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Self-Assessments of Impacts by Projects and Programmes in the Central Province 1990-2000

S. Upasena, K. Bartholomeusz, A. Weerasinghe and R.B. Morapaya

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The self-assessments of projects/programmes in the Central Province is part of a larger study co-ordinated by the Centre for Poverty Analysis called Joint Initiative for Monitoring Development Trends in the Central Province (JIMOD). JIMOD was designed to assess the development trends in the Central Province during the last decade according to 6 selected parameters: health, education, income, employment, living conditions and empowerment.

The self-assessment was done as a second step of a previous study called "An Overview of Projects/Programmes in the Central Province" (please see annex 1 for a synopsis of this study). The first study - Overview of Projects/Programme in the Central Province - focused on collecting background information on selected projects/programmemes in the Central Province via interviews with relevant personnel and, written documents.

In the second step of self-assessment, an interactive and innovative methodology was used to gather information on how project/programme staff assessed the impacts of their own organisation. This methodology served to realise the two objectives of the study, which were:
1. Sensitise programme/project staff towards impacts
2. Analyse impacts of projects/programmes as perceived by the staff

The findings of JIMOD, including the results of this self-assessments (SA) were presented and discussed at a dialogue workshop, held in February 2002 in Kandy. Those who participated in the SA (project/programme representatives) were invited for the dialogue workshop together with the study group and policy makers. This workshop initiated a discussion of the development trends in the Central Province and how different projects/programmes and policies may have contributed to setting these trends during the last decade.

The self-assessments were intended to prepare the project/programme staff to participate actively in the dialogue workshop. The ultimate goal of the workshop was to sensitise projects/programmes to plan better in the future, taking into consideration the impact they have had in the past.

The Centre for Poverty Analysis (CEPA) contracted Arrow Consult to conduct the self-assessments. The team of consultants comprised of:

> Ms Suji Upasena,
> Mr. Kevin Bartholomeusz,
> Mr. Ananda Weerasinghe and
> Mr. R B Morapaya

This report contains the findings of the self-assessments. This report will present an analysis of the perceptions of project/programme staff of their own organisations impacts. It will also provide information on the process of the self-assessments in terms of how successful it was in achieving its objective of sensitising programme and project staff towards impacts.

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[1] For more information on this study please contact CEPA

1.2   Clarification of Terms

This report contains terminology that may hold different meanings for different people. As such this section will clarify some terms used, in order to have a common understanding among readers. We will attempt to provide some definitions for terms as we used them in this study. A reminder here that these are not dictionary definitions, but rather an explanation of the meaning we gave the term. As such it is only a *contextual definition* or what could be called a *working definition* (please see below).

Project purpose/goal - for projects/programmes, which used log frame to plan "project purpose", it was simply what was stated under the project purpose in their planning document. For the remaining projects/programmes the "goal" was taken to mean what they hoped to achieve. As expected in some projects/programmes the stated goal was also an impact (see definition of impact below). An example of this is, a programme that has the stated goal of poverty alleviation, also becomes an impact of the relevant programme.

Activities - Activities in this context was defined as what projects/programmes do in order to realise their stated purpose/goal. A project/programme has relatively more control over its activities. An example of an activity of a vocational training project is preparation of a trainer's manual.

Impacts - changes that happen outside the project/programme, to which it may contribute. Projects/programmes have relatively less control over impacts. An example of an impact of a vocational training project is increase in employment.

Shadow impacts - are a type of impact. They are impacts on the project/programme staff. An example would be "an improvement in skills". This is a new dimension added to impact assessment and is an area that is often overlooked.

Attribution gap - it's easier to explain this by using an example. For instance if we take the impact "increase in employment", it's difficult to assess how much (if at all) one vocational training project contributed to this. This is because a lot of other factors impact increase in employment, such as the state of the economy, political stability etc. This is known as the attribution gap. It means that it is difficult to attribute an impact to one project or programme.

Indicators - were used to explain parameters used in the JIMOD study. They provided specific details on what is meant by a certain term as well as provided information on what to look for. For example, an indicator for income was "household income". Indicators were also used to specify impacts. For example rather than saying "increase in income" as a general impact one can say "increase in annual household income of the Central Province by 10% from year 2001-2002". This is a more specific impact and makes it easier to assess.

Direct poverty alleviation focus - by this we mean those organisations, which stated poverty alleviation in their project purpose/goal.

4

Indirect poverty alleviation focus - organisations that have a different stated purpose/goal such as vocational training, but target poverty alleviation indirectly.

2.   METHODOLOGY

The study originally targeted 35 organisations in the Central Province. Of these approximately 1/3 were government organisations, 1/3 NGOs and 1/3 donor supported projects. However, as some organisations were unable to respond due to various reasons, the study was conducted with 32 organisations. Of these, 11 organisations were from the government sector, 11 from donor-supported projects and 10 from the NGO sector (please see annex 2 for a list of organisations visited). Two international NGOs were originally targeted, but regrettably they were unable to participate.

