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## **List of Acronyms**

ASE	Agri-Service Ethiopia
AIDS	Anti-Immune Deficiency Disease
CBI	Community Based Institution
CBO/I	Community Based Organization/Institution
COTEE	Community Training, Extension and Education
CSOS	Civil Society Organizations
CC	Cooperative Commission
DFs	Development Facilitators
DPPC	Disaster prevention and Preparedness Commission
EPRDF	Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front
FFS	Farmers Field School
GO	Government
KDA	Kore Development Association
MoJ	Ministry Of Justice
NRM	Natural Resource Management
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
IRD/P	Integrated Rural Development/ Program
PID	Participatory Innovation Development
PME	Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
PO	Program Office
PRSDS/P	Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development Strategy/Program
PTD	Participatory Technology Development
SWOT	Strength, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats
VLDP	Village Level Development Promoter
VLHP	Village Level Health Promoter
WB	World Bank

## **Part One:**

### **Strategy and Guideline for the establishment and development of Community Based Institutions [CBIs]**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

In view of attempting to build development efforts on strong base and ensuring sustainability of the efforts thereof unleashed, Agri-Service Ethiopia has adopted a broad base development strategy. Broad base development strategy is a strategy that serves as impetus for development efforts to rest on concrete base that ensures long-term continuity of interventions. This approach is seen as warranty to sustainability of development activities that are undertaken by the support of outsiders. Above all to contribute to the empowerment of the community, which will be manifested by the existence of a self reliant, vibrant and pro poor community institution that takes the lead in the local level, relevant and result oriented development initiatives.

The present food security and poverty eradication endeavours that ASE is making should be able to solve current problems of the targeted communities and sustain to serve more. For this to occur, the communities must take part in the decision making process of the different stages of its intervention, right from perception to implementation, as equal partners, even with more stake to shape its own future. This is a strategic shift for ASE, from being *more of service delivery* agency to *more of a capacity building* organization with a priority concern of initiating, motivating and

strengthening the formation and function of farmer centred civil society organizations, which may have the aim of fighting poverty, environmental degradations, gender bias, inequalities, right violations and voiceless ness of the poor. The motive of the organization to build community based institutions (CBIs) is therefore to:

- Make wider base for the development efforts, thus providing more space for the participation of different segments of the community, specially the poor, women and marginalized groups
- Motivate local people owned development initiatives that should continue to survive, even in the absence of ASE
- Ensure sustainability of its interventions, and
- Use those institutions as entry points for ASE to begin rural development interventions and exit points, upon completing its terms of formal existence in the area. The terms of formal existence of ASE in a particular area will be decided based on the institutional, technical and financial sustainability indicators of the CBIs.

This document is therefore developed to guide ASE staff at all levels about the implantation of its community capacity building strategies, with particular reference to the initiation, formation and function of Community Based Institutions, in all its program areas. It will serve as reference material and organizational manifesto that will help keep development efforts of the organization on the right track. The strategy document is basically a guide for action and thus it should be applied flexibly taking the particular context and local conditions of specific regions or program areas into account.

This document tries to give a bite of the historical account of ASE, A brief summary about the core functions of the organization, the rationales why this strategy is considered important, the theoretical discourses on which this strategy is grounded, institutional philosophies on capacity building and community empowerment, the policy and legal frameworks of the government that pertains to community organizations, the major objectives of the document and the detailed strategies and guidelines for action. For quicker reference, the strategies and guidelines for action are beginning on page 40. It is therefore advisable to make a separate copy of the most practical aspect of the strategy document and get it distributed to the front line development workers who will be most engaged in the formation and function of the CBIs. Most importantly, it is advisable to translate this same copy in to the local language, which most of the community members understand better.

## **1.2 Overview of ASE**

Agri-Service Ethiopia (ASE) is an indigenous non-governmental and non-profit making organization engaged in rural development for the last 35 years. The organization has focused on community education as a launching pad of its development initiative. Correspondence education was thus the benchmark of development initiative of the organization, which was then thought of as a cutting edge to development. With the aim of improving the problem solving capacity of the rural poor through knowledge and skills enhancement therefore, it started enlightening the community through printed materials prepared for distance education. The widespread illiteracy that cloud covered the populace at large however curtailed short the desired effort. As a result it

was later supplanted by face-to-face education/training, with a rationale of serving the illiterate community members more reasonably.

Both the correspondence and face-to-face training approaches were in fact seen as important instruments to attain short- and long-term objectives of Agri-Service Ethiopia. In the course of running community education, Agri-Service Ethiopia realized that the effort of educating the community could not be an end by itself and be regarded as a means of preparing same for social, civic and economic role that goes far beyond the limits of rudimentary awareness raising training. The organization therefore opted to integrate its educational efforts with broader rural development goals.

Alongside community education, therefore, Integrated Rural Development (IRD) became the focal hub, upon which the organization unleashed its multifaceted efforts as of mid-eighties. Primarily, demonstrating agricultural innovations and facilitating a link between the communities and input suppliers have waged Integrated Rural Development. This approach however took a major objective of making a logical link between Agricultural Development and the other important sectors including, Education, Health, Rural water supply and credit facilities, with the intention of bringing about holistic development at local level.

The area selection criteria of ASE during the era of implementing Integrated Rural Development Programs, among others include: non-existence of NGOs in the area, low level government supports to farmers and where there is great agricultural potentials. Apparently, most of the places where ASE was implementing IRDPs between 1987-2000, were not badly food insecure and the natural resources not seriously degraded.

ASE has conducted strategic plan for the period 2000-2005. Accordingly, one of the major changes that took place in ASE was concerning the area selection criteria of the organization. The new strategy suggested that ASE need to focus on the food insecure woredas of the country, where the natural resources are degraded, causing the occurrence of sever poverty and food insecurity. The new area selection criteria of ASE, has therefore influenced not only the place of work but also the development approach of the organization. A shift was thus made from Integrated Rural Development Approach to Integrated Food Security Program Approach, which the focus of the later is making sustainable food security possible, with due consideration of the social services as direct and indirect contributors for the success of the program.

ASE's shift to food security program strategies since 2001 has dictated the intervention areas to be those marginalized woredas in terms of access to basic services and food. The Integrated food security and integrated rural development programmes are in a way different approaches but with similar intervention activities. From ASE point of view, there is a marked difference between those approaches, that food security is a recently coined concept entailing more focus and emphasis on household food security issues, departing from the angle: making food adequately available, fairly accessible and utilizable. All the activities in this program are consciously and systematically designed to achieve the aspects of food security. Literally speaking, the overall goal of any integrated food security program is to see every project participant household getting adequate and quality food all the time, to run an active and healthy life. The monitoring and evaluation indicators, the overall tools and methods employed in the program and the attitude of ASE's staff and the management are totally geared towards achieving this goal.

In the course of implementing the integrated food security program, ASE has developed various program strategies that help realization of the newly articulated institutional mission. Among others, ASE has developed strategies for Community Training and Education, Agricultural Extension, Natural Resource Management, Participatory Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, Gender and development, Participatory Research and Community Based Institution [CBI]. Having put all these strategies to work, ASE paid much attention to the CBI strategy, for which an extensive review of the strategy document as well as the actions on the ground was made. Apparently, the result of the review exercise has given birth to the development of the second and more elaborated version of the CBI strategy. This strategy document was, unfortunately developed on the verge of completion of ASE strategic plan for the period 2000-2005 and before the development of a new plan for the coming five years. Therefore the vision and mission statements articulated in the old strategic plan document are still used in this document. Nevertheless, it will be subject for revision upon completion of the new strategy plan document.

Currently ASE is undertaking three Integrated Food Security and one Integrated Rural Development Programmes in Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Regional State, Oromia and Amhara National Regional States respectively. A new program has been launched recently in Tehuledere woreda of the Amahara region, and some more are coming up. The overall intention of ASE is to increase the number of interventions in the food insecure and marginalized parts of the country, as many as possible.

Now the basic question that came to the attention of ASE is, who should be the owner of these beautiful programs and what should be the role of ASE and the community in the realization of same? ASE, as part of its efforts to answer the above basic questions, is now in the process of making a remarkable shift from being a service

delivery agency into a more of capacity building organization that works on the principles of community empowerment. There is a debate within the staff of the organization asking: can we quickly and easily get out of the decades aged tradition of service delivery function, as ASE is still tending to work in places where those services are seriously limited?

Nevertheless, consensus has been reached that ASE firmly believes, all the basic social services and economic opportunities that favors the poor and marginalized groups must be met. But it also have the conviction that in order to make sustainable provision of the services are ensured and ownership of the services by the people is guaranteed, the community itself should play a leading role through voicing the demands of the poor and claiming for what they deserve as well as through mobilizing its own knowledge, materials, human power and supports from others. Apparently, the role of ASE should be mainly to facilitate participatory learning and action [training] and providing technical, financial and institution building supports for those who are spearheading community development initiatives.

Precisely speaking, ASE can play a role to improve the negotiation power of the community, to help them achieve the basic services and more, through making meaningful influence on the state and non-state actors working with them. This approach will be instrumental for ASE to make sure that not only the proper services are there but also community based development institutions remains to be strong and relevant for the people. This is one of the main reasons why ASE is changing its basic philosophy from service delivery approach to community empowerment through capacity building. Formation and strengthening of Community Based Development Institutions is not strategy to make life of ASE

field staff easy while running rural development programs or to see ASE conceived interventions are rightly implemented on the ground. It is basic intention is to help the creation and sustenance of farmer/rural-centered civil society organizations, which have significant role in making and shaping the futures of the community they belong to, through a powerful and meaningful engagement as well as negotiations with state and non-state actors.

### **1.2.1 ASE's Vision**

ASE aspires to see a rural Ethiopia where poverty is reduced and a favourable environment is maintained to the satisfaction of the present and future generations.

### **1.2.2 ASE's Mission**

Work with the poor communities in rural Ethiopia towards attaining food security, protecting and rehabilitating of the environment and provision of adequate social services. Enhancing the capacity of communities through training is a crosscutting function of ASE.

#### **Note**

*ASE is on the verge of finalizing the first strategic plan, which was developed for the period 2001-2006. Now a new one is being worked out for the period 2007-2011. Apparently, the ways the vision and mission statements are articulated in the former strategic plan document [which is exactly mentioned here above] can be changed modified or remain with out change in the new document. The*

*reader is therefore requested to refer to the new ASE strategic plan document, which will be issued before the end of 2006.*

## **1.3 Core Functions of ASE**

ASE is engaged in activities that would magnify participation of the rural people and mitigate rural misery. The major ones are however;

### **1.3.1 Community Training, Extension and Education [on agriculture, NRM and social issues]**

### **1.3.2 Participatory Research**

### **1.3.3 Community Based institution**

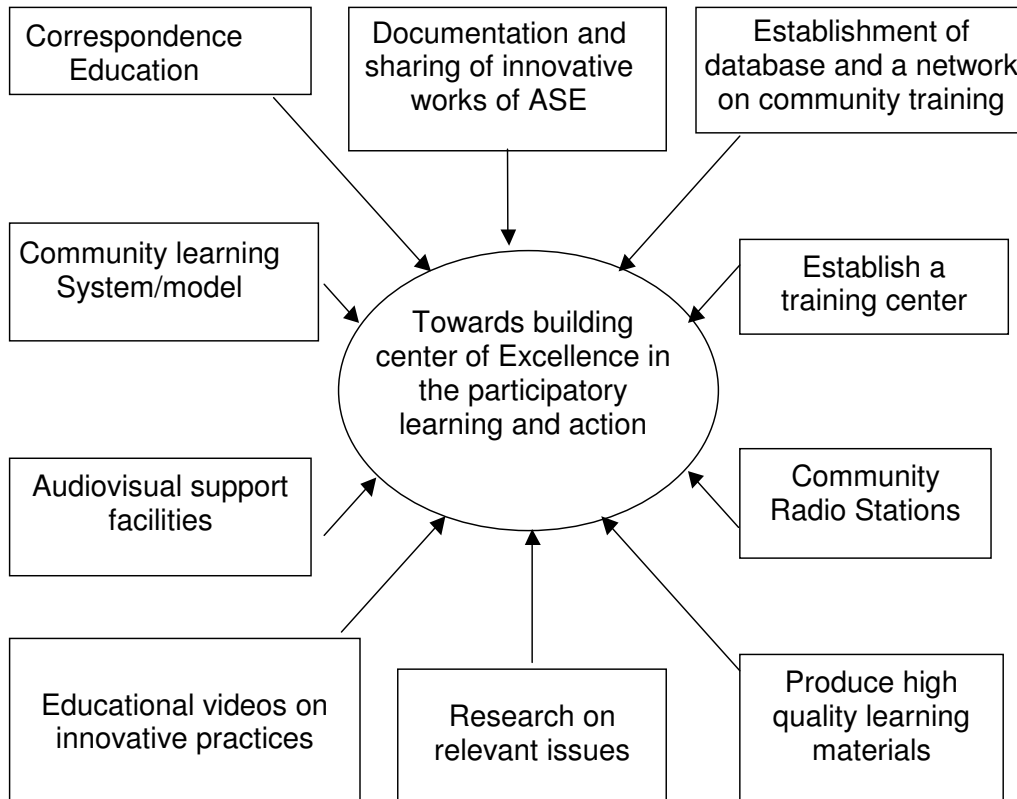
#### **1.3.1. Community Training, Extension and Education**

In a nutshell, the principal functions in this program can be summarised as Introduction, Generation, Documentation, sharing and utilization of knowledge in the area of agriculture, natural resources management and emerging social issues. The regional program offices, under the guidance and backstopping supports of the COTEE department, carry out most of these activities. The basic philosophy of the “training” function is not entirely taking the perspective of knowledge transfer but knowledge sharing and participatory learning. Meaning, ASE strongly believes that farmers are knowledgeable and there are even times when experts are ignorant about some issues while farmers have good knowledge and understanding. On the other hand, there are problem situations about which farmers are partially or totally ignorant and seek the

support of experts or outsiders. Some times both farmers and experts are equally knowledgeable about certain issues while there are also problem situations, which are absolutely grey area to the farmers and the experts. All these scenarios suggest the need for “not the conventional training approach”, which its premise is transfer of knowledge from one end to the other, but an innovative approach which is grounded on the principles of participatory/collective/mutual learning.

The innovative approach which ASE is trying to deal with and wishes to become a centre of excellence in, dose not consider “one time training” as a final end but it takes the principles of social learning which is grounded on a collective “learning-action-learning” continuum. Social Learning is a process of linking, expanding and improving, data, information, knowledge and wisdom. It has no end but it is a continuous learning process, leading to qualitative changes in the lives of the participants. The development and extensive use of a framework on participatory learning and action, which often takes place in schools without walls [like farmers field school], is one of the areas where ASE is determined to make purposeful and consistent efforts, believing that this is one of the strategic directions which drives ASE towards achieving its strategic goal. Nevertheless, This is not the only path to achieve the strategic goal of becoming a centre of excellence in community learning, although it is the major one. Apparently, ASE is striving to introduce more innovative actions that help the realization of its strategic goal. The most important strategic directions are explained in the following schematic diagram.

**Diagram 1: Strategic directions of ASE that takes to building centre of excellence in participatory learning and action**



### **1.3.2 Participatory Research and Extension:**

Participatory research is part of the collective learning exercise mentioned above. It shares the same principles of knowledge management and the basic assumption is farmers [mainly] and other stakeholders participate in the agricultural or social researches activities consciously and at equal footing. Farmer Participatory Research is not primarily done to contribute to academic excellence. It is a type of action research and thus expected to bring about practically valid results for the end user and by the end user. There are three types of participatory agricultural research known for ASE:

**1.3.2.1 Participatory Adoptive Research:** *[technology driven research]* It is difficult to put a hard line distinction between the research and extension/development activities in ASE. Technologies from any part of the world are encouraged to come to the attention of the farmers but not in the spirit of pushing the technologies for use. Farmers are expected to conduct a participatory adoptive research so as to make it fit to their own realities or reject at times when they find it completely inappropriate. Though the entry point for this type of research are new technologies that happen to come to the farming system, farmers and the back stoppers are expected to spell out the problems that need to be addressed in the course of the adaptive research.

