of which the rapid development of Mityana town is perhaps the most visible.

The AMP grew out of contacts between the Anglican Bishop of Mityana diocese and ActionAid Kenya shortly after the 1979 'Liberation War'. Until 1987, the programme was supervised by the ActionAid office in Nairobi, and during these years, the Church of Uganda acted as 'host' for the project. With resources raised through child sponsorship, the primary focus of the AMP from 1981 was assistance to 15 primary schools in the vicinity of Mityana. This took the form of provision of construction materials and labour for school buildings, payment of school fees for 1,861 sponsored children, together with provision of uniforms, school meals and scholastic materials. Towards the end of 1982, assistance was also channelled into developing school gardens in the form of chemicals, tools and seeds.

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The 'phase-out area' comprised 5 sub-counties, with 2,538 km² and a population of 150,000.

Soon after its launch, the programme was beset by major problems: a general sense of insecurity, with population movements and regular closure of schools resulting from military operations. In spite of these difficulties, the programme grew both in its range of activities and in the number of pupils and schools assisted. For instance, 1983 saw the launching of courses for agriculture teachers, and the distribution of agricultural inputs to a few women's groups. By 1985, farmers' 'contact groups' were also assisted with agricultural inputs and extension advice. After yet more disruption in late 1985 and before the advent to power of the NRM, work resumed: by late 1986, AMP was working with 28 farmers' groups who were seen as alternative entry points into communities to schools. AMP had also started providing support to primary health care activities. In spite of these developments, ActionAid described the programme at the time as:

mostly a relief programme relying heavily on child sponsorship with hand-outs emphasised in the fields of school construction, materials and feeding. Only rudimentary development work was done in Agriculture and Health.

1987 marked a turning point for the programme, both in terms of its institutional link with ActionAid (following the establishment of an office in Kampala and of a fully-fledged ActionAid Uganda programme) and in terms of programming content and methodology. It took the form of a move away from a perceived over-emphasis on education to embrace a broader concept of development. Specifically, in addition to work in 'Community Agriculture' with farmers' groups, AMP launched a Community Based Health Care programme, and later, the Technical Skills Training Unit. The first efforts were made to attempt to phase out free handouts: the school uniform and school feeding scheme were terminated at the end of that year although the provision of subsidised inputs still constituted the bulk of programme activities in the education and agriculture sectors.

Work in the education sector nevertheless continued to expand: 25 schools were sponsored in 1987 (another 10 received some form of assistance) and the numbers of sponsored children reached 5,500. In late 1988, the reform of the programme took a step further with a decision to restructure the programme area in order to concentrate resources over a smaller locality, and to follow directives concerning the ratio of sponsored children to total population in ActionAid target areas. These measures were complemented by a decision to reformulate the programme extension structure as well, to ensure more regular contact between field staff and local communities, and to promote an integrated approach to development. A 'zoning one-plus-two' structure was adopted, in which the target area was subdivided into four zones and 27 sub-zones. Activities in each zone were now coordinated by one of the programme heads, with each sub-zone assigned an ActionAid field worker, each of whom also works for a particular sectoral programme. Thus, at zonal and sub-zonal levels, programme staff have a dual responsibility: coordination of a range of activities taking place in their geographical area and providing professional (sectoral) support to their colleagues in the other zones or sub-zones. This reform package has not always proved easy to implement. As the 1988/89 annual report notes (p.6):

since the advent of AA-Uganda in 1987, AMP [. . .] has faced the very difficult task of totally changing its methods of operation, management style, development outlook and target area served.

Efforts have also been made to increase cooperation with Government (for instance through the secondment of staff to the programme and in vaccination campaigns), as well as with other NGOs active in the area (especially the Churches in the field of primary health care). A start has also been made in collecting basic data for evaluation and monitoring purposes.

5.2.2 The programme in 1990

The AMP currently consists of four operational programmes: agriculture, education, community based health care, and technical skills development - which includes a 'Women in Development' scheme. These programmes are complemented by a sponsorship administration department, and a monitoring and evaluation unit. AMP is headed by a coordinator and individual programmes are supported by a central administrative unit. Further support, including in service-training, is provided by the Kampala office.

Total expenditure for 1989/90 was £382,000 for the four operational programmes, excluding support costs. The 1990/91 budget for AMP is £498,000 including support costs. Current staff establishment stands at 70, including 27 field workers.

The agriculture support programme

Aims at 'raising household incomes and living standards'. It concentrates its activities on extension services through village-based courses, educational trips and home visits, mostly focusing on improved crop and animal husbandry techniques. The programme aims at working with 2,000 - 3,000 households per year thus allowing the whole target area population to be reached within four years. The participation of women in farming activities and group formation is encouraged.

In 1989/90, AMP staff were involved in 115 village-based courses, 38 educational trips and 1,698 home visits to give technical advice. These training sessions are often attended by Government extension workers. The programme also provided market information on a monthly basis regarding input availability and where to sell produce. Assistance is also extended to school gardens with materials and tools, but the generalised sale of subsidised inputs was discontinued in 1988.

The education support programme

Aims at 'improving the quality of formal and non-formal education provision in the target area'. It provides support to 6,000 sponsored children and all primary schools in the target area. From 1989, school fees have no longer been paid: the programme's main tasks have been the supply of scholastic materials at cost to 76 schools, the provision of building materials not locally available to construct classrooms, teachers' houses, latrines, etc. Local communities are expected to provide other materials and

their labour. Refresher courses for teachers have also been sponsored by ActionAid and educational trips for headmasters organised. The programme has recently launched an adult literacy scheme. Assistance to non-formal education is described below.

□ *The community-based health care programme*

Aims at 'assisting communities to improve their health status' by encouraging the formation of Community Based health committees at parish level to select Community Health Workers who will receive training by ActionAid. Programme staff have conducted health education sessions (covering nutrition, child health care, family planning, and sanitation) followed-up by visits to individual households. The programme has supported immunization campaigns and has provided minor curative treatment free of charge. Other areas of involvement, apart from spring protection and well digging which are described below, have included the provision of latrine slabs at cost and assistance towards the construction of three aid posts.

The programme encourages the rehabilitation of the disabled in their own communities (through home visiting, the provision of appliances, referrals, and assistance to establish family support groups and training to develop income-generating activities). Overall it aims to reach 3,000 households every year, covering the whole target area within a four-year period.

□ *The technical skills training unit*

Provides the focus for the case-study. Its aim is 'to increase local revenues by encouraging non-agricultural economic activities' (especially for women and youth). More specifically, the establishment of the TSTU in 1987 originated in the desire to support the existing programmes by providing technical back-up in design and construction work, and to promote the dissemination of new technologies and skills. It is justified by 'a general lack of practical skills in the target area other than those related to agriculture',⁵¹ resulting from the academic bias of school curricula and from Uganda's isolation, denying most people exposure to technologies and expertise available in other countries.

The TSTU has been involved in a wide range of activities. To support existing programmes, this has included training of masons in school construction work and roofing with fibro-cement tiles, in spring protection and well digging techniques, the training of community members and school teachers on furniture making and repairs to buildings (using tool kits provided to schools by the programme). Design and the development of prototypes at the Unit's workshops have included such items as carpentry tools, weaving frames, blackboards, maize strippers and groundnut shellers, and equipment for the disabled. The Unit's other main activities - support to tile makers, to village polytechnics and to women's groups - are described below.

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Difficulties encountered in recruiting suitable senior staff for the Unit have hampered the development of both these and other activities, such as a planned credit scheme, the development of other appropriate technologies, business skills training, training of additional local artisans in new technologies, etc. Many of these activities are included in a three-year plan for a Skills Development and Income Generation Programme whose main components are support to village polytechnics, a women in development programme, a credit and business management programme, and the introduction and dissemination of new technologies (using the AMP site for design and testing work).

5.2.3 Assumptions and rationale

ActionAid describes its overall policy as that of 'working with the poor in the target area to improve their quality of life through encouragement, awareness raising, training and support'.⁵² The strategy of the programme is to address the three causes of poverty in the area - lack of awareness, lack of skills and facilities and absence of external support - (1990/91 plan and budget):

through an empowerment process which will involve constant dialogue with individual community members and interest groups, awareness raising, training, exposure to more efficient production methods and improvement or making available basic facilities. [. . . support will be provided if] 'it will lead community members to sustainable development rather than create a dependency syndrome'.

Such an approach has entailed a significant departure from the original ideas of the programme. As ActionAid itself describes it (Plans, Progress Report, July-December 1987, p.3):

Ever since AMP started as a programme, we have used the school as our entry point into the Community regardless of the geographical position of the schools we assist. The result has been that our efforts have seen little visible impact on economic development in our target area. [. . .] we have redefined our concept of a community and decided to use the parish as our entry point into the community.