In selecting the organisations, several criteria were kept in mind. Some of these are:

- A balanced representation of the three sectors; government, donor-supported and NGO
- Organisations which operate in the three districts in the Central Province; Kandy, Matale and Nuwara Eliya
- Organisations with a development or poverty alleviation focus
- A mix of those that were active in the last decade (from 1990 onwards) and are active now, will be active in the future, with more emphasis on the latter
- Organisations working in a wide range of areas ranging from agricultural development to environmental conservation
- Organisations working in a relatively large geographical area within the Central Province or District as the case maybe
- Organisations which were included in the first step of this study "An Overview of Projects/Programmes in the Central Province"

In each organisation we asked a minimum of two persons who were involved in implementing the project/programme to participate in the self-assessment. In terms of academic qualifications the range was from high school leavers to those with a postgraduate degree (PhD). Please see table 1 below for a summary of the study sample.

Table 1: Study Sample Details

Details	Government	Donor	NGO	Total
Number of organisations	11	11	10	32
Number of persons who participated	45	46	53	144
Average participation/organisation	4	4	5	
Range of persons participating		2-13 per organisation		

The self-assessments were conducted like a mini workshop. It took between 45 minutes to 1 hour to complete on the average. In some organisations, due to lengthy discussions, the self-assessment took about an hour, while in some it was completed in 30 minutes. The self-assessment was done either in English or in Sinhalese or sometimes a mixture of both as requested by the relevant organisation.

The SA started with a brief introduction, which provided the participants with some background information on CEPA and JIMOD and introduced the consulting team and their purpose in conducting the SA. This was done using ZOPP cards (please refer to annex 3 for the workshop methodology).

Immediately after this step, the participants were asked to state their project purpose, which was then visualised on a ZOPP card. For projects, which did not use log frame to plan, we asked for their project goal for the sake of simplicity.

The participants were then given two ZOPP cards each and asked to write two impacts of their organisation. In this step, many of the participants asked us to clarify what we meant by impacts. The participants' assessment of impacts were collected and discussed in the plenary stages. Here the main objective was to clarify impacts and differentiate impacts from activities (please refer to definitions used in section 1.2).

In the next step we presented the 6 parameters used in the JIMOD study on 6 ZOPP cards. The indicators for each parameter were written at the back of the cards. Then we grouped the participants into 2 groups (when the number of participants were less than 4 we did not group, but did this step in the plenary). Each group were then given the 6 parameters and asked to rank the parameters according to which ones they impacted the most, in descending order. Once this was done they were asked to justify their ranking and attempt to come to a common ranking for the organisation.

Teams comprising of two consultants each conducted the self-assessment. One consultant took the lead role in moderating, while the other supported and documented.

3. LIMITATIONS

The total sample size was 32 (statistically valid as n>30). However, the sample size in each type of organisation (government, donor supported and NGO) was relatively small (10 and 11) and, as such they might not be representative of that organisation type. However, JIMOD was a pilot study to obtain information on how useful such studies could be and, whether they could also be of practical use to projects/programmes and policy makers in doing their job better. As such this relatively small sample size from each type of organisation was able to provide many insights.

In most projects/programmes, the project/programme head participated along with other staff members. In some projects/programmes those who participated dealt only with a specific area. In some other organisations, those participating had been with that organisation for a relatively long time (some since inception) while some others who participated had joined recently (as recent as a couple of days ago). This meant that some staff responses could have been influenced by personal areas of expertise as well as the time period they had worked for the organisation. However, those who fell into this category were relatively few as compared to the total number who participated in the self-

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[2] Cardboard cards measuring roughly 8"x3¾"
[3] As over 2/3 of the participants were unfamiliar with log frame analysis we refrained from following the hierarchy from activities, results/outputs, project purpose, goal, development goal, overall goal to impacts.

assessments. Hence, we are confident that their responses did not bias the end result significantly.

As stated in the introduction, this innovative methodology was tested for the first time in such a study. We have already made some minor revisions to the methodology. However, there might be other weaknesses, which may become clearer in hindsight and could be gauged from those who participated in the self-assessment.

4. ANALYSIS

4.1 Formulation of project purpose/goal

Exactly three fourths (¾) of the organisations were able to easily remember and formulate their organisation's project purpose. The rest (¼) had some difficulty in formulating their project purpose clearly and stated activities of the organisation rather than the overall purpose.

Going by the stated project purpose as well as information gathered by us regarding the projects/programmes in the first step of this study, a little over three quarter (¾) of the organisations visited, had a direct or indirect poverty alleviation focus (please see table below for details).

Table 2: Organisations with a Poverty Alleviation Focus

Sector	Poverty Alleviation Focus		
	Direct	Indirect	Total
Government	3	3	6
Donor	0	10	10
NGO	5	4	9
Total	**8**	**17**	**25 = 78%**

The remaining 7 organisations, which were not perceived by us as having a poverty alleviation focus either directly or indirectly, focused on areas such as the environment, export promotion and co-ordination of development projects/programmes in the region.

About 4 organisations had a peace/ethnic harmony orientation even though it was not explicitly stated in their project purpose (only one NGO stated this purpose). However, most of the impacts these organisations identified fell into the category of peace/ethnic harmony.

