

## List of Acronyms

ASE	Agri-Service Ethiopia
AIDS	Anti-Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CBI	Community-Based Institution
CBO/I	Community-Based Organization/Institution
COTEE	Community Training, Extension and Education
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CC	Cooperative Commission
DFs	Development Facilitators
DPPC	Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission
EPRDF	Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front
FFS	Farmers Field School
GO	Government
KDA	Kore Development Association
MoJ	Ministry Of Justice
NRM	Natural Resources Management
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
IRD/P	Integrated Rural Development/Program
PID	Participatory Innovation Development
PME	Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
PO	Program Office
PRSDS/P	Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development Strategy/Program
PTD	Participatory Technology Development
SWOT	Strength, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats
VLDP	Village-Level Development Promoter
VLHP	Village-Level Health Promoter
WB	World Bank

## **PART ONE:**

# **THE STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY-BASED INSTITUTIONS (CBIs)**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Agri-Service Ethiopia (ASE) has adopted a broad-based development strategy, with a view to making sure that its development efforts bear the desired fruit: sustainable development. A broad-based development strategy is a strategy that helps firmly anchor development efforts so that they will result in continuous interventions. It is widely believed that this strategy will ensure the sustainability of the development activities that ASE is currently undertaking with support from outsiders and thereby make a significant contribution to the empowerment of communities. A community is said to have been truly empowered only if and when it has a self-reliant, vibrant and pro-poor community institution that takes the lead in all pertinent and result-oriented development initiatives at the grassroots level.

ASE has no doubt whatsoever that its food-security and poverty eradication interventions will go beyond solving the problems that its targeted communities are plagued by at the moment—provided that the communities themselves actively participate in the decision-making process at all the different stages of these interventions. So long as the communities rise to the challenge of actively participating in everything that pertains to these interventions as equal partners to ASE, nothing can prevent the interventions from bearing the fruit they are meant to bear. That, at any rate, is what ASE believes. ASE's ***strategic shift from service delivery to***

**community empowerment**, too, compels it to do everything in its power to make sure that that happens.

To ASE, empowering a community involves enhancing the capacities of farmer-centered civil society organizations (CSOs), if they have already been established; but, if they have not, initiating and facilitating their establishment by impressing upon community members the need for establishing such CSOs. As such CSOs normally play a pivotal role in fighting poverty, putting in check environmental degradations, combating gender inequalities as well as violations of other rights, ASE will do all that it can to facilitate the establishment of such organizations and to strengthen them. ASE's objectives of facilitating the establishment of community-based institutions (CBIs) are, of course, the following:

- Widening its development-effort base and thereby providing more space for the participation of various segments of the community, especially the poor, women and marginalized groups;
- Enabling development initiatives owned by community members to thrive, even after ASE has left the area for good;
- Ensuring the sustainability of its interventions; and
- Using the CBIs as entry and exit points for its (ASE') rural development interventions in the area (the terms of ASE's formal existence in a particular area will be decided based on the institutional, technical and financial sustainability indicators of the CBIs).

This document had to, therefore, be developed so that it will serve as a guide to ASE's staffs at all levels as they go about implementing its community-capacity-enhancing strategies, with particular reference to the

initiation, establishment and functioning of the CBIs in all its program areas. The document will also serve as a reference material and as an organizational manifesto that will help keep ASE's development efforts on the right track. The strategy document is basically a guide. Extra care must, therefore, be taken to apply it flexibly, taking into account the reality on the ground that is particular to each program area.

This document has incorporated into it ASE's historical background, a brief summary of its core functions, the rationale behind the designing of this strategy, the theoretical discourse on which it is based, the institutional philosophies pertaining to capacity enhancement and community empowerment, the Government's policy and legal framework with regard to community organizations, the major objectives of the document and the detailed strategies and guidelines.

For a quick reference, the actual strategies and guidelines begin on page 40. It is, therefore, advisable to make a separate copy of the most practical aspect of the strategy document and get it distributed to the frontline development workers who will assist in the establishment of the CBIs and in making sure that they properly function. Most importantly, it is necessary to translate the copy into the local language that most of the community members understand.

## **1.2 An Overview of ASE**

Agri-Service Ethiopia (ASE) is an indigenous, non-governmental and not-for-profit organization engaged in rural development ever since its establishment in December of 1969.

ASE has been using community education as a launching pad for its development initiatives. Correspondence education was thus the benchmark of its development initiative. There was, in fact, a time that ASE had considered correspondence education to be determinant to development. In a bid to improve the problem-solving capacity of the rural poor through knowledge and skills enhancement, ASE had, therefore, begun enlightening the community through printed materials prepared for distance education. The fact that the illiteracy rate in its areas of intervention was very high, however, got in the way. ASE was, therefore, left with no choice other than switching to face-to-face education/training.

Both the correspondence and face-to-face training approaches were, nonetheless, efficacious instruments for achieving ASE's short- and long-term objectives.

While executing its community education program, Agri-Service Ethiopia came to realize that educating the community could not be an end in and of itself, for it could not do much more than raise the community members' awareness about certain issues. In other words, ASE realized that community education alone could not enable a community to assume its rightful role in the social, civic and economic life of the community. It, therefore, decided to integrate its educational efforts with its broader rural development goals.

Alongside community education, ASE, consequently, set out to adopt and implement the Integrated Rural Development Program (IRDP). Accordingly, it has been exerting its multifaceted efforts to that end ever since the mid-1980s. Implementing the IRDP, of course, involved demonstrating agricultural innovations and facilitating a link between the communities and

the input suppliers. It also called for a logical link between agricultural development and the development of the other important sectors—including education, health, rural water supply and credit facilities, with intent to bring about a holistic development at the local level.

ASE's area selection criteria for implementing Integrated Rural Development Programs, among others, included the **non-existence in the area of NGOs**, low-level government support to farmers and great agricultural potential. So most of the places where ASE was implementing IRDPs between 1987 and 2000 were not seriously food-insecure; nor were their natural resources badly degraded or depleted.

ASE has already implemented its five-year (2000-05) Strategic Plan. Accordingly, it had to revisit its area selection criteria and come up **with a new strategy**. **The new strategy** suggested that ASE needs to focus on the food-insecure woredas of the country, where the natural resources are degraded and thus greatly contribute to the exacerbation of the people's abject poverty and food insecurity. ASE's new area selection criteria, have, therefore, resulted in influencing not only its decisions as to the areas where it should work, but also its development approach. In other words, ASE had to make a shift from the Integrated Rural Development approach to the Integrated Food Security Program approach. The latter, of course, focuses on making sustainable food security possible, with due consideration of the social services as direct and indirect contributors to the success of the program.

ASE's shift to the Food Security Program Strategy since 2001 has compelled it to make its intervention areas marginalized woredas, in terms of access to basic services and food. The Integrated Food Security Program and the

Integrated Rural Development Program are, of course, two different approaches, though the intervention activities in both are the same. In fact, from ASE's point of view, there is a marked difference between these approaches. Food security is a concept that has come into the picture only recently, entailing more focus and emphasis on household food-security issues. As such, it is a departure from the erstwhile approach that focused on making food adequately available, fairly accessible and utilizable. All the activities in this program are consciously and systematically designed to achieve food security. Put differently, the overall goal of any Integrated Food Security Program is seeing each project's participant household get adequate and quality food all the time, so that it will lead an active and healthy life. Accordingly, the monitoring and evaluation indicators, the overall tools and methods employed in the program and the attitudes of ASE's staffs and of its Management are geared toward attaining this goal.

While implementing the Integrated Food Security Program, ASE has developed various program strategies that help accomplish its newly articulated institutional mission. Among others, ASE has developed strategies for Community Training and Education, Agricultural Extension, Natural Resources Management, Participatory Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, Gender and Development, Participatory Research and Community-Based Institutions (CBIs). Having put all these strategies to work, ASE has paid due attention to the CBI Development Strategy. Accordingly, it has extensively reviewed both the draft strategy document and the activities to be undertaken. Subsequent to that, ASE has developed the second and more elaborate version of the CBI Development Strategy. As this strategy document was developed at a time that ASE was winding up implementation of its Strategic Plan for the period 2000-05, nevertheless, it had to incorporate into it (the document) the vision and mission statements

articulated in its previous Strategic Plan document. That means, these statements will have to be revised once the new Strategic Plan has been drawn up.

Currently ASE is implementing three Integrated Food Security programs and one Integrated Rural Development program in the SNNPR, Oromia and Amhara national regional states, respectively. A new program has been launched recently in the Tehuledere Woreda of the Amhara Regional State, whereas there are more in the pipeline. ASE's intention in all this is to keep on increasing its interventions in the food-insecure and marginalized parts of the country.

**Editor's note:** There is a lack of concord between the number of the programs and that of the regional states mentioned above.

These, however, pose certain questions that ASE should find appropriate answers to. For instance, who should be the owner of these programs? And exactly what roles are ASE and the community expected to play toward their implementation?

As part and parcel of its efforts to answer these questions, ASE is now in the process of making a shift from service delivery to capacity enhancement toward community empowerment. This shift has in turn prompted a number of ASE's staffs to wonder how the organization can, within such a short period of time, get out of its decades-old tradition of service delivery? These staffs cite the fact that ASE is still working in places where such services are direly needed.

A consensus has, nevertheless, been reached on one thing: all basic social and economic services that the poor and marginalized truly need must be



provided. Another point that there has been no disagreement about is that these services will have to be provided in a sustainable manner. What logically follows that is the proposition that ownership of the services by the community should be guaranteed. The conditions that will enable the community to play the leading role in all this—in particular, the role it should play in articulating what the poor need and deserve—should be created. The best way to create such conditions, of course, is by mobilizing the community's own knowledge, materials, and manpower and by enlisting support from others. ASE's role in all this is facilitating participatory learning and action (training) and providing technical, financial and institution-building support to those who are spearheading community development initiatives. More specifically, ASE can help the community as follows:

- Improving its negotiation power; and
- Helping it access basic services and more by meaningfully influencing both state and non-state actors.

This approach will be instrumental to ASE not only to make sure that the proper services are being given, but also that the community-based institutions remain strong and relevant to the people. This is one of the main reasons why ASE is changing its approach from service delivery to community empowerment through capacity building.

ASE knows full well that the establishment and strengthening of CBIs means more workload for its field staffs, as they will have to accomplish them while running rural development programs and seeing to it that its interventions are properly implemented on the ground. All the same, these farmer/rural-centered CSOs will have to be established, for establishing and strengthening them is the only way forward so far as community

empowerment is concerned. These CBIs, once they are established and strengthened, can play a significant role in shaping the future of the community they represent by, among others, lobbying state and non-state actors in the interests of their respective communities.

### **1.2.1 ASE's Vision**

ASE aspires to see a rural Ethiopia where poverty is significantly reduced and the environment is made favorable for the fruition of present as well as future endeavors aimed at ensuring food security in a sustainable manner.

### **1.2.2 ASE's Mission**

ASE's mission is to work with the poor communities in rural Ethiopia toward attaining food security, protecting and rehabilitating the environment and providing adequate social services—enhancing the capacities of communities through training being its crosscutting function.

### **Note:**

ASE is on the verge of finalizing implementation of the first Strategic Plan, which was developed for the period 2001-06, and is now drawing up its Strategic Plan for the period 2007-11. ASE's vision and mission statements may or may not, therefore, be the same as they appear in the former Strategic Plan document. It would thus be advisable on the part of the reader to refer to ASE's new Strategic Plan document as well.

## **1.3 ASE's Core Functions**

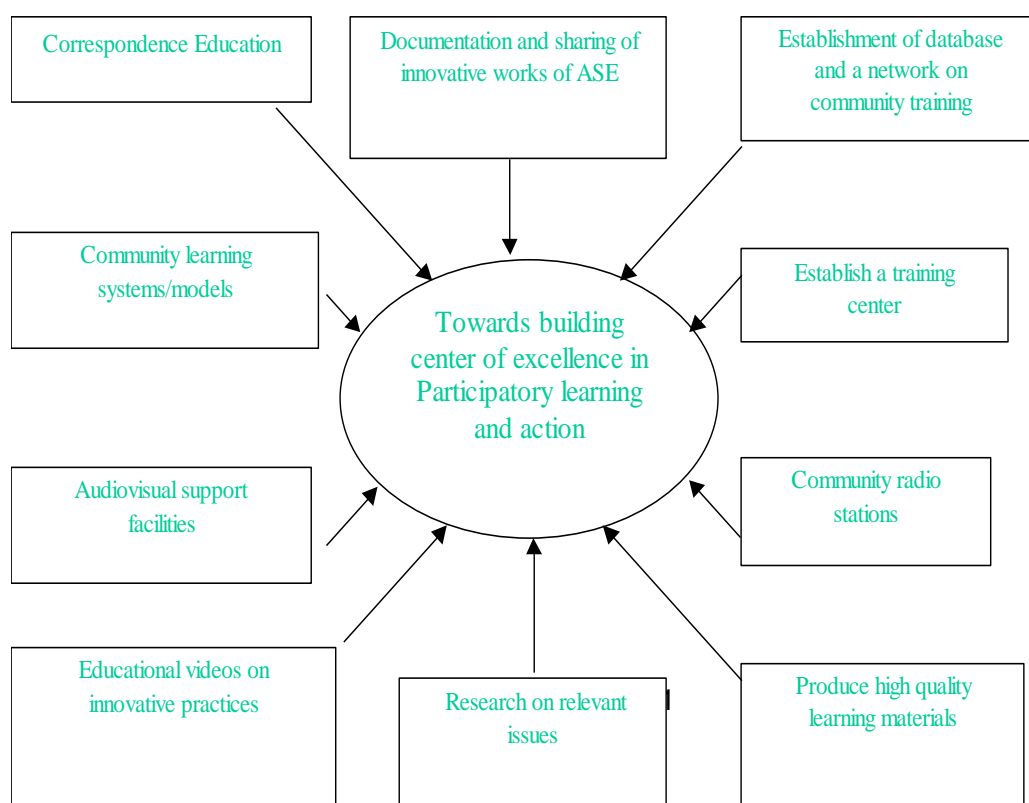
ASE is engaged in activities that are expected to encourage the active participation of the rural people and result in mitigating rural misery. Major among these activities are the following:

- Community training, extension and education (in agriculture, natural resources management and social issues);
- Participatory research;
- Facilitating the establishment of community-based institutions and strengthening them; and
- Community training, extension and education.

In a nutshell, the principal functions in this program are introduction, generation, documentation, sharing and utilization of knowledge about agriculture, natural resources management and pertinent social issues. Most of these activities are undertaken by the regional program offices, with guidance and support from the COTEE Department. ASE undertakes all its training functions based solely on the principle of ***knowledge sharing and participatory learning—as opposed to knowledge transfer***. That, needless to say, means that it believes that farmers are more knowledgeable about certain things than its own experts are. Of course, there are also problem situations about which farmers are partially or totally ignorant and seek the support of experts or outsiders. Furthermore, ASE has found out from experience that, at times, both the farmers and the experts are either equally knowledgeable or ignorant about certain issues. These scenarios suggest that upholding the principle of participatory/collective/mutual learning is the best way to go about training—rather than the conventional training approach, which is premised on transferring knowledge from one end to the other.

This innovative approach, which ASE has of late opted for and wishes to become a center of excellence in, does not consider training as having starting and ending points, but as being a continuous process—that is, a social learning firmly anchored in a learning-action-learning process. Social learning is all about the process of linking, expanding and improving data, information, knowledge and wisdom. As such, it has no end in sight. On the contrary, it is a continuous process that is aimed at bringing about a qualitative change in the lives of the participants. The development and extensive use of a framework on participatory learning and action, which often takes place in schools without walls (like farmers field school), is one of the areas where ASE is determined to make purposeful and consistent efforts, believing that this is one of the strategic directions which drives ASE toward achieving its strategic goal. It is not, nevertheless, the only path that leads to becoming a center of excellence in community learning, albeit the major one. ASE is also striving to introduce more innovative actions that help the realization of its strategic goal. The most important strategic directions are explained in the following schematic diagram.

**Diagram 1: The strategic direction of ASE toward building a center of**



## excellence in participatory learning and action

**Editor's note:** How am I going to make the corrections that need to be made inside the diagram?

### 1.3.2 Participatory Research and Extension

Participatory research is part and parcel of the collective learning exercise mentioned above. It shares the same principles of knowledge management, its basic assumption being farmers (mainly) and other stakeholders participate in the agricultural or social research activities consciously and on an equal footing with one another. Farmers' participatory research is not, of course, aimed at making any contribution to academic excellence, as it is only an action research. Its sole purpose, in fact, is bearing valid results that will be useful to the end users. There are three types of participatory agricultural research known to ASE: Participatory Adoptive Research, Participatory Innovation Development, and Participatory Technology Development.

#### 1.3.2.1 Participatory Adoptive Research (*technology-driven research*):

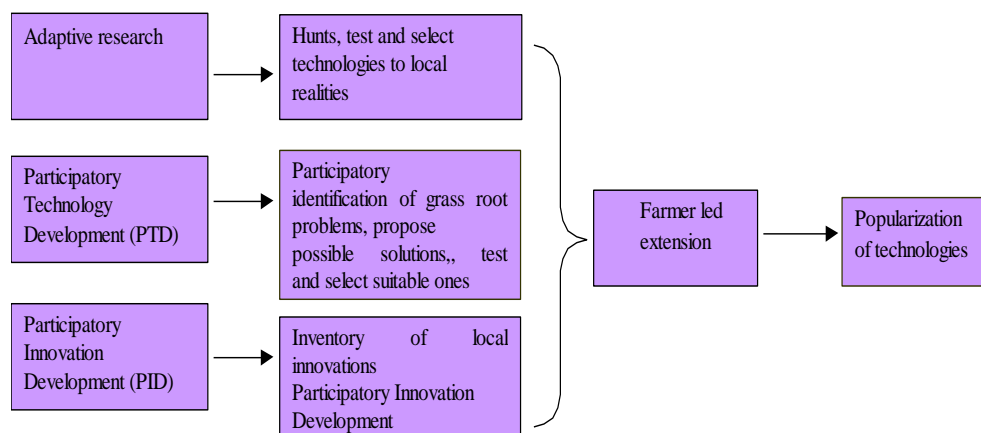
It is difficult to draw a line between ASE's research-related activities and its extension/development activities. Farmers are encouraged to acquaint themselves with pertinent technologies that come to them from any part of the world, but they will not be told to choose this or that. They are also expected to conduct a participatory adoptive research so as to make any technology fit their own reality on the ground, or reject it as being inappropriate to their particular situation. Though the entry points for this type of research are new technologies that happen to come to the farming system, farmers and the backstoppers are expected to spell out the problems that need to be addressed in the course of the adaptive research.

