



# **Guide to Critical Issues for Socio-Cultural Analysis**

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A companion to this guide, “Socio-Cultural Analysis in IDB Projects: A Discussion Paper,” is also available.

Both documents are online at <http://www.iadb.org/en/publications/publications,4126.html>.

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## **1. The Power of Knowledge**

The poverty one sees through a car window or on a movie screen is monotonous, drab and depressing. It also doesn't even begin to describe reality. Poor people in Latin America and the Caribbean are not merely poor; they are poor in many different ways that can vary even within a single neighborhood or rural area.

Some poor families are the products of many generations of poverty, with established survival strategies and social networks to help them through times of crisis. Others lack such social stability and live precarious and unpredictable lives, suffering chronic unemployment and frequent migration in search of work. Other families are recently impoverished, in some cases displaced by natural disasters or violence, and in others, by loss of employment, loss of land or catastrophic illnesses or accidents. Still others are female-headed households, often victims of abuse and abandonment, with household compositions and social networks that may be quite distinct from other poor families.

Poor people often belong to groups that are excluded from mainstream society, such as Afro-descendants, indigenous peoples or inhabitants of informal urban settlements. Others are physically isolated from population centers and the benefits of development investments.

Each person living in poverty has a story to tell. These stories matter to the IDB and help define how it conducts business.

The Bank's mission is to reduce poverty and exclusion, a task that requires not only institutional resolve and financial resources, but also a detailed understanding of poverty. This knowledge is critical to the success of Bank projects in the same way that a hydropower engineer must thoroughly know the geology and hydrology of a river basin, or that an agronomist must understand the particulars of life zones, soils and plant science.

As the Bank undertakes an individual project, it must confront a number of questions. Who are the project's beneficiaries and potential stakeholders? How do they earn their living? What are the social networks on which they rely for mutual support? How are their communities organized? Who are their leaders? How are they constrained by indifferent or hostile institutions and power centers in broader society?

Such detailed, fine-scale data on poverty are rare. This is not surprising, since poor people live largely outside the world of the institutions charged with gathering information. In many cases, fieldwork to conduct socio-cultural analyses must be carried out under difficult

conditions that require special skills to overcome the suspicion, resistance and sometimes initial hostility of people who have little trust in government, whose systems of leadership are based on kinship and personal ties and whose decision-making processes are time-consuming and require a high level of consensus.

Yet despite the difficulty of obtaining information about the poor and excluded, this knowledge is essential to ensure that the IDB's projects succeed in achieving their broader objectives. For this reason, the Bank requires socio-cultural analysis throughout its operations, from planning at the country level to project identification, design, implementation and monitoring. Without this detailed and accurate knowledge, the Bank could not fulfill its role as a development institution.

In addition to its accuracy and comprehensiveness, the information produced by socio-cultural analysis is purposeful. It doesn't merely describe, but also points to solutions and advocates for changing business-as-usual practices.

The socio-cultural analyses produced by the IDB constitute a vast trove of knowledge about the peoples and institutions of our region—knowledge that would otherwise not exist. This knowledge constitutes one of the Bank's foremost contributions and stands as a clear example of why the IDB's role in knowledge production and development finance are mutually dependent and inseparable.

This publication sets forth a framework for socio-cultural analysis at the IDB. It is important that the Bank's operational staff read it, discuss the points it raises, and put it into practice. Much of the Bank's success in poverty reduction and social inclusion depends on its success in generating and applying knowledge gained from socio-cultural analysis.

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## **2. A Critical Tool for Poverty Reduction**

The following pages describe major socio-cultural issues in sectors financed by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), along with guidelines for addressing them. Their purpose is to provide a framework for socio-cultural analysis in these sectors and to guide investigators toward useful areas of inquiry that are critical for ensuring that Bank projects meet their goals in reducing poverty and exclusion.

Socio-cultural analysis requires the combination of exceptional technical expertise with a solid understanding of a given country's social, political and economic context. Every development project has a unique set of beneficiaries and stakeholders who interact in specific ways with the broader society, its institutions and its power structure. The purpose of socio-cultural analysis is to provide Bank staff and borrowers with accurate, detailed information about these realities.

Thus, socio-cultural analysis delves deeper than general descriptions of poverty to carefully distinguish among different groups of the poor, each one of which has different needs, capacities, support systems and outlooks. For example, a proper socio-cultural analysis reveals how people living just above the poverty line think and act very differently from their neighbors who live just below it. The analysis explains why some rural people are particularly impoverished due to discrimination and repression by dominant groups, and because of the spatially and culturally remote lives they lead.

While the immediate task of socio-cultural analysis is the collection of information, its ultimate aim is to advocate for innovative strategies that will help poor and excluded groups overcome the constraints they face, allowing them to benefit from development interventions. Largely because of these constraints—and a lack of detailed knowledge about them—poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean has remained at around 40 percent of the population over the past three decades. This is despite considerable investments that have been made in the region to reduce poverty and exclusion, varied government policies of the left, right or center, and the dedicated efforts of skilled practitioners at all levels.

Some of these constraints are related to conditions within poor and excluded communities, such as poor health, limited education and a lack of economic opportunity. Other limitations come from outside, such as a lack of interest or even outright hostility from the

dominant sectors of society. Equipped with detailed knowledge of these constraints, project staff can design strategies for reducing them.

Socio-cultural analysis also initiates the project's first contacts with the beneficiary and target groups. These contacts go on to become the basis for a process of consultation and participation with communities, which helps guide project planning, implementation and the long-term provision of benefits to these stakeholders.

### **3. Socio-Cultural Analysis and the IDB**

The IDB requires socio-cultural analysis for meeting the terms of its Environment and Safeguards Compliance Policy, specifically as an input in an Environment and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) and an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP). Both an ESIA and an ESMP are required for all Bank-financed projects that are likely to cause significant social and environmental impacts (Category A projects) and projects with a high risk for causing short-term negative social and environmental impacts (high-risk Category B projects).

Socio-cultural analysis is also required to enable the Bank to comply with its policies and strategies in the areas of involuntary resettlement, gender equality, indigenous peoples, access to information and natural and unexpected disasters. It is utilized throughout the lifespan of IDB projects, beginning with country-level studies and programming, and then for project identification, analysis, monitoring and evaluation.

As part of gathering information, socio-cultural analysis enables a process of consultation and participation in which beneficiaries and stakeholders help to define development objectives and identify the ways to achieve them. Although consensus is often impossible to achieve in diverse communities, consultation is a way to address differences in opinion and to promote fair, transparent and equitable decision-making.

Community members' initial responses during socio-cultural analyses provide an early indication of how they view benefits, as well as risk factors and possible adverse consequences. As the project cycle continues, the consultation process becomes the foundation for enlisting the community's judgment, knowledge and labor force. Moreover, consultation and participation are critical to ensuring that the community takes ownership of the project, and to ensuring the project's continued operation and flow of benefits.

This document focuses on four sectors where socio-cultural analysis is particularly critical for addressing issues of reducing poverty and exclusion. In the case of major infrastructure projects, the primary concern is to minimize or mitigate their impacts on local communities. For projects in the areas of urban and rural development, the aim is to both minimize impacts and to ensure access to project benefits by poor and excluded groups. The primary challenge for social projects is to ensure maximum benefits to target groups and their sustainability over the long term.

