

### 3. The Objectives of Linking

A Link must have a defined purpose and objective. It can, in itself, be the main element of a relationship or it may be a single element in a project that involves several and varied activities.

It would be wrong to regard one single visit or a number of unco-ordinated visits as a link arrangement. A link is a planned integrated activity that aims to foster exchanges of staff and co-operation on a long term basis of perhaps five or more years. It should bring benefits to both partners in knowledge and understanding. It should aim to meet the wider social and economic requirements of society in general.

The benefit of links should not flow in one direction alone; a mutual interest and benefit are prerequisites for success. "Links are delicate mechanisms and depend on continuing mutual confidence and regard between members of staff concerned". [British Council 1987]. "Extreme care must be exercised" in choosing the right partner. [Willoughby 1985]. "The potential for conflict is great" [Baker et al 1989 [1]]. The main areas where links have proved themselves valuable are:

- o institutional, organizational and administrative development.
- o staff development, particularly mid-career staff.
- o management training.
- o improvement of technical expertise.
- o course and curriculum development, and training techniques.
- o technology transfer (which should be appropriate to the country).
- o collaboration in research.
- o community matters, particularly in relation to PHC development.