**1.3.2.2 Participatory Innovation Development** (*farmer-innovation-driven research*): Farmers are highly encouraged to identify, develop and use local innovations, which have never come to the attention of most of their fellow farmers, researchers and extension workers. Farmer innovators are not like the model farmers who are purposely trained by extension workers on how to properly use technologies coming from the outside world (outside the farming system). They are farmers who come up with new ways of doing farming, using their own wisdom or improving on their indigenous knowledge, or based on the findings of the informal experiments they have conducted, with support from formal research workers. Such innovators are not easily traceable, mainly because they seldom tout their findings or improvements. In fact, they tend to view any new finding or improvement as something that needs to be put to use right away, toward increasing their agricultural productivity. More effort must, therefore, be made to identify local innovations, as well as to determine which innovations are worth considering. The outcome of any work that innovative farmers undertake always has added value, and that is one of the important parameters that qualify their work to be innovative. If and when an innovative work cannot be scaled up, nonetheless, it will be subject to participatory innovation development exercises, in which extension workers and researchers will be involved. The fact that the entry point for the research is “local innovation” makes this approach different from those commonly known farmers’ participatory research approaches.

Whenever an innovative work is found to be good enough to be replicated elsewhere and scaled up, it can be shared with other farmers using the farmer-to-farmer extension approach. This, nevertheless, is not done with intent to foist farmers’ innovations onto others, as was the case with

“modern technologies” in the past. Instead, it is done mainly to help farmers learn and appreciate both the process and the product of the innovation, in the hope that it will inspire them to be more innovative. Once this innovativeness is developed in them, the farmers will no doubt be able to actively get involved in participatory innovation and development. That, then, will help them—especially smallholder farmers—develop the self-confidence needed to find solutions to the location- and situation-specific problems they often face. What makes this approach crucially important is that such problems can seldom be addressed by the ToT approach of the formal research and extension system.

Diagram 2: Conceptual model for types of participatory research



**1.3.2.3 Participatory Technology Development** (*problem-driven research*): This is a type of participatory research that is normally farmer-led, but sometimes expert-led as well. And ASE is well acquainted with it. In this type of research, farmers, extension workers and researchers do whatever they can on their own to develop technology that will address a **known problem situation**, which farmers, or experts, or both were able to identify. The output of the research is then publicized through farmer-to-farmer extension work. Participatory Technology Development, which is actually the collective name of all types of farmers’ participatory researches, differs from Participatory Innovation Development, in that its entry point for the research is not necessarily “farmers’ innovation” but an identified problem situation.

### 1.3.3 Supporting the Formation and Strengthening of CBIs

This is the central theme of the strategy paper. As such, it is discussed in detail in the subsequent sections. As a strategy of ASE, supporting the formation and functioning of farmer/rural-people-centered CSOs has as its major objective increasing the negotiation power of the community (in which



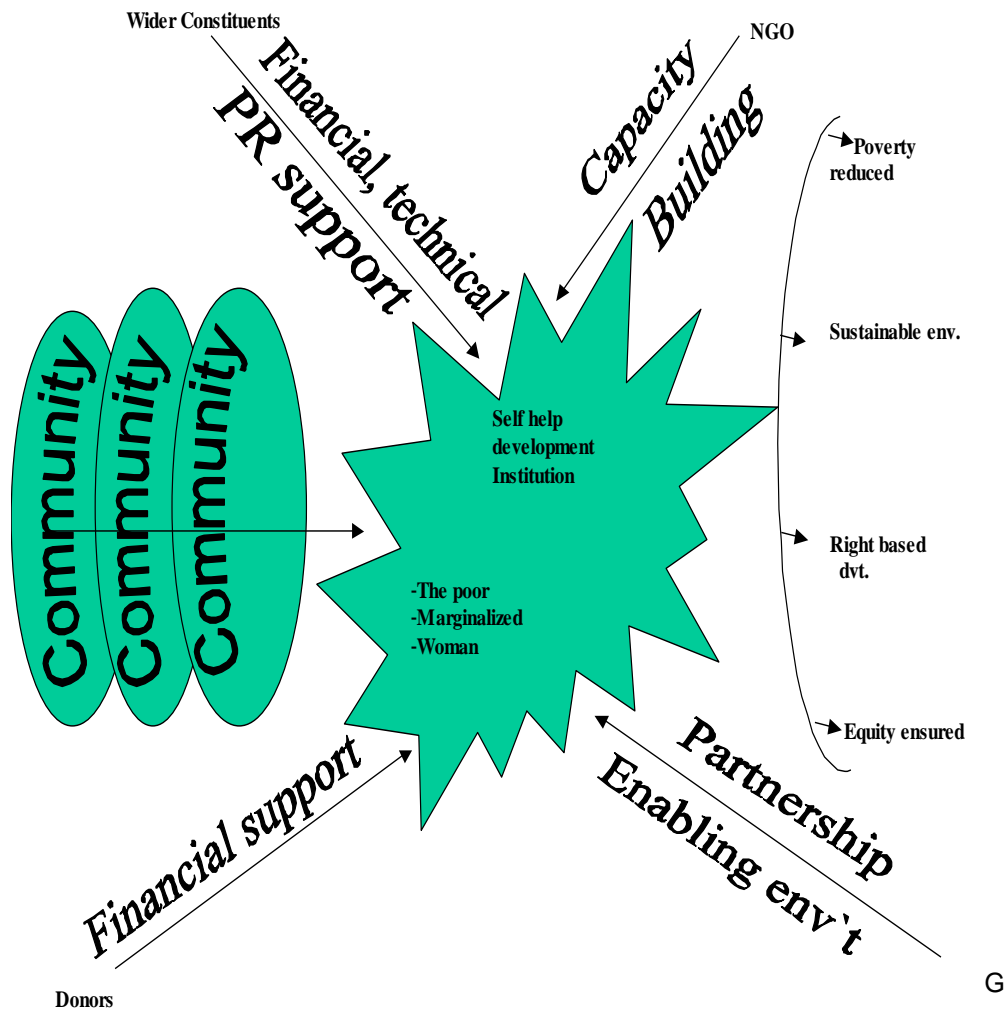
the poor farmers, women and other marginalized groups have significant space) toward accessing basic social services, economic opportunities and more. The constituents of a CBI are basically farmers. Others who are willing to support its causes, without, in any way, adversely affecting the interests of the rural poor, may, nonetheless, join it. ASE's working definition of a CBI is "A rural-people-centered, non-partisan, not-for-profit, voluntary, free and multipurpose, self-help community development association/institution."

ASE raises awareness about the importance of "rural institutions for development" in the early days of the training sessions, convinced that it is one of the social issues that the community has to learn about. If the community members are interested in establishing a CBI, ASE gives them all the support it can to that end. ASE will do so, for it expects the CBI to eventually give it (ASE) in turn all the support it will need to properly implement its development initiatives as its *bona fide* counterpart. Initially, ASE will not have much choice other than playing a significant role in the decision-making process with regard to all project activities. Gradually, however, the CBI will be made to claim more space in the decision-making process. ASE, for its part, will proportionately increase its role as a capacity enhancer.

Government institutions and donors are also expected to provide the CBIs with the support they need—by creating for them an enabling environment and access to funds.

The CBI will then go on to coordinate and oversee all activities related to the community learning and action as well as the participatory research work discussed herein above. The following schematic presentation shows a model of the CBI as perceived by ASE.

**Diagram 3: Model of the Community-Based Institution**



## **PART TWO: OUR PERSPECTIVES**

### **2.1 Theoretical Grounds**

Empowering the community to institutionally own and ensure the sustainability of ASE's development undertakings is tantamount to constructing a building on concrete ground. Community empowerment is the culmination point of the sustainability transition in the development arena. An empowered community will, therefore, want to secure for itself more than economic security. For instance, it is bound to demand that its perceived rights, too, be fully respected. The best way to achieve this, however, is by establishing vibrant community-based institutions that will serve their communities as local development actors. Building community-based institutions is a broad-based development approach that invariably ensures the effectiveness and sustainability of interventions. And it is premised on two very important concepts: (1) Exploring the community's social capital—that is, the traditions, culture, values and socially institutionalized forums—and making the most of it toward attaining development goals. Raceli (1999) defines "social capital" as the norms, reciprocal ties, and trust built among members of a community that stem from and result in mutual benefits and cooperation. (2) Identifying the core groups that can spearhead the implementation of development projects and ensure the sustainability of all development activities.

The community-based development approach is an approach that past development experiences have brought to the scene as a result of a

paradigm shift. It is broadening the base of development endeavors, thereby building them on a robust organizational base that holds the institutional leadership responsible for undertaking and ensuring the sustenance of development activities in an area. As forwarded by Edgar Owens and Robert Shaw (1972: 13-14), the solution to the problems that have been “wholly overlooked” for centuries begins with organization. Hence, the first step in development is to organize the people into relatively autonomous local institutions and to link these with the highest level of the economy and the society.

Local institutions are not necessarily established to begin work where the NGO or their government partners left off. In other words, whatever support the NGO and the concerned government body might have given them to get established, local institutions are not at all obligated to operate in accordance with their wishes, once they have withdrawn from the area. ***Basically, community-based institutions are established with a view to empowering the community and thereby help it become master of its own destiny, by mobilizing and using its own resources (knowledge, material, money, social capital, etc.) as well as by demanding—on behalf of the poor and the marginalized groups whose voices are seldom or never heard—that the government fully respect its (the community’s) inalienable human, social and economic rights.***

The second reason for establishing local institutions is to create a situation where the continuity of the development initiatives of other partners in the area can be ensured. When the time comes for government development actors and NGOs to move on to other areas, or when they withdraw from an area—which is invariably true in the case of an NGO—the local institution

might want to keep up the good work begun by them. However desirable that might be, the community will, nevertheless, find it difficult to ensure the sustainability of the development activities introduced either by an NGO or a government body, unless there already is a local institution that will spearhead the undertaking of these activities.

A community-based institution normally helps ensure the sustainability of development activities by developing in the community a sense of ownership with regard to them (the activities). It is an approach that provides equal opportunity to the members of the community without discriminating against any one of them based on gender, race, or anything else. Like Edgar Owens and Robert Shaw (1972: 2-3), ASE believes that this approach combines economic growth with social justice, as well as greater participation by the individual in all activities aimed at uplifting his/her community. At the heart of this approach is the concept of a broad-based development, or the establishment of a set of institutions that will give the underprivileged person an opportunity to actively participate in the decision most important to his/her life and link him/her to the mainstream of modern society (Edgar and Shaw).

Individuals and communities will be empowered so that they will be able to control their resources and decide over the distribution thereof. According to Stewart and Taylor (1995), empowerment ranges from a tokenistic and almost therapeutic manipulation at the bottom rungs of Arnstein's famous ladder (Arnstein 1990) to a more positive empowerment of individuals and communities that results in an ability to control their community's resources and make decisions pertaining to their lives. Empowerment involves resisting the isolation of individuals and reducing their dependency as service users.

But it also means reducing the marginalization of communities by enhancing their role in a radically restructured area of governance.

The institutionalization of community development will bind the communities together and give them extra thrust to regenerate the economic and social milieu and, by and large, broaden their vision so as to protect and manage the environment. In other words, they will begin to see beyond their erstwhile shortsighted momentary tapping of advantaged. As stated by Diane Warburton (1998:53), [a central characteristic of current community development is its institutionalization in formal programs of physical renewal of neighborhoods and estate, of economic and social](#) regeneration, and of environmental protection and management. ASE's objectives in this regard are the following:

**Editor's note:** The lines above are not clear to me.

- ✓ Significantly upgrading the quality of the economic and social lives of the majority of the people;
- ✓ Building a comprehensive institutional structure through which the people will be able to democratically control a significant portion of the total economy, especially the part that pertains to their basic necessities of life; and
- ✓ Instilling in both the individual and the community a sense of responsibility and thereby helping them lead a full life.

## **2.2 The Institutional Philosophy and Rationale for Supporting CBIs**

ASE's CBI Development Strategy is an outcome of its decades-old development experience. And it is aimed at instilling in the members of the community a sense of ownership of ASE's development activities and at ensuring their (the development activities') continuation. ASE's rationale and philosophy in this regard are the following:

### **2.3 The Establishment of CBIs: Not a Borrowed Strategy**

In accordance with its objectives, as stated in its Strategic Plan for the period 2001-06, ASE adopted the broad-based development approach to ensure the sustainability of its development activities. Supporting CBIs does not, therefore, compel ASE to adopt an entirely new strategy, for it has all along been working with community groups (action groups) who were organized, though they were not given formal recognition by the pertinent government bodies. In the program areas where ASE has stayed for more than a decade, it had to use as its entry points to its development programs initially "training groups" and later on "action groups." As a matter of fact, ever since it adopted the Action-Oriented Training Program, ASE has adopted this *modus operandi* as its working culture and principal development strategy.

One of the lessons that ASE drew from its phasing-out experience, which formally took place in 1999, was, however, that the action groups with which ASE has worked for quite a long period of time could not manage to take over and properly run the development initiatives—after the phasing-out of ASE from the area.

Being the sole responsible body for project management throughout the former program phases, ASE had never provided the action groups with the opportunity to learn how to handle “development projects on their own, with minimal support from outsiders.” The action groups, for their part, had formed apex organizations at the kebele level during the last days of ASE in the former program areas. And they were expected to play a very important role in terms of keeping the development initiatives rolling, after the complete phasing-out of ASE. They were, nevertheless, on the verge of collapse. ASE, therefore, saw it fit to come to their rescue by changing its strategy and transforming them (the action groups) into cooperatives.

The experience prompted ASE to consider the establishment of a “community-based institution” as its partner in development. It also dawned on ASE that the propitious time to do that was not its phasing-out period, but soon after commencement of its program intervention. Thus established, the community-based institution will be given a role to play in all the development activities that ASE undertakes in the program area—including the decision-making process.

Based entirely on its experience, ASE, therefore, saw the need for establishing community-based institutions. In other words, to ASE, establishing CBIs is not a donor-induced strategy or a strategy adopted from elsewhere. As learning is a continuous process, ASE will have to, nonetheless, continue to learn more about this activity, so that the CBIs whose establishment it will facilitate will properly play the role envisioned for them and thereby help empower their respective communities.



## **2.4 The Establishment of CBIs: as a Measure to Forestall any Post-Phasing-Out Crises**

ASE has also drawn valuable lessons from the experiences of other NGOs in Ethiopia. One of these is that once an NGO leaves its program area for good, all that it had been building is bound to crumble down, as it were, unless the NGO makes an arrangement in time to make sure that that would not happen. For instance, a few NGOs had handed over a few of their development activities to “government partners,” and the remaining to “community groups” just before they phased out, apparently believing that doing that was a feasible strategy. To the chagrin of these NGOs, however, it turned out that, for one reason or another, their government partners were not as enthusiastic as they were expected to be about ensuring the continuity of the proper implementation of their projects. It also gradually transpired to them that the community groups lacked the courage and capacity to demand that the government continue to give the community the support it needed, so that it (the community) would continue to benefit by the infrastructure that its NGO partner had built for it. Also, the fact that the community group to whom the responsibility was handed over was not a legal entity compounded the problem, by making it virtually impossible for it to do what the NGO had hoped it would do. A close look at the whole thing discloses that at the heart of the problem was the fact that the concerned NGO never bothered to make sure that the community group actively participated in its development activities much earlier.

Having drawn this valuable lesson from the experiences of other NGOs, ASE is, therefore, determined to make sure that a community organization is established as soon as possible and that it is made ready for the job awaiting

it. So far as ASE is concerned, the only way that a community-based organization can be made ready to rise to the challenge of ensuring the continuity of its development activities is by making it actively participate in the designing, implementation, monitoring, etc. of these activities before it is too late.

## **2.5 The Community as Master of its Own Destiny**

The purpose of establishing community-based institutions is not only to make sure that the community will continue to benefit by the infrastructure, the facilities and systems that its NGO partners have put in place. ASE strongly believes that there should also be a change of attitude toward farmers. So far as ASE is concerned, considering community groups/institutions as nothing more than passive partners in development whose role should be limited to channeling to the people the development support of outsiders is an antediluvian attitude. As such, it is totally unproductive. ASE believes that community groups/institutions should be viewed as important development partners and be fully empowered to properly play this role. Properly playing this role, of course, involves actively participating in the decision-making process. One way that this "idea" can be made a "reality on the ground" is by facilitating the conditions necessary for the members of a community to get organized and establish a community-based institution that can enter into negotiations with the NGO and the local government in all development-related matters on their behalf.

ASE has no use whatsoever for the outdated *modus operandi* that treated community groups as subordinates to their NGO partners and as having nothing to contribute to their (the NGOs') development initiatives. Nor does it want to be seen by community groups as being so powerful as to be able

to make or break things. Why? Because it strongly believes that in a situation where community groups/institutions are passive participants in the development initiatives that concern them, it is virtually impossible to develop their self-confidence. Yet developing self-confidence in a community group/institution is crucially important, for there is just no way that the community group/institution can be master of its own destiny without it. To ASE, establishing a community organization and getting it duly registered by the concerned government body in and of itself is not enough. Instead, it would like to see a big change of attitude among the leaders of the community organization, so much so that they become active participants in all its (ASE's) development activities on an equal footing with its staffs. So far as ASE is concerned, the existence of such a community organization is a *sine qua non* to ensuring the sustainability of its interventions.

## **2.6 Paternalism Adversely Affects Innovativeness and Self-Confidence**

The traditional project-implementation experiences of many countries bear testimony to the fact that farmers used to be seen as nothing more than legitimate receivers of support from outsiders. According to that view, the outsiders (NGOs, government agencies, individual experts, etc.) knew what could help the poor farmers get out of poverty, that they had to help these poor farmers, and the farmers, for their part, had to strictly follow the instructions given to them. To ASE, that was a paternalistic view. As such, it was not at all productive. On the contrary, it significantly contributed to the killing of whatever innovativeness the farmers had.

Innovativeness is all about new ways of thinking and doing things. And it always entails values that help bring about positive changes. ASE has found out from its decades-old experience that farmers are innovative. They must,

nonetheless, be provided with the opportunity to show their innovativeness. But in a situation where outsiders come to them as being all-powerful and know-it-all, it is very unlikely that they will be able to come up with new ideas or practices. How could they, as what is expected of them is only carefully listening to the instructions that the outsiders have come to give them?

The community-led development approach, on the other hand, provides the people with an opportunity to use their own knowledge and creativity to tackle their development challenges. That in turn creates for them an enabling environment for them to come up with lasting solutions to **some** of their problems—with little or no outside support. That, however, does not mean that poor farmers do not have any use whatsoever for outsiders' knowledge and support. What is intended here is to underscore the need for striking a balance between outsiders' help and tapping indigenous knowledge. ASE strongly believes that it is possible to help poor farmers without killing their self-initiative, by making sure that the help given to them is complementary. To that end, it is imperative that they get organized.

