

NEICORD

PROJECT PROCESS REVIEW REPORT

Duration: 28th August to 15th September 2012

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Preface:

It has been the intended desire of Tear Australia (supporting Partner) and NEICORD (facilitating Partner) to see “transformed and sustainable communities after the end of every Integrated Community Development Project envisage by both. This call for a review of the facilitating partner, Implementing (Local Partner), and Supporting partner Strengths and Weaknesses, Strategies, Approaches, Processes and methods used in achieving its desire goals and vision.

The review would enable NEICORD to closely examine the current approaches, strategies, processes and methods used in Integrated Community Development Project and take corrective steps in facilitating and implementing Community Development Projects in Northeast India.

Initially the planned of the review was to do the review with representatives of Implementing Partners, Project staff and NEICORD Management in Shillong. But due to the inability to travel because of Communal Clash and tension in Assam and Nagaland during the scheduled dates the review could not be held in Shillong. Hence, an alternative arrangement was made for review of Implementing Partners and questionnaire to be responded by Implementing Partners (TTBC and BBKA) was sent to them and the same has been studied and analyse followed by Email and telephonic interview. The project staffs of the Facilitating Partner (NEICORD) were also facilitated to review the project by reflecting on the Strengths and Weaknesses, Strategies, Approaches, Processes and methods used in facilitating the Projects. The same was done with the Management of the Facilitating Partner.

This report studies the efficacy and effectiveness of the project components and its relevance to the project area. Also, the programme execution model of the different activities is discussed and presented in details. The approach and review is purely based on questionnaires filled by the implementing partners, primary data collected through focused group discussions and in-depth interviews through email and telephone. At the time of developing the report, it was not only ensured that data collected have been properly reflected but special care has been also taken to highlight the field scenario in true sense.

Rev VL Nghakthang
Facilitator

20th September 2012

Chapter I: Introduction

North East India Committee on Relief and Development (NEICORD) is a non-profit Christian organization responding to the needs of the poor and marginalized, irrespective of color, race, religion and gender. NEICORD strives to build bridges of peace and harmony among all tribes of the North East India in partnership and cooperation with churches and other NGOs. NEICORD operates from its head office in Shillong, located in the state of Meghalaya.

Since its inception, Tear Australia became an important partners, regular donors, and motivators for the organization. During the initial stages of the partnership, NEICORD directly implement projects supported by Tear Australia. But on the later stage, NEICORD had introduced partnership approach process. Since then, Programs are implemented through partnership with Churches and likeminded NGOs at the grass root level. In order to review the process of the project, both NEICORD and Tear Australia agreed to conduct project process review with an objective to have a clear and sound directions, policies, strategies and processes for Project sustainability and that would enhance the quality and relevancy of the program. The review process is designed to provide a summary of the current status of the two projects carried out from tear Australia support. The report conveys the real situation of the project in terms of its relevancy, effectiveness and sustainability. It also discusses issues related to designing, delivery and monitoring processes.

1. Objective of the review

Overall objectives: NEICORD to have a clear and sound directions, policies, strategies and processes for Project sustainability

Specific Objective of the review:

(i) Relevance:

- To study the relevancy of the project component
- To study the urgency of the project for the partner to implement

(ii) Review:

- To study the effectiveness of working with and through partners
- To assess the partner contribution in all the process
- To what extend the partners allocated finance, material and human resources to implement the activities and to achieve the programme results
- To appraise NEICORD's roles in the project's processes

(iii) Effectiveness

- To what extend did the partner contribute to achieving the expected results.
- Did the projects achieve their intended objectives? If not, why not?
- Study NEICORD's approach, methods, and strategies for community development projects

(iv) Sustainability

- To what extent will activities initiated by the partners continue once the formal project withdraws from the project area?
- In which way did the partner link up with other stakeholders that could positively influence the sustainability of the project?
- To study NEICORD's sustainability approaches, methods and strategies in community development

2. Approach & Methodology:

The process review report is based on primary data collected first hand by the facilitator from both NEICORD and project partners. Information has been collected through Focused Group Discussions (FGD), In-depth Interviews and responding to structured questionnaires in NEICORD main office and project site. Therefore, the following methodologies were applied during the process review:

- o Desk assessment of Project evaluation report, annual reports, monitoring reports
- o Review of inputs, approaches, strategies, policies
- o Interview of project staff and group discussion
- o SWOT analysis of the project
- o Review and Analysis

Due to ethnic clash in Goalpara and bandh on the way to Tseminyu the project site could not be visited. Structured questionnaire was send to both the partners. And three series of meetings were conducted in NEICORD main office.

