

**Part 1:**  
**SETTING UP A CENTRE**

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**Promoting, Planning, Organising  
and Supervising Tasks**

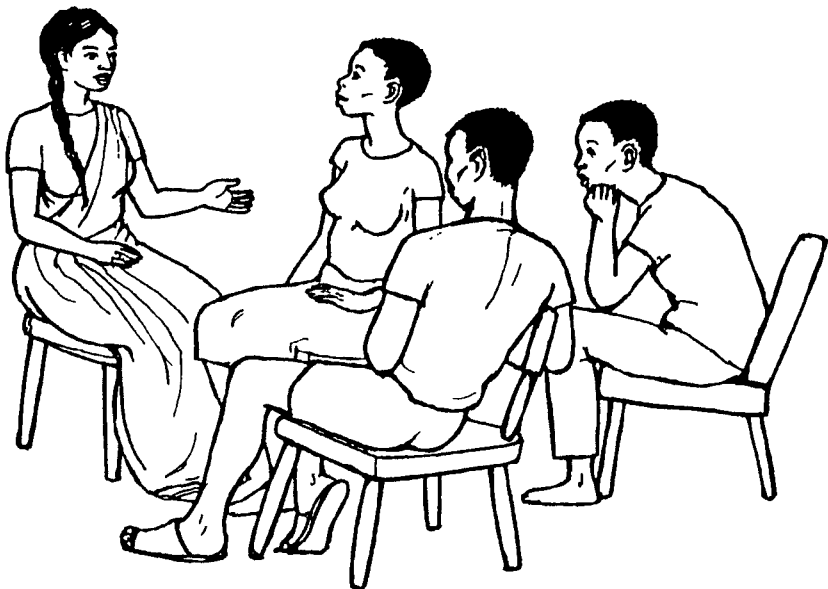
# *Promoting the Idea*

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A resource centre will not succeed unless it is fully understood and welcomed by the community. Promoting the idea of the centre is therefore of the utmost importance.

## **Promoting the Idea to Local Leaders**

The first people who must be involved are the local leaders and decision-makers. These may have been elected or appointed or they may be people who have become leaders according to a different tradition.



It is very important that these decision-makers:

- Approve of the idea of having a resource centre in the community.
- Are involved in planning and setting it up.

This approval is needed:

- To ensure the centre will succeed.
- To give support to the people who plan, supervise and work in the centre.
- To motivate community members to be involved in developing the centre.

The ways by which community decisions are made vary from place to place.

Here are some examples from two Commonwealth countries.

In India many community decisions are made by the village 'Panchayat'. Each Panchayat is made up of members who are elected by secret ballot by all the adults living in a village. Village groups, such as co-operatives, youth clubs, women's groups, and adult education centres, operate under the general supervision of the village Panchayat.

In Botswana each village has a Village Development Committee which is elected at a public meeting. The local headman and a representative of the Village Extension Team (a team made up of all the extension workers in the community) are also represented on the Committee.

Involve the local decision-makers from the beginning, and make sure you have their approval. If they are not involved, they will not give their support nor help to solve problems when they arise.

### *Story*

*In India an international organisation decided to set up a health and nutrition education programme in a village. The organisers did not involve the members of the village Panchayat in the planning. When some of the organisation's medicines were stolen, the Panchayat did not help to find the thief. They did not feel committed to the programme as they had not been involved in its planning.*

### **Promoting the Idea in the Community**

When the local leaders and decision-makers have welcomed the idea of a centre, the idea must be promoted to the whole community. To do this successfully, the leaders must be very clear about the value and benefits of the centre. Although each

community will have its own unique needs, the benefits are likely to be those outlined in the Introduction.

Promote the idea through activities such as:

- Holding information talks at community and group meetings.
- Asking community group members to discuss the idea with others.
- Asking teachers to discuss the idea with students and parents.
- Encouraging students to tell their families.
- Organising popular theatre or puppet shows with the benefits of a centre as the theme.
- Using local singers, poets, etc. to write something about a centre.
- Using local press and radio, where they exist, to produce items about a centre.

After 'promoting' the idea, hold a community meeting to discuss it. If there is support for the idea, discuss ways the community members can contribute. This will give the leaders enough information to decide whether to start the project.

*Note:* There are ideas on page 63 for promoting the centre after it has been opened.

The success of a rural community resource centre depends mainly on the support and participation of the community.

## **Getting Approval from other Decision-Makers**

In some communities the local leaders and decision-makers make the final decisions on community projects. In others, however, it may be necessary to obtain approval of other decision-makers (e.g. a government ministry, a district adult education committee, or a rural development office). If this is the case in your community, do not go ahead without having their approval. The possibility also exists that they may be able to fit the centre into their own plans and help with funding, training, and keeping the centre going.

The resource centre may need to be approved by district, regional, or national decision-makers.

### *Story*

*A village in Africa wanted its own health clinic. The people put up a building and started a small service with volunteer staff. But it soon ran out of money and supplies. The organisers went to the district health committee to ask for more funds. The district health committee said that they had never planned to put a clinic in that village because they were planning for one to be set up in a nearby village. Nor could they provide funds for a clinic they had not planned.*

## ***Setting up a Planning Group or Committee***

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The purpose of a community resource centre is to meet the learning and information needs of the community. How should these needs be defined? How should the service be planned, organised, financed, managed, staffed, and supervised? One way to answer these questions is to set up a planning group or committee. The term 'committee' will be used in this guide, but another term such as 'planning group' or 'advisory group' may be preferred.

In some communities there may already be a number of groups or committees. Some may have goals similar to those of a resource centre. In this case it may be wise to ask an existing committee to form a sub-committee of its members to plan and supervise the centre. Another possibility is to ask interested representatives from such committees to form a new committee.

### **Committee Membership**

It is important that the committee represents the different interest groups in the community (e.g. the interests of teachers, religious leaders, shopkeepers, police, women's groups, youth groups, extension workers, etc.).

- The members of the committee should be:
- Committed to the development of the community.
  - Able to give time to their committee duties.
  - Responsible people who are trusted by the community.
  - Aware of the work involved.

When setting up a resource centre committee always involve existing organisations and committees to make sure that different interest groups are represented.