## **2.7 The Rights-Based Development Approach**

The rights-based development approach is all about helping people demand that their rights be fully respected. These rights, of course, include the right to development (basic social services), the right to sustainable livelihood, the right to be heard, etc. Establishing community-based institutions and developing their self-confidence is no doubt one way of ensuring that that happens. All elected governments are obligated to ensure the respect of the rights of the people. The people, for their part, are obligated to pay taxes.

But they also have the right to air to their elected government any grievances that they may have. Needless to say, the best way to make their voices heard is by getting organized into lobby groups.

By the same token, NGOs are making money available for development work by selling project ideas in the name of communities. That, therefore, makes NGOs obligated to serve the community—even as the government is. What logically follows that is that the communities have the right to actively participate in all decisions on how the money that comes to them through the NGOs is spent. ASE has found out from its experience that by and large communities that are benefiting by the interventions of NGOs view the NGOs as institutions established by munificent and kind-hearted people who are willing and ready to share what they have with the poor. That, more or less, is true about those people who give their money to charitable organizations and donors, with instruction that their money go into helping poor communities in the developing countries. ASE, nevertheless, believes that those who are out implementing development projects do not deserve to be viewed that way, for they are only doing the work that they are being paid salaries for. The rights-based development approach helps demystify such realities; it also helps raise the awareness of the communities about “money” and “power,” and about their obligations to the Government.

## **2.8 Adding Value onto Traditional Institutions**

There are a number of community-based traditional associations in developing countries like Ethiopia that have specific social and economic objectives. These associations have been able to survive for decades, or for centuries, having been able to withstand the various policy and regime changes that took place in these countries. ASE believes that these

associations are deep-rooted in the customs of the land where they exist. As such, they are reflections of the people's customs, values, norms, and beliefs. Any attempt at disbanding them is, therefore, bound to have serious repercussions. So they ought to be left alone—until such time as the internal dynamics of the community itself compels them to be either transformed or irrelevant. That, of course, happens as a direct result of a change in the country's economic system or in its curriculum—to mention but two causes.

ASE has conducted a thorough study on traditional associations before it adopted the establishment of CBIs as its development strategy. One of the traditional associations that ASE did a study on was *idir*. *Idirs* are traditional associations established by communities with the objective of meeting their (the communities') social and psychological needs. And there are *idirs* in all the woredas where ASE is implementing its development programs. There was a time that ASE contemplated the idea of using these *idirs* as its development partners. It, nonetheless, eventually arrived at the conclusion that it'd better leave them alone for the following reasons:

- ASE was afraid that diverting their energies into its development activities could result in distorting their original objectives and thereby interfering with their ages-old way of doing things. That, ASE thought, would be undesirable, for it means that everything would fall apart.
- The election process of *idirs* is far from being democratic, in that elections are not fair, free and periodic. Nor do they provide the poor, women and marginalized groups of a community with an opportunity to assume leadership positions.

- None of the *idirs* that ASE conducted a study on has a woman at its helm, although there are *idirs* established exclusively for and by women where they could assume that post. As these *idirs* were established to fill a gap and are subordinate to the main *idirs*, however, they did not count, so far as ASE was concerned.
- NGOs, as a rule, were established to support the poor, women and marginalized groups. None of these segments of society is, nevertheless, accorded significance in these *idirs*.

The findings of its study on traditional associations, therefore, led ASE to opt for the establishment of community-based institutions, to which members of the *idirs* can be either leaders or just members.

## **PART THREE:**

### **THE LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ASSOCIATIONS**

#### **3.1 The Legal Framework**

The legal basis for the establishment and operations of NGOs and public associations in Ethiopia is enshrined in Articles 404-482 of the Ethiopian Civil Code promulgated in 1960. Associations' Registration Regulation Legal Notice No. 321 of 1966 provides further elaboration on some of the pertinent provisions in the Civil Code. The formation of NGOs and their operations have been treated on the basis of these legal instruments. Save for some insignificant modifications, there is to date no full-fledged legislation to deal with NGOs (Kassahun, 2002).

The Ethiopian Civil Code and the Associations' Registration Regulation state that registration of associations is necessary in order to make sure that their objectives and activities are lawful and moral (Art. 462 of the Civil Code and Art. 8[b] of the Associations' Registration Regulation), verify that the statements and information contained in their applications for registration and in their bylaws are accurate and reliable (Art. 7[1] of the Regulation), and verify compliance with mandatory legal provisions (Art. 475 of the Civil Code and Art. 7[2] of the Regulation). These provisions, in general, show that people have the right to form any kind of association, including CBOs and CBIs, and/or to get those already formed duly registered. Although there is no provision that explicitly recognizes CBOs and CBIs as distinct social entities, Article 404 of the 1960 Civil Code, which provides that a minimum of two persons can form an association with a view to obtaining a result other than the securing, or sharing, of profits, is applicable to the registration of CBOs and CBIs, as long as they pursue lawful purposes. Furthermore, Article 31 of the 1994 Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) provides that any person has the right to freedom of association for any cause or purpose, as long as the activities of the association do not in any way violate the rule of law and the Constitution.

It is, however, well documented that the legal and regulatory framework for the establishment and operations of CSOs—including CBIs—falls far short of being favorable and adequate. The present Ethiopian Government, in its Capacity-Building Program document, has acknowledged that government institutions are major “stumbling blocks” to the unleashing of CSOs' energy into achieving the country's development objectives. The current institutional environment for CSOs can be described as being “disabling” in the sense that the laws, directives and institutional framework governing the



regulation of CSOs' activities impose on them heavy bureaucratic demands, and constrain their ability to mobilize and control the resources they require to undertake development activities (MoCB, 2004).

In view of that, a draft NGO law is now in the Parliament. The first draft appeared a few years ago (in 2002?). Several have been published since then. Once enacted, the new NGO legislation is expected to improve the current operating conditions for CSOs. For one thing, it has introduced new provisions, such as the right of NGOs to undertake income-generating activities. For another, it will shorten the time it now takes NGOs to get registered, licensed, and to renew their licenses, etc.

The draft document has incorporated into it several provisions proposed at different times by the NGO community. But a number of NGOs are still forwarding their comments and recommendations to the drafting committee formed by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). In an observation report that a few NGOs submitted to the drafting committee in the year 2004, for instance, they have tried to bring to the attention of the committee an earlier suggestion that had been left unattended by the latest draft. The suggestion had to do with the name "associations," instead of "NGOs." Elaborating on the fact that the term "association" is too generic, they had suggested that it be replaced with the term "NGOs." In addition to forwarding their comments and suggestions, the NGOs have drafted an alternative piece of NGO legislation.

The legal and regulatory framework for the establishment and operation of cooperatives<sup>1</sup> is, in general, adequate and supportive. Farmers'

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<sup>1</sup> Generally, cooperatives are economic entities owned by their members. In the case of productive cooperatives, which may be agricultural or industrial, the members are the producers or workers. There are also a variety of other types of cooperative organizations—for instance, cooperative marketing

organizations in rural Ethiopia include the various forms of community-based associations and cooperatives. The types of institutions that currently exist in rural Ethiopia include mutual-help burial associations, rotating savings and credit groups, and work parties. Informal extension groups (such as FFS, IPM, NRM, etc groups), water-user and flourmill associations, too, exist in most farming communities. In a few areas, cereal banks have been set up with support from NGOs. Cooperative societies are, nonetheless, the officially recognized and registered organizations by the concerned government offices.

For a long time now, government policies have provided farmers' organizations with blueprint structures in the form of cooperatives. The present Ethiopian Government, in particular, has given due attention to agricultural marketing and to the setting up of appropriate structures, such as cooperatives' promotion organs at the various levels (federal, regional, and woreda levels), as expressed in its various policy papers, including the Poverty Reduction and on Sustainable Development Strategy. The creation and strengthening of efficient cooperatives have been recognized by the Government as the key strategies for improving agricultural marketing and rural services. The idea behind that is that efficient and effective farmer organizations can be the key to an efficient marketing system, for they can channel supply from their members, improve storage (and even processing), and increase the bargaining power of farmers vis-à-vis trade operators.

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organization and consumers' and savings and credit, housing cooperatives, etc. Cooperative societies are also organized at the primary, secondary (union), and tertiary (federation) levels. These cooperative organizations, when they exist within the framework of a dominant capitalist economy, may come to resemble more or less the private concerns with which they compete (Macmillan Dictionary of Anthropology, 1986).

### **3.2 The Institutional Framework**

In addition to those mentioned above, various Government policies and proclamations provide the institutional framework needed for promoting grassroots-level development and for empowering communities. These include the 1993/5 definitions of the powers and duties of the executive wing of the Federal Government and the promulgation of the proclamations of pertinent institutions like the MoJ, Cooperatives Commission (CC), and DPPC. The proclamations define the specific powers and duties of the various regulatory bodies.

Under the Proclamation defining the powers and duties of the federal Ministries (No. 4/1995), the Ministry of Justice registers CSOs that are either international or that operate in more than one regional state. The categories of organizations registered by the Ministry include NGOs, faith-based organizations, professional/occupational associations, and organizations established to do research and advocacy at the federal level. The MoJ has its own requirements and procedures for registering each category of organization (MoCB, 2004). The same Proclamation assigns the responsibility of registering national organizations operating in only one regional state to the regional Bureau of Justice.

The Associations' Office of the Ministry of Justice has recently issued a Directive, stating that renewal of registration needs to be done only once every three years. This Directive is not, however, being applied consistently in all the regional states. Instead, some organizations are registered at both the federal and regional levels, although they are not required to do so (Ibid).

The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs registers labor unions; the Ministry of Trade and Industry registers chambers of commerce; and the Cooperatives Commission registers cooperatives.

Registration by the Ministry of Justice automatically makes a CSO a legal entity, but it does not give it the license to operate. Though the DPPC is principally concerned with humanitarian operations, the Proclamation that established it (No. 10/1995) has designated it as the focal point for other types of NGOs. Accordingly, the DPPC/Bs enters into three-year operating agreements with organizations involved in service delivery and humanitarian relief—including NGOs. The existing procedures make no provision for DPPC/Bs to enter into operational agreements with CSOs engaged in advocacy. Such CSOs have, therefore, a somewhat ambiguous status (*ibid*).

The other responsibilities of the DPPC/Bs include coordinating and monitoring CSOs' activities. For service-delivering CSOs, this is done in collaboration with the pertinent sectoral Ministries and Bureaus. In a few regional states, the Bureaus of People's Organizations have also begun to play a role in this.

What ASE has observed is that the DPPC/Bs as well as the sectoral Ministries/Bureaus are not adequately staffed to properly handle CSO affairs. In fact, even the very few staffs that have been assigned to handle CSO affairs do not seem to have the educational background that would have enabled them to do their job more efficiently. This incompetence is more pronounced in the regional states. With a few notable exceptions, the coordination and monitoring of CSOs' activities, therefore, leave much to be

desired. In other words, the outcomes and impacts of CSOs' interventions are seldom assessed properly.

The situation is exacerbated by the fact that the CSOs are required to submit reports to a number of government bodies, all of which are supposed to be somehow coordinating and monitoring their (the CSOs') activities. That the CSOs are required to submit reports to all these government bodies, needless to say, takes up a lot of their valuable time. Yet the requirement seems to have no added value whatsoever—in terms of enhancing the CSOs' development performance, accountability or collaboration with the Government (ibid).

### **3.3 The Policy Environment**

The Rural Development Strategy and the Strategy for Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction of the Ethiopian Government state that they recognize the potential role that CSOs, including CBIs, can play in the national development effort and in the fight against poverty. Although there are obvious problems in the interpretation of some of their provisions and in the implementation thereof, especially at the lower levels, the Food Security, Health, Education, Water, and Road sectoral policies, too, stress the need for promoting community participation. Furthermore, the Government's Poverty Reduction and for Sustainable Development Strategy clearly states that the Ethiopian Government considers CSOs to be its partners in development and that it, therefore, expects them to play significant roles in terms of service delivery and in managing and monitoring the services that the Government delivers. The Strategy also recognizes NGOs as being important development partners to the Government and as being actively involved in the core poverty-oriented sectors (MoCB, 2004). More specifically, CSOs are

expected to play significant roles in managing public services and by actively participating as members of water users' groups, school management committees, health management boards, women's and pastoralists' associations and school anti-AIDS clubs. The Capacity Building Strategies and the decentralization process further the commitments expressed in the various policy papers. According to the SDPRP, decentralization implies not only administrative devolution but also the devolution of fiscal resources to the woreda level of government. The SDPRP identifies civil society's participation in deciding how these resources are allocated as a key element in their empowerment (Ibid). The decentralization policy and relevant aspects of the capacity building strategy/program are discussed herein below.

**Editor's note:** The sentences in blue are not quite clear to me.

Ever since 1991—the year in which the ruling party, the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), came into power—Ethiopia has adopted a federal system of government. As such, it has been decentralizing the political power. According to this system of government, regional state governments are responsible for the implementation of economic and social development policies and for maintaining public order, whereas the Federal Government is responsible for all other matters not delegated to, or shared with, the regional state governments.

The decentralization process has since been propelled further with the 2001 decision to move sectoral departments from the zonal to the woreda level in the four most populous regional states<sup>2</sup>, where over 78% of all the woredas

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<sup>2</sup> Amhara, Oromiya, SNNP, and Tigray.

in Ethiopia are found. As a matter of fact, this devolution has since been extended to the remaining regional states as well.

According to a study that the World Bank (WB) conducted on associational life (2004), although representative structures of government exist at the regional, woreda and kebele levels, it is widely recognized that stronger roles and more resources are needed at the woreda and kebele levels for decentralization to significantly contribute to participatory democracy. The document also states that the World Bank Woreda Studies (2002) have found out that decentralization was characterized by a “de-concentration” of the long-established hierarchical way of governing, rather than by devolving decision-making and accountability to the sub-regional level. The findings also suggested that the accountability of service providers to communities could be strengthened through the existing administrative and representative systems, and that the current model of service delivery is resource-intensive and rigid, and that communities need to be engaged in service delivery as [active partners](#).

**Editor’s note:** [Partners to whom?](#)

To address the problem of lack of capacity at the various levels and enhance CSOs’ participation in the democratization process, delivery of services, and decentralization, the MoCB has embarked on several public-sector capacity-enhancing programs, besides drafting a Civil-Society Capacity Building Program. The expressed objectives of this Program are to create an enabling institutional environment and to build the capacity that is necessary for an effective CSO participation in promoting development, poverty reduction,

and the strengthening of democracy<sup>3</sup>. The proposed strategy for achieving the Program's objectives is expressed in three sub-programs: creating an enabling institutional environment, forging a partnership between the Government and CSOs, and enhancing the capacities of CSOs.

The Program has various components and initiatives—including the following:

- Streamlining CSOs' registration, coordination and monitoring (the initiatives include amending and passing an NGO law, as well as amending legal and administrative regulations for CSOs);
- Increasing CSOs' access to resources; and
- Enhancing the Government's engagement with CSOs.

NGOs, in general, were appreciative of the Government's concern and saw the components of the Program as being relevant to addressing certain problems. They, in particular, lauded the Government's expressed commitment to creating for CSOs an enabling environment. They could not, nevertheless, accept the Program in its entirety, mainly because they found a government-designed and government-led program of partnership forging and capacity enhancement of CSOs to be unpalatable. In fact, in their preliminary observations report on the draft Program (2004), they stated the following: *"While we agree to the changes required both within the Government and CSOs, we strongly believe that the required change processes must be led and owned by the right and legitimate owners, if we are ever to see the desired changes. However, the overall strategy fails to make a distinction between the respective roles and responsibilities of the Government and CSOs and, as such, it essentially imposes a top-down*

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<sup>3</sup> According to the program document, CSOs include informal traditional institutions, NGOs, membership organizations, etc.



*government-led change under all the sub-programs. Once again, while we agree to the change needed both within the Government and CSOs, we do not subscribe to the view—indeed we strongly oppose it—that a change process in CSOs can be designed, directed and implemented by any government.”*

### **3.4 Government Officials’ Perceptions of CBIs**

During the field survey (see below), the Review Team attempted to find out what high-ranking government officials at the regional level thought about CBIs. To that end, they held one-on-one interviews with the officials in the Bureaus of Cooperatives, Justice, and People’s Organization in both the Oromia and Amhara Regional States. As shown herein below, the Review Team found out that these officials, by and large, view CBIs as having the potential to play a significant role in the development efforts of their respective communities. Still, their perceptions of CBIs differed from one another’s.

(a) According to the Bureau of Justice, CBIs engaged in development activities can be registered as NGOs if they can meet the requirements for NGOs’ registration. The requirements, according to the Bureau, include submitting to it copies of project documents, testimonials of the founding members, minutes of the meeting at which the leaders of the CBI were elected, and a support letter from the Woreda’ Social Affairs Office. That means, if properly assisted to develop their own projects and define their structures, strategies, etc, CBIs—such as the ones in whose establishment ASE had played a significant role—could meet these requirements and register as local NGOs. It is to be recalled that DAs have already been recognized and registered as NGOs, mainly because they have clear

development objectives and established structures. The problem in both cases is rather their lack of capacity in terms of skilled human resources, financial resources, etc.

(b) Cooperatives' promoters view CBIs as institutions with which cooperatives can work in close collaboration, especially in the marketing of farmers' produces. They, however, underline the need for clearly defining the roles of CBIs, stating that, unless that happened, they could eventually end up functioning like any other cooperative.

There is, however, a consensus among all concerned that cooperatives are the most appropriate form of community-based institutions and that they enjoy preferential treatment by governments. The policies of the current Ethiopian Government, too, seem to corroborate that view. ASE is, nonetheless, worried that the prevalence of such a view could prove to be inimical to the<sup>4</sup> development of other types of CBIs and the private sector, even though it cannot back up its fear with a cogent argument. ASE also believes that their public image, autonomy, and inherited problems (mainly associated with embezzlement) need to be taken into account before trying to build any partnership with cooperatives.

(c) The Bureaus of People's Organizations seem to believe that the regional state governments are responsible for making the environment conducive for the establishment of CBIs, and that CBIs could play a significant role in ensuring the sustainability of the development activities that are being undertaken at the moment, if given the support they will initially need. The Bureaus have added that there are two teams that are currently serving at the kebele and sub-kebele levels—mainly in development, security, and

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<sup>4</sup> In the cooperative societies policy (2003), it is stated: 'the government believes that cooperative societies are the main instruments for the implementation of (its) developmental objectives'.

arbitration. According to them, these teams—the *Mengistawi Budin* (a government team) and the *Yelimat Budin* (a development team)—could either be upgraded into CBIs, or be made to support and facilitate the activities of the CBIs.

