Partnership and Innovation in Development

by Berthold Kuhn

Governments have to respond to people's expectation of political representation and administrative service delivery. Non-government organisations have to respond to felt needs of their project beneficiaries and to sensitivities of their donors. Entrepreneurs have to respond to ever changing market demands.

IFFERENT actors in society, the government, non-governmental organisations and the business sector, promote development with different motivations, strategies and projects. Motivations include political considerations, humanitarian endeavours and profit-making interest. Strategies are related to considerations how to best achieve the stated objectives and projects consist of activi-ties with defined responsibilities and tasks for project executors and participants.

On the long way from motivation over strategy considerations to project implementation, common objectives may be overlooked as each actors is busy with day-to-day management and pursuing of its own institutional, organisational or entrepreneurial interests.

Innovation has to do with continuous responsiveness to changing needs and expectations of people: clients, customers, donors, and beneficiaries. Governments have to respond to people's expectation of political representation and administrative service delivery. Non-government organisations have to respond to felt needs of their project beneficiaries and to sensitivities of their donors. Entrepreneurs have to respond to ever changing market demands.

Institutions, organisations and entrepreneurs may define what is their "target group" for claiming support, demanding services or products.

Relations of people are more complex. People, clients, customers and beneficiaries are more than members of "target

groups". They interact with a variety of institutions, organisations and commercial enterprises to manage their life and

gain satisfaction. They look for opportunities and tend to care less who or which organisation or institution provides this opportunities as long as they do not engage in activities which fundamentally contradict their principles. This is all the more true in development.

Institutions, organisations and even entrepreneurs are less flexible, because the process of responding to new situations, demands and trends becomes more complicated when change threatens to challenge established rules, regulations and habits.

How can a distinctive partnership approach create an enabling environment for innovation?

Partnership departs from understanding his, her or its strengths and weaknesses and the searching for complemen-

People expect something from government and government, with limited resources, has the responsibility to cater to the needs of a maximum of people it represents. Government's low-cost service delivery approach in development is oriented towards achievements of targets. The focus tends to be rather on quantity than quality targets of service delivery in order to meet legitimate expectations of people.

NGOs face a different situation. People do not have democratically legitimated rights to ask NGOs for service deliveries. Instead, NGOs voluntarily

offer people their services. Therefore they are also known as Voluntary Organisations. NGOs are, as a matter of contractual relations, more accountable to those with whom they sign agreements for service delivery. These are in many cases donor agencies which believe in the development commitment of their partner NGO.

The comparative advantage of NGOs is that they can select their beneficiaries according to their own ideas and priorities, showing some sensitivity to government which provides the legal framework conditions for their functioning and donors which provide funding support.

Government provides NGOs only with freedom if it does not feel challenged by the activities of NGOs. Donors provide NGOs with funds only if they feel that NGO have a comparative advantage over governmental organisations in working in specific areas. The advantage of NGOs lies in terms of quality and innovation. Both need special commitment and energy and cannot be easily achieved by a (governmental) institution which faces short-term expectation of a large number of people. Development of a country has to do with making quality improvements replicable on a large scale, at low costs. This is how to reconcile sustainable quality improvements with growth in development.

Partnership between NGOs and government is the way to achieve this.

Government and NGOs, as non profit-actors, are both supposed to work in areas where market mechanism fail to provide self-sustained economic development and social justice. Poverty is a dynamic concept and market mechanism may tomorrow work in areas where they previously failed. Last but not least because of successful government and NGO development interventions. When selfsustained growth can be achieved through profit-oriented market mechanism, then the time is over for subsidised government and NGO development interventions in an area. Development can only work if

no actor claims exclusivity over

territory, people and target

groups.
This is why partnership between government, NGO and profit-oriented business is necessary. It all starts with successful innovations aiming to reduce dependencies on subsidies or charity and with making innovations replicable on larger scale. Building trust and translating theory into practice remains a major challenge for development actors in Bangladesh. Government, NGOs, the private sector and donors.

The European Commission-NGO Dialogue Project organises a workshop on "Partnership and Innovation in Development" from September 8th-10th, 1998 at the Islamic Development Bank Bhaban, Dhaka It hopes to contribute to build such trust amongst development actors in order top build partnerships and promote innovations.

The author is Team Leader of the European Commission-NGO Dialogue Project, Bangladesh. The article reflects only the personal view of the author.

Garment Workers at HIV Risks

by Shahiduzzaman

The country's garment factories are now the main source of export revenues. But the women working at the factories are at risks of getting sexually transmitted diseases as well as deadly HIV that causes AIDS.

