

The Benchmark Series

Workshops and Seminars

By

Research & Management Enterprise (Pvt.) Limited

About The Benchmark Series

A benchmark is an empirical (observable) example, one that can be readily documented for purposes of learning and dissemination.

Benchmarking involves understanding how

other organisations have achieved improved performance. It is one of the most effective means for identifying improvements that can make a significant difference to your organisation. *The Benchmark Series* introduces the results of benchmarking exercises undertaken in recent years by the series facilitator, Tariq Husain, during the course of his consulting career. The series is presented by Research & Management Enterprise (Pvt.) Limited (RME) of Islamabad in collaboration with co-sponsors. The following learning opportunities are currently on offer for people working in the field of development:

Process Management (Two-Day Workshop)

Few of us in development manage processes as comfortably as executives in the private sector. One reason for this is that work processes are not as well defined in

development as they are in the business world. We can speculate about why this is so (and speculate we will in the workshop), or we can begin to learn how leading people through an agreed process results in effective leadership and coordination, and better outcomes for all concerned. Many of the successful leaders of development organisations provide examples of process leadership that many more could learn from. They include people who work in international agencies, government departments and NGOs. And they are responsible for the same processes—typically planning, implementation and evaluation—that define what most of us do in our day-to-day work. Some choose to define and lead a process semi-formally. Others formalise process management, and make this the basis for job descriptions, staff training and empowerment, and improving service delivery. For this, as we shall see in the workshop, it helps to use the ISO 10013 guidelines for quality manuals.

Insights from 20 Years of AKRSP (Two-Day Seminar)

The Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) started its work in the Northern Areas and Chitral District (NAC) of Pakistan in December 1982. After a long period of neglect and isolation, the Northern Areas

were then opening up to the rest of the world *via* the Karakoram Highway (KKH) that links Pakistan with China. While government investment concentrated on large infrastructure schemes, AKRSP organised villagers, developed their managerial and practical skills, and initiated programmes for village infrastructure, land development, group savings, loans, agricultural inputs, livestock development, marketing and natural resource management. AKRSP's first General Manager, Shoaib Sultan Khan, received the coveted Magsaysay Award for community service in 1992, and his approach to rural development has been adopted on a large scale in Pakistan and some of the neighbouring countries. In a speech given in Canada in May 2004, His Highness the Aga Khan, the founder of AKRSP and its sister organisations, recalled some of the aspirations and achievements in the following words: "The challenge was to create sustainable, inclusive development processes in which

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everyone could take part and seek joint solutions to common problems. We established more than 3,900 village-based organisations, from women's initiatives and water usage to savings and credit groups. The quality of life of 1.3 million people dramatically improved. Per capita income has increased by 300 per cent, savings have soared, and there have been marked improvements in male and female education, primary health, housing, sanitation and cultural awareness. Former antagonists have worked together to create new programmes and social structures." AKRSP's learning-by-doing approach, however, has not been documented, disseminated and debated as systematically as its various development programmes and impacts. In 2003, AKRSP, with assistance from the UK Department for International Development, commissioned a study to analyse selected aspects of AKRSP (introduced below) in order to draw out operational insights for similar participatory initiatives. The workshop uses this study to engage development practitioners in discussing the twenty-year AKRSP experience in relation to their own perspectives.

Devolution, Local Governance and the Poor (Two-Day Workshop)

Few governments devolve or decentralise with the specific objective of helping reduce poverty. Yet people concerned with local development, including politicians, administrators and donors, put a certain amount of faith in decentralisation and expect it to help the poor. Why? Some feel that decentralisation brings government closer to the help and this inevitably helps the poor access government services. Most development practitioners, however, see devolution as a necessary condition for poverty alleviation, but not sufficient on its own for helping the poor. Acknowledging this, development organisations try to complement devolution in ways that enhance the participation of the poor in development. Many emphasise the organisation and capacity building of the poor as a pre-requisite for better service delivery. Others design specific measures for targeting the poor through the budget and planning processes, and the sectors and technologies that influence the lives of the poor the most. Still others aim at enhancing transparency and accountability in service delivery by various means, including public institutions, advocacy groups and the mass media. The workshop will introduce and discuss these and other ways of linking devolution with poverty alleviation. It will draw upon available literature as well as first-hand experiences from Pakistan and other developing countries of Asia and Africa.

International Principles of Evaluation (One-Day Course)

The evaluation of development assistance has been gaining increased prominence in the field of development in recent years, with systematic attention to both learning and accountability. The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD has a working group that brings together experts from all the multilateral and bilateral aid agencies to formulate and review evaluation principles and practices. The United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) has also recently drafted the UN evaluation norms and standards. This short course would introduce the principles for the evaluation of development assistance that have been adopted by DAC/OECD and proposed by UNEG. It would include a state of the art review of what these principles mean and how they are practiced by several of the International Financial Institutions (IFIs), including those in which the evaluation unit is independent of the management. Participants will discuss the pros and cons of the growing trend towards independent evaluation units. This discussion will be facilitated with the help of the state of the art evaluation policies adopted by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). References

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will also be made available from the World Bank's Operations Evaluation Department, the oldest independent evaluation unit in the development community.

About the Facilitator— Tariq Husain

The Benchmark Series is designed and facilitated by Tariq Husain, Managing Director of Research & Management Enterprise (Pvt.)

Limited (RME), Islamabad. Tariq was recruited by AKRSP in October 1982 and organised the Monitoring, Evaluation and Research Section of the new programme. He left AKRSP in 1988 to set up a consulting practice called Enterprise & Development Consulting (Pvt.) Limited, or EDC. Tariq's experience as a consultant extends to most of Pakistan (half the districts of the country, all four provinces and Azad Jammu and Kashmir) and 16 other countries. His sectoral experience includes agriculture, water management, irrigation economics, social forestry, community infrastructure, the social sectors, biodiversity and environment, microfinance and most sectors of the informal economy ("the poor man's economy"). High-level contributions include two reports for World Summits—the Pakistan Country Report for the World Summit on Social Development (1995) and the National Progression Report for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002)—and Pakistan's 2003 progress report on the Millennium Development Goals. Prior to founding EDC in 1988, Tariq worked for about six years with AKRSP, and for one year with the agricultural policy programme of Ford Foundation (Pakistan). He graduated from Columbia University, New York, and obtained his masters and PhD in economics from the University of Chicago. His experience in relation to *The Benchmark Series* includes the following:

- Between 1995 and 2003, Tariq worked on several consulting assignments in Pakistan and abroad in which improving process management was a key concern. Addressing this concern helped clients improve beneficiary participation and inter-agency coordination in multi-sectoral initiatives.
- In 1999 (for the World Bank), Tariq completed a comprehensive review of local level institutions in Pakistan. Since 2000, he has assisted with initiatives for devolution and conducted evaluations of decentralisation in Pakistan, Bhutan, Ethiopia, Tanzania and Uganda for national and international organisations.
- Working with the Office of Evaluation of IFAD during 2002 – 2003, Tariq carried out a detailed review of the international principles of evaluation interviewed the evaluation units of 11 IFIs, and helped develop the *IFAD Evaluation Policy*. During 2005, he worked with the Evaluation Office of UNDP to draft the corporate evaluation policy of UNDP and its funds.
- In 2003, Tariq led an EDC-AKRSP team that prepared the twenty-year perspective study (funded by DFID of the UK) that forms the basis of the seminar mentioned above. The study focuses on the organisation and management of AKRSP during the review period, diverse approaches to social mobilisation, and the evolution of AKRSP's approach to community infrastructure, enterprise development and natural resource management.