Experience has, nevertheless, shown that the suggestion is a nonstarter in more ways than one. For one thing, rivalry is inevitable between such government-sponsored structures and development-oriented and community-based organizations. For another, kebele administrations and government institutions invariably prefer to work with the government-structures, and the NGOs with the development-oriented and community-based organizations, thereby making meaningful collaboration virtually impossible.

The problem gets worse if and when NGOs decide to bypass these structures and establish their own parallel structures that could coordinate, facilitate, and implement their development activities at the kebele and/or sub-kebele level. The establishment of activity-based and other single-purpose groupings such as water-user associations, savings and credit associations, flourmill associations, etc., however, seldom poses a similar problem. In fact, members of the formal structures have been observed actively participating in these groupings.

What can be deduced from all that is that the legal and policy environment is not in any way a snag to the registration of CBOs/CBIs. One can even say that the Government tends to leave CBOs/CBIs unfettered even if they are not duly registered by the concerned government body—so long as they are seen working with NGOs.

Nonetheless, a lot seems to remain in terms of giving clear and unambiguous division of power and mandate at the level of regions and below, shortening the bureaucratic chain, and granting of explicit provisions that encourage the involvement of civil society organizations in general and CBO/Is in particular in the development arena. Concerned international organizations, bi-lateral and multi-lateral organizations, and donor agencies need to work more in respect to lobbying, while CBO/Is are expected to demand for more of their rights.

**Editor's note:** I couldn't fully grasp what the paragraph is trying to say. Exactly what is it that the Government is supposed to do?

#### **4. AN OVERVIEW OF CBI'S REVIEW EXERCISE**

**Editor's note:** I suggest that you change this sub-title. I tried, but couldn't come up with a better one. Furthermore, the numbering (4) does not follow the pattern already set. I think it should be 3.5.

Back in 1996, Agri-Service Ethiopia had prepared Guidelines for Establishing Grassroots Community Development Structures and distributed copies thereof to the Program Offices (POs). Establishing ground rules such as agreeing on shared objectives, openness and accessibility, honesty, relevance, achievements, and learning from experience helps often-lengthy processes operate more smoothly and effectively (Bishop 1994, p.4 in Warburton 1198, p.33). Of course, ASE had made it a point from the outset to impress upon the POs the need for adapting the provisions of the Guidelines to the particular reality on the ground in their respective areas of operation.

In a nutshell, the Guidelines contained ASE's overall objectives, its development direction, and the ways and means of establishing community-based institutions. Although those of us at ASE were well aware of the fact that the how's that the Guidelines contained could not be practicable in all the areas where ASE was operating at the time, we thought that they could serve as points of departure to establishing CBIs and that the farmers and ASE's Development Facilitators, in particular, could use such a manual, as they were working in a situation where there were "no sharable experiences" in the country.

At any rate, the Guidelines have served ASE as a launch pad for developing its CBI Development Strategy—this document. More specifically, the rationale for establishing farmer-centered civil society organizations, which is given in this document, was given in the Guidelines as well. As a matter of fact, it was based on the provisions of the Guidelines that ASE facilitated the establishment of CBIs in the Lalo-Mamma Mider and Enebse Sar Mider Woredas (Amhara Regional State), in the Berek Alleltu Woreda (Oromia) and in the Amaro special Woreda (SNNRP). ASE has, of course, drawn valuable lessons from its experiences in all these woredas, as a result of its formal review exercise and the consultative workshop organized by its (ASE's) experts and a Consultant it had commissioned. The lessons that ASE has thus drawn are given herein below.

#### **4.1 The Review Process**

The study on community-based institutions was planned and undertaken in accordance with the decision made thereon by ASE's Management. Based on that decision, a Review Team comprising three members was formed.

Subsequent to that, the Team set out to draw up an operation plan for itself. Then ASE commissioned a Consultant to give the Review Team experts' advice and to help it explore relevant global, national and organizational environments and prepare a conceptual framework that could serve as a basis for establishing community-based institutions.

Accordingly, the Review Team, in close collaboration with the Consultant, used both primary and secondary data to conduct the study. It also held informal, but intensive, discussions with the leaders and members of certain community-based institutions, as well as focused group discussions with a large number of men and women who were not members of the CBIs. Most importantly, the Review Team held one-on-one interviews with the members of all the Woreda Councils in ASE's program areas, with the officials of the various Bureaus in the pertinent regional states—including the Bureaus of People's Organizations, Justice, Cooperatives—as well as with ASE's field staffs. [Relevant documents like by-laws, income and expense vouchers, minutes, letters, etc. were also reviewed as sources of information.](#)

**Editor's note:** [Whose bylaws, income, etc. are you talking about?](#)

A questionnaire was prepared and distributed to all field staffs of ASE's to explore their general understanding of community-based institutions. Also, the field staffs, the leaders of the community-based institutions and the officials of the Woreda Councils were provided with a SWOT analysis matrix and requested to fill it out as objectively as possible. In addition to that, the leaders of the Executive Committees of the CBIs were given a self-assessment checklist, which they responded to. The assessment checklist was, of course, aimed at assessing their organizational milieu.

## **4.2 The Crucial Issues**

Having thus rigorously reviewed the CBIs and analyzed their internal and external situations, the Review Team was able to identify the following crucial issues that were later on used as bases for designing the strategies described in this document.

- Once the woreda apex CBI is established, there is a risk that it could usurp the decision-making power of the kebele-level CBIs. It is, therefore, imperative that that be forestalled from the outset by duly decentralizing power from the woreda apex CBI to the Kebele-level CBIs—thereby striking a power balance.
- The woreda-level CBI is constituted basically by the kebele CBIs. The CBIs at both levels must, therefore, share all registration and contribution fees. Of course, ASE has nothing to go by and suggest how these fees ought to be divided between the two. What it is certain about is that if the woreda-level CBI is allowed to pull all the resources made available to the CBIs, the CBIs at the kebele level will inevitably be left powerless.
- The issue of having an independent activity groups vis-à-vis the power of the kebele level CBIs.

**Editor's note:** Not clear to me.

- There are certain thorny questions that should be answered properly from the outset. For instance, who should be the beneficiaries of the services that CBIs render—only their members, or non-members as

well? But if non-members are allowed to benefit by these activities, how could the members be committed to the CBI? And if members are made to be the exclusive beneficiaries thereof, how would the CBIs differ from cooperatives?

- Equally thorny are the questions regarding the leadership of the CBIs. For example, could the leaders of a CBI serve as members of the Kebele Council, if elected? Or would that result in a conflict of interests? Or could their being elected to serve on the Kebele Council be seen as an opportunity to create synergy between the kebele-level CBI and the kebele's administration? Do the CBIs and the kebele administrations have any bone of contention? If so, what conflict-resolution mechanism should be put in place so as to resolve any conflict that may arise as a result of this bone of contention?
- The Integrated Water Shade Management is being tested at the pilot level. This approach normally tends to "cross the borders of Kebeles" in the event that more than one kebele falls under the same water shade. The approach that CBIs adopt is, however, a kebele-based one. Could ASE consider these approaches simultaneously?
- The constituents of the CBIs have hitherto been exclusively farmers. A development organization has to, nonetheless, have the inputs of experts who are familiar with all the technical, legal and bureaucratic matters that normally have a bearing on development. That means, the CBIs should strive to lure such experts into being their members. But could doing so result in a conflict of interests between the farmers and the non-farmers? And how could the leaders of a CBI manage it



(the CBI) effectively upon the phasing-out of ASE, in light of the fact that they are farmers who have not had much education?

- Is managing ASE-initiated development activities the main objective of the establishment of CBIs, or does it have another adjective as well? Could the establishment of a woreda-level CBI be like replicating ASE at the woreda level, or will it truly support the initiatives of the community to become masters of their own destiny?
- Are the CBIs and the *Mengistawi Budun* complementary to each other? Or are they mutually exclusive?
- What is the best way of ensuring the financial sustainability of the CBIs? Could the CBIs continue to exist and properly function without donor support? Would it be better if the CBIs undertook income-generating activities? If so, what is the best way that they could manage these activities?
- Should ASE phase out gradually or all at once? What role should those staffs of ASE's who remain behind even after ASE has phased out play? What type of working relations should ASE have with the CBIs after it has completely withdrawn from the area?
- The relations between cooperatives and CBIs seem to leave much to be desired. The fact that CBIs, like the cooperatives, are involved in the distribution of inputs has become a source of conflict between them. Is it lawful for the CBIs to get involved in the provision of agricultural inputs? If not, what is the role that CBIs should play in this

regard, without having to contravene the law of the land? Is there any possibility for forging partnership between CBIs and cooperatives?

- Funds are coming to the local government from bilateral agencies. What should the local government do to help the CBIs get access to these funds? And what should the CBIs, for their part, do to that end?
- ASE has observed that the leaders of CBIs are initially highly enthused about their newfound roles and that, with the passage of time, nonetheless, their enthusiasm wanes. What should be done to make sure that they remain enthusiastic and fully committed to their respective CBIs even after ASE has phased out? Would it be advisable to provide them with some incentive so that they will continue to remain committed? If so, in what should the incentive be given to them?
- The CBIs appear to be unduly dependant on ASE. For instance, they do not always employ an adequate number of project staffs as and when they should. What should be done to help the CBIs do so? And, in the event that the CBIs manage to employ an adequate number of projects staffs, should ASE continue to maintain the same workforce? What exactly is ASE supposed to for the CBIs once the latter have been able to employ an adequate number of project staffs?
- We all know that the Ethiopian Government has adopted resettlement as an important strategy for ensuring food security and proper natural resources management. Accordingly, the focus of the government for settlement is on the landless youth and the CBIs are also tending to support the landless rural youth as they are falling under the “poor

category” of the CBIs definition. The local government people are not happy with this and there is a strong opposition to the CBIs, whenever they try to support the landless youth. How should the CBIs tackle this challenge?

**Editor’s note:** The sentences above must be rewritten using more specific language. For example, instead of telling the reader that the government is focusing on the youth, which is too general, tell him/her what exactly it is doing for them.

- What are the administrative challenges that the CBIs are faced with in administering the VLDPs and VLHPs (even though ASE is responsible for providing them with the incentives they need to do their jobs)?
- In the Amaro Special Woreda, there is a development institution known as “Kore Development Association (KDA).” KDA was established at the woreda level. And almost all the members of the CBIs are its members, too. It seems to enjoy the support of the local government. The community seems to, nonetheless, hanker for a change, because KDA has not reportedly been delivering what it was supposed to, besides lacking in transparency and accountability in its management. In fact, the community has of late shown a propensity to work with the nearby CBI, rather than with KDA. Still, KDA’s presence has made it difficult for ASE to encourage establishment of an apex organization for the CBIs of the area at the woreda level. ASE’s hesitation to do so emanates from its fear that KDA and the woreda-level CBI will end up viewing each other as rivals, instead of working toward the development of the area by complementing each other. In this connection, too, there are, therefore, certain thorny questions that need to be answered after weighing in all the available options. For instance, would it be advisable to merge the woreda-level CBI and

KDA? If that is the most preferred option, how do we determine that they will have enough commonalities that will enable them to work together as harmoniously as they should? Can we be sure that they will have the same values, working culture, mission and objectives? What must each one of them be told to change about itself, as part of its preparation for the envisioned merger—that is, to make it properly work? Or should they be encouraged to work separately? What is the probability that the two can work hand in glove toward their shared goal of developing the area?

This strategy document has tried to address the most important and generic strategic issues, although it has left out the ones that seem to be particular to the Program Offices. The document has also made a distinction between those issues that are pertinent to ASE and those that are so only to the CBIs. ASE respects the institutional sovereignty of the CBIs. It, therefore, holds the view that these issues have to be addressed by the CBIs themselves. Still, ASE has made it a point to incorporate into this strategy document a few tips that it believes the members of the CBIs could use as points of departure to the discussions they need to hold on the pertinent issues, before drafting their bylaws.

Having reviewed its experiences and sifting the most crucial issues that deserve institutional attention, ASE had organized and held a two-day consultative workshop at the national level, which the representatives of most of the pertinent government agencies, NGOs and CBIs attended. As expected, the feedback that ASE was able to get at the workshop has significantly shaped the framework of this strategy document.

### **4.3 An Overview of the Consultative Workshop**

In accordance with the aphorism that two heads are better than one, ASE felt the need for further enriching the contents of the CBI Development Strategy by incorporating into it the views of as many stakeholders as possible. To that end, it organized and held the consultative workshop, the participants of which were drawn from the Bureaus of the concerned regional states, the federal Ministries, Commissions, Woreda Councils, NGOs, research organizations and the CBIs themselves.

Two study papers were presented at the workshop, in order to acquaint the participants with the basic concepts of community-based institutions. As they were prepared by experts of national renown, the papers were able to serve the participants as a sprinting pitch to discuss the issues at length.

Following the presentation of the papers, the participants were divided into four working groups. Then each working group was given five topics of discussion: four of them on the crosscutting issues and one on a specific point. The choice of the discussion topics was based on the following crucial issues that the Review Team had identified while conducting its study:

#### **4.3.1 The Name "CBI"**

- ❖ Does the name CBI truly signify its mission and goal?
- ❖ What other name would you suggest, if you felt that the name should be changed?
- ❖ Does the term "self-help" sufficiently indicate the intended meaning, or does it give a different, unintended meaning?

### **4.3.2 Who should be the Main Beneficiaries of CBIs?**

- ❖ Who should be the main and direct beneficiaries of CBIs? Should both members and non-members be made to equally benefit by the services that a CBI renders? Or should its members be the exclusive beneficiaries of such services?
- ❖ If its members are made to be the exclusive beneficiaries of the services that a CBI renders, how could the CBI be viewed as being any different from a cooperative?
- ❖ If, on the other hand, non-members, too, are made to benefit by the services that CBI provides, what can be done to make sure that the members of the CBI are truly committed to it with a sense of ownership?

### **4.3.3 The Power Balance**

- ❖ How should the powers and duties of the kebele-level CBIs and of the woreda-level CBI be determined in such a way that neither of them will complain that it has not been given enough powers and duties?
- ❖ How much of the money that comes into the possession of the kebele-level CBIs should be channeled to the woreda-level CBI?

### **4.3.4 Should Action Groups be Made Independent Legal Entities or Part of CBI?**

4.3.4.1 What should the relations of action groups and CBIs look like? Should action groups be independent legal entities that have their own bylaws, rules and regulations, or should they be made part and parcel of the kebele-level CBIs? If they are to be made independent, what form should their relations with the CBIs take?

4.3.4.2 Do you believe that individual members of action groups can continue to maintain their independence or that circumstances will force them to eventually be members of the nearby CBI?

## **5. THE PAHSING-OUT STRATEGY**

**Editor's note:** The same is true about this numbering.

5.1 What phasing-out strategy would you suggest for ASE?

5.2 What would you say are the factors that ASE should take into consideration before it reduces the number of its staffs as part of the measures it will have to take toward its phasing out?

5.3 At what stage of a CBI's development should ASE withdraw from its operation area and hand over all its development activities to a CBI? What would you say are the indicators that the time has come for ASE to do that?

5.4 What should ASE' working relations with the CBIs be like after it has phased out?

5.5 Is it important that a CBI forge working relations with other CBIs? If so, why?

## 6. CONSTITUENCY BUILDING AND EMPOWERMENT

**Editor's note:** The same is true about this numbering.

- ❖ What are the *pros* and *cons* of registering individuals, institutions and organizations that have shown their willingness to support the objectives of CBIs at the various levels (at the woreda, regional and federal levels) as members? What strategy would you say should be designed to that end?
- ❖ CBIs are basically farmers' institutions. So could opening membership to non-farmers in any way undermine farmers' interests?

## 7. SUSTAINABILITY

**Editor's note:** The same is true about this numbering.

- ❖ What should be done to ensure the financial and technical sustainability of CBIs?
- ❖ Can CBIs get involved in income-generating activities?
- ❖ If so, how should they administer these activities?
- ❖ How could CBIs benefit from the funds that bilateral and multilateral organizations channel into the country through the government?
- ❖ What motivation mechanisms should be put in place to make sure that the leaders of CBIs maintain their enthusiasm about leading the CBIs?



- ❖ It seems like ASE has inadvertently developed in CBIIs a dependency syndrome. What measures would you say must be taken to reverse this situation so that the CBIIs will be able to stand on their feet?
- ❖ What, in your opinion, must ASE do to forestall a similar problem (unintentionally developing a dependency syndrome in the CBIIs that it tries to strengthen) in the future?

## **8. THE CASE OF THE AMARO SPECIAL WOREDA**

**Editor's note:** The same is true about this numbering.

- ❖ Would you suggest that the CBI merge with the Kore Development Association (KDA) or that it remain an independent organization?
- ❖ If the members of the kebele-level CBIIs of Amaro joined KDA, what improvement could KDA be expected to make?
- ❖ What support should ASE provide KDA with, so that it will assist and cooperate with the kebele-level CBIIs?
- ❖ Exactly what type of working relations should ASE forge with KDA?

The first four questions, of course, had to do with the crosscutting issues, whereas the last four—that is, Questions 5,6,7 and 8—were given to Working Groups 2, 3, 4 and 1, respectively. After the working groups discussed these issues and made presentations thereon, a plenary discussion was held on them. The output of the whole exercise is shown in the table here below.