T 18 Marjina — not her real name - works as a A helper at a garment factory. She has a passion for cinema. But she can't save enough for the entertainment. No problem.

Her male supervisor at the factory buys tickets for her favourite films and keeps her company. Even though he is married - his wife and two children live in a village outside Dhaka city — the man one night took Marjina to his rented room and they had sex. The young girl, fresh from a remote village in southern Bangladesh, tried to say no. But how could she displease a man who showers her with favours such as buying cinema tickets?

Marjina's tale is typical of many of the unmarried women who work at the country's garment factories. More than 840,000 people work at about 3,000 garment factories in Dhaka and some other cities. Nearly 80 per cent of the workforce is female.

And an estimated 20 per cent of unmarried female garment factory workers engage in sex, according to a new study on the sexual behaviour of women and men in garment factories in Dhaka. The study, conducted by ActionAid Bangladesh, a UKbased development organisation, covered workers at 93 garment factories.

When a group of women at a factory was shown a condom

with the feudal tradition we had

most of them said they have seen it, but only a few said they And Marjina and her supervisor partner have never used a

condom. While an estimated 20 per cent of unmarried female workers are having, they are alarm-ingly poor in their knowledge of safer sex practices, the study re-

vealed. During one discussion session one woman told the researchers that her husband has a swollen penis with an occasional discharge of pus. The man, a truck driver, was recently released from jail, and told her that his condition was due to maltreatment by the jail police. She does not know how to recognise Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) and so believed his story.

This lack of knowledge has made the garment factory workers specially vulnerable to acquire any form of STD or the virus that causes the fatal AIDS. This is highly alarming as the threat of HIV/AIDS epi-

demic looms over Bangladesh. According to official estimate available until 1996 Bangladesh has about 2.3 million cases of STD. So far 95 cases of HIV infection have been reported in the country since 1989, of which have developed into AIDS, seven of which have been fatal.

Garments women engage in extramarital sex mainly because of poverty and in the hope of earning some extra bucks or gifts. Even though the garment industry has provided thousands of poor women with jobs, the salary is poor. A helper's average monthly take-home pay is only Tk. 900 — not enough to rent a house and buy

One of the study findings: "At least 15 percent of the women having sex with co-workers are doing so for small gifts of cash,

and with the hope of security."

The financial situation of female factory workers is critical, particularly that of the helpers who get the lowest pay and thus suffer from job insecurity, a situation exploited by male colleagues who want to have sex with women. Thus even though a woman sometimes engage with more than one partner they cannot be categorised as commercial sex workers

Workers attending clinics are reluctant to seek help in cases of STD for fear of expo-

The report found that a large number of young male workers are also engaged in homosexual practice simply for additional income, raising the risk of STD. But they believe that sex with another male partner is riskfree from the point of STD and HIV/AIDS.

"Do something for the garment factory workers to save them from the threat of HIV/AIDS and STD," said Dr. Nafeesur Rahman, Head of Dis-

ability & AIDS Coordination Unit of ActionAid. "It's also a big threat for the flourishing economy"

About the working atmosphere in garment factories, he said they work in an unhygienic environment. The water and sanitation situation is precarious in the factories, especially the toilets facility is very

This unhygienic situation compounds the risk of STD and HIV/AIDS.

In terms of HIV/AIDS, Bangladesh is a low prevalence but high risk country," said the report adding, "urgent emphasis therefore needs to be given raising awareness of transmission and prevention of STD and HIV/AIDS.

Ton van Zupthen, Country Director of ActionAid Bangladesh, said "relationship between work, health, poverty and sexual behaviour of workers in this key industrial sector in Bangladesh will continue to receive attention."

The garment industry is the major foreign currency earning sector in addition to generating employment opportunities to thousands of poor women, said Rita Afser, team leader of the study group. "So, the government as well as the private entrepreneurs should give special attention to this sector to ensure proper medical support for the workers", she said. News Network

Handling Technology with Care

Claude Martin writes from Gland, Switzerland

VER since man began to Others, more pessimistic make tools, his belief in or merely realistic - point out his ability to invent his that many, perhaps most peoway out of trouble has steadily ple in the world today have never seen a telephone, much increased. Such confidence is not entirely misplaced. From less a television or a computer: the wheel and the stone axe to they have yet even to reach the stage of the thoughtless conthe internal combustion engine and the computer, sumption of paper and other technology has been crucial to resources about which the adthe evolution of human society. vanced industrialised world is increasing the capacity for now finally beginning to have a action and intervention in conscience. The possibilities offered by technology, for the terrestrial processes and helping to solve many basic quality of life, let alone problems of health, shelter. for environmental improveand the general conditions of ment, depend very much on where you live. But as our reliance on tech-

