

**Evaluation of the
Social Sustainable Development Programme in Angola
(PRODESSA)**

**A joint partnership programme of
The United Methodist Church in Angola (UMCA) and
The United Methodist Church in Norway (UMCN)**

**Final report
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Acronyms

UMCA	The United Methodist Church in Angola, Western Annual Conference
BN	Norwegian Missions in Development
PID	“Partnership in Development”
POSOCA	Social Program with Children (School project)
PRODESSA	The Social Sustainable Development Programme in Angola
UMCN	The United Methodist Church in Norway
TOR	Terms of Reference

Executive summary

Norwegian Missions in Development (BN) initiated in 2002 a study called “Partnership in Development” (PID). The aim of the study was to motivate a more decentralised partnership model between BN members and their church partners in the South. The United Methodist Church in Norway (UMCN) and its partner The United Methodist Church in Angola (UMCA) took on the challenge and commenced a careful planning process, which concluded with the creation of the Social Sustainable Development Programme in Angola (PRODESSA). Operations began in 2005, with an annual budget starting from USD 125.000 in 2005 and increasing to around USD 380.000 per year in 2008.

The purpose of this evaluation is twofold. First, it is to make an assessment of PRODESSA’s achievements in relation to its objectives, to document the lessons learned and to present recommendations for the future of the programme. Second, the evaluation should assess the methodology of PID and its relevance to similar community development programmes in other contexts.

The assumption behind PID is that the outcome of development efforts is influenced by how the relationships between the stakeholders (BN, UMCN, UMCA, PRODESSA, local congregations and local communities) are organised. A particular challenge is to shift from being a service provider working *for the community* to become a programme working *with the community* where the community itself takes a leading role in developing its own future. Another challenge is for the recipient (UMCA) and donor (UMCN) partners to enter into a real and equal partnership. Besides, the intention of PID is to reduce any unnecessary bureaucratic burden in the development cooperation.

Some of the lessons learned in PRODESSA are:

- It is possible to practice PID and to allow local communities to play a leading role in decisions and implementation and to let planning, monitoring and evaluation rest with the local partner, in this case PRODESSA/UMCA.
- PRODESSA proves that it is possible to simplify the process of application and reporting at all levels of the chain, from local civil society through the local/national partner to the Norwegian partner, and finally to BN and NORAD.
- However, the positive concepts of PID will alone not assure more effective and efficient development output and outcomes. Good systems, methodologies and monitoring as well as capable staff and close follow-up from the donor are important.
- It takes time to capture what working *with the community* means and how this can be done. Projects can easily fall back on a *for the community* operational mode.
- When diversity in projects is very large as in PRODESSA it becomes difficult to provide professional support and follow up to the communities.
- Introducing and understanding PID takes time and requires considerable capacity-building in the national church, as well as in the Norwegian mission organisation.

The evaluation indicates that PRODESSA, in accordance with its objectives, has been able to reach out to men and women in difficult conditions. However, in productive projects like the ones supported by PRODESSA UMCA and UMCN should be aware of the risk that better off community members “capture” many of the projects’ benefits.

Better programme planning could probably have improved the efficiency of PRODESSA. More emphasis should have been put on the development of methodologies, planning of workflows, monitoring systems and manuals.

A clearer indication of the need to select projects that can benefit a greater audience would be amenable. Better systems and methodologies would also have helped to carry out more activities, and thereby produce higher outputs without increasing costs.

The PID concept assures a higher likelihood of supporting relevant projects. All communities visited firmly defended their decisions and projects. They were convinced that they had chosen relevant projects. Programme relevance is probably the strongest part of PRODESSA.

Regarding whether projects initiated in the communities with support from PRODESSA stand the chance of becoming sustainable, it is still too early to make an assessment. The fact that all the community projects piggyback on UMCA and the local congregation increases the likelihood of becoming sustainable. However, in order to become sustainable, productive projects like those supported by PRODESSA must be set up as businesses and produce profits. As far as I can understand, few projects are making profits and my consideration is that several of the projects have not taken the business aspects sufficiently into account. They simply lack a clear business design, and the groups as well as PRODESSA lack systems in order to measure the degree of profits and sustainability in operations. However, the eagerness observed in the visited groups and some of the groups' ability to survive conflicts and serious problems indicate that the people themselves are willing to work hard in order to assure the sustainability of their projects. Also, the fact that only one out of 15 initiated projects has so far ceased indicates that several of the projects may stand a chance of surviving over time. The school projects stand a good chance of becoming sustainable since the government has promised to pay salaries to the teachers.

Some of the recommendations given in this report are:

1. PRODESSA should urgently address its lack of *good systems*. Models to illustrate, methodologies and manuals to guide, and systems to plan and monitor are all required.
2. More attention should be focused upon making the projects into viable local businesses. The constant measurement of project profits should be prioritised.
3. The implementation of projects should be more balanced throughout the year. In order to support this idea, a more detailed annual outreach plan is required.
4. UMCN should maintain its technical support to PRODESSA and focus upon the transfer of knowledge, especially in the field of good systems.
5. Comprehensive monitoring systems should be installed between communities and PRODESSA, PRODESSA and the Bishop, and the Bishop and UMCN.
6. PRODESSA and POSOCA should be merged. PRODESSA should have two activity lines, education and productive projects. UMCA should assess the opportunity of becoming a major player in the new educational infrastructure of Angola.
7. The PID projects in Angola and Liberia should continue to learn from each other. Improved cross-country learning is expected alongside the development of better systems.
8. The PID concept should be relevant also in similar community development programmes in other contexts. However, before introducing it in other contexts BN and UMCN should better document the PID methodologies.

Background

Norwegian Missions in Development (BN) is made up of 18 Norwegian mission organisations involved in development efforts funded by Norad. In 2002, BN initiated a study called “Partnership in Development” (PID). The aim of the study was to motivate a more decentralised partnership model between BN members and their church partners in the South. In a search for organisations willing to pilot the decentralised partnership model, the concept was presented to and discussed with The United Methodist Church in Norway UMCN and its partner The United Methodist Church in Angola (UMCA). UMCA is one of Angola’s larger churches with a total of 262 congregations and around 178,000 members. Together UMCA and UMCN commenced a careful planning process, which concluded with the creation of the Social Sustainable Development Programme in Angola (PRODESSA). Operations began in 2005, with an annual budget starting from USD 125.000 in 2005 and increasing to around USD 380.000 per year in 2008.

In 2002, after 41 years of independence and civil wars, Angola began the process of rebuilding the country. In 2008, peaceful presidential elections were held and after enormous struggles, the people now hope for a better tomorrow. Angola is rich in resources and its economic growth is now among the world’s highest, surpassing 20% annually. It’s a large country, four times the size of Norway, and home to around 16 million inhabitants.

The purpose of this evaluation is twofold. First, it is to make an assessment of PRODESSA’s achievements in relation to its objectives, to document the lessons learned and to present recommendations for the future of the programme. Second, the evaluation should assess the methodology of PID and its relevance to similar community development programmes in other contexts. The Terms of Reference (TOR) for the evaluation can be found in Annex 1.

A participatory approach has been a guiding principle throughout the evaluation. Focus has been upon learning together with core personnel in UMCN and UMCA. A field visit to Angola was carried out in late August 2008. During the field visit the UMCA head office and six communities outside were visited, one without a PRODESSA project and five with. Personnel from UMCN and UMCA participated throughout the field visit, as did the local consultant Mr. João José Peixoto. Their participation has been an important part of the evaluation process. Nevertheless, this report and its conclusions are all my own.

The need for “Partnership in Development”

PID is a concept searching for a partnership model tailored for church/mission organisations that can result in more effective and efficient development practice. According to Krokeide (2004, p. 6)¹, the objectives of PID are as follows:

- a) That the main focus of future development work shall be at the local level of civil society (congregation) and that the work contributes to the strengthening of civil society and the development of democratic organisations.
- b) That the responsibility for the planning, implementation and evaluation of development projects rests with the local partner.

¹ Nils Atle Krokeide (2004), Partnership in Development, Bistandsnemnda, Oslo, Norway.
<http://www.bistandsnemnda.no/newsread/ReadImage.asp?WCI=GetByID&IMAGEID=4&DOCID=10092>

- c) To simplify the process of application and reporting at all levels of the chain, from the local civil society level through the local/national partner to the Norwegian partner, and finally to BN and NORAD.
- d) To improve the quality of the development work carried out by churches and Christian organisations, with increased focus upon sustainable impact in local society.

For a better understanding of these objectives it is important to understand the traditional partnership model practiced in several BN projects. The point is not to criticise other projects, but to help understand PID. Figure 1 provides an illustration.