**1.3.2.2 Participatory Innovation Development (PID)** *[farmer innovation driven research]:* Farmers are highly encouraged to identify, develop and use local innovations, which have never come to the attention of many of the fellow farmers, researchers and extension workers before. Farmer innovators are not like the model farmers who are purposely trained by extension workers on technologies coming from the outside world [outside the farming system]. They are farmers who come up with new ways of doing agriculture using their own wisdom and through conducting informal experiments on indigenous or scientific knowledge bodies. Such innovators are not easily traceable or they don't often try to popularise their works, as innovation for such people is just a way of life and part of the effort of making their livelihood possible. It is therefore necessary to employ some techniques to identify local innovations and chose, which innovations are worth dealing. There is always an added

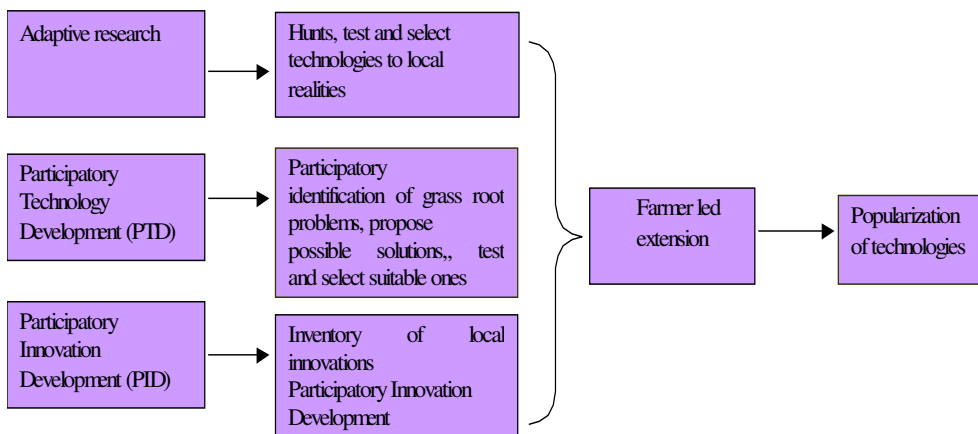
value in the works of innovative farmers and that is one of the important parameter, which qualify the works of such farmers to be innovative. Whenever the type of innovation is not ready for scaling up, it will be subject for participatory innovation development exercises, in which extension workers and researchers involve. The fact that the entry point for the research is “local innovation” makes this approach different from those commonly known farmer participatory research approaches.

Whenever the identified farmer innovation is found good enough for dissemination or scaling up, it can be shared with other farmers using the farmer-to-farmer extension approach. Nevertheless, this is not done with the spirit of pushing the farmer innovations to others, as used to be with the “modern technologies”. But the emphasis has to be to help farmers learn and appreciate both the process and the product of the innovation. It is basically desired to promote the spirit of innovativeness and participatory Innovation development among farmers so that to help smallholder farmers give answers to location and situation specific problems they are often encountered with. Such problems are not probably easy to be addressed all by the ToT approach of the formal research and extension system.

**1.3.2.3 Participatory Technology Development (PTD)** [problem driven research]. This is very commonly known type of participatory research in ASE, which is often farmer-led and sometimes expert-

led. In this work, farmers, extension workers and researchers play their own role in the process of technology development to address a known problem situation, which farmers or experts or both identify. The outputs of this exercise are directed to popularisation through the use of farmer – to - farmer extension. PTD, which is indeed a collective name of all types of

Diagram 2: Conceptual model for types of participatory research



farmer participatory researches, differs from PID because the entry point for the research is not necessarily a “farmer innovation” but identified problem situation.

### 1.3.3 Supporting the formation and strengthening of Community Based Institutions (CBIs)

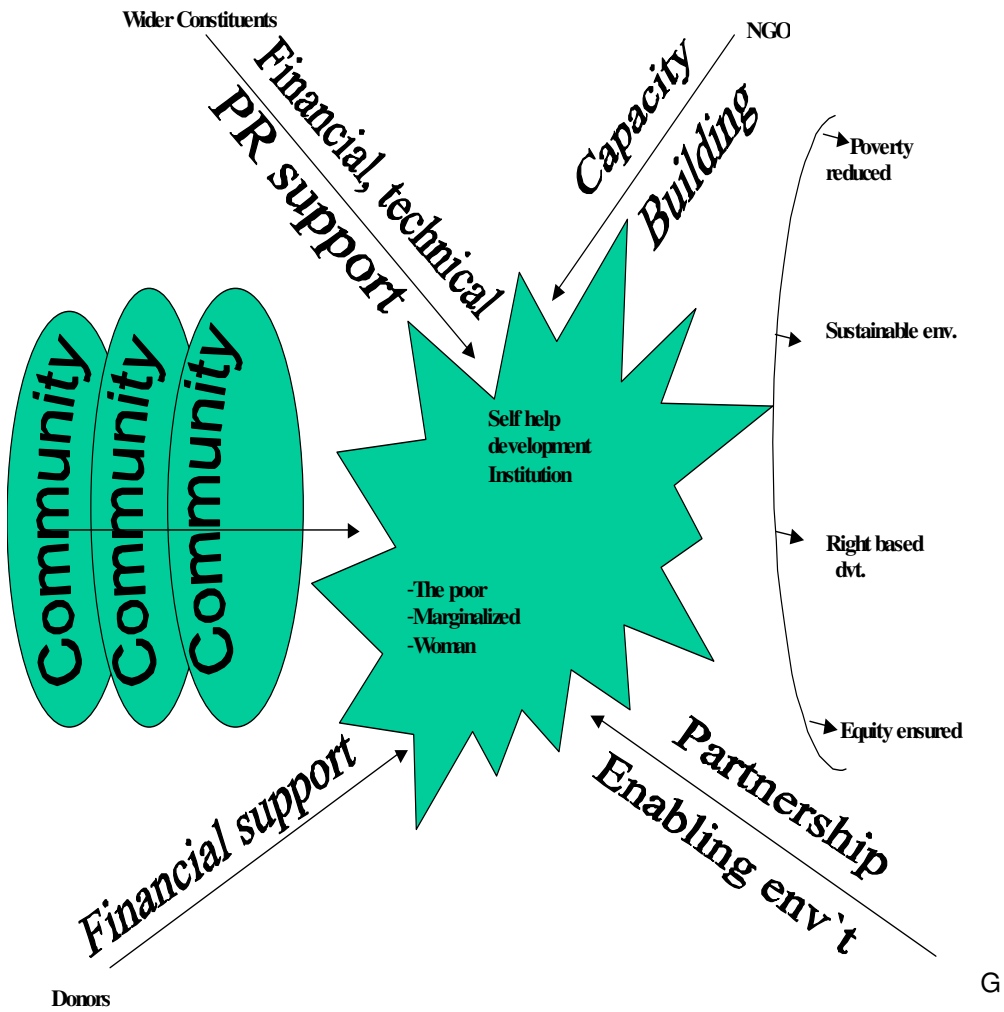
This is the central theme of the strategy paper and much detail concerning what it is all about and how it works is given in the subsequent sections.

As a strategy of ASE it is in a nutshell, about supporting the formation and functioning of farmer [rural people] - centred civil society organizations, with the objective of improving the negotiation power of the community [in which the poor farmers, women and other marginalized groups have significant space] to achieve their needs for basic social services, economic opportunities and more. The constituents of this institution are basically farmers. Others who are willing to support the cause of the organization, without affecting the interest of the rural poor negatively, may also join the organization. The working definition for ASE concerning CBI is therefore: *It is a Rural People Centred, Non Partisan, Not for Profit, Voluntary, Free and Multipurpose Self-help Community Development Association/Institution*

ASE creates awareness about the importance of “rural institutions for development” in the early days of the training sessions, believing that it is one of the social issues the community has to learn about. If the community members are interested with the idea of forming association, ASE gives all possible supports to help them achieve their dreams. This institution will become a local counterpart of ASE with which all development initiatives of the organization will be implemented. In the beginning, ASE may have significant decision- making role in project activities. Gradually, the CBI takes more space in decision-making while ASE proportionally increases its role as a capacity builder. Government institutions and donors are also expected to make significant supports to the CBIs in terms of creating enabling environment and access to funds. The CBI will be the leading institution to coordinate and oversee the activities of community learning and action as well as participatory

research works mentioned above. The following schematic presentation gives the model of the Community Based Institution as perceived by ASE.

**Diagram 3: Model of the Community Based Institution**



## **Part Two:**

### **Our Perspectives**

#### **2.1 Theoretical grounds**

Empowering the community to institutionally own and ensure sustainability of the development undertakings are tantamount to building development on concrete ground. Community empowerment is a culmination point of sustainability transition in the development arena in which the communities in question think beyond economic security and voice for their perceived rights. This can be achieved by building strong community based institutions that can perform as vibrant local development actors. Building community based institutions is a broad based development approach that presumably warrants effectiveness and sustainability of interventions. It is based on two very important premises. Firstly, exploration of social capital - traditions, culture, values and socially institutionalized and binding social fora and renovating them so as to serve as development organs. Raceli (1999) defines *social capital* as the norms, reciprocal ties, and trust built up among members of a community that stem from and result in mutual benefits and cooperation. Secondly, establishing core groups that can play a leading role in the implementation and ensure sustainability of development activities are essential conditions that lay ground for institution building.

Community based development approach is an approach that past development experiences have brought to the scene as a result of paradigm shift. It is broadening the base of development endeavors; thereby building it on robust organizational base that claims institutional leadership responsible for undertaking and ensuring sustenance of development activities in an area. As forwarded by Edgar Owens and Robert Shaw (1972: 13-14), the

solution of the problems of those who for centuries have been “wholly overlooked” begins with organization. Hence, the first step in development is to organize the mass of the people in relatively autonomous local institutions and to link these with higher level of the economy and the society.

Local institutions are not primarily formed to follow suit of their NGO or government partners, who have been helping them to get organized in the early days of their meetings. In other words they are not essentially considered as loyal institutions which will be responsible to take care of the works of the development partners, after complete withdrawal of same from the area. *The spirit of institution building is basically to empower the community and help them become master of their own destiny, through mobilizing and using their own resources [knowledge, material, money, social capital etc] as well as claiming their rights from the government on behalf of the poor and marginalized groups whose voices are not heard or often ignored.*

Indeed, the second important reason of building local institutions is to create a situation where by the continuity of development initiatives of other partners in the area be ensured. Government and Non-government institutions becoming more distant, especially upon withdrawal of the latter from a place, thereby finishing their predetermined time of stay, local people could exert their own initiative and organize more effectively, taking off where the institutions have left off.

As an economic and social venue community-based institution forms base rock for sustainability by developing sense of ownership in the community. It is an approach that gives equal opportunity for the members of the community without sexual and racial discrimination. Sharing the views of Edgar Owens and Robert Shaw (1972: 2-3), we believe that there are the beginnings of alternative approaches, approaches that can combine economic growth with

social justice and greater participation by the individual in his/her society. At the heart of this approach is the concept of broad base development. The establishment of a set of institutions, which would give the underprivileged person of the poor countries an opportunity to participate in the decision most important to his/her life and which, furthermore, would link him/her to the mainstream of modern society [Edgar and Shaw].

Individuals and communities will be able to have access as a result of which they may be able to control their resources and obtain the power to have decision over the distribution of it. According to Stewart and Taylor (1995), empowerment ranges from a tokenistic and almost therapeutic manipulation on the bottom steps of Arnstein's famous ladder (Arnstein 1990) to a more positive empowerment of individuals and communities where control of resources and decisions passes to local interests. Empowerment involves resisting the isolation of individuals and reducing their dependency as service users, but it also means reducing the marginalization of communities by enhancing their role in radically new structures of area governance.

Institutionalization of community development would bind the communities together and give them extra thrust to regenerate the economic and social milieu and would by and large broaden their vision so as to protect and manage the environment-beyond shortsighted momentary taping of advantage. As stated by Diane Warburton (1998:53), a central characteristic of current community development is its institutionalization in formal programmes of physical renewal of neighborhoods and estate, of economic and social regeneration, and of environmental protection and management. Our perspective in this regard is:

- ✓ To lift the largest possible number of the people to a higher level of life, economically and socially.

- ✓ To build a comprehensive institution structure through which the people will be able to control democratically a significant portion of the total economy, especially in the things that one does to the necessities of life.
- ✓ To cultivate the sense of individual and joint responsibility, so that they may rise individually to a full person's life and collectively to a full social life.

## **2.2 Institutional philosophy and rationales for supporting CBIs**

ASE's CBI development strategy is an outcome of age long development experience that came about as a necessary forum to build in the hearts of the people a sense of ownership of development activities that are undertaken and stand for their continuation. The rationales and basic philosophical views of ASE in this connection are given as follows:

### **2.3 CBI-organically grown strategy:**

In congruent to the objective, unambiguously stated in the strategic plan document of ASE for the period 2001-2006, the organization, embarked on broad base development approach as concrete base for sustainability. Supporting CBIs is not basically a major shift of strategy for ASE, as ASE was used to work with community groups [Action groups] who are literally organized but not formally recognized by the relevant government bodies. In the previous program areas, where ASE has stayed for more than a decade, "training groups" and later on "action groups" were used as entry point for its development programs. This has particularly become institutional working culture for ASE since the adoption of Action Oriented Training Program, as a principal development strategy. However, one of the lessons drawn by ASE from the phasing out

experiences, which formally took place in 1999, was that the action groups, which ASE was working with for quite longer period, couldn't manage to take over and run the development initiatives after the phasing out of ASE from the area.

ASE, being the entire responsible body for project management throughout the former program phases, has denied opportunities for the action groups to learn how to handle "development projects by their own, with minimal supports of outsiders". On the other hand, the action groups, which eventually have formed apex organizations at Kebele level towards the last days of ASE in the former program areas, were expected to play a very important role in terms of keeping the development initiatives rolling, after the complete phasing of the organization. Nevertheless, they were all on the verge of collapse, had it not been for the rapid strategic shift made by ASE to transform the action groups into cooperatives. This was exactly the turning point for ASE that the organization had begun to think about the importance of having a formal "community institution" as a partner for development, not at the time of phasing out but starting from day one of program intervention, with a very clear role and mandate of decision-making for both parties, throughout the period ASE is staying in the area. Community Institution building is therefore not a donor induced strategy or a strategy just adopted from elsewhere with out having prior acquaintance, but it is a result of experiential learning for ASE. It is indeed a firm belief of the organization, learning is a continuing process and ASE will continue to learn more about community institution building vis-avis community empowerment, in the time to come.

## **2.4 CBI-an institutional remedy for post phasing out crisis:**

As mentioned above, also from the experiences of other NGOs in Ethiopia, ASE has learned that there are damages taking place on the development works initiated and implemented by

NGOs, following phasing out of the institutions. Handing over of some of the project activities to “government partners” and some of them to the “community groups” literally sounds a feasible strategy for those NGOs who may decide to phase out, after staying for some years in certain places. However, the reality on the ground shows, for many reasons, the attention of the government partners to follow up and strengthen the NGO initiated development works was too low. On the other hand, the community groups do not also have the courage and the capacity to strongly challenge the local government and the citizens for the well being and continuity of the services and infrastructures, which have been built by the support of the partner NGOs. The community groups lack legal personalities and the groups are not also institutionally strengthened to counter challenge the situations. This was caused mainly due to the passive participation of the community during the project life, and failure of the partner NGOs to create feelings of ownership on the side of the people. It is therefore very important for ASE to make sure that there is a “community organization” in place, with all its mandate, capacity, and interest to safeguard the good works of development partners and donors and run own development initiatives in similar, even better, spirit.

