

METHODOLOGY for assessing the workshops' impact:

This was done through a combination of formal and informal activities.

The beginning of the work centered on building relationships with the village NGO staff and beneficiaries who had been involved in formulating, facilitating and participating in the workshops. As an outsider, it was necessary to establish trust and friendships and awareness of what the field study was intending to achieve. This involved spending time with staff individually and visiting projects, as well as getting to know families in the area and becoming a familiar face. This was also a period in which ability to communicate socially in Bangla was developed.

It was appreciated that in order to conduct an in-depth study of people's response to the workshops, six-months of basic Bangla would not be a sufficient basis for dialogue. With this in mind, English speaking local village staff were recruited to work on the impact assessment team as translators and as survey staff.

With the help of the Bangla staff, a formal review seminar was devised in which the workshop facilitators worked together to conduct the *Trainers' Evaluation of the H&H Workshop Process* (see Appendix 1.). In the course of this exercise, an assessment was made of the trainers' own reaction to the workshop process and to their involvement in it. They discussed

- their understanding of the workshops' purpose
- the way in which they prepared for facilitating the workshops
- their experience of the process as trainers
- the workshops' successes and failures and aspects that needed improvement
- their opinions about the feasibility of conducting further workshops
- feelings about their own training needs as facilitators
- the reaction of people in general to the workshops in the intervening period between early 1997 (when the workshops were conducted) and late 1998 (the impact assessment)
- the purpose of the 1999 field study.

This review seminar fulfilled several purposes:

- it introduced the objective of the impact assessment to the people who had been the workshops' representatives, and who's approval and understanding it was therefore necessary to engender;
- it provided additional background information about how the workshops had been conducted;
- it gave an indication of the attitudinal environment in which the impact assessment was to be conducted;
- it provided the opportunity for the facilitators - who had been at the heart of the process - to give their advice on how the workshops could be developed. The detail of the discussion and recommendations arising from the seminar is presented in Appendix 1.

Following the review seminar, more informal surveying was done to further explore the issues raised in the seminar and to gain a wider appreciation of the social, economic and environmental conditions in which the workshops had taken place. Such informal work was done through: individual and group conversations; being invited into villager's homes where their circumstances could be seen, discussed and learnt about; and visiting other communities where comparisons and

contrasts could be drawn between these villages and Sundarban (where the workshops took place).

It should be noted that apart from occasional visits to Dhaka, the majority of the field study's six months was spent living in the village-NGO's office in Sundarban. Hence there was ample opportunity to become known as a person rather than just as a face and to get to know the villagers' life styles and circumstances.

Following this informal surveying, a methodology was then devised for carrying out a comprehensive formal study of the workshops' impact and future potential. Based on the 1997 workshops report (Carter, 1997), the facilitators' review seminar and on the informal surveying, issues requiring detailed inquiry were drawn together. A format for individual interviews with workshop participants was composed which

- provided a structure to ensure that important issues were covered
- allowed for fluid dialogue and for unexpected issues to be explored
- enabled interviewers to understand the purpose of the various questions
- facilitated a detailed study of learning objectives met and impact on building practice
- investigated the villagers' experience of hazard since 1997
- paid integral attention to gender issues
- encouraged data to be recorded in a format which would enable optimum analysis
- encouraged the participants to know that their concerns and interests were at the centre of the study and that their contribution to the survey would be the basis on which H&H work was improved
- enabled the participants to make their recommendations for the development of the H&H workshop process.

To facilitate the individual interviews, a team of surveyors was recruited. These people were all local villagers or village NGO staff, some of whom had been workshop facilitators in 1997 and some of whom were English speakers. One team of men and one team of women were to work with male and female participants respectively. The teams participated in a course of training designed specifically for the impact assessment's work (see Appendix 2). This training covered:

- The objectives of the impact assessment and the influence it would have on H&H's work
- A review of the issues and building techniques covered in the H&H workshops
- Establishing rapport with interviewees and conveying an understanding of the purpose of the interviews
- Dealing with interviewees' reactions to the interview and their possible questions about it
- Developing an understanding of interview theory and practicing interviewing skills
- Working as a member of an interview team
- Logistical planning of the survey workload.

On completion of the course, the surveyors were given an H&H certificate to acknowledge their new skills and their efforts (see appendix 2).

The interviewers worked in their teams on a rota that allowed for one team to be translating their results from two interviews into English with the H&H field worker, whilst the other team was working in the field. This system enabled the teams and the field worker to report and resolve any survey difficulties, as the work was in progress. It also allowed the data to be translated into English quickly so as to maintain optimum accuracy. The field worker attended occasional interviews to monitor the quality of interviews, but also kept a discrete profile in order to allow the long standing rapport between the teams and their fellow villagers to yield maximum information with minimum inhibition (- the fact that the field worker was now a familiar face in

the village did not reduce the villagers' tendency to come in small crowds to observe the field worker at work).

Using an interview analysis guide that had been produced alongside the interview questionnaire, the survey data was then analysed in quantitative and qualitative terms. A summary of the data analysis can be found in Appendix 6.

The interviews were devised so as to allow issues to surface which might merit deeper probing later on. The analysis did indeed indicate the need for further understanding of the socio-economic background to H&H's target group. Within the study time still available, another dialogue exercise was conducted, using a flash card (- a sheet of cartoons designed to stimulate discussion on particular subjects without risk of verbally preconditioning the outcome of the conversation, see Appendix 3, picture 12 -) which had been prepared to draw out villagers' thoughts about household economics, savings and concepts of investment.

Recommendations arising from the workshop facilitators' review seminar were also followed up. In particular, it had been suggested that a series of posters was required to help jog memories about the ideas tried and tested in the workshops. A poster series was designed and was tested for message and visual clarity among participants and non participants, and among the interview survey team (see Appendix 3). This testing was carried out without revealing who had drawn the posters until comments had been given.