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## Potential Socio-Cultural Issues in Major Infrastructure Projects

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### **For energy generation, transmission, and large dams:**

- Landowners lose agricultural land, pastures, orchards, houses, wells, etc.; non-landowners lose jobs as laborers, renters, sharecroppers, etc.
- People living downstream of dams experience changes in the quality and flow of water, with impacts on irrigation, fisheries and other resources.
- Local populations are impacted by the influx of new people, disrupting former economic, social and cultural relations. Pressure intensifies on social services, transport and trade. Communication networks can be disrupted.
- Increase in prostitution, violent conflicts, alcoholism, sexually transmitted diseases, etc. Increased need for police, healthcare, waste disposal and other public services.
- Exposure to outside influences changes behavior and values of local populations, especially young people.
- Communities need to reconstruct and restore environmental conditions, jobs, farmlands, pastures, technologies, markets, suppliers, housing, infrastructure, public services and neighborhoods.

### **For large highways and other transport corridors:**

- Major impacts on indigenous and colonist populations in the area of influence.
- Influx of loggers, hunters and prospectors; development of spontaneous colonist settlements, cattle ranches, plantations and logging enterprises, with resulting land speculation.
- Increase in prostitution, violent conflicts, alcoholism, sexually transmitted diseases, etc.
- Negative impacts on land, forests, waterways, collective production systems, security, culture and living conditions of native communities. Cumulative impacts on indigenous peoples threaten their cultures' existence.
- Social exchange relationships are altered due to new trade items and commerce and the corruption of community leaders.
- New health problems such as malaria, influenza, tuberculosis and sexually transmitted diseases.

#### **4. Major Infrastructure Projects**

Major infrastructure includes large dams, power plants, substations, transmission lines, oil and gas pipelines, highways, railways, bridges, ports, airports and industrial parks. In most cases, the size, complexity and long-term operations of such projects have the potential to produce significant negative impacts that can last for decades. Some impacts are irreversible, such as the involuntary displacement of communities, disruption of existing socio-economic networks and social systems and depletion or loss of access to natural resources.

Accurate information about these potential impacts is needed in the earliest stages of project preparation to ensure that adequate baseline studies can be carried out and that compensation and/or mitigation programs can be developed before project approval. In the case of projects involving involuntary resettlement, a resettlement plan based on accurate baseline data must be prepared before the project can be submitted to the IDB's Board of Executive Directors. Failure to identify or acknowledge potential impacts can lead to significant delays in project approval and implementation. On occasion, such failures have led to projects being shelved.

In cases where potential social impacts are identified during initial screening, a complete socio-cultural analysis must be carried out, which usually includes a census of the families or groups that would be directly affected. The census, which consists of basic social, economic and cultural data on each family, is cross-referenced with the results of a physical and territorial survey of the properties and/or houses. This survey is based on updated, high-resolution aerial maps of the land, properties, cultural and historic sites, as well as other assets located in the affected area and its immediate surroundings.

Analysis of alternatives that can avoid or minimize impacts is an essential part of project identification that must be carried out before preparing more detailed studies and compensation and mitigation programs. Alternative scenarios might contemplate different routes for road corridors or oil or gas pipelines, or different heights and locations of dams for hydroelectric projects. The analysis may have to strike a balance among different potential social impacts, or between different social and environmental impacts. Where there are major social or environmental liabilities, the analysis should recommend not going ahead with the project, which would save the Bank and the executing agency the significant expenses of further preparation.

The most critical components for mitigating negative impacts such as land use planning, land titling and demarcation—as well as the local institution building components—must be in place before construction starts. In this way, the infrastructure projects are treated not as discrete transport or infrastructure operations, but as the regional development projects they actually are. As with all such broad-spectrum projects, they must be driven by participatory planning and institutional development, with the development of infrastructure as a subsidiary component.

#### **4.1. Direct Impacts on Target Groups**

Direct impacts mainly result from land acquisition and include loss of land, dwellings, productive assets, employment, natural habitats, access to common property resources and sites of cultural or historic significance. Temporary use of land under lease arrangements or right-of-way contracts, such as from transmission lines or oil and gas pipelines, can also have direct impacts on productive activities and real estate values.

The Bank's Operational Policy on Involuntary Resettlement (OP-710) provides detailed guidance on the management of the multiple risks that such operations entail. This category should include the impact of construction camps. Some large construction projects may employ hundreds or even thousands of workers, which can have a devastating impact on small communities.

The policy identifies the general topics to be considered in the socio-cultural analysis. However, each project is unique, making it necessary to carry out a census to specify how many people are directly affected, their social and economic situation and the characteristics of the different social groups. More detailed case studies are needed to clarify particular issues identified in the census. Combined with a physical and territorial survey, the census precisely defines the kind and/or amount of compensation that should apply to each category of the affected population, as well as the best resettlement options.

Given the importance of socio-economic and physical-territorial surveys, Bank staff should review their scope and methodology before applying them, in order to ensure that they cover all the important indicators. Once the information has been collected, it must be consolidated and analyzed and, where necessary, crosschecked to ensure that it accurately reflects the situation on the ground.

## 4.2. Indirect Impacts on Target Groups

Indirect impacts include the loss of services, infrastructure, employment and business

### **A Reservoir Destroys Critical Transport Routes**

The resettlement operation for the Guatemala Chixoy Hydropower Project, which directly affected a score of Achi Maya villages with a total of roughly 3,500 residents, is a well-documented disaster. However, the energy project's indirect impacts are not so widely known.

The project's long, narrow reservoir severed ancient trails and river crossings connecting major Achi Maya market towns on either side of the Chixoy River. In particular, it cut off the major livestock-producing region from the markets on which it depended and curtailed the exchange of agricultural and manufactured goods among hundreds of villages throughout the region. The project also severed contacts between the civil-religious authorities in the regional center of Los Pajales and tens of thousands of Achi people on the other side of the reservoir, who looked to them for spiritual and political guidance.

opportunities in areas adjacent to major projects. Examples of such areas would be the watersheds of large reservoirs, urban neighborhoods bisected by major highways and local commerce zones impacted by new roads to mining concessions, port facilities and other major infrastructure projects.

Dramatic indirect impacts have occurred when transport projects, including waterways and oil or gas pipelines, have opened up remote and fragile areas, leading to occupation of the land and destruction of the natural resource base of indigenous peoples and other traditional populations. In tropical lowland areas, these projects can facilitate access to loggers or gold prospectors and settlers, resulting in degradation of the habitat and destruction of the natural resource bases of traditional communities.

Increased pressure on the land and contact with the outside world can lead to the impoverishment or even disappearance of indigenous people and other traditional land-based groups. Newly introduced diseases, such as malaria, measles, tuberculosis and sexually transmitted diseases, can decimate isolated populations. In regions where drug cultivation is a major activity, local people may suffer from associated violence.

A project's area of influence can be difficult to define, requiring careful socio-cultural analysis rather than an arbitrary measure such as a circle whose radius is a certain distance from the project works. The place at which a bridge or road section completes a link between two hitherto isolated regions may result in social impacts that affect a wide area. Similarly, a

reservoir or highway may sever trade and commerce routes, communications networks and social and political organizations.