This has required a considerable shift of emphasis for programme staff from the mechanics of input provision to detailed consultations with local communities. 'Regular consultations are held with targeted households, Parent Teachers' Associations (PTA), School Management Committees, and RCs to identify problems and solutions: we believe that these are legitimate organs representing all the people we work with' (1990/91 plan & budget, p.9). The strategy is ambitious. Current AMP plans rest on consultation meetings with 90 RC1 councils in the target area, with the 60 PTAs, and with hundreds of individual households. AMP aims at reaching

⁵² 1990/91 plan and budget, p.1. AMP's definition of 'the poor' (effectively all residents but the 'affluent') is discussed below.

54,000 out of 73,200 community members in the target area over a three-year period. This is to be undertaken by a corps of field workers whose main function is to act as 'change agents' (1990/91 Plan and Budget):

Poverty alleviation and improvement in the general quality of life in a sustainable way is a slow and complicated process. It involves change in people's attitudes and acquisition of specific skills. To achieve this requires a very large well-trained and motivated staff to work as agents of change.

To attempt to meet these objectives, ActionAid provides competitive salaries for its extension staff, as well as training in appropriate techniques to complement their professional experience and skills. It is envisaged that field workers' activities would be supported by 'community workers', selected by their communities (on the basis of one per 25 households), and who would receive training and a monthly honorarium from AMP. The long term implications of such a structure have, however, led to its postponement.

Programme sustainability is anticipated to be reached within eight years through a combination of hand-over to Government extension services, and the development of sustainable programme activities for local communities. Earlier plans to transform the AMP into an independent local NGO (SHEDA) affiliated to ActionAid have been abandoned, although SHEDA has come into existence and is currently developing a programme similar to AMP in a neighbouring area.

5.3 Evaluation Results

5.3.1 Support for institutional training

Village polytechnics

ActionAid has been supporting village polytechnics for three years, and current plans envisage expanding from two institutions (at present) to one in each of the four zones of the target area. This type of assistance is considered appropriate since (Activity Proposal, November 1989, p.1):

Due to social and economic strife, Ugandans became desperate. Education was no longer valued and many school children and youths turned to petty business to earn a living. The number of school drop-outs increased [. . .] and most became vagrants and many juvenile delinquents. [Further] the type of education in the schools is not really basic. It is a neo-colonial academic type which does not equip scholars with basic practical skills and knowledge [. . .] job seekers rather than job makers [are produced].

Although village polytechnics are not at present eligible for Government assistance, and thus have to rely on other sources of income, their promotion forms part of

Government policy. Syllabi are being reviewed and appeals have been made to local communities to establish such institutions (usually consisting of one or two simple buildings made out of locally-available materials) at sub-county level. Some communities have responded but 'others lack awareness while many are limited by financial resources, and the hard-to-get construction materials to facilitate the establishment of the projects' (*ibid*, p.1).

The aim of the new ActionAid plan was to create more awareness in the community to start up, maintain and run village polytechnics and to introduce new skills through these institutions. Each polytechnic would receive assistance for a period of five years on a cost-sharing basis: field workers would sensitise local communities, ActionAid would provide hard-to-obtain construction materials and equipment, and pay 10 salaries (in diminishing proportion over the years) per polytechnic for teachers it will have helped to recruit. Each polytechnic would be required to establish an income-generating project to ensure its sustainability.

Both polytechnics currently assisted by ActionAid (at Kyankowe and Namukozi) have received similar types of assistance. It was scheduled to end in December 1990, after which only limited help will be made available.

Although ActionAid's involvement with Kyankowe polytechnic appears to have started in a somewhat *ad hoc* fashion, it is now regarded as a testcase for the district where its approach remains unique. The polytechnic was inspired by the local Member of Parliament who provided land; it opened in May 1988 with 60 trainees taking two year courses in tailoring, bricklaying and carpentry, in addition to agriculture, a compulsory subject for all. The minimum entry requirement is P7 (completion of primary school). The polytechnic is run by a 10-person Management Committee chaired by the local Church minister, whose secretary is the Principal. Since its opening, the polytechnic has enrolled an additional 50 students in January 1989 and another 30 the following year. This intake reduction is ascribed to limited local demand and the lack of boarding facilities. Fees are moderate at US\$ 3,700 per term.

The chairman of the Management Committee was emphatic that the polytechnic could not have got off the ground without the ActionAid assistance (free building materials, salaries for the five teaching staff, and tools and equipment such as sewing machines and training materials) - even though the precise terms under which the assistance has been made available (loan or grant?) appear unclear to the school authorities. As a result of internal decisions (and in part reflecting what it sees as the poor management record of the institution), ActionAid support was withheld in June 1990, pending a review. This decision took the school by surprise, as its dependence on outside assistance was fully exposed: at the time of the evaluation, teachers had not received their salaries since that cut-off point.

The prospects for the school appeared all the poorer since earlier plans (developed by the previous principal) which included the development of 'cottage industries' on site to generate income and to finance a revolving fund to purchase tools for graduates on loan had failed to materialise. The income from school activities appeared very

limited (and poorly controlled). At the time of the visit, the school was attempting to secure some support from the district education authorities.

Namukozi school was established in April 1988 to provide school girls who had dropped out of school with a technical skill which would enable them to earn their own income. The original intake of 10 (mostly single mothers) was taught weaving, embroidery, home and business management in addition to tailoring, over a two year period. A further seven girls joined the school in April 1989 and 17 the following year. The fee of US\$ 4,500 a term covers tuition and some of the materials.

ActionAid's assistance to the school was also made available at the outset: it covered the purchase of four sewing machines, materials and salaries for the three teachers. In addition, management advice was provided and the school was given contracts to produce school uniforms for the AMP Education support programme. In June 1990, this support ceased and the services of the business trainer were consequently terminated. Like Kyankowe, the school is currently facing severe financial difficulties with current income (from fees and a limited production) insufficient to meet running costs. It hopes to build its own premises and to expand production to generate more income in the future. As a result of difficulties in raising the fees or because of pregnancies, the number of trainees has dropped: only 16 first years and one second year presently remain at the school.

The project has also run into problems, however, because it became increasingly seen as a family business rather than a community project. The original premises for the school were at the Manager's home (whose idea the project initially was). The absence of community involvement (in part because parents are living in scattered homesteads, Namukozi being close to Mityana town) was only partially corrected with the establishment - less than year ago - of a Management Committee. The school authorities hope to increase community interest in future through visits, sales and allowing the use of machines.

□ *Social and economic impact*

The evaluation attempted to judge the broader impact of the polytechnics by following up students who had completed their training at Kyankowe and Namukozi. Of the original intake of 60 at Kyankowe, 32 completed (19 in tailoring [all girls], four carpenters and nine builders [all boys]). Of these, four of the girls could afford their own machines and 10 were said to be employed as tailors. Five had neither taken up nor abandoned the trade. Of the four carpenters, two had found employment in carpentry workshops in Kampala, one could afford to buy tools and set up his own business, and one was not practising. Of the nine builders, one went to Kampala, two started work in the area, and the whereabouts of the remainder are unknown.

Of the original intake of 10 at Namukozi, seven completed (two dropped out because of pregnancy). Of the seven, four have access to a sewing machine (three on hire) and the remainder are not practising their trade (in two cases because no machine could be found). Girls have been advised to start working in their own villages because of the limited demand in town.

A total of 14 graduates (11 from Kyankowe and three from Namukozi) could be traced, while four graduates from a similar institution (Naama training school) were also interviewed. 61% of them had attained the level of P7, 22% were secondary school dropouts (all of whom were men) and 17% were senior four leavers (all of whom were women). Of these 18 graduates interviewed (7 men and 11 women), 15 (83%) were practising their skill as their major and full-time occupation. Two were practising their skills part-time and one had failed to practice at all, in all cases because of the lack of tools or equipment. Overall 13 were tailors, there were two carpenters and three builders.

All of the graduates interviewed who were practising their skills were working in the target area or (in two cases) within Mityana town. Of these, 11 (73%) were running their own businesses but had little effect on employment creation since only two of them employed some six workers. All 18 graduates interviewed had found the training useful, singling out 'income generation' as the most significant benefit, thus meeting the main objective of the TSTU's assistance. Nevertheless, 28% (all female graduates) would have liked training in Home Management and 22% (mostly males) complained of lack of training in business management. Another two women (11%) would have liked training in hand work.

Of those graduates reporting increased incomes as a result of their training, levels of income varied greatly from one skill to another. Of the 12 tailors, six were earning an average gross income of USh 36,000 per annum, three were earning an average of USh 76,000 and the remaining three earned an average of USh 220,000. On the other hand, the two practising builders were earning an average of USh 650,000 a month, and the carpenter who was practising reported annual earnings of USh 1.2 mn.⁵³

The introduction of the TSTU in 1987 presumed opportunities for non-agricultural income generation in the target area through exploitation of both the available resources (sand, clay, sisal, timber, hides etc) and a ready market for the ensuing products. If all the 15 graduates were working within the target area (and none of these claimed to have had any problems in marketing his/her products or services locally), others had certainly left the region. From records available at Kyankowe Polytechnic, for instance, out of nine masons who had graduated, only two were working in the area - the rest had left for unknown reasons. It is likely, however, that at least some did so because of local market constraints.