4.2 Project/programme staff's perception of impacts

The 144 people who participated in the self-assessment came up with 254 ideas, which they stated as impacts. Of this, only 75% fell into the category of impacts, according to the definition in section 1.2. The donor-supported projects' understanding of impacts was the closest to our definition with 79%. Government organisations had about 77% of

Stated impacts falling into our definition. NGOs understanding of impacts was a bit further away compared to the other two sectors, but the majority of impacts stated (69%) was in line with our definition of the word impact (please see table 3).

Table 3: Stated Vs Actual Impacts

Impacts	Government	Donor	NGO	Total
Stated	87	87	80	254
Actual	67	69	55	191
% (actual/stated)	77	79	69	75

Notes:　　Stated = all those stated as impacts by project/programme staff
　　　　　Actual = of those stated, the number of impacts which fell into the category
　　　　　of impacts according to the definition in section 1.2

In order to give some idea of what project/programme staff wrote when asked for impacts, we selected some examples below:

Some examples of *stated* impacts or those that were outside our definition of impacts (section 1.2):
- Various programmes conducted for children and adults
- Cannot provide resources as demanded
- Identifying your needs through social mobilisation
- Encourage them towards saving

Some examples of *actual* impacts or those that were within our definition of impacts:
- Improve sustainable livelihoods of people in and around plantations
- Ability to grow crops successfully
- Companies profitability increased due to forestry operations
- Generate employment through small business development

A look at organisational performance in identifying impacts was interesting. About 20 organisations understanding of impacts was in line with our definition. On an organisational basis, of the total impacts stated by them, about 75% were in line with our definition. Another 6 organisations had an understanding of impacts which was fairly close to ours - between 51-75% of impacts identified by them were within our definition. Of the remaining 6 organisations understanding of the word was less than half (please refer table 4).

Table 4: Organisational Impact Assessment

Actual Impacts /Stated Impacts	< 50%	51-75%	76-100%	100%
Government	3	1	7	4
Donor	1	3	7	6
NGO	2	2	6	3
Total	**6**	**6**	**20**	**13**
Range		16%-100%		

Note:　Actual impacts/stated impacts = the number of impacts in line with our definition,
　　　　Over the total number of impacts identified by each organisation

Those organisations whose understanding of impacts was different to ours tended to state activities when asked to write down impacts. Some examples are as follows:

- Raising awareness of parents and children about nutrition
- Preparing a district plan for development plans presented by different areas in the district
- Teachers are identified as trainers
- Encouraging them towards saving

Some also wrote down statements, which were neither impacts nor activities. For example:

- Lack of mental development due to poverty
- Barriers due to lack of education
- Political influences

The individual understanding of impacts ranged from vague statements such as "benefit to the people" to fairly detailed, such as the following:

- 40% of target families who will be involved in income generating activities will improve their annual income from Rs25,000 to Rs30,000
- Sustainable economic advancement in 7000 families below the poverty line
- About 20% of farmers who participated in the farmer forestry programme have understood the importance of reforestation

Understanding of impacts also showed a wide range in terms of the ability to identify simple impacts versus complex impacts. An example of a relatively simple impact would be "increase in income" as identified by many participants. Some examples of relatively complex impacts identified are the following:

- Increase in the income of Taverns/Bars due to the Samurdhi subsidy
- Link between organisations (especially government and non government)
- Local decision makers and administrators are more sensitive to enterprise promotion
- A progressive attitude change in state officials regarding forestry projects using people's participation
- People of the target area have obtained an identity for themselves

These are classified as complex impacts as they are somewhat distant from the organisation's immediate focus and are usually not observed. Some of the impacts above also refer to attitude changes, which are overlooked more often than not due to the difficulty in measuring them.

A couple of organisations also touched on shadow impacts (please see definition in section 1.2) when they mentioned benefits accruing to their own staff such as:

- Contribute towards achieving a clear economic development in the members of the NGO
- Provision of 36 staff positions within our own organisation

Most of the impacts stated fell into the category of positive impacts, meaning it was stated as a benefit or a plus point. Only a few organisations were open to the idea that they could have negative impacts such as the one, which spoke of an increase in the income of liquor bars.

Plenary Discussion on the Impact Session

A lot of interesting points came up in this discussion. Most were easily able to comprehend the difference between an impact and an activity once it was explained using the impacts (or activities) they themselves had written. One organisation wrote "creation of rural societies for economic and social development of women and children". Which they themselves recognised as an activity once the difference between impacts and activities was explained (please see definition in 1.2). The same organisation also wrote, "people are empowered, especially in participating, organising and running programmes", this was more in line with the definition of an impact.

Sometimes the difference between the two was in the way a sentence was worded. For example, if it was written "motivating people to save" it was an activity, which helped to realise the project purpose of poverty alleviation. However, if it was written "people are saving" it could be an impact according to our definition. People could be saving due to many reasons, such as an increase in the household income. However, a project, which motivates saving could also be contributing towards this habit.

In these discussions another aspect that was highlighted was the fact that activities and impacts may differ depending on the goal/purpose of the relevant organisation. An activity of one organisation could be an impact of another and vice versa. For example, preparation of a trainer manual is an activity of a vocational training project whose stated purpose is to strengthen the vocational training sector in Sri Lanka. However, this same activity (preparation of a trainer manual) could be an impact of a prior project whose purpose it was to develop human resources in the vocational training sector (this example is fictitious).