In cases of large-scale involuntary resettlement, as in hydropower projects, indirect impacts often include population loss and the isolation of communities. When a project acquires substantial portions of a municipality or other administrative unit, it can significantly distort land prices, which affects local farmers who remain in the area. In addition, increased demand for services, supplies and labor for the project can increase the cost of living.

Major infrastructure projects carried out in a given region also produce cumulative impacts that are difficult to link to any single project. For instance, each individual transport corridor, highway development program or oil and gas exploration project encourages an influx of new people; each additional project results in additional newcomers, causing substantially increased degradation of natural resources and pressures on traditional populations.

#### **4.3. Impacts of Project Work Camps**

Large infrastructure projects often require camps to house up to thousands of workers, particularly for projects in remote areas. Although these camps can create economic opportunities for local people, the influx of a large number of relatively well-paid, temporary workers can also dramatically increase violence, prostitution and the spread of disease. Heavy construction traffic may damage roads, increase dust and pollution and cause accidents. There may also be pressure on hard-pressed local services, such as the water supply, local health services and law enforcement.

Socio-cultural analysis produces critical information for designing measures to avoid such impacts. In particular, it can help identify alternatives, such as improving access roads and bussing the workforce in from the nearest cities. It can lay the framework for regulations governing work camp activities, including requirements that would be contractually binding on sub-contractors. Such regulations would cover issues such as traffic routing, hours of operation, measures to control noise and dust and the medical screening of all workers. Codes of conduct would be applied to employees.

In cases in which projects also generate significant economic opportunities, socio-cultural analysis can help borrowers/clients match local skills with their needs and determine the training required for local people to qualify for the new jobs. Project leaders must also determine royalties for regional or community development funds and how they are used.



#### 4.4. Issues Related to Mitigation and Compensation

Analysis also provides data to help determine who will be eligible to receive benefits, assistance and other entitlements needed to reconstruct their livelihoods following displacement connected to a development project. Data for this purpose is required in the following areas:

<b>Land and property ownership:</b>	Which possession rights or informal rights are regarded as ownership, keeping in mind that a lack of formal title may be the norm and does not bar eligibility for assistance?
<b>Affected property:</b>	Wholly, partially or indirectly affected properties that would be acquired or otherwise impacted by the project.
<b>Family or household:</b>	The presence of co-resident adults or co-resident married children who could be regarded as the heads of separate households for resettlement benefits. Also, couples living in common-law unions, spouses living separately or the widowed.
<b>Eligibility timelines:</b>	Information that would help to establish a cut-off date after which new entrants will no longer be eligible for compensation and resettlement assistance.
<b>Asset and property security:</b>	Issues regarding security of tenure for replacement assets, such as farmland and houses, to ensure resettled people are not victimized by unscrupulous officials, lawyers or moneylenders.

Socio-economic analysis initiates the discussion of eligibility and compensation. These issues must be thoroughly addressed before project implementation to avoid conflicts and to ensure that affected families are satisfied with the criteria that have been adopted. Even when criteria have been agreed upon, affected people often ask for reviews or adjustments because they have learned or heard rumors that higher compensation has been given in other projects. Clearly defining the criteria at the onset reduces the anxiety of affected people and better enables the borrower/client to plan, organize and budget the compensation and resettlement process.

Socio-cultural analysis reveals opportunities for alternative compensation and resettlement options that take into account the diversity of the affected population. For example, the analysis could show that a choice between cash compensation and resettlement in social housing projects may be too limited. It could also present options for housing design and materials that take into account people's cultural characteristics and the proposed economic

activities at the resettlement site. In rural areas, land provided for resettlement must be suitable for the type of agriculture or livestock rearing practiced. In urban areas, plots should allow for some expansion.

The analysis also provides information on non-owners of property, such as renters, sharecroppers and farm workers. These people must also be resettled and provided with alternatives for reestablishing their housing, livelihoods and access to public services. This sector is often among the poorest in affected populations. It may be determined that cash compensation should not be offered to poor or vulnerable groups for fear that it could end up in the pockets of money lenders, shopkeepers and landowners in the form of debt repayments. Moreover, the amount of compensation for poorer families is rarely sufficient to buy a decent house near a new place of employment.

Analysis helps to determine if such landless and houseless families can be resettled in sites reasonably close to their former sites to make it easier to maintain their jobs and reconstruct their community networks. Information on the elderly, the physically or mentally handicapped, single women living with small children and so on can lead to arrangements with local social services.

Information will also indicate how each category of affected families can regain or improve their former living standards. The project may include social and/or technical assistance for the first years of resettlement, access to agricultural credit or support in finding employment, or opportunities for self-employment in urban areas.

Socio-cultural analysis will suggest a schedule for the implementation of compensation and mitigation programs, which must be closely coordinated with the timetable of the major works. Failure to do so can result in significant delays in the implementation of infrastructure projects, as well as serious impacts on the affected population. In the case of resettlement, common sense requires the adoption of a schedule that will allow the population the flexibility to stay in place until a few months before the civil works oblige them to move, taking into account agricultural cycles, school calendars, etc.

Social and cultural analysis also informs land-titling programs carried out as a mitigation component of transport projects that affect indigenous peoples and other traditional rural populations in remote areas. This information will help to ensure greater security for affected populations, in particular helping them maintain control over their territories and natural

resources. It also suggests additional measures, including demarcation, fencing of critical areas, legal support to stop illegal occupations or theft of natural resources and campaigns to explain the rights of indigenous peoples and others to the local authorities and neighboring populations.

#### **4.5. Analysis of Institutions Charged with Mitigation**

The institution that carries out compensation, resettlement or other mitigation programs must also be the subject of socio-cultural analysis. Ideally, the institution should be the project's executing agency to better ensure coordination and commitment. Financing for compensation and mitigation programs should be included in the operation rather than in a separate operation.

Institutional analysis should focus on aspects that will be critical for later execution of the mitigation programs. These include the agency's policy and legal framework and its capacity to produce the planning studies, the organizational level at which responsibility for the program will be lodged, the agency's ability to provide adequate staff, facilities and equipment and its capacity to ensure that contractors deliver works, goods and services. The executing agency must also be able to provide a detailed presentation of resettlement impacts and entitlements agreed upon with affected families, make cost estimates or budgets and draw up a realistic execution timetable and a solid financing plan.

#### **4.6. Social Communication in the Project Area**

Socio-cultural analysis establishes the basis for a social communication program, which is required for any major infrastructure project that has a significant potential to impact local people. Such a program can facilitate dialogue between the executing agency and the affected population throughout the life of the project using the following approaches:

- Inform the population about the details, timing and potential impacts of the project.
- Open channels of communication through which the affected population can discuss options and issues related to compensation and mitigation measures.
- Facilitate dialogue among the beneficiaries of compensation and mitigation programs, the executing agency or project sponsor and the local or regional authorities responsible for eventual operation and maintenance of infrastructure and provision of social services.
- Provide a systematic grievance mechanism whereby affected people can seek redress on complaints through direct communication with project authorities.

The analysis will indicate how best to organize meetings with local communities, which communications media should be used and how messages can be delivered most effectively. Choice of language is particularly important in the case of indigenous populations and other groups that are outside the mainstream.