## **2.5 The community has to be master of its own destiny**

The purpose of building community institutions is not only to oversee the infrastructures, facilities and systems initiated by NGO partners. ASE strongly believes that there should be a completely changed attitude concerning the philosophy of partnership with farmers for development works. The community groups/institutions should not be seen as passive development partners that are considered to be mechanisms to channel development supports of outsiders to the people. Rather, they should be active development partners, who are adequately empowered to make choices of development priorities and make

decisions at all levels of the process. One of the possible ways of making this “idea” a “reality on the ground” is by helping the community members get organized and represent their own people to negotiate with the NGO and the local government in all pertinent issues.

The supporting agencies [like ASE] have to make sure that the feelings of the community groups should not happen to be like a “subordinate of its NGO partner and less important for the development initiatives”; because the people are just “receiving donations” from the “powerful NGOs who can make things happen or break”. If this is not fairly achieved, it will keep the community groups/institutions hold a passive participation through out the partnership process, and thus may fail to develop confidence and self-esteem. This is a very crucial factor, which certainly determines whether or not the community become master of its own destiny. ASE is not only interested to see community organizations formed and get registered with the competent government offices. The most important aspect of this strategy is indeed to see attitudinal and behavioural changes have come among the community members and the NGO partners, to make sure that the people have the greatest say in the development affairs of their own domain.

## **2.6 Paternalistic view greatly affects innovativeness and confidence**

The traditional project implementation experiences in many places of the world witness that farmers are considered, legitimate receivers of supports from outsiders. Outsiders [NGOs, government agencies, individuals, etc] are believed to “know every thing good” that could help the poor farmers get out of poverty.

On the other hand, the outsiders feel like they have to "take care" of the farmers, apparently farmers have to obey the instructions and guidance given by them. This is what is so called "paternalistic view" and this view and the accompanied practices kill the innovativeness of farmers; as the system is completely driven by the outsiders who have all the formal and informal power. Innovativeness is all about new ways of thinking and doing things, and that newness always entails values, which cause positive changes. Farmers are innovative if they are provided the opportunities. However, if their cognitive is restrained not to think freely because of the systematic and purposeful imposition of outsiders, then it is unlikely for them to come up with new ideas or practices. Because, what is expected of them is to listen instructions of outsiders and do it with out making mistakes.

The community led development approach on the other hand provides more chance to the people to use their own knowledge and creativity to tackle development challenges. This creates apparently an enabling environment for the people to innovate and come up with a lasting solution to some of their problems, even with out the support of outsiders. This theory does not however deny the value of outsiders' knowledge and supports for the farmer led development endeavours. However the issue is all about striking a balance: how best the farmer and formal system perspectives work together for the good of the poor. Therefore helping farmers get organized in the spirit of having self-standing and self- confident development institutions would lay the ground for the innovativeness of its constituents.

## **2.7 Putting rights based development approach to work**

Rights based development approach is all about helping people raise their claim making abilities for their rights, which among others include the rights to development [basic social services], the right to sustainable livelihoods, the right to be heard etc. Basically, building community institutions with the spirit of self-reliance and self-confidence, is instrumental to create opportunity for the people to collectively voice for their rights. Elected governments have the obligation to respect group and individual rights of the people. On the other hand, the people have all the rights to make their voices louder and put pressure on the government to make it do the right things, on the right time, and with the right attitude. The right bearer, which is the community, is tax payer while the government is responsible to administer all the money collected from taxes, other revenues and aid money.

By the same token, NGOs are making money available for development works by selling project ideas in the names of the community. This makes NGOs duty-holders as governments are. Therefore, the communities have the right to adequately participate in making decisions on how to spend the money that comes through the NGOs. Very commonly, the perception of the community about NGOs is “ they are institutions, which are created by generous and soft hearted personalities who want to kindly share their own breads to the poor”. This is basically true for those volunteer who raise money and work with the spirit of helping the poor. Those who are at implementation level and have day to day contacts with the people are however hired staff, and not entirely volunteers. Demystifying the realities and making the communities aware of every thing about “money” and “power” as well as teaching the rural community members about their obligations are some of the things one has to address in the rights based development approach.

## **2.8 Adding value to traditional institutions**

There are a number of traditional associations in developing countries like Ethiopia, which have specific social and economic objectives, and have survived for years in the system without being affected by policy and regime changes. These institutions are indeed manifestations of the culture of the people. Affecting these institutions would mean, one way or another, affecting the culture of the people. Culture is the way of life of the people and it emanates from inside as a result of age long traditions, communications, interactions and knowledge creation, which builds value systems in the process that are accepted and respected by the people at large. ASE has a strong conviction that those traditional associations should remain their and if necessary “get vanished” or “transformed” not as a result of a purposeful manipulation of outsiders but as a result of the gradual internal dynamics of the culture of the community itself, which can be often caused by changes in economy, education, knowledge, etc. ASE has conducted a study concerning the traditional institutions before widely adopting CBI as a strategy. “Iddir”, which is one of the traditional institutions established to meet social and psychological needs of the people who belong to the association, is available in all operation “woredas” of ASE. Making “Iddir” or not to accommodate rural development objectives, was one of the debatable issues among the staff as well as ASE management. Eventually it has been agreed that “Iddir” should remain untouched in the social systems because of the following reasons:.

- Fear to dilute original objectives of "Idir", which is indeed very damaging for the community as it is part of their life and culture,

- Election of leader in “Idir” is not democratic and thus denies opportunities for the poor and marginalized community groups to come to power,
- Women are not in leadership position in any of the Iddirs unless it is a special “women-only Iddir”, which is less influential and hold subordinate position in the social system in general, and
- NGOs are basically created to support the poor, marginalized and underprivilege groups, but these social segments are not adequately accommodated in many of the “Iddirs” both at membership and leadership positions.

Therefore, supporting the formation of Community Based Institutions, in which members of the Iddirs will have the opportunity to participate as members and leaders of the institutions is adding values to the traditional associations, without destroying them or bringing externally induced conflicts to them.

## **PART THREE**

### **3. The Legal and Policy Context for the Formation and Operation of Associations**

#### **3.1 The Legal Frameworks**

The legal basis for the establishment and operation of NGOs and public associations in Ethiopia is enshrined in Articles 404 - 482 of the Ethiopian Civil Code promulgated in 1960. Associations' Registration Regulations Legal Notice No. 321 of 1966 provides further elaboration to some of the pertinent provisions in the civil code. The formation of NGOs and their operations have been treated on the basis of these legal instruments. Save for some insignificant modifications, there is to date no full-fledged legislation to deal with NGOs (Kassahun, 2002).

In the civil code and the regulation, it is stated that registration of associations was necessitated in order to: ensure that the objectives and activities of associations are lawful and moral (Art. 462 of the Civil Code and Art. 8(b) of the Associations Registration Regulation), verify whether the statements and information contained in the registration application and by-laws of an association are accurate and reliable (Art. 7(1) of the Regulation), and verify compliance with mandatorily practiced legal provisions (Art. 475 of the Civil Code and Art. 7(2) of the Regulation). These provisions in general show that people have the right to form any kind of association including CBO/Is and/or to get legal registration for those already formed. Although there is no explicit provision that recognizes CBO/Is as distinct social entities, Article 404 of the 1960 Civil Code, which provides that a minimum of two persons can form an association with a view to obtain a result other than the securing of sharing of profits, is applicable for registration of CBO/Is, so long as they pursue legally acceptable purposes. Furthermore, Article 31 of the 1994 Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia provides that any person has the right to freedom of association for any cause or purpose as long as the activities of the association do not violate the rule of law and the constitution.

Nevertheless, it is well documented that existing legal and regulatory frameworks for the formation and operation of Civil Society Organizations [CSOs] including CBIs are not

favourable and adequate. The present Ethiopian government in its capacity building program document has acknowledged that government institutions are major 'stumbling blocks' to realising SCO energies to achieve development objectives. The current institutional environment for CSOs can only be described as 'disabling' in the sense that the laws, directives and institutional framework governing the regulation of CSO activities impose heavy bureaucratic demands, and constrain CSOs in their ability to mobilize and control the resources they require to undertake development activities (MoCB, 2004).

In view of that, a draft NGO law is now passing through the legislative process. The first draft appeared few years ago (in 2002?) and several draft versions have been published since then, but it is still under review. The new NGO legislation is expected to improve the current operating conditions for CSOs. The draft has clearly introduced new provisions such as the right to undertake income - generating activities by NGOs. The legislation when put into effect will definitely lessen the bureaucratic procedures in registration, certification, etc of CSOs and change the relationship of NGOs with different government offices.

The draft document has incorporated several provisions proposed at different times by the NGO community. Yet, the NGOs still submit more comments and recommendations to be considered by the drafting committee of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). In their recent commentary and observations report (2004), they have indicated some earlier suggestions that have been left unattended by the latest draft. These include *inter alia* the use of more embracive term "Associations" in the title of the legislation instead of "NGOs" ('*associations*' is the term used in existing legislations referring to various forms of institutions in addition to NGOs). On top of specific comments and recommendations, the NGOs have drafted and proposed a complete alternative legislation.

The legal and regulatory framework for the formation and operation of cooperatives<sup>1</sup> is relatively adequate and supportive. Farmers' organizations in rural Ethiopia include the various forms of community based associations and cooperatives. Mutual help burial associations, rotating saving and credit groups, and work parties are the typical types of rural institutions (vide the section on CBO/Is below). Informal extension groups (such as FFS, IPM, NRM, etc groups), water user and grind mill associations are also found in most farming communities. In few areas, cereal banks have been set up with the support of NGOs. However, cooperative societies are the officially recognized organizations that are registered by concerned government offices.

Since long, government policies have provided blueprint structures for farmers organizations in the form of cooperatives. The present Ethiopian government has given increasing attention towards agricultural marketing as expressed through its various policy papers, including the PRSDS/P, and the setting up of appropriate structures such as cooperatives promotion organs at the various levels (federal, regional, and woreda levels). The creation and strengthening of efficient cooperatives has been recognized by the government as one of the key strategies to improve agricultural marketing and rural services. The idea is that efficient and effective farmer organizations can be the key to an efficient marketing system. They can channel the supply from their members, improve storage (and even processing) and increase the bargaining power of farmers vis-à-vis traders.

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<sup>1</sup> Generally, cooperatives are economic entities owned by their members. In the case of productive cooperatives, which may be agricultural or industrial, the members are the producers or workers. There are also a variety of other types of cooperative organization: cooperative marketing organization, for example, and consumers' and savings and credit, housing cooperatives, etc. Cooperative societies are also organized at primary, secondary (union), and tertiary (federation) levels. These cooperative organizations, when they exist within the framework of a dominant capitalist economy, may come to resemble more or less the private concerns with which they compete (Macmillan Dictionary of Anthropology, 1986).

## **3.2 Institutional Framework**

In addition to those mentioned above, various policies and proclamations of the government also provide institutional frameworks with the professed aim of promoting local level development and empowerment of communities. These include the 1993/5 definition of power and duties of the executive organs of the federal government and establishment proclamations of relevant institutions like the MoJ, Cooperatives Commission (CC), and DPPC. The proclamations define the specific power and duties, the organization, etc of the different regulatory institutions.

Under the proclamation defining the powers and duties of federal Ministries (No. 4/1995), the Ministry of Justice registers CSOs that are either international or that operate in more than one region. The categories of organizations registered by the Ministry include NGOs, religions groups, professional/occupational associations, and organizations with prime objectives of research and advocacy at federal level. The MoJ has established requirements and procedures for registering each category of organization (MoCB, 2004). The same proclamation assigns responsibility for registering national organizations operating in only one region to regional Bureau of Justice.

The Associations Office of the Ministry of Justice has recently directed that renewal of registration needs to be done only every three years, but this new procedure is not being applied consistently across all regions; some organizations are registered at both federal and regional levels although this is not a legal requirement (Ibid).

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs registers trade unions, the Ministry of Trade and Industry registers Chambers of Commerce, and the Cooperatives Commission registers cooperatives.

Registration by the Ministry of Justice confers legal status but not the right of a CSO to operate. Though the DPPC is principally concerned with humanitarian operations, the proclamation that established it (No. 10/1995) designated it as the focal point for other types of NGO. In line with this, the DPPC/Bs have assumed responsibilities towards organizations involved in service delivery and humanitarian relief. One of these responsibilities include concluding three year operating agreements with NGOs.

The existing procedures make no provision for DPPC/Bs to conclude operational agreements with CSOs engaged in advocacy, which are left with a somewhat ambiguous status (*ibid*).

Other responsibilities of the DPPC/Bs include coordinating and monitoring CSO activities. For service delivery CSOs, this is done in collaboration with the relevant sector Ministries and Bureaus. In some regions, Bureaus of People's Organizations have also begun to play a role in this. Within the DPPC/Bs and the sector Ministries/Bureaus there is limited capacity for handling CSO affairs, both in terms of the number of staff assigned to the work and the relevance of their skills. This lack of capacity is particularly severe in the regions. Consequently, with a few notable exceptions, coordination and monitoring of CSO activity is weak particularly with regard to assessing outcomes and developmental impact. The number of government bodies concerned in CSO coordination and monitoring creates demands for multiple reporting by CSOs with little or no added value in terms of development performance, accountability or collaboration with government (*ibid*).

### **3.3 The Policy Environment**

The rural development and poverty reduction strategies of the government recognize the potential role of CSOs including CBIs in sustainable development and the fight against poverty. In spite of interpretation and implementation problems especially at lower levels, sectoral policies of Food Security, Health, Education, Water, Road, etc promote community participation. The SDPRP clearly states government's expectations of CSOs in relation to service delivery both in terms of the roles that it envisages for civil society in managing and monitoring services delivered by the State and in terms of direct service delivery by CSOs themselves. Specific roles foreseen for civil society in managing public services include participating as water users' groups, school management committees, health management boards, women's and pastoralists' associations and school anti-AIDS clubs. In direct service delivery, the SDPRP recognizes NGOs as important development partners that are already involved in the core poverty oriented sectors (MoCB, 2004). The Capacity Building Strategies and the decentralization process further the commitments expressed in the various policy papers. According to the SDPRP, decentralization implies not only administrative devolution but also the devolution of fiscal resources to the woreda level of government. The SDPRP identifies civil society's participation in deciding how these resources are allocated as a key element in their empowerment (Ibid). The decentralization policy and relevant aspects of the capacity building strategy / program are discussed below.

Since 1991, and the coming to power of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), Ethiopia has been following a policy of regionalization in building democratic systems of governance. Regional governments are responsible for

the implementation of economic and social development policies and for maintaining public order, including administering a police force, and the federal state is responsible for all powers not delegated to, or shared, with the regions.

Decentralization is further evolving with the 2001 decision to move sector departments from the zonal to woreda level in the four most populous regions<sup>2</sup>, where over 78% of all woredas are found. Devolution to woreda level in the other regions has followed.

According to the World Bank (WB) study on associational life (2004), although representative structures of government exist at regional, woreda and kebele levels, it is widely recognized that a stronger role and more resources are needed at woreda and kebele levels for decentralization to work better for participatory democracy. In the same document it is stated that the World Bank Woreda Studies (2002) found that decentralization was characterized by a “deconcentration” of the long established hierarchical way of governing rather than by devolving decision-making and accountability to the sub-regional level. The findings also suggested that the accountability of service providers to communities could be strengthened through the existing administrative and representative systems, and that the current model of service delivery is resource intensive and rigid, and that communities need to engage as active partners in service delivery.

To address the problem of capacity at the various levels and enhance CSOs participation in democratisation, delivery of services, and decentralization, the MoCB has embarked on several public sector capacity building programs and recently drafted a Civil Society Capacity Building Program. The objective of this Program is to create an

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| <sup>2</sup> Amhara, Oromiya, SNNP, and Tigray.

enabling institutional environment and to build the capacity that is necessary for effective civil society participation in promoting development, reducing poverty and strengthening democracy<sup>3</sup>. The proposed strategy for achieving the program objective is expressed in three sub-programs: creating an enabling institutional environment, building partnership between government and CSOs, and building the capacity of CSOs.