### *Story*

*A business woman was elected to be chairperson of a committee in her village. She knew her community well and got on well with the village leaders. She accepted the position. But she was so busy with other things that she did not have time to arrange and run regular meetings. The committee soon stopped meeting and the project failed.*

### **The Size of the Committee**

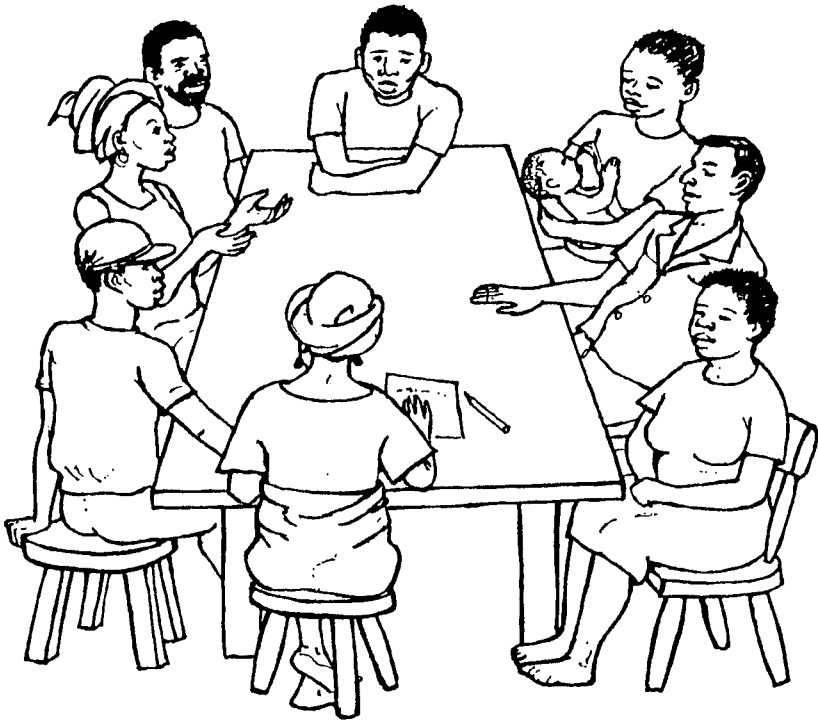
The committee should have from five to ten or twelve members. If it is smaller than five it may not represent the different groups in the community. If it is larger than twelve, it will have difficulty in organising and making decisions.

### **Selecting the Committee**

Some communities may wish to elect the committee. These elections should follow the rules of other community elections.

It is possible to have a combination of elected members and appointed members. It may be essential to have representatives of particular groups (e.g. health and agriculture extension workers or teachers) on the committee. People holding these posts should be automatic appointments and the rest of the committee should be elected.

No matter how a committee is formed, be sure its main responsibilities are to plan, manage and supervise the centre.



*A committee holding a meeting*

## **A Constitution for the Committee**

It is necessary to make a written statement about the committee's size, membership and responsibilities. This is called a 'constitution'. Some points to consider when writing a constitution are:

- Overall duties of the committee.
- The number of elected members.
- The appointed members.
- The length of membership, e.g. 1 year, 2 years.
- Requirements for attendance at meetings.
- Language to be used at meetings and for the record of these meetings.
- Minimum number of members to be present at a meeting ('quorum').
- Frequency of meetings.

- Duties of committee leaders.
- Passing decisions.
- Recording the discussions and decisions.
- Committee leaders and their election.
- Dissolving the committee.

An example of a constitution is given on pages 75 to 77.

## **Duties of the Committee**

The duties of a committee are:

- Overall planning.
- Setting objectives.
- Selection and supervision of staff.
- Fund-raising.
- Budgeting.
- Supervising accounts.
- Auditing.
- Monitoring and evaluation.

## **The Committee's Officers**

The committee must have good leaders if it is to achieve its work successfully. Most committees have the following leaders or officers:

- A chairperson.
- A secretary.
- A treasurer.

Sometimes there is a deputy chairperson to carry out the duties of the chairperson when the chairperson cannot be present. There is a detailed description of the qualities and duties of good committee leaders on pages 78 to 80.

If the committee leaders do not have the right qualities, the project may fail.

### *Story*

*A farming co-operative was given a good farm by the government. A chairperson, a secretary, and a treasurer were elected. Soon they began to use the money for themselves instead of the farm. They treated the other members of the co-operative as labourers and did not involve them*

*in decision-making. When the leaders were asked to explain their actions they threatened to throw other members out of the co-operative.*

*At the end of the first season, the crop yields were not very good. Everyone except the leaders and their relatives left the co-operative. Soon afterwards the co-operative was closed.*

## *Determining Community Needs*

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The committee should make a list of the community's needs. These may be:

- *Basic needs* such as better health, water supply and sanitation.
- *Information needs* such as where to find out about a particular service or government policy.
- *Economic needs* such as how to produce better crops.
- *Educational needs* such as textbooks and teaching aids.
- *Recreational needs* such as sports facilities.

There may also be adults who wish to start basic numeracy, literacy or other adult education lessons, and need reading materials.

There may be extension workers wanting informational material for people to study.

Community development workers may wish to hold educational workshops but not have the teaching aids they need.

There may be parents who are worried that their children have nothing of interest to them in the village and will drift to the towns.

Women's groups may need information on setting up co-operatives.

To find out what people want from the centre, it may be necessary to carry out a house-to-house survey or organise a meeting of the whole community.

<p>The objectives of the centre must be based on the <b>NEEDS</b> of the community.</p>
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# *Community Profile*

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A community is a group of people who have something in common. This can be the place where they live, their age, their education, their religion, their interests, their political affiliations, their activities, their work, their problems, or a combination of two or more of these.

A community profile is information about the community and its members. This information will help the centre and its workers to provide the right materials and service for the members of the community. If the right materials and services are not available, people will not use the centre.

## **The Information Required**

Here are some guidelines on the kind of information the committee should know about the community. There is no need for 100% accuracy. That would involve too much work and time. But the committee should have enough correct information to provide a good description of the community.

Make sure that the information is acquired with the knowledge and permission of the local leaders and the community members.