When the possibility of negative impacts was discussed, most organisations initially disagreed stating that they made sure these were avoided by assessing market conditions etc. However, by discussing other influences on the impacts their organisation may have - such as the fact that an increase in employment which maybe an impact of the relevant organisation is influenced by the economic and political situation in the country they were able to comprehend the fact that they cannot take the entire credit or blame for the impacts of their organisation.

If one cannot take the entire credit or blame, the participants questioned the purpose of monitoring impacts at all. It was discussed that it was useful for project steering, as impact monitoring provided far more insight into project progress than activity monitoring. Activity monitoring was generally limited to monitoring financial and physical progress. For instance "an x% of the budget has been utilised" (financial progress) or "an x number of irrigation tanks built" (physical monitoring). This type of monitoring though useful to some extent, still leaves open the question of how far this organisation has achieved its stated purpose of, for example poverty alleviation. Therefore, even if projects can't control impacts, and therefore can't be blamed for them, projects can indeed underline influence their impacts. Thus, there is a need to be mindful of impacts and to monitor them. These aspects were discussed during plenary sessions.

Some organisations stated they were moving away from financial and physical progress monitoring toward impact monitoring. As a first step towards this, they were setting up databases containing information on their immediate target group.

## 4.3 Ranking of the parameters according to project/programme staff

The 6 parameters that participants were asked to rank were, income, employment, health, education, living conditions and empowerment.

Of the 32 organisations, which participated 29, arrived at a ranking common to the organisation. This was either through two groups arriving at a common consensus or jointly agreeing upon a ranking for organisations, which had less than 4 participants. Of the three organisations unable to arrive at a common consensus, one agreed on the order of the first three parameters and only differed on the order of the last three. *Therefore taking into consideration the first three parameters, 30 organisations were able to arrive at a common consensus.* The inability to arrive at a common consensus stemmed from the fact that the people who participated had different areas of responsibility or had been with the project for different periods of time. Hence, they had a different perspective on the project/programme and found it difficult to reconcile this view during the short time period provided.

The analysis of the parameter ranking is limited to those projects/programmes, which arrived at a common consensus. Furthermore, we limited our analysis to the parameters ranked within the first three. This is mainly because, it was felt during the process of the self-assessment, that most organisations considered the first three rankings as important and paid them more attention. It was observed that the order of the last three parameters was given relatively less consideration.

As shown in Chart 1, in terms of the projects/programmes impact on most, *empowerment* was the parameter 13 projects/programmes ranked number 1 (43%). A total of 8 organisations ranked *income* as number 1 (27%). Five organisations ranked *education* as the number 1 parameter (17%). Please see annex 4 for more details.

Chart 1: Parameter Ranked Number 1 Most Frequently

- Living Conditions 3%
- Health 0%
- Employment 10%
- Education 17%
- Income 27%
- Empowerment 43%
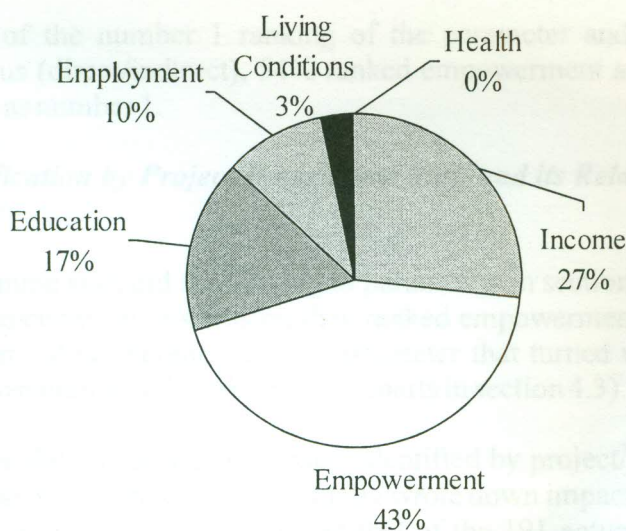
This order changes somewhat when you look at the first three rankings of each project/programme. A total of 20 organisations ranked *income* within the first three parameters. Eighteen organisations ranked *employment* within the first three parameters. Seventeen organisations ranked *empowerment* within the first three (please see annex 4).

Chart 2: Parameter Most Frequently Ranked Within the Top Three (%)
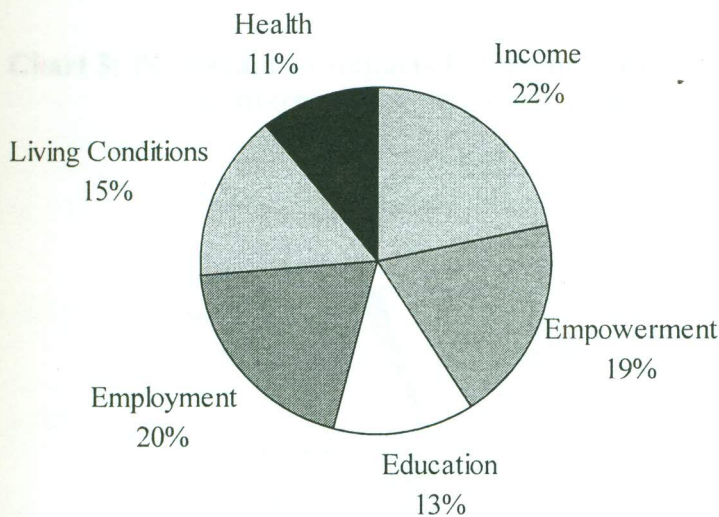
Of the parameters, empowerment was the clear leader with 13 organisations ranking it number 1. In terms of being among the top three, income led the way with over two thirds (2/3) of organisations ranking it within the first three parameters. Employment and education were the other two parameters organisations felt they impacted significantly. The appearance of health in chart 2, is due to the fact that project/programme staff gave it their own meaning and ranked it. For example, one organisation used this parameter to reflect their impact on worker safety and health.