## 5. Major Infrastructure Projects Check List

### **Baseline data**

What socio-economic censuses and territorial surveys must be carried out? How is the area of influence of the project defined for determining indirect or cumulative impacts? What categories of people will be affected? Which are the most vulnerable groups? What potential short- and long-term and direct and indirect impacts must be identified?

### **Institutional responsibilities**

Are the executing agency's responsibilities clearly defined? Is the executing agency or sponsor fully capable of taking on responsibility for compensation and mitigation programs?

### **Alternatives**

What alternative scenarios, including termination of the project, must be considered? Which proposed alternative can best avoid or minimize potential impacts? What mechanisms should be used for public consultation on alternatives?

### **Eligibility criteria and compensation measures**

How can eligibility criteria and compensation measures be clearly defined? How should they be discussed and agreed upon with legitimate representatives of the affected population?

### **Compensation options**

What options must be developed for different groups within the affected population, including poorer, more vulnerable groups, such as single women with children, the elderly and the sick and physically and mentally handicapped.

**Timetable**

How must the schedule and budget for compensation and mitigation be defined? How can it take into account the timing of the main civil works? How can it account for the specific needs of the affected population, such as the agricultural calendar and schooling for children?

**Titling of properties**

What measures must be taken to regularize or title the new settlement areas or individual properties provided for resettlement? Will the project fully cover legal and other costs?

**Work camps**

What are the potential social impacts of work camps? What measures must be taken to avoid or minimize these impacts?

**Indirect impacts on the population and local economy**

How can the affected population of the broader project area most effectively be consulted about mitigation measures or the maintenance of services and infrastructure? What measures must be contemplated to mitigate the long-term effects of the project on the communities in the project's area of influence?

**Social communication**

What components does a social-communication program need to explain the project, eligibility criteria and compensation measures to the directly and indirectly affected populations, including the poorest or most vulnerable groups or ethnic minorities? How can the program help such groups choose appropriate options? What are the most appropriate media to use? How can the content be clearly understood by the target audiences? Are there local languages that must be taken into account?

### **Specific Socio-Cultural Issues Pertaining to Social Sector Projects**

- Groups in project areas have access to diverse education, health, justice and social systems. Groups may also have distinctive beliefs and practices, languages, concepts of time and values.
- Collateral factors bar participation of some frequently excluded groups.
- Institutional practices can constrain the performance of project execution staff.
- Dominant groups may be biased against minority groups' traditional practices.
- Cultural norms may limit the education of girls.
- Geographic isolation prevents access to social services.
- Epidemiological data are not disaggregated by ethnic or social characteristics.
- Formal sector identity cards such as licenses, permits and property titles are not necessarily available to socially excluded groups.
- Project teams face challenges in designing project components in accordance with social and cultural values that differ from their own.

## **6. Health, Education and Other Social Projects**

This group of projects includes primary healthcare; epidemiological monitoring and control; technical and vocational training; pre-school, primary and secondary education; and distance education. In recent years, the social sector has expanded to include emergency relief and social compensation, including conditional cash transfers, pensions and social security reform, judicial reform and the prevention of crime and violence.

The main social challenges these projects face lie in ensuring that components are appropriate to the culture, social organization and aspirations of poor and socially excluded beneficiary groups. These components cannot be simple add-on elements; they must be an integral part of project design. Other key issues include ways to increase beneficiary participation, the minimization of institutional practices that constrain performance and the identification of cultural factors and other obstacles confronting particular groups.

The normal functioning of societal institutions fails to reach the poor and socially excluded. Therefore, projects require innovative strategies and/or complementary measures in order to reach them. If a project is intended to benefit the nation as a whole—for instance, an initiative to reform judicial or social security systems—data from socio-cultural analysis should provide the basis for designing pilot projects to test new strategies for reaching the poor and socially excluded. If the project targets a geographic region, the analysis must provide data to help ensure that benefits reach the poor and socially excluded, particularly when resources and services are channeled through local governments controlled by traditional elites who would otherwise divert benefits to their usual clients. Information from socio-cultural analysis makes it possible to counteract these negative factors by clearly defining social criteria and procedures for allocation of services and resources and correcting for bias against poor and excluded groups.

### **6.1. Setting Priority Objectives**

Detailed sample surveys help strengthen systems of information management, which are vital for identifying and reaching poor beneficiaries. For example, a primary healthcare program designed to reduce water-borne diseases requires epidemiological information on the sectors of the population with the highest infant mortality rates or incidence of dysentery, cholera and viral hepatitis. Equally important is information on social and economic status, disaggregated by gender and age, and in many cases by ethnic or racial status. These data will permit targeting and

the design of innovative instruments for reaching the priority segments of the population. Such information is rarely available unless produced specifically for a given project.

### **6.2. Ensuring Stakeholder Participation**

A social program is more likely to respond to the needs of the beneficiaries if the people themselves help in its design and monitoring. In practice, however, poor and socially excluded people often lack the time or resources required for such participation. Furthermore, they rarely have an effective system of representation in which local-level representatives can be consulted. In many cases, therefore, community health promoters, paralegal non-governmental organizations or others directly involved in the sector in question can provide useful input.

### **6.3. Reaching Excluded Groups**

A major challenge is getting executing agencies to acknowledge the existence of social exclusion. Government officials often tend to downplay it because it reflects badly on the agency or the nation as a whole. In some cases, the poor quality of social services may be blamed on the excluded groups themselves, with claims that the people are not interested in education or refuse conventional health services. Socio-cultural analysis can prove that social exclusion does exist and generate solutions to overcome it.

Socio-cultural analysis provides information needed to design special initiatives to reach socially excluded groups. For example, it can indicate ways to reduce the cost of reaching isolated populations—for instance, charging local people with certain aspects of program management instead of using professionals from the capital city. Decentralizing project operations is almost always more cost effective than using staff from a centralized bureaucracy.

Another factor is finding time when project officials and beneficiaries can interact. Agency officials are often burdened by meetings and paperwork, leaving them little time to spend in the project area. For their part, beneficiaries are bound to the agricultural cycle, the round of daily household tasks or the salaried workweek. Time for scheduling project activities may have to be found in the evening, on weekends and during slack times in the production cycle.

### **6.4. Identifying Culturally Appropriate Components**

The success of social-sector projects is greatly determined by the degree to which the cultural context of the target population is taken into account. A project often has opportunities for working with local practitioners and traditional specialists, as the following examples suggest:



- The poor often turn to traditional healers because they are more accessible, treat patients with more respect, speak their language, share their beliefs and cultural values and are cheaper. Traditional healers can often be integrated into a healthcare system at little or no cost and without compromising the quality of healthcare provided. They can be taught to recognize and remit cases that require conventional treatment and are probably better qualified to deal with culturally specific psychosomatic illnesses than are conventional practitioners.
- Traditional judicial systems are often based on the belief that crime or other offenses result from failure of the social group to integrate and socialize an individual rather than being solely a matter of individual culpability. Such systems often entail corrective measures such as rehabilitation, compensation to aggrieved parties and reintegration and reeducation of offenders rather than punishment through incarceration or separation from the community. Socio-cultural analysis can point to opportunities for cost saving and effective traditional practices that can improve quality of life without contradicting notions of justice of the dominant society.