In carrying out their activities, graduates identified four major obstacles. Three groups of four respondents each (27%) named lack of tools and/or equipment, lack of spare parts and lack of credit facilities as a major constraint. Three respondents (20%) complained of lack of technical advice. Those who complained of lack of spare parts were tailors who had hired old sewing machines, whose spares were expensive and difficult to obtain. The tailors also cited the lack of credit facilities to buy their own machines (instead of hiring).

⁵³ Little information exists regarding income levels in the region. A survey of 300 farming households conducted by ActionAid in early 1990 would indicate an average monthly income per household of USh 5,270.

When asked about their future plans, the most frequent response (seven graduates (45.7%)) was for those who wished to buy tool-kits or sewing machines, even though none of them had any capital to fulfil his/her ambition. Second in importance (20%), were those tailors who wished to establish their own business rather than be employees; they lacked capital to buy the machines. 13.3% wished to change their places of work to locations with a better market potential, and the final 20% had no plans at all.

Eleven small-scale enterprises were contacted to compare training mechanisms within Mityana's 'informal sector' with the service provided by village polytechnics. These included a brick layers association (15 youth members), two brush makers, a tile makers cooperative society, 2 tin smiths, a baker, weaver, two carpenters and a tailor. All of them, with the exception of one brush maker and the tile makers cooperative society, were located within a 4 km radius of Mityana town.

Of all those interviewed, only one (the baker) was not training others. The others had trained a total of 31 people over the preceding year (ranging from two to 12 people at a time) for periods between a month and a year. This type of informal sector training contrasts markedly with that offered by technical institutes on three major ways. First it is entirely practical and on the job; second it offers only one skill (excluding formal business management), and third, and the training period is far shorter (less by half compared to village polytechnics for tailors and carpenters). Training by local artisans appeared to be very efficient and was entirely conducted *without* external support. One tailor interviewed in Mityana town, for instance, was able to train 12 girls within one year, using only *one* machine. By comparison, Kyankowe Village Polytechnic produced a total of 19 tailors at the end of a two year course, using *15* machines and *two* instructors. Similarly, Namukozi village polytechnic produced only seven tailors at the end of a two year course, using *four* machines and *three* instructors. In addition, neither of the polytechnics currently offers business management training and none of their graduates kept any books. In contrast, the training offered by artisans, while not imparting these skills formally, provided a 'course' within a real business environment. Finally, with the exception of the tailor whose trainees were paying a fee of US\$ 20,000 per annum each, other artisans trained free of charge and either provided some pocket money to the trainees or allowed them to have private orders.

One can conclude that village polytechnics appear to meet a need in the Mityana area, especially in rural areas where artisans are seldom to be found. Although they suffer from high drop-out rates, most of their graduates are practising their skills and providing a useful service to their local communities.

Nevertheless, the quality of the service provided is undermined by a number of factors. In the first place, many practising graduates are constrained (or unable to practice) because of the lack of start-up capital to acquire tools: no credit and/or

savings schemes were associated with the training.⁵⁴ Secondly, training is not provided in a 'real' environment: the absence of income-generating activities within the polytechnics compounds this disadvantage. Thirdly, none of the practising graduates interviewed kept business records. Indeed a quarter of them singled out the lack of business management as one of the deficiencies of their training. Finally, time management and home management appear to be high priorities for women graduates, reflecting their domestic burdens: the current curriculum does not offer such training.

In spite of the relative apparent success of the polytechnics (and the success of their graduates will be determinant in establishing their reputation), ActionAid appears to have adopted a high-risk, somewhat inefficient and highly subsidised strategy to promote technical skills dissemination.

Some of the problems associated with the polytechnics (such as poor financial prospects and limited community involvement) in part stem from the limited support offered by ActionAid other than financial and material assistance. This is especially the case for Kyankowe where ActionAid supervision seems to have focused mainly on verifying the use of funds and other inputs provided rather than, say, on management training. The level of material assistance provided has also led to dependence on outside funding and has acted as a disincentive to rigorous management and to the development of other income-generating activities thus compromising the polytechnics' sustainability.

It should be noted, however, that similar problems exist in other institutions,⁵⁵ possibly because of the very real competition from other trainers (i.e. artisans, who generally levy no fees and thus appeal to the more disadvantaged). The question clearly needs to be raised whether it would not be a better use of money and resources to supporting *existing* artisans in disseminating technical skills rather than the replication of village polytechnics in the rest of the target area. Such support could take the form of provision of credit facilities, providing, at cost, particular tools and equipment, and extension services in business and management skills to enable artisans in turn to impart these skills to their trainees.

5.3.2 Support to individuals and groups

Tile making

ActionAid's support for the dissemination of new skills and technologies has reached an advanced stage with fibro-cement roofing (FCR) tiles. This is a new technology in the locality, introduced through ActionAid's efforts. After initial experimentation

⁵⁴ An earlier suggestion made by Fisher and McVay (ActionAid, 1988) that the sale of uniforms to ActionAid should be banked and matched by ActionAid to create a fund to purchase sewing machines for groups of graduates has not been taken up.

⁵⁵ There are five such institutions in the area, of which Kamange and Naama Schools are similar to the ActionAid-supported polytechnics: both face similar constraints, such as a falling intake, high drop-out rates, lack of income-generating activities and a high level of dependence on external donations.

at the TSTU workshop, seven local persons were trained in the technique over a two-months period in late 1988. Of these, two were helped to establish their own tile-making businesses with an interest-free loan repayable over two years (others continued as roofers). The loan (worth approximately US\$ 400,000) was made in kind to cover the purchase of the necessary equipment, the construction of a shed and curing tanks and a first consignment of raw materials (sand, cement, and sisal). In return, the producers agreed to sell their tiles at prices controlled by ActionAid (to ensure that profit levels would be reasonable and tiles affordable). A large proportion of the production had a market guaranteed by ActionAid for its school construction programme.

Production at both sites started in mid-1989. After early technical bottlenecks (including an erratic supply of subsidised cement from ActionAid), total combined production at both workshops stood at about 5,500 tiles per month at the end of 1990. In the first few months of production, both workshop experienced very limited demand: in spite of the subsidies, the innovative nature of the technology did not endear it to prospective customers. One of the enterprises had produced 10,000 tiles by the end of the first year but, only 4,000 had been sold, in spite of a price advantage over iron sheets. By early 1990, however, both workshops reported that they could not meet the demand. One of the entrepreneurs then increased production facilities to reach two hundred tiles per day, although he complained of the small profit margin allowed by the pricing structure.⁵⁶

In the long run, it is the competitiveness of this new product vis-a-vis iron sheets which will determine its sustainability. At the end of 1990, the cost of tiling a square meter was US\$ 3,378 compared with US\$ 2,810 for iron sheeting. To date, the price differentials have been cushioned by ActionAid orders (close to half the production of one workshop) especially since all school construction work within a 10 kms radius of Mityana is now expected to use FCR tiles.

It should be stressed, however, that through its design and promotion work, ActionAid has provided a product which is clearly the most appropriate for community buildings in the target area. Fibro-cement tiles have a higher local-materials content than the nearest roofing substitute (iron sheets) and cost about the same, they are more durable, quieter in the rain (a special advantage for classrooms), and are easy to manufacture. Additionally, ActionAid's approach to decentralised production is innovative. The two enterprises are producing on a regular basis (one is particularly well run), and they have created eight jobs.

For the present, though, FCR tiles are likely to remain a top-of-the-range product for relatively well-off individuals in town. Because of the cost differential and product novelty, their spread in the target area will in all likelihood be restricted in the medium term to communal buildings (in most cases supported by AMP). The relative

⁵⁶ During 1990, the price of cement charged by ActionAid has more than doubled, which, according to calculations made by one of the workshops, is absorbing almost the entire costs during the period. Nevertheless, the subsidy is still considerable.

uncompetitiveness of FCR tiles will present special problems for the two entrepreneurs who have been trained by ActionAid, once the subsidies are withdrawn. The two loans provided by ActionAid have still largely to be repaid; a decision has already been made to extend the repayment period.

□ *Women's groups*

The TSTU has been closely associated with a 'Women in Development' initiative which started as a pilot scheme in two parishes in 1989. It has had three main objectives, as a 'facilitator and clearing house' for AMP. First, to raise awareness on the importance and need for the full involvement and participation of women in development. Second, to train members of at least eight women's groups on general and specific leadership and development issues. Third, to introduce and make available to group members simple appropriate technologies for home improvement.