Moreover, the demands of nology has increased, so the technologically advanced sociambivalence of its effects has eties have so far tended to inbecome more apparent. For crease rather than diminish machines and technological pressure on dwindling natural processes can damage and resources. That fact not only destroy the life of our world increases the imbalance beeven as in some respects they tween the rich and poor counsave and enhance it. tries but also raises grave Nowhere has this technodoubts about what will be left logical dilemma been better for the future if "progress" exposed than in the growth of continues at its current frantic the environmental movement

during the past 35 years or so. Environmentalists have drawn My own view is that there is place for technological soluattention to the disastrous tions to the problems of overconsequences of industrial consumption, pollution and pollution, of the slavish reenvironmental degradation. liance on chemicals to boost and unsustainable use of refood production, of the profligate burning of fossil fuels, and sources. But if such solutions of many other effects of the are really to work, we must human obsession with tooldesign them appropriately and make sure the technology is making. Yet even within the envithe best we can devise, rather than committing ourselves ronmental movement there is disagreement over the pace. blindly to the first new discov-

scale, and future possibilities ery that comes to hand. of technological development To illustrate my point, take Some would argue, for examthe case of DDT, once seen as ple, that the rapid spread of the miracle pesticide that would not only increase food electronic communications telephone, television, the production but also combat Internet, and e-mail, will ultikiller diseases spread by mately reduce dramatically the mosquitoes. Widely used in agriculture, DDT was identified world's demand for paper, thus allowing the replacement by the mid-1950s as the chief weapon against malaria, one of of forests we have lost during our years of dependence on the main causes of death in the printed word. developing countries. The

World Health Organization made the chemical the centrepiece of an ambitious campaign aimed at nothing less than the total eradication of malaria.

At first, it appeared to be an outstanding success. Spraying with DDT certainly saved millions of lives as malaria was wiped out or dramatically reduced in 37 countries. But agricultural use of the pesticide was already leading to serious concern about its safety, as demonstrated forcefully in 1962 by Rachel Carson's seminal environmentalist book. Silent Spring, which first raised the alarm about the deadly effects of indiscriminate use of highly toxic chemi-

Among such chemicals is DDT, one of a group of what are called Persistent Organic Pollutants, or POPs, resisting degradation by light, chemical reaction, or living organisms. These highly toxic substances dissolve much more easily in fat than in water, accumulating in the fatty tissue of all living things, with serious consequences for long-term health. And because they evaporate at relatively low temperatures. POPs can be transported atmospherically to cause damage far away from where they are actually used.

Over the years since Rachel Carson's book, a body of evidence about the harmful effects of DDT has been collected. It is highly toxic to fish and invertebrates, can cause sex changes and eggshell thinning in bird species and damage the heart, liver, and nervous system in mammals. DDT cause cancer.

As a result DDT is banned from agricultural use virtually

cally. The price of resources,

like water and energy, are not

taken into consideration while

accounting for the environ-

to most, are the cost of setting

up and maintaining an effluent

treatment plant (ETP). They of-

ten fail to realise that they

spend a lot more than what they

perceive. For instance, certain

industries incur heavy expendi-

ture in treating water for a

product. However, a fair

amount of the water comes out

as industrial waste. This is an

example of money lost due to

neer can translate these hidden

costs to the losses incurred by

"If an environmental engi-

wasteful use of resources.

The obvious costs, according

worldwide. Yet, although it failed actually to eradicate malaria — which currently still kills up to three million people out of 500 million annual clinical cases — and in spite of the availability of more sophisticated alternative techniques, DDT remains in many cases the weapon of choice against the disease. Some 30,000 tonnes are produced each year in countries such as Russia, India, Mexico, and China.

The eradication of malaria is no longer an aim of the World Health Organization: local control of the disease is the order of the day and this can be achieved by more benign chemicals and by biological methods such as the introduction of predators to reduce mosquito numbers. The continued use of DDT is a classic example of an inappropriate technological solution that survives because it is seen as an easy way out of what is, admittedly, a desperate problem.

WWF has set out to create the conditions in which the production of DDT can be phased out by 2007 at the latest. If that is achieved, it will have taken 45 years to replace a clearly harmful technological solution — and one that in any case was bound to become ineffective because of evolving resistance among the insects it was meant to wipe out — with another technological approach that is both more effective and more sustainable.

If we are to put our faith in technology to overcome the range of environmental dangers that beset us, then at least let us avoid the sort of carelessness in the use of tools that led to so much of the degradafirst place.