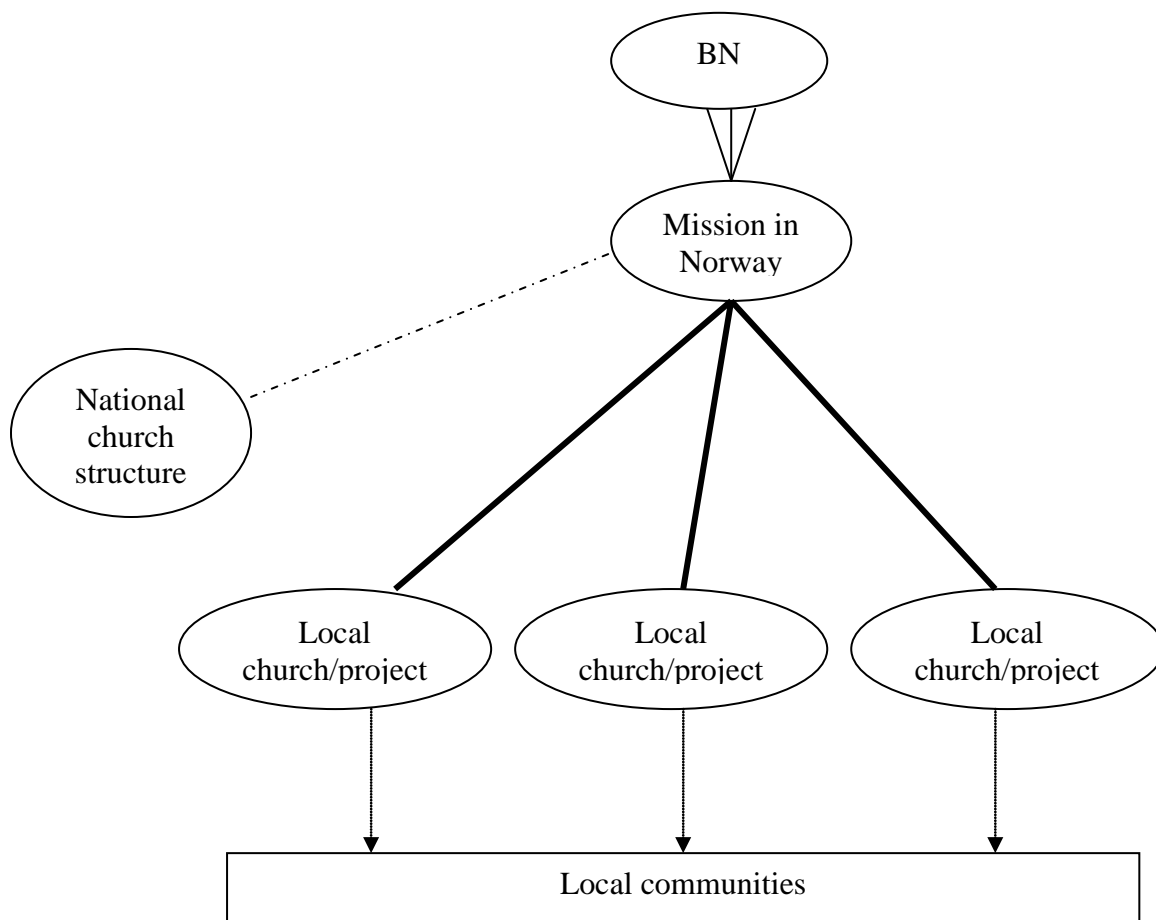


Figure 1: A traditional partnership model

As illustrated in Figure 1, in a church-based development project financed by BN there are often five major stakeholders:

- BN;
- The mission organisation in Norway;
- The national church structure in the partner country;
- The local churches/projects in the partner country;
- The local communities.

The assumption behind PID is that the outcome of development efforts is influenced by how the relationships between the stakeholders are organised. In what follows I shall try to outline how typical relationships between stakeholders are often organised in traditional projects.

BN – the mission organisation in Norway

Most projects in the BN portfolio are small, often less than US\$100,000 per year. Nevertheless, each project has to go through a complete and formal planning, implementation and evaluation process. A separate project document, together with annual plans and reports, is necessary for each project. The assumption of PID is that this is a complicated process that negatively affects the whole chain of actors, from the community level to the BN level. It bureaucratises instead of making development efforts a dynamic and result-oriented exercise.

The mission organisation in Norway – the national church structure

The mission organisation in Norway and the national church are normally sister organisations, where the first often participated in initiating the latter. Most national churches are now fully autonomous structures, independent from the Norwegian mission organisation. Nevertheless, the central structures of the national church are often still relatively weak. A consequence is that the national church often does not play a central role in community development efforts. They may offer their formal approval and some minor guidance, but often the core decisions and operations are a matter between the mission organisation and the local congregation and/or local project staff. There are generally few projects that the national church brings to the whole network of local congregations. If the national church is involved, the project will normally only be brought to a few targeted communities. Such a targeted approach is difficult for a national church structure as it may exacerbate existing regional or tribal tensions. Some national churches may therefore prefer that development projects are handled outside their control when only a few pre-targeted communities can be included.

The local congregation/project – the mission organisation in Norway

Many projects are active in only one or a few local communities, and the mission organisation in Norway may support several independent projects in the same host country/church. Normally, but not always, a local congregation of the partner church is present in the community, and serves as a platform to reach out to the community with the project's activities. The local project often reports directly to the mission organisation in Norway, and the project often takes place in close coordination with the local pastor. Thus, in many projects the most important relationship is the one between the local congregation and/or project staff and the mission organisation in Norway. This is where planning and monitoring take place. To further strengthen the direct connection between the mission organisation and the project, it often places an expat as an advisor to work directly in the project.

Local communities – local projects/congregations

When it comes to development efforts there are basically three ways in which a local congregation can relate with a local community: in the community, for the community, and with the community.

In the community

When a church is placed in a community but does not actively relate with the community in development efforts, the church's operational mode is *in the community*. This type of a church often has limited diaconal engagement outside the church. Any development efforts therefore tend to concentrate upon serving their own members' needs. This attitude and practice is still very common. When using resources from Norad, such practice is intolerable. It is therefore very challenging to partner with this type of local congregations.

For the community

Congregations working *for the community* observe many needs in their local communities: street children need lodging, kids need schooling, alcoholics and drug addicts need shelter and

food, and AIDS victims need medicine. These observations motivate the church to start serving these needs. The church becomes a service provider and works for the community. Sometimes the local communities are consulted, but it is the church (and/or the project staff) who take the lead and make all major decisions.

With the community

When a church starts working *with the community*, things change. Instead of being a service provider, the church becomes a promoter, facilitator, mobiliser and dialogue partner. Instead of the church deciding on which needs to serve, the church enters into partnership with the community. The church now asks, “What can we do *together* to improve *our* community?”

Most will probably agree that working with the community is what all churches should do. However, practice is different. Many churches, also in Norway, have limited engagement with the local community. They are located *in the community*, but there is limited interaction *with the community*. As for African churches engaged in development efforts, the operational mode is often that of a service provider. The church works *for the community*. Few churches have entered into a deeper dialogue with the community.

One of the reasons why churches struggle in entering into real dialogue with their communities may be that traditional development projects practiced by BN partners do not arrange for such partnerships. Even if everyone agrees that projects should be needs and demands-based and the community should be actively involved, the practice is often different. Long-term planning (it often takes two years from planning to implementation), rigid and often irrelevant reporting, delayed financial transfers, measurement of irrelevant indicators (as seen from the community), complicated processes of adjustments, etc., can often make development efforts an exercise for specialists. A consequence is that the Norwegian mission organisation often places their own representative to supervise or direct the local development efforts. Another consequence is that the people living in the communities become recipients of services and not responsible for their own development.

PID – an alternative to the traditional partnership model

As I understand it, the overall purpose of PID is to break up the common partnership model and replace it with a new model, whereby the interaction between local communities and the local congregation can be *with the community*, and where the national church structure becomes an active partner in development efforts. Moreover, the purpose is to reduce any unnecessary bureaucratic burden. Thus, my understanding of PID is illustrated in Figure 2.