3. Project Background: Tear Australia support the followings Integrated Community Development Project in Northeast India

(i) Khumolozung ICDP

The project Khumuluzung Integrated Community Development Project (KCIDP) began in July 2005, in partnership with the Tseminyu Town Baptist Church. Kohima District in Nagaland. The project is directly benefited by 6 Rengma villages and covers approximately 500 households and a total population around 3,300.

ii). Goalpara ICDP

The Goalpara Integrated Community Development Project (GICDP) began in 2005 in partnership with the Goalpara Boro Baptist Church. GICDP works in 5 villages in Chirang district, Assam and it is benefited by 525 households and a total population around 4200

4. Project Component: Both the project has five major components such as: (i) Capacity building (ii) Health awareness (iii) Adult literacy (iv) Agriculture & (v) Income generation program through Self Help Groups (SHGs).

5. Project Management: The project is directly managed by the partner Church. The partner church has formed a project committee who is responsible for governing and operation of the project. The committee has appointed implementing team who are responsible for daily

functioning and implementation of the programs. The Project Committee recruited and appointed personnel for the project. Whereas, NEICORD acts as a facilitating agency in terms of quality assurance, providing on job's training, periodical close monitoring, link with the donors, technical support, report writing and developing capacity of the partner church.

Chapter II, Finding Based on the Term of Reference

1. Review of the relevancy

The review assessed that NEICORD and Tear Australia have identified the most relevant approach for integrated community development project in terms of approach, resource allocation and components

1.1 Approach: Working with and for the community approach is strongly applies in all the project process. Therefore, communities were involves in all the process from planning to implementation to evaluation, they even involved in designing annual work plan. Transparency is properly maintains in all communication and dealings. Community convenient was adjusted because they own the project. Project put all the efforts to be a relevant initiator. Partner Church maintained the following NEICORD approach in all the activities:

People's participation, Community organization, Justice (lobby & advocacy), (Self) sustainability, Self-help-groups, Exit-strategy, Empowerment, Networking, Volunteerism

1.2 Resource Allocation: Right and relevant resource was allocated to the partner on time. In case of partner requirement for staff training, right person for the right topics is allocated by NEICORD. New techniques and skills are shared within the partners. There is transparency in terms of funding and budgeting from donors. Information's are shared within the partners in terms of training opportunity, resource available from Government and other organizations. But in case of partner church adequate resources are no allocated for development work.

1.3 Project Component: Both the project team has identified that group approach and federation formation are the most relevant components of the project. This approach promotes leadership building, skill development, income generating activities and it encourage saving practices. It was found that this is the core program component. The remaining program components like - capacity building, nutrition program and agriculture can be incorporated with the group activity and the knowledge and skill can be imparted to the group. It was found that right from the planning process, group approach has been applied.

The following component have measureable impact from the project: Presence of unity within the group after formation of SHG and federation, saving practices, promotion of kitchen garden both for nutritional support and income generating activities, various Income Generating Activities within group and individual and cleaning drive for healthy and hygiene environment. It was identify that livelihood for unemployed youth (through technical and vocational training) and children formal education program are two relevant component not incorporated.

Recommendation:

1). Clear exit strategy should be developed that will provide guidance during the delivery process

2. Effectiveness of the process

2.1 Effectiveness of working in Partnership: NEICORD strategies in working with and through the Church partners can be noted as an effective working approach for involving church in development work. By working with the church NEICORD is easily recognized by a larger community. This approach ensures long term existence of the programs since the church can continue the project. Project and NGOs continuity depends on the resource available, whereas church will continue to exist till the Lord comes. Both the partner church provided space for project office which minimize the project administration cost, and the project involves church leaders in all the project management process which bring conceptual changes, and their view about development is progressively transform. They have understood development in a Christian way of thinking and working. And it also enhanced the capacity of the partner church in terms of management, organizational development and working policies. Therefore, working with and through the church ensure continuity and sustainability of the programs. Besides this, engagement of the existing staff to head up the development work in case of Goalpara indicates church openness and willingness to work beyond.