The program has various components and initiatives. The components include:

- Streamlining CSO registration, coordination and monitoring (initiatives include: amend and pass an NGO law, amend legal and administrative regulations for CSOs),
  - Increasing CSO access to resources, and
  - Enhancing government engagement with CSOs.

The government's concern has been appreciated and the program components are generally perceived as relevant to addressing identified problems within government, CSOs and in their relationships. However, save some of the initiatives under the first sub-program (i.e. creating an enabling environment), The program has not been accepted by the NGO community. They opposed the very idea of a government designed and government-led program of partnership building and capacity building of CSOs. In their Preliminary Observations report on the draft program document (2004), it is stated: *"While we agree to the changes required both within government and CSOs, we strongly believe the required change processes must be led and owned by the right and legitimate owners, if we are ever to see the desired changes. However, the overall strategy fails to make a distinction on the respective roles and responsibilities of the government and CSOs and as such it essentially imposes a top down government-led*

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<sup>3</sup> According to the program document, CSOs include informal traditional institutions, NGOs, membership organizations, etc.

*change process under all the sub-programs. Once again, while we agree to the change process needed both in government and CSOs, we do not subscribe to the view – indeed we strongly oppose it – that a change process in CSOs can be designed, directed and implemented by any government.”*

### **3.4 Perceptions of Government Officials Regarding CBIs**

During the field survey (see below), the review team attempted to gather views of government at regional level about CBIs based on direct interview of officials in the bureaus of cooperatives, justice, and people’s organization in Oromia and Amhara regions. As briefly presented below, results of the exercise show that there are differing perceptions on the growth of CBIs but apparently positive understanding of their potential role in local development.

(a) According to *the Bureau of Justice*, CBIs engaged in development activities can be registered as NGOs if they can meet the requirements for NGOs’ registration. The requirements, according to the bureau, include copies of project documents, testimonials of the founding members, minutes of the leadership election, support letter from woreda social affairs office, etc. If properly assisted to develop their own projects and define their structures, strategies, etc, CBIs such as those supported by ASE can satisfy the stated requirements and register as local NGOs. DAs, having clear development objectives and established structures, are already recognized and registered as NGOs. A common problem in both cases is rather their lack of capacity in terms of skilled human resource, financial resource, etc, which makes their organizational and financial sustainability a critical concern.

(b) *Cooperatives promoters* anticipate possible collaborations between CBIs and cooperative in various areas, such as in the marketing of farmers produces. However, they underline that the role of CBIs as distinct from cooperatives needs to be clearly defined. With respect to CBIs' organizational development, the understanding of the bureau seems that they eventually end up in a form of cooperative society.

It may be pointed out that the tendency to view cooperatives as the most appropriate form of community organization is prevalent and that cooperatives enjoy preferential treatment by governments at the practical level. This view appears consistent with the policy orientation of the present government<sup>4</sup>. However, although it is hard to justify with concrete data, such views and practices may hinder and discourage the development of other types of CBIs and the private sector. At another level, the public image of cooperatives, their autonomy, and inherited problems (mainly associated with embezzlement) also need to be taken into account in building partnerships.

(c) *The People's Organizations Bureaux* believe that regional governments are responsible to create enabling environment to their respective peoples to organize themselves into CBIs that would play active role in and ensure sustainability of development activities. They think that *mengistawi budin* ('government teams') and *yelimat budin* ('development teams') organized at kebelee and sub-kebelee levels can serve as the basis for CBIs. According to them, these multi-purpose groups, which are involved in development, security, arbitration, etc, can support and facilitate the activities of CBIs at their respective level.

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<sup>4</sup> In the cooperative societies policy (2003), it is stated 'the government believes that cooperative societies are the main instruments for the implementation of [its] developmental objectives'.

Experience, nevertheless, shows rivalry and conflicts of interest between these government - sponsored structures and other development - oriented CBOs; and the support and preference of kebele administrations and government institutions to use the former, whilst NGOs prefer to work with a rather independent ones.

Problems are particularly pronounced when new parallel structures with overlapping functions are formed by NGOs for the coordination, facilitation, and implementation of development activities at kebelee and/or sub-kebelee levels ignoring those units. In the case of activity - based and other single - purpose groups such as water user associations, saving and credit groups, grain mill associations, etc, however, such problems may not be evident, and it is common to find members of the formal structures actively involved in the different entities.

In conclusion, the legal and policy environment does not look strictly constraining the registration of CBO/Is and their recognition as legal entities. Indeed, when seen from the point of view of NGO - CBO/I collaboration, it could be said that there is little or no threat of intervention of government bodies even when the collaborating CBO/Is are not legally registered.

Nonetheless, a lot seems to remain in terms of giving clear and unambiguous division of power and mandate at the level of regions and below, shortening the bureaucratic chain, and granting of explicit provisions that encourage the involvement of civil society organizations in general and CBO/Is in particular in the development arena. Concerned international organizations, bi-lateral and multi-lateral organizations, and donor agencies need to work more in respect to lobbying, while CBO/Is are expected to demand for more of their rights.

#### **4. Overview of CBI review exercise**

Agri-Service Ethiopia prepared a Guideline on Establishing Grassroots Community Development Structures at organizational level in 1996 and gave to the POs to be used as a reference. Establishing ground rules such as agreeing on shared objectives, openness and accessibility, honesty, relevance, achievements, and learning from experience helps often-lengthy processes operate more smoothly and effectively (Bishop 1994, p4 in Warburton 1198, p33). The POs were advised to contextualize the guideline in congruence to their objectives and socio-economic conditions of their area. The guideline explains the over all objective of Agri-Service Ethiopia and its development direction. The guideline also gives idea on how the community-based institutions can be structured. This was not considered as a stereotype that has to be adopted by all CBIs in ASE operation areas. Nevertheless it was very helpful for the farmers and ASE facilitators in giving them clue about how to kick-off the idea of CBI in a situation where there were “no sharable experiences” in the country.

The guideline was a launching pad for ASE to develop the new strategy of CBI, which this document is basically dealing with. Most of the ideas and philosophies that tries to explain why ASE is interested to support farmer centered civil society organizations, which is duly considered in this document are shared from the previous one. This strategy document is therefore a formal replacement of the former guideline, which was substantially used to develop and shape the current one. Based on the former guideline, ASE has managed to support the formation and function of CBIs in Lallo Mama Mider and Enebse Sar Mider woredas [Amhara Region], Bereh Alleltu Woreda [Oromia] and Amaro special Woreda [Dehub region]. Lessons were drawn from past experiences as a result of the formal review exercise and consultative workshop facilitated by a group of ASE experts and a consultant who worked as a mentor. Findings are briefly described here below.

## **4.1 The review process**

The over all study of community-based institutions was planned and undertaken in accordance with prior decision passed by ASE's management and subsequent arrangements made by the review team. Firstly, a review team consisting of three members was formed. The team made necessary and relevant preparation thereby drawing its operation plan. Secondly, a mentor was hired so as to render expertise advice to the review team and explore relevant global, national and organizational environments and prepare conceptual framework that could serve as legal and theoretical premises to the organization's initiative of building community based institutions. Both primary and secondary data were used in the study. Formal and informal intensive discussions were made with leaders of community-based institutions' and non-members alike. In this respect, focused group discussion was held with men and women from the non-members. The wereda councils of all the programme areas, regional people's participation and organizing bureaus and bureau of Justice, cooperative commissions and Agri-Service Ethiopia's field staff were involved as respondents. Relevant documents like by-laws, income and expense vouchers, minutes, letters, etc. were also reviewed as sources of information.

A questionnaire was prepared and distributed to all Agri-Service Ethiopia's field staff to explore their general understanding of community-based institutions. The Field staff, leaderships of community based institutions and wereda councils were provided with SWOT analysis matrix and were requested to respond without any bias regarding the strengths and weaknesses that the community based institutions have, opportunities favouring them and the threats that would

inhibit their progress. More importantly, the community based institutions leadership and executive committees were provided with a self-assessment checklist, which they responded to, regarding their general organizational milieu.

## **4.2 Critical Issues**

The study team, having gone through a rigorous review of the CBI and analysing the internal and external situations, the following critical issues were identified, on which basis the major strategies described in this document are designed.

- Upon the formation of the woreda apex, there is a risk of taking the decision making power the kebele level CBIs by the Woreda CBI. Decentralizing power from the woreda apex organization to the Kebele CBIs is therefore an important aspect of the institution building exercise [Striking power balance]
- The woreda level CBI is basically constituted by the kebele CBIs. Registration and contribution fees of the members should be shared both by the basic institutions and the woreda CBI. What proportion of the fee should go to the woreda CBI is not clearly determined so far. There is a fear that the kebele CBIs will be left powerless if the Woreda CBI pulls all the resources.
- The issue of having an independent activity groups vis-à-vis the power of the kebele level CBIs.
- Who should benefit from the activities of CBIs? Members or including non-members? If non-members are getting benefits, is it possible to ensure strong commitment of members? If members only are benefiting from the CBI, what makes it different from cooperatives?

- Should leaders of CBI also be part of the kebele council if they are elected? Could there be conflict of interest? Or is it an opportunity to create synergy between the kebele CBI and the kebele Administration? Is conflict between CBIs and Kebele administrations are something inevitable? If yes, what conflict resolution mechanisms should then be in place.
- Integrated Water shade management is being tested at pilot level. Inherently this approach tends to “cross borders of Kebeles” as long as more than one kebeles come under the same water shade. The CBI approach is on the other hand a kebele-based approach. Could ASE consider these strategies simultaneously?
- The current status tells the only constituents of the CBI are exclusively farmers. The membership appears to be closed. On the other hand, building a development organization demands inputs of experts who are familiar with technical, legal and bureaucratic frameworks at local and federal level. Is it a good idea to open the membership so that to include capable people who are willing to support the causes of the CBIs or would this bring in conflict of interest between the farmers and non-farmers coming from different parts of the country? Could the CBI leaders, being all farmers, able to manage the organization effectively upon the phasing out of ASE?
- Is the main objective of establishing the CBIs to manage ASE initiated activities or more? Is there a tendency of creating another “ASE” at woreda level or is it to support the initiatives of the community to become masters of their own destiny?

- Is the set up of the CBIs and “Mengistawi Budun” compatible to each other or conflicting? Are there comparative advantages if they coexist or could that jeopardize the survival of the CBIs?
- What shall be done to ensure the financial sustainability of the CBIs? Could the CBIs sustain without donor support? Is it possible to encourage the CBIs get engaged in income generation activities? If yes, how should it be managed?
- Should ASE phase out all at once or gradually? What should be the role of ASE staff who are supposed to remain behind upon phasing out of ASE? What type of relationship ASE should expect with the CBIs, after complete phasing out from the area?
- The relationship of Cooperatives and CBIs appears to be vague. Most importantly, CBIs are involved in the distribution of inputs and this has become the source of conflict with Cooperatives. Is it legally possible for the CBIs to get involved in input provision? If not, what should exactly be the roles of CBIs in this connection? Is it possible to build partnership between the CBIs and the Coops?
- Funds are coming to the local government from bilateral agencies. What should the CBIs and the local government do to help the CBIs get access to these funds?
- CBI leaders appear to be motivated and committed at the beginning of their participations in the CBI [honeymoon]. Could this stamina continue in the future, especially after the phasing out of ASE? Is it important to introduce an incentive policy for the CBI leaders? If yes, what should that policy look like?

- The CBIs appears to be heavily dependant on ASE. Project staffs are not yet adequately employed by the CBIs. What should be done to help the CBIs employ their own staff? Once the CBIs manage to have their own staff, should ASE continue working with the same staff composition? What exactly should be the roles of ASE once the CBIs have their own staff?
- The government has adopted resettlement program as an important strategy of food security and natural resource management. Accordingly, the focus of the government for settlement is on the landless youth and the CBIs are also tending to support the landless rural youth as they are falling under the “poor category” of the CBIs definition. The local government people are not happy with this and there is a strong opposition to the CBIs, whenever they try to support the landless youth. How should the CBIs tackle this challenge?
- What are the administrative challenges that prohibit the CBIs to administer the VLDPs and VLHPs [incentives are still managed by ASE]
- In Amaro special woreda, there is a pre-existing development institution, known as Kore Development Association [KDA]. KDA is established at woreda level and almost all members of the CBIs are members of the KDA too. KDA is strongly backed by the local government while the community is not happy with the level of achievements of KDA so far and the people wants to see some changes on the governance too. Apparently, the community tend to work more with the CBI, showing less interest to the KDA. On the other hand ASE has found it difficult to encourage the formation of an apex organization for the CBI at woreda level, in the presence of a similar development organization [KDA] at the same level. ASE has a fear that the Woreda CBI and the KDA will happen

to be competitive to each other while they share same members at grass root level and share the same vision of eradicating poverty. A gradually developed “unhealthy relationship” between the two agencies may end up with serious conflicts for power, and this may negatively affect the development works of the woreda by in large.

The critical issues in this connection are therefore: Should the two institutions merge at woreda level and form a single organization or should they be encouraged to work independently at woreda level. If the two institutions coexist at woreda level as independent and autonomous agencies, is their a chance for both agencies to establish strategic alliance, so that to work for the same goal with good spirit and partnership? If merging the two organizations is an option, do these organizations share the same values, working culture, mission and objectives? What changes are expected to take place on the side of the KDA and the CBI before hand so that to make the merging process very smooth and realistic?

This strategy document has tried to address the most important and generic strategic issues, while those critical issues, which appear to be specific to some of the program offices, are not considered in specific details. This strategy document has also made distinction between those issues that are pertinent to ASE and to the CBIs them selves. Some of the issues have to be addressed by the CBIs them selves so that to respect the institutional sovereignty of the CBIs while this strategy document provides tips for the CBIs, that would help them to stimulate discussions among the members while drafting their own bylaws.

Having reviewed the existing experiences of ASE and finding out the most critical issues that deserves institutional attention, ASE has organized a consultative workshop at national level, in which most of the relevant government agencies and NGO partners as well as CBI representatives were present. The products of this consultative workshop have significantly shaped the framework of this strategy document.

### **4.3 Overview of the Consultative workshop**

In order to enrich the CBI strategy with views, concepts and thinking from many angles and make it comprehensive, Agri-Service Ethiopia organized a two-day consultative workshop. Participants of the workshop were from relevant government bureaus of concerned regions, from federal ministries, commissions, wereda council members, NGOs, research organizations and the main actors-the CBIs.

Two study papers were presented in the workshop to acquaint the participants with the basic notion of community-based institutions and which served as a sprinting pitch for the participants to enter in to discussion regarding same. The participants broke in to four groups after presentations of these two papers for discussion and each group received four crosscutting and one specific discussion point each. The discussion points emanated from the critical issues the study team has come across. The points were the following:

#### **4.3.1 Naming and implication of CBIs**

- ❖ Does the name CBI dignify its mission and goals?
- ❖ If it has to be modified, suggest how to make it?

- ❖ Does “self help” sufficiently imply the intended meaning of saying NGO or does it give a different meaning?

#### **4.3.2 Who should benefit from CBIs?**

- ❖ Who should be the direct beneficiaries of CBIs? Should it address both members and non-members of the institution? Or should it benefit only members?
- ❖ If only members are being benefited, how does it differ from cooperatives?
- ❖ How can it be possible to ensure commitment and initiation of members if they do not have special privilege?

#### **4.3.3 Power balance**

- ❖ How should the power balance among kebelee and woreda CBIs be balanced and structured?
- ❖ How much of the kebelee CBIs cash (%) be channeled to the woreda CBIs?

#### **4.3.4 Action Groups - stand alone or part of CBI?**

- 4.3.4.1 How should be the relationship of action groups to CBIs? Should action groups have their own bylaws and rules and regulations or be governed by the kebelee CBIs? If they have to stand alone, how should be the roles, responsibility and power relations to CBIs?
- 4.3.4.2 Can individual members of Action Group continue or CBI will swallow them?

### **5. Phasing out strategy**

- 5.1 Suggest phasing out strategies that ASE should follow in the future.