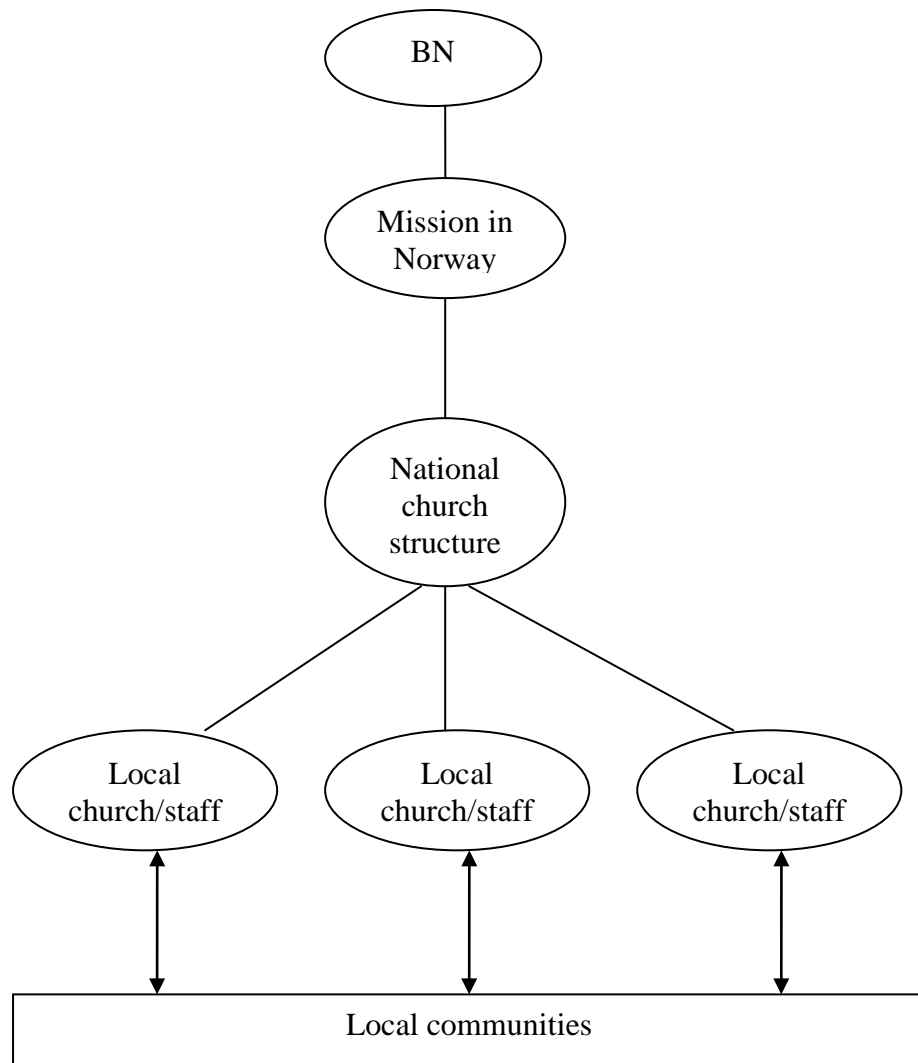


Figure 2: The partnership model according to PID

In the PID model the local churches/projects are no longer service providers, but have joined the communities in a common search for a better tomorrow. The church or the project staff no longer decide on the content of the efforts; it is now the local communities in interaction with the local church who prioritise needs and decide on what to do in order to improve their living conditions. The national church structure now enters into a partnership with the mission organisation and can coordinate several project efforts with several local churches. In an ideal situation the national church can be provided with one budget to support different activities in different local communities, depending on the proposals being developed locally. Thus, the number of projects administrated between BN and the mission organisation can be reduced to one per national church partner. Altogether this would, according to PID, improve the quality and increase the impact of development work carried out by churches.

PRODESSA - an introduction

PRODESSA aims to secure PID and put its principles into practice. PRODESSA is fully integrated into the national church structure, and the staff is integrated into the UMCA Department of Studies and Projects, working directly under the Bishop's authority. Thus, in principle, all efforts carried out by PRODESSA are efforts carried out by UMCA. All local

congregations of UMCA are informed about PRODESSA, and PRODESSA is repeatedly presented at various regional and annual UMCA meetings.

All UMCA congregations are invited to join efforts with the communities and apply for project support from PRODESSA. When a request is received, the PRODESSA staff visit the local church/community and carry out meetings where conditions and opportunities are outlined. At the beginning of the process there is special emphasis upon presenting what working *with the community* means.² In PRODESSA this is outlined in the following five principles (PRODESSA project document, p. 10):

1. That all programmes to be implemented should be analysed with the participation of beneficiaries and the local congregation and approved by the Department of Studies and Projects.
2. The local entities that want to implement projects should be assured that they have the competence and capacity to implement the referred projects.
3. All projects should be planned, implemented and evaluated with transparency.
4. Efficient management is required.
5. The implementation of the social projects should include active involvement of the beneficiary communities as a way to maintain self-sustainability and profits in order to generate their own funds in the future.

So far, 15 different local congregations/communities have received support from PRODESSA. The types of projects vary in type and size, and they are all the result of local communities' prioritisations. In relation to Norway, PRODESSA is organised as one project only, reducing bureaucratic burdens in UMCN and BN.

The experience so far is that interest in PRODESSA from the UMCA and its congregations is considerable. UMCA is eager to learn, fully supports the concept of working *with the community*, and possesses capacity to formulate effective solutions to the challenges met.

To get PRODESSA started, most efforts have so far been dedicated to developing and finding ways to operationalise the PID principles and build the capacity of UMCA. Several workshops involving all core persons, including the Bishop, in UMCA have been carried out. In a post-conflict situation where the church has so far mostly been involved in relief efforts, it takes time to understand what working *with the community* means and how this can actually be done. Throughout the process the Bishop and other church leaders have been supportive, and PRODESSA has benefited considerably from being integrated in the Department of Studies and Projects, where the head of the department is also the head of PRODESSA. This person has been and still is the core of PRODESSA.

PRODESSA operates with few of its own staff. According to the project document only two staff are needed, the coordinator and its assistant. However, to date, the assistant's position has been unstable. Three people have occupied the position over the last three years, and the position has been vacant for long periods. Finding candidates with the necessary personal and professional qualifications has been a challenge.

The PRODESSA follow-up from the UMCN has been very close. Together with an international development expert, the Norwegian representative has visited PRODESSA at least twice a year. Efforts have been invested in training and preparing UMCA in order to get

² The term *with the community* is not used by PRODESSA, but from what the staff told me I understand that this is what they try to explain to the communities.

PRODESSA started. The experience is that it has taken longer than expected to install comprehensive accounting, implementation and monitoring systems. At the time of this evaluation, the accounting system at the head office level was properly installed and practiced. However, cash transfer planning between the UMCN and UMCA was still a challenge, and implementation and monitoring systems were still weak (more on this below).

Since the concept of PID is to leave the identification and prioritisation of needs to the communities, and for follow-up and mentoring to be the responsibility of UMCA and PRODESSA, it has been challenging for the Norwegian team to balance their input. Most effort has been invested in general assistance in order to help those involved better understand the PID concept. Effort has also been invested in installing comprehensive accounting and money-transfer systems. The Norwegian team has been reserved in providing detailed guidance in community projects, and has generally not questioned PRODESSA staff’s judgement. The team has also been reluctant in requesting more detailed or comprehensive project documents, implementation plans, and monitoring and project reports. Existing project documents and reports are professionally speaking relatively weak and don’t provide clear guidance and details on how to implement and monitor the project. The idea on the Norwegian side seems to have been that this will gradually improve as PRODESSA and its staff gain more experience. However, since communities themselves are those implementing and making decisions about the projects, anyone writing up a project document, which is a challenging exercise, should according to my view receive clear guidance.

PRODESSA described

The communities/local congregations interested in support from PRODESSA are given almost total freedom when it comes to what type of project they would like to get involved in. As long as the community with reasonable arguments can make sure that they have the competence and the capacity to implement the project, all types of projects are eligible, whether long- or short-term, big or small. However, PRODESSA assumes that every project will provide services that are to be sold, and asks that income from sales is distributed 40% to those operating the project, 30% for other operating costs, and 30% is to be repaid to PRODESSA. Thus, legally speaking, all support from PRODESSA is considered as a loan to the communities. This condition results in relatively small projects in most communities. Table 1 presents the 15 different projects in PRODESSA.

Table 1: PRODESSA’s projects

Community	Type of project	Details of project	Year of initiation	Projected investment US\$
Cacuaco	School	Construction of 10 classrooms + toilets	2004	98,000
Cassoalala	Fishing and river transportation	Purchase of 1 boat, engine and nets	2004	10,000
Ojiwa	Community goat raising	Purchase of 25 goats to raise a flock of community animals	2004	7,312
Dondo	Computer training	8 computers, equipment and renovation of classroom	2005	13,000
Caculo	Agriculture	Inputs for Kasava and Maize	2005	3,500

cazongo		production		
Caxicane	Fishing and river transportation	Purchase of 1 boat, engine and nets	2006	10,000
Calamba	Community cattle raising	Purchase of xxx cattle to raise a flock of community animals	2006	10,000
Tombua	Bookshop	Construction of shop and working capital (books, school materials, etc.)	2008	10,000
Vista Alegre	Bookshop	Xerox and PC, construction of shop and working capital (books, school materials, etc.)	2007	10,000
Muceque Cabele	Fishing in ocean	Purchase of 2 boats with engines, nets, etc.	2007	12,000
Cacongo	Fishing in ocean	Purchase of 1 boat with engine, nets	2007	12,000
Muxualuando	Community goat raising	Purchase of xxx goats to raise a flock of community animals	2007	5,000
Lubango	School	Construction of 10 classrooms + toilets	2008	100,000
Canema	Mill	Construction of building and purchase of the mill	2008	25,000
Cabala	Fishing in river	Purchase of 1 boat with engine, nets	2005	4500

Table 1 lists all the PRODESSA projects. All of the projects except the one in Cabala are still active. In Cabala the engine was stolen and the people involved demonstrated little interest in reinitiating the project and installing theft-prevention mechanisms in order to continue with new efforts.

The projects listed illustrate the wide span of the different types of projects. Beside the school projects, the investment per community is relatively low. Except a couple of the fishing projects, the projects in PRODESSA are not organised to improve community members' livelihood activities. However, all projects are productive and the aim is for each project to cover operating costs with operating income. Thus, all projects provide their communities with important services, which they sell locally. Some projects like the fishing projects, the mill and the bookshops also provide jobs to some community members.

Locally, each project has a democratically elected coordination team consisting of at least three members: the coordinator, the treasurer and the secretary. This team is supervised by a community committee consisting of members from the traditional leaders or chiefs (sobas), local government representatives, the UMC pastor, a UMC lay member, and members from the community.

Table 2 shows the number of beneficiaries and data on project coordinators' backgrounds.