The design of culturally appropriate project components requires an understanding of cultural issues, respect for traditional systems of belief, knowledge and decision-making and a willingness to experiment. This is a participatory process based on patience and mutual trust that engages with traditional authorities and their representatives. It does not merely mean asking people what they want, which is likely to result either in unrealistic demands or answers designed to please interviewers. Rather, it must be based on an analysis of those ways of life that people want to maintain and strengthen, and of those aspects they wish to change.

### **6.5. Collateral Constraints to Project Success**

Socio-cultural analysis can reveal collateral factors that can reduce a project's effectiveness. For example, if children are suffering from malaria or hunger, an education program will not achieve its intended impact. Sometimes such collateral issues can be addressed without complicating or significantly increasing the cost of a program. For example, providing identity documents or reducing the cost and complexity of other bureaucratic requirements makes it easier for very poor people to register their children in school. Provision of daycare facilities helps mothers to take advantage of training or job opportunities. These problems can sometimes be overcome

through better coordination among agencies or by simplifying the bureaucratic requirements of the executing agency or by providing additional resources.

Another important collateral constraint can arise from an executing agency lacking the capacity to carry out social components. Members of an agency's operational staff, such as teachers or health workers, are often poorly paid, receive delayed payment or must endure long and costly trips to the city to receive their pay. They rarely receive additional payments for working in poor, isolated and sometimes dangerous areas, which creates morale problems. Under these conditions, it is unrealistic to expect staff members to take on the additional workload that projects require without receiving benefits in return.

In other cases, agency managers never leave their offices in the capital city and have no idea what is going on in provincial and local clinics or schools. If such managers are the only authorities involved in project design and implementation, the result is not likely to meet real needs on the ground. These issues need to be addressed during project preparation and should be included in the project team's negotiating agenda.

## **7. Health, Education and Social Projects Checklist**

### **Beneficiaries**

Which groups or sectors are targeted to benefit from the services, resources or subprojects? What are their locations, poverty indicators, income levels, ethnic/racial compositions, genders and ages? Are there other important indicators that should be documented? What are the criteria and procedures for determining the provision of services and allocation of resources?

### **Gender issues**

What are the constraints on the participation of women, particularly women in poor or marginal groups? Is the program or any of its components specifically designed to benefit women? Is it possible that, as in some cases, men instead face constraints on participation?

### **Objectives and priorities**

What are the local priorities? How do the overall objectives of the program relate to them? How are national, regional or local priorities determined? How are resources allocated?

### **Participation**

What factors will help determine the beneficiaries' level of participation in the design of the program and/or the definition and achievement of local priorities? What is their capacity for sharing responsibility for implementation or monitoring of the program or sub-projects?

### **Access and exclusion**

How does the physical isolation or social exclusion of beneficiary groups constrain the ability of project activities, resources or subprojects to reach target groups? What measures can facilitate access for people who have traditionally been excluded?

### **Culturally appropriate content of programs**

What are the local values, systems of belief, authority structures and practices of target groups that the program or specific program components must take into account? How can this be achieved? How can traditional specialists and/or authorities become directly involved in the program's design and implementation?

### **Collateral and contextual factors**

What additional factors may affect people's access to the resources or services provided by the program? Such factors often include malnutrition, high levels of seasonal migration, low income levels (limiting the ability to buy school uniforms and books or pay for accommodations) and lack of identity documents. How can these issues be addressed through the project? If they are not addressed, are there other ways in which the project can achieve its objectives?

### **Executing agency**

Does the executing agency have the financial means, technical skills and administrative capacity to manage the program and/or subcomponents? Are its front-line staff members sufficiently qualified and/or motivated to deliver the program and sub-components?

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## **Specific Socio-Cultural Issues in Urban Development and Sanitation Projects**

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- Although projects aim to generate long-term positive results, negative impacts may result from flawed decision-making processes and disruption during construction.
- Slums are much more than just poor neighborhoods. They contain vibrant industrial, service and commercial activities, as well as markets and sophisticated and resilient systems of social support, food security and self-protection. Many produce important amounts of food (thanks to gardens and domestic animals) for both self-consumption and local markets.
- Socio-cultural analysis for large urban projects must distinguish among the different categories of urban poor and provide alternatives in terms of size, type, costs and locations of project components.
- Socio-cultural surveys and censuses of people and properties in poor urban settlements are difficult to carry out but are nevertheless critical for the design and operation of projects.
- Socio-cultural analysis is essential for establishing clear, transparent and fair systems of entitlement to the urban development projects' benefits.
- Urban improvement projects in areas characterized by high population density, high risk and precarious structures often require population displacement and relocation programs. If properly managed, these will result in better houses and public services.
- Risk assessment carried out in consultation with affected families is a fundamental tool for making decisions on temporary and/or permanent population displacement.
- While the poor put a high priority on water and sanitation services, they do not always understand the need for expenses such as house connections and utility tariffs. Socio-cultural analysis can identify these knowledge gaps and recommend ways to better inform project beneficiaries.
- Cheap, easy-to-obtain materials for new water and sanitation systems enhance sustainability, especially when local community organizations are expected to operate or maintain them.
- The use of alternative labor, supply and procurement systems based on community assets generates ownership and a sense of shared responsibility within the communities benefitted by development interventions. Socio-cultural analysis can help identify available community assets such as technicians, unskilled and semi-skilled labor, borrow pits, transport vehicles such community centers.
- Construction and upgrading of sanitation systems usually necessitate significant resources and time to be spent on carrying out complementary educational programs.

## **8. Urban Development, Sanitation, and Housing Projects**

Most large-scale housing, sanitation or urban development programs seek to overcome discrimination and exclusion by improving living conditions, providing basic services and integrating informal, marginal and poor areas into the city. But while a project's aim may be to extend benefits to these target groups in the long term, any benefits' actual value may be diminished by deficiencies in the decision-making process resulting from ostensible improvements that do not truly meet the needs, capabilities and constraints of the beneficiaries. For this reason, projects must address social issues as well as the civil works themselves.

For example, an IDB-financed sanitation project for the Una basin in Belem, Brazil, succeeded in benefiting a third of the city's population in large measure by engaging poor families in the planning and execution of their own resettlement. In contrast, in a relocation program in the Linha Amarela Highway project in Rio de Janeiro, the main concern of project officials was to clear families from the area. They treated residents merely as illegal occupants and obstacles to the civil works and maintained that they had no right to discuss the proposed resettlement site, complain about the poor quality of replacement housing or participate in decision-making. As a result, the relocation program for several hundred families resulted in the creation of a particularly miserable slum less than three years after the settlement was established.

Until recently, dismissive attitudes regarding the poor and excluded were common among borrowers/clients in Bank-financed projects. But in the past few years, significant progress has been made in adopting more socially responsible attitudes, although it sometimes remains a challenge to convince executing agencies to pay attention to social needs in large urban development works.

Socio-cultural analysis helps executing agencies differentiate among different kinds of urban poor in order to successfully address social needs. The poor are not and cannot be treated as a monolithic group.

For example, there is often a clear distinction between the poor who live just below and just above the poverty line. Those below the poverty line have lives that are unpredictable and chaotic, marked by chronic unemployment, catastrophic illness and victimization. Those who live even slightly above the poverty line generally have greater security due to reciprocal-exchange support networks that provide relatively stable employment in small business, services

and manufacturing enterprises. These same networks provide assistance with health emergencies, as well as a degree of personal and property security.

