



ASIST

Advisory Support, Information Services and Training

ASIST TODAY AND TOMORROW

Background note no. 2

for the

ASIST

Review and Planning Workshop

23 - 26 November 1999



**Employment-Intensive Investment Branch
Recovery and Reconstruction Department**

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CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION.....	1
2	ASIST OF TODAY	3
2.1	ASIST - Organisational and Administrative Framework and Developments during Recent Years	3
2.2	ILO Restructuring Process - Developments in 1999	4
2.3	Institutionalisation of ASIST Functions and New Directions	6
3	ASIST OF TOMORROW - SOME CHALLENGES FOR ASIST IV	9
3.1	Choice of Technology - How to ensure that planners and policy-makers are aware of, believe in, committed to, optimising the use of local resources?	9
3.2	How do we involve rural and urban communities in planning for future infrastructure development?	11
3.3	Community participation in infrastructure works – widening the scope?	12
3.4	How to establish and disseminate best practices in Rural Infrastructure Works?	14
3.5	How to improve the environment for small-scale contracting in infrastructure provision?	16
3.6	How do we support infrastructure upgrading in low-income urban areas?	17
3.7	How to cope with solid waste management in urban unplanned settlements?	19
3.8	Community contracting - What are the modalities for contracting out urban community works?	21
3.9	How to provide international training in labour-based technology in a changing market?	22
3.10	How to provide international training on urban labour-based and community-managed upgrading	24
3.11	How to rejuvenate and expand ILO's research role?	25
3.12	How to fully exploit the developments in information technology to effectively disseminate information on employment-intensive works?	27
3.13	How to get practitioners to take labour issues seriously?	29
4	RESOURCES	33
4.1	Programme staffing	33

4.2	Location of offices	34
4.3	Funding	34

1 INTRODUCTION

This paper has been written as an introductory note on some issues pertinent to ASIST at present. The present paper is meant to provide a rapid access to information on some issues, which are expected to be discussed at the upcoming ASIST Review and Planning Workshop, it will not be comprehensive and exhaustive in providing information on ASIST. ASIST has prepared regular reports over the period of ASIST III, which will form the basis for the deeper analysis of achievements and assessments to be made before and during the workshop.

The target readers of this paper will therefore be the participants from donor agencies, partner organisations and institutions as well as individual representatives at the November 1999 Review and Planning Workshop.

The paper consists of three major sections, one describing important elements of ASIST and its environment at present, including the organisational and administrative framework, aspects of institutionalisation, and the ILO restructuring process. The second deals with the further development of the ASIST and its related programme activities, whilst the third concentrates on resources like office staffing, location and funding.

The outline of the present status and environment of ASIST in the first section is limited to a description of the above-mentioned activities, which ASIST thought needed some additional comments. The progress reports and the independent review of ASIST should provide the participants with a full description of the activities, outputs and achievement of the objectives.

The section on the future activities of ASIST aims at producing a brief on some of the more recent and proposed future features of ASIST operations. The inclusion and reference to some of the future issues, whilst other are less present in the paper, does not necessarily mean that the others are not a priority. It reflects more the fact that ASIST staff believes these issues were in need for an explanation and promotion as they may have been less prominent in earlier work of ASIST, and that some issues are under serious development. It is hoped that the section will provide a useful preparatory reading before the workshop and be valuable reference material for the discussion on the future ASIST programme.

The resources needed for a continuation of ASIST services is being discussed in section three. The proposal takes it that there are donors interested in continuing and expanding upon the ASIST services. This is based on the observations of the possible service level with the present staff, the future needs and demands and the possible support from ILO. In addition to staffing and funding, this section also deals with the question about the location of ASIST office(s).

2 ASIST OF TODAY

2.1 ASIST - Organisational and Administrative Framework and Developments during Recent Years

The organisational framework, location, staffing and work arrangements in place for the current phase of the ASIST programme respond to the objectives, expected results and principal activities described in the ASIST III programme document. In general, ASIST is expected to provide technical support, backup and training services to the rural and urban projects and programmes in the sub-region covering East and Southern Africa. This includes project development and monitoring, but also the provision of regular services in response to Government and project demand. In collaboration with the Development Policies Department, POLDEV (see new ILO department structure later), ASIST also responds to demands related to the Sub-Saharan Africa Transport Programme (SSATP) and its components Road Management Initiative and Rural Travel and Transport and to other donor supported programmes, and to information and training demands from non-ASIST programme areas (West Africa, Asia, Latin America).