- 5.2 What possible considerations should be made to reduce staff during phasing out?
- 5.3 At what stage of CBIs should ASE withdraw from operation areas and pass over all activities to CBIs? What should be the indicators?
- 5.4 What kind of relationships should ASE establish with CBIs after its phasing out?
- 5.5 Is CBI-to-CBI relationship important? If yes, how?

## **6. Constituency building and empowerment**

- ❖ What are the pros and cons of registering individuals, institutions and organizations who are willing to support the objectives of CBIs at different levels (woreda, region and federal levels) as a constituent of CBIs? If it is agreed, what strategies should be designed?
- ❖ Since CBIs are farmer-based institutions, could non-farmers constituents undermine farmers' interest and promote their own?

## **7. Sustainability**

- ❖ What should be done to ensure sustainability of CBIs in financial and technical matters?
- ❖ Can CBIs involve in income generating activities?
- ❖ If yes, in what way could they administer them?
- ❖ How could CBIs benefit from funds obtained by the government from bilateral and multilateral organizations?
- ❖ What motivation mechanisms should be used or devised to ensure commitment of CBI leaders?

- ❖ There seems to be dependency syndrome by CBIs as a result heavy involvement of ASE. What measures should be taken to enable CBIs do their tasks by themselves?
- ❖ What should be done to avoid dependency?

## **8. The case of Amaro special Woreda**

- ❖ Should CBI merge with Kore Development Association (KDA) or remain an independent organization?
- ❖ If kebelee CBIs of Amaro should join KDA, what improvements will KDA be expected to make?
- ❖ What support should ASE provide to KDA so that it can assist and cooperate with the kebelee CBIs?
- ❖ What should the relationship between KDA and ASE look like?

The first four questions were crosscutting while the last four i.e., questions 5,6,7 and 8 were given to groups 2, 3, 4 and 1 respectively. After they were presented and discussed by the plenary, the output of the group work was consolidated as presented here below..

## Tabular summary of reflection of the consultative workshop

S/no	Critical Issue	Suggested Strategies	Action Required	Responsibility	Remark
1	Designation and definition of CBI				
1.1	Designation and definition given to CBI sufficient enough to explain its mission and goals and roles?	Whether it is Association or Institution, and to prefix Self-help or not remain arguable. Designation Options: Self Help Community Development Association/Institution or Community Development Association/Institution	Management decision upon them	ASE Management	Further clarification from legal perspective will be required.
1.2	Does "Self-Help" or "Institution" prohibit qualification for the status of "NGO"?	Not necessarily. But "Association" is the commonest in registration requirement by the competent authority.	Management decision	ASE Management	Further consultation of the legislative requirements
1.3	Redefinition of CBI:	A rural people centered non-partisan, non-profitable voluntary, free and multipurpose non-governmental (Self-help) Community Development Association/Institution	Management decision	ASE Management	CBI has to be a "Rural People Centered" because 'Farmers-centered' ignores non-farm and pastoral livelihoods in rural area.

S/no	Critical Issue	Suggested Strategies	Action Required	Responsibility	Remark
2	Benefits and priorities				
2.1	Who should benefit from CBI?	Generally, rural people in CBI operational areas are beneficiaries. And the CBIs themselves should set strategy and targeting criteria to address the rural poor and vulnerable people first.	CBIs should review their respective bylaws accordingly	CBI	If benefit limited to members only, CBI appears to be a business entity, and vulnerable for refusal by the community, to the extend of liquidation
2.2	How could we keep up motivation and commitment by members without entitling them for special benefits?	Membership should come from the willingness and commitment to support the development of the rural community, but not from the expectation (for oneself) of returns for the contributions made. There should be Regular and Associate membership. The latter members should not vote, rather advise and observe the CBI. Nevertheless, regular members are privileged to voting and control, be elected for leadership position, recognition and priority service at times of resource scarcity.	Advocacy about this approach for membership.	ASE and CBI	

S/no	Critical Issue	Suggested Strategies	Action Required	Responsibility	Remark
3	Authority and Responsibility between KA and Wereda CBIs				
3.1	Wereda CBI	It should be governed by the principle of decentralization. Main authority of the Wereda CBI, but not limited to, are acting as a legitimate body of CBI, Initiate policy and laws, supervise their enforcement, Hire and fire employees. Some of its responsibility include Promote CBI and membership; Establish networking with other partners, and Coordinate inter-KA linkage and collaboration; Coordinate, plan, monitor and evaluate wereda level projects, Appraise and finance Kebele CBIs projects, Generate and administer fund, and Provide technical Assistance to Kebele CBIs.	Review CBI bylaws accordingly.	CBI	
3.2	Kebele CBI	Some of the kebele CBI authority and responsibilities include Deciding on membership as per the preset criteria, Targeting for intervention, Appraising individual or action group micro projects; and manage implementation of decisions and plans of wereda CBI, Initiate plans, networking and cooperation with kebele level partners, mobilize resources.	Review CBI bylaws accordingly.	CBI	

S/no	Critical Issue	Suggested Strategies	Action Required	Responsibility	Remark
4	Sharing revenue between kebele & wereda CBIs				
4.1	What proportion of kebele CBI income should be contributed to the Wereda CBI?	It should be based on and proportionate with the authority and responsibilities given to the Wereda CBI.	CBIs should review and decide accordingly.	CBI	
5	Action group vs CBI				
5.1	Should the laws and leadership of CBI govern Action Groups? Or should they have their independent entity (& bylaw) and management?	Action Groups should be free economic entities and be governed by their respective bylaws. OR Action group should remain under the management of the CBI.	ASE management to decide	ASE	
5.2	What relationship should exist between CBI and Action Groups, if the latter are free economic entity?	Apart from membership, a Contractual Agreement to do the agreed upon project should be the governing principle.	ASE management to decide		
6	Phasing out and disengagement by ASE				



S/no	Critical Issue	Suggested Strategies	Action Required	Responsibility	Remark
7	Constituency building and empowerment	CBI membership should be open to every individual and organization, and membership status should be distinguished as Regular and Associate. Capacity building to many CBI members so that vacant posts in CBI leadership can easily be filled.	Determine the rights and duties of Regular and Associate members. Promote CBI through various ways and broaden constituency base. Designate contact person where appropriate to act on behalf of the CBI	CBI	
8	Conflict of interest between CBI and other actors in the operational areas	Ensure coordinated and collaborative effort between CBI, Government bodies, other partners. Promote good governance (transparency and accountability) and ethics (intra and enter CBI). Design conflict management system.	Clarify responsibilities and roles of development actors, Establish and implement a joint planning, review and reflection forum among interest groups; Strengthen networking and enhance capacity in good governance, ethics, conflict management, etc.	ASE, CBI, Local government and other partners	Source of conflict arise from discoordination of efforts among actors and double responsibility by leaders and communities
9	CBI vs Kore Development Association (KDA) in Amaro Kele program area: merger or separate entity?	Continue seeing CBI and KDA as one community based institution, and KDA continue to harmonize its structure and principles to that of the CBI.	Continue progressive transformation and consolidation of KDA/CBI	ASE/PO and KDA/CBI	KDA seen as opportunity for apex CBI given that it is transformed to civic society and in favor of CBI principles

S/no	Critical Issue	Suggested Strategies	Action Required	Responsibility	Remark
10	Sustainability				
10.1	Sustainability of CBI	Improve institutional and financial sustainability of CBI	Flexibility and responsiveness to the changing circumstances, Broadening constituency base, Enhancing good governance, Diversifying resource base, Strengthen networking and advocacy, Progressively improving institutional capacity, Design motivational scheme to raise and keep commitment.	CBI	
10.2	Structural boundary of CBI	Structural boundary of CBI may be based on watershed, government administration, development potential (geographic), or their combination	CBI should decide based on the objective realities	CBI	

## **9. Objectives the CBI strategy document**

- To promote participation, self-reliance and empowerment of the community, with due emphasis to the poor, women and other marginalized groups so that to help them improve their livelihood and promote sustainable natural resource management practices.
- To encourage the CBIs to initiate, design, implement, monitor and reflect on own development undertakings that aims at community development in general and improving the livelihood of the poor and marginalized groups in particular.
- To ensure post phasing out sustenance of economic and social development initiatives of ASE and other agencies that work with the CBIs,.
- To ensure the voices of the poor and women are heard through facilitating direct, organized and non-partisan representation of the community at kebele and woreda level; to positively influence the economic, social and policy functions of the state.
- To facilitate necessary ground works that can allow and ensure the community get better access to inputs supply and product markets through creating links with the relevant agencies.

## **10. The nature of the CBIs ASE is willing to support**

- They are not for profit

- Not a branch of any NGO or Government offices
- Non partisan to any political parties
- Strive to expand and meet the development needs of the entire woreda they belong to.
- Represent the community and struggle for the fulfillment of the rights to development, the rights to sustainable livelihood and the rights to be heard
- Basically farmer [Rural people] centered development association
- Non farmers [non rural people] encouraged to become members as long as the interest of the rural people is respected
- Poor farmers and women are consciously encouraged to come to leadership positions
- Exercise participatory decision making
- Collaborate with GOs, NGOs, Donors and the private sector, who like to work with the CBI, without affecting its sovereignty
- Promote conservation based development, with due emphasis to sustainable natural resources management.

## **11. Uniqueness of the CBIs from other development institutions**

- They are Rural People /Farmer centred development associations/institutions

- CBI is different from the type of development associations in Ethiopia, which are elite initiated and led development organizations, that consider farmers as receivers of development support
- It is not systematically or structurally linked with government agencies, political parties or NGOs. However it receives supports from any donor, with out putting its institutional sovereignty at risk.
- They are self-help groups and thus basically different from NGOs. NGOs are working to support not their members but a third party, which is also known as target groups [eg farmers, women, children, old age people, handicap people, PLWHA, etc]. In the case of the CBIs the community at large is the beneficiary but in case of limited resource members who also fall under the poor category would get priority.
- They are not activity-based associations. CBIs are responsible for all development endeavour of their domain, including agriculture, education, health, water supply, training/community learning, marketing and other economic and infrastructure developments.

- They are different from cooperatives because their main objective is not profit making but over all economic and social development as well as representation of the poor and marginalized groups at different level. They can work closely with cooperatives but also replace them to some extent in places where cooperatives are not established.

## **Part Four.**

### **Major CBI Formation and Development strategies**

#### **4.1 ASE-CBI partnership:**

This partnership will be initiated from the beginning and one of the reasons why ASE wanted to see the CBIs established at kebele level is to consider it as a development partner that represent the community at large. In the course of making a strategic shift from service delivery approach to community empowerment approach through capacity building, the first step for ASE is to initiate, recognize and develop a community organization, which will be responsible to deliver all the social and economic services for the people, and continue to be more active in the future, even in the absence of development partners like ASE.

The modality of the partnership at the initial stage is therefore characterized by; ASE having more power in directing and controlling the development process for few months. In the mean time the CBI begins to learn about managing a development institution and working in partnership with relevant organizations. Upon strengthening of the community organization, which presumably would begin to take place in about a year time, ASE's role in decision making on all development affairs would become lower and lower, and the CBI taking the lead. ASE will consciously manage the number and quality of staff it should have at different stages of the CBI development, which is duly explained in the guideline.

## **4.2 Initiate organization:**

ASE organizes the CBIs on the philosophical basis that they are civic organizations that strive for collective well being of the community as well as betterment of selected target groups. The partnership model that is envisaged to prevail is: ASE is an organizing agency while the CBIs are partners with high negotiating power and adequate space for making decisions on joint affairs. The lowest unit of the CBI is established at Kebele level while the woreda level apex organization, which will come in to being through time ,will be the one, which will formally represent the community at woreda, level and get registered with the relevant government body.

## **4.3 Capacity Building:**

ASE plays role of capacitating and facilitating enabling environment for the CBIs to become robust institutions that are confident and self-reliant in initiating and leading the development efforts relevant to their respective constituencies. In this respect the organization is playing the role of facilitating learning opportunities on relevant issues, demonstration of technologies, identification and promotion of local innovations etc.

ASE also uninterruptedly gives various trainings for the CBIs' leaderships as an attempt to strengthening their thinking and project execution capacity. Included in here are mainly General Awareness Raising Education and Skill Enhancement Trainings. Of course this

is crosscutting activity that is carried out at all stages but the type and intensity of the training courses on leadership and management varies in accordance to the development phases of the CBI. Experience sharing and educational tours are also very effective tools to enhance learning as quickly as possible. To support the implementation of this specific strategy, ASE has developed a separate strategy and guideline document on community learning and communication, which among others include the approaches and methods of developing the leaders of the institution. Nevertheless the most important aspects are also mentioned in the guideline section of this strategy document.

#### **4.4 Making CDF available:**

Community Development Funds [CDF] is a block grant of money that will be made available for the CBIs to help them learn how to write project proposals, implement development projects, handling accounts, preparing reports and in general managing partnerships with development partners. The second important purpose of this fund is to address the collective needs of the community which were not duly addressed while developing the main program document or to address those problem situations that came to the attention of the community and ASE as a result of the implementation of some of the activities. ASE will manage the fund basically but the CBIs and other government partners will have a say in decision making. A separate guideline on how to use the Community development Fund is available in ASE.

#### **4.5 Mobilization of other Resources:**

ASE encourage the CBIs to mobilize local resources through collection of registration and membership fees, organizing fund raising events, soliciting donations from the private sector, linking with donors, establishing income generation schemes, accessing bilateral funds through entering in to partnership agreement with the local government etc. These are very important activities of the CBI from birth to maturity. Most of the activities will be mentioned in the bylaws and guidelines of the CBIs and details of some are given in this guideline.

#### **4.6 Encouraging the CBIs to own income-generating enterprises:**

This is of course part of the resource mobilization strategy mentioned above. It is however import to pay a special attention to this strategy as it is a major factor to ensure financial sustainability of the CBIs. This is all about helping the CBIs establish income generating enterprises that surely have a good market in their domain as well as support the development efforts of the woreda. A good example is the poultry farm that was established by Alembirhan CBI in Enebse Sar Mider Woreda. This is a lucrative business for the CBI as well it highly supports the efforts of the CBIs and the local government to ensure food security in the area. As many enterprise as possible could be established over the period ASE is staying with the CBI in the program area. However the management capacity, experiences

of the CBI on transparency and accountability, market feasibility etc are some of the important factors that determine the number and size of the enterprises. Details of establishing those enterprises are given in this guideline.

#### **4.7 Phasing-in and phasing-out strategy:**

Supporting the formation and strengthening of CBIs is an entry and exit strategy for ASE. ASE begins its intervention by making exclusive efforts to set up a community-based institution on the basis of the interest of the people. Throughout the program period, ASE is expected to build the capacity of the institution, helping the people have access to manage their own development affairs. Finally ASE is supposed to make a gradual exit from the program area and the good indicator for the complete phasing out of the organization will be the level of strength and capacity of the CBIs. Therefore the role of ASE at phasing in and phasing out periods are clearly indicated in the subsequent guideline section of this strategy document. The earlier the CBI become self standing institutions with adequate capacity, the earlier will be the complete withdrawal of ASE from the area.

#### **4.8 Networking:**

The CBI is not thought to form its own “island of development” and thus remain with out having systematic and effective networks with others. It should be encouraged to share its own development philosophy and approaches to others as well as learn from others.

Local traditional associations, kebele administration, wereda administration, line offices, kebele level cooperatives, unions, NGOs and other civic associations are the first category of actors with which the CBIs should form a formal and non formal networks. This exercise should be effective enough to maximize the benefits of the CBIs and it should avoid networks, which are less worth doing. At various level of the CBI development, ASE will have a very strong partnership with the CBIs. Nevertheless at the post phasing out era, ASE will have a network with the CBIs and this networking will be formed on the basis of equal footing between the two parties.