Table 2: Beneficiaries and coordinators of PRODESSA projects

Communities	Type of project	Approx. number of direct beneficiaries/users	Project coordinator		Assistant coordinator		Secretary		Treasurer	
			Male/female	Member of UMC?	Male/female	Member of UMC?	Male/female	Member of UMC?	Male/female	Member of UMC?
Cacuaco	School	270 pupils	m	Y	m	y	f	Y	f	y
Cassoalala	Fishing and river transportation	10 (fishing) + those who are transported	m	Y	m	y	m	Y	f	y
Ojiwa	Community goat-raising	29 members	m	Y	m	y	m	Y	f	y
Dondo	Computer training	130 graduated + new classes coming up	m	Y	m	y	m	N	m	y
Caculo cazongo	Agriculture	35 members	m	Y	f	y	f	Y	f	y
Caxicane	Fishing and river transportation	4 (fishing) + those who are transported	m	N	m	y	m	N	f	y
Calamba	Community cattle-raising	Approx. 35 members	m	N	m	y	m	Y	f	y
Tombua	Bookshop	4 (working) + those who buy books, etc.	m	Y	m	y	m	Y	m	n
Vista Alegre	Bookshop	4 (working) + those who buy books, etc.	m	Y	m	Y	m	Y	f	y
Muceque Cabele	Fishing in ocean	12 fishermen	m	Y	m	n	f	N	f	n
Cacongong	Fishing in ocean	4 fishermen	m	Y	m	Y	m	Y	m	y
Muxualuando	Community goat-raising	30–50? members	m	Y	m	Y	m	Y	m	y
Lubango	School	600 pupils	m	Y	m	y	m	Y	f	y
Canema	Mill	4 (working) + 1500 villagers	m	N	m	y	m	Y	f	y
Cabala	Fishing in river	64 villagers	m	y	m	y	m	Y	m	y

What is striking in the PRODESSA projects is the huge difference in the number of beneficiaries. In particular, the fishing projects stand out as benefiting few people. Arguments used to defend this situation are that the boats also provide transportation, that the women are involved in salting and selling fish, and that fish are now available at the local market.

So far, none of the local project coordinators are women, and only three coordinators are not members of the Methodist church. The projects are therefore dominated by men from UMCA. However, the data on assistant coordinators, secretaries and treasurers illustrate that also women and community members have considerable influence in the projects.

Table 3 provides an overview of how widely the PRODESSA projects are spread, how often they are visited by the project staff, and how much is still to be invested in the project.

Table 3: Distance from Luanda, visits by the project staff to the communities, and dollars still to be invested in the PRODESSA projects

Communities	Type of project	Hours' travel from Luanda	Approx Number of visits to the community since start-up	Number of visits so far in 2008	Still to invest
Cacuaco	School	1.5	40	8	20,000+
Cassoalala	Fishing and river transportation	3	16	2	0
Ojiwa	Community goat-raising	3.5	16	2	0
Dondo	Computer training	4	16	3	0
Caculo cazongo	Agriculture	2	8	0	0
Caxicane	Fishing and river transportation	3	6	1	0
Calamba	Community cattle-raising	3	12	3	2,500
Tombua	Bookshop	1.5 days or flight	6	1	2,000
Vista Alegre	Bookshop	4	6	2	0
Muceque Cabele	Fishing in ocean	2	8	3	0
Cacongo	Fishing in ocean	1.5 days or flight	4	0	0
Muxualuando	Community goat-raising	1 day	2	0	3,000
Lubango	School	1 day	4	2	85,000
Canema	Mill	6	8	3	0
Cabala	Fishing in river	3	6	0	FAIL

Table 3 illustrates that all projects are located outside the capital of Luanda, and several projects are as far away as one day or more of travel. Some projects are closer to each other, making it easier to stop by when visiting other project sites, yet several projects are relatively isolated, making frequent visits and follow-up difficult and costly. Together with weakly designed outreach plan, the spread of projects makes planned follow-up from the staff difficult. However, it must be mentioned that to UMCA the objective of benefiting communities in the whole church has been seen as more important than operational efficiency.

Some projects are visited frequently, while others are not. PRODESSA does not have a plan when it comes to how often and when projects should be visited. There is also no plan on how and what type of monitoring should take place when investments are completed. For example, the projects in Muceque Cabele and Cacongo are both about fishing in the ocean and they are both complete in terms of investment. However, in 2008, the one in Muceque Cabele has so

far received three visits while the one in Cacongó has received none. PRODESSA staff explained the difference in visits as rooted in travel distance, not in professional needs.

Positively speaking, PRODESSA practices learning by doing. Thus, in most projects investments are carried out gradually and in phases. For example, the first four classrooms of the school in Cacucaco were built in 2006, then another four were added in early 2008. Finally, some offices and lavatories are planned for late 2008 or during 2009.

As indicated in Table 3, most investments in the projects are now complete. Only the school project in Lubango has just started and still demands considerable investment. When a community has installed one project it is not eligible for another. The reason given is that new projects should go to new communities or local congregations, a practice considered the most fair within the UMCA.

Investment and activity flow in PRODESSA is irregular, with most investments carried out during the final months of the year. As of 31 July, only US\$6,844 out of the US\$107,000 budgeted for community investments in 2008 had been invested. Around 95% of the budget will be spent during the final 4–5 months of the year. It is unclear whether this is possible this year if PRODESSA is to practice its principle of learning by doing and investment in phases.

PRODESSA has been struggling in terms of installing comprehensive yet easy-to-practice accounting systems in the community projects. None of the five community projects that were visited had correctly completed accounting books. There is no up-front financial participation from participating communities. The 40-30-30 distribution rule – 40% of gross income to those working in the project, 30% for other operating costs, and 30% to be repaid to PRODESSA – is well known in all groups. However, few seemed to understand how this is to be practiced. Few groups have so far begun repaying the 30% of gross income, and since the available accounting information is limited, it turned out to be impossible to calculate how much they should have repaid according to the 40-30-30 condition. However, in 2007, US\$1,170 was repaid, and in 2008, two deposits totalling US\$1,682 have been made. Altogether, six out of the 15 projects have begun repaying the project investment. The idea behind the repayment is that the money received will be used in new communities. However, so far none of the repaid money has been invested in new projects. All the repaid money is kept untouched in a local bank account.

Several of the community projects have run into unpredicted problems. For example, the freshwater fishing projects have faced a serious reduction in fish resources; in Muxualuando many goats have died due to an unknown disease; in Caxicane there have been three different pastors during the last two years; and in several communities the coordinators have not followed up their duties. However, what stands out is the ability of the communities to continue their efforts, re-plan the activities and move ahead. Only the project in Cabala has ended; in all the other communities they have found solutions to the challenges. Observations in the field indicate that the communities feel strong ownership of the projects, and when they run into challenges they focus upon finding solutions.

It is interesting to note the close contact between the church and the community. Even if most of the project coordinators are church members, there are few other signs that the projects are mostly serving church members. In this regard the inclusion of local leaders or chiefs (sobas) has given the projects a community identity. Both church members and non-church members participate on equal terms. There is a strong feeling of ownership between those who actively

participate in the projects. However, in some communities, few community-members actively participate in the projects, the projects tend to lose members over time, and relatively few new members join.

PRODESSA analysed

The above observations from the field visit and a review of the core documents make it possible to undertake a deeper analysis of PRODESSA. First of all I should emphasise that I firmly believe in the concepts of PID and the need for the reorientation of many church-based development projects. A shift from a *for the community* approach to a *with the community* approach is definitely welcome. Observations in the field leave no doubts that PRODESSA attempts to put PID into practice. However, the PID theoretical concept will not in itself lead to better development efforts. It also depends on *how* it is practiced.

In order to analyse PRODESSA I make use of two self-developed models. One is originally inspired by Porter's value chain, while the other is rooted in Maslow's pyramid of needs. However, both models are considerably different from the originals and no direct comparison should be made.

PRODESSA's value chain

The aim of PRODESSA is to contribute to local development and empowerment. In order to achieve this, the local church and the community join hands in coordinated project efforts. The focus of the community is naturally the expected output from the project itself. The objective for them is to get the school running, to open up the bookshop, to assure that the mill works, etc. To successfully operate a project, several competencies are required, and several of these are needed in order to solve other challenges in the community. Thus, learning to operate one project can prepare a community to also operate other projects or tackle other challenges. Such general development knowledge is core in development projects like the ones supported by PRODESSA.

We can therefore divide the knowledge necessary to operate a community project into *project-specific knowledge* and *general development knowledge*. General knowledge can be particularly important in a community, not only to operate the project itself, but also to tackle other types of challenges.

Figure 3 illustrates the different knowledge that PRODESSA tries to facilitate in a community project.


General Development Knowledge	Learning by doing				Local Development and Empowerment
	Learning development skills (organisation, accounting, money management, budgeting, planning, implementation, evaluation, etc.)				
	Development of democratic processes and organisations				
	Mobilisation and orientation of the community				
					
Project-specific Knowledge	Planning, budgeting and financing	Initiation and implementation	Operation, marketing and maintenance	Sharing of profits/losses	

Figure 3: The value chain in development efforts

Project-specific knowledge

In order to successfully operate a project, a community must be able to plan, budget and finance it. This is followed by the initiation and implementation of the project. After initiating a project it will soon move into a normal mode of operation, where the marketing of services and the maintenance of equipment are important elements. Depending on how successful a project is in its operating efforts there will be profits or losses to be shared.

