



The Principles of Effective Development

Presented by: Kevin Webb, CRCID
September 9, 2006



Good morning fellow Rotarians. I have been asked to present today on the International Service Project Do's and Don'ts. What I intend to provide is a set of general principles that represent the keys to effective development. It is hoped that these principles will assist in the planning and implementation of international service projects or programs that are **sustainable** and contribute to the **reduction of poverty** in the developing community and/or country.

However, before I discuss these principles, I would like to begin by providing you with the context by which these principles were developed.

Introduction:

International Development is a recent global phenomenon that was one of the outcomes of the Second World War. The reconstruction of Europe under the U.S. led Marshall plan was one of the first large scale development programs.

Since the late 1940s there have been a proliferation of governments and civil society organizations dedicated to assisting the poverty-stricken populations of the world. Rotary is at the forefront of these activities through its many international service programs such as Matching Grants and 3H projects. With its global network of clubs, Rotary is in the enviable position of having both reliable and professional expertise in many of the countries that are most in need of assistance.

During the 1990s international development underwent an evaluation by the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) on behalf of the donor countries, including Canada and the United States. It was determined that the approaches taken were "too narrowly focused and often failed to recognize the cultural and political context in which development takes place."¹

The evaluation led to international momentum for supporting a more comprehensive approach to development that resulted in the 2000 Millennium Declaration outlining the collective commitment to sustainable development and poverty reduction with 8 development goals to be met by 2015.

It was found that for development to be effective certain general principles could be applied to any project or program.

These general principles are:

- Local Ownership;
- Gender Equality;
- Improved donor coordination;
- Stronger partnerships;
- Results based approach; and,
- Building Capacity.

I will expand upon each of these principles during the balance of my presentation.

¹ CIDA 2002 Policy Statement, pg.1).

Local Ownership:

It is important for the sustainability of any international service project or program that it reflects the priorities of the beneficiaries. Whereas this may seem obvious, “communities within the community” can complicate the identification of the beneficiaries. What I mean by this statement is that there are often different groups within a village or town, each with different priorities. Gender is a good example, with women and men having different priorities. Men often look at development assistance as improving the economic status of the village and/or themselves whereas women often seek to improve the living conditions for their family. Therefore it is important to determine who will be the primary beneficiaries for the project.

A development story, that I believe to be true, occurred a few years ago and demonstrates the importance of this first principle (see side bar).

A Rotarian was visiting a community in a developing country and quickly noted that the women were walking several kilometers a day to a stream to access their drinking water. The animals in the area also utilized the stream resulting in the water being of very poor quality. The Rotarian left the community determined to provide the community with a well that would save the women from the daily long walk and improve the health with clean drinking water.

Once back home, support for the project was forthcoming and the well was duly built. The Rotarian and the club were very proud of their achievement.

A few months later the individual returned to the community and was amazed to find that the well was not being used. The women continued to walk several kilometers to get their daily water. The village leaders stated that the well was working just fine, but the women refused to use it.

Asking the women, it was found that their priority was not the water well because they wanted the walk to the stream. Asked why, they stated that it was the only opportunity they had to get away from their men and discuss issues important to them.

The Rotarian then asked what it would take for the women to start using the well. They responded by requesting a “women only” community building. Another project was implemented and the community building was subsequently constructed. A return visit to the community found both the well and the community building being utilized with the women using the extra time now available together to make crafts that were being sold to generate extra income for their families, thus contributing to the greater welfare for the community.

As this story indicates, it is important to ensure that the project is a priority of the community it most affects. Consultation with the group prior to the implementation will increase the probability of the project being successful.

Gender Equality:

Gender equality is an essential principle for the successful implementation of an effective development program and/or project. Women do not automatically benefit from development initiatives, no matter how well intentioned, because of systemic barriers to their full and equal participation”.² The United Nations has identified gender equality as a central issue for achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Development agencies are currently focused upon improving the capabilities of women because in many cultures women are excluded from community decision making processes and have less access than men to:

- Education/training;
- Land (a determinant of wealth);
- Secure employment;
- Leisure; and,
- Political process.