The writer is Director General of WWF International based in Gland.

ORE or less from the day enables him to increase his that the western system earning capacity. The knowl-LVLof education got edge of English which is one of introduced in our country. the distinguishing features of getting educated has meant that the western system of education we train ourselves in such a way that while others work for us. capacity further. we simply issue orders. This is the model that was projected in mid 19th century. It was in tune

inherited as also the new professions that were opening could be ensured, even the so-To work with one's own cial scene will begin to undergo hands was even looked down upon. This disdain of manual work more or less coincided with the prejudices that had prevailed in India for hundreds

of years because of the caste system. Without going into the merits and demerits of this system, it has to be recognised that these attitudes have remained

The British did not subscribe to the caste system. Under the British, social mobility increased a great deal. This was owing to the introduction of railways and construction of roads and several other factors. Therefore the hold of the caste system started declining. The prejudice against working with one's own hands however continues to be almost as strong as it used to be. The western sys-

tem of education which we all

came to accept did not work for

its dilution or its removal ei-

more or less unchanged for al-

most 200 years.

While in other countries, approximately 15 per cent of the teaching time is earmarked for learning to do things with one's own hands, in our country school education is bookish from beginning to end. If anyone can excel in any one of the classical subjects of study, it

revolution. I am trying to

focus your minds to foreign

education systems in

Bangladesh, and mainly

English-medium schools began

to emerge and the concept of

smart, English-speaking chil-

dren became increasingly popu-

lar with the parents. Every

mother, worth her salt, en-

rolled her boy or girl into an

At that time, there were very

each and every corner in Dhaka

city had an English-medium

school. Students in numbers

have graduated each year after

doing their O'LEVELs. While

some went on to do A'LEVELS

others opted for intermediate,

the humble Bengali-medium

equivalent to A'LEVEL. Come to

think of it - not many schools

Enough of the past, let's shift

taught A'LEVEL back then.

With the advent of the '80s.

secondary school education.

Working with One's Hands

Amrik Singh writes from New Delhi

helps to increase the earning And yet, if India is to progress we have to change our ways. In specific terms, we have to work with our hands. Properly speaking, each one should work with his hands. If this

a change. On a visit to Germany some three decades ago, I came across a group of IIT trained engineers. They were spending six months on an assignment in that country. When I asked them about their experience in Germany, they explained that, for the first few weeks, things were difficult because they were not accustomed to working with their hands. Once they got over this handicap, they overtook their German counterparts. In terms of theory they were already well

grounded, they added. The odd situation in our country is that while there should be 4-5 nurses for one doctor, there is only one nurse per doctor available. Similarly, there have to be a number of technicians so that an engineer can perform competently. But because of the traditional disdain for manual work, everyone wants to take up a job which does not require manual work.

Things are changing however. The most decisive factor at work is that what are called prestigious jobs are scarce. Everyone cannot be an engineer or a doctor. Some people have to accept other jobs too. In any case, because of the extraordinary spread of education, the number of those competing for jobs has grown enormously.

Therefore, people have no choice except to opt for whatever is available. No wonder the popularity of vocational courses is growing. Attempts are being made in various states in the country, to popularise vocational courses. But the rate of success is not high.

There are two main reasons for it. One is the obvious fact that facilities for vocational education are both poor and limited. The second crucial factor is that not only is prejudice on the social plane against working with one's hands fairly widespread, even teachers of other subjects do not understand the importance of students being encouraged to work in the vocational area. In the eyes of most teachers, this is virtually a waste of time.

There is hardly a university in the country which for example has a paper, at the B Ed level, dealing with the theory and practice of vocational education. In other words, most of them just do not understand that if a child has not been taught how to work with his hands, there is something profoundly wrong there.

It is time that we re-oriented our thinking. It is only when our children, in addition to doing languages, maths and science and social science subjects, also learn how to handle household appliances and many other things that they will be required to handle in life that they will have been properly educated. Acquiring mechanical literacy in the modern age is vital. A whole new generations has grown up without doing so, and this is a cause both for disquiet and intervention at the educational

This apathy towards vocational education is having negative consequences for our economic growth. While our engineers are competent and, sometimes, creative those who have to assist them in actual production are poor in technical ability and sometimes downright incompetent. More precisely, it is the poverty of performance at the middle level which is coming in the way of defect-free production. One important reason why our exports are declining is that the rejection rate of goods manufactured in India is extraordinarily high. Orders are either cancelled or not re-