#### **4.9 Constituency building:**

CBI is an association created basically by the rural people/farmers but it should also be able to attract members or supporters from other domains. Specifically, ASE should support the CBIs to get them linked with those people who belong to the woreda by birth but staying in big cities like Addis and others. Merchants, Civil Servants, Religious leaders and leaders and members of the civic associations in the woreda as well as in the provincial cities of the region, in Addis and beyond are also potential groups to become constituents of the CBIs. By doing so the CBIs could create a favorable environment for these people to participate in the development affairs of their own relatives. It is also a wonderful opportunity for the CBIs to expand its constituency and secure sustaining supports.

#### **4.10 Conflict management:**

It is presumed that the CBI will be confronted with a number of challenges, being the most important one the conflicts that may arise among the members and the leaders, between the CBI and local government administration, other civic associations and organizations like the cooperatives. Transparency, accountability, joint planning, understanding own mandate areas, participatory monitoring and evaluation, consistency, positive thinking, communication skills, forming strategic alliance etc are some of the tools that may help to manage conflicts. ASE should be able to introduce those tools to the CBIs at different levels of development.

#### **4.11 Micro financing:**

The second important phasing out strategy for ASE is to make micro finance institutions work in close collaboration with the CBIs. PEACE micro finance is an important partner of ASE, which is presumed to provide financial services to farmers in its operation area. Following the phasing out of ASE, PEACE is supposed to continue working with the CBIs. Nevertheless, ASE should also look for other micro financing options like establishing a credit and saving cooperatives or working with other micro finance organizations, in case PEACE is not duly accessible to the CBIs on the right time or when the capacity of PEACE to address the needs of the community is low.

#### **4.12 Making VLDPs and VLHPs accountable to the CBIs:**

The VLDPs and VLHPs are those people who will be elected by the CBI and assigned to support them in the overall development programs [VLDPs] and health extension matters [VLHPs]. Often they are farmers and provide service to the community on part time basis. Through time ASE would invest on the VLDPs and VLHPs to develop their capacities and ensure that they would reach to a level where they can adequately support the CBIs, even after the phasing out of ASE. These people should be accountable to the CBI and upon partial phasing out of ASE, they should take the place of ASE development facilitators as a permanent employees of the CBI.

The above-described strategies are the basic ones, which ASE should take care while handling CBI as a major function of the organization. A number of points, which appears to be important for the CBIs but not strategic issue for ASE, are not considered at this stage. Most of them will be duly addressed in the bylaws and organizational manuals of the CBIs. Application of the strategies mentioned above is not also described item by item in this guideline. The CBI development process is basically divided in to various phases and the implementation modalities of each strategy are discussed in those relevant phases. The following section is the guideline for the implementation of the various CBI phases. This guideline will be helpful for the day-to-day operation of the CBI in ASE.

## **Part Five:**

### **Guidelines for the various Phases of institution Building**

#### **5.1 PRE-CBI PHASE**

This is an initial stage that makes the sprinting pitch for the CBIs to kick off. It is a phasing in stage for ASE in general where preliminary activities of organizing the community into CBI is carried out. At this early stage, the overwhelming activity will be ground working. The ground working is basically meant to prepare the community psychologically, socially, economically and organizationally. It is in a way a stage whereby tremendous attempt is made to create a receptive social environment for the CBI to become reality. In this respect intensive awareness creation activities will be undertaken. ASE will take the lead to initiate the formation of CBIs but the approach should not be at all “instructional” or “persuasive” type of communication.

A defined period of time is required to finish this phase. The ideal time budget recommended to accomplish the pre-CBI phase is six months after the proper takeoff of the program in the Woreda. The following indicators may help to measure “Proper take off environment”: agreement signed with the government, funds made available for the PO, staffs deployed at field level and the minimum working facilities are met. However, the time required by the program offices to accomplish the activities outlined here under might vary

from place to place. The time required to accomplish the activities is also dictated by the prevailing political, social and environmental situations of the locality. At the pre CBI phase the following are the major functions of ASE, which need to be done along side with the other activities of ASE, like conducting base line survey, gender analysis, training need assessment, syllabus preparation, module preparation, identification of farmer innovations etc.

### ***5.1.1 Staff orientation***

One of the findings of ASEs monitoring exercises in the past five years was that the staff were either not very clear about the new orientation ASE embarked on or had difficulty to understand the difference between building cooperatives and CBIs. Most importantly, it was not easy for the staff to think in terms of playing a capacity building role instead of having a service delivery function. In the beginning of the partnership with CBIs, ASE surely plays significant role in providing services to the community. However, this role has to be overtaken by the CBIs upon time. There must be a very clear picture in the process, showing that the roles of the CBIs in terms of decision making is steadily increasing and that of the ASE staff is kept at diminishing order. This is the most important progress indicator for ASE to measure whether the philosophy of community empowerment is being materialized or not. ASE has to make sure that the staff attitude is completely changed in this direction and every individual in the program office and head office is prepared to define her/his own path to achieve the collective goal of building a

vibrant, responsible, sustainable and farmer centred civil society organization at woreda level.

The second most important aspect, which the staff of ASE and the management need to pay attention to is building CBIs is one of the major functions of ASE and this function is by no means the responsibility of a single unit or individuals in the organization. The department of COTEE in the head office and the responsible units at program office level are only expected to spearhead the process but the contribution of all ASE staff to the building process of CBIs is indispensable. The roles and functions of the different units of ASE is given in a separate section of this strategy paper. It is, however, very important to note that the Human Resource Management Unit and The Department of COTEE have to pay due attention to conduct staff orientation when new staff are joining the organization.

### ***5.1.2 Targeting the Poor***

As usual, the entry point for ASE while launching new programs will be formation of the community-learning forum [Which used to be training groups in the past], in which participation of the community is absolutely on voluntary basis. Experience has thought ASE that “voluntarism” although it sounds democratic and fair, the approach is some times deceiving in the sense that the poor, the marginalized groups and rural women remains shy and far apart from participating in the community learning forums [Trainings] and other community development initiatives. It is therefore an important action for ASE to

conduct a base line survey and understand who is who in terms of wealth and other social parameters. The base line survey would also be very helpful to understand the existing social institutions, for which the formation of the CBIs would add value. Apparently, the information to be obtained from the base line survey would be very helpful for the Development Facilitators [DFs] to make a door to door visit and stimulate the interest of the poor, marginalized groups and women and encourage them to become part of the forum.

### ***5.1.3 Stimulating interest through community dialogue***

Once the DFs make sure that good number of the desired target groups [poor, women and marginalized groups] are adequately represented in the community learning forums, ASE staff should pose questions in the forums that provoke learning about community institutions. ASE shall prepare carefully designed learning modules that help to facilitate discussions on this subject with the community. The first learning module will be designed to guide how the communities' knowledge about institution building could be developed and motivated through a method known as community dialogue/conversation. In this module the principles, steps and procedures, how best the community dialogue/conversation can be facilitated will be included. The aim of the community dialogue session is to help the people appreciate the need for "joining hands and ideas" for development to come and thus make self initiated decisions to establish the Community Based Institutions. This approach is an alternative to the use of "instructional" or "persuasive" types of

communication models, which are mainly characterized by aggressively pushing the interest of outsiders to achieve stated objectives.

#### ***5.1.4 Experience sharing visits***

The DFs, at this very stage of CBI formation, must be able to develop the knowledge of the community and make their perceptions clear about CBI, through organizing an experience sharing visits to the previous working places of ASE. This has to be done after making sure that there is good level of interest and motivation in the community to establish their own CBIs. The second learning module on CBI building, which ASE need to prepare ahead of time, is on how to organize and facilitate an experience exchange visits from the CBIs established in the previous working woredas of ASE. In the absence of this model the educational tour might not be able to achieve its objectives adequately. The DFs have to be very careful not to push farmers learn every thing from the previously established CBIs, but they should focus on the basic principles, the process, challenges and lessons. The module will be helpful to guide the staff what communication techniques should they use in order to make sure that stereotype CBIs are not replicating in every place where ASE is operational. Nevertheless, there should be a basic framework, which all CBIs can refer to as a general direction. All new CBIs are expected to be “better” than the old ones as the experiences of the previous CBIs would be educational for the new

ones as well as the growing experiences of ASE staff to facilitate CBI formation will be advantageous.

#### ***5.1.5 Creating awareness of other stakeholders***

This approach is probably new to government counterparts and other relevant stakeholders in the woreda. Therefore, the awareness creation exercise of ASE has to address these stakeholders too. Organizing workshops/meetings, facilitating experience-sharing visits to other places, organizing educational tours through visiting the CBIs in the same woreda, discussing findings of evaluations reports, mission reports etc can be some of the tools which can be used to help the government counterparts know more about the CBIs. Therefore, creation of awareness to government stakeholders and other civic society organizations in the woreda can be only started at this stage of the CBI formation. However more organized and systematic interventions can be made at the later stage. The awareness creation and familiarization exercise is indeed a continuous process and remains important throughout the period. But the program office has to make conscious and purposeful efforts to make all stakeholders aware at the pre-CBI formation phase about the growing changes and good intentions of the CBI formation. Experiences have taught ASE that in places where there was good level of awareness of the government counterparts from the start, the support the CBIs received from the relevant government bodies was tremendous and appropriate.

### ***5.1.6 Formation of ad hoc Committee for CBI***

The very reason why ad hoc committee is needed before going to the election of the proper CBI executive committee members is to give time to the community to carefully study and nominate leaders as well as to carry out all preparatory works like drafting the constitution of the CBIs, building offices etc. From experience, ASE learned that the first 6 month –1 year is difficult time for the organization because this is the period ASE and the communities need to know each other very well. The rural community is in many cases suspicious of religious or political hidden motives of strangers, who come to its domain for the first time. On the other hand, it is highly likely to see some people who are socially active but with high “personal and selfish motives” appear to dominate the community meetings. It is also more likely, such personalities might have the chance to be elected as leaders of the community unless some precautions are taken. The ad hoc period is therefore very crucial for ASE to win the confidence of the community as well as give the community a breathing space to nominate the right candidates for the CBI leadership.

In every kebele, where ASE is operational, it is presumed that a community-learning forum is already established in the first 6 months period of the program life. This forum shall manage to learn about community-based institutions in more details. Members of this forum may also begin to have informal discussions with fellow farmers about the need for the establishment of the CBI. Some people who are

leaders of social institutions like “Iddir”, “Maheber”, and Churches/Mosques etc; can take the lead to sell the idea; by putting it as a discussion agenda in the social forums. This is a groundwork that needs to take place before calling the general meeting of the public in the kebele. It is probably good to organize one session in the community-learning forum to hear the feed back from the leaders of social organizations so that to understand the felt needs of the community members who are not in the learning forum. This session would also be used to plan for the general meeting.

Needless to mention, a steering group from the learning forum, which will be responsible to call the general meeting and facilitate the discussion about the formation of the proper CBI has to be formed. The steering group can make contacts with the kebele administration so as to get supports from this institution while calling the meeting of the general public. In the general meeting the ad hoc committee should be elected and its mandate as well as the expected time to perform the duties envisaged in its mandate has to be endorsed by same. Among other duties, the ad hoc committee should be able to draft the constitution of the CBI and get it endorsed in the general meeting which is presumed to be called a year after the ad hoc committee takes office.

## **5.2 EARLY PARTNERSHIP**

This is a stage where the CBI concept is understood and got acceptance by all parties on board. It is indeed a stage where the

illusions of community based institutions is clarified, the driving motive of CBIs well underscored and the gainful collective benefits hitherto attached to it vowed and accepted. ASE will take the lion share of the activities and realize the formation of the desired CBIs while the community takes active and enabling participation at this stage. It is presumed that one year will be enough for the ad hoc members to accomplish their tasks and a general meeting will be called at the end of the year by the ad hoc to report their works and facilitate the election of the permanent CBI executive committee members. The core activities will thus be:

#### ***5.2.1 Capacity Building of leaders in the ad hoc committee***

The ad hoc members are expected to involve in the implementation of the projects, which were developed by ASE, through involving the community at the stage of program formulation. The ad hoc committee is also required to have its own by law until the formal bylaw of the proper CBI is drafted. They are also responsible to build their own offices and begin to run the day-to-day business of the office with the support of ASE development facilitator and VLDPs. Therefore ASE has to organize training sessions for members of the ad hoc members, for which training modules should be prepared ahead of time. The content of the training module may include among others, leadership, organization and management, financial management, planning, monitoring, evaluation, networking, transparency, accountability, participation, conflict management and others. It is probably good for the program office to organize the

training at a central venue instead of making it in each particular kebele. Nevertheless, it should be taken into account that the participants should not exceed 25 or 30, at any one time.

“On the job training” is indeed the most effective approach to make sure that the participants have gained the skill they are required to have. Therefore, the development facilitators and all officers must be able to visit and train the ad hoc committee members while they are at work. The on job training should be a well-planned activity. ASE staff must be able to understand the capacity support needed by each group and a purposeful intervention has to be made to help them reach the desired level of competence. It is well understood by ASE that the people in the ad hoc committee are only temporary and it is likely that others will replace all or some of them when the formal CBI leaders are elected. Although it is the mandate of the general meeting to decide, ASE may suggest if the community could make a serious evaluation of the members of the ad hoc committee and let some of them to continue working as CBI leaders. This will be very helpful to guarantee continuation of the works of the previous committee. Yet, this type of training will be a continuous process for ASE, so that the new CBI leaders will be trained even on more advanced courses. On the other hand, those members of the ad hoc who will be replaced by the new ones are still part of the community and they will be in a better position to serve other public or social institutions in the kebele.

### ***5.2.2 Involve the ad hoc in PME***

It is presumed that the period the ad hoc is formed will be towards the end of the 2nd quarter of the first year. The ad hoc is, therefore, expected to take part in the monitoring meeting of the 2nd quarter and planning exercise of the third and fourth quarter activities. The monitoring and planning exercises can be considered as on job training for the ad hoc committee members.

The ad hoc members must be in a position to take the lead in the planning and monitoring exercises of the subsequent periods. They should be able to report the works of the preceding quarter and facilitate plans of the coming period in a quarterly meeting of the project participants. It is probably hectic to call a general public meeting every quarter but it should be possible to invite all project participants who are directly involved in the ASE supported activities. It is also a good idea to invite the kebele administration and representatives of social organizations for the meeting. Staff of the Office of agriculture, health and education should also be invited in such meetings and ASE should provide support to the members of the ad hoc committee while facilitating the meeting. Development facilitators, all VLDPs and some officers must be able to attend these important meetings. It is important to note that the legacy of these experiences will sustain long in the program area, even after the phasing out of ASE. Therefore, ASE staff should give due emphasis to this activity so that to make sure a new culture of participatory planning and down ward accountability is introduced.