²CIDA’s Policy on Gender Equality

<http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/CIDAWEB/acdicida.nsf/En/EMA-218123616-NN9#1>

Some examples of the disparity between men and women are indicated in the following statistics:

- Women in many developing countries produce most of the food consumed in Sub-Saharan Africa but rarely do they have secure tenure to the land they work.
- Of the children who do not attend school in the developing countries 60% are girls.
- 67% of the 879 million illiterate adults in the world are women.³

It has become a maxim that by focusing upon the women and girls in a community a project has a much greater probability of successfully improving the living standards for that community. A good example is the example I just gave regarding the water well whereby once the women were consulted about their priority needs, the project was successful and the living conditions of the community were improved.

Therefore, when planning a project or a program that will affect the entire community it is important to consult with the female leaders of the community to ensure that this is what they also want. If there isn't consensus, then the project should be reevaluated prior to moving forward.

Donor Coordination:

Many civil society organizations, such as Rotary, implement small and isolated development projects. There is a risk that this approach could lead to duplication and/or gaps in the implementation of development priorities. It also places an immense administrative burden on the already limited capacity of host organizations and communities.

For example, in Honduras there are over 180 Rotary clubs implementing International Service projects. In order to coordinate all of this activity Rotary in Honduras has created a committee in order to reduce duplication and to prevent gaps.

Prior to implementing a project some research should be undertaken by the Rotary club(s) to ensure that a similar project has not already been approved or completed in the community either by another Rotary club or a non-Rotary organization.

Therefore, adhering to the principle of Donor Coordination will reduce duplication and alleviate administrative burden. This will improve both the effectiveness and efficiency of the project while ensuring that it meets the priority needs of the beneficiaries.

Stronger Partnerships:

International Development, to be successful, requires partnerships between groups that are committed to assisting another group improve their standard of living and the recipients of this assistance. Whenever there is more than a single group undertaking an activity the responsibilities of each group must be clearly articulated and fully understood by all concerned. Rotary clubs will enter into a contract when they seek matching grant or 3H funding from The Rotary Foundation. This contract identifies the responsibilities of each partner.

³ UNDP Human Development Report, 2003.
<http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2003/?CFID=2030290&CFTOKEN=26009917>

But what about those projects where there is no supplemental funding agreement and it is simply a club-to-club project? While Rotarians are generally ethical and honest with a legitimate desire to do “good” in the world, this does not prevent misunderstandings from occurring that could negatively impact a project, especially with language and cultural differences. An agreement or a memorandum of understanding would reduce the potential for any misunderstanding.

Another important key to a strong partnership is regular communications during the life of the project that can identify potential issues and challenges before they negatively impact the project. Due to the annual turnover of club officers, regular communication can be disrupted by the replacement of a project contact. In order to maintain continuity and ensure that the communication is not interrupted, it is recommended that the project contacts should remain in place for the life of the project.

Results Based Approach:⁴

The fifth general principle is using a results based approach. What this means is that the goals and objectives of the project need to be clearly articulated based upon the current situation and the anticipated changes to this situation.

During the project planning a needs assessment should be undertaken to determine the baseline information. During implementation it is important to regularly monitor the project by comparing the actual results with the need assessment information and the results that were anticipated. This ensures that the project is on track to achieving its goal. Upon completion the project needs to be evaluated to determine if it was successful and if there were any lessons to be learned that could be applied to the next project.

Rotarians, like most people, dislike reports. However, like death and taxes, reports are an inevitable fact of life. International Development has become more report focused over the past decade as the government agencies and civil society organizations justify the funds being spent on assistance to their respective constituencies.

Reporting using a Results Based Management (RBM) framework link the project activities to both short term and longer-term results. For example a short-term result, also known as an output, for a well project would report on how much water the well is producing and if it is fit for human consumption. The short-term results are then linked to the effect this well is having on the beneficiaries. For example, because the beneficiaries have access to clean water there is a 20% reduction in the incidence of water-borne diseases in the community. This is a longer-term or outcome result.

Donor governments and their respective civil society partners are adopting this results based approach because it assists the partners plan and implement an effective project and the reports provide the key information to the donors justifying the financial and administrative contribution. CRCID has utilized RBM for the past several years and it is reflected in its application and report forms.