General development knowledge

To get any project started, the community must be mobilised and orientated. The mobilisation of people in order to solve common problems is constantly needed in any community, as is the development of democratic processes and organisations. To successfully operate a project, a community must also learn specific development skills that are needed in any type of development effort. Accounting, money management, the organisation of work, management, planning, evaluation, etc., are general skills required in any community effort. Practicing a project assures that community members gain experience. Learning-by-doing is probably one of the most effective learning methodologies available. Whether a project succeeds or fails, there are always important lessons to be learned for those involved.

Project-specific knowledge and *general development knowledge* contribute to local development and empowerment. A project in itself, like a school, a mill or a fishing boat, contributes to development, but so too does the knowledge of how to mobilise, organise and operate coordinated community efforts. The idea of a project like PRODESSA is that together, *project-specific knowledge* and *general development knowledge* will reinforce each other.

As illustrated in Figure 3, *project-specific knowledge* and *general development knowledge* are both important. However, my experience is that development efforts tend to experience problems in emphasising both parts equally. Some concentrate most effort upon activities related to the project itself. They tend to take for granted that the learning process will follow automatically, or that communities already have knowledge about how to get organised and get people actively involved. Other projects concentrate most of their efforts upon general

development knowledge and often tend to forget that the project itself should be organised in order to bring about benefits in both the short and long term. Normally, the communities concentrate nearly all of their efforts upon the project itself, while the development/funding partner is often most interested in the general learning process. This mismatch in objectives can indicate a potential weakness in a project.

Analysing PRODESSA's value chain

Field observations of PRODESSA indicate that the project invests effort in both *project-specific knowledge* and *general development knowledge*. However, based on my observations there are elements within each of the two areas that appear to be weak.

General development knowledge

Mobilisation and orientation of communities

PRODESSA, together with the local church, has done an important job of mobilising and orientating the communities. The members actively involved in the projects appeared to be motivated and understood their responsibilities. Allowing communities to decide what type of project to get involved in is an important mechanism in mobilising people. Several communities have been able to overcome serious problems like the death of animals and a reduction in fishing resources. It is therefore likely that the communities themselves have gained new and important knowledge on how to mobilise and motivate their members. However, as time passes, local participation in the projects tends to decline. The number of active members has fallen in several projects, so too has the number of people actively involved in the coordination of the projects. This seemed to be a general trend in several projects. Once the novelty has worn off, a project needs to deliver tangible benefits if it is to keep people's interest. The constant "re-mobilisation" of members is needed. For example, the school project in Cacucaco and the cattle-raising project in Calamba seem not to have been able to maintain a high level of community interest over time. Besides, there seem to be little evidence that communities have used the new knowledge gained in order to initiate other projects not supported by PRODESSA.

Development of democratic processes and organisations

Decisions pertaining to all the PRODESSA projects are made democratically in the communities, and the projects are managed by locally elected leaders. In a country with very low democratic experience this is a major achievement. However, in several communities there are clear signs of dependency upon one or two people, often the local coordinator of the project and sometimes also the local pastor. At the start-up of a project, PRODESSA does train local leaders, but ongoing efforts over time to develop a more democratic culture in the community in order to assure the constant development of a democratic culture are missing. The repeated involvement of PRODESSA is, however, normal if the project runs into problems or the local project leadership mismanage. Since PRODESSA is an integrated part of UMCA, project policing and follow-up from the local and national church can also be expected in the longer run. From a sustainability perspective this makes the set-up of PRODESSA particularly interesting. However, the way in which PRODESSA is designed does not help to maximise the development of democratic culture and practice in the communities. Since communities that have initiated one project are not in practice eligible for another, and since follow-up from PRODESSA is irregular and depends upon the distance from Luanda, it is difficult to cultivate democratic practice in the communities over time.

Learning development skills

The transfer of development skills seems to me to be incidental. Beside the transfer of initial basic knowledge to get started, it is difficult to observe a plan on how development skills are to be transferred to the communities. As far as I can observe, besides some general project guidelines and simple accounting books and vouchers, PRODESSA has no manuals, methodology or systems in order to assure the planned transfer of knowledge. Furthermore, besides accounting, the types of skills that PRODESSA wants to transfer are undefined. In none of the visited communities was the installed accounting system practiced correctly. There were several errors and the available information was generally of very low accuracy.

Learning-by-doing

As mentioned previously, learning-by-doing is a powerful methodology. All communities visited highlighted that they had learned a lot through their involvement in the project. Their comments were mostly related to “project management”, but several also emphasised “working together” as something new that they had learned. However, in order to get the most out of learning-by-doing, it is important that a development actor develops a planned approach to the learning process. This requires the active use of the quality circle, where the leaders of a project and community members together learn to constantly plan, operate and evaluate a project. Lessons learned from evaluation must be brought into future planning efforts. It is possible to teach communities to work based on the quality circle, not only in terms of the project itself, but also in their family and community efforts. However, since repeated projects have not been possible so far, PRODESSA does not facilitate the use of the quality circle in its design.

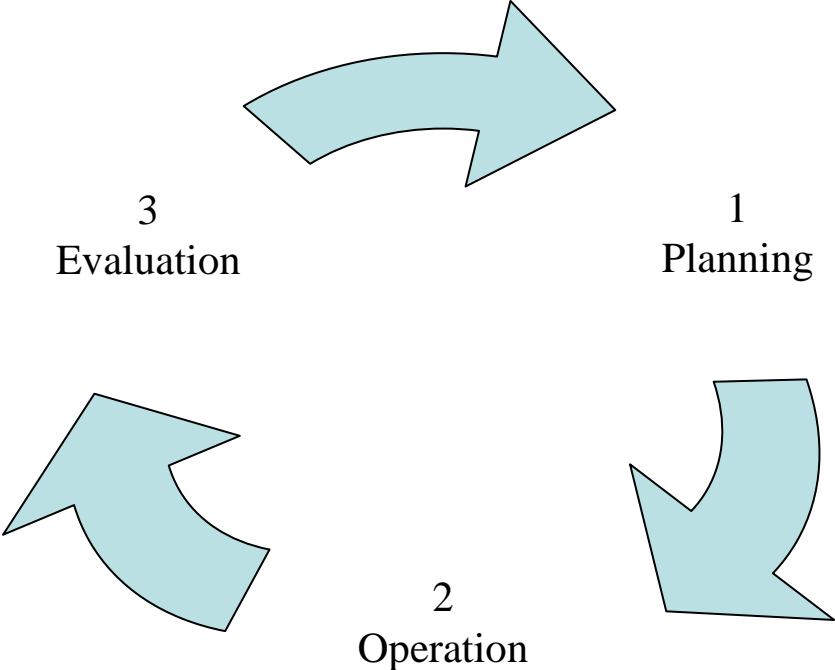


Figure 4: The quality circle

Project-specific knowledge
Planning, budgeting and financing

A major strength of PRODESSA is that the communities themselves plan and decide which project to get involved in. Detailed planning and budgeting of the project is a joint activity between PRODESSA and the community, while projects are fully financed by PRODESSA. Communities may contribute some volunteer labour, but normally none of the finance. The

argument behind the lack of local financial contribution is that the community will later pay back project investments through the 40-30-30 distribution rule mentioned. Nevertheless, I find the lack of financial contribution up-front to be a major weakness. Without this there is the risk that projects will be larger and different to what local resources can support over time. Up-front contribution also assures a type of project in line with community's demand.

Initiation and implementation

A community project financed by PRODESSA is implemented in phases, assuring local understanding and participation. This is positive and should be upheld as an important principle in PRODESSA. Every community is different and requires different implementation strategy and speed, but the vast difference in the time that it takes to get a project started seems to be not only a response to local differences, but also to a lack of systems and planning in PRODESSA. Besides, the difference in distance from Luanda may influence the time of implementation.

Operation, marketing and maintenance

PRODESSA assures that the communities receive training in undertaking the projects. Focus seems to be upon technical and somehow also administrative skills. Generally the communities appear to have gained the necessary technical and vocational skills, while administrative skills are often still weak. The importance of the proper maintenance of equipment is stressed, and it is hoped that the projects' indirect attachment to the local church may motivate continued maintenance over time. What seems lacking is greater emphasis upon marketing, which is not prioritised in PRODESSA's training. Since all projects provide services/products to their local markets, a better understanding of marketing could help to improve the outcome of their efforts.

Allowing communities to decide the type of project that they become involved in has a definite advantage. However, the other side of the coin is that it creates a tremendous challenge in PRODESSA when it comes to organisational competence. It is impossible for PRODESSA staff to be experts in every type of project. Providing the communities with proper guidance, training and follow-up is therefore difficult. To balance this challenge, PRODESSA engage experts in training efforts. Nevertheless, it is still worth asking whether a slight limitation in eligible projects could improve the overall results in the projects.

Sharing of profits/losses

As previously mentioned, all projects in PRODESSA offer services/products at a cost to their community members. The idea is that the income from sales covers operators, costs and even repayment of the project's investment to PRODESSA. In order to distribute the income from the projects, PRODESSA has developed an interesting, but still not very functional, distribution formula. According to this, all income from sales is to be distributed 40% to those operating the project, 30% for other operating costs, and 30% to be repaid to PRODESSA. Thus, legally speaking, all support from PRODESSA is considered as a loan to the community. However, the formula does not take into account the huge differences in the types of projects. Repaying 30% of revenues from computer courses may be possible, but for a school this would require very high school fees. Besides, some projects, like cattle-raising, won't produce any income for several years.