A co-relation of the number 1 ranking of the parameter and those with a poverty alleviation focus (direct/indirect), 54% ranked empowerment as number 1 while 25% ranked income as number 1.

Impact Identification by Project/Programme Staff and its Relation to the Ranking of Parameters

Project/programme staff did the ranking of parameters in section 4.3 in the final session of the self-assessment. In this session they ranked empowerment as the parameter they impact on most, while income was the parameter that turned up within the top three rankings the most number of times. (See pie charts in section 4.3).

The study team slotted the actual impacts identified by project/programme staff in the previous session, where the staff individually wrote down impacts, into the 6 parameters of the JIMOD study. Our results showed that of the 191 actual impacts identified by participants, most fell into the category of *income*. Interestingly, one third (1/3) each of

the impacts identified by both donor-supported projects and government programmes fell into this category, while 13% of impacts identified by NGOs did (please see annex 5 for more details).

Our analysis of impacts identified by project/programme staff indicate that income was the category that most came up with when identifying impacts of their own organization and empowerment was second. However, when it came to ranking the parameter on which they had the most impact (section 4.3), it was the other way around with empowerment being ranked first and income second.

Chart 3: Percentage of Impacts Falling into the Parameters
(as interpreted by the study team)
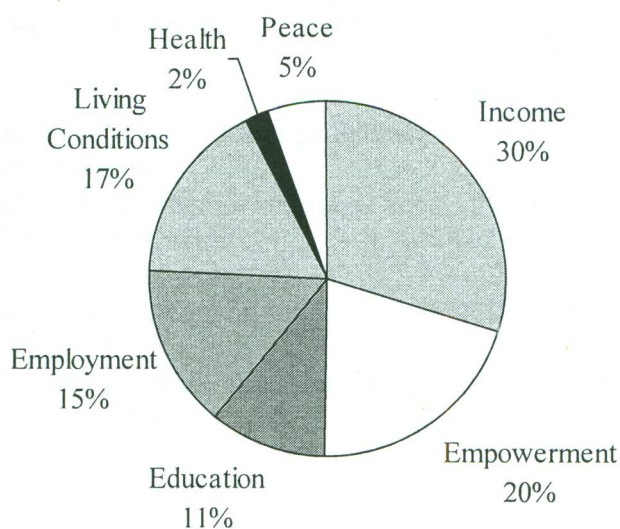
The number of impacts falling into each parameter is somewhat different when ranked by different types of organisations as assessed by impacts identified by project/programme staff. In the government sector the order is income, empowerment and living conditions. In the donor-supported projects it is income, education and living conditions. In the NGO sector it is empowerment, ethnic co-operation/peace/national unity, and living conditions (please see annex 5).

The Ranking Process

The ranking was done mostly in a participative manner. A lack of communication was observed in a few organisations where the head or one person in a group dominated the ranking process. However, during the plenary discussion of the rankings people paid attention to each other's justifications and showed a willingness to change the group ranking to arrive at a common ranking for the organisation. We also observed that organisational staff seemed keen to get across what they felt was the correct perception of priorities of their project/programme. The discussions on the parameter ranking were often lively with participants hotly debating the order of the parameters. Some stated this exercise was useful in clarifying their focus.

Comments on Parameters

A few organisations commented that the parameters did not reflect what they did and suggested the inclusion of additional parameters such as the "environment". Others said that certain crucial indicators were not contained in the relevant parameter i.e. health does not include indicators on AIDS awareness, worker safety and health, personal health, and hygiene awareness. An interesting comment was made by a donor project when they said that "worker safety and health" could be an indicator for poverty.

As a parameter, empowerment created the most controversy. Some government and non-government organisations said they felt that "social mobilisation" was not reflected in empowerment. Some had difficulty deciding whether awareness raising should be classified under empowerment or education. Some were not sure if gender issues were covered under empowerment. Some ranked empowerment relatively higher using it to mean an impact on their immediate target group. Others ranked it low saying although a lot of their activities were concentrated on this parameters their impact was relatively small.