## A Tabular Summary of the Reflections of the Consultative Workshop

S/N	The Crucial Issue	The Strategy Suggested	The Required Action	The Responsible Organ	Remark
1	<b>Definition of a CBI</b>				
1.1	Does the definition given to a CBI adequately indicate its mission, goals and roles?	It is difficult to determine whether a CBI should be referred to as an association or as an institution. Nor was a consensus reached with regard to adding onto its name the term "self-help." Definitions options: Self-help community development association/institution, or community development association/institution	Managerial decision	ASE's Management	Further clarification required from the legal perspective
1.2	Could the use of the terms "self-help" and "institution" disqualify a CBI from being categorized as	Not necessarily. But the term "association" is more commonly used, besides being what the registering government bodies prefer to use	Managerial decision	ASE's Management	More consultation needs to be held on legal requirements

	an NGO?				
1.3	How should a CBI be redefined?	A rural-people-centered, non-partisan, not-for-profit, voluntary, free and multipurpose non-governmental (self-help) community development association/institution	Managerial decision	ASE's Management	A CBI has to be redefined being "rural-people-centered" because the definition 'farmer-centered' is inclusive of not only farmers, including pastoralists

S/N	The Crucial Issue	The Strategy Suggested	The Required Action	The Responsible Organ	Remark
2	<b>Benefits and priorities</b>				
2.1	Who should be the main beneficiaries of a CBI's services?	In general, the rural people who live in the operational areas of the CBI are the beneficiaries. But the CBI is expected to come up with a	CBIs should review their respective bylaws accordingly	The CBI	If beneficiaries are limited members of a CBI appears to be a business

		strategy for making the poor, women and marginalized groups the main beneficiaries of its services			entity, vulnerable refusal by community, the extend liquidation
2.2	Is there any way that the members of a CBI can be made committed to the CBI in a situation where non-members, too, are made to benefit by the services the CBI renders?	From the outset, people must be told that being a member of a CBI will not entail for them any privileges—other than the right to elect and be elected. They should also be informed of the fact that two types of membership are available: regular membership and associate membership. Associate members may give the CBI pieces of advice, but cannot elect or be elected. Regular members, on the other hand, are entitled to all that. They may also be catered to on a priority basis in the event that an acute shortage of certain services occurs for some reason	Raising the awareness of the people about this approach	ASE and the CBI	

S/N	The Crucial Issue	The Strategy Suggested	The Required Action	The Responsible Organ	Remark
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3	<b>Determining the powers and duties of the woreda-level CBI and of the Kebele-level CBIs</b>				
3.1	The woreda-level CBI	This must be determined in accordance with the principles of decentralization. The woreda-level CBI must be seen as the focal point of all the CBIs within the woreda. As such, it should be entrusted with the responsibilities of initiating policies and laws, supervising their enforcement, hiring and firing its employees, promoting CBIs and membership in them, networking with other partners, coordinating intra-CBI linkage and collaboration, coordinating, planning, monitoring and evaluating woreda-level projects, appraising and financing kebele-level CBIs' projects, generating and administering fund, and providing technical assistance to kebele-level CBIs	Review bylaws accordingly	CBI	CBI
3.2	Kebele-level CBIs	The powers and duties of a kebele-level CBI must include deciding who should or should not be its	Reviewing bylaws accordingly	CBI	CBIs

	member as per the criteria set, targeting a group for intervention, appraising individual or action-group micro-projects; managing the implementation of decisions and the plans of the woreda's CBI, initiating plans, networking and collaborating with kebele-level partners, and mobilizing resources		
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S/N	The Crucial Issue	The Strategy Suggested	The Required Action	The Responsible Organ	Remark
4	<b>Sharing revenue</b>				
4.1	What proportion of the income of kebele-level CBIs should be contributed to the woreda-level CBI?	It should be based on, and proportionate to, the powers and duties allotted to the woreda-level CBI	CBIs should review the matter and decide thereon	CBIs	
5	<b>Action-groups vis-à-vis CBIs</b>				

5.1	Should the bylaws and leadership of CBI action groups, too? Or should they be established independent, legal entities—with their own bylaws and management?	Action groups should be established either as independent, legal entities with their own bylaws and leadership, or they should be made part and parcel of the CBI	It is up to ASE's Management to decide on the matter	ASE
5.2	In the event that action groups are established independent, legal entities, what kind of relations should there be between them and the CBIs?	They could be made members of the CBIs; they could also enter with the CBIs into contractual agreements to implement certain projects	It is up to ASE's Management to decide on the matter	
6	<b>ASE's phasing-out and disengagement</b>			
6.1	What phasing-out and disengagement strategies should ASE follow?	Facilitate the handover process (to CBIs); enhance the capacities of CBIs, focusing on their institutional, technical and financial capacities	Facilitating the establishment of the CBIs and strengthening them by recruiting for them capable managers, as well as technical and administrative staffs; raising the awareness of communities, and training CBIs' leaders, staffs, and partners;	ASE and CBI

			<p>gradual disengagement from program activities (handing over the responsibility and necessary resources to the CBI); making sure that the CBI continues to function as legal entities by enhancing the capacities of their leaders and broadening and networking their resource base; reviewing and strengthening CBI's institutional setup and performance</p>	ASE and CBI
6.2	<p>What relationship should ASE have with the CBI after it has phased out?</p>	<p>ASE should keep in touch with the CBI as their constituency even after it has phased out</p>	<p>Continue to provide the CBI with technical assistance, networking, fund sourcing, etc.</p>	ASE
6.3	<p>What type of networking should CBI pursue?</p>	<p>CBI should develop horizontal linkage and partnership with other CBI at different levels; they should develop same vertically as well—with high-level CBI, NGOs, forums, and networks; besides, they have to establish an apex CBI at the regional and/or</p>	<p>Widening and strengthening networking and cooperation</p>	CBI and ASE



	national level		
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S/N	The Crucial Issue	The Strategy Suggested	The Required Action	The Responsible Organ	Remark
7	<b>Constituency building and empowerment</b>	Membership in a CBI should be open to every individual and organization; there should also be regular members as well as associate members; the maximum effort must be exerted to develop and enhance the capacities of the members, so that any vacant posts in the CBI's leadership can be readily filled	Determine the rights that regular and associate members will have as members, as well as their obligations to the CBI; promote the CBI, using various ways and means; and be sure to broaden their constituency base; and, where appropriate, designate a contact person who will act on behalf of the CBI	CBI	
8	<b>Conflicts of interest between a CBI and other actors in the operational areas</b>	Facilitate conditions that are favorable for concerting the development efforts of CBI's with those of the concerned government bodies and other	Clarify the responsibilities and roles of the concerned development actors; create a forum whereby all of them can come together	ASE, CBI's, local governments and other partners	Usually, conflicts of interest arise because of lack of concert among the development efforts of different actors

		partners; promote good governance (transparency and accountability) and ethical behavior among the CBIs; and come up with a conflict-management system	and jointly plan and review their activities; strengthen networking and enhance the capacity of each actor to deliver good governance and properly manage conflict		and due duplication responsibilities
9	<b>The CBI and the Kore Development Association (KDA) in the Amaro Kore program should they merge or work as separate legal entities?</b>	Continue considering the CBI and KDA as one community-based institution; and make sure that KDA harmonizes its structure and principles with those of the CBI	Continue working toward the consolidation of KDA/CBI	ASE, Pos, KDA the CBI	The existence of KDA should be viewed as an opportunity for establishing an apex CBI provided that it successfully transformed into a civic society and in accordance with the guiding principles of CBI

S/N	The Crucial Issue	The Suggested Strategy	The Required Action	The Responsible Organ	Remark
10	<b>Sustainability</b>				

10.1	Sustainability of the CBIs	Improve institutional financial sustainability of CBIs	the flexibility and responsiveness to the constantly changing circumstances; broadening the constituency base; enhancing good governance; diversifying the resource base; strengthening networking and advocacy; enhancing the institutional capacities of CBIs; and designing a scheme for ensuring the continued commitment of CBIs' leaders	CBI
10.2	<b>The structural boundary of a CBI</b>	The structural boundary of a CBI may be based on the watershed, government administration, development potential (geographic), or a combination of the two	The CBI should decide that, based on the reality on the ground	CBIs

## 9. THE OBJECTIVES OF THE CBI STRATEGY DOCUMENT

**Editor's note:** The same is true about this numbering.

- To promote the participation, self-reliance and empowerment of the community, with due emphasis on the poor, women and other marginalized groups—with a view to helping them improve their livelihood and promote sustainable natural resources management.
- To encourage the CBIs to initiate and design development projects aimed at community development in general and improving the livelihood of the poor and marginalized groups in particular, as well as to implement them and monitor their implementation.
- To ensure the post-phasing-out sustenance of ASE's economic and social development initiatives, as well those of the other agencies that work with the CBIs.
- To make sure that the voices of the poor and women are heard by facilitating the direct, organized and non-partisan representation of the community at both the kebele and woreda levels and to thereby positively influence the economic, social and policy functions of the state.

- To facilitate the groundwork necessary for ensuring the community's access to inputs supply and product markets, by creating linkage with the pertinent agencies.

## **10. THE TYPES OF CBIs THAT ASE WILL SUPPORT**

**Editor's note:** The same is true about this numbering.

- Not-for-profit, non-partisan and non-sectarian CBIs;
- Not a branch of any NGO or government body;
- CBIs that are working toward ensuring the development of the entire worda to which they belong;
- CBIs that represent the community and work in full gear toward ensuring the respect of its (the community's) rights to development and sustainable livelihood, as well as its rights to be heard;
- CBIs that are basically farmer/rural-people-centered and engaged in development activities;
- CBIs that encourage non-farmers, too, to be their members in such a way that the interests of the farmers are not adversely affected by that;
- CBIs that consciously encourage poor farmers and women to assume leadership positions;
- CBIs that exercise participatory decision-making;
- CBIs that collaborate with GOs, NGOs, donors and the private sector, without compromising their institutional sovereignty; and
- CBIs that promote conservation-based development, with due emphasis on sustainable natural resources management.

## 11. THE UNIQUENESS OF CBIs

**Editor's note:** The same is true about this numbering.

- CBIs are rural-people/farmer-centered development associations/institutions;
- Unlike those development associations that were initiated by the elite and are being led by same, CBIs do not consider farmers as only receivers of their development support;
- CBIs are not systematically or structurally linked to government agencies, political parties or NGOs. They are, however, willing to receive support from all—provided that the support is not in any way strings-attached and does not, therefore, result in compromising their institutional sovereignty.
- They are self-help groups and thus differ from NGOs. NGOs, as a rule, are established to support not their members but a third party, which they refer to as their “target groups” (for example, farmers, women, children, the elderly, people with disabilities, PLWHAs, etc.). On the contrary, CBIs are established to serve their respective communities, or—in the event that an acute shortage of resources occurs—the poorest among them.
- CBIs are not [activity-based associations](#). CBIs are expected to undertake all development activities in their areas—including agriculture, education, health, water supply, training/community

learning, marketing and other economic and infrastructure developments.

**Editor's note:** Not clear to me.

- They are different from cooperatives, in that profit-making is not one of their objectives—their objectives being limited to ensuring the overall economic and social development of their areas and to representing the poor and marginalized groups at various levels. CBIs can, however, collaborate with cooperatives; they can even provide most of the services that cooperatives provide in those places where there are as yet no cooperatives.

## **PART FOUR: STRATEGY FOR ESTABLISHING AND DEVELOPING CBIs**

### **4.1 ASE-CBI Partnership**

One of the reasons that ASE wanted to see the CBIs established at the kebele level is to consider them as its development partners that represent the community at large. In making a strategic shift from service delivery to community empowerment through capacity enhancement, the first step that ASE will take is to initiate the establishment of a community-based organization that will be responsible for delivering all social and economic services to the people, and then develop it so that it will continue to be more active in the future, even after its development partners, including ASE, have left the area.

The modality of the partnership at the ***initial stage***, therefore, calls for ASE to have considerable power in directing and controlling the development process for a few months. In the meantime, the CBI begins to learn about managing a development institution and working in partnership with pertinent organizations. Once the community organization has been strengthened, which should ***begin to take place in about a year's time***, ASE's role in the decision-making process will begin to diminish, whereas that of the CBI will increase. That means, with the passage of time, the CBI will be playing the leadership role, and ASE will only be its Adviser. It also means that ASE will have to consciously manage the number and quality of the staffs it should have at different stages of the CBI's development, which is duly explained in the guidelines.

#### **4.2 Initiating Organization**

ASE organizes the CBIs on the philosophical basis that they are CSOs that strive to ensure the collective well being of the community and of selected target groups. The partnership model that is envisaged to prevail calls for ASE to operate like an organizing agency—the CBIs being its partners with considerable negotiating power and adequate space for making decisions on matters of mutual interest. The lowest unit of the CBI will be established at the kebele level, whereas the woreda level apex organization, which will come into being through time, will be the one that will formally represent the community at the woreda level and get registered as such with the concerned government body.



### **4.3 Capacity Building**

ASE plays the roles of capacity enhancer and facilitator of an enabling environment for the CBIs to become robust institutions that are self-confident and self-reliant in initiating and leading the development efforts relevant to their respective constituencies. In this respect, the organization facilitates learning about certain things that are relevant to the community, demonstration of technologies, identification and promotion of local innovations, etc.

ASE also continuously gives training in various skills to the CBIs' leaders to strengthen their thinking and enhance their project-execution capacity. The types of training that ASE gives them are mainly General Awareness-Raising Education and Skill-Upgrading Training. Training, of course, is a crosscutting activity that ASE undertakes at all stages, but the intensiveness of the training in leadership and management varies in accordance with the development phase that the CBI is in. Experience-sharing and educational tours, too, enhance learning. To support the implementation of this specific strategy, ASE has developed a separate strategy and guidelines for community learning and communication, which, among others, include the approaches and methods of developing the leaders of the institution. The most important of these are incorporated into the guidelines section of this strategy document.

### **4.4 Making CDF Available**

Community Development Fund (CDF) is a block grant of money that will be made available to the CBIs to help them learn how to write project proposals, implement development projects, handle accounts, prepare

reports and, in general, how to manage partnerships with development partners. The second important purpose of this fund is to address the collective needs of the community that were not duly addressed at the time that the main program document was being developed, or to address those problem situations that came to the attention of the community and ASE as a result of the implementation of some of the activities. ASE will manage the fund, but the CBIs and ASE's government partners will have a say in the decision-making. ASE has separate guidelines for the proper utilization of the Community Development Fund.

#### **4.5 Mobilization of Other Resources**

ASE encourages the CBIs to mobilize local resources by charging registration and membership fees, organizing fundraising events, soliciting donations from the private sector, creating linkage with donors, establishing income-generating schemes, accessing bilateral funds by entering into partnership agreements with the local governments, etc. Most of the activities will be mentioned in the bylaws and guidelines of the CBIs, but a few of them are given in these guidelines.

#### **4.6 Encouraging the CBIs to Own Income-Generating Enterprises**

This, of course, is part of the resource-mobilization strategy mentioned above. It is, therefore, imperative that special attention be given to it, as it is determinant to ensuring the financial sustainability of the CBIs. This is all about helping the CBIs establish income-generating enterprises that have a reliable market in the area and could support the development efforts of the woreda. A case in point is the poultry farm that was established by the Alem-Birhan CBI in the Enebse-Sar Mider woreda. This is a reliable source of

income for the CBI. Besides, it supports the efforts of the CBI and of the local government to ensure food security in the area. ASE plans to help each CBI establish as many enterprises as possible during its (ASE's) stay with the CBI in the program area. The major factors that determine the number and size of such enterprises, however, are the competence of their management teams, the CBI's experience in operating in a transparent and accountable manner, and the availability of markets for their products. The ways and means of establishing the enterprises are shown in these guidelines.

#### **4.7 The Phasing-in and Phasing-out Strategy**

Supporting the establishment and strengthening of CBIs is an entry and exit strategy for ASE. ASE begins its intervention by facilitating the establishment of a CBI in the interests of the people. Throughout the program period, ASE is expected to enhance the capacity of the CBI by helping the people manage their own development affairs. ASE is, nonetheless, supposed to make a gradual exit from the program area. What it will use as indicators that the time has come for it to do a complete phasing out are the strength and capacity of the CBIs. ASE's roles at its phasing-in and phasing-out periods are clearly indicated in the guidelines section of this strategy document. The earlier the CBI becomes self-reliant, with adequate capacity, the earlier will ASE completely withdraw from the area.

#### **4.8 Networking**

The CBI is not supposed to form its own "island of development" and thus remain isolated. Instead, it should be encouraged to share its own development philosophy and approaches with others and learn from them in

turn by systematically and effectively networking with them. Local traditional associations, the kebele and woreda administrations, line offices, kebele-level cooperatives, labor unions, NGOs and other CSOs are the first category of actors with which the CBIs should forge formal and non-formal networks. This exercise should be effective enough to maximize the benefits of the CBIs. But a CBI should avoid networks that are not worth the trouble. At the various levels of the CBI's development, ASE will forge a very strong partnership with the CBIs. After it has phased out, nevertheless, ASE will network with the CBIs on an equal footing—very much like that between two parties of the same stature.

#### **4.9 Constituency Building**

A CBI is an association created basically by the rural people/farmers. Still, it should be able to attract members, or supporters, from other domains as well. More specifically, ASE should help the CBIs get linked with those people who originally come from the woreda and are now residing elsewhere: in big cities like Addis Ababa and in the major towns. Businesspersons, civil servants, religious leaders and leaders and members of the CSOs in the woreda as well as in the other towns of the regional state are potential constituents of the CBIs. By getting linked with these people, the CBIs are actually presenting them with the opportunity to participate in the development affairs of their places of origin and fulfill their self-actualization needs. The CBIs, for their part, will be expanding their constituencies and accessing sustainable support by doing so.

#### **4.10 Conflict Management**

It is presumed that the CBI will eventually face a number of challenges. Of these, the most serious would probably be the conflicts that may arise between its members and leaders, between the CBI and the local government administration, or between the CBI and other civic associations and organizations—including cooperatives. Transparency, accountability, joint planning, fully understanding one's mandate areas, participatory monitoring and evaluation, consistency, positive thinking, communication skills, forging strategic alliances, etc. are, therefore, some of the tools that it could use to manage these conflicts. ASE should be able to introduce these tools to the CBIs at the various stages of their development.

#### **4.11 Micro-Financing**

The second important phasing-out strategy for ASE is to make micro-finance institutions work in close collaboration with the CBIs. PEACE Micro-Finance Institution is an important partner of ASE. As such, it is expected to give credit services to the farmers in its operation areas. Even after the phasing-out of ASE, PEACE is supposed to continue working with the CBIs. Still, ASE will have to also look into other micro-financing options like establishing credit and savings cooperatives, or into the possibility of working with other micro-finance organizations, in case the CBIs gradually find it difficult to access PEACE's services as and when they need them, or if PEACE lacks the capacity to fully address the needs of the community.

#### **4.12 Making VLDPs and VLHPs Accountable to the CBIs**

The VLDPs and VLHPs are people who will be elected by a CBI and assigned to support them (the people) in the overall development programs (VLDPs) and health extension matters (VLHPs). These normally are farmers and provide their services to the community on a part-time basis. Through time,

ASE will invest in the VLDPs and VLHPs and thereby develop their capacities, with a view to enabling them to gradually reach that level where they can adequately support the CBIs, especially after ASE has phased out. These people should be accountable to the CBI. And after ASE has partially phased out, they should be able to replace ASE's Development Facilitators as permanent employees of the CBI.

The above-described strategies are the ones that ASE should implement while facilitating the establishment of a CBI as its major function. There are, nonetheless, a number of points that are important to the CBIs, but not necessarily to ASE, simply because they are not part of its strategic issues. These points are not considered at this stage. Most of them will, however, be duly addressed in the bylaws and organizational manuals of the CBIs. Nor are the ways and means of implementing the strategies mentioned above shown item by item in these guidelines. The CBI's development process goes through various phases. So the implementation modalities of each strategy are discussed under these phases. The following section consists of the guidelines for the implementation of the various phases that the CBI will have to go through. These guidelines will be helpful for the day-to-day operation of [the CBI in ASE](#).