Members of each of these two groups view themselves and their possible futures very differently. The poor who live below the poverty line can hardly imagine receiving benefits promised by most urban development or housing projects, much less paying for these benefits. As such, urban development projects must offer poor populations alternatives that may vary in size, type, cost and location in order to best meet their diverse social, economic and cultural needs. This will help ensure that the benefits will be sustainable.

Two housing projects in São Paulo illustrate this concept. Here, the majority of the very poorest families voiced a preference for basic single-family housing units rather than multi-family housing, even if they were located at a considerable distance. Their reasoning was that the single units better met individual needs, could be expanded in the future and had a lower initial cost. In these same two projects, other poor families that preferred collective housing were able to exchange their rights to apartments with families from another slum that opted for urbanization.

In another project, which was in Belem, some of the poor but stable families eligible for resettlement in the project housing blocks expressed a preference for cash compensation. Each family received funds equivalent to the value of its former house, plus an amount equivalent to a serviced plot; each family then used this money to buy a house in another neighborhood.

Socio-cultural analysis for large urban projects must distinguish among the different groups of urban poor living in slums or informal neighborhoods on the periphery of large cities. The urban poor can be grouped as follows:

#### **Another Option: No Resettlement**

Extensive resettlement does not always have to be an issue. For example, in a project to rehabilitate Suriname's Meerzorg-Albina road, the socio-cultural analysis prepared for the Environmental and Social Management Plan indicated that 157 dwellings and shops, 11 fruit stalls, and over 20 km of fences located in the project's right of way (ROW) would be affected. The relocation cost was estimated at US\$112.3 million.

The project was redesigned to reduce the width of the ROW, thereby limiting the need for resettlement to only 17 structures and four vendors' stalls. Then the project was further revised by removing the parking lane on the side of the road and making minor adjustments to the road's realignment. These moves eliminated the need for any resettlement whatsoever.

- “New” poor or working-class families that have lost their houses due to rising rents, unemployment, a drop in salary or illness, and who have been obliged to move into a slum or acquire a cheap building plot in a remote area. They are generally eager to escape from their diminished situations.
- Households of long-term residents who have lived in slums since their arrival in the city, often many years prior. These families are relatively well established in the informal sector (e.g. small business, service and manufacturing enterprises) and have made some improvements to their housing. They may prefer to stay in their neighborhoods, especially if they are centrally located, to be close to schools, services and jobs.
- Recent migrants to the slums, often displaced farmers, who have few skills that are marketable in the city. They move from one place to another in response to opportunities for employment or because of changes in family composition or as a result of violence associated with drug traffic, among other reasons. If they own their houses, they are often willing to sell or exchange them for other goods, such as a car, another plot or even goods of lesser value. They view the opportunity for new housing as another opportunity to trade and are less willing to accept formal commitments associated with most urban housing projects.
- Recent migrants to the slums in countries affected by internal armed conflict, such as Mexico, Colombia, Guatemala, El Salvador and Peru. These are generally rural farmers or people from small towns that have been dispossessed of their land, houses and belongings by violence between illegal armed groups and the national army and/or drug gangs and the police. These internally displaced populations require special treatment in urban development projects in accordance with guidelines established by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.
- Households run by women who are single, separated or divorced. They generally earn lower wages than men but tend to be more concerned with improving opportunities for their families, particularly when it comes to their children’s educations.
- Extremely poor people, living unpredictable and chaotic lives, generally with little or no formal education and a family history of poverty that spans generations.

They seek temporary work, send their children to beg and often sleep on the streets. They can be subdivided into two groups: those who nourish some hope of eventually improving their situations and those who have lost hope.

### **8.1. Dealing with Delays**

Large urban housing or sanitation projects frequently suffer serious delays due to lack of counterpart funding and slower-than-expected bidding processes. Other delays can result from changes in state, provincial or municipal governments, which often require that a project be renegotiated. Such problems can negatively impact families, such as those identified for resettlement.

In the meantime, the original socio-economic survey may become outdated. Some families will have left the area while others may have replaced them, and eligibility criteria for project benefits may have changed. If project implementation has taken a long time—five or even ten years—the census may need to be updated.

Delays in regularizing property titles for beneficiaries often require the issuance of provisional documents with the promise of receiving a legal title later on. In some cases, the provisional document is never converted into a legally valid property title, which limits beneficiaries' rights to sell the property. A better alternative in many cases is to insist upon legal titling as part of project implementation to preserve each family's right to sell its property.

### **8.2. Complementary Activities**

Urban development, housing and sanitation projects usually require additional, complementary actions to ensure meaningful benefits for poor and excluded groups. Socio-cultural analysis identifies the need for such services and equipment, which may include formal education (nurseries, preschools, elementary schools and high schools), informal education (adult education and programs for street children, addicts, the elderly and the unemployed) and preventive healthcare for the most vulnerable groups.

Such social activities must be carried out in coordination with local community organizations to ensure that benefits go to the poorer or more vulnerable groups and are not captured by groups that enjoy greater access to local centers of power. Inclusion of the poorest groups requires that the project incorporate such complementary activities at the beginning of project preparation to ensure that they are addressed by engineers, urban planners, economists,



sociologists and social workers, in conjunction with the legitimate representatives of the target or beneficiary population.

### **8.3. Operation and Maintenance**

Changes in public administration and/or the definition of new priorities often lead public institutions to abandon existing projects once they have been completed. For this reason, operation and management are critical issues in ensuring long-term benefits.

In the case of complementary activities, responsibility for operation and maintenance may formally rest with various public entities that may have difficulty coordinating their actions. For example, public schools, nurseries or health centers may be the responsibility of municipal or state governments, the private sector, the church or NGOs. Even when operation and maintenance has been negotiated in the project design and is the object of some formal agreement, the agreements may not be carried out.

Participation of beneficiary families and communities in operation and maintenance is generally very limited. Moreover, these groups rarely have the technical knowledge needed to take on this responsibility. Therefore, it is advisable to select and train local people in operation and maintenance during project implementation; this generates employment and creates a sense of ownership. Beneficiaries can more readily take on these responsibilities if they are mobilized and trained while the project is still being carried out.

## **9. Urban Development, Housing, and Sanitation Checklist**

### **Baseline data**

What baseline information is required for the target population? What are the different groups affected? What are their expectations and preferences? This must be documented by an up-to-date socio-economic census and physical survey.

### **Eligibility criteria and options**

How will eligibility criteria, including cut-off dates and definitions of households or family units, be developed? Will they be discussed with representatives of beneficiaries or with local organizations representing them to ensure agreement and clarity?

**Social communication**

How must a social communication program be designed to explain the overall objectives of the program and the eligibility criteria? How can it promote the participation and development of local community organizations, from project design through implementation to operation, maintenance and monitoring?

**Timetable**

Does the project have a realistic timetable that will prevent or minimize delays in project implementation? Does the executing agency have the resources and technical capacity required to carry out its responsibilities? Will the timetable be periodically reviewed? Will beneficiary communities be informed about any changes to the schedule?

**Redefinition of beneficiaries**

How can eligibility criteria address the possibility of substituting in new families that move in for beneficiary families that leave the area?