If a project is to produce profits, a clear business model is required. However, in the training received from PRODESSA, little emphasis is placed upon the business side of the project; most efforts are related to how to operate the project. But what about the calculation of costs

and prices, marketing and growth? Since PRODESSA only supports the initiation of *productive projects*, it is important to teach communities to become business managers. Initiating a bookshop is not difficult; what is difficult is to make it into a profitable business that provides its customers with quality services. A project must become a profitable business if it is to persist over time.

PRODESSA's pyramid of fundamental factors

The following pyramid illustrates my experience of the three fundamental factors necessary to succeed in development efforts.

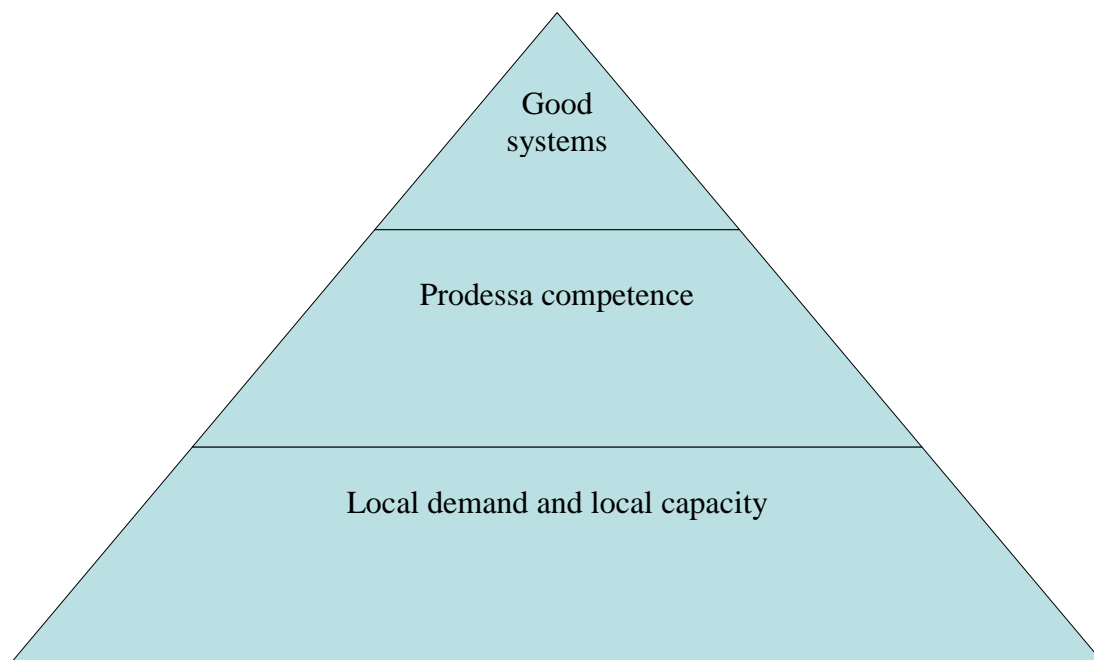


Figure 5: The PRODESSA pyramid of fundamental factors

Local demand and local capacity

The pillar in any development project is local demand and local capacity. If there is no or low demand for a project it is doomed to fail, and if there is no or low local capacity to manage the project over time it will also fail. A major misunderstanding in many development projects is that local needs and local demand are considered to be the same. They are not. A community may have a need for clean water, but this need may not be transformed into a demand, which is when the community confirms the need and are willing to take action to find ways of fulfilling that need. A consequence is often that a water pump may be installed, but the people keep drinking water from the river. Or there may be a need to keep male and female animals separate in order to increase animal quality, but when fences are installed nobody seems to care about keeping the herds separate. Thus, before a community achieves self-awareness of a need and is willing to take action to meet the need, there is no local demand for a project. Up-front financial participation is a measurement which can help distinguish between a need and a demand. Furthermore, local demand may not be sufficient to successfully operate a

productive project. For example, setting up a bookshop will not be a sustainable business in a very small local community.

Besides the difficulty in assuring that there is a local *demand* for projects, donors and development agents must also be aware that communities tend to stress needs that they think donors may buy into. These needs do not necessarily represent the prioritised needs of the community. However, with the large scope in projects this does not seem to be a problem in PRODESSA.

Even if a project is designed to fulfil a local demand, it is not guaranteed success. If the community doesn't have the potential capacity (skills, knowledge, etc.) to operate the project it will fail. It is therefore important to assess the local capacity. A major mistake is often that development agents believe that with proper training a community is capable of operating nearly any project. However, with no experience in operating productive community projects it can be an uphill task to operate a large mill or a computer institute. It is therefore important to assure that project type and size are in accordance with local capacity.

A definite strength of PID and PRODESSA is the strong focus on being demand-driven. Basically, local communities can choose whatever type of project they may want, which increases the likelihood of success. It is, however, not a guarantee of success. Often local communities may demand a project out of habit (they may have seen it elsewhere) or they believe that a specific type of project has a higher likelihood of being accepted by PRODESSA. Local communities may also overestimate their own capacity.

Speaking positively, field observations indicate that the communities have been under very little influence from PRODESSA when deciding the type of project to get involved in. The scope of projects in PRODESSA indicates that communities do not choose a certain type of project because they believe that it will stand a better chance of acceptance. Field observations also indicate that the local communities have gone through a reflective process in order to assess whether their proposal stands the chance of surviving over time. Thus, my judgement is that PRODESSA has been able to find an operational mode in which the local communities decide upon what project to engage in. However, what stands to be seen is whether the communities have the capacity to successfully operate the projects over time. It is feared that some of the communities have engaged in projects too large or too complicated for their capacity. Another fear is whether communities will be able to maintain their motivation over the several years it takes to develop an outcome from a project. Generally, when communities have little experience in operating productive projects, it is recommended that they keep their projects small and the business cycles short. I argue that PRODESSA has been too focused upon allowing communities to get involved in too many types of project. Some provisions on project size and term would have been commendable, and would probably not have affected communities' understanding that they themselves decide on what to get involved in.

PRODESSA competence

Working in the field of development requires many competencies. Development work is indeed a knowledge-intensive industry. Promoting community development and facilitating processes of empowerment cannot be standardised or systematised. It requires empathy, dedication, technical knowledge and personal skills. These are qualities that are not easily found in any context. My experience is that it takes a combination of personal talent and experience to develop the type of competency that a development agent like PRODESSA

requires in order to promote local empowerment. When a development agency has staff with the necessary competency, it is able to facilitate reflexive processes in the communities, helping them to better decide what type of project fits local demand and resources. Moreover, competent staffs are able to transfer knowledge and help initiate and operate a project, smoothing out conflict and helping to maintain community motivation over time. This avoids dependency and assures local ownership and governance of the project.

Providing a balanced and objective assessment of PRODESSA's staff based on a few days' field visit is impossible. However, the first impression of project manager Mr. Antonio Sozinho was very positive. His ability to relate and interact with local communities in a way that transfers knowledge without imposing criteria appears exemplary. However, one weakness of PRODESSA is the nearly total dependence upon the project manager. During the last three years, project assistants have been involved, none of whom have remained for any length of time. Recently a new assistant has been hired, but it's still too early to assess whether he will be able to grasp the idea of facilitating local empowerment.

Related to PRODESSA's competence is the fact that it is part of UMCA. This is a competence in itself as it facilitates networks that can benefit the projects, and provides a structure upon which the projects can piggyback. This allows ongoing policing, support and follow-up over time.

PRODESSA systems

What PRODESSA lacks are good systems. No systems can replace competent staff, and no project will succeed if it doesn't respond to local demand. However, good systems can facilitate the work of competent staff and help communities to analyse the demand and their resources. In PRODESSA it is difficult to identify models, methodologies, plans for implementation and follow-up, systematic training, etc., that the staff intend to follow in a relatively systematic way. The project manager does maintain an overview, but it is informal and in many ways related to his personal charm and competence. Since systems are informal, it might be one of the reasons why it has been difficult to sustain and involve other project staff. It is simply very difficult to understand what their job is about. Other consequences are the potentially incidental follow-up of projects, where some receive several visits while others receive few, an unbalanced intake of new projects, and a lack of plans to assure more balanced activities throughout the year. My assertion is that PRODESSA can benefit the most from designing and documenting its methodology and carefully planning its activities, which will help local staff and communities to better understand their responsibilities.

Another area related to good systems is comprehensive project monitoring of PRODESSA. Today nearly all monitoring, both by the Bishop and the UMCN, is informal and based on visits and close contact. Formal monitoring is further hindered by the lack of plans and methodologies. For example, the project document and annual reports give no clear direction or information about the projects. When plans are weak and indicators are blurry, comprehensive monitoring becomes an impossible task for both the one being monitored (what should he report?) and the one monitoring (what should she ask for and what feedback can she give?). What a project misses when monitoring systems are weak is not only control and follow-up. More important is the learning process it is for the one being monitored. When a monitoring report has a format that is properly designed, the filling it out will help stimulate a reflexive process and help identify areas which need the leader's attention.

