

Partnership conception

The partners should begin by answering such fundamental questions as:

- ◆ What advantages would be gained from the partnership?
- ◆ Would we have a better chance of attaining our goals independently?
- ◆ With whom should we collaborate? What are our options?
- ◆ How can we select the most suitable partner agency?

Partnership design

The project design can make or break the relationship. At this stage, you need to share expectations and concerns with your partners and highlight strengths. What resources can both sides bring to the relationship? What are the expected roles of expatriates and hosts? Will there be a transition or turnover stage? Could either side withdraw honourably? Are there any preconceived policies or rules?

Partnership formation

Once you and your partners design an acceptable project framework, it is time to discuss staffing. If new personnel are required, how will recruitment and selection take place? Are there any guidelines to be established before starting?

Partnership management

Most partnerships experience serious difficulties in the management or operative phase. The difficulties often result from problems at the previous stages and/or inadequate skills, knowledge and attitudes. Some questions that need answering at this stage are:

- ◆ Are the manager's beliefs, styles and practices appropriate?
- ◆ Are there deep-rooted value differences behind the contrasting management styles and practices?
- ◆ How are differences settled when they occur?

Most project problems can be traced to human factors, not technical deficiencies. By following a strategic process that addresses the human aspects of partnerships, projects have a good chance of succeeding. By human aspects, we mean the similarities and differences in the way the partners perceive and carry out their activities.

Transfer of skills, knowledge, and expertise to counterparts in the host country is the minimum condition for successful institutionalization and sustainable development. Researchers such as Somlai (1992) and Blitzer (personal communication, 1993) have noted that management and the