Income as a parameter also created some problems. Some of the comments on this parameter are summarised below:
- Income impacts on all other parameters, hence the presence of income as a parameter nullifies all the others

- Is it possible to separate income from employment, if you have one you have the other
- The same argument as above goes for living conditions, if income improves should this also not improve

- Why wasn't increase in production/quality separated from income, as one can't assume that increase in production/quality necessarily translates into an increase in income

A few organisations commented that they did not like being confined to these parameters. They said they would like come up with their own parameters. They also pointed out that conflict resolution and human rights were not in any of the parameters.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The methodology was appropriate in achieving the twofold objectives of the study. Which were:
1. Analyse impacts of projects/programmes as perceived by the staff
2. Sensitise project/programme staff towards impacts

The analysis in the previous section shows that the methodology was able to glean interesting insights into perceived impacts of projects/programmes in the Central Province. It was also able to sensitise staff towards impacts. This was mainly due to the fact that the methodology was designed to be participative. One cannot underestimate the importance of this aspect to the overall success of the self-assessments. The self-assessments were conducted not only to gather information, but to link practitioners (i.e.

projects/programmes visited) with institutions such as CEPA, who are in a position to initiate and co-ordinate studies, which could be of use to these projects/programmes.

The Sinhalese translation of the word impact (*balapaam*) confused many. There is a negative connotation associated with the Sinhalese term, which means, "unwanted political coercions". Although this confusion was apparent in some of the stated impacts, which read as "influence from state and non state organisations", after the plenary discussions we clarified what we meant by impacts. In the majority of organisations visited, people were able to grasp the meaning of impacts and, the point in monitoring impacts at the end of the impact identification session. In some organisations, this step was unnecessary as they already had a good understanding of impacts.

Those who were able to clearly formulate their project purpose and with relative ease came across as having a clear focus or a sense of direction. Those who had difficulty formulating their purpose/goal and stated activities came across as being extremely involved in the day to day running of the project/programme with the purpose/goal being somewhat further away from their minds.

It was interesting to note that over ¾ of the organisations visited had a poverty alleviation focus, even though only a quarter focused directly on this issue. However, those who focused indirectly on poverty alleviation seemed to have a stronger impact than those who focused directly on poverty alleviation. This maybe due to several reasons:

1. Those who focused indirectly on poverty alleviation targeted the poor but not the poorest of the poor. Those who worked directly in poverty alleviation targeted the latter.
2. Direct poverty alleviation programmes/projects visited, mostly doled out subsidies or provided access to credit without really assessing their target group's ability to pay back, thus sometimes unwittingly aiding to continue the cycle of poverty. None of the projects/programmes dealing in poverty alleviation indirectly handed out subsidies. Those with the indirect poverty alleviation focus had built up expertise in the area they worked in for example vocational training. This enabled them to provide a better quality service to their target group as compared to their colleagues involved directly in poverty alleviation.
3. Those with the direct poverty alleviation component mostly limited themselves to "social mobilisation", which is explained loosely as awareness building. This does not focus on one specific area but deals with a vast number of areas. This situation is akin to the saying "jack of all trades, master of none".

In general it can be said that there is a common understanding of impacts among the projects/programmes visited. This is indicated by the fact that out of the stated impacts about three fourths (75%) were within our definition of the word according to section 1.2.

Judging by the organisational impact assessments, donor-supported projects understanding of impacts was closest to ours. Government sectors' understanding was also close, while the NGOs understanding of the word was somewhat different when compared to the other two sectors. The NGOs tended to state activities rather than impacts or statements, which fell into neither category. This could have been because most of the NGOs did the impact assessment in Sinhala, where the term used for impacts could have contributed to the confusion.

The better understanding of impacts among donor projects could be because in the recent past impact monitoring has received more attention than before at least in donor circles. This is true for the government sector as well, with a UN consultant being based in the Ministry of Plan Implementation to move monitoring away physical and financial progress towards impacts. This new trend towards impact monitoring seems to be reflected in the donor and government responses. Surprisingly the NGOs seem a little slow in latching on to this trend and one reason for this could be the lack of access to ideas on impact monitoring as well as experts in impact monitoring.

Even though there was a general common understanding of impacts across organisations, understanding of impacts within organisations shows that *a little over three fifths of organisations understood impacts in a similar vein*. Almost 2/5 of organisations had a different understanding of the word impact. This indicates that even though much progress has been made in disseminating the idea of impacts and impact monitoring, there is still a long way to go. It is also good to keep in mind at this point, that we are only speaking of understanding the term impacts and being able to identify possible project/programme impacts. It will be interesting to see how far projects/programmes have gone in terms of actually carrying out impact assessments and using the information gathered to steer the relevant project/programme in the right direction.

Almost half of the actual *impacts identified* by projects/programmes are in the two parameters of *income and empowerment*. If you add employment and living conditions to this over three quarters of the impacts stated are within these four parameters. This clearly indicates income, empowerment, employment and living conditions as the areas the majority of organisations visited mainly feel they impact on. At this point it is useful to also keep in mind that living conditions and employment were closely linked to income in the minds of most of those who participated in the SA. This would again bring income to the forefront as the parameter the most impact is felt to be on.

However, analysis according to organisation type indicates that apart from income the donor-supported projects also have a strong focus on the parameter education (formal education and vocational training). In the same vein NGOs have a strong focus on a parameter not included in the JIMOD study, ethnic co-operation/peace/national unity. This is apart from their main orientation of empowerment. The government sector's main focus is on the parameters income and empowerment.