In 1989/90, with the help of 20 RC1s, awareness-raising meetings were held with both women and men and six new women's groups were formed. Training sessions were held to discuss problems raised by the groups such as time management, child up bringing, home management, child nutrition, AIDS control, first aid, and how to start an income-generating project. In addition, AMP provided training in planning, budgeting and leadership skills. Eight educational trips to other groups were organised for 161 women, and 303 home visits conducted. Demonstrations sessions were made to promote mud stoves, maize strippers and groundnut shellers.

Income generating activities have been identified by the six groups. These include feeding brick makers, smoking fish, making pancakes for sale to school children, setting up a piggery, and vegetable growing either as a group or on an individual basis. Not all of these activities have started, however. Staff complain that not enough is put into practice by the groups in spite of their weekly visits, although trying to start up projects without offering financial assistance is clearly a problem.

In October, the programme was extended to the whole project area. In each sub-zone, the plan is to include awareness-raising meetings and introductory talks, to organise educational trips, to hold one-day courses on leadership skills, to assist with project identification and planning, and to alert people to the laws affecting women. Demonstration session on appropriate technologies for the home are also to be held. By the time of the evaluation, 10 women's groups had been visited, of which eight had been receiving support from ActionAid, the remaining two were 'unassisted'. All the groups are very new: all but two were formed after 1987. Membership ranged from six to 25 (exclusively women) and they normally meet once a week.

Most of the AMP-assisted groups cited three main reasons for setting up their group. Of major importance was the prod provided by ActionAid. Other reasons were to better themselves in health and agriculture, to learn other useful skills, and finally to share experiences, socialise, and show examples to other women. AMP assistance for all but one of the groups indeed started with group formation. It took the form of regular visits by programme staff, with training provided. Training in time saving and home care, as well as visits to other groups, were cited by group members as having

been especially useful. The introduction of mud stoves has also been successful with half the members in some of the groups using one.

In spite of its decision to offer only training and advice, some of the groups were formed because members specifically expected material assistance from the programme. Not surprisingly, the degree of commitment to those groups is limited, and members complain of poor attendance at meetings, especially when there is no ActionAid presence. Five of the eight groups suffered from poor internal organisation (poor membership fee records, failure to contribute to group funds from craft sales, limited attendance). In these groups, the advantages of group membership thus remain unclear. The other three groups, on the other hand, could be considered 'well organised'.

Some of the groups visited are clearly highly dependent upon ActionAid. In one instance, members unanimously declared that the withdrawal of AMP support would lead to the demise of the group. Most members bemoaned the fact that ActionAid no longer provides agricultural inputs. In another instance, while great difficulties were encountered in raising the annual membership fee of USh 500, members felt it would be no problem to raise USh 5,000 as part payment for a pig if ActionAid provided the rest.

Members generally considered the groups which had been formed were useful for learning rather than for collective work. The main social activity for all the groups remain traditional crafts (mats, baskets, etc.) which ActionAid has encouraged through its training schemes. As an *economic* venture, however, crafts have been plagued by marketing problems. Four of the groups, however, have started on other activities. Three have joint agricultural projects, using borrowed land. One of these is raising pigs, while the fourth is engaged in tailoring (using a sewing machine sold at half price by ActionAid).

Unassisted groups have benefited from having been formed without external assistance to meet a perceived need. Indeed both of the unaided groups visited displayed a greater degree of initiative than the others. One is attempting to generate income to help local orphans acquire education, health and clothing. It has managed to borrow land to grow yams and tomatoes, raising USh 22,000, of which USh 1,000 per term has gone towards school fees. The group would like to have access to credit to start a poultry project but, members say, many widows are reluctant to join because the group does not receive external assistance! The other unaided group is based in town and is of very recent origin. Its 10 members have started making crafts and baking cakes. It also rents a sewing machine and aims at teaching sewing skills to school drop outs. The group faces difficulties in marketing its crafts but baking is more successful. To allow for continuous production (rather than renting time at a nearby bakery), it is building its own facility (for which some of the building materials have been purchased). Future plans include setting up a poultry farm if credit becomes available.

ActionAid has clearly helped a number of women's groups develop. In most cases, the main income-generating activity (traditional crafts) has poor prospects; however

other initiatives have been launched and the training provided has been highly appreciated by group members. A number of new ideas have been adopted, the most striking of which are improved mud stoves. Yet, the WID programme appears to be facing two problems. One stems from the persistent view that ActionAid is a provider of inputs, thus fostering an attitude of dependency which seems all-pervasive. Secondly, these women's initiatives seem to be isolated from other parts of the programme. The rationale for separate WID activities remains unclear as the programme as a whole should pay attention to the complexity of problems faced by women living in the target area.⁵⁷

□ *The education sector*

The TSTU trained 18 teachers in carpentry skills for two weeks in 1988, in order to promote the dissemination of these skills among the school population (as encouraged by Government), and to enable teachers to undertake simple school repairs and maintenance themselves. The 18 schools to which these teachers belonged were later supplied with tool kits. Ten of these schools were visited during the ODI evaluation. Of these, three happened to have carpentry teachers not trained by AMP: one school had a teacher trained at a technical school for three years, two others had their teachers trained by *artisans* in the informal sector for a few months to replace AMP-trained teachers (one had died, the other had left for further studies). In the first case, a school kit had been provided by ActionAid since a trained teacher was available.

Of the seven teachers trained at the AMP, four felt that the course had given them insufficient training, and some stated that they did not know how to use some of the tools provided by ActionAid. One of the schools visited had never utilised the tools, probably reflecting at least in part, a low level of technical self-confidence on the part of the teacher. The remaining three teachers had acquired some carpentry knowledge prior to the ActionAid course. Nevertheless, all the teachers (including the one who had never utilized the tools) stated that they were practising some skills, whatever the standard. Six of them were practising in school, while four others were practising both within and outside school. Among the skills used were making and repairing doors, windows, tables, desks, stools, and chairs. The impact of the programme outside the schools is illustrated by four examples: three of the teachers interviewed were already training some school dropouts in their own workshops, whereas one was employing other people. Three teachers were producing household furniture in their own workshops, generating an average income of about US\$ 7,100 per month.

In all the schools visited, participation in carpentry was voluntary and restricted to boys' classes from grades P4 to P7. These classes were, however, generally small (from six to 10 pupils). One of the reasons for this was an inadequate number of tools, made worse in cases where carpentry teachers who had established their own workshops outside school were using the school tool kits. Furthermore, carpentry classes were being held only on one afternoon a week in all the schools visited.

⁵⁷ See S. Gyde, '1989 Report and Recommendations on Women's Development Project, Mityana, Uganda', November 1989.

Clearly, therefore, ActionAid's assistance could be furthered by extending the period of training to teachers and readjusting the content of the tool kits to accommodate larger classes. Schools could be encouraged to rearrange timetables to increase the number of practical classes per week. PTAs should be encouraged to release funds to buy timber: one school visited was doing well thanks to the commitment and support from the PTA. To avoid wastage resulting from teachers' transfers, one member of the school community, preferably a parent, could also be trained in carpentry skills to provide continuity. Finally, the follow-up by ActionAid has been irregular: more supervision would result in better skills imparted and higher morale.

Ten roofers were trained at the AMP workshop to use FCR tiles for schools and houses. Of these, six could be traced during the evaluation exercise. Experienced roofers had been trained for a few weeks and two young men who had no previous experience were trained for a full year. With the exception of a roofer from the experienced group, all found the training very useful particularly in extending their range of skills and putting new business opportunities within their reach. Indeed all those interviewed except one had become full-time roofers. The one respondent who found the course unhelpful was a businessman who trained in tile making and roofing in the expectation of receiving a tile making machine from AMP at the end of the course. Failure to get the equipment led him to abandon his prospective activity.

The five practising roofers were self-employed in the vicinity of Mityana town. Each one was employing between two and seven employees each to a total of 21. All estimated that their income had increased as a result of the training received. The three experienced roofers earned an estimated gross annual income varying between USh 1 mn and 1.2 mn. The two young men earned about USh 210,000 annually. Their main problems stemmed from the lack of tools for the younger roofers; two older roofers complained of lack of trust among their clients who often fail to pay for the services rendered, a third of irregular income. One common constraint among all the five roofers was lack of jobs as fewer people are now using the fibre/cement tiles because, it was asserted, of a recent drop in the quality of 'ActionAid tiles'.