2.2 Challenges faced in working with partnership: There are challenges to be faced when new initiatives are introduced. In case of the current partner project, various challenges were faced by both the parties. For example, in Goalpara NEICORD work with Association that is the highest administrative body of the church in terms of organizational policies, whereas in Tseminyu NEICORD is partnering with one local church. Though Tseminyu Town Baptist Church has their own autonomy in terms of functions, there are limitations in terms of policies and strategies development. Goalpara partner have more privilege to design new policies and strengthen the initiatives since as the project committee are from decision making body of the association. In case of Tseminyu, the project committees are basically from local churches only. Therefore, in case of policy development for inclusive involvement of churches in development Goalpara partners are more privileged than the other.

2.3 Effectiveness in program design: From initial stages of the project community and partner church have involved in all the planning process. The project have applied bottom up approach in all the process. Therefore, the program component were identified and selected on the basis of the input from the partner and community at large, which contributes towards achieving the goal

2.4 Effectiveness in development of operational Strategy: The review process identified that, though proper operational strategies are developed, the project had effectively deliver activities to the target community. Project proposal alone is a general guide for the whole program. In order to ensure quality operation, it was felt that proper operational strategies and written guidelines need to be developed for future intervention. Operational strategy

should define clear roles of partner and NEICORD in terms of implementation, monitoring, financial monitoring, and should provide guidelines and required systems for the field staff to ensure effective implementation of the activity planned and efficient delivery of the program.

2.5 Effectiveness in operation and monitoring: The number of initiatives undertaken by both the project explains the efficacy and effectiveness of the program. The program through the church was an eye-opener and moved the community since the government initiation was limited to any such programme in their areas. *Self Help Group* approach is identify as the most effective component of the project –This gives an ample opportunity to individual family to expose and learn the mode of income generation, and it gave them an opportunity to get themselves involved in earning their livelihood and for family support. NEICORD active involvement in operational process is much appreciated by the partners. But monitoring process needs to be enhanced particularly for finance.

NEICORD practice the following monitoring system for effective facilitation and delivery of the programs – monitor through reports, on call monitor (telephone), emailing, group meeting and visit, evaluation, cross checking of reports, survey, and community assessment through interview and case study during field visit.

While both the partners appreciated NEICORD's active involvement in terms of partner staff capacity building, fund release and transparency in all the process, the review team identified that cash flow checking system is lacking and partner contribution in terms of finance is not properly incorporated. In general, finance monitoring is weak from NEICORD. There was different views in terms of financial monitoring, the other view as the role of NEICORD finance department whereas other felt it is program unit. Besides this, the review team identified that proper monitoring guideline is not developed for project monitoring team.

2.6 Recommendation

- 1). NEICORD to develop Operational strategy that will include Cash Flow Checking and overall monitoring system.
- 2) NEICORD should work directly manage the project to ensure effective management
- 3) NEICORD team should have more direct contact with target community in the form of providing training, visiting their agriculture fields/working place.

3. Sustainability

In case of formal withdrawal of the project, the following activities are good indicators for sustainability of the project

- Formation of Federation: Federation exists as umbrella organization for different SHGs where individuals are involved through SHGs. Its executive members are given training on Group management and accounting which will enable them to sustain.
- Agriculture activities: Farmers using their learning through the trainings provide by the project increase production, which contributes to increase in family incomes
- Networking & linkages: Project have established linkages and network partnership with government and likeminded for SHGs and project in general for future continuation
- Partner Church has included development activity both in association and local church level. Pastors and preacher have preached issues facing community today and they link their

message with development context. From church own income, seminars and training on Christian involvement in community development are conducted mainly for leaders and Pastors of the church.