**Editor's note:** What are you trying to say at the end of the last sentence?

## **PART FIVE:**

### **GUIDELINES TO THE VARIOUS PHASES OF INSTITUTION BUILDING**

#### **5.1 The Pre-CBI Phase**

This is an initial stage that makes the sprinting pitch for the CBIs kick off. It is, in general, a phasing-in stage for ASE—a stage where the preliminary activities of organizing the community into a CBI are carried out. At this early stage, the main activity will consist of sheer groundwork. The groundwork will, of course, be aimed at preparing the community psychologically, socially, economically and organizationally. As such, it is a stage at which much effort will have to be exerted toward making the social environment conducive for the CBI to become a reality. That means, it involves the undertaking of intensive awareness-raising activities. ASE will take the lead in the establishment of the CBIs, but its approach will not be “instructional” or “persuasive.”

**Editor’s note:** It is not enough to tell the reader what ASE’s approach is not going to be. You have to also tell him/her what it will be.

Setting a time line is required to finish this phase. The recommended time to accomplish the pre-CBI phase is six months, after the program has been properly launched in the woreda. The following indicators may help to measure the “proper takeoff environment”: the agreement entered into with the government, the funds made available to the Program Office, the staffs deployed at the field level and the minimum working facilities. The time required by the Program Offices to accomplish the activities outlined herein under might, nonetheless, vary from place to place—depending on the locality’s prevailing political, social and environmental situations. At the pre-CBI phase, ASE’s major functions will consist of conducting a baseline survey, doing a gender analysis, undertaking a training needs assessment, preparing the syllabus as well as the module, identifying innovations, etc. ASE will have to, nevertheless, do all these with no prejudice to its other activities.

### 5.1.1 Staff Orientation

What ASE has observed during its monitoring exercises in the past five years is that the staffs did not seem to have fully grasped its (ASE's) new direction or had difficulty in understanding the difference between building cooperatives and CBIs. The most troubling thing, in particular, was the fact that they were still fixated on service delivery rather than gearing themselves up to undertake activities aimed at capacity enhancement. Surely, at the initial stage of its partnership with CBIs, ASE will have to play the role of services provider to the community. With the passage of time, however, this role will have to be played by the CBIs themselves. To that end, the role of the CBIs in this regard must steadily increase, whereas that of ASE should steadily diminish. The same holds true about decision-making. In other words, the CBIs will at first be almost onlookers as ASE makes most of the decisions with regard to the services to be provided to the communities. Gradually, nevertheless, the two will have to reverse roles. It is only if and when this happens that ASE can be sure that the community is truly empowered. ASE has to make sure that the attitudes of its staffs have completely changed in this regard. In other words, each employee in the Program Offices and at the Head Office will have to define her/his own path and work to achieve the collective goal of building a vibrant, responsible, sustainable and farmers-centered CSO at the woreda level.

**Editor's note:** Wouldn't this statement prompt the reader to wonder why the Management cannot persuade ASE's staffs to move with the times?

The second most important thing that ASE's staffs and Management need to pay attention to is the fact that building CBIs is one of the major functions of ASE, and that it is by no means the responsibility of a single unit or of a few individuals in the organization. True, in the main, the responsibility of



establishing CBIs rests with the Department of COTEE at the Head Office and the concerned units at the Program Offices. All ASE staffs are, however, expected to contribute to the process. [The functions of the different units of ASE are given in a separate section of this strategy paper. It is, nonetheless, imperative that everyone knew at the outset that the Human Resources Management Unit and the Department of COTEE give orientation to new staffs.](#)

**Editor's note:** How are the last two sentences related with each other?

### **5.1.2 Targeting the Poor**

As usual, the entry point for ASE while launching new programs will be the formation of the community-learning forum (which used to be referred to as "training groups"). Then the community participated purely on a voluntary basis. ASE has learned from its experience that although "voluntarism" seems to be democratic and fair, the poor and marginalized seldom volunteer. Why? Because, as a rule, rural women are too shy to participate in the community learning forums, or in any other community-development initiatives. ASE will have to, therefore, conduct a baseline survey with a view to determining who is who in terms of wealth and other social parameters. The baseline survey will also have the added advantage of better understanding how the existing social institutions operate, for the establishment of the CBIs will add value to them. Furthermore, the information to be obtained from the baseline survey will be very helpful to the Development Facilitators (DFs) as they go from door to door and try to talk the poor and marginalized members of the community into joining the forum.

### **5.1.3 Stimulating Interest through Community Dialogue**

Once the DFs make sure that a sufficient number of the desired target groups (poor, women and marginalized groups) are represented in the community learning forums, ASE's staffs will have to be prepared to throw lead questions in these forums, so that the participants will learn more about community institutions from the discussions that will ensue from their answers. ASE shall prepare carefully designed learning modules that will help facilitate discussions with the community on this subject. The first learning module will be designed so as to guide the DFs on how the communities' knowledge about institution building could be developed by utilizing the method known as "community dialogue/conversation." This module will incorporate into it the principles, steps and procedures of holding a community dialogue/conversation. It will also have a section on how best the community dialogue/conversation can be facilitated. The aim of the community dialogue sessions is to help the people appreciate the need for "joining hands and ideas" toward the development of the area they live in. It is widely believed that, through such sessions, people can come together and make self-initiated decisions to establish community-based institutions. This approach is an alternative to the "instructional" and "persuasive" types of communication models, which are mainly characterized by aggressively pushing the interests of outsiders to achieve stated objectives.

### **5.1.4 Experience-Sharing Visits**

At the stage of the CBI's establishment, the DFs must work in full gear to develop the knowledge of the community so that it will have a clear idea about the CBI. This they can do by organizing experience-sharing visits to the previous working areas of ASE. Prior to that, however, they have to

make sure that the community is really interested in establishing its own CBI. The second learning module for the establishment of a CBI, which ASE has to prepare ahead of time, is on how to organize and facilitate experience-sharing visits. The visits will, of course, be made by the just-established CBI's members to the previous working woredas of ASE. But in the absence of this module, the educational tour might not be able to fully achieve its objectives. The DFs must be careful not to pressure farmers into learning everything from the previously established CBIs, but to focus on the basic principles, processes, challenges and lessons. The module will guide the staffs as to what communication techniques they should use in order to make sure that stereotyped CBIs are not replicated in every place where ASE is operational. Still, there should be a basic framework that all CBIs can refer to as a direction that they should all follow. In general, new CBIs are expected to be "better" than those established earlier, for they have the advantage of learning from their experiences and avoiding the errors they (the previous ones) have made. Besides, the fact that ASE's staffs keep on honing their skills of facilitating the establishment of CBIs will surely help the nascent ones be better than their predecessors.

### **5.1.5 Raising the Awareness of Other Stakeholders**

This approach is probably new to government counterparts and ASE's stakeholders in the woreda. ASE's awareness-raising exercise will have to, therefore, address these stakeholders, too. Organizing workshops/meetings, facilitating experience-sharing visits, organizing educational tours to the CBIs in the same woreda, discussing findings of evaluation reports, mission reports, etc. can be some of the tools that can be used to help government counterparts know more about the CBIs. The establishment stage of a CBI is, therefore, the ideal time to do awareness-raising among government

stakeholders and CSOs in the woreda, whereas the more organized and systematic interventions can be made at a later stage. True, awareness-raising is not a one-time shot, but something that will have to continue throughout the period. What is intended here is to stress the need for a conscious and purposeful effort on the part of the Program Offices to make all stakeholders aware of the need for establishing a CBI—by impressing upon them the significance of the role they will eventually play. Experience has shown ASE that in those places where its government counterparts were made fully aware of what a CBI is all about, the CBI tends to muster almost unreserved support from them (the concerned government bodies).

#### **5.1.6 The Formation of an *ad hoc* CBI Committee**

The community will have to begin the whole process of establishing and then developing a CBI by at first forming an *ad hoc* CBI committee. Such a committee will pave the way for the establishment of a *bona fide* CBI by making it possible for the community to take its time to decide who should lead it (the CBI) and to do all the preliminary work—including the drafting of its bylaws, the construction of a building that will house its office, etc. ASE has found out from experience that the most difficult times for a CBE are usually the first six-to-12 months of its existence. Why? Because this is the time that the leaders of the CBI and the community probe each other, as it were. In other words, a wait-and-see attitude seems to get hold of the community, in particular, during this period in the existence of the CBI. After all, their mountainous terrain and somewhat bloody history seem to have made rural communities in Ethiopia very suspicious of strangers. Whatever they do for them initially, they tend to suspect that the strangers have a hidden religious or political agenda. On the other hand, people who are socially active but have “personal and selfish motives” could dominate the

community meetings. A few of these might, in fact, manage to have themselves elected as leaders of the community unless some precautions are taken. Forming an *ad hoc* CBI committee will, nevertheless, make it easy for the community to weed out such people before it is too late. Besides, it will give it a breathing space to nominate the right leaders for the CBI. Furthermore, it will enable ASE to win the community's trust, for it (the community) will have an ample time to find out that ASE has no ulterior motive whatsoever, other than helping the community empower itself.

In every kebele where ASE is operational, it is safe to assume that a community-learning forum has already been created, and that it was created in the first six months of the program's lifetime. This forum shall manage to learn about community-based institutions in a detailed manner. Members of this forum may also begin to have informal discussions with fellow farmers about the need for establishing a CBI. Some people who are leaders of social institutions like *idirs*, *mahiber*, and churches/mosques, etc. can take the lead in selling the idea, mainly by making it a topic of discussion on the social forums. This is the groundwork that needs to be accomplished before calling a general meeting of the public in the kebele. It is probably good to organize one session in the community-learning forum to get feedback from the leaders of the social organizations, as their feedback will help understand the felt needs of the community members who are not members of the learning forum. This session will also be used to draw up the plan for holding the general meeting.

A steering committee, too, will have to be formed—constituted by members of the learning forum. The steering committee will, of course, be responsible for calling the general meeting and facilitating the discussion on the formation of the CBI. The steering committee should be able to work in close

collaboration with the kebele administration, for the latter is determinant to the success of certain activities—including the calling of a general public meeting.

At the general public meeting, members of the *ad hoc* committee will be elected. The public will have to also endorse its mandate and the timeframe within which it must undertake all that it has to. One of these is, of course, the drafting of the bylaws of the CBI to be established. The *ad hoc* committee must draw this up within a year's time so that it will be approved at the next general public meeting, which should be held a year later.

## **5.2 Early Partnership**

By the time that the formation process of the CBI has reached this stage, all concerned will have developed a good understanding of what a CBI is all about. Many will have, in fact, begun to do everything they can to make it a reality within their respective communities. Furthermore, one can safely assume that no vestige of suspicion will have remained and that everyone will have been fully aware of the benefits that could accrue to him or her from the establishment of a CBI.

At this stage, ASE will have to work in full gear toward the establishment of the CBI; the community, for its part, will have to throw its weight behind it (ASE) and give it its unreserved support. Then, roughly one year after the first general public meeting was held, a similar meeting will be called for the second time, for a whole year is ample time for the *ad hoc* committee to undertake all the activities that it must toward the establishment of the CBI—as stated earlier. At this second general public meeting, the permanent

members of the CBI's Executive Committee will be elected. Thereafter, ASE will be engaged in the following activities.

### **5.2.1 Enhancing the Capacity of the *ad hoc* Committee's Leaders**

The members of the *ad hoc* committee are expected to be actively involved in the implementation of the projects that ASE has developed, with participation from the community—right from their formulation. The *ad hoc* committee will also have to draw up its own bylaws, to serve it up until the establishment of the CBI. Another thing that this *ad hoc* committee will have to do is construct its own office and run its day-to-day activities. To that end, the *ad hoc* committee will be given support from ASE's Development Facilitators and the VLDPs. Its members will also be given pertinent training by ASE, in accordance with the training modules that will be prepared for the purpose ahead of time. The training module will incorporate into it, among others, lessons on leadership, organization and management, financial management, planning, monitoring, evaluation, networking, transparency, accountability, participation, and conflict management. And the Program Office will have to organize these training sessions in such a way that all trainees can meet at a place central to all—instead of meeting at each kebele. It must, nonetheless, make sure that the number of the participants at any one time does not exceed 30.

On-the-job training is the most effective way of making the participants acquire the skills they need to do their jobs effectively and efficiently. The Development Facilitators and officers must, therefore, go to their places of work and give the *ad hoc* committee members on-the-job training. They will have to, however, make sure that this training is well planned.

For their part, ASE's staffs should be so eagle-eyed as to be able to identify ahead of time the type of support that each of these groups should be provided with in order to be able to rise to the challenges before them. They must, nevertheless, do so with the understanding that all, or most, of the members of the *ad hoc* committee could be replaced by others once the CBI has been established. Of course, in the event that ASE's staffs notice certain qualities in the members of this committee, they should not hesitate to bring them to the attention of the community, so that they may be elected as leaders of the CBI, even though they cannot have them elected. Should that happen, the leaders of the CBI will have no difficulty in continuing to build on some of the good work begun earlier by the *ad hoc* committee.

Even those members of the *ad hoc* committee who fail to be elected as leaders of the CBI are better positioned to be of great service to the other public or social institutions in the kebele, by virtue of the fact that they have worked as members of this committee for about a year. ASE will have to, nevertheless, continue to give them and the leaders of the CBI on-the-job training and thereby make them be more useful to their community.

### **5.2.2 Involving the *ad hoc* Committee in PME**

The period in which the *ad hoc* committee must be formed is sometime during the second quarter of [the first year](#). It will have to, therefore, take part in the monitoring meeting that will be held during that quarter, as well as in the drawing up of the activity plans for the third and fourth quarters. The monitoring and planning exercises can be considered as on-the-job training for the *ad hoc* committee's members.

**Editor's note:** [The first year of what?](#)



At the monitoring meetings and planning exercises of the subsequent periods, however, the members of the *ad hoc* committee must be in a position to play the leadership role. In other words, they should be able to say what should be monitored or planned. They should also be able to present a report on the quarter's performance and to facilitate the drawing up of the activity plan for the next quarter at the quarterly meeting of the project's participants. It might not be practicable to call a general public meeting every quarter. Calling a meeting of the project's participants—that is, those involved in ASE-supported activities—should, nevertheless, be relatively easy. But maximum effort must be made to see to it that the kebele administration and the existing social organizations are represented in such meetings. The staffs of the Offices of Agriculture, Health and Education, too, should be invited to attend. ASE's staffs, for their part, will have to provide the members of the *ad hoc* committee with all the support they need to properly run the meetings. The need for invariably attending such meetings must also be impressed upon Development Facilitators, all VLDPs and some officers. As the legacy of these experiences will linger long in the program area, even after ASE has phased out, it is imperative that ASE's staffs give them due consideration. In short, by doing everything that they can to make sure that the meetings are taken by everyone concerned as seriously as they ought to, ASE's staffs will be making a great contribution to the development in the area of a new culture of participatory planning and downward accountability.

### **5.2.3 Transforming the *ad hoc* Committee**

Everything may not always go to plan. The same holds true about the strategies spelled out in this document. According to this strategy paper, the

*ad hoc* committee will work for about one year and then be replaced by the Executive Committee of the CBI. Extra care must, however, be made to make sure that the following have taken place before the committee is replaced:

- The general public has endorsed the activities undertaken by the *ad hoc* committee;
- Tangible benefits have begun to accrue to the community as a direct result of the project activities managed by the *ad hoc* committee;
- A culture of working together to attain a common goal and doing so in a well organized manner has been developed by the community as a result of the monitoring and planning exercises of the *ad hoc* committee;
- The bylaws of the CBI has been drafted and endorsed at the second general public meeting;
- Most of the leaders of the *ad hoc* committee have acquired the skills needed to do their jobs efficiently and that they seem self-confident;
- The support necessary to establish and develop the CBI has been obtained from the concerned government bodies;
- The building that is to house the CBI's office has been constructed and equipped with all the facilities and pieces of equipment it needs;
- VLDPs and VLHPs have begun to report to the CBI; and
- The performance of the DF, who is responsible for giving support to the *ad hoc* committee, has been evaluated.

### **5.3 Advanced Partnership**

At this stage, the *ad hoc* committee will have been dissolved, and the Executive Committee of the CBI will have come into existence, having been

democratically elected by the community. The CBI must have also been duly registered by the concerned government body and attained legal-entity status. Furthermore, in all probability, its leaders will have begun to play their rightful role, which includes making important decisions, making it possible for ASE to begin shunning the limelight—as it should. In short, it is a stage where the CBI is, more or less, on its own and is, therefore, able to concert and lead all the efforts aimed at developing the community. Under normal conditions, the CBI should reach this stage one year after its establishment. The activities that need to be undertaken at this stage comprise the following.

### **5.3.1 The Executive Committee of the CBI Begins Work**

The newly elected Executive Committee of the CBI begins work in close partnership with ASE. That means, the Executive Committee has reached that stage where it makes decisions on the ongoing projects and the overall development work of the kebele. Its duties and responsibilities will consist of the following:

- Drawing up the annual activity plans of the program for their respective kebeles;
- Reviewing the implementation of these activity plans every quarter, even as the *ad hoc* committee used to;
- Participating in the kebele administration's council meetings as an observer;
- Entering into negotiations with the kebele administration with a view to aligning its activity plans with those of the government;

- Participating in ASE's quarterly technical meetings and thereby playing a determinant role in meaningfully directing its (ASE's) technical and managerial functions;
- Registering members and collecting membership fees;
- Designing a system whereby the poor, women and marginalized groups will be made the main beneficiaries of all development interventions in the area;
- Getting involved in the income-generating activities that are being undertaken at the kebele level;
- Beginning to design their own projects and thereby accessing the community development funds as well as funds from other sources (government or bilateral support);
- Forming committees that will report to it—such as social services, school, health, water development, community learning forum, natural resources management, etc. committees—and providing to them leadership;
- Getting actively involved in the identification, development and promotion of farmers' innovations;
- Facilitating fair and sustainable agricultural input supply and marketing services to the community, especially the poor, and lobbying the concerned government bodies to that end;
- Guiding and managing the VLDPs and VLHPs; and
- Striving to do everything independently, with little or no support from ASE's Development Facilitator.

If and when the Executive Committee of the CBI properly fulfills these duties and responsibilities at the advanced ASE-CBI partnership stage, one can surmise that it (the Executive Committee) is on the right track. The CBI might not right away be able to develop the work culture that will enable its

Executive Committee to fulfill all its duties. Still, it should be able to manifest that it is improving by the day and thereby give its assurances that it will definitely rise to the challenge before it. In the monitoring and evaluation section of this strategy paper, progress indicators could be extracted out of the above-outlined duties of the CBI.