### ***5.2.3 Transforming the Ad hoc***

It is not always true that the strategies will go well in all cases, as spelled out in this document. According to this strategy paper, the ad hoc committee is expected to work for one year and then the permanent committee has to replace it. Nevertheless it is so important to make sure that the following criteria are met by the ad hoc before taking decisions to get it replaced by the new ones. These among others may include:

- 5.2.3.1 Works of the ad hoc accepted and appreciated by the general public
- 5.2.3.2 The community begin to gain benefits from the project activities managed by the ad hoc.
- 5.2.3.3 A new culture of community- led development works, begin to capture the attention of the people [well organized community led planning and monitoring sessions carried out by the ad hoc]
- 5.2.3.4 Constitution of the CBI drafted and endorsed by the general public meeting
- 5.2.3.5 Technical and psychological fitness of most of the ad hoc leaders
- 5.2.3.6 Support obtained from government counter parts
- 5.2.3.7 Office of the CBI established and become functional

5.2.3.8 VLDPs and VLHPs begin to report to the CBI

5.2.3.9 Personal evaluation of the DF, who is responsible to support the ad hoc committee.

### **5.3 ADVANCED PARTNERSHIP**

ASE-CBI advanced stage of partnership is a stage where the role of the initiator-ASE, is less significantly magnified but active, so to say. This is a stage where the transitional/adhoc committees have dissolved and gave way for permanent committees that have been elected democratically by the community. At this stage the CBIs have to acquire legal entity and become formal institutions. Here the CBI executive committee members demonstrate real leadership role and are highly involved in all decision-making processes. Apparently this is a scenario that evidences the maturity of the CBIs to take the lead in the development processes. Under normal condition it is presumed that one-year should be enough to complete this phase and pass to the next one. At this phase the activities envisaged are:

#### ***5.3.1 CBI executive members take office***

The newly elected Executive Committee Members [ECM] of the CBI takes office and much closer partnership will continue to exist between ASE and the CBI. At this stage the ECM- CBI shall begin to make more decisions about the projects and overall development works in the kebele. Their involvement in decision making and leadership can be described by:

- Working out the annual plans of the program for their respective kebeles and review them every quarter as used to be during the time of the ad hoc committee
- Participating in the kebele administration council meeting at observers status and negotiate the plans of the CBI vis- a- vis the government plan for the kebele
- Participating in the quarterly technical meeting of ASE and begin to make meaningful and powerful influence on the technical and managerial functions of ASE.
- Begin to register members and collect membership fee
- Design a system how best the poor, marginalized groups and women shall benefit most from their interventions
- Involving in income generating activities at kebele level
- Beginning to prepare their own project activities and access the community development funds which is designated for this purpose as well as funds from other sources [government, bilateral support]
- Organizing and providing leadership to the sub committees that will come under the CBI, such as

social services [Schools, health, Water development] community learning forum, Natural Resources Management, etc

- Involving in the identification, development and promotion of farmer innovations
- Facilitating, lobby and advocate for the fair and sustainable agricultural input supply and marketing services of the community, specially the poor.
- Guiding and managing the VLDPs and VLHPs
- Working more independently from the ASE-Development
- Facilitator

Theses are some of the functions that indicates the growth and development of the CBI at the advanced partnership stage. All these functions might not become part of the working culture of the CBIs overnight. But there should be a steady progress towards the full manifestation of most of the functions over a given period of time. In the monitoring and evaluation section of this strategy paper, a good deal of progress indicators will be extracted out of the above outlined functions of the CBI.

### ***5.3.2 Improving the capacity of the leaders***

Capacity building of the CBI-ECM is an inbuilt function for ASE. The desired level of capacity for the CBIs can be explained as:

- All CBI-ECM have writing and reading skills
- Some of the members [those who are legible] continue their education through a distance learning arrangement
- The ECM manages to run an office with all proper systems installed. [Accounting, book keeping, procurement of goods, recruitment and administration of employees [VLDP, VLHP], material supply and management, secretarial functions [arranging meetings, recording minutes, writing letters, filing documents, proposal writing etc], planning, monitoring, reporting, democratic decision making processes etc]
- The negotiation power of the ECM with the kebele administration and ASE program offices uplifted [observing cases where the CBI influence decisions of other stakeholders]
- The ECM demonstrate the use of conflict resolution mechanism, that helps to address conflicts that may take place within their members, ECM and project participants, CBI and Kebelee Administration, CBI and ASE staff, CBI and Cooperatives, CBI against the staff of office of agriculture, health, education etc.
- Self-initiated project activities and income generation undertakings observed on the ground.
- Begin to develop broader vision in terms of expanding their services by type and quality as well seeking for

higher-level networks so that to make better influences at woreda level.

These are some of the qualities that are desired the CBI leaders should have. ASE is therefore expected to plan its capacity building support in line with this. Face to face training, correspondence education, experience-sharing visits, creating enabling environment to the ECM-CBI for independent discussion making and joint decision making as may be required, creating access for the use of community development funds under special arrangement [because they are not registered at this stage], providing on the job training, using motivation mechanisms and awards for best performers, encouraging the ECM to learn from their mistakes: could be some of the tools the program offices may use.

### ***5.3.3 Intensive training of VLDPs and VLHPs by ASE***

This is the other most important capacity building support ASE is supposed to deliver at this stage of the CBI development. ASE should be able to train at least one VLDP and VLHP for each “Gott”.

The most important areas of training for these persons is on communication, facilitation and networking skills. ASE need to develop a guideline on how to elect, train, develop and motivate VLDPs and VLHPs in general. They are not primarily expected to deliver all technical trainings to farmers but play important roles in the community learning forums to facilitate collective learning and

action. They also make all the links for technical aspects between the CBI and other actors including ASE, Cooperatives, office of agriculture, office of health etc.

All the skills about Farmers Field School, Participatory Innovation Development and participatory learning techniques as well as some specific skills on organic agriculture, nursery management, natural resource management, gender issues, HIV/AIDs, highland fruits, bee keeping etc; are those subjects the VLDPs are expected to be trained on. For the VLHPs more trainings are required on general health issues, family planning, child care and development, environmental and personal hygiene, HIV AIDS and prevention of Malaria [where applicable]. ASE has to develop a training program and modules to undertake all these activities in the course of implementing the program. It would be possible to organize these courses in the training centre ASE is planning to establish in Tehuledere woreda.

#### **5.4 LATE PARTNERSHIP**

This partnership phase is the last step in the organizing effort where the role of the CBIs is magnified and their legal recognition ratified. It is a real testing and critical stage where the mantle of initiating and running development activities is transferred to the CBIs and gradual disengagement of ASE from being involved in all the activities becomes reality. At this level the CBIs will be able to plan, organize, implement, monitor and evaluate and administer development

activities in their areas while ASE renders technical and advisory assistance.

#### ***5.4.1 CBI – Apex organization formed at woreda level***

This is the higher-level aggregate of the CBIs, which serves as an apex organization for all CBIs in the Woreda. Basically it will be established based on the desires of the existing CBIs to become stronger and influential, with higher negotiating power at woreda level. This will also provide them opportunity to expand their services to the entire woreda. It is a process by which representatives of each kebele begin to discuss about the importance of higher-level networks in the quarterly planning meetings that is presumed to take place at the woreda coordination office of ASE. The woreda apex should start with the formation of an ad hoc committee, which will be mandated to establish the woreda level CBI as well as begin to communicate with ASE and the government as an organized body of all kebele level CBIs. The woreda ad hoc may constitute one representative from each kebele CBI and must have its own chairperson and secretary. These networks should be able to work at least for 6 months and the most important function may include:

- Drafting the by laws of the woreda CBI and get it endorsed by the members. This is the transitional period for the woreda CBI from a network in to a unified body and legally recognized institution.

- Drafting a strategic directions and project/ program [with the help of ASE], which will be discussed and approved by the general assembly

*ASE may support the woreda Ad hoc CBIs in terms of:*

- Facilitating meetings: Providing meeting halls, if necessary covering the per diem of the farmers when they spend the night in the town, passing messages to the kebelee CBIs, making presentations and facilitate discussions on the advantages of being organized at woreda level etc
- Organizing experience sharing visits to previous working places of ASE where a fully grown CBI is functional
- Hiring a local lawyer who will be working very closely with the chair and secretary of the ad hoc committee
- Providing stationeries and other materials needed by the ad hoc
- Linking the ad hoc with appropriate institutions in the woreda administration
- Encouraging the ad hoc to represent the farmers [though not yet registered] in matters that concerns the collective interests of the kebelee CBIs, which presumably involves social and development issues
- Supporting in drafting the strategic directions and a program proposal for at least three years

The draft constitution of the woreda CBI should be endorsed in a meeting where a minimum of 5 and maximum of 7 representatives of each kebele CBIs are present. The representatives should be drawn partly from the kebele *CBI ECM* and partly from the *members* of the kebele level CBI. If the representatives are 7, three may come from CBI-ECM and the remaining 4 from the members [in case of 5, 2 from the ECM and 3 from the members]. Such representation is very important because this meeting is supposed to form the highest body [general assembly] of the woreda CBI. Every time, equal representation of women and fair presence of the poor and marginalized groups in the general assembly has to be taken in to account. The program office may help the woreda CBI ad hoc committee make the inaugural meeting of the general assembly formal, by inviting officials from woreda and zonal level government offices and representatives of ASE head quarter. This is very helpful, indeed, to make the responsible government people aware of the process and thus solicit their support from the very beginning of establishing the woreda level apex organization of the CBI. In the inaugural workshop, the woreda CBIs are expected to:

- Endorse the by laws of the woreda CBI
- Elect board members
- Present and discuss their strategic plans for the coming couple of years and a project document, which is a requirement for registration

#### ***5.4.2 Balancing the power of the Kebele and Woreda CBIs***

One of the things the woreda level constitution should take into account is to assert the need for a legally bounded power balance between the woreda and kebele level CBIs. By tradition, whenever a higher-level association is formed on the grounds of “base associations”, there is always a tendency of concentrating the power in the upcoming higher association, which ultimately kills the enthusiasm and motivations of the base associations. Although it is the full discretion of the general assembly to decide on the power and functions of the woreda and kebele level CBIs, ASE should be able to bring this point to the attention of the concerned members of the CBI through provoking discussion on the basis of the following points.

- What should be the contribution of the kebele CBIs to the Woreda CBIs, in terms of money, out of the membership fee and other incomes to be generated at kebele level?
- How fairly should be the resources that will be solicited by the woreda CBI shared to the kebele CBIs?
- What is the level of autonomy for the kebele CBIs to prepare proposals, get funds from different sources and implement projects by its own, with out the approval and go ahead of the woreda CBI?

- If kebele level CBIs are getting funds directly from donors, how could the money be channelled to them as they have no own bank account and what should be the role and responsibility of the Woreda CBI in this connection?
- How best should be the reporting coordinated by the Woreda CBI, even if kebele CBIs have the autonomy to run their own projects?
- How should the Woreda led projects be implemented and coordinated with due participation and recognition of the Kebele CBIs. [How is it possible to make participatory decision making happen in project management]?
- How is it possible to make the secretariat of the woreda CBI, accountable to the kebele CBIs, downwards?
- How is it possible to create a space for the kebelee CBIs to have a say in the evaluation of the performances of the staff of the secretariat?

From the above discussion points, there seems to be three possible types of development projects in the CBIs:

- Those developed and implemented by the kebele level CBI, through soliciting their own funds
- Those developed and implemented by the kebele CBIs with the financial support of the woreda level CBIs

- Those developed and coordinated under the leadership of the woreda CBIs, while implementation will be the role of the kebele level CBIs

These are therefore the three important considerations that seriously determine the power and functions of the kebele and woreda CBIs. The right time for the CBI to discuss and pass decisions in this connection will be, while drafting the by laws and the strategic directions of the organization.

#### ***5.4.3 Get registered with GO***

This is a fundamental step for the CBIs to get legal recognition by all governmental, non-governmental and donors' organizations as well as the private sector. The Woreda CBI will be responsible for this task and the following are the minimum requirement the CBI is supposed to make ready before presenting the application to the competent government body. There could be regional differences in terms of the requirements that need to be met by the CBIs for registration. Therefore, it is important for the CBI to consult the responsible body in the respective regions. However the following points are worth considering for the CBI at all times.

Endorsed bylaws by the general assembly

CVs and photos of elected persons

Get office space

Get project proposal and strategic plan approved by the general assembly

Get financial support/letter of commitments from donors

Get support letters from the woreda council

#### ***5.4.4 Begin to negotiate with GOs at woreda level***

The woreda CBI is expected to start purposeful engagement with the woreda council and the line offices at woreda, zonal or regional level. It shall take part and participate in the woreda level development committees, NGO-GO partnership committee, and in any of the relevant government meetings, which allow participation of civil society organizations. The CBI is also expected to bring discussion issues that concern the community, to the tables of the government people and negotiate as may deem necessary.

#### ***5.4.5 CBI establish its own Secretariat***

At this phase, the CBI is expected to establish its own secretariat, which will be accountable to the CBI executive committee. A project manager, 2-3 projects officers, and some administrative staff will be recruited in the beginning and these staff will provide backstopping supports to the VLDPs and VLHPs. ASE is also expected to orient the staff recruited by the CBIs and even builds their capacity after

assessing the knowledge and experiences of the new staffs. However, training on facilitation and communication skills and how to organize and run community-learning forums and community based institutions are some of the areas the CBI staffs need to be trained, no matter how they are skilful and knowledgeable. The staff must be very well familiar with the working principles of the CBIs so that they can quickly adopt the institutional culture. Care has to be taken that the new staff should not introduce an autocratic institutional culture as used to be in the formal systems.

#### ***5.4.6 VLDPs and VLHPs begin to become full time workers of CBI***

Until this time the VLDPs and the VLHPs are expected to work on part time basis, their main engagement being farming. Nevertheless, The CBI must be able to have these people as permanent staff and the number of the VLDPs and VLHPs that need to be transformed in to permanent position depends on the institutional strength of the CBI as well as financial resources.

#### ***5..4.7 Critical evaluation of the status of CBIs***

ASE as a learning organization must have an inbuilt monitoring and evaluation system and this system should be able to facilitate learning, which ASE could accommodate the new lessons in the subsequent actions of the organization. This is, therefore, part of the

ongoing program implementation process of ASE. However it is also important to conduct a special review of the status of the CBIs before ASE decides to proceed to the next phase. The next phase is the period when ASE staff will be reduced partially, upon ensuring the CBI secretariat is operational at full scale. The outcomes of the review exercise determine the type of support ASE should provide to the CBIs in the next phase.

### **5.5 PARTIAL PHASING OUT OF ASE [Matured CBI]**

At this stage the CBIs have presumably reached organizational level of performance whereby they can play key role in the development of their domain. This particular stage in time is a signal for both development partners-ASE and CBI, that the program is approaching its weaning phase and subsequent sustainability measures be taken. It is in deed a stage where the involvement of ASE in the decision affairs of the CBIs is significantly lowered and that of the CBIs magnificently grown. The organizational development level of the CBI is therefore such that:

### **5.6 Constituency building highly stimulated**

The CBI is expected to increase membership and those members should not necessarily be only from the farming community but also non-farming people. Merchants, government employees, lawyers and others can be approached to become members of the association. Some civil society organizations such as women association, youth association, teachers associations, unions of

cooperatives etc can get the status of associate membership in the association, but this will be subject to the bylaws of the CBI.

With the support of ASE [program office and head office] the CBI should be able to establish a link with associations or group of people who belong to the woreda, by birth but living in the bigger cities of the country or in the Diaspora. These days it has become customary for many people in Ethiopia to form informal associations on the basis of their birthplaces and many are enthusiastic to support development endeavours that are being run in their home places. It is, therefore, a very important step for the CBIs to exert extra efforts and establish a formal relationship with such groups. In this connection, ASE and the CBI are expected to:

- Identify and hold meetings with the key leaders of the associations [ASE PR and high level management members involve in the lobby]
- Organize a field visit for the representatives of the association so as to help them know the reality at grass root level and appreciate the works of farmer led CBI.
- Organize an event, in which the works and plans of the CBI will be presented to all the members of the association in the big cities with the support of a documentary film.
- Facilitate a fund raising activity for the CBI in the same event [encourage the group to form a permanent fund raising committee for the CBI]

- Provide opportunity for the associations or groups become associate members of the CBI
- Get access to media to address the wider public more about the works of the CBI and thus get more supporters and donors.

## **5.7 Increase Operational Kebeles**

CBIs are not expected to get restricted [in terms of scope of operation] to the number of kebeles, which are the basic institutions for the formation and registration of the associations. One of the good indicators that show the maturity of the CBIs is the fact it manages to move and work in other Kebeles of the Woredas successfully. This is not an easy exercise for the CBIs as they are expected to raise the awareness of the people, initiate CBIs in the kebeles, support them to run some projects, make them part of the leadership at woreda level etc. On the other hand, it will not be a difficult job for them if the performance of the CBI in the previous kebeles was good and able to attract public interest. To make decisions on how to expand to the entire Woreda should be the responsibility of the CBIs at large but ASE is also expected to support them because of its partial existence in the Woreda. The following guiding points may help ASE and the CBIs how to go for expansion within the same woreda.

- The CBI may receive requests from new kebeles and/or the Woreda council to expand to more kebeles in the Woreda.