The impact identification and the parameter ranking together indicate that of the 6 parameters, *income and empowerment are the two parameters organisations feel they impact on mostly*. Of these two, income seems to have a slight edge over the parameter empowerment, as it is the parameter that the most number of organisations ranked within the top three. It is also the parameter that most often came to mind when identifying impacts of their own organisation. However, interestingly the main strategy of organisations dealing with poverty alleviation (direct/indirect) is to empower their target group (54% of organisations), with a secondary focus on income (25% of organisations).

Health is the parameter on which there is felt to be the least impact. This reflects the fact that the indicators in the health parameter does not reflect areas the organisations visited are working on such as worker safety and health, AIDS awareness and so on. In addition,

if the parameter environment had been there the rankings would have been somewhat different as quite a few of the organisations visited felt they had an impact on this parameter. However, in the absence of the appropriate parameter it was translated into an impact on income, employment or living conditions or even sometimes into empowerment. The latter as awareness raising in the environmental area was seen as empowering people.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

A few revisions are needed in the methodology to make it more relevant and interesting to participants as well as less time consuming. These revisions will also hopefully minimise confusion regarding terms used in this study. We recommend the following revisions:

- Limit the ranking of the parameters to the first three
- Ensure that the moderators conducting the self assessment are as participative as possible
- Look for an alternative term for "impact" in Sinhala (other than "*balapaam*")

Participants were invited to comment on the methodology and process of the self-assessment at the JIMOD dialogue workshop organised in February 2002. This was envisaged to enable CEPA to gauge its usefulness and fine-tune the methodology further as needed.

As the study showed that NGOs understanding of impacts is somewhat different to the common understanding, organisations such as CEPA should involve more NGOs in their programmes and sensitise them towards this subject.

In order to make studies such as JIMOD more relevant to practitioners, we recommend the addition of the parameters environment and peace. The parameter for environment could include indicators for soil conservation, re-forestation, natural resource management etc. The parameter peace could include indicators for ethnic co-operation, conflict resolution, and human rights. We also recommend that the following indicators be added to the relevant parameters:

- Income - increase in production, increase in quality
- Health - AIDS awareness, worker safety and health, awareness of personal hygiene and health
- Empowerment - aspects of social mobilisation, development of entrepreneurial capabilities, development of leadership abilities

The above recommendations are based on feedback from the projects/programmes visited during the self-assessments.

Annex 1: Synthesis of Overview of Project and Programmes in the Central Province

From among the three different types of organisations; government, donor-supported and NGOs, several organisations, which operated in the Central Province since 1990, were selected for the overview. The main objective of the overview was to provide information on the areas these organisations work in and therefore impact on and amount of investment going into each type of organisation.

The organisations selected for the overview worked in a diverse number of fields ranging from agriculture to the environment. The fields covered by the organisations surveyed included:

- Agriculture
- Plantation communities
- Enterprise development
- Poverty alleviation
- Rural financing
- Land management
- Health and nutrition
- Education
- Forestry development
- Social mobilisation

The area of operation of these organisations also ranged from being limited to several DS divisions in the district (i.e. some NGOs) to covering all of the Central Province or even beyond (i.e. some government programmes).

We came across difficulties in obtaining data on budgets in a comparable format over a period of several years. However, for government and donor-supported projects the District Planning Secretariats have a format for reporting fund allocations to the line ministry, which was developed in 1999. For NGOs it is impossible to derive the flow of funds from the formats currently available. Some of the government and donor supported project funds eventually go to NGOs, but it is difficult to assess how much. Apart from these sources NGOs also avail themselves of funds from other sources.

According to the format used by the District Planning Secretariat, roughly around Rs6.8 billion was allocated to the Central Province (CP) in the year 2000. Kandy district received Rs3.03bn, Matale Rs2.5bn and, Nuwara Eliya Rs1.3bn.

In Matale district, of the total allocation about 3% of the funds were from donor-supported projects. In the other two districts donor supported funds were negligible (less than 1%).

Most of the funds were allocated to the agriculture sector in Matale (66% of the district budget), social welfare and cultural services in Nuwara Eliya (25% of the district budget) and power and energy in Kandy (25% of the district budget). Apart from these main allocations, all three districts allocated funds for roads. In Matale 6%, in Nuwara Eliya 12% and in Kandy 17% of the respective district budgets were allocated for this purpose.