- Boro Baptist Church Association (BBCA) has established different entity for relief & development work called Boro Baptist Aid & Development. BBCA is committed to continue the work of community transformation even after the formal withdrawal of the project. They have also received fund from other organization. They mobilize local churches to contribute for serving the poor and needy. Pastors have preached about serving the poor, environment and health issues in the church

-Both the church have develop policy for their involvement in community development

NEICORD have facilitates, motivates, encourages and capacitated both the partner church for their own sustainability through the following activities:

- Capacity building of the project committee, project staff and community on management, project cycle process, integral mission, and related issues

- Initiated partner church to have separate development wing, for example BBCA is good example

- Assist and facilitate development wing of the partner church to have legal registration

- Regular monitoring of the projects

- Interaction with the project committee

- Introduced partner church and project to government offices and other likeminded organization. Coach the project staff how to established link with them. For example: NEICORD Project Officer Visit Govt office in Dimapur, Nagaland with partner project coordinator

Chapter III Recommendation for the way forward

The activities of the projects are very much embedded within the community and have developed as a major support system that cannot be detached. The introduction of ICDP project has brought a sea change in its operating areas by transforming the community towards better socio-economic condition. The project finds great relevance in the project area and is quite appropriately designed to provide the required community and livelihood support. It has been also very successful in terms of delivery, community mobilization and reach. The project has greater potential than seen to have effective intervention due to its setup and community good will. NEICORD should continue working for the welfare of the underprivileged and disconnected communities by changing working approach. But the program component can remain the same by strengthening SHG approaches which already have measureable impact within the larger community. For instance, SHG and federation have created awareness among the community and it has brought greater conceptual changes for working in groups and promoting self sustain approach. The review team strongly recommends the followings for future direction of NEICORD's intervention:

- NEICORD should directly manage all the new initiatives including project design, management, implementation, and monitoring to ensure quality, efficiency, timely and effective operation.

- NEICORD should open its own-project office in a strategic location of the project. For example: in case of new project it will operate from SILCHAR which is the District capital of Cachar, Assam.
- It should continue to apply 'Bottom-Up Approach' in all the process. This ensure participation of the community and promote sense of belongingness
- NEICORD should design seven years project. During the first five (1-5) years NEICORD should fully involve in all the processes. But at the later stage of the project; from 6 years onwards, it will enter exit strategy by slowly withdrawing from management of the project. During the first five year, greater focus will be provided for enhancement of capacity in local level.
- Working with churches and through Churches/association is always NEICORD's priority, but limited capacity and expertise of the churches in target areas does slowly down the speed and not ensure quality. Therefore, NEICORD decides to directly manage the project by encouraging churches and association in project areas to involve directly and in-directly in the forms of the following.
 - NEICORD should request churches to depute their existing staffs to be employed by the project for the whole project period. They will be trained at the early part of the project. This will minimize staff turnover during the project period. (For example : Employment of 3 partner church staff to be based in Project for project management(1 staff as Project Coordinator, 1 staff for Project Assistant, and the other 1 staff for finance, as per the need of the project).
 - Employment of churches/association staff will be contributing factors for continuity of the project after withdrawal
 - NEICORD should invite and encourage local church leaders to involve in Local Project Management Committee as volunteer
- The following components are recommended for future project considering urgency and relevancy of the situation
 - **Community Organization and mobilization** including CBOs (SHG) formation, promotion and Project Development Committee Formation
 - **Training & Capacity Building** both in community, Project committee and NEICORD
 - **Skills enhancement activities for sustainable economic development (SED) – Agriculture both upland and lowland by introducing System of Rice Intensification and Sloping Agricultural Land Technology, Income Generating Activities, Climate Change Adaptation,**
 - **Education – non formal to formal**
 - **Health : Mother to Child health Care (MCH)**
 - **Advocacy and Networking**

- NEICORD should develop operational strategy that will include Cash Flow Checking and overall monitoring system of the project
- NEICORD team should have more direct contact with target community in the form of providing training, visiting their agriculture fields/working place.
- Clear exit strategy should be developed that will provide guidance during the delivery process, and this has to be included in the proposal. Exit plan can develop with a view to handover the project either to Community Based organizations (SHG/Federation) or local church. The project should work towards strengthening their capacity during the whole period in order to ensure continuity of the project.