### *1. Local Administration/Leadership*

Is there a local government office in the village? Is there a traditional system of administration? How are decisions made about the community? Are they made by a local government officer, a community committee, or village elders? When decisions are made, how and by whom are they carried out?

### *2. Physical Boundaries*

What are the physical boundaries of the community the centre will serve? Will the centre serve only the village in which it is situated or will it also serve nearby villages?

### *3. Population of the Community*

What is the total number of people living in the community? It is helpful to know the number of children aged up to 12 years,

the number of teenagers, the number of adult women and adult men and the number of older people.

#### *4. Occupations*

What do most of the men do for a living? What do most of the women do? How many children go to school? What do the other children do? What do the teenagers do? How much money do the people earn and how do they earn it? Is there an 'exchange' or barter system?

#### *5. Education*

Approximately how many people have been to formal school? How many years of school have they had? This information will help in planning the reading level of the materials in the centre.

#### *6. Languages — Literacy*

What languages are usually spoken in the community? Which one is used most? What language(s) can the people read and write? How many people can read and write well enough to use simple instructional material? What percentage of literates are women, men?

#### *7. Adult Education Programmes and Extension Services*

What adult education programmes are being held or have recently been held in the village? Who and how many have attended the programmes? Are there any special programmes for women? What other extension services are there?

#### *8. Learning Resources*

What learning materials already exist in the village (e.g. at the school, at the places of worship)? How are these materials used and how often?

#### *9. Community Knowledge and Skills*

People are the most important information resource. Find out who can help to teach special skills in the community. For example, can someone help to teach farming, basic numeracy and basic carpentry?

#### *10. Interest Groups*

What groups are there in the community? For example, sports

teams, women's groups, religious groups, dance groups? What are the main cultural activities?

### *11. Transportation and Communication*

Is there a road to the village? Where is the nearest railway station? Airstrip? How often do buses, planes or trains come to the village, if at all? Is there a post office? Are there any telephones?

### *12. Seasonal Patterns*

Do community activities depend on weather patterns, such as rainy or dry seasons? How many members of the community are involved in the harvest?

### *13. Religion*

What religions are practised in the community? Do any of these have special rules that have to be considered, such as holy festivals and days, rules for women?

### *14. Institutions/Social Facilities*

Is there a school and what classes does it have? What places of worship are there? Is there a market place or a meeting place? Who can use it and when? What health care facilities are there? Is there a police post? Are there shops or co-operatives and if so, what kind? Is there electricity and a water supply?

## **Collecting the Information**

The information can be collected in several ways.

If there has been a recent census in the country, it can give some of the information needed, such as the number of people and their ages and perhaps number of years in school, and languages spoken.

If there has not been a recent census, or if this information is not easily available, then ask people at gatherings and meetings to provide this basic information. Explain that the information collected will only be used to help the staff of the centre to provide a good service.

The headteacher or the nearest education office can also help with information about the number of families and school-age children living in the area, and about recent adult education programmes. The local religious and political leaders may also be able to provide information about the education work they

have sponsored. And of course the committee will already know a lot about the community which can be included in the profile.

The committee can carry out the survey itself or ask others to help. There may be a social studies teacher at the local school, or someone attending a college willing to do this survey as part of his/her course requirements.

When the information has been gathered, it should be organised and written down. This record will be very useful to the workers of the centre. It helps when choosing suitable materials and organising activities. It is also useful when applying for money.

The community profile tells you all about the people the centre will serve.

## *Setting Objectives*

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The overall purpose of the resource centre is to meet the informational and learning resource needs of the community. This can be achieved by such objectives as:

- Providing information on subjects of concern and interest to the community in forms that can be easily understood and used by community members.
- Co-ordinating and organising activities with extension and other community workers such as workshops, discussion groups, and practical demonstrations, and by providing appropriate teaching aids.
- Organising activities in which community members can share ideas, information and concerns with government and non-government agency workers.
- Providing interesting reading material in local languages, and at the appropriate literacy levels.
- Providing a meeting and activity space for community use.
- Providing simple duplicating equipment and supplies, and training people to use them.

- Providing equipment and supplies for leisure activities such as film/slide shows, dances, etc.

To achieve these or similar objectives the resource centre must have:

- A building.
- Finances.
- Appropriate staff.
- A management group such as a committee (already described) to be sure the community's needs are being met.

The objectives will have to be checked from time to time to see if any changes are required. This process is described in more detail on pages 36 and 37 under the heading 'Monitoring and Evaluation'.

## **Work Plan**

To achieve these objectives the committee should set out a work plan.

This work plan outlines the tasks in the order in which they should be done. It also indicates how long each task is expected to take. This means putting down what can be achieved in the first month, the second month and so on. Remember that much of the work may have to be done in people's spare time and may take a long time. Also remember when people will not be able to help, such as at harvest time and holidays.

It is wise to review this work plan every few months. Change the plan if necessary.

An example of a work plan is given on pages 81 to 85. It is divided into several 'phases'.

These are:

- Phase 1* setting up the committee;
- Phase 2* selecting and training staff;
- Phase 3* the building;
- Phase 4* final preparations for opening the centre.

Each of these phases sets out:

- The start date; the activity; the community members involved; the person in charge; the people involved outside the community; the date by which that particular activity should be completed.

A work plan provides a timetable for the work that needs to be done.

# The Budget

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After preparing the work plan, make a budget. This budget outlines the money needed to set up and run the centre. It usually covers one year at a time.

To prepare the budget, find out the cost of each item you need. Then add a percentage to cover likely price increases. Experience shows that more money is always needed than was originally thought.

Part of a budget might look like this:

	<i>Amount of money</i>
Office supplies (paper, pens, postage, etc.)	_____
Equipment (e.g. furniture, typewriter)	_____
Building supplies (or rent)	_____
Learning and information materials	_____
Printing equipment and supplies	_____
Maintenance and repair of building	_____
Electricity or fuel	_____
Salaries	_____
Transport	_____
Miscellaneous	_____
<i>Total</i>	_____

It is very difficult to know how much money will be needed for the learning and informational materials. Ask extension workers and teachers for their help. Be generous in the estimate, especially for the first year, when the basic collection of materials will be developed.