**Complementary activities**

What social components beyond the immediate requirements of the project are needed to ensure that overall aims can be achieved? Will this be the result of a consultation process? Does this process reflect the expectations and needs of the different categories of population in the project area? How will the beneficiaries be involved in the design, implementation and/or monitoring of the social components?

**Operation and maintenance**

Does the design of the project take into account the operation and maintenance of infrastructure and equipment? What formal agreements must be drawn up among the parties involved? Will it be possible to hand over responsibility for aspects of operation and maintenance to the beneficiaries?

**Monitoring and evaluation**

How can the monitoring and evaluation system take into account the socio-cultural characteristics of the beneficiaries? Will it enhance their participation?

### **Specific Socio-Cultural Issues Pertaining to Rural Projects**

- Rural populations often have greater socio-cultural diversity and more deeply rooted traditional cultural norms and values than do urban populations.
- Traditional concepts of time differ from those of Westernized urban societies; a slower pace in rural areas requires that project officials provide beneficiaries ample opportunity to analyze proposals and reach decisions.
- Human productive/extractive systems overlap with officially designated protected areas.
- Rural economies are complex, entailing activities in several locations and management of production of multiple plant and animal species, as well as seasonal off-farm income streams.
- The local population's system of management and resource use has been developed and proven over a long period of time as part of its adaptation to the region's ecological conditions.
- Conflicting land-tenure/land-access systems of rights often coexist in the same area. The primary function of formal legal systems is often to secure the rights of large landowners and provide concessions to certain enterprises.
- Outsiders generally lack a detailed knowledge of the adaptation and survival strategies of rural groups and may have difficulty interpreting the information that is available.

## **10. Rural Development, Environment and Land Titling**

Rural areas often have more cultural diversity and deeply rooted traditional norms and values than comparable urban neighborhoods, where life is governed more by the dominant modern Western culture. In traditional cultures and societies, people tend to have closer relationships with their environments. Imposing social, economic or ecological change on these societies may produce dramatic, even violent, reactions or affect the way in which they manage the environment.

Socio-cultural analysis is critically needed in rural projects involving land titling, irrigation, conservation and forestry, due to the opportunities they offer for poverty reduction as well as the risks they entail. There is a particular risk of impoverishing those sectors of the rural population that depend on land for their subsistence and are less integrated into the formal market economy. A particularly important subject for analysis is the local population's resource-management system. In most cases, these systems have been developed over many years and have proven their effectiveness in adapting to the region's ecological conditions.

A given rural area may contain a diversity of populations, even when its environment is generally uniform. In some cases, areas may include very small-scale groups with highly distinctive cultures that are not acknowledged by the broader society. Many problems and misunderstandings associated with rural development projects can be traced to a lack of knowledge of such differences.

### **10.1. Formal, Traditional, and Customary Rights**

Socio-cultural analysis of rural management projects examines three types of rights governing resource use:

- The formal legal system consisting of property titles, registries, cadasters and concessions made to enterprises.
- Traditional rights, which may not coincide with the national legal system and which may not be formally codified or written down, but are compatible with the principles of the legal system.
- Customary law, applied in accordance with the people's system of values, and which is applied in the spirit of correct practice stipulated in their cultural heritage.

In many areas, formal legal systems are only partially established in the rural sector, where their primary function is to secure the rights of large landowners and provide concessions to certain enterprises. Significant numbers of smallholders, indigenous peoples and other minorities do not have property titles issued by the state. As such, the formal legal system may coexist with traditional rights or with the customary law of different ethnic groups, or with different rights for men and women.

While formal legal rights are readily identified and understood, traditional and customary rights often require documentation and explication obtained through socio-cultural analysis. Traditional rights are grounded in the social, cultural and religious context of a society, often making them more real to the people than the formal legal system. Not surprisingly, their violation can meet with seemingly unexpected and sometimes violent social responses.

### **10.2. Conflict over Resource Rights**

Conflicts over resources can occur when the three systems of rights exist side by side, when interests conflict or when misunderstandings arise. There is a potential for conflict among different ethnic, religious or linguistic groups, between traditional and more modern sectors of the population and among groups with different economic practices.

In such situations, socio-cultural analysis examines previous experiences of conflict in the local area. It identifies and assesses levels of social cohesion and potential fractioning of groups affected by or benefiting from rural development projects. In areas with a significant potential for conflict, particular attention is given to possible overlapping areas of interest. Such information can help prevent conflicts among social groups by ensuring that project design respects formal, traditional or customary rights to possess, use or transfer resources of an area held by local social groups.

One frequent source of misunderstandings is a lack of clarity due to unfamiliarity with local languages and linguistic usage. For example, many indigenous societies use the Spanish or Portuguese terms for “work” to mean wage labor or payment in cash but use different terms to refer to agriculture, hunting, fishing or production of handicrafts, even if these activities generate cash income. In projects that use input from local people, failure to understand this distinction can lead to an emphasis on short-term opportunities for wage labor rather than productive activities that will be sustainable over the long-term. Once the project comes to an end, so do the opportunities for “work.”

Socio-cultural analysis encounters particular challenges in land regularization projects because of the historical fractioning of properties among family members, a practice that results in no formal titling. In such cases, establishing ownership, use, and access rights is a delicate and complex matter. Adding to the complexity are parcels owned by absentee owners but used by local residents. Still another problem is imprecise boundaries—for example, a creek that has changed its course or a forest that has disappeared.

### **10.3. Rules Governing the Use of Natural Resources**

Local customs and rules that determine the use of resources such as land, water, plants, game, salt and minerals are inherently obvious to the population. They are not explicitly formulated and often go unspoken. In regions with different ethnic groups, they may even be contradictory, making it imperative to understand the dynamics among different norms, authority structures and decision-making processes.

The following are ways in which socio-economic analysis can indicate how projects can impact natural resources. Projects can:

- Produce changes in how resources are used, leading to undesirable secondary effects, such as contamination of water sources as a result of intensive agriculture or stock raising, new industrial or commercial enterprises and large- or small-scale mining.
- Cause loss of control over the use and management of natural resources, especially when they have to be shared among different groups.
- Cause change in microclimate conditions that could affect traditional productive activities, lifestyles and housing (for example, an increase in insect pests or loss of protection from heat, wind or rainfall).
- Result in the loss of critical natural resources such as water, firewood, medicinal plants and wild fruits, as well as common grazing land and game and food plants.
- Alter existing infrastructure, affecting access to crops, pastures, hunting grounds, fishing areas and other natural resources.
- Promote discrimination in usage rights or customary laws that affect dominant ethnic groups or gender as a result of unilaterally strengthening target groups or other interest groups.
- Encourage social fractioning and intra-community conflicts.

#### **10.4. Distribution of Economic Roles**

The basic structures of a rural society's economic system must be understood as a delicately balanced survival system in which acquisition and exchanges, cropping systems, animal husbandry, etc. are different from the dominant society. For example, economic tasks distributed on the basis of age and gender often promote social equilibrium and govern access to natural resources. In regions used by groups with different economic systems, information must be collected on the geographical and legal limits of the areas used by each group.

Analysis can suggest how change will affect these traditional economic systems. For example, population growth will threaten traditionally nomadic or semi-nomadic groups. Opportunities for earning cash can disrupt division of labor based on gender and age.