PRODESSA is a first attempt to firmly establish PID. The idea is that lessons learned in PRODESSA may be brought to other contexts. Thus, it becomes even more important to have *good systems*. When models, methodologies and plans are systematised and formalised it is much easier for outsiders to grasp PID and analyse what part of PRODESSA needs to be adjusted to their own context. Recently, UMCN has also initiated a PID project in Liberia, where the plan is to build on PRODESSA and exchange the lessons learned. Interchange between the two programmes is based on exchange visits. I believe that a better conceptualised and modelled PRODESSA, where tools for planning, implementation and monitoring were more formalised, could have facilitated a much more effective outcome of the interchange. It is however worth mentioning that UMCN facilitated a joint workshop in Liberia in November 2008 where one of the aims was to better modelling and documenting the PID methodologies.

Since projects are different it is of course impossible to systematise a detailed “how to” manual. However, even if the planning and implementation of projects cannot be standardised, it should be possible to outline some type of guidance on how the *process* of working with the communities could be carried out. Using the quality circle and the value chain in the outset could be of help. Besides, it shouldn’t be that difficult to outline some guidance systems when it comes to balanced implementation efforts and monitoring rhythm and content.

PRODESSA results

According to the TOR I should assess PRODESSA’s results along several dimensions, from the relevance of activities to programme efficiency and long-term impact. A short field visit cannot provide sufficient information to clearly indicate all types of results. It is, however, often possible to provide an assessment of whether the direction of the outcome seems to be positive.

Target group

From the TOR: *“To what extent has the programme successfully reached the stated target group of ‘Men and women in difficult conditions in the communities where there are local congregations of UMC.’”*

PRODESSA only operates where there are local congregations of UMCA, and these are generally located in poor communities. In this regard, PRODESSA has been able to reach its objective. However, especially in productive projects there is always a risk of “elite capture”; that is, the better-off community members are those directing and benefiting from the project. This was also observed during the field visit. Several of those most active in the projects were those with the most resources in their community. However, this is not necessarily negative as the “local elite” may be important in getting a project up and running. What’s important is that the better-off don’t crowd out the poorer community members. It is impossible to say whether this is happening based on short visits to some of the communities, but PRODESSA should be aware of the risk.

Programme efficiency

From the TOR: *“Make an assessment about the efficiency of the resources used in the programme in relation to the conducted activities. Should the activities have been carried out in another manner? Could the same activities been achieved with the use of less costly resources?”*

No observation during the field visit indicates that PRODESSA is squandering away the money received. However, a different programme design could probably have increased efficiency. First, a considerable part of PRODESSA resources has been used for support from Norway. This is understandable since PRODESSA is a pilot trying to establish PID. However, more emphasis could have been placed upon developing good systems in order to reduce the need for outside support in the future. Since PID is a concept for partnerships between equals, the Norwegian team has probably been too polite in their attempts to transfer knowledge and systems. The outcome of their follow-up has therefore perhaps not been as efficient as it could have been. Clearer guidance could have been recommendable. Second, the spread of projects across the country is costly and a more carefully designed plan of outreach would have been preferred. Maybe a regional roll-out could have been possible? Some regional volunteers could perhaps also help in developing a more cost-efficient design? Third, related to the former point is the inconsistency in the follow-up of projects. Some receive many visits, others few. A more careful plan for when and why projects should be visited would reduce costs. Fourth, the workflow throughout the year is unbalanced. A more constant effort throughout the year could help increase the number of projects without increasing costs.

What is positive in PRODESSA is that it piggybacks on the UMCA. Several overhead costs (e.g., office rent and equipment) are covered by UMCA and not charged to PRODESSA.

Programme effectiveness

From the TOR: *“Make an assessment of the degree to which the programme has achieved the programme objective as stated in the programme plan:*

Long-term overarching development goals:

- *That the communities of the United Methodist Church Western Angola Annual Conference may have life abundantly, derived from its self-sustainability.*

Outcome / immediate objective of the programme for the entire period:

- *Improvement of the life conditions of men and women in the beneficiary communities.”*

It is still early to assess the degree to which communities have been empowered, and thereby better equipped to confront other challenges. It is also difficult to assess the degree to which the organisational and democratic training has led to an overall improvement in these areas. A positive outcome can be expected. However, this outcome could probably have been even higher if communities were allowed repeated projects in order to work along the quality circle over a longer time period and relate to different projects.

From the TOR: *“[Assess] anticipated results (outputs) for the entire period.*

That the communities may implement projects such as:

- *Productive strengthening;*
- *General training;*
- *Moral and civic training;*
- *Offering of goods and social basic services;*
- *Rebuilding of infrastructure;*
- *Support to resettlement process.”*

The rebuilding of infrastructure and support to the resettlement process have not been core in any of the projects. The focus of PRODESSA has been on the training of communities, and the focus of the communities has been on offering goods and services.

PRODESSA has few limitations regarding what types of projects communities may get involved in. It is therefore surprising to find that none of the projects are set up to strengthen individuals' personal businesses. They could have been projects to train farmers or self-help groups to learn about business. Instead, communities have decided upon community projects that deliver products and services to community members. This finding indicates that a narrowing of eligible projects to only include productive community projects could be possible, thereby allowing greater specialisation of knowledge in PRODESSA.

As mentioned earlier, some projects have very few beneficiaries. A clearer indication of the need to select projects that can benefit a greater audience would be amenable. Good systems would also have helped to carry out more activities, and thereby produce higher output.

Programme relevance

From the TOR: *“Make an assessment of the programme’s relevance in relation to the main challenges in the programme area. Can the programme be said to be highly relevant or less relevant in relation to the needs of the people in the area? Are there any differences in the programme’s relevance in relation to gender?”*

The PID concept assures a higher likelihood of supporting relevant projects. All communities visited firmly defended their decisions and their projects. They were convinced that they had chosen the most relevant projects. My consideration is that programme relevance is probably the strongest part of PRODESSA. However, since the “local elite” are often active in the projects there is a risk of being less relevant to the poorer strata, and when it comes to women the results reported in Table 2 clearly illustrates the risk that PRODESSA is not able to support balanced gender efforts. Project coordinators are men, pastors in all the communities are men³ and most committee members are men. However, interesting to observe is that most treasurers are women. Also interesting is the fact that several of the projects mostly benefit women (e.g., the mill and goat-raising).

Programme sustainability

From the TOR: *“Make an assessment of the programme’s sustainability. In particular, give an opinion regarding the possibilities that the local communities have to maintain and to continue the local projects that have been initiated by the assistance of PRODESSA.”*

Sustainability in PRODESSA has two dimensions: one, PRODESSA as a programme, and two, the projects in the communities. Regarding PRODESSA as a programme, it is of course impossible to maintain all of its activities without outside support. However, since PRODESSA is integrated into the UMCA’s Department of Studies and Projects and works directly under the Bishop’s authority, the programme doesn’t have to end if outside support ceases. It is therefore important to maintain PRODESSA within the department and withhold that PRODESSA is not an independent structure, but only represents UMCA.

Regarding whether projects initiated in the communities with support from PRODESSA stand the chance of becoming sustainable, it is still too early to make an assessment. Some of them have only just started, while others like the computer training in Dondo have operated over some time and have started to repay some of the initial investment to PRODESSA. The fact that all the community projects piggyback on UMCA and the local congregation increases the

³ AMC accepts female pastors, but most pastors are still men, and all the pastors in communities where PRODESSA is active are men.

likelihood of becoming sustainable, as long as UMCA doesn't interfere differently than planned.⁴

In order to become sustainable, the productive projects must be set up as businesses and produce profits. Since projects often lack comprehensive accounting systems and a clear business design, and since PRODESSA lacks systems to monitor profit levels in projects, it is difficult to discern whether projects are making profits or not. However, as far as I can understand, few projects are making profits. For start-up projects, profit-making is still not expected. Nevertheless, I consider that several of the projects have not taken the business aspects sufficiently into account. They simply lack a clear business design, and the groups as well as PRODESSA lack systems in order to measure the degree of profits and sustainability in operations. However, the eagerness observed in the visited groups and some of the groups' ability to survive conflicts and serious problems indicate that the people themselves are willing to work hard in order to assure the sustainability of their projects. Also, the fact that only one out of 15 initiated projects has so far ceased indicates that several of the projects may stand a chance of surviving over time.

Some of the projects that stand a good chance of becoming sustainable in the long run are the schools; more on this in what follows.

PRODESSA and POSOCA

After many years of war, Angola needs to rebuild its educational system. Demand for schooling is very high. Many kids and adults have lost the opportunity to go to school and now want to enrol together with new age groups. A possibility in the new educational system is a partnership between churches (or other voluntary organisations) and the government. If a church is willing to run a school and able to put up eight classrooms of good quality, the government will provide the salaries for the teachers. Besides, church schools are free to use the official educational curriculum. This possible partnership provides UMCA with a tremendous opportunity that may not be there in the future if Angola becomes a stable country. If government support continues and UMCA positions itself well, it is possible for UMCA to become a major player in tomorrow's educational system. However, the time to act is probably now.

UMCA has already been involved in education for several decades. The POSOCA programme has received Norad support for several years and now operates 8 schools with a total of 3,089 pupils. Besides, an estimated 6 other local UMCA congregations run their own schools without being part of POSOCA. Also interesting to note is the new Methodist University, where demand from students has been much higher than expected. 5,000 students approximately are now enrolled at the university.