The main contribution of the TSTU to the Community Based Health Care programme has been training 22 local masons in well digging and spring protection techniques. Three dispensaries have also been built with AMP providing free raw materials and furniture. ActionAid's support for well digging and spring protection programmes has been motivated by the lack of clean water sources in the target area: its July 1989 survey indicated that only 16% of the available water sources were clean and safe. At the time of the evaluation, AMP had contributed to the protection of 150 springs and 35 shallow wells. The programme has recently gathered momentum, with 27 wells and 47 springs completed last year alone. Support has taken the form of community consultations and mobilisation (mainly through RC1 councils), the provision at no charge of cement and pipes for springs, concrete rings for wells, and skilled labour in the form of a mason. Communities are expected to contribute locally available materials (sand, stones, bricks), their transport and to provide labour on site.

Of the 22 masons trained by AMP (in 1988), 10 were still practising their new skills at the time of the evaluation. The 'drop-outs' appeared to have given up in the face

of the time and effort required to 'mobilise' communities (and hence the reduced income, although masons are paid US\$ 6,000 by AMP per spring protected). Those who had joined the course in the expectation of substantial monetary gain can, furthermore, benefit from the building boom in Mityana town (and elsewhere in the country). This relatively high drop-out rate is likely to have been also caused by the fact that the masons were selected by ActionAid. Now the choice of candidates is left to local communities.

Interviews with three of the still-practising trained masons (who had together protected 24 springs and one well) indicated that all found the training useful to acquire new skills (and improve on existing building methods), although further training would have been welcomed in health-related fields. All three, however, practised their skills part-time, usually because there were not enough sites. All three also appeared highly committed to improving the living conditions of local communities, and thus willing to work on sites where local materials and labour supply are necessarily erratic. This might mean foregoing part of their normal monthly income from construction work (estimated at between US\$ 10,000 and 45,000).

The experience with village water committees is as yet limited although these are likely to be more successful if established for each water point (rather than each village) and if they include women. The subsidy element in spring protection has been calculated by ActionAid at 56% of the total cost: it is difficult to gauge whether this represents a 'reasonable' contribution (since little information is available on disposable income in the programme area) but this subsidy remains very obvious to the beneficiaries since it entirely covers the costs of skilled labour and imported materials. Charging a fee - however small - for these items would lessen the degree of dependence upon ActionAid. In spite of these problems, the spring protection programme appears to have been very successful: its strength would seem to relate mainly to AMP's support to the development of skills already in existence within local communities.

Artisans in the informal sector

A rapid survey of artisans in the informal sector provides a few elements of comparison with 'unaided' artisans and groups of artisans. As shown in Table 4, the artisans interviewed indicated sizable gross income levels (although, with the exception of the figures quoted by the baker who happened to be an accountant by profession, these figures should be treated with caution since none of the artisans interviewed kept any account books).

Through their activities, employment had been created at an average of just under four jobs per enterprise, and if one includes trainees, the average per enterprise to seven, not a negligible figure for Mityana. The survey showed that five enterprises were selling their products at their places of work (carpenters, brick layers, tile makers, and the tailor); the two tinsmiths sold at their place of work as well as in town. In two-thirds of the cases, therefore, the local market was sufficient to absorb all of the production, supporting the TSTU's presumption that there is a ready local market in the target area for non-agricultural products. The remaining four enterprises (a baker,

Table 4 Income and employment generated by different types of artisanal activity

<i>Artisan</i>	<i>Estimated Annual Income US\$ mn</i>	<i>No of Employees</i>
Weaver (hand loom)	0.8	8
Bricklayers Association	0.9	8
Tailor	0.32	Nil
Baker	2.4	3
2 Carpenters	1.2	7
2 Tinsmiths	1.1	2
Brush maker	(not given)	4
Tile makers coop	(not given)	7

a weaver, and two brush makers) were selling only part of their products in the vicinity of Mityana.

Out of 11 small scale enterprises visited, nine (82%) cited the lack of credit facilities or working capital as their major business constraint. The baker, for instance, wanted to improve his oven, the Walugogo Brick Layers' Association (made up of 15 youths, nine of whom had attended school up to and above S4) lacked capital to buy gum boots, wheel barrows, overalls and a brick making machine. The remaining two enterprises, including the tailor, also cited the lack of tools or equipment as a constraint. The tailor wanted to purchase additional machines to accommodate a larger number of trainees.

Generally, Mityana's 'informal sector' gives the impression of rapid growth, in spite of constraints such as lack of tools/equipment and working capital (which justify the TSTU's proposed activities). Most of these artisans do not presently qualify for the attention of the AMP as they operate outside the target area: yet they could provide a self-sustaining conduit for effective skills dissemination (especially if they benefitted from help in business skills, design work and new product development) at minimal cost, as AMP's experience with springs and wells technicians has ably demonstrated.

5.4 The Wider Context

Several characteristics of ActionAid's programme in Mityana combine to make it a programme of interest in the broader context of NGO initiatives in Uganda: its rigorous definition of a 'target area'; its development of a separate extension structure; its multi-disciplinary approach, and its attempts to move towards a 'participatory' approach.

AMP's target area was re-defined to allow the concentration of sufficient resources and ensure cost-effectiveness. The objective is to reach 54,000 of the estimated 73,200 residents of the target area over a three-year period. Set against this objective is the availability of 27 extension workers (or one field worker per 2,000 people). In the present circumstances,

effectiveness is thus circumscribed and complaints are made of infrequent contacts between ActionAid staff and the 'target community'. The proposed introduction of a complementary structure of Community Workers paid by AMP (one per 25 households) has been shelved in view of its questionable sustainability.

As is the case with other NGOs adopting a 'change-agent approach', ActionAid is thus faced with a seemingly insurmountable problem: the adoption of a methodology relying heavily on salaried field workers which, in itself, is unlikely to become sustainable. The development of activities which can be sustained in the long run by local communities or government services (with emphasis on production rather than social welfare where possible) therefore provides a promising avenue which could be more fully explored by AMP. To some extent, the AMP has got round this problem through working through farmers' and other groups, and encouraging the creation of committees (such as in the health programme). This appears to be positive, though difficult to implement, especially if the programme continues to strive to sever all links with the inputs delivery/subsidy approach of the past.

Too rigid a definition of the 'target area' can also lead to a downplaying of the influence of external factors. The current exclusion of urban artisans from the programme because they work outside the target area provides an example of this 'island approach'. The AMP area is, however, very reliant on services provided by Mityana town just as the town's present development results to a great extent from growth in its hinterland.

The development of programme objectives, methodologies and evaluation criteria have tended to become rather rigid and inflexible, perhaps stemming in part from the centralised management style of the agency as a whole. This is shown by AMP's prominent role in attempting to define ActionAid's 'target group' and, more generally, in the agency's role in promoting Rural Development.⁵⁸ Responding to a request from the Head Office that all programmes target the 'poorest 20% of the population' in their respective target areas, AMP used ActionAid poverty indicators (social, economic, environmental and political conditions) to assert that the 20% focus would effectively exclude many people from the programme since, it is argued, 90% of the population in AMP's target area are poor and/or vulnerable. Further, to identify the 'poorest 20%' would be practically impossible, would place ActionAid in the untenable position of judge, and would wrongly equate lack of assets with vulnerability. Such targeting, it was argued, would entail working with people who already depend on support from other members of the community and the impact of the programme's work would be minimal.

AMP argues that, in its target area, poverty is not due to exploitation by the rich, or to climate but, as we have noted, to lack of awareness and training. Hence, it is contended, the causes of poverty are unique to a particular environment, and no general rules can be developed for all ActionAid programmes. Its current policy is to exclude the 'affluent' but it does not seem to have actively sought out and identified the most vulnerable, thereby leaving it open to the criticism that it has adopted an indiscriminate 'blanket' approach which

⁵⁸ See ActionAid's Approach to Rural Development, July 1990.

does not sufficiently take into account social and economic differentiation within the target area which, as recent data indicates, can be considerable.⁵⁹

ActionAid lays emphasis on baseline studies, situational analyses and focused group discussion to analyse the causes of poverty, and to identify qualitative and quantitative indicators to measure its impact (mostly child mortality, nutritional status of children and community literacy levels). If perhaps less progress has been registered at AMP than in other ActionAid programmes in this respect, the emphasis placed on these issues has certainly been a welcome development in the wider context of NGOs which have often justifiably been accused of management 'sloppiness'. A participatory development approach, however, is not often compatible with the universal setting of *ex-ante* quantified objectives, and care must be taken that management by objectives should not undermine AMP's overall approach. Neither should it foster a uniform vision of society which would compromise ActionAid's attention to the more disadvantaged.

The greatest obstacle to effective impact for the AMP remains, however, the legacy of its earlier methodology stressing the provision of inputs (whether free or subsidised). This earlier approach continues to undermine AMP's relationship with its 'target population' whose perception of the programme remains largely unchanged.⁶⁰ The former approach was necessarily divisive (and encouraged in some cases the sub-optimal use of inputs), however small the target area, since the resources at the disposal of the agency could never have satisfied everybody's needs: in 1987, for instance, the Community Agriculture component of the programme, as well as other inputs, sold an average of 13 hoes per parish! ActionAid was thus reaping the worst of both worlds: a dependency syndrome and a divided society, as well as very limited coverage.