### **5.3.2 Enhancing the Capacity of the Leaders**

It goes without saying that enhancing the capacity of the CBI and of its Executive Committee is one of ASE's major duties. ASE will, therefore, see to it that the following are done to that end:

- All members of the CBI and of its Executive Committee have acquired reading and writing skills;
- Some of those who are literate and interested in furthering their education are made to do so by arranging for them distant learning opportunities;
- The Executive Committee is given a reasonably equipped and furnished office so that it will have no problem carrying out its duties—including accounting, bookkeeping, procurement of goods, recruitment and administration of employees (VLDPs and VLHPs), material supply and management, secretarial functions (arranging meetings, recording minutes, writing letters, filing documents, proposal writing, etc.), planning, monitoring, reporting, etc.;
- The Executive Committee of the CBI has acquired considerable negotiation power in its dealings with the kebele administration and ASE's Program Offices and is thus in a position where it can meaningfully influence the decisions of other stakeholders;

- The Executive Committee of the CBI has manifested its mastery of conflict resolution and management and, therefore, exudes confidence that it can rise to the challenge of resolving or managing any conflicts that may eventually arise among the members of the CBI, between the members of the Executive Committee itself and the project's participants, between the CBI and the Kebele administration, the CBI and ASE's staffs, the CBI and the cooperatives, the CBI and the staffs of the Offices of Agriculture, Health, Education, etc.;
- Self-initiated project activities and income-generating activities are being undertaken; and
- The Executive Committee of the CBI has visibly developed a broader vision for the CBI, in terms of expanding its services both by type and quality, and is trying to network with the concerned organizations at the woreda level.

These are some of the qualities that the CBI's leaders should manifest at this stage of its development. And it is based on the manifestation of these qualities that ASE will draw up its plan for enhancing the capacity of the CBI. ASE—more specifically, its Program Offices—will use various tools to enhance the CBI's capacity. These tools could be, among other things, face-to-face training, correspondence education, experience-sharing visits, the creation of an enabling environment so that the CBI will not find it very difficult to make decisions pertaining to the development of the area, ensuring its access to the community development funds under a special arrangement (because the CBI will not have been registered at this stage), giving its members on-the-job training, awarding outstanding performers, and encouraging the members of the Executive Committee to learn from their mistakes.

### **5.3.3 Giving VLDPs and VLHPs Intensive Training**

This is the other most important capacity-enhancing support that ASE will give the CBI at this stage of its development. ASE should be able to train at least one VLDP and one VLHP for each *Gott*, which is the Amharic word for turf. And the training should consist of communication skills as well as skills in facilitation and networking. To that end, ASE will need to develop guidelines on how to elect, train, develop and motivate VLDPs and VLHPs in general. The VLDPs will not, of course, be expected to initially give much technical training to the farmers. What they will be expected to do, instead, is create community learning forums and facilitate collective learning and action. The other important thing that these people will have to do is create a technical linkage between the CBI and the other actors—including ASE, the cooperatives, the Offices of Agriculture, Health, etc.

The VLDPs are expected to be trained in all the skills that the Farmers Field School trains its trainees in—including participatory innovation development, participatory learning techniques, organic agriculture, nursery management, natural resources management, gender issues, HIV/AIDS, highland fruits, apiculture, etc.

The VLHPs, on the other hand, will be taught about general health issues; they will also be given training in family planning, childcare and development, environmental and personal hygiene, and prevention of HIV/AIDS and malaria (where applicable). Developing these training programs and the modules needed to properly execute them is, needless to say, a gargantuan responsibility ASE will have to somehow shoulder. ASE might have to develop the training programs, as well as the modules, at the training center it is planning to establish in the Tehuledere Woreda.

## **5.4 Late Partnership**

At this stage in the development of the CBI, it (the CBI) will have attained legal-entity status; ASE will have handed over to it the mantle of initiating and running development activities; and ASE's gradual disengagement from all development activities will have reached its final stage. In short, the CBI will have, more or less, come of age; gone will have been the days that it needed to look up to ASE; on the contrary, it will have been in a position where it can plan, organize, implement, monitor and evaluate and administer all the development activities in its area, whereas ASE will continue to provide it with technical and advisory services. In short, it will have reached the stage where it can call the shots—to use common parlance.

### **5.4.1 Establishing the Apex CBI at the Woreda Level**

This is a CBI that serves as an apex organization for all the CBIs within the woreda. Its establishment will have to, of course, be initiated by the existing CBIs themselves. In a bid to further increase their negotiating power and positively influence the pertinent government policy at the woreda level, the CBIs will most probably want to be represented at the seat of the woreda government. This representation will also present it with the opportunity to expand its services to the entire woreda. It is expected to begin when the representatives of the CBI in each kebele come together, to attend the quarterly meetings that will take at ASE's Woreda Coordination Office.

Like the establishment of the CBIs at the kebele level, the establishment of the woreda apex CBI, too, should begin with the formation of an *ad hoc*



committee. Once formed, the *ad hoc* committee will then do almost everything that its counterpart committee at the kebele level did. In other words, it will be given the mandate that will enable it to establish the woreda-level CBI and, to that end, to communicate with ASE and the concerned government bodies, representing the CBIs at all the kebeles within the woreda. As much as possible, care ought to, however, be taken to make sure that all the CBIs within the woreda have been represented as members of the woreda *ad hoc* committee. The *ad hoc* committee will have to also choose its Chairperson and Secretary. This committee should remain in existence at least for six consecutive months, during which time it will have to undertake the following activities:

- Drafting the bylaws of the woreda CBI and getting it endorsed at the meeting of the General Assembly of the CBIs in the woreda, which will be held when the woreda CBI is ready to be inaugurated as an independent legal entity; and
- With technical help from ASE, drawing up a strategy for the CBI at the woreda level and designing the projects/programs that it will have to implement, after they have been reviewed and approved by the General Assembly mentioned herein above.

ASE may support the *ad hoc* committee to establish the woreda-level CBI as follows:

- Facilitating meetings: providing it with an assembly hall, if necessary, paying the farmers *per diem* when they have to spend the night in the town, conveying messages to the kebele CBIs, making presentations and facilitating discussions on the advantages of being organized at the woreda level, etc.;

- Organizing experience-sharing visits to ASE's previous intervention areas where there are full-fledged CBIs;
- Hiring a local lawyer who will be working very closely with the Chairperson and the Secretary of the *ad hoc* committee, mainly to help them draft the bylaws of the woreda-level CBI;
- Providing it with stationery and other materials that it will need to properly fulfill the duties and responsibilities entrusted to it;
- Linking it with the pertinent institutions within the woreda;
- Encouraging the *ad hoc* committee to represent the farmers (though it is not registered) in matters that concern the collective interests of the CBIs at the kebele level—usually social and development matters; and
- Participating in the drawing up of a strategy and a program proposal for at least three years.

The draft bylaws of the woreda CBI should be endorsed at the General Assembly that will be constituted by representatives of each kebele CBI. Each kebele CBI will have to, of course, be represented by a minimum of five, but a maximum of seven, of its members. It is advisable to make sure that the representatives are drawn both from the CBI membership and its Executive Committee. For instance, if a CBI is represented by seven people, three of them could be members of the CBI's Executive Committee, and the remaining four the CBI's ordinary members; but if it is represented by only

five people, two of them could be drawn from its Executive Committee, and the remaining three could be the CBI's ordinary members. Such a representation is very important because these people will be constituting the General Assembly of the woreda CBI, which will be its highest governing body. Furthermore, maximum effort must be exerted to make sure that women, the poor and marginalized groups have been proportionately represented in the General Assembly. ASE's Program Office in the vicinity may help the *ad hoc* committee of the woreda CBI in organizing the inaugural ceremony. For example, it can, on its behalf, invite the high-ranking officials from the woreda and zonal level government offices, as well as representatives of ASE's Head Office. It is crucially important that representatives of the pertinent government offices be present on the occasion, as the woreda-level CBI will eventually need their support. Soon after the inaugural ceremony, the woreda-level CBI is expected to do the following:

- Have the General Assembly endorse its bylaws;
- Elect members for the CBI's Board of Directors; and
- Present to the General Assembly its draft Action Plan for the next two years, as well as a project document, which is a requirement for registration.

#### **5.4.2 Determining the Powers and Duties of the Kebele and Woreda CBIs**

One of the issues that the bylaws of the woreda-level CBI should address is the division of power between itself and the kebele-level CBIs. Normally, whenever a higher-level association is formed on the grounds of "base associations," there is a tendency to concentrate power in the higher-level association. That in turn invariably results in making the base associations

totally unenthused about what they are supposed to do. Although it is up to the General Assembly to decide on the matter, ASE will have to do everything it can to make sure that its members are made aware of the repercussions that a concentration of power in the woreda-level CBI could entail. To that end, it will instigate a discussion on the following points:

- What should the kebele CBIs contribute to the woreda CBI—in terms of money—out of the membership fees they collect and the other incomes they generate?
- What portion of the resources that it secures from donors and government sources should the woreda CBI share with the kebele CBIs?
- How much autonomy should the kebele CBIs have, so that they can prepare proposals, solicit funds from various sources and implement projects on their own—without needing the approval, or go-ahead, of the woreda CBI?
- In the event that the kebele-level CBIs manage to successfully solicit funds from donors, how could the money be channeled to them, since they will have no bank accounts? And what should the role and responsibility of the woreda CBI be in this case?
- Even if the kebele CBIs have the autonomy to design and execute their own development projects, it is imperative that the woreda CBI know what each kebele CBI is doing. But what is the best way of making sure that their reports reach the woreda CBI in a concerted manner?
- It is equally imperative that the kebele CBIs actively participate in the projects that the woreda CBE designs and executes. But what is the best way of ensuring that that happens, since their active participation in project management could be unrealistic in more ways than one?

- Ensuring downward accountability has nowadays been widely accepted as a desirable thing to do. But how could it be made practicable—that is, how could the Secretariat of the woreda CBI be made accountable to the kebele CBIs?
- How is it possible to create a space for the kebele CBIs to have a say in the evaluation of the performances of the staffs of the Secretariat of the woreda CBI?

These questions could serve as points of departure toward an in-depth discussion on the crucial issues. But they also have the added advantage of indicating that, all in all, the CBIs should undertake the following three types of development projects:

- Those developed by the kebele-level CBI and implemented by same, with financial support from donors whose help it had solicited;
- Those developed and implemented by the kebele CBIs, with financial support from the woreda-level CBI; and
- Those developed by the leadership of the woreda-level CBI, but should be implemented by the kebele-level CBIs—coordinated by the woreda-level CBI.

These are, therefore, the three important issues that ought to be carefully considered while allotting powers and duties to the two-level CBIs. And the most propitious time to do that is at the time of the drafting of their respective bylaws and the drawing up of their strategic directions.

### **5.4.3 Getting the CBIs Duly Registered**

Getting duly registered by the concerned government body is crucially important for CBIs, in that that is the only way that they can be recognized as legal entities by all pertinent governmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as donors and the private sector. Seeing to it that that is done is the responsibility of the woreda-level CBI. That includes making sure that all the requirements have been met, before submitting a letter of application to the concerned government body, requesting for registration. The requirements might slightly differ from kebele to kebele. Extra care must, therefore, be made to make sure that the requirements that are particular to all the kebeles concerned are fully known ahead of time. In general, nevertheless, what is required is making sure that the following are in place:

- The CBI's bylaws has been endorsed by its General Assembly;
- The curriculum vitae (resumes) and passport-size photographs of the elected persons are attached to the letter of application for registration;
- The CBI has its own office;
- The CBI's project proposal and strategic plan have been approved by its General Assembly;
- The financial support necessary to properly implement the approved project has either been secured or a letter of commitment from its donors has reached the CBI; and
- A support letter has been secured from the Woreda Council.

#### **5.4.4 Entering into Negotiations with the Woreda's Government**

The woreda-level CBI is expected to start a purposeful engagement with the Woreda Council and with the line offices at the woreda, zonal or regional

level. It must also make sure that it has been represented in the woreda's development committees, the NGO-GO partnership committee, and in any other pertinent government-formed committees that have an open-door policy. The CBI is also expected to bring the issues that concern the community to the attention of the pertinent government bureaus and offices, so that something will be done about them. Furthermore, as and when necessary, it should lobby these government officials on behalf of the community.

#### **5.4.5 The CBI has to Establish its Own Secretariat**

At this phase, the CBI is expected to establish its own Secretariat, which will be accountable to its Executive Committee. The Secretariat should initially be constituted by a Project Manager, two or three Project Officers, and a few administrative staffs. The administrative staffs will have to, of course, give backstopping support to the VLDPs and VLHPs.

ASE, for its part, will give the staffs recruited by the CBI orientation. It will also enhance their capacities through training. The training will invariably include training in facilitation and communication skills and in how to organize and run community-learning forums and community-based institutions. Furthermore, ASE will do everything it can to make sure that the CBI's staffs have developed an appropriate institutional culture by acquainting them with the pertinent guiding principles, so that they will not eventually be tempted to be pompous and autocratic.

#### **5.4.6 VLDPs and VLHPs as Full-Time Employees of the CBI**

As stated earlier, the VLDPS and the VLHPs have been working on a part-time basis. Once the CBI has been established, nevertheless, it is advisable to make them its permanent employees—provided the financial resources at its disposal enable it to do so.

#### **5.4.7 A Critical Review of the Status of the CBIs**

ASE is a perpetually learning organization. As such, it needs to have an in-built monitoring and evaluation system that will facilitate for it nonstop learning. ASE, of course, will right away put into practice whatever lessons it thus draws. In fact, doing so is part and parcel of the implementation process of its programs.

In addition to that, however, ASE will have to review the development status of the CBIs before proceeding to the next phase, which involves the partial reduction of its (ASE's) staffs. For that to take place, nonetheless, ASE will have to make sure that the Secretariats of the CBIs have reached that stage where they can fulfill their duties with little or no support from ASE. In short, the outcome of the review exercise will determine the type of support that ASE will provide the CBIs with during the next phase.

#### **5.5 A Partial Phasing-out of ASE**

At this stage, the CBIs will have begun to play the key role in the development of their respective domains. That means, they will have become so mature that they will have to be weaned of the programs that ASE has been implementing for them. What logically follows that is that ASE's role in the decision-making process, too, will have to begin diminishing, whereas that of the CBIs will have to begin increasing. In other



words, the CBI will have reached an organizational development level characterized by the following:

### **5.6 Constituency Building is Pursued in Earnest**

The CBI is expected to increase the number of its members. And its members should not have to necessarily be only farmers; non-farmers, too, could join it. Businesspersons, civil servants, lawyers and others should be approached to become members of the institution. A few CSOs such as the Women's Association, the Youth Association, the Association of Teachers, cooperatives, etc., too, could be made its associate members—so long as its bylaws allow that.

With the support of ASE (the Program Offices and the Head Office), the woreda-level CBI should be able to establish a link with associations or groups of people who originally come from the woreda, but reside elsewhere—for instance, in Addis Ababa or in any of the major towns of the country. ASE has observed that it has of late become customary among those who live in Addis Ababa, and even among Ethiopians in the Diaspora, to form informal associations, based on their places of birth, with the expressed purpose of actively participating in all the development efforts of that particular place. The CBIs, for their part, will have to do everything they can to forge relations with such groups of people. To that end, ASE and the CBIs will have to jointly do the following:

- Identify the leaders of the associations and hold meetings with them (ASE's Public Relations Services and the members of its top-level Management will have to be involved in lobbying these leaders);

- Organize field visits for the representatives of the associations that are expected to be associate members of the CBI, so as to help them see what farmers' CBIs are doing at the grassroots level;
- Organize an event at which a documentary film featuring the major accomplishments of the CBIs will be shown to the members of the associations in the town;
- Facilitate the formation of a permanent fundraising committee for the CBI at the same event;
- Invite the associations or the groups of people present to join the CBI as its associate members; and
- Publicize what the CBI has done by closely working with the mass media, so that more donors and supporters will extend to it their support.

### **5.7 The CBI Extends its Services to Other Kebeles**

A CBI can work in other kebeles as well—other than the kebele where it was initially registered. In fact, one of the factors that indicate that a CBI is truly [mature](#) is its ability to work in other Kebeles, too. That, of course, is easier said than done, for it involves, among other things, raising the awareness of the people, initiating the establishment of CBIs in these kebeles, giving them the support they need to design and execute certain projects, as well as to be represented in the woreda-level CBI. If the CBI has already made a name for itself, as a result of what it has already been able to accomplish, nevertheless, it could be welcomed with open arms in the other kebeles. Deciding whether or not it should work in the other kebeles of the woreda rests entirely with the CBI. In the event that it decides to do so, however, ASE will give it all the support it needs, as it is positioned to do so, at least because it is well acquainted with the whole area. The following guiding

points may help the CBI to extend its services to the other kebeles within the same woreda:

**Editor’s note:** It is mature, not “matured.”

- A request could be lodged by a kebele and/or the Woreda Council to the CBI—that is, a request for extending its services to the kebele. If and when the request comes from the Woreda Council, it could be accompanied with information on how bilateral, multilateral or government funds could be accessed to launch a development project in the kebele. A similar request could be lodged to the CBI by other NGOs or donors that might want it to extend its services to a kebele of their choice. Before granting or denying such requests, the CBI will have to, nonetheless, do a thorough analysis of its capacity—in terms of manpower and financial resources. The CBI should be careful not to make the mistake of assuming that securing the funds necessary to extend its services in and of itself can qualify it to do so. There is more to extending one’s presence than that.
- Whether the CBI decides to extend its services to another kebele either because it was requested to do so or of its own volition, it will have to use the following kebele selection criteria: a low level of food security/a high level of poverty, a high level of vulnerability to both internal and external shocks, a low level of government services, the absence of an NGO in the kebele, a visible interest on the part of the community to establish its own CBI at the kebele level. In the event that many kebeles lodge a similar request and meet all these criteria, the Executive Committee of the CBI must be able to come up with its own criteria, so as to be able to narrow down its choice.

- Until such time as the kebele where the CBI has just gone to with a view to extending its services thereto is in a position to have its own VLDPs, the VLDPs of a nearby kebele should shoulder the responsibility of running the community-learning forum of the kebele.

## **6. ASE'S STAFFS BEGIN DISENGAGEMENT**

**Editor's note:** The same is true about this numbering. In fact, it is a repetition.

If a CBI is truly mature and strong, it cannot have much use for ASE's services, which are basically aimed at enhancing its (the CBI's) capacity. So, once a CBI has reached that stage, ASE will have to begin diminishing its importance to it. That, of course, involves staff reduction in its Program Office. The Program Office will have to, however, do everything possible not to lay off experienced staffs, but to, instead, find ways and means of making them useful in the new woredas that ASE will most likely go to following its apparent irrelevance to the mature CBI.

