

projects, the vast majority (approx. 400) on the ground were recruited, trained, deployed and managed locally, with only 12 staff members (8 Canadians) being brought in from outside of the country.

Regarding the first critique, the extent to which CARE Canada can be justifiably accused of *linear thinking* or of adopting a 'project mode' of planning, is difficult to determine because neither of these concepts are easily operationalisable. On the one hand, CARE Canada has been involved in a variety of projects that have been left to the local communities and NGOs to design and implement (see below), suggesting that it has adopted a multidimensional, flexible and responsive strategy. On the other hand, CARE Canada has emphasised the organisation's efficiency and cost-effectiveness – qualities criticised by some in the mainstream.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, this statement written about NGOs in general certainly applies to CARE in particular:

While [NGOs] generally profess a closer affinity to the poor than to the state, they bear more resemblance to the state than they do to the poor – and in most of their activities they operate in a manner that is more akin to the state than to any organisation of the poor (Farrington/Bebbington 1993: 177).

In other words, CARE Canada is a professional organisation which, at least in its official publications, adheres closely to the standards and objectives of its primary financial provider.

Second, as a recipient of institutional funding, CARE Canada seems to have a considerable degree of *independence* from the Canadian government in determining the specifics of its programs, although it has clearly operated within CIDA's six priorities.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, most of the planning and implementation of the NGO's projects were conducted by local NGOs and community groups themselves, and even the project management was carried out by the country office, CARE Bosnia & Herzegovina/Croatia, rather than by Ottawa directly.<sup>20</sup> In its official report, CARE Canada stated that

...the strategy is not to promote a 'blueprint' design for local adoption, such as one modeled on Western NGOs for example. Rather, the strategy is to encourage groups to grow and flourish in self-identified ways that seem appropriate in their current situation and indigenous environment.

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<sup>18</sup> CARE's *cost-efficiency* was emphasized on the basis that it was under budget in one area and thus able to prolong its mission; and its *effectiveness* was stressed in the context of successful handovers in a timely manner to established civil society groups that it had helped create.

<sup>19</sup> For instance, in the REACH II project, CARE Canada states that the "majority of the staff and beneficiaries of this project are women" (1998).

<sup>20</sup> According to Wils (1994: 76), even though they may accept large grants from official aid agencies, large NGOs are often very influential: "bigger NGOs have a significant degree of bargaining power, precisely because of their absorptive capacity and because they have succeeded in developing viable alternatives in service provision or economic support to the poor."