The request of the woreda council may also be accompanied with the possibility of accessing bilateral, multilateral or government money designated for development works in the woreda. Other NGOs or donors who might be interested to work with the CBI may also come with special requests in terms of choices of kebeles. However, the CBI should be able to analyse its capacity in terms of staffing, management, resources etc before accepting requests for expansion. It is important to take in to account that securing funds should not be the only driving force for the CBIs to get expanded in the woreda.

- When the CBI is expanding on the basis of its own plan or the request of others, the following kebele selection criteria can be used. Low level of food security/high level of poverty, level of vulnerability for internal and external shocks, low level of government services, little or no NGO existence in the Kebeles, high expression of interest of the community and willingness to establish their own CBI at Kebele level. Whenever the competing kebeles meet those criteria equally the CBI executive committee must be able to develop more criteria and make decisions accordingly.
- The VLDPs in the neighbouring Kebeles to the newly selected ones should be responsible to carry out the community learning forums for a while, until the new Keble is

in a position to have its own VLDP and a functional institution.

## **6. Disengagement of ASE Staff**

It is logically not sound to have a strong CBI as well as strong presentation of ASE in the same area, at the same time. ASE is supposed to be there basically to build the capacity of the CBI and once there is a positive development from the side of the CBI, the presence and participation of ASE in the affairs of the CBIs has to be substantially reduced. Therefore, the program office needs to take decision in terms of reducing its staff. As much as possible ASE should not plan to layoff the experienced staff but this action has to be synchronized with an expansion plan of ASE to new woredas, for similar intervention.

Therefore the number of DFs has to be reduced and those remaining in the area can be transformrd to play a role of a backstopper and supervisor of the VLDPs and VLHPs. One supervisor can be enough to support and follow up the works of VLDPS and VLHPs in three kebeles. On the other hand, ASE should reduce the officers by half, and those who have good experiences in the establishment of new CBIs and good at organizing and running community learning forums should move to the new woreda.

The number of staff that need to stay behind depends on the strength of the CBIs, agreement of the donors for funding and the demand of the new program area for more staff. In general, at this

phase of CBI development, it is important for ASE to stay behind only with few capacity building staff for at least 2-3 years and the number of staff has to be decided by ASE management.

### **I) Proposal writing and linkage with donors enhanced**

One of the things the CBIs have to be good, at this stage of development, is proposal writing and linking themselves with donors and other networks. This is again one of the important tasks of ASE that CBIs need to be trained on proposal writing through out the period of ASE's existence in the area. This training should be offered specially for the staff of the secretariat and ASE has make sure that the CBIs have managed to prepare their own proposals and got donor support, before the senior staff of the program office have left the area. ASE has also to lobby for its own donors to continue supporting the CBIs , even after the complete phasing out of the organization. More efforts have to done however to link the CBIs with International NGOs and networks, who will be willing to support the CBIs with and with out the existence of ASE. Most importantly, ASE need to pay attention to help the CBIs get access to the bilateral and multilateral funds that flows to the woreda councils from the federal and regional governments.

### **ii) Involved in income generation activities**

As it has been discussed in the previous sections of this strategy paper, the source of funds for the CBIs will be membership fees,

Community development fund, donations and supports from associations and groups who belong to the area by birth. However, ASE has to make maximum efforts to ensure that the CBIs have managed to own income generation ventures at woreda level and this effort of ASE has to be fully operationalized at this stage of the CBI development. Such ventures need to be established upon conducting a feasibility study, that may include among others the market situation, availability of raw materials, simplicity/complexity of the venture to manage, above all its contribution to the development works of CBI and the government at woreda level. The CBI should not opt to open a business venture just because it is lucrative but that same business must be able to make significant contribution to support the development programs in the woreda.

Who should own the business ventures is the most common question that often was raised and discussed among ASE staff in the past few years. This strategy paper is not also in a position to give a clear-cut answer to this question, although the study team has made tremendous efforts to deal with this subject. The policy of the government in this connection varies from region to region and there are also some possible options to be explored further. For example:

- In the Amhara region, owning income generation ventures is allowed for NGOs or associations like CBIs as long as they have the permission from the regional DPPC and make the income and expenditure statements of the venture as transparent and clear as possible to the DPPC representative

at woreda level. The rationale of this policy is in short, the government encourages NGOs or CBIs to get involved in the business as long as the income generated by such ventures is directed to the development works of the community. The responsible body of the government is expected to duly supervise this process.

- In Oromia, there is no clear policy issued in this connection. But from the interview the review team had with some officials in the region, there is a discussion going on in the council to issue similar policy, like the Amhara region. Most people in the council are supportive of this idea and already some self help groups like the handicaps associations, children welfare organization etc are already generating incomes and using it to run their own programs, even though there is no clear policy and regulations in this respect.
- The other possibility is that the community organization can establish a business organization on the basis of the principles of endowment. Meaning the people who will be the shareholders of the company will not get any dividend and all the money to be generated will be directed to the CBIs to run development programs. ASE has to make sure that the law protects this option.
- CBIs can also establish cooperatives, which will be busy with market issues and input delivery activities at kebele level. The kebele level cooperatives may also establish a union at woreda level and unions have legal provision to manage the income generating ventures on behalf of the CBIs. These

options need to be again protected by law, to prevent delinquency and abuse.

- There can be many more options to be explored and this should be up to the program offices to find out the best and sustainable option to support the CBIs become self reliant in terms of financial needs.

### **iii) Making micro finance Institutions work with the CBIs closely**

For ASE, in order to make a complet phasing out from the program area, there should be a strong and well-established CBI, which will be responsible to keep the development initiatives moving in the area. Making micro finance institutions work with the CBIs very closely is therefore a very important consideration for ASE to make the phasing out process smooth and reliable. PEACE micro finance is the closest partner of ASE when it comes to the provision of credit and saving services to the community. PEACE as a partner is expected to work side by side with ASE since the second year of the intervention of ASE in new program areas. This of course depends on the availability of lonable funds and the degree of feasibility of the business for PEACE. At this stage of the CBI development, the PEAC micro finance is expected to be a reliable partner of the CBIs not only in terms of providing credit services to its members but also providing banking and other related services, which is indeed very much scarce in the rural parts of the country, specially where ASE is often operational. In case PEACE is not able to provide such services, ASE must be able to look for other options available in the

area. Establishing Saving and credit cooperatives and working with other micro finance institutions in the area can be some of the feasible options.

## **7. COMPLETE PHASING OUT OF ASE [Fully grown CBI]**

This is a precursor stage to complete withdrawal of ASE from an area, .At this stage the CBIs are envisaged to have reached an institutional maturity level whereby they can stand on their own and coordinate all development activities and the required resources in their respective areas. Thus, they are supposed to:

- Be in better capacity of program performance
- Have reliable funding sources
- Cover more space in the socio economic and political arena of the woreda
- Have elected more capable members of the board of management
- Have high participation of constituents in the development programs
- Have takeover all the activities upon complete disengagement of ASE
- Have adequate staff of CBI at work
- Fully develop working systems and procedures

ASE shall decide for complete phasing out, if most of the above mentioned parameters are met at this stage of the CBI development. Otherwise, it is necessary to extend for more years until the capacity of the CBIs is grown to the desired level.

## **8. POST PHASING OUT ERA**

It is assumed that the CBIs have taken off and initiate, perform, monitor, evaluate and ensure development intentions by their own. Both software and hardware problem solving capacity of the CBIs are undoubtedly strengthened. Moreover, the institutional representativeness of the CBIs is well recognized by, and built in the hearts of, the community as well as the government people. At this stage, ASE would, therefore, completely phase out from the area and the following parameters will characterize the relationship between ASE and the CBI:

- ASE- CBI will assume equal partnership
- ASE continue to build capacity of the staff and the leaders from a distance
- Networking among CBIs initiated and enhanced
- Joint research and learning conducted
- Share knowledge and experiences at national and international levels.
- ASE conduct Post Phasing out assessment

## **Part Six:**

### **Roles and Functions of ASE staff at all levels**

ASE staffs play crucial role in congruent with the positions they occupy in the organization at all levels. Accordingly roles of the staffs of ASE are indicated below.

#### **6.1 Roles of the staff of ASE at the headquarters:**

- Development of institution building strategy and reviewing the same
- Preparation of guidelines on organizing community based institution and amelioration of same in congruence to institutional dynamism
- Coordinate and organize experience sharing tours that embrace all CBIs (POs)
- Capacity building for ASE frontline workers, CBI leaders and employees
- Strengthen inter-CBI linkages
- Ensure gender equality in the formation and operation of CBIs
- Ensure that the poor are participating with equal tempo

- Connecting the CBIs with donors
- Advocacy
- Policy influence and aligning government alongside CBI
- Creation of exposure to outside world
- Persistent follow up
- Research pertaining to CBIs as alternative to guarantee sustainability in terms of economic security, stewardship and empowerment
- Organizing learning and sharing workshops for ASE staff and other organizations
- Establish close contacts with phased out areas' CBIs and render consultancy service
- Keep up-to-date information concerning the formation, function, growth and challenges of all CBIs supported by ASE

## **6.2 Roles of the staff of ASE at Programme levels:**

- Identification of social capital-norms, traditions, culture, values that are deep rooted in the communities and endowed with coordinating power
- Continuously sensitising the communities
- Work tediously to inculcate the need of joint activity and cooperation in the communities
- Develop in the communities the appreciation of corporate activities

- Facilitate the situation for the communities to demand for and realize the formation of community organizations
- Scale up the internalised and prevailing social capital where ever possible
- Organize preliminary CBIs that serve as exemplary model and coordinate the communities to get organized at each KA
- Organize ad hoc/transitional committees that play leadership role or that serve as conduit between the communities and services at woreda level
- Uninterrupted general awareness raising education to the communities and facilitate the formation and function of community learning forums
- Continuous capacity building for the transitional and permanent CBI Executive committees at all level
- Strengthen negotiation capacity of the CBIs
- Link the ad hoc committee of the CBIs with GO, NGO and Civic societies
- Involve the adhoc in problem identification, planning, execution, monitoring and evaluation
- Facilitate the utilization of Community development funds at all levels
- Organize general assembly and form permanent CBIs
- Encourage election of leadership with due representation of women and the poorest groups
- Thorough training on leadership, financial, property and personnel management, proposal writing, reporting, fund raising, partnership management etc,

- And others as stipulated in this guideline.

## **Part Seven:**

### **Monitoring and Evaluation Framework**

Monitoring and evaluation are very crucial tools and inseparable ingredients for learning and taking appropriate management actions on continuous basis. In this regard, all the activities need to be monitored and evaluated for timely responses against the anomalies, if any. Though both monitoring and evaluation seem similar, they differ in the sense that monitoring is all time activity that could be done formally and informally, and managerial arm that serve to keep the work in track and alongside the bounds of allocated resources. On the other hand, evaluation is a periodic, more organized and comprehensive learning event that particularly reviews the realizations of the objectives and goals of the program, workability of the theories, principles and organizational philosophies, efficiency and effectiveness of the initiative also look in to the current attitude, knowledge and experiences of the staff vis-à-vis newly emerging knowledge, policy and experiences at national and international level.

#### **7.1 Monitoring**

The works that the CBIs undertake need to be monitored with the intention of contributing to the development and advancement of the activities. Monitoring is following up, watching or checking the implementation of activities over a period of time in order to see how it goes, so that any necessary measure can be taken on time. It is through monitoring that the concerned stakeholders get right and up-to-date information about what is going on. This enables them to take corrective measures on time and keep the intended undertakings on the desired track. It is continuous and should be carried out both formally and informally. Tools to monitor activities should be developed in view of specific echo-region and the target communities in collaboration with actors of the development efforts put on the ground.

## **7.2 Evaluation**

Evaluation is a tool that serves to decide whether activities have been accomplished as desired and it is decision oriented. It is a judgment passed pertaining to a given undertakings and intended to reveal the skewness from and closeness of implementation to the desired predetermined objective. It should be conducted periodically to see the progress and/or retrogress of the activities undertaken. At programme level this could be undertaken biannually. This is indeed part of the ongoing program implementation process of ASE. However it is also important to conduct a special review of the status of the CBIs before ASE decides to proceed to the partial phasing out and complete phasing out phases.. The outcomes of the review

exercise determine the type of support ASE should provide to the CBIs in the next phase. All the activities therefore need to be evaluated against set objectives and set indicators to measure success.

### **7.3 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

Reporting is a soul of an activity, whereas monitoring and evaluation are flesh and blood. Therefore, it should be made at different stages to different stakeholders as required. It can be made on monthly, quarterly, biannually and annual bases as required by the frontline executors of activities. Two types of report are expected from program offices. The first one is a brief summary of the achievements, progress and challenges of the CBIS visa vis the planned activities. This will be part of the annual report of ASE, which also include the works of other activities. The second report will be a separate and detailed report of the CBIS in Each woredas. This should include the reflections of the annual partners meeting as well as the community meetings to be organized at different level. A good deal of the reports of the CBI-ECM should also be included in this report. At Head office level a comprehensive report of the status of all CBIs in ASE operational areas should be prepared and presented for a discussion, at least ones in a year. On top of this mission reports and monitoring reports of the head office program officers should be prepared and discussed accordingly.

## 7.4 Indicators of Monitoring and Evaluation contextual to CBIs

- ❑ Targeting the poor: that the marginalized groups and rural women are well represented and addressed.
- ❑ Stimulating interest through community dialogue is properly being done
- ❑ Experience sharing visits are arranged as creating an exposure to the communities' leaders
- ❑ Creating awareness for other stakeholders is undertaken
- ❑ That the concept of CBI is understood and got acceptance by all parties
- ❑ Formation of ad hoc committee
- ❑ Capacity building of leaders in the ad hoc committee
- ❑ Involvement the ad hoc in PME
- ❑ Transforming the ad hoc
- ❑ Organizational strength of CBI
- ❑ CBI executive members take office and working out of annual plans of the program for their respective kebeles and review same every quarter as used to be during the time of the ad hoc committee
- ❑ Participation of CBIs in the quarterly technical meeting of ASE and beginning to make meaningful and powerful influence on the technical and managerial functions of ASE
- ❑ Membership registration and collection of fee
- ❑ Preparation of **their** own project activities and access the community development funds which is designated for this

purpose as well as funds from other sources [government, bilateral support]

- ❑ Organizing and providing leadership to the sub-committees that will come under the CBI,
- ❑ Involving in the identification, development and promotion of farmer innovations
- ❑ Guiding and managing the VLDPs and VLHPs
- ❑ Working more independently from the ASE DF
- ❑ Improved capacity of the leaders
- ❑ Intensive training of VLDPs and VLHPs by ASE
- ❑ Gradual disengagement of ASE and transferred responsibility to the CBIs
- ❑ CBI – Apex organization formed at woreda level
- ❑ Drafting and endorsement of by laws
- ❑ Draft a strategic directions and a project/ program [with the help of ASE],
- ❑ Balancing the power of the Kebele and Woreda CBIs
- ❑ Get registered with concerned government authorities
- ❑ Beginning of negotiation of CBIs with GOs at woreda level
- ❑ Established CBI Secretariat
- ❑ VLDPs and VLHPs begin to become full time workers of CBI

## **Part Eight:**

### **Tips for CBIS**

Under this topic this strategy paper is planning to provide some tips, which are not basically part of the strategy as it is not the mandate of ASE to pass decisions on, but simply with the intention of advising the CBIs. It will be absolutely the discretion of the CBIs to use it or leave it.

- *Who should Benefit?* All Rural People In the operational area, Poor and Vulnerable groups get priority?
- *Motivation for membership:* Membership should be absolutely based on willingness to support others and not expecting benefit for one self from the Institution. But in times of scarce resources poor and marginalized people, who are members of the Institution, should get priority.
- *Constituency Building:* Membership should be open to every Individual and organizations [Regular and Associate member] but interest of farmers, who are the basic constituents of the organization should be protected.
- *Resolving Conflict of Interest:* Joint Planning at Kebele level with GO and other partners, developing the spirit of mutual understanding, periodic joint meetings, clearly defined mandates and adhering to the described mandate

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