The number of DFs has to, nonetheless, be reduced. And the remaining will have to be given new roles: as backstoppers and supervisors of the VLDPs and VLHPs. One supervisor alone should be able to shoulder the responsibility of doing follow-up on the work of the VLDPs and VLHPs in three kebeles. The number of ASE's officers, too, must be halved. But those who are well experienced in facilitating the establishment of new CBIs and are good at organizing and running community-learning forums can be assigned to the new woreda that it (ASE) will go to from there.

The number of ASE's staffs that should remain unaffected by these reductions will depend on the strength and maturity of the CBIs in the woreda, the accord signed between ASE and its donors with regard to the funding of its programs in the new woreda, as well as the budgeted overhead cost. In general, at this phase of a CBI's development, ASE will have to make itself as lean as possible, by retaining only a few staffs that it will need to undertake capacity-enhancing activities for only two or three years. The decision as to exactly how many staffs should remain and for how long will have to, nonetheless, be made by ASE's Management.

### **i) Proposal Writing and Linkage with Donors is Enhanced**

At this stage of its development, it is imperative that the CBI be good at proposal writing and forging relations with donors and networks. Training the staffs of the Secretariat of a CBI in how to write proposals is, of course, one of ASE's duties. As such, it must keep on training them in this valuable skill throughout its stay in the area until such time as they have been able to write proposals and to thereby secure the financial support that the CBI needs from donors. ASE has to make sure that the Secretariat of the CBI has fully acquired this skill before the senior staffs of its Program Office in the area have left for good. Also, ASE will have to lobby its own donors to continue supporting the CBIs even after it has completely phased out of the area, besides exerting more effort to link the CBIs with international NGOs and networks that could give them financial support. Furthermore, ASE should do everything in its power to help the CBIs get access to the bilateral and multilateral funds that flow to the Woreda Council from the federal and regional governments.

### **ii) The CBI Undertakes Income-Generating Activities**

As stated earlier, the sources of fund for the CBIs will be membership fees, the community development fund, and donations from associations and groups whose members originally come from that area. In addition to all that, ASE will make maximum effort to make sure that the woreda-level CBI has managed to own an income-generating business venture, and to do so at this stage of its development. Needless to say, such business ventures will have to be established based on the findings of a feasibility study. The feasibility study will, of course, normally look into the prospective market for the products and/or services of the business, the adequate and uninterrupted availability of raw materials, the simplicity/complexity of the venture to manage, and the return it will have for the CBI. Actually, the feasibility study must also be able to determine the contribution that the business venture will make to the development programs in the woreda, for it is not at all advisable for the CBI to establish a business venture simply because it looks to it highly lucrative.

ASE, however, has not as yet been able to find an appropriate answer to the question “Who should own the business venture?” although it has tried to many times. One of the reasons that it has found it difficult to come up with an appropriate answer to this question is that the governments’ pertinent policies differ from regional state to regional state. Still, a number of options are available—including the following:

- In the Amhara Regional State, NGOs and community-based institutions may own an income-generating business venture by duly securing a license from the regional DPPC. They will have to, nevertheless, periodically submit a financial statement to the representative office of the DPPC at the woreda. The financial

statement will, of course, have to clearly show all the incomes and outgoes of the business venture. The rationale behind this policy is that the regional government encourages NGOs and CBIs to get involved in business, so long as it is provided with some evidence that the income generated from the business venture goes directly into the development of the community.

- The Oromia Regional State, on the other hand, has no clear-cut policy on this matter. The Review Team that ASE had formed for the purpose has, nonetheless, found out from the one-on-one interviews it had held with some officials in the Region that the Council is discussing the issue with a view to formulating a policy like that of the Amhara Regional State. The Team has also been informed that the Oromia Council is fully supportive of the idea and that it has turned a blind eye when certain self-help groups like the Association of People with Disabilities and the Children Welfare Organization began getting engaged in income-generating activities.

**Editor's note:** The word "handicap" is no longer politically correct. What is correct is "people with disabilities."

- The other thing that the CBI can do is establish a business venture in accordance with the principles of endowment. That means, the shareholders of the company will not get any dividend; instead, all the money thus generated will be directed to implementing the CBI's development programs. ASE has to, however, make sure that this option does not in any way contravene the law of the land.

- CBIs can also establish cooperatives, which will be busy with marketing and input-delivery activities at the kebele level. The kebele-level cooperatives may also establish a union at the woreda level, as unions have the right to manage an income-generating venture on behalf of the CBIs. Extra care must, nonetheless, be made to make sure that these options are not in any way abused or misused.
- One can safely assume that there are many other options. But it is up to the Program Offices to choose the best and most sustainable option for making the CBIs financially self-reliant.

### **iii) Making Micro-Finance Institutions Work with CBIs**

For ASE to completely phase out from its program area, there should be a strong and well-established CBI that could shoulder the responsibility of getting its development initiatives in the area rolling. One way that ASE can ensure that that happens is by making micro-finance institutions work with the CBIs as closely as possible. As stated earlier, PEACE Micro-Finance Institution is ASE's partner in development. So it provides the members of the communities that ASE is serving with credit services. PEACE is expected to work alongside ASE, starting in the second year of ASE's initial intervention in a new program area. The arrangement is, nonetheless, contingent upon the availability of adequate funds that PEACE could extend as loans and the viability of the business. At any rate, PEACE has given its assurances to ASE that it would do everything it could not only to provide the CBIs that have reached this stage with credit services, but also with additional banking products and services. These services, needless to say, are hard to come by in the rural parts of the country where ASE is operational. ASE is, therefore, appreciative of what PEACE is doing. In the



event that PEACE finds it difficult to render these services to the CBIs, nevertheless, ASE will have to look into other options that are available in the area. As disclosed a while back, these options could include establishing savings and credit cooperatives and working with other micro-finance institutions.

## **7. THE COMPLETE PHASING-OUT OF ASE**

**Editor's note:** The same is true about this numbering. In fact, it is a repetition.

If and when the CBIs reach the stage where they are institutionally mature and can, therefore, stand on their own feet and coordinate all development activities, ASE will have to get prepared to completely withdraw from that area. So far as ASE is concerned, a CBI can be considered to have reached that stage if it manifests the following:

- It has the capacity needed to implement development programs;
- Has reliable funding sources;
- Has been given more space in the socio-economic and political affairs of the woreda;
- Its Board of Directors is constituted by capable members;
- Its constituents are actively participating in the implementation of the development programs;
- Is ready to take over all the development activities that ASE had been undertaking;
- Has an adequate number of staffs to effectively shoulder its newfound responsibilities; and
- Has put in place fully developed working systems and standard procedures.

If the CBI is so mature, ASE will gladly begin to take measures aimed at its complete phasing-out from the area. Otherwise, it will have to stay a bit longer and work in full gear to make sure that the CBI stands on its own feet, as it were.

## **8. THE POST-PHASING OUT ERA**

**Editor's note:** The same is true about this numbering. In fact, it is a repetition.

Once the CBI reaches the stage where it can initiate, implement, monitor, and evaluate development programs on its own, ASE can assume that its capacity to solve both its software and hardware problems has been fully enhanced. That in turn will lead ASE to assume that it is also accepted by both the community and the local government as a *bona fide* institution working toward the development of the area. Then, then ASE will have to start drawing up a plan for its complete withdrawal from the area. And, once it has done that, its relations with the CBI will have the following characteristics:

- ASE’s relations with the CBI will be based on an equal partnership;
- ASE will continue to enhance the capacities of the staffs of the CBI from where it is relocated;
- ASE will initiate networking among all the CBIs established in the woreda;
- ASE and the CBI will jointly undertake research- and learning-related activities;
- ASE and the CBIs will share with each other their knowledge and experiences at all levels; and
- ASE will once in a while conduct post-phasing out assessments of the performance of the CBI.

## **PART SIX: THE ROLES THAT ASE’S STAFFS WILL PLAY**

In general, all staffs of ASE play crucially important roles at various levels—as shown herein below.

### **6.1 The Roles of ASE’s Staffs at the Head Office**

- Drawing up strategies for the establishment of community-based institutions and reviewing same from time to time;
- Preparing guidelines for strengthening community-based institutions, in accordance with their institutional dynamism;
- Organizing and coordinating experience-sharing visits for all CBIs;
- Enhancing the capacities of ASE’s frontline workers and of the leaders and employees of CBIs;
- Strengthening [intra-CBI](#) linkages;
- Ensuring a proportionate gender composition of the CBIs at all levels;

- Ensuring the active participation of the poor in all development activities, as well their proportionate representation in the leadership of CBIs;
- Linking the CBIs with donors;
- Undertaking advocacy work on behalf of the poor, women and the marginalized groups of the communities ASE is serving;
- Lobbying the Government at all levels and thereby positively influencing its pertinent policies and enlisting its support;
- If and when possible, providing the leaders of CBIs with an opportunity to go abroad and learn from the experiences of other grassroots institutions like them;
- Doing close and nonstop follow-up on the implementation of ASE's programs, as well as on the progress that newly established CBIs are making;
- Doing research on how best CBIs can ensure the sustainability of ASE's interventions and the empowerment of their respective communities;
- Organizing educative workshops for other staffs of ASE, as well as for the staffs of other organizations;
- Forging ties with the CBIs that are operating in the areas that ASE has withdrawn from, with a view to rendering to them advisory services; and

**Editor's note:** It is intra, not inter.

- Gathering and collating up-to-date information about the establishment, operations, growth and challenges of all the CBIs that ASE has been giving support to.

## **6.2 The Roles of ASE's Staffs at the Program Levels**

- Identifying the community's social capital—that is, its deep-rooted customs, culture, norms, and values;
- Scaling up the community's social capital whenever possible;
- Incessantly sensitizing the communities on the need for getting empowered;
- Working tirelessly toward developing in the communities a culture of joining hands and working together toward developing their area;
- Facilitating the conditions necessary for the communities to establish community-based institutions that will help them coordinate their development efforts;
- Organize preliminary CBIs that serve as exemplary model and coordinate the communities to get organized at each KA
- Facilitating the conditions necessary for forming *ad hoc*/transitional committees that will pave the road leading to the establishment of CBIs;
- Incessantly raising the awareness of the communities about such issues as economic development and human rights and facilitating the creation of community-learning forums;

**Editor's note:** The sentence in blue is not clear to me.

- Incessantly enhancing the capacities of the members of the Executive Committees of the CBIs, so that they will be able to properly fulfill the responsibilities entrusted to them;
- Increasing the negotiation power of the CBIs;
- Linking the *ad hoc* committees with GOs, NGOs and CSOs;

- Giving the members of the *ad hoc* committee on-the-job training by getting them involved in problem identification, planning, execution, monitoring and evaluation;
- Facilitating the proper utilization of Community Development Funds at all levels;
- Organizing the General Assemblies of CBIs and helping them to be truly functional;
- Facilitating the conditions necessary for electing the right people as leaders of the CBIs and ensuring the proportionate representation therein of women and the poor;
- Giving the CBIs intensive training in institutional management; in personnel, financial, property, and partnership management; as well as in proposal writing, reporting, and fundraising; and
- Undertaking the other activities listed down in these guidelines.

## **PART SEVEN: THE MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK**

Monitoring and evaluation are intertwined, efficacious tools for learning from one's mistakes, as well as for taking appropriate and prompt remedial actions. It is, therefore, imperative that all activities be continuously monitored and evaluated.

Even though monitoring and evaluation are inseparable and seem to be quire similar, there is, however, a nuance between them. Monitoring, in general, is an activity that could be done all the time, and done both formally and informally. As such, the Management could use it for making

sure that the work that the organization is engaged in is on the right track and within the limits of the approved budget.

Evaluation, on the other hand, is an activity that is undertaken periodically in a more organized manner. And it is primarily aimed at finding out whether or not the objectives of the organization have been achieved and its goal attained, as well as at assessing the workability of the theories, principles and organizational philosophies that the organization has adopted. Furthermore, evaluation helps gauge the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization's initiatives as well as the attitudes and competence of its staffs—in comparison to the staffs of other organizations that deserve to be benchmarked.

### **7.1 Monitoring**

The activities that the CBIs are undertaking need to be monitored continuously to see if they are making the contribution they were meant to make to the development of their respective communities. Monitoring involves doing follow-up on the implementation of development programs, with a view to taking appropriate and prompt measures aimed at rectifying any irregularities, or correcting any mistakes, observed. Monitoring also helps keep stakeholders abreast of what is being done, so that, in the event that a glitch is observed in the implementation of a development program, they will come together, deliberate the matter and come up with a solution thereto right away. As such, it ought to be undertaken continuously—both formally and informally. Area-specific tools must, however, be developed, in collaboration with the development actors on the ground. Otherwise, the monitoring could end up being off the mark and, therefore, useless—even misleading.

## **7.2 Evaluation**

Evaluation is a tool that is used to decide whether or not activities are being undertaken to plan. It is, therefore, decision-oriented. Evaluating an activity, or the implementation of a development program, is logically followed by a judgment as to whether or not the activities, or the implementation of the development program, are progressing to plan. As such, evaluation is an activity that must be undertaken periodically to determine the progress of the activities being undertaken and/or the lack thereof. In the case of programs, for instance, it may be undertaken twice a year.

ASE views evaluation as part and parcel of the implementation process of its development programs. ASE will have to, therefore, evaluate the development status of the CBIs before deciding to withdraw from an area either partially or completely. The outcome of its evaluation of the development status of a CBI will then help it determine the type of support it should extend to it (the CBI) thereafter. That means, ASE will have to evaluate all the activities that a CBI is undertaking against the objectives set for it—using the indicators of success put in place.

## **7.3 Reporting Requirements**

Like monitoring and evaluation, reporting, too, is crucially important. Reports may be submitted once a month, or every quarter. They could also be submitted semi-annually or annually.

So far as ASE is concerned, its Program Offices are required to submit two types of report to the Head Office: (1) A brief summary of the achievements,



progress and challenges of the CBIS vis-à-vis their Activity Plans; and (2) A detailed report on each CBI. The summary type of report is to be submitted once a year, whereas the second type of report should incorporate into it the reflections of the Annual Partners' Meeting as well as of the community meetings. A good deal of the reports of the CBI-ECM should also be included in this report. At Head office level a comprehensive report of the status of all CBIs in ASE operational areas should be prepared and presented for a discussion, at least ones in a year. On top of this mission reports and monitoring reports of the head office Program Officers should be prepared and discussed accordingly.

**Editor's note:** I suggest that it be made clear as to which reports should be prepared by the Program Offices, and which ones by the Head Office, as well as whom they ought to be submitted to.

#### **7.4 The Objectives of ASE's Monitoring and Evaluation**

In general, ASE will undertake monitoring and evaluation with a view to finding out whether or not the following have been achieved:

- The poor, rural women and the marginalized groups are adequately represented in all activities;
- Interest is properly stimulated through community dialogue;
- Experience-sharing visits are organized and arranged so that the leaders of the CBIs could learn from the experiences of others;
- The awareness of all stakeholders has been raised with regard to the roles that CBIs can play in their respective communities' development efforts;
- All concerned individuals and groups of people are fully aware of what CBIs are all about and have accepted them as important development partners;

- *Ad hoc* committees have been formed as and when they should be;
- The capacities of the leaders of the *ad hoc* committees are being properly enhanced;
- The *ad hoc* committees are being actively involved in planning, monitoring and evaluation;
- The *ad hoc* committees are disbanded once the CBIs, whose establishment they have been facilitating, have been established;
- The CBIs are being further strengthened with the passage of time;
- The Executive Committees of the CBIs have begun properly fulfilling the responsibilities entrusted to them by drawing up the annual activity plans for the programs of their respective kebeles and by reviewing same every quarter—even as the *ad hoc* committees did;
- The CBIs have begun to actively participate in ASE’s quarterly technical meetings and thereby meaningfully influence its (ASE’s) decisions;
- The CBIs are widening their membership base by registering more and more members and thereby collecting membership fees;
- The CBIs have begun to design their own project activities and access the Community Development Funds earmarked for the implementation of such projects as well as funds from other sources (the Government, bilateral support, etc.);
- The CBIs are doing a good job of organizing sub-committees under them and providing them with the leadership they need;
- The CBIs are actively involved—as they should—in the identification, development and promotion of farmer innovators;
- The CBIs are making the most of the experiences of the VLDPs and VLHPs by providing them with the management and guidance they need;

- The CBIs are fulfilling their duties and responsibilities with little or no support either from ASE or the Development Facilitators;
- The leaders of the CBIs are showing visible signs that their capacities are being enhanced with the passage of time;
- ASE has continued to give intensive training to the VLDPs and VLHPs;
- There are unmistakable indicators that ASE's role is diminishing, as it should, and that of the CBIs increasing as part of its (ASE's) preparation for its gradual disengagement from the areas;
- An apex CBI has been established at the woreda level;
- The CBIs have drafted their bylaws and gotten them endorsed by their respective General Assemblies;
- The CBIs have drawn up their strategic directions and prepared their projects/ programs, with help from ASE;
- The powers and duties of the CBIs at the kebele level and of the CBI at the woreda level have been duly and fairly determined;
- The CBIs have been duly registered by the concerned government body and thereby made legal entities;
- The woreda-level CBI has entered into negotiations with the government's representative at the woreda;
- The CBIs have constructed the buildings that will house their offices and established their Secretariats; and
- The VLDPs and VLHPs have become full-time and permanent employees of the CBIs.

## **PART EIGHT: TIPS FOR THE CBIs**

Under this topic, this strategy document provides a few tips that ASE believes will be helpful to the CBIs. As these are only tips but not part and

parcel of the Strategy, however, the decision to accept or reject them rests entirely with the CBIs.

- Who should be the beneficiaries of the services that the CBIs will render? *Should* all the rural people living in the operational area be made beneficiaries? Or should only the poor, women and the marginalized groups living in the area be made the primary beneficiaries thereof?
- The people must be told from the outset that being members of a CBI does not necessarily entail for them any material benefit and that they should be members only if they want to be of service to their community. In the event that an acute shortage of the services that the CBI renders occurs for some reason, nonetheless, priority should be given to the poor, women and marginalized who happen to be regular members of the CBI.
- Membership should be open to all individuals and organizations that are interested in being either regular or associate members, with a view to being of service to their community. Extra care must, however, be taken to make sure that this open-door policy does not in any way end up being inimical to the interests of the farmers in the area, for they are supposed to be the main constituents of a CBI.
- As we have tried to argue elsewhere in this strategy document, conflicts are seldom avoidable. But there are certain tools that can be used to resolve them—including joint planning at the Kebele level, with GOs and other partners, developing a spirit of mutual

understanding, holding periodic joint meetings, making sure that mandates are clearly defined and then strictly adhering to them.

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