Annex 2: List of Organisations Visited

Organisation	Contact Person(s)
Government	
District Planning Secretariat, Nuwara Eliya	Mr. Samarakoon
District Planning Secretariat, Kandy	Mr. Shanthikumara Samarasinghe,
Fax: 08 233186	Deputy Director (Planning)
District Planning Secretariat, Matale	Ms. Madduma Bandara
Provincial Planning Unit (PPU)	Mr. Dissanayake
Samurdhi, Matale	Mr. Kapukotuwa
Samurdhi, Nuwara Eliya	Mr. Mr. Marasinghe
Samurdhi, Kandy	Mr. Sumanadasa
Sri Lanka Samurdhi Commission	Mr. H Sumanapala, Director General,
IDB, Kandy	Mr. T M Kularatne
EDB	Mr. Subasinghe
DSI, Gatembe	Ms. Weerakoon
Department of Export Agriculture Crops	Mr. Palitha Wicremasinghe
Donor Projects	
Teacher In-Service Project	Dr. Gerhard Huck
Enterprise Information Project	Mr. Udo Gaertner
RRDP/ESSP	Dr. Steigerwald
Perennial Crop Project	Mr. Abeysekera
IRDP, Nuwara Eliya	Mr. Samarakoon
REAP, Matale	Mr. Abeywardene
EFWRDP	Mr. Mohns
RBIP	Mr. Hofmann
Participatory Forestry Development Project, Kandy	Mr. Dissanayake, DFO, Kandy
Plantations Communities Project	Mr. Doug Graham
Environment Action 1 Project	Mr. Herath/Dr. Jinasiri Fernando
Chief Secretary, Central Province	Mr. K B Wijekoon
NGOs/Private	
Nation Builders Association	Mr. Adikaram
Palm Foundation	
133, Lady Macallum's Drive, Nuwara Eliya	
Tel: 052 23732	
Sinhala Tamil Rural Women's Network	Ms. Vimali Karunaratne
No. 72, Shanthipura, Nuwara Eliya	
Sarvodaya	Mr. T V Ariyawansa
SEEDS	Manager
Don Bosco Boys Home	Fr. Dixon Fernando
Kundasale Community Development Foundation (KCDF)	Mr. Basnayake
Shanthi Nikethanaya	Mr. Jayawardene
Satyodaya	Mr. Lalith Abeseykera
Sithuwama	Mr. Chandana Bandara

Annex 3: Methodology for the Self-Assessment

Objectives:
- Sensitise programme/project staff towards impacts
- Analysis of impacts of projects/programmes as perceived by the staff

Activity	Time	Materials
Introduction Use the ZOPP cards with the following key words: CEPA (Centre for Poverty Analysis) JIMOD (Joint Initiative for Monitoring Development Trends in the CP) 6 Parameters (Health, Education, Income, Employment, Living Conditions, Empowerment) Dialogue workshop in Nov 2001 Self-Assessment of Projects/Programmes in the CP Arrow Consult	02	ZOPP cards with Key Words
Project Purpose If there are no clarifications regarding the introduction, ask participants for their project purpose and visualise it on a ZOPP card	03	ZOPP cards, markers
Individual Impact Assessment Invite participants to write down two impacts each on ZOPP cards as they understand it. Collect the cards.	05	
(If the group is small (less than 6) read out all the impacts, if the group is large read selected impacts/activities making sure that some activities and some impacts are selected)	10	ZOPP cards, markers
If understanding of impacts is poor, discuss impacts in plenary Clarify the difference between an activity and an impact.		
Prioritisation of parameters Present the 6 parameters (if they are not clear read out the indicators for the unclear parameters)	05	3 sets of 6 parameters on ZOPP cards with Indicators
Divide participants into 2 groups. Give each group the parameters on 6 ZOPP cards and ask them to arrange the cards in descending order according to which parameter they think they impact on most.	10	Written on the other side of the card
Ask participants to come into the plenary and discuss the similarities or Differences of opinion regarding parameters. Invite participants to give reasons for their choices. Arrive at a common ranking for the project/ programme if possible.	10	

Annex 4: Parameter Ranking

Parameter	Government		Donor		Ranking NGO		Total			
	1st	1-3	1st	1-3	1st	1-3	1st	%	1-3	%
Income	3	7	4	7	1	6	8	**27**	**20**	**67**
Employment	1	8	2	6	0	4	3	10	**18**	**60**
Living conditions	1	5	0	4	0	5	1	3	14	47
Education	1	4	1	4	3	4	5	**17**	12	40
Health	0	3	0	2	0	5	0	0	10	33
Empowerment	4	5	3	5	6	7	13	**43**	**17**	**57**
Environment				2						
Increase in production/ Quality				3						
Total Number	10		10		10		30			

Notes:

- This table contains parameter rankings as done by the project/programme staff themselves
- The total number in the last row = The number of organisations which arrived at a common consensus for the first three parameters
- 1st = those who ranked this parameter first as the one they impact on most
- 1-3 = those who ranked this parameter within the first three
- Percentages are rounded off to the nearest digit

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Annex 5: Impact Analysis The Study Team's Interpretation

Parameters	Government	%	Donor	%	NGO	%	Total %
Income	16+7 = 24	**34**	17+6 = 23	**33**	7	13	**28**
Employment	10	15	9	13	7	13	14
Living conditions	12	**18**	10	**14**	8	**15**	**16**
Education	3	4	13	**19**	4	7	10
Health	1	1			2	4	2
Empowerment	14	**21**	7	10	15	**27**	**19**
Environment	1	1	7	10	2	4	5
Successful completion of development projects	3	4					
Increased production/quality #	7	10	6	9			7
Ethnic co-operation/ peace/national unity					9	**16**	5
Total	**67**		**69**		**55**		**191=100%**

- Notes:
- This table presents those impacts identified by project/programme staff which, have been slotted in the JIMOD and other parameters as appropriate by the study team
- We added those who stated impacts related to increased production/quality to this category under the assumption that these increases are reflected by an increase in income. We have also created a separate parameter for this as well below to represent the number who stated impacts along these lines
- Percentages have been rounded off to the nearest digit
- The figures in bold represent the top three parameter categorisation according to sector in the relevant columns and the top three overall in the total column