5.5 Concluding Remarks

If the legacy of the past still weighs heavily on the AMP and the way it is perceived by the local population, it is nevertheless clear that the AMP has moved some way from its original objectives and strategies. A multi-sectoral programme has been established with what appears to be an efficient extension structure (especially since the introduction of a new system in 1989), laying increased emphasis on participatory development. The evaluation suggests, however, that AMP could go further in moving away from its original practice by further reducing subsidies, for instance, and adhering less rigidly to a form of management that places a high premium on the realisation of quantified objectives.

While ActionAid has, as we have seen, placed much emphasis on the collection of data for monitoring and evaluation purposes in its 'target areas', work in this respect is still in its

⁵⁹ The AMP, Monitoring and Evaluation Report, June 1990 indicates, for instance, that, out of a sample of 300 farmers, 15% had less than 1 acre at the disposal of their households. The argument that AMP pays insufficient attention to the poorer groups has been made in two other recent evaluations reports.

⁶⁰ Regrettably, this has also partly led to a stalling of planned credit schemes as these were thought to potentially reinforce a 'dependency syndrome'. These difficulties were compounded by sponsorship rules which have tended to focus on individual children, rather than whole communities.

infancy at AMP. In view of the scope of the programme and its work methods, it is therefore difficult to estimate its overall impact. There are, however, indications of much progress in the areas of agriculture, sanitation and education. While the TSTU has had an active role to play in all of these areas, technical skills dissemination *per se* has not made as much progress. There appear to be two main reasons for this. First are the problems associated with the former approach and secondly there are difficulties which appear inherent to AMP management, in particular those associated with the recruitment of staff and in the lack of integration between the Unit and the rest of the programme. Constraints have also arisen from the introduction of (or support to) new activities with minimum identification work and, to a degree, a vision of development resting upon the introduction of external material resources, technologies and ideas rather than supporting indigenous capacities (such as local skill dissemination mechanisms within the 'informal sector').

As a result, the sustainability of some of the activities promoted by the TSTU is open to question. More generally, the experience of the TSTU reflects the wider implications for an agency such as AMP of adopting and subsequently attempting to move away from an inputs-oriented approach once expectations have been raised (both at the community level and within programme staff). That such an attempt is being made (and much progress has already been registered), in spite of these considerable difficulties, is a tribute to the commitment and integrity of AMP staff.

Appendix: Financial Information**a. ActionAid Uganda Programme**

(£)	<i>Expenditure 1988/89</i>	<i>Planned expenditure 1989/90</i>	<i>Projected expenditure 1990/91</i>
Buwekula programme	214,000	238,000	289,000
Vision Terudo	108,000	70,000	84,000
AMP	360,000	382,000	419,000
Local NGOs	143,000	148,000	352,000
Kampala*	161,000	392,000	169,000
Capital expenditure	117,000		
Kamuli programme			450,000
Other costs			340,000
Total expenditure	1,103,000	1,230,000	2,103,000

* includes administrative support, and other costs in 1989/90.

b. ActionAid Mityana Programme

1.	Projected expenditure by sector 1990/91 (£s)	498,900
	Agriculture	88,400
	Health & Water	131,000
	Education	105,300
	Technical Skills	60,800
	Data & Research	10,900
	Training	23,000
	Sub-total:	<u>419,400</u>
	Administration & capital expenditure	79,500
	Grand Total:	498,900
2.	Total expenditure 1988/89	360,000
3.	Total expenditure, 1989/90, (programme costs only)	382,000
	divided as follows:	
	Agriculture	87,000
	Health & Water	105,000
	Education	118,000
	Technical Skills	72,000

6. CONCLUSIONS

The growing literature on NGOs maintains that they offer the advantages of low-cost delivery, especially to the poor and in remote areas, utilising a rapid, innovative and flexible response. Familiarity with the social environment and the active involvement of target populations enhance NGO effectiveness. On the other hand, NGO activities are often said to be very diverse, fragmented, and small-scale. To what extent do NGOs in Uganda - and the NGOs whose programmes were evaluated in the context of this study - conform to this picture? In attempting to provide answers to this question it is necessary to introduce a word of caution. The wide range of NGOs and activities in Uganda, together with multiple, often poorly defined, and occasionally contradictory objectives severely reduce the ability to undertake rigorous evaluation and come to firm conclusions. Likewise it is often difficult to assess the precise value of benefits obtained, and to judge the relative worth of different benefits, as well as to draw the link between benefit and project input. Because of these limitations what follows is more an informed commentary than a rigorous assessment of NGO poverty alleviating projects in Uganda.

6.1 Target groups

NGOs involved in programmes with an economic focus often assert that their 'target groups' comprise the 'poorest of the poor'. As noted in Part I, however, NGOs in Uganda rarely undertake the detailed social analysis which would be necessary to identify this group, and to analyse more precisely the causes of poverty, rather than its symptoms. Even where the need for such analysis is acknowledged, the skills to undertake it are often lacking.

The case studies presented above broadly confirm this view, with only the AMP currently attempting to collect detailed socio-economic data in its area of operation, some years after the project began. What is most common is for the target group to be perceived in rather negative terms as excluding the 'affluent'. This not only makes for a somewhat **unfocused** approach (most noticeable in the ACORD and MSRDP programmes), but it also often tends to present the target population as poorer than it is. However, a number of NGOs in Uganda use other criteria to identify their 'target groups'. These include geographical location, and different characteristics of vulnerability, such as being disabled, refugees, widows and orphans. Nevertheless, most programmes with an 'economic focus' are characterised by the lack of attention given to the issue of social differentiation; the upshot is that the poorest, already in the least favourable position to benefit from external support, are in danger of being effectively by-passed.

Such comments, though, need to be placed in context. If the record of NGOs in Uganda in reaching the poorest may well be better than that of official donors,⁶¹ the case studies also show that 'reaching the poorest' is far from easy or straight forward. The manufacture of ox-ploughs, for instance, is only indirectly relevant to the poorest farmers in Acholi (though a

⁶¹ The effectiveness of a number of initiatives financed through official external funds has been severely affected by their reliance on a demoralised and inefficient government infrastructure. Considerable frustration has been expressed by donors, especially those involved in the agricultural and health fields.

larger supply will be of some benefit, mainly through sharing and lending arrangements). Similarly, while the introduction of fee-paying medical services in Busoga by the MSRDP does often exclude the poorest, the 'NGO approach' - small-scale and face-to-face - allows for the effects of this exclusion to be mitigated through credit arrangements, the field staff's intimate knowledge of the local population, and payments in kind.

The uneven record of NGO programmes with an economic focus attempting to reach Ugandan women and answering their specific needs is also confirmed by the case studies. While UWFCT and the MSRDP specially focus on women, the gender implications of the encouragement of ox-ploughing were only addressed by ACORD some years after the launch of their programme (and then only partially), and the 'gender-sensitivity' of some of the AMP initiatives has often been too narrow.

These weaknesses often arise from the lack of resources to undertake the necessary pre-project analysis, but they also reflect the pressure under which NGOs find themselves to produce results quickly. NGOs tend to involve themselves with those sections of the population with whom quick results are likely to emerge. In part, this is the product of those official funding agencies which emphasise quantified objectives, often at the expense of a participatory methodology. In part, however, it is sometimes a consequence of what might term increased 'bureaucratisation' within NGOs: growing emphasis on things like baseline studies, quantified objectives, the monitoring of specific indicators, etc. may well go some way towards improving the management and efficiency of projects, but they can also reduce flexibility and response to changing local realities.

Furthermore, the case studies confirm the importance of what could be termed the social self-perception of the NGO: the NGO personnel running projects are themselves part of the local elite who tend to associate socially with the 'rich' and who often work with local government officials and other powerful community members. This necessarily has an influence on projects, the way they are executed and the manner in which benefits are distributed.

In spite of these pressures, the NGO projects examined here have often been successful in reaching some of the least accessible areas of the country: all four case studies demonstrate an ability to work, either directly or indirectly, in small, sometimes isolated, and occasionally virtually cut-off rural communities.