#### **10.5. Special Protection for Minorities**

Socio-cultural analysis of minorities in a project area can lead to special measures to protect these groups from more powerful interests and from the effects of social and economic changes. For example, the mechanization of agriculture can lead to the eviction of small farmers who have traditional or customary possession rights. It can also result in the expulsion of indigenous people whose territories have not been legally recognized and demarcated.

Social and economic change can also encourage indebtedness, causing people to sell their land to pay off their debts under the following circumstances:

- Credit is made available to people who are not yet sufficiently familiar with the mechanisms of the money economy.
- Control of goods or money is traditionally in the hands of women, which is not understood or respected by the creditors.
- Newly introduced economic activities, such as mono-cropping or introduction of new hybrid varieties or new cash crops, increase the producers' vulnerability to droughts, floods, or fluctuating international markets.

Information on these factors can be used to design credit mechanisms that do not subject small farmers or minority groups to the risk of losing their land.

#### **10.6. Organization and Values in Traditional Economies**

The organization and principles of economies of traditional societies, especially of subsistence economies that are dominated by non-monetary relations based on reciprocity, are very different from those of a market economy. The principal aim of traditional economies is to reduce risks to

the family or kin-based groups, even at the cost of less benefit for particular individuals. These factors are particularly important to socio-cultural analysis because development projects can only produce long-term benefits if they ensure families or groups a certain level of economic security.

The analysis of economic activities must determine their social, political or religious significance in addition to their economic or monetary outputs. For example, it is important to understand who has responsibility for economic security and protection of a social group. In many projects, incentives for new economic activities tend to go to the men, although women may provide the bulk of food security for the household or kinship group. For this reason, women should also be allowed to participate in the identification and promotion of project activities.

### **10.7. Key Cultural Factors in Rural Societies**

In traditional societies, social organization, economic activities and cultural identity are closely interrelated. Key cultural elements are particularly sensitive to external influence, though people in small-scale rural societies are not fully conscious of what those elements are or how to articulate them, especially to outsiders. The following are some of these cultural elements:

- Values and rules of political organization.
- Social mechanisms that regulate exchange and obligations among kin and kinship-based groups.
- Prestige objects, species of flora or fauna or artifacts of religious or festive importance.
- Pride and historical mistrust of outsiders.
- Distribution of economic or religious roles and other activities important for determining the identity of men, women or specific groups.
- Local perceptions of who is poor and who is not poor that differ from the formal criteria used by rural development planners.

### **10.8. The Cultural Dimensions of Time**

Concepts of time in traditional societies differ from those of Western urban society. In most non-Western cultures, concepts of time are more closely related to natural cycles—to the tides, the agricultural calendar or seasonal changes in rainfall. As such, the rhythm and pace of life is



slower. Knowing this can help project officials provide beneficiaries with sufficient time to analyze proposals and reach decisions.

In some cases—out of courtesy or simply to take advantage of short-term job opportunities—community members may accept proposals before they have had time to discuss them. The resulting projects often provide little benefit to the community and are unlikely to be sustainable.

### **10.9. The Importance of Exchange Relationships**

Exchange, redistribution and trade have important social, cultural and economic functions by encouraging social and political contracts and dissemination of information. Traditional relations, which include the exchange of gifts and money, serve to promote social equilibrium and help resolve conflicts.

Women usually play a key role in exchange and redistribution, a role that helps them develop and maintain a social network. A woman's right to dispose of her own goods and possessions can be an important element in determining her social position. In many non-Western societies, this right is comparable to the Western notion of "property." The loss of a woman's traditional right to dispose of her goods can lead to the loss or deterioration of her social and economic position.

### **10.10. Preservation of Intellectual Property**

Traditional systems of belief and knowledge are an important part of mankind's cultural heritage. They motivate people and give meaning to a society's day-to-day activities, identity and culture. Traditional knowledge is expressed through myths and legends that are transmitted in traditional activities. When such an activity is lost, the knowledge disappears as well.

Globalization has increased interest in medicinal plants and traditional varieties of food crops. Most of this knowledge is regarded as common property. Its value has been developed over generations and is not legally recognized as the property of any individual or group. Socio-cultural analysis helps to identify traditional systems of knowledge and foster respect for them at the local, national and international levels.

Socio-cultural analysis helps guide development professionals away from their standard role of instructing traditional people, toward learning how they and why they manage natural resources in the way that they do and understanding how to identify and respond to their

priorities, constraints, techniques and innovations. The objectives should be to ensure sustainability, reduce risk and produce diversity.

### **10.11. Respect for Historic, Symbolic, and Religious Values**

Many local groups maintain historical, mythical or symbolic relationships with specific sites in areas where they live. Socio-cultural analysis can identify these values and sites to safeguard a group's cultural and spiritual identity. This is particularly important in the case of indigenous groups that are still not significantly affected by Western societies, and in cases in which a group's relation with the natural world is explicitly religious or sacred. Such people may be unable or reluctant to speak about these beliefs. It is important that mutual trust be developed with local people before attempting to acquire this information.

## **11. Land Titling, Environment, and Rural Development Guidelines**

### **Formal, traditional and customary rights**

What is the social, ethnic and geographical composition of the population? What traditions or customs are relevant to property and usufruct rights, access to natural resources and rights to hunt, fish or extract raw materials? Could the project affect people's access to natural resources, including those resources specifically used by men and those used by women?

### **Conflicts**

Could the project lead to disputes over property rights or use rights to land, water or other natural resources? Which economic, ethnic, geographic or gender-based groups use which resources? What social, symbolic or religious role do these resources play? What measures are likely to be successful for ensuring that the different groups can continue to exercise traditional customary rights, even if economic conditions change? Have effective solutions been applied to past conflicts?

### **Loss of lands**

Could the project cause some sectors or groups to lose their rights or their access to land? What actions are needed to ensure that people's rights are respected? How can these actions be effectively implemented to ensure equity among the different interest groups?

### **Pressure on natural resources**

Could the project lead to social, economic or cultural changes that will force the population or particular groups or sectors to increase exploitation of natural resources? What mechanisms limit the use of natural resources? How do those mechanisms vary among different economic and ethnic groups in the area? What measures could promote the development of new regulations or the adaptation of traditional practices to ensure the protection and fair distribution of natural resources?

### **Social, economic and cultural change**

Is the project likely to bring social, economic or cultural change to particular groups that would lead to loss of cultural identity? Is project planning adapted to the rhythm and time scale of the population? What measures could help the people integrate the changes into their way of life?

### **Trade, exchange and redistribution**

Is the project likely to change traditional rules of trade, exchange and redistribution that would affect the socio-economic or cultural equilibrium? What are the non-economic functions of trade, exchange and redistribution? What changes will affect the role of women? What additional measures are needed to maintain the social equilibrium or support the integration of ethnic or gender-based groups?

### **Traditional knowledge and intellectual property**

What measures could prevent loss of traditional knowledge and foster the development of new knowledge? What would be the most appropriate way of protecting intellectual property rights in local, national and international contexts?

### **Sites of cultural, religious or historic importance**

Is the project likely to affect any sites or natural areas of social, cultural, religious or historical importance to the local population? Can sufficient mutual trust and understanding with local groups be developed to engage in discussions about religious prohibitions, taboos or fears of disturbing the “spirit owners” of the areas in question? Has the project considered measures to avoid or minimize potential disturbances to these sites?