Capacity Building:

Building capacity is helping the beneficiaries of international assistance increase their own ability to help themselves to ensure that benefits are sustained beyond the life of

⁴For more information on RBM, visit the CIDA website at:
<http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/CIDAWEB/acdicida.nsf/En/EMA-218132656-PPK>

individual projects. Capacity development involves encouraging and supporting changes in people's activity, behaviour, skills and relationships that improve the ability of groups and individuals to achieve their goals.

Most of us have heard of the adage of giving a person a fish, you feed them for a day but teach them to fish and they can feed themselves for a lifetime. For international assistance to be ultimately successful, which means that it is no longer required, the people in the developing countries living in abject poverty must receive the tools to help themselves. This includes access to education and adequate healthcare as the precursors of real poverty reduction. Once an individual and a community is healthier and has access to universal education, the foundation is set for them to take action to reduce their poverty.

Conclusion:

International Service is the fourth avenue of service of Rotary International. Over the years Rotary clubs and Districts have implemented thousands of successful projects; so, how will these principles benefit Rotary? As I mentioned at the beginning of this presentation, international development underwent a global evaluation during the 1990s that has resulted in there being significant changes to how development is being delivered that will improve its effectiveness and efficiency.

Rotarians, as significant contributors to development work around the world, need to understand these principles and integrate them into their international service projects and programs. As other development organizations are able to provide the results of their international assistance projects and programs, Rotary could find that donations to Rotary's International Service from other organizations and individuals are affected or it becomes increasingly reliant upon non-Rotary organizations to provide the results of a project. For example, the Polioplus program relies on the reporting of the World Health Organization to inform Rotary of the effectiveness of this program.

So what can you do?

You are the Rotary leaders in your District. I would like to suggest to you that you share these principles to those Rotarians in the District who are active in International Service.

It is my belief that by integrating these principles into international service, Rotary's international service will become more effective and sustainable. Other like-minded organizations and individuals will also actively seek to become partners in international Rotary initiatives.

Rotary International, and vicariously the clubs and Districts have received tremendous prestige and kudos globally for its Polioplus program. Individual clubs and Districts can also get the recognition they deserve from their communities for implementing effective development projects and programs. Integrating these principles into every club project and program will provide the results that can be shared in its own community and with other possible partner organizations.

Combined with Rotary's unique global network these effective development principles will maintain Rotary as leader in the community because Rotarians LEAD THE WAY.

Thank you.

Partial Reading List:

Books:

Chossudovsky, Michel. The Globalization of Poverty and the New World Order. 2nd. Edition. Global Outlook, 2003.

Easterly, William. The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest have Done so Much Ill and So Little Good. Penguin Press: New York, 2006.

Sachs, Jeffrey D. The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for our Time. Penguin Press: New York, 2005.

Stackhouse, John. Out of Poverty and into Something More Comfortable. Random House of Canada Limited, 2000.

CRCID Papers:

(Available from the [Zone 22](#) and [CRCID](#) Websites)

CRCID Three-Year Program Proposal: Blueprint for Change. March 2006.

CRCID Strategic Plan for 2004 – 2007. July 1, 2004.

CRCID Policy Manual. July 1, 2006.

CRCID Quarterly Newsletters between November 2004 and June 2006.

Canadian Reports:

Canadian International Development Agency. Canada Making a Difference in the World: A Policy Statement on Strengthening Aid Effectiveness. September 2002. <http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/aideffectiveness>

Canadian International Development Agency. A Role of Pride and Influence in the World: Development. Government of Canada, 2005. <http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/ips-development#1>

Canadian International Development Agency. Results-based Management in CIDA: An Introductory Guide to the Concepts and Principles. <http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/CIDAWEB/acdicida.nsf/En/EMA-218132656-PPK#1>

Canadian International Development Agency. CIDA's Policy on Gender Equality. March, 1999. <http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/CIDAWEB/acdicida.nsf/En/EMA-218123616-NN9>

International Reports:

United Nations Development Program. UNDP Human Development Report: Millennium Development Goals – A compact Among Nations to end Human Poverty. Oxford University Press, Inc.: New York, 2003. <http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2003/?CFID=2030290&CFTOKEN=26009917>

Commission for Africa. Our Common Interest: Report of the Commission for Africa. March, 2005. <http://www.commissionforafrica.org/english/report/introduction.html>