6.2 Scale, Sustainability and Replicability

Most long-term development programmes implemented by NGOs in Uganda are 'small scale', typically a primary health care initiative covering one or two villages, or an agricultural extension service in the immediate vicinity of a Church.⁶² NGOs have, however, increasingly been trying to scale-up their activities and two of the case studies - the ACORD

⁶² NGOs active in relief and rehabilitation have often been involved in larger scale initiatives. OXFAM, for instance, transported and distributed 7,000 tons of food and other items into Kitgum in 1988/89. Similarly for some NGOs, the Karamoja emergency involved the deployment of large-scale resources.

programme in Gulu and Kitgum districts, and the MSRDP in Busoga - provide examples of NGO programmes with regional ambitions. In both cases, however, success has been limited. A single - albeit central - element of their multi-sectoral programmes registered progress (the Engineering Workshop and the Health programme, respectively) but neither agency can claim to have had the broad impact it had envisaged at the outset. There appeared to be only limited appreciation that the programmes implemented went beyond the simple addition of different activities in agriculture, health, forestry, etc. A major reason for the limited success lay in management constraints, while in one case the *political* implications of attempting to promote a sizeable initiative were not sufficiently understood. The AMP objective of attempting to reach over 50,000 people in a three year period through a multi-sectoral programme appeared to be beyond the capacity of the staff to service such a large initiative.

Programme sustainability, though clearly of importance to all four cases studied, appeared to be equally problematic. Two particular issues can be highlighted. Firstly, although the participation of 'beneficiaries' (discussed below) is recognised to be all-important in achieving lasting success, the level of participation ranged from mediocre to poor. Secondly, project success was often critically related to the quality and input of the current staff servicing the projects, but how long can this commitment be sustained? Adequate training and other conditions of service for NGO personnel (generally much more favourable than for the underpaid civil service) clearly foster motivation and the continuation of the projects analysed here has certainly been related to staff commitment, sometimes displayed in the most trying circumstances. The WACU workshop case study in particular illustrates this point, while more generally the staff at many Church-run hospitals certainly ensured their continued operation throughout the 1980s in parts of the country affected by civil war.

What the case studies show, however, is that if the desire to involve target groups and staff commitment cannot ensure the long term sustainability of programmes, neither can they guarantee the sustainability of the operational NGOs themselves. *At the programme level*, long-term prospects were undermined, to a greater or lesser extent, by the following factors:

- lack of income generated, either because activities meant to be financially self-sufficient failed to meet their objectives (often because of poor market research), or because activities were dominated by social welfare objectives which do not easily lend themselves to financial autonomy.⁶³
- inappropriate project design or implementation methods, for instance where project sustainability is dependent upon levels of organisational, managerial and technical skills which are highly unlikely to be forthcoming from among the beneficiaries.
- lack of sufficient thought given to the institutional setting of the project or where little consideration has been given to 'institution building'.
- factors external to the project but which proved very influential, such as political instability and deteriorating economic performance in the region of the project.

⁶³ This raises the question of the extent to which financial sustainability is a desirable goal to achieve, and if it is, what is being lost in the process.

Interestingly, the programmes assessed appeared to be relatively unaffected by direct Government interference, while they also benefitted little from Government support.

From an institutional perspective, long term prospects tend to be undermined in cases where they are dependent on one or two key individuals (usually the founder members), and where they overwhelmingly rely on one or two external funding sources.

One of the case studies, however, illustrates well the fact that institutional self-sufficiency may, in certain cases, only be achieved at the expense of other priorities. Thus, it is unlikely that the UWFCT will be in a position to cover the overheads and costs incurred in extending training and technical advice to clients through its own income for the foreseeable future. On the one hand, launching its own income-generating projects will clearly divert very scarce management capacity from its lending programme; on the other, reducing overheads and other costs will reduce the access of the poor to loans. Financial autonomy objectives could therefore undermine the development goals of the organisation.

This sort of dilemma is very common, particularly among projects designed to provide a service rather than develop income-generating activities. This is well illustrated in the case of the MSRDP aid posts, and their attempts to link income received through the provision of a curative service with other income-generating activities, including preventive services.⁶⁴ Sustainability is indeed of major concern for all the projects examined: in WACU's case, questions arise regarding the institutional context, the choice of technology and the existence of markets. For the MSRDP, policies concerning user charges and income-generating projects to finance rural health posts - and the attendant management requirements - are prominent; for AMP, reducing subsidy levels has proved a significant obstacle.

It is difficult to make too strong a judgement about the replicability of the projects studied (and of most NGO development projects in Uganda) because of their relative 'youth'. Nonetheless it should be noted that the issue of replication does not explicitly figure in the design stage of most programmes, even if the geographical extension of activities sometimes constitutes one of their objectives. Thus the MSRDP project envisages eventual coverage of the whole diocese with an aid post in each parish.

The greatest potential for replication would appear to lie in the medical field. The UCBHCA at present counts more than 100 affiliates, each involved in one or more primary health care initiatives. Elsewhere, the relative lack of coordination among NGOs together with generally poor communications with Government restrict the potential for learning from experiences and thus for the replication of successful programmes.

6.3 Specificity and Innovation

The case studies support the view expressed in Part I, above, that in some respects the NGOs have made their mark on development by default: decreasing resources at the disposal of the

⁶⁴ The sustainability of many of the community-based health care programmes operated by NGOs in Uganda is an issue of growing concern among the different agencies funding these programmes.

state have curtailed its effectiveness in providing services, while official aid programmes have tended to focus on areas of little immediate concern to NGOs (infrastructure, industrial rehabilitation, etc.). NGO programmes are concentrated in particular sectors: the MSRDP evaluation illustrates the contribution made by NGOs in the medical field (especially in preventive health care); the ACORD programme attempted to develop an industrial facility in a neglected part of the country to meet local smallholder demand in an innovative fashion; the UWFCT is implementing a credit programme which is unique, thanks to the profile of its clients and its multi-disciplinary approach which stresses technical and managerial support.

However, the case studies reveal less evidence of participation and innovation than the conventional wisdom would suggest. While some NGOs still exhibit strong 'top down' methods of implementation,⁶⁵ most at least attempt to develop participatory processes even if not always with unmitigated success. The case studies all indicate the importance that the NGOs attach to participation in the implementation of activities. But the practice is different. Participation at the planning stage often remains elusive, although the UWFCT case study is a noteworthy exception in this respect. Accountability to donors is in practice often of greater importance than accountability to the beneficiaries, often because of the need to continue to receive funds or to increase the flow of funds. This often undermines group participation. Participatory evaluation and monitoring mechanisms are still a rarity: accountability mechanisms towards 'target groups' are indeed, practically everywhere, conspicuous by their absence.

The innovative nature of an 'NGO methodology' in Uganda has other limits: in many cases, the traditional 'community development' approach prevails, although emphasis is increasingly placed by agencies on group formation and group dynamics. In part as a result of poor information flows among NGOs, many agencies have proved reluctant to engage in types of intervention outside their traditional domain. Work with individuals rather than with groups, for instance, generally remains out of bounds as has any comprehensive attempt to assess the potential of the country's 'private sector', an undertaking 'culturally' at odds with some NGOs, as the ACORD case study indicates. Similarly, the absence of pre-project investigations has often led NGOs to ignore or by-pass local institutions in favour of launching their own organisational blueprints whose sustainability is not always assured.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ This is especially true where NGOs themselves have adopted a top-down management style (often where a charismatic founder is still at the helm or within some church-related structures) and/or where staff have not benefited from exposure to training which emphasises different and less authoritarian approaches.

⁶⁶ Adopting a 'participatory approach' in the context of relief programmes is more problematic and a number of foreign NGOs have acquired a reputation for authoritarian and culturally insensitive programmes, as the Karamoja emergency has demonstrated. Other agencies, however, have attempted, with a measure of success, to involve beneficiaries and local structures in such programmes and have placed particular emphasis on women in such situations. (For an example see De Coninck & Muir, 1989.) Gradually, too, agencies have attempted to inform their activities through an understanding of the causes of conflicts rather than simply treating the symptoms of emergency situations, and to link relief with rehabilitation and development initiatives.

6.4 External Factors and the Wider Setting

The external environment is clearly influential in all of the case studies, but was of particular importance to project impact in two of them. The WACU workshop in Northern Uganda has been extremely vulnerable in relation to both political upheaval and the slow pace of infrastructural rehabilitation, and in large part because of these external factors, its very existence is now in doubt. The poor state of the country's infrastructure has touched all four projects, while both the Workshop's and the UWFCT activities have been especially affected by the difficulties experienced by Uganda at the macro-economic level.

The case studies also highlight the importance of state-NGO relationships, revealing their different and changing nature and both their positive and negative points. For the WACU workshop, the relationship with the state has been complex, supportive at the national level but unclear, inconsistent and certainly complex at the local level. In recent times the relationship between ACORD and the Cooperative Union (in effect a para-statal body) has been critical for much of the development of the project. The AMP and MSRDP studies both describe the establishment of an extension structure which is parallel to that of the state and examine the long-term implications of such an approach. The state appears particularly supportive of the UWFCT but this support does not go much beyond verbal approval.

Of importance, too, some of the case-studies indicate a certain blindness to the world outside the project, even to the world outside the approaches used by NGOs in other circumstances. For instance the AMP study raises the question of whether support for village polytechnics is the most appropriate method of imparting skills to the rural off-farm working population and providing them with alternative employment. The evaluation certainly shows the effectiveness of informal methods of the informal sector, often performing better than the NGO approach.