# *Fund-raising*

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Basically there are two different kinds of funds:

- Those funds that are used to start the centre and are not guaranteed in advance.
- Those that are guaranteed by donors for a certain period of time (usually longer than one year).

It is essential to have both 'starter' money and long-term funds. Without long-term funds a centre cannot be sure that it can continue to provide a service to the community. Therefore it is important to plan all fund-raising activities carefully and to include long-term funding applications from the beginning.

## **A Fund-raising Plan**

The committee may decide to appoint some of its members to be responsible for fund-raising. This group should develop a fund-raising plan which will involve the community and get assistance from outside.

## **Involving the Community**

Members of the community must be involved in raising money for the centre. The fund-raising group should tell the community how much money is needed and for what purpose. They should encourage community members to give as much money as they can and to contribute their labour, their time and their skills. Some examples of fund-raising activities are:

- Sponsored walks, swims, runs.
- Selling arts and crafts.
- Donating part of the profits from market day.
- A benefit dance.
- Performing street theatre in the community and the nearest large town.
- Selling raffle tickets for a prize.

One centre in Papua New Guinea bought plain T-shirts of different sizes and colours. A member of the community knew how to put silk-screen prints on cloth. A design was made with

the centre's name and this was printed on the T-shirts. These were then sold at a small profit and were very popular.

In Swaziland, communities organise local 'talent' shows. The audience pays the performers to get off the stage or to get back on the stage. The performers donate the money to whatever project they are supporting.

Some communities hold 'Dutch Auctions' for a prize. Each person bids a few pennies higher than the last person and puts only those pennies in the pot. The last person to bid gets the prize.

Raising money can be made easier if the committee does the following:

- Makes sure the centre has the whole community's support.
- Makes sure the amount of money needed from the community is realistic.
- Makes sure that the community can trust the committee to spend the money properly.
- Encourages the community to contribute every year.
- Keeps the community informed about the centre's progress. (Successful efforts should be celebrated, and recognition given to groups and individuals.)

Sometimes people who have left a community to live elsewhere form societies to collect money for projects in their home community or help in other ways.

Always involve the community in raising funds for the centre.

## **Assistance from Outside the Community**

Once the community has raised some money of its own, it can look outside the community for more. Its self-help efforts will prove to outside organisations that the community really wants the centre and deserves assistance.

The first thing to do is to find out where to apply for money. The next step will be to write application forms.

## **Finding out Where to Apply for Money**

The following may provide funds:

- *Government departments*, especially those which are concerned with the type of service the centre will give. These include

departments responsible for community development, social welfare, library services, adult education, rural development. (There may be a council or committee that co-ordinates projects, made up of representatives from these departments.)

- *Non-government organisations*, such as voluntary agencies, social service organisations, religious organisations.
- *Embassies and High Commissions* of developed countries may have special project funds which they can use to help a centre.
- *Specialised agencies* such as UNESCO, UNICEF, The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), The World Health Organisation (WHO).

Ask local government officers which government departments and non-government organisations in the country are the best ones to ask for money for the centre. Find out if it is necessary to apply for funds through a co-ordinating council.

If addresses are not known there are two things to do:

1. Write to the nearest reference library or the National Library Reference Service in the capital city. Ask the library to send the names and addresses of government departments, embassies and high commissions of developed countries, and of non-government organisations with offices in the country. Often non-government organisations publish directories of organisations in the country. The National Library should also know of such publications.
2. Use a telephone book. The committee should try to obtain an up-to-date telephone book (or books) for the country. If this is not easy, find out who has the nearest telephone and ask to use their telephone book. Most telephone books are divided into two parts. One part is the alphabetical list of the names of the people and organisations and their telephone numbers. The other part is a list of companies arranged by the type of product or service they sell (e.g. car (auto) dealers, bookshops).

Government departments are usually listed in the alphabetical section of the telephone book. Sometimes they are listed alphabetically by each department's name. Sometimes they are all listed together under the section perhaps called GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES/DEPARTMENTS. These ministries and departments have different names in different countries. They may change their names from time to time. However, there will probably be departments in the country that deal with the following:

- health
- agriculture

- education
- library services
- rural and community development (this often includes services for youth and women)
- business/commerce
- transportation
- minerals and energy
- government information services

## **How to Apply for Money**

Here are some useful guidelines to follow when applying for money:

- Find out what types of project each department and organisation prefers to support. For example, some support women's projects, some support appropriate technology, some support projects for children.
- Write a letter to the organisation explaining how the centre fits into the kinds of effort it supports. Ask for an application form.
- Prepare a chart in a notebook as a fund-raising record. A sample is given on page 89. Fill in the details accordingly.
- Write a detailed description of the centre which can be sent to organisations that give money to projects. This description may be used more than once. A local government officer or extension worker may be willing to duplicate or photocopy the description. Also try to have it typed.

The description should include the following:

- The name of the centre and where it is.
- The general purpose of the project.
- A short community profile.
- What the money will be used for.
- How the project started.
- Progress to date.
- How the centre will work with other programmes and groups in the community.
- Location of the centre.
- Work plan.
- The supervision and administration of the centre.
- The staff of the centre.
- Contributions from the community.
- Budget.

- Other organisations being asked for money.
- Special difficulties.
- Reporting procedures.

More details on these points are given on pages 86 to 88.

The description should be accompanied by letters of reference from community leaders, saying how the centre will benefit the community. It is also important to provide the name of the contact person at the centre and the name and address of the bank and the centre's bank account number there. In the same letter, ask the organisation if it would like to meet someone from the centre and suggest a time for this person to visit.

If it is not possible for a committee member to go, try instead to find someone who comes from the village and is going to the town where the organisation's offices are. Be sure that this person is reliable and can explain the project well. It is important to show donors that the project has been well planned and will be well managed.

Write to the department in charge of finance or the department in charge of national planning and ask if there are rules or regulations for aid money coming from other countries. Be sure to follow these rules if the centre applies for money from overseas.

Always acknowledge donations of money and materials by sending a thank-you letter. This is a good idea because:

- It tells the donor you have actually received the donation and it has not been lost.
- It shows the donor you are organised and they may consider donating again.