Annexure:**i. Acronyms and abbreviations**

NEICORD	: Northeast India Committee on Relief & Development
TOR	: Term of Reference
TTBC	: Tseminyu Town Baptist Church
BBCA	: Boro Baptist Churches Association
SWOT	: Strength Weakness Opportunity Threat
GICDP	: Goalpara Integrated Community Development Project
KICDP	: Khumuluzung Integrated Community Development Project
SHG	: Self Help Group
CBOs	: Community Based Organization's
SALT	: Sloping Agricultural Land Technology
SRI	: System of Rice Intensification
FGD	: Focused Group Discussion
MCH	: Mother to Child health Care

ii. Questionnaires sample

PROJECT REVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

A. Relevance
1. What are the Project Components?
2. Do you think it is relevant for Community Development? If Yes or No, Give reasons
3. Suggest any other component which you think is relevant but not included in the present project design for community development
B. Review
What has been the contribution made by the Partner towards achievement of Project Objectives? Please give specific answer.
Do you think your contribution made was sufficient to sustain the project? If no, please suggest
Give your opinion on NEICORD's contribution of resources, such as, Finance, Personnel etc. for the project.
Is there a partnership agreement between NEICORD and the partner?
Do the partner maintenance a separate account for the project?
Do the partner hired a separate staff for the project
Do you think whether the Project achieves its Annual target? Yes or No, if no, what are the reasons for not achieving the target? Suggest how we can achieve
Whose Project do you think this Project is? Whether NEICORD or Church
C. Effectiveness
How best can the Church participate in Community Transformation?
How effective are the activities implemented for community?
D. Sustainability
What is the plan of the Church to continue the work of Community Transformation after the end of Project?
Mention the linkages with light minded NGOs, Church; Government that will help is project sustainability.

SWOT Analysis for Partner

Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat

NEICORD Assessment Form

- Rating is from 1 to 3
 1- Below Average
 2- Average
 3- Good

Criteria	Rating	Findings	Recommendation
Strategic			
The organization has a written strategic plan for the project			
The plan is communicated to all partner and staff			
The organization has oriented its partner and staff about the project strategy			
The organization frequently evaluates the relevancy of the activities in community			
The organization takes the time to identify challenges facing by the project			
The organization has invested time in implementation, planning and monitoring process of the project.			
The organization developed plan that can evaluate the progress and performance indicators to measure the progress toward the achievement of goals and objectives.			
Resource Allocation			
The organization shares its financial information with the partner			
The organization develops an annual comprehensive operating budget for all activities.			
Adequate resources for planning and implementing and outcome measurement have been allocated			
Operation			
The organization provide ongoing training for staff and partner			
The organization provide ongoing training for the community			
The organization is committed to assist the partner and staff in meeting project goals and objectives			
The organization is reviewing the project on a regular basis with the partner			
Are project task and responsibilities established in the project			

Impact			
A monitoring system has been established for tracking the progress made by the project			
A timeline for every activities established			
Data collection methods have been designed.			
Outcome data have been collected and tracked by assigned persons.			
Sustainability			
The organization focuses on leadership and capacity building for long term capacity of the partner.			
The organization have sustainability plan for the partner and community			

Partner Self Assessment Form

Criteria	Rating	Findings	Recommendation
Competency			
Basic competencies (vision, mission, values)			
Governance (development plans)			
Strategic focus			
Principles for expanding the program			
Board and their management’s skills and monitoring			
Fulfillment of the objectives by the partner			
Involvement of church president/chairman/secretary in the project			
Maintenance of project duties by staff above personal gain or interest			
Management			
Leadership capacity of partner (skills, accountability, teamwork, innovation, commitment)			
Decision making capacity			
Resources (policies, procedures, and responsibilities)			
Controls (systems and their implementation)			
Preparation and submission of annual			

plan by the partner and the community			
Submission of monthly report by partner to NEICORD			
Submission of six monthly and yearly report by the partner to NEICORD			
Submission of financial report by partner to NEICORD			
Disbursement of fund from the partner for the project as per the plan			
Utilization of project asset for the purpose of the project			
Maintenance of project records and documentation			
Program operation and performance			
Human resources (skills inventory, motivation, appraisal, development)			
Inclusion of BPL irrespective of caste, creed, religion and race			
Project coverage			
Organizing and mobilizing skill of the staff			
Utilization of local resources for implementation of the project			
Achievement of project targets			
Networking and linkages			
Quality assurance			
Fund management			
Sustainability (operational and financial)			
Impact			
Impact assessment			
Income generation			
Employment generation			
Community health			
Food security in the family			
Nutritional consumption in the family			
Adoption of permanent cultivation			
Community leadership abilities			