Also in PRODESSA, the demand from the local communities to initiate schools is high. Two projects (Cacuaco and Lubango) have already been selected, of which one is about to finish. However, the experience in PRODESSA is that school projects are much more costly than other projects. Besides, to enable high-quality schooling, other non-construction activities like the capacity-building of professors and parents are needed. Nurturing the contact with

⁴ AMC is a mature church and generally the Methodist churches are known for being more systematic compared to some other denominations. The word Methodist is actually derived from the word methodical. On average PID may therefore stand a better chance of succeeding in a Methodist context than in another church context.

educational authorities is also important. Thus, if PRODESSA is to be a good partner for local communities/churches in their educational efforts, there is a need for increased technical capacity in education. School projects are therefore very different from the rest of PRODESSA projects, where the focus is upon being productive service/goods providers.

In this situation, a merger between POSOCA and PRODESSA could be assessed. PRODESSA would have two activity lines: one for productive community projects and one for community/church schools. PRODESSA would then have to increase its competence in education, and thereby become a much better partner for those communities involved in schools. UMCA could become a major player in Angola's educational system with a chain of schools being operated in partnerships between local communities and local congregations.

Lessons learned

The following bullet points summarise some of the lessons learned in PRODESSA:

- PRODESSA serves as an example that it is possible to practice PID, even in a post-conflict context. It is possible to allow local communities to play a leading role in decisions and implementation and to let planning, monitoring and evaluation rest with the local partner, in this case PRODESSA/UMCA.
- PRODESSA proves that it is possible to simplify the process of application and reporting at all levels of the chain, from local civil society through the local/national partner to the Norwegian partner, and finally to BN and NORAD.
- The positive concepts of PID will alone not assure more effective and efficient development output and outcomes. Good systems, capable staff and close follow-up from the donor are still important.
- It is challenging for a national church to concentrate efforts in only some of the communities where it has local congregations.
- It is challenging for a donor to balance its inputs and follow-up in a PID project. However, even if a real partnership requires a significant transfer of power, this doesn't mean that the transfer of knowledge and monitoring is less needed than before.
- When communities are given nearly total freedom and few conditions are given, there may be a risk of "elite capture" of the projects. Whether this is happening in PRODESSA should be investigated.
- It takes time to capture what working *with the community* means and how this can actually be done. Projects can easily fall back on a *for the community* mode.
- When repeated projects in communities are not possible and when business cycles are long the effect of learning by doing is not optimized.
- When diversity in projects is very large as in PRODESSA it becomes difficult to provide professional support and follow up to the communities.
- It is a challenge to understand the business part of a local project and to install systems that constantly measure the business success in a transparent manner.
- Introducing and understanding PID takes time and requires considerable capacity-building in the national church, as well as in the Norwegian mission organisation.

Recommendations

1. PRODESSA should urgently address its lack of *good systems*. Models to illustrate, methodologies and manuals to guide, and systems to plan and monitor are all required.

2. Communities should still be given the freedom to decide upon what type of project to get involved in. The freedom, however, should be kept within a frame. An example of a frame could be:
 - a. Projects should be productive and provide the community with demanded goods/services.
 - b. A considerable part, e.g., minimum 20%, of the community members should potentially benefit from accessing the service. Projects benefiting only a few people should not be prioritised.
 - c. Aside from schools, projects should be kept relatively small e.g., in most cases below US\$10,000.
 - d. The planned time it takes to make a project profitable should be short, preferable below 12 months.
3. Communities should give a financial contribution of a minimum 5–10% up front before initiating a new project.
4. In order to work along the quality circle, projects should continue to be implemented in phases, and communities should be allowed repeated projects at least twice or three times.
5. More attention should be focused upon making the projects into viable local businesses. The constant measurement of project profits should be prioritised.
6. UMCA should assess whether PRODESSA can be “rolled out” in a more geographically concentrated manner in order to increase cost-efficiency without generating conflicts in the church.
7. The implementation of projects should be more balanced throughout the year. In order to support this idea, a more detailed annual outreach plan is required.
8. PRODESSA should increase its number of staff to at least three in order to avoid dependency upon one person.
9. UMCN should maintain its technical support to PRODESSA and focus upon the transfer of knowledge, especially in the field of good systems.
10. Comprehensive monitoring systems should be installed between communities and PRODESSA, PRODESSA and the Bishop, and the Bishop and UMCN. The monitoring format should be such that the reporter reflects and learns from reporting.
11. PRODESSA and POSOCA should be merged. PRODESSA should have two activity lines, education and productive projects. UMCA should assess the opportunity of becoming a major player in the new educational infrastructure of Angola.
12. The PID projects in Angola and Liberia should continue to learn from each other. However, learning should not only be organised around interchange visits and seminars, but should more be organised around the development and continued improvement of good systems.
13. If possible, PRODESSA and UMCN should team up with an action research partner in order to together develop good systems and make necessary adjustments in PRODESSA’s design as lessons are learned.
14. The PID concept should be relevant also in similar community development programmes in other contexts. However, before introducing it in other contexts BN and UMCN should better document the PID methodologies.

Terms of reference

1. Introduction

United Methodist Church in Norway, Board of Global Ministries hereafter called UMCN has engaged Mr. Roy Mersland and João José Peixototo undertake an integrated evaluation and feasibility study of **PRODESSA, Social Sustainable Development Programme** in Angola.

The work should be carried out in close cooperation with the representative of the UMCN and together with the Western Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church in Angola as well as with the programme staff. Representatives from UMC in Norway shall be entitled to observe and participate in the evaluation but shall in no way interfere in the professional judgment of the evaluation team.

2. Background information

Norwegian Missions in Development (BN) initiated in 2002 a project called "Partnership in Development". This project was presented, to and discussed with, UMC Angola Western Annual conference with the result that the church started a careful planning process which later concluded with the creation of PRODESSA as a new programme in the church.

3. Purpose of the evaluation

- To make an assessments of the programme achievements in relation to the objectives stated in the corresponding programme plan, annual plans etc.
- To document lessons learned in the programme.
- To present recommendations for the future of the programme.
- To assess the methodology "Partnership in Development" and it's relevance for similar community development programmes.

3. Specific assessments to be carried out.

The evaluation shall be carried out based on the evaluator's best professional judgement and according to accepted best international evaluation practices. In particular the following items shall be included in the evaluation.

3.1 Target group

To which extent has the programme successfully reached the stated target group:

"Men and Women in difficult conditions in the communities where there are local congregations of UMC."

3.2 Programme efficiency

Make an assessment about the efficiency of the resources used in the programme in relation to the conducted activities. Should the activities have been carried out in another manner? Could the same activities been achieved with the use of less costly resources?

3.3 Programme effectiveness

Make an assessment to which degree the programme has achieved the programme objective as stated in the programme plan:

Long-term overarching development goals:

- That the communities of the United Methodist Church Western Angola Annual Conference may have life abundantly, derived from its self-sustainability.

Outcome/ immediate objective of the programme/ programme for the entire period:

- Improvement of the life conditions of men and women, in the beneficiary communities

Anticipated results (outputs) for the entire period:

- That the communities may implement projects such as:
 - · Productive strengthening
 - General Training
 - Moral and Civic Training
 - Offering of goods and social basic services
 - Rebuilding of Infrastructures
 - Support to Resettlement Process

4. Programme relevance

Make an assessment of the programme relevance in relation to the main challenges in the programme area. Can the programme be said to be highly relevant or less relevant in relation to the need of the people in the area? Are any there differences in the programme's relevance in relation to gender?

5. Programme sustainability

Make an assessment of the programme sustainability. In particular give an opinion regarding the possibilities that the local communities have to maintain and to continue the local projects that have been initiated by the assistance of PRODESSA. Preferably the sustainability model developed by Norwegian Missions in development should be applied in evaluating the programme sustainability in relation to the following three factors:

- Activity profile
- Organisational capacity
- Context

6. Assessment of the methodology "Partnership in Development".

The concept "Partnership in Development" was developed by BN as an innovative alternative to traditional development cooperation. The main objectives of the new practice were to:

- a) That the main focus of future development work shall be at the local level of civil society (congregation) and that the work*

contributes to the strengthening of the civil society and to the development of democratic organisations.

- b) That the responsibility for planning, implementation and evaluation of development projects rests with the local partner.*
- c) To simplify the process of application and reporting at all levels of the chain from the local civil society level through the local/national partner to the Norwegian partner and finally to BN and NORAD.*
- d) To improve the quality of the development work carried out by churches and Christian organisations with increased focus on sustainable impact in the local society.*

The present evaluation shall make an assessment to which extent these objectives have been reached. The evaluation is also expected to assess the relevance of this methodology compared to more traditional practices as well as to give recommendations for future improvement and development.

7. Future development of the programme.

Make a specific recommendation in relation to the future of the programme. The recommendation should preferably be based on the same sustainability model developed by Norwegian Missions in Development.

8. Reporting

The evaluator shall present her/his findings in a workshop to be held at the programme site attended by the programme staff, members from target group as relevant, as well as representatives from UMC in Angola and Norway.

A written report in English shall be prepared based on this Term of Reference. Before the final report is presented, a draft report shall be presented to the programme management, UMC in Angola and in Norway who shall be given reasonable time to present their comments regarding the draft report.

9. Programme reference documents

The main reference documents of the programme are:

- Programme plan: Social Development and Sustainable Programme PRODESSA 2005-2009
- Annual programme plans
- Annual programme reports
- Annual financial reports
- Partnership in Development BN, 2005

Oslo

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