Remember that certain types of projects are more likely to receive funding than others. They are those which:

- Involve local groups.
- Encourage self-help and self-reliance within the community.
- Do not need large amounts of money.
- Promote learning and improvement of living conditions.

Community-based projects that do *not* appeal to most organisations are those which:

- Ask for large amounts of money.
- Provide assistance to a small group of people which will put them in a privileged position.

Be prepared for some organisations to say 'no' to a request for money. Do not be discouraged. Try to find out if there is anything that could be improved (e.g. the information in the application; the evidence of community support).

## Long-term Funding

Long-term funding is money that donors guarantee every year for more than one year. It is only with long-term funding that a centre can continue to give service. It is important to include long-term funding in the earliest plans for the future.

Unfortunately, most overseas aid organisations will NOT provide long-term funding for communal services like the centre. It will therefore be necessary to find out which government departments and non-government organisations in the country may be interested in the centre for more than one year. These may include the education department; the adult education division; the library services; a literacy development division or literacy council; a correspondence or external studies department; a department of information; the community or social services department; a rural development department; extension divisions of the departments of Health and Agriculture.

The committee may find it helpful to talk with the district officers of government departments. They will know how best to apply for long-term funding. Be ready to provide the written details about the service as outlined on pages 86 to 88. BE PATIENT! Governments have to know a long time in advance to make decisions about providing funds.

Even if the committee is successful in getting agreement for long-term funding from government or non-government organisations, it will take time to receive the actual money. The centre should try to develop services during this time. For this there must be some money for essential items. If the centre can guarantee that funds are coming, a bank may be willing to lend it money. Remember that loans must be repaid, and a charge (known as interest) will have to be paid as well. Be sure to find out how much interest will have to be paid.

The advantages of long-term funding from outside the community are that:

- The centre will be able to continue to provide a service for more than a short time.
- It may be possible to pay the workers in the centre regular salaries.
- The centre may be able to use some of the facilities of the funding agency's district office (e.g. a telephone, typewriter, duplicating machine).

The disadvantages are that:

- The centre may have to change its procedures to meet the requirements of those of the funding agency.
- It may not be possible to employ staff from the community.
- There will be more administrative 'paper work'.
- The committee may be disbanded, thereby losing the community's direct involvement in the centre.

## *Setting up a Bank Account*

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When the centre receives money in cash or by cheque from fund-raising activities, it must be kept safely.

The best way of keeping money is to open an account in a bank or a post office.

Ask a bank or post office employee to explain what kinds of account are available. Most banks have two types of account: a savings (or deposit) account and a chequing (or current) account. Both are described on page 90. It is a good idea to have both a savings account and a chequing account. Money can be moved from one to the other.

Before setting up an account, the committee must decide who has 'signing authority' for the centre's money. These are the people who can take money from the bank account and sign cheques. It is a good idea to have at least two such people who must both sign a cheque before it can be used. This way there is less chance of funds being misused. Have a third person as a 'reserve' in case one of the other people is away or ill. The people with signing authority should probably include the staff member and a member of the committee.

The bank will regularly send a list or 'statement' for each account, showing how much money has been paid in and taken out. This statement will help the centre to check that its own record of accounts is correct. Information on how to keep the centre's own accounts is given on pages 108 to 110.

In some rural areas the nearest bank is too far away for the

community to make use of it. In such a case it will be necessary to find another institution or person to hold the centre's funds and act as a 'bank'. The committee could ask the local church, a trustworthy trader, a co-operative, a credit union, or an aid organisation to do this.

## *Auditing*

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The centre's accounts will have to be audited. 'Auditing' means that someone from outside comes and checks that the centre has spent the money on the items that are listed in the accounts book. Most organisations including banks, schools, hospitals, libraries, clinics and shops have their accounts audited each year. Often it is a legal requirement to have the accounts audited.

If the centre is funded by the government, the government will probably instruct its own auditors to check the accounts. If the centre is not a government centre, ask someone from the outside who is a qualified accountant or is trusted and respected and able to check the accounts to do an audit. This person must not be involved in the centre. Have this person write a report on the accounts. Send copies of this report to all major donors.

<p>In preparation for auditing make sure the accounts are up-to-date, accurate and have all the receipts available.</p>
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## *Choosing the Staff*

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The committee will have the responsibility for the overall planning and supervision of the centre. But one or two staff members

will be needed to do the day-to-day tasks. The staff will be answerable to the committee which should always be ready to give advice and supervision.

## **The Job Description**

The committee must write a clear statement (or job description) of the work that each staff member will be required to do. At first there will probably only be one staff position. The job description for that position should include the following:

- Consulting community members, extension workers and other community workers about their informational and learning resource needs.
- Gathering information and learning resources to meet those needs.
- Developing activities in which community members can share ideas, information and concerns among themselves and with extension and other community workers, administrators and planners.
- Working with extension and other community workers to co-ordinate their activities in the community, and provide materials for those activities.
- Producing informational materials in written and non-written forms and providing duplicating equipment and supplies for community use.
- Organising and keeping a record of the informational and learning resource materials in the centre.
- Providing extension services and promoting these and other services.
- Assisting the fund-raising activities.
- Performing general administrative tasks including keeping accounts, developing lending procedures, keeping statistics, stock-taking, reviewing the materials, disposing of materials which can no longer be used, writing reports, general maintenance and repair of the centre and the materials.

## **Title**

A title for the job should be decided. Some suggestions are:

- Community Information Officer (CIO)
- Information Centre Manager
- Community Information Centre Co-ordinator

- Community Librarian
- Community Resource Centre Manager

The term 'Community Information Officer' (CIO) is used throughout this guide.

## **Salary**

Decide how much money, if any, the CIO is to receive for doing the job. There may be government guidelines for similar jobs. If the CIO is to receive a salary, be sure the centre has the money to pay it regularly.

If there is no money for the salary, community members could consider paying the CIO in other ways, such as helping in the CIO's garden, building a new house for the CIO, or supplying the CIO with food. An example of this takes place in some villages in Sri Lanka. Instead of a salary, the village members take turns to give a mid-day meal to the person who organises community activities and services in the Buddhist temple.

The CIO may not have time to do all the tasks outlined in the job description. The committee may wish to help by appointing a caretaker to keep the centre clean and do any small repairs. Again, it will be necessary to decide how much money, if any, the caretaker receives.

