

DESIGN OF A MONITORING INFORMATION SYSTEM with Participative Components

for the UNICEF-Aided I.A.D. Programme, Ratnagiri

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Contents, Summary & Introduction

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SUMMARY

The monitoring system design presented in this Report has **two distinct foci**. One is the design of **a workable monitoring system to support programme implementation** and management. Here we are mainly dealing with data sources and information flow within the programme structure - most often hierarchically but also in certain cases bypassing the lower levels. The **other focus is on participative monitoring, wherein the information flows originate with the people**. In most cases we have provided for a program-manager to obtain feedback in this fashion, but some of the "participative" activity will be entirely outside the official program structure. The latter aspect is covered in a self-contained section at the end of this Report

To enable the monitoring system to function effectively (keeping in mind the foci mentioned above) we have recommended the posting of two Monitoring Assistants to the office of the Program Coordinator. They may take the place of the "Junior trainer" and/or the "Programme Assistant", or may be additional appointees. In our opinion one of the positions may need to be a fresh addition.

As a part of the emphasis on people-oriented monitoring, **it has been suggested that the five poorest households in each village should be constituted into a panel which is continuously monitored to assess the effects of the program.**

It has also been envisaged that **an Observer** (with training or **skills in social anthropology**) who regularly visits the program area, could prove to be very valuable in "sensing" changes in the processes of village management, of development, and changes in attitude among the people.

Given the novelty of the concept of participative program design and self-monitoring, it is recommended that one Panchakroshi be selected for a carefully prepared full scale experiment. The relevant Project Officer and his Balasevikas will need appropriate training, refresher courses and guidance to effectively introduce these methods of working in their area.

INTRODUCTION

At the instance of **UNICEF (West India Office, Bombay)** SRI had undertaken a 3-month project to design a Monitoring System for the UNICEF-Aided Integrated Area Development Programme in Ratnagiri District.

The project itself contains several unique characteristics; it is the first of its kind in the country. The Monitoring system also breaks new ground in the effort to develop a scheme for monitoring of social inputs with the "participation" - not merely in doing part of the work, or asking for things, but in helping to design parts of the processes and the monitoring system - is a relatively new idea, it requires some

sophistication on the part of the project administrators. The scheme suggested here incorporates an effort in one Panchakroshi where a full scale experiment in participation will be tried.

During the initial phase of this work, a series of background notes were prepared for internal discussion. Shri Somshankar Das, then Collector, Sindhudurg District and the Programme Authority, was then met for discussions. We also met the staff of the Centre for Development Studies and Activities, Pune who had prepared the original project design in their capacity as Consultants to UNICEF, and attended the training course for project officers conducted at CDSA.

A field visit was arranged in consultation with Mr. V. S. Dhole, the Programme Coordinator in late November. Detailed discussions were held with Shri Dhole during the course of visits to several Panchakroshis, and meetings with some Voluntary Agencies. Project-related Meetings were attended to learn the types of information flow required. Discussions with the Project Officers, Balsevikas and some residents of the villages also provided insights into the field situation. A Panchakroshi meeting at which the Panchkroshi Mandal was inaugurated provided an opportunity to gauge the opportunities for people's participation.

Not the least part of the work has been an extensive review of the literature on "Monitoring", especially that relating to Social Indicators relevant for such programmes, and to the few available documents on the participation of the people in process design and monitoring system design.

A first draft of the Monitoring System design was presented to UNICEF early in January, and discussed page-by-page during a meeting with Mr P. Nigel Fisher, Planning and Evaluation Officer in Bombay. The system design and the Report were later finalised after taking into consideration the suggestions received. We are particularly grateful to Mr. Fisher for giving us access to some of the reports on participative process design.

This Report has been divided up into 9 Sections. Sections 2 and 3 deal with general concepts in monitoring information systems design and their relevance to IADP Ratnagiri respectively. Sections 4 to 8 describe the monitoring processes at different levels in the program hierarchy. **Section 9 deals specifically with the ideas on self-monitoring by the people in the programme area.** The appendices contain all the formats to be used by different participants in the monitoring system and a small note on "Cost-effectiveness"!

A bibliography on relevant literature is provided at the end.