6.5 Effectiveness and Efficiency

As noted above, providing firm assessments on the effectiveness and efficiency of NGOs in Uganda is constrained by lack of information and uncertainty surrounding precise quantifiable objectives, costs incurred and programme benefits. If the case studies have demonstrated their capacity to provide a service that would not otherwise be available, the NGOs have also illustrated the lack of emphasis placed on monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. In part this stems from the lack of resources (especially for local agencies), from the shortage of necessary skills and, more generally, from the low priority accorded to the collection of this information. Atypical in this respect has been the analysis undertaken by the AMP project, although it is still too early for the information gathered to provide a judgment on longer term impact, even if it has highlighted some of the potential pitfalls of management by objectives, and of bureaucratisation on rural development programmes of the type AMP is attempting to implement. Most NGO projects - especially those run by local agencies - have few management tools at their disposal to monitor their activities and gauge their impact.

Lack of 'hard' data, however, does not mean that comments on efficiency and effectiveness cannot be made. In general the case study projects have generally been effective in achieving at least some of their initial goals. In most cases, the more tangible objectives set have been

attained: a functioning workshop has been rehabilitated and expanded in Gulu, aid posts have been built in Busoga, springs protected and classrooms renovated in Mityana, although the proliferation of programme objectives, for instance in relation to MSRDP, ACORD, and AMP created important management constraints and reduced effectiveness.

On the other hand, the sustainability of these initiatives remains uncertain, while project costs (including administrative overheads and other programme delivery expenditure) have often been large especially when set against the size of the 'target population' and their ability to meet the costs in the future.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, the case studies do suggest quite strongly that it is only possible to reach this population effectively if the necessary level of resources is made available: the UWFCT study probably provides the best example of the need for considerable expenditure (other than directly on the credit programme) to ensure that the poor are reached in an effective and sustainable fashion.

Money, though, is by no means everything. Social benefits and in most cases a degree of flexibility have enabled the projects examined here to adapt to the changing circumstances of the Ugandan environment. The resilience of the staff at the Engineering Workshop in Gulu is but one example out of many. Similarly, where development activities have (often) been engulfed by civil disturbances, the NGOs studied have proved able to switch to relief operations, as the ACORD case study again demonstrates. Such flexibility, however, often comes with a price: the run-down character of Uganda's infrastructure, has, as we noted earlier, forced the larger agencies to develop their own alternatives, an expensive exercise in itself, particularly where this has involved expatriate personnel whose lifestyle has often not been the most modest. The case studies have also illustrated how initiatives have frequently been vulnerable to factors outside the control of the relevant NGO, a vulnerability on occasion enhanced, rather than mitigated, by the design of the programme.

In view of the costs involved (with the possible exception of the MSRDP), it could well be that the NGO programmes which have been evaluated can only be fully justified if their impact goes beyond their immediate project confines: innovation in terms of approach and objectives has often been in evidence but any potential for replication remains, in most cases, yet to be exploited. Wider problems of the limited coordination among NGOs and with other bodies are relevant here. Experiences are insufficiently shared, resources are duplicated and too little is learned from mistakes.

To summarise, and from a broader perspective, NGOs active in Uganda *can* claim to have made a significant contribution in three main areas. In the first place, their relief activities have undoubtedly contributed towards relieving widespread suffering throughout much of the turbulent recent history of the country. Relief has not only brought immediate survival, but also renewed confidence in the future and, in some cases, self-respect and possibly even a measure of security. Secondly, NGO involvement in long-term development programming has, in certain areas, provided facilities and services which would not otherwise have been

⁶⁷ Here again, it would be wrong to make sweeping generalisations. An 'expensive' NGO programme such as the WACU workshop which has entailed a total investment of £500,000 still only represents less than £1 per head of population in the programme area. One should also remember that as NGOs attempt to move away from relief and rehabilitation programmes which involve predominantly the provision of inputs, administrative overheads will naturally represent an increasing proportion of total programme costs.

available, particularly in the health and sanitation fields. Finally, NGOs are showing to those concerned that development projects to be successful, must meet a real need, must demand a high level of participation from the intended beneficiaries (including in the planning of activities), an active contribution in their implementation and management and must rest on the utilisation of local resources and skills.

6.6 The Future for NGOs in Uganda

We end this Working Paper with a few thoughts on what implications these conclusions might have for future NGO involvement in Uganda.

NGO effectiveness, in its broadest sense, would benefit from closer coordination (in some instances even to the extent of integration of particular programmes) with government initiatives. Overall impact has been hampered by the poor level of communication with Government, particularly the limited involvement of NGOs in policy matters. Insufficient attention has been paid to the strengthening of existing (or the creation of new) institutions, so necessary in the Ugandan context where institutions of all descriptions have been undermined by civil conflict.

Discussion of NGOs and the state and, in particular, the fact that NGOs have, at least in part, thrived because of the State's retreat, underline the point that they are particularly **well placed** to contribute to a **strengthening** of public institutions, rather than, as is often the case, develop their own separate programme delivery systems. This is all the more important since, in the medium term at least, the resources at the disposal of the state (especially at the local level) are unlikely to increase, inhibiting the effectiveness and wider impact of government development programmes.

Depending on future modalities, the participation of NGOs in district-level planning mechanisms might provide an appropriate opportunity for increased effectiveness through collaboration, for a greater degree of much-needed NGO accountability and for enhanced popular confidence in the State's legitimacy. The decentralisation of official structures is, however, no panacea; it may well entail a closer *control* over the population and NGOs would be well placed to articulate the necessary 'countervailing' power. Similarly, NGOs have an important role to play with regard to RCs, especially in developing their planning capacities and in providing a voice to the less articulate.

Generally, therefore, NGOs have the critical task of establishing new forms of linkages with government. Hyden (1983) has argued that, in order to replace the predominance of the regulatory linkages of yesterday, governments must be shown the advantages of an active non-governmental sector. Perhaps even more in Uganda than elsewhere in the continent, NGOs (provided they can develop *their own* accountability mechanisms both internally and towards their 'target groups') therefore have a crucial role to play in strengthening (either in their own right or as instruments to develop other organisations) the establishment of a 'civil society' with diverse and effective pressure groups able to sustain and reinforce mechanisms of democratic control, themselves increasingly seen as a pre-condition for genuine progress.

Should this role be extended to participation in national policy development? While NGOs may well feel that in doing so, they might be seen to share responsibility for something they will have little subsequent authority over, the lack of dialogue has clearly restricted the broad effectiveness of their work. Their accumulated experience and their relative proximity to socio-economic groups with limited skills to articulate their interests would seem, however, to provide them with a role in, at least, the formulation of any future official poverty alleviation programmes. Similarly, NGOs would seem to have a special task, indeed responsibility, to fulfil in promoting a strategy to tackle to country's North-South divide - possibly the main cause of instability in Uganda - through their own investment decisions as well as through influencing other donors' and government's priorities.

Current weaknesses point forcibly to the fact that NGO efforts in the future will benefit from better coordination and collaboration (among themselves as well as with government) and making their experiences more widely known. In relation to this latter aspect, in Uganda the general public is not well informed about NGO programmes and sometimes suspects their motives. Sharing project results (predicated upon the development of an evaluative capacity currently poorly developed among most NGOs) will be all the more effective if it is broader than immediate programme issues, and embraces national policy questions and the choice of target groups.

In spite (but also because) of their rapid growth, some local NGOs remain weak and dependent on foreign funding, bureaucratically top-heavy (in contradiction with their message of self-reliance!) and without a clearly-defined 'space' in society in general and in the development movement more particularly. They still need to develop their 'corporate identity' and the parameters of their role in Ugandan society, reflecting and building upon their own circumstances rather than trying to be an image of Northern NGOs. On the other hand, Northern NGOs increasingly need to examine the dimensions of a new division of labour with their Ugandan counterparts and may well consider local NGOs and their capacity to foster the development of 'grassroots' groups as especially important in Uganda. Institution-building is of critical significance at present (going well beyond the need for funding conduits) and voluntary associations have an important role to play in the development (and therefore the democratisation) of the country. Further, local NGOs will want to allow for a gradual disengagement by foreign NGOs from operational programmes and to articulate the interests, as intermediary organisations, of grassroots groups.

Finally, NGO effectiveness might well be enhanced through a move away from what remains essentially at present a reactive attitude to development problems towards a renewed attempt at imaginative programming. While a better understanding of social processes at work in the country will lead to a more precise definition of 'target' groups, involvement in infrastructural projects, in disaster prevention and preparedness (including institution building), in tackling marketing constraints, in further strengthening the dynamism of the private sector, in considering broader responses to conflict situations, all provide potential new avenues for effective and innovative NGO work in Uganda.

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