## **Selection Procedures**

In some cases the CIO may be the person who had the original idea of starting the centre. In other cases the committee will have to look for someone else. Above all, the person should be acceptable to the community. In addition the person should:

- Be committed to the idea of information sharing.
- Have good organisational skills.
- Be literate and numerate.
- Work well with people.
- Be imaginative, friendly and creative.

Typing skills would be an advantage. It may be advisable to set minimum formal educational qualifications. A short test may be given to ensure that a candidate has the right skills. This test could include questions in basic arithmetic, filing in alphabetical order, finding information in books, and verbally summarising material.

The committee may decide to advertise the job or to ask the

community to nominate people for the position. Make a final date for applications and nominations. Then assign a small group to interview each applicant.

It is also a good idea to have a 'trial' or probationary period for the CIO. Inform the person that after the first six months (or year) the committee will meet with the CIO to review the work that has been done. If the committee and the CIO agree the work has gone well, the CIO should be offered long-term employment. If the work has not gone well, it may be necessary to find a new CIO.

## **Training**

Training will basically be 'on-the-job', 'do-it-yourself', with the CIO using the suggestions in this guide and adapting them as necessary. It is very important that the committee help the CIO as much as possible. Perhaps the task should be given to one or two committee members. Visits to similar projects, centres, libraries would also be useful.

Further training may be necessary as the services of the centre expand. Remember that this training may have to be paid for.

The committee should:

- write a clear job description for the CIO;
- select the right person for the job;
- be available for advice and supervision.

## **Training Manual**

A training manual has been written to accompany this guide. It is intended for institutions and agencies which train groups for rural community projects and require specific examples and methods relating to the development of rural community resource centres. It can also be used by extension workers, community leaders and others for training purposes within a specific community. It is available from the Director, Education Programme, Commonwealth Secretariat, Marlborough House, Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5HX.

# *A Building for the Centre*

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This section describes the building or room where:

- The information and learning materials will be kept.
- People can come to use or borrow them.
- Information-sharing activities can take place.

It can be an unused room in an existing building, such as the place of worship, a school, or a community centre. Or it can be a new building on a piece of land that is bought or rented.

## **Site**

Try to locate the centre as close as possible to places where people meet, such as the market, the shops, the school, the transport stop. If the centre is located far away from busy places, people may not visit it. Be sure the members of the community and the person owning the land or building want to have the centre located there.

## **Legal Agreements**

It is advisable to set out the arrangements for purchasing, renting or using a building or a piece of land for the centre in a legal agreement. Everyone involved will then be clear about the arrangements, and there should be no misunderstandings. Such legal agreements include a lease, and the registration and transfer of land. Here are some points to note about them.

A 'lease' is an agreement between those who own the land or building and those who want to use it. A lease for using a building may include conditions such as:

- Length of lease.
- How much rent is to be paid.
- Who pays for repairs, water supply, electricity, taxes.
- Who will have keys.
- Who pays for any changes that are made to the buildings.
- When and how to give notice of leaving.

If land is being bought, the law of the country may require land to be legally 'acquired' and registered at the nearest land

registry office. It is important to follow all the necessary procedures, and keep all legal documents in a safe place.

Where land is communally owned, be sure that everyone involved in the ownership is in agreement about having the centre on their land.

## **Cost**

It can be very tempting to have a modern building. Buildings of this type can be attractive, and people are often proud of them. But they may be too expensive to build and maintain, especially when the centre is just starting. If there is not enough money to have this type of building, don't worry. It is more important that the centre provides a good service. It is possible to have an inexpensive but well-designed and attractive building if:

- There are local people willing to help build the centre. Their labour will cost less than bringing people from outside. They will also know the best way to build with local materials.
- There is someone who has experience in building and carpentry to lead the group of workers.
- Local materials are used. It is expensive to buy and bring zinc sheets, glass, cement and plastics, etc. to rural villages. Also people often find it easier to look after a building that is familiar to them and made of local materials.

## **Design/Plan**

When designing a building:

- Provide for as much natural sunlight as possible. This makes the centre a bright place, which is important for reading, writing and working. In some rural areas, village buildings have very low roofs and are very dark inside. If this design is to be used, have as many windows or openings as possible.
- Design the building to protect the inside from strong sunlight, heavy winds, rain and dust. Be sure the windows have shutters, and that the roof is well constructed and has enough 'overhang'. If the centre is in an old building, check that the walls and roof are strong and do not leak.
- Try to prevent dampness and mildew caused by rain and humidity. One way is to have as much air as possible flowing around the materials. This can be done by having as many windows as possible, shelves without solid backs, large spaces

between each shelf, and shelves that are not tightly packed with materials.

- Plan a building that is easy to enter. For example, avoid steps that are difficult for older or disabled people.

Two examples of simple but good designs for buildings are shown on the next page.

## **Size and Space**

The centre should be at least 6 metres long by 4.5 metres wide (approximately 20 feet by 15 feet), making a floor area of 27 square metres. It is necessary to have this amount of space to provide for:

- Community activities.
- The materials acquired by the centre.
- Displays.
- The people who wish to use the materials.
- The people who work in the centre.
- Storage.

### *Activity Space*

The centre should have space for such activities as workshops, small discussion groups, children's story times, puppet shows and meetings.

### *Space for Materials*

The materials need to be placed directly on shelves or in boxes that are put on shelves. At first there may not be many materials, but as the centre develops the amount will increase. Begin by building shelves along one or two walls and then build more as they are needed.

### *Display Space*

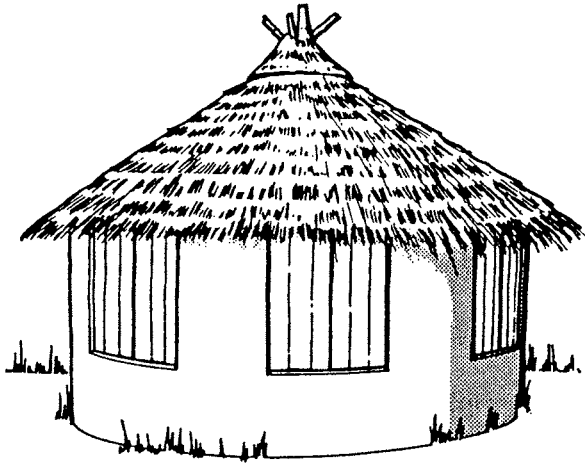
Have a place for displaying information, interesting new materials, posters, games, local crafts, etc.