In the field of agriculture (in which three fourths of our people are engaged), our productivity continues to be low. What came to be called the Green Revolution succeeded only in some parts of the country. In simple words, almost three-fourths of the country has remained untouched by it. How are we going to increase productivity in those areas unless, amongst other things, we can re-educate the peasants in regard to new techniques and new tools? The situation will soon become grim because the population is booming and agricultural is not

keeping pace. As in most other things, real action is at the state level. The states therefore have to be more committed, more resourceful and more assertive in promoting vocational education. Otherwise the situation will con-

tinue to be what it is. — Mandira The writer is a former Vice Chancellor of Delhi University.

tion of our environment in the by Mahjabeen Hassan has also been associated with reduced lactation in human ET me clear the air right our attention to the present. mothers and is thought to now. When I say education

thing.

Green Reporting by Yoga Rangatia

of companies' performance on the environmental front, it emerged that companies were not forthright about their environmental management proce-

In India, about six years ago. the Company Law made it imperative for a company's balancesheet to include two more statements - one on energy conservation measures and another on the company's research and development efforts - in addition to its financial audit. But a company reports the former as if it is an intrusion into their privacy, pointed out an eminent industrialist.

Companies usually perceive that what is good environmentally may not be good economi-

the company, it would be news for most CEOs," says Daryl Ditz, director, Environmental Law Institute. Banks and financial insti-

tutions play a major role by making it mandatory for companies to disclose, its performance while availing of loans. Russ Thirkell, consultant

and Regional Programme Manager, United State-Asia Environmental Programme (US-AEP), speaking on the role of Fls says, "There is magic about the improvements banks achieve when they integrate environmental issues along with the other issues contained in their evaluation process. Not only does a bank 'look good' to its clients and investors, it 'feels good' to know the bank is in control of its destiny, even on those days where something

CSE/Down To Earth Features

Today, Bangladesh, (actually Dhaka) not only has English medium high schools but also English-medium universities such as North South, East West, Stamford etc.

One aspect remains nebulous, though. All the Englishmedium high schools in Dhaka follow the British education system (with the exception of the American High School) and the standardised tests such as O'LEVELs are handled by the English-medium school. Others University of London via the British Council. However, the followed suit. It was the "in" English-based universities are mostly affiliated with American universities. Pretty interfew English-medium schools but soon (by the late eighties)

esting! The classes in almost all these schools and universities are taught by the locals. Very few schools have teachers conducting subjects in which they specialised. In some schools, Biology and Physics are taught by the same teacher. The same is with Geography and Literature. Many teachers are not even graduates! Fortunately. undergraduates are usually employed in elementary schools.

Most high school teachers

The Education Revolution

know very little about what they are teaching. A person with a degree in Math cannot teach Chemistry to O'LEVEL or A'LEVEL students. No wonder experienced private tutors, who know their stuff, are so much in demand. However, this is a problem established schools usually don't face. Because most old schools dated back to the mid-seventies, have experienced teachers, impressive backgrounds and excellent results, along with a good international reputation.

Hardly any school these days follows the overall British system. High schools don't look and feel like high schools. There are no lockers, no drama or music clubs and no school sports teams. So, when they say that they follow the British system, they only mean the educa-

Many faculties in Englishmedium universities consist of teachers recruited from the Dhaka University or other Ben-

gali-medium universities. The biggest joke of all is the atmosphere and the premises of the universities. I know of a university, which is a few-storey tall and is in the middle of a road. The university building is squeezed between shops on either side of it. There is no cam-

The lack of proper Englishmedium universities are the cause of hundreds of students going abroad for higher studies. Most students opt for universities colleges in the United States require TOFEL and SAT tests for admission. This is where coaching centers come

They guarantee high scores, but how much this is true? Very

In conclusion, I would like to say that this piece is impersonal. It was not written to offend any organisation or any individual, so nobody should take offense. Furthermore, all opinions expressed here are general and have been verified by a survey.

Garfield ®

HEN it comes to

disclosing

environmental

performances, Indian

companies take a backseat. The

Bhopal gas tragedy is an

extreme example of a company's

Despite the catastrophe, there's

a Bhopal waiting to happen in

almost every corner of the

their performance public, com-

panies usually go on a defen-

sive. The first reaction one

should expect: the information

is confidential. And the alibi:

regulatory authorities could

the United States Agency for In-

ternational Development's

(USAID) Clean Technology Ini-

tiative (CTI) and International

Resource Group (IRG), to find a

way of encouraging disclosure

At a workshop, organised by

crackdown on us.

When quizzed about making

country.

inability to handle a crisis.





Jim Davis IT MAKES ME FEEL GREEDY ALL OVER!