### *Space for People*

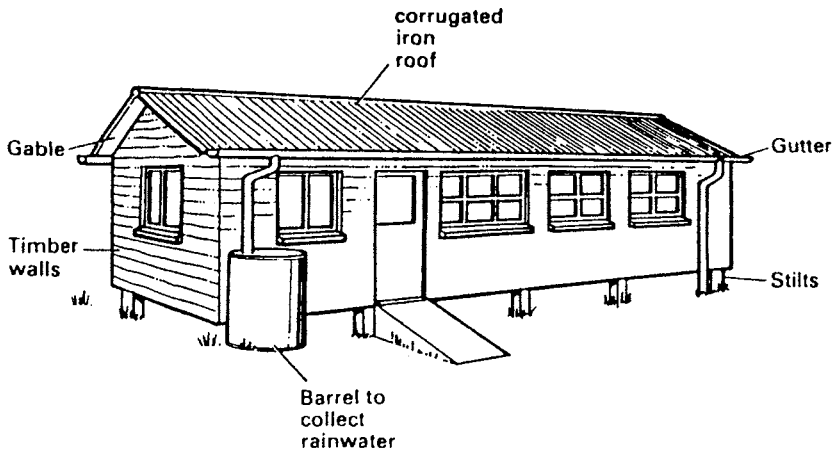
People need enough space to be able to use the learning and information materials in comfort. Provide space for a study or work table and for several chairs, stools or mats.

### *Workspace*

There must be space with a table or desk and a chair for the staff to work in the centre. There they can write letters; order, unpack



*Round hut style with several windows to let in the sunlight and the air and overhang roof to keep out the rain.*



*School-classroom style with peaked roof to keep the rain well away from the walls and windows. The stilts or piles on which the building rests are a good way of keeping the floor dry.*

and arrange materials; draw posters; use duplicating equipment, etc.

The best place for the workspace is near the doorway. There the CIO can see the activities in the centre and be seen by people needing assistance. This is also the best place for borrowing and returning materials.

### *Storage Space*

There must be space to put paper, pens, extra copies of materials, storage boxes and materials for repair. This storage area should be kept neat and away from the public space. A loft or the space behind the work table is a good strong place.

## **Furniture**

The furniture for the centre should include shelves, work tables, chairs, a lockable cabinet, stools and mats.

### *Shelves*

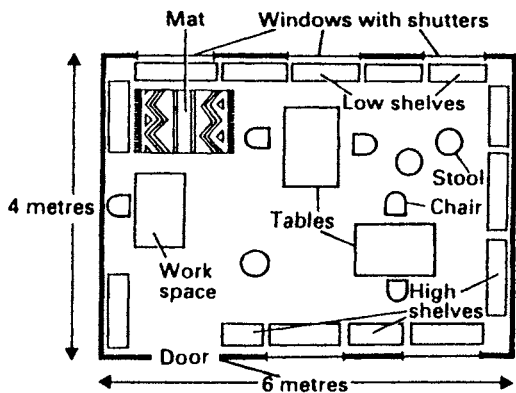
Make shelves that are:

- Strong.
- Supported approximately every metre to prevent sagging.
- At least 20 centimetres deep (from front of each shelf to back).
- Without backs so as to allow for maximum airflow.
- 'Braced' at the back for strength.
- At least 30 to 35 centimetres apart in height, with 10-20 centimetres beneath the bottom shelf and the floor to allow for cleaning.
- Protected from rain, wind and sun.
- Not too high. (People must be able to reach the top shelf.)
- Of different sizes (e.g. low ones under windows and for children and higher ones along the walls).
- Protected from ants if necessary by placing the legs in tins of water or a mixture of kerosene and water.

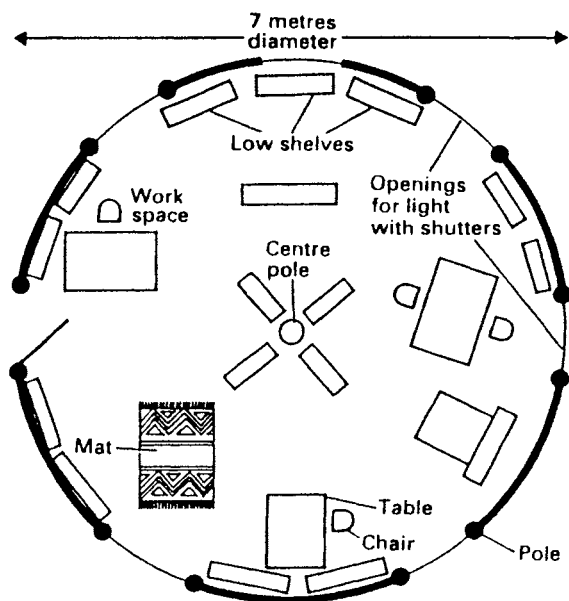
Shelves should be made from inexpensive, locally available materials such as:

- Wood, smoothed by planing and sanding.
- Smooth, flat bricks and boards.
- Wooden boxes placed side by side, stacked on top of each other, and held firmly by braces.
- Bamboo lashed together.
- Smoothed strong branches lashed together.

Here are some ideas for placing furniture in the centre.

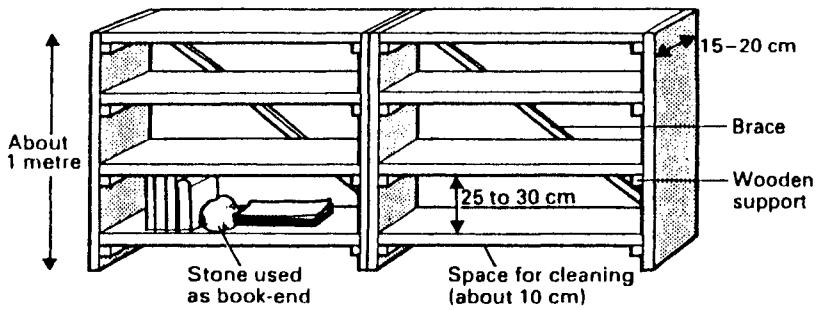
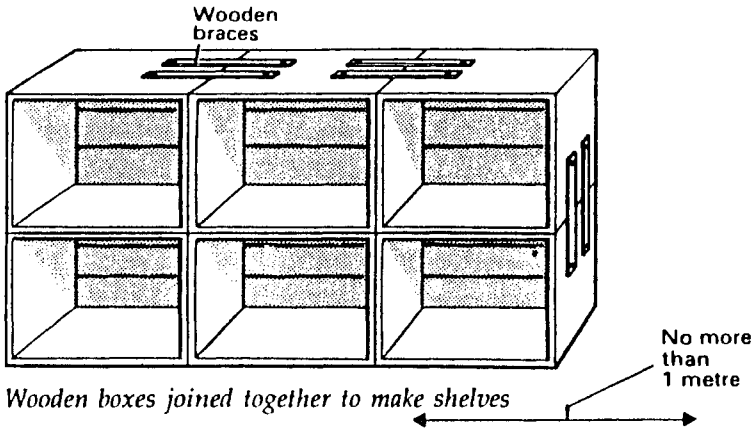


*School classroom shape*

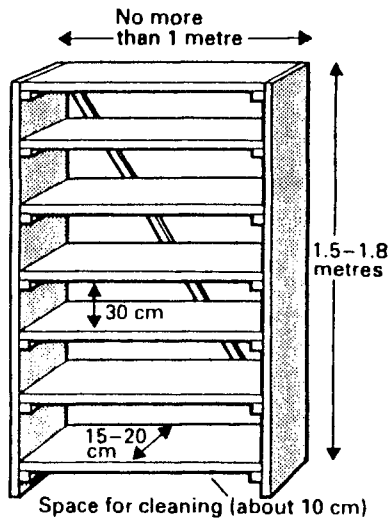


*Round hut*

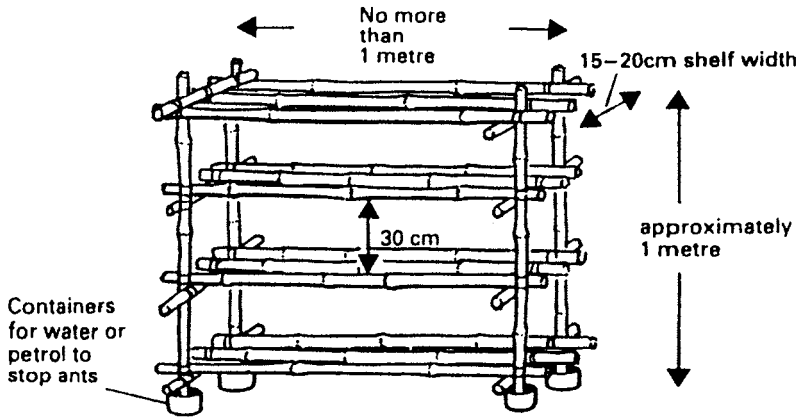
Here are some drawings of different kinds of shelves:



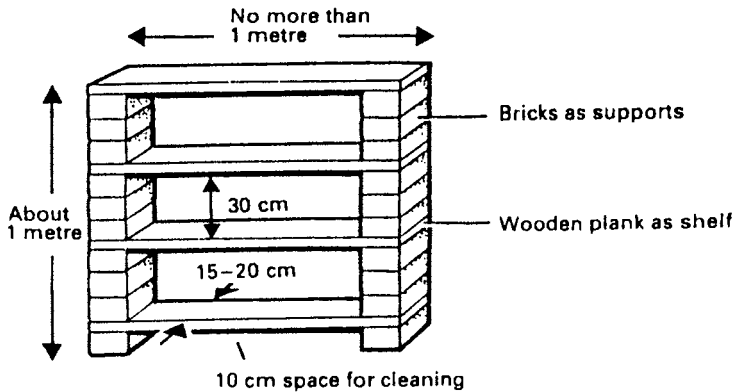
*Low timber shelves*



*High timber shelves*



*Bamboo shelves*



*Shelves made from boards and bricks*

# *Monitoring and Evaluation*

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## **Monitoring**

Monitoring is the process of regularly looking at the procedures of the centre to find out what works well, what the problems are and what to do about them.

It is necessary for the CIO or a committee member to report regularly at committee meetings and to community members about the day-to-day activities of the centre. They will then know how well their service is running. With this information, they will be able to make suggestions on how to improve the service.

The reports should outline the different types of activities for a certain period of time. They should cover such matters as:

- Activities with the community, and with extension and community workers.
- Fund-raising activities.
- Accounts.
- Materials purchased, donated, duplicated and borrowed.
- Problems and possible solutions.

## **Evaluation**

Evaluation basically is two things:

- Finding out if the service is achieving its objectives.
- Finding out if these objectives are meeting the needs of the community.

Evaluation must be done at least once a year so that the committee can determine what has been achieved, what has not been achieved, and why.

The committee has already defined the needs of the community, the objectives, the type of service, how the service will answer the needs, and the tasks of the staff. This description will provide the basis for evaluation.

Because the centre is used by the community, it should be evaluated by the community. If the centre is evaluated by someone from outside the community, the evaluation may not reflect what the community feels.

Involve the community in the evaluation by:

- Bringing together the community, the CIO, the extension workers and the committee to form groups to look at the objectives of the centre.
- Requesting these groups to comment on the services of the centre.
- Requesting them to provide suggestions for improvement.

If some objectives have not been achieved, the committee should find out why. Perhaps they were not realistic. Perhaps unexpected problems arose. Perhaps no one knew how to do the tasks involved.

Make sure to find out if any objectives are no longer needed or should be changed, or whether new ones should be added.

Involving the community in evaluation takes time and must be organised carefully. But it will ensure that the centre and its services are meeting the informational and learning resource needs of the community.

*MONITORING* makes sure that the activities of the centre are proceeding according to the agreed policies and work plan.

*EVALUATION* makes sure that the objectives of the service are being achieved, and that the objectives are meeting the needs of the community.