ILO Headquarters, which includes POLDEV, but also other services such as the legal and budget departments, is responsible for:

- the definition of policies in collaboration with ILO's constituency;
- the preparation of policy guidance and technical guides;
- the management of inter-regional projects;
- the co-ordination of (sub-) regional initiatives (such as ASIST Asia and the Pacific, ACTIF in West Africa, and the research and support work in Latin America), and;
- the clearing of major commitments of a political or financial nature.

The ILO Area Office Directors are responsible for the definition and implementation of all ILO work in the countries under their responsibility including administrative matters related to technical co-operation activities. The ILO Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDTs), through interventions of technical specialists, provide technical backstopping and support to the Area Offices and programmes and projects in their respective sub-region.

This general division of responsibilities allows ASIST - in consultation with the Area Office Directors and HQ - to take proactive initiatives (e.g. the organisation of workshops and seminars) as well as technical programme development work in direct collaboration with Governments and donors in ASIST programme countries. Biannual consultations between HQ (POLDEV) and ASIST serve to discuss policy issues and workplans and to review the progress in respect of the requirements of the programme document. Individual time inputs for programme and project management, promotional work, production of general guidelines (such as new guidelines related to the use of Food for Assets and Sustainable Employment - FASE - and guidelines on Community Contracts in Urban Infrastructure Works), as well as for the provision of information are estimated and included in the work plans.

The decentralisation strategy implemented by the ILO during the period 1995 to 1999 as part of its "Active Partnership Policy" (APP), resulted in the transfer of an increasing number of administrative and technical responsibilities to the ILO field structure. The principal objective of the APP was to bring the ILO closer to its constituents and to give these constituents a much bigger role in the definition and implementation of country programmes. Whereas definite progress was made towards the realisation of this objective, a number of administrative bottlenecks hampered the efficient implementation of technical co-operation work during this transition period. Certain field projects, being located in a given country, received administrative backstopping from an Area Office based in a second country, technical backstopping from an MDT located in a third country

and were financially reporting to the Regional Office in a fourth country. The situation was exacerbated by the fact that, during the transition period, the ILO field structure as a whole still had to rely on HQ for certain financial control functions. Obviously, this created many delays and frustrations both at the country level and for ASIST staff, who had to spend additional time on sorting out administrative issues.

Recognising the difficulties described above, the ILO - with support from DANIDA - commissioned a study on the restructuring and rationalisation of the field structure. A final report from the consultants was formally submitted to the ILO in May 1999, recommending the clustering of administrative, financial and technical functions at sub-regional level. Also during the 1999 International Labour Conference, the Technical Co-operation Committee discussed an internal report on Technical Co-operation assessing the ILO's performance. After the restructuring within the different major sectors at Headquarters, the ILO Governing Body will examine, during its November 1999 session, the follow-up implementation plan to this report. The ILO will initiate the restructuring of its field organisation from January 2000, taking into account the different recommendations.

2.2 ILO Restructuring Process - Developments in 1999

2.2.1 A Crossroads

The ILO finds itself at a crossroads in time. The constantly reoccurring crises in Africa, Asia and Latin America (caused by natural and man-made disasters, political instability and financial speculation) result in increasing levels of unemployment and human insecurity. Globalisation has become a major market force, influencing the working lives of many people. Economic outcomes are now influenced more by market forces, than through social dialogue, legal norms or state intervention. However, there is also a renewed awareness of the necessity for a strong social framework to successfully cope with these changes. More than ever, the ILO operates at this intersection of a changing global economy, society and individual human beings. To do so effectively a complete organisational, operational and financial overhaul of the organisation is currently being undertaken.

In March 1999, the new Director General of the ILO took office. Juan Somavia, a Chilean national, has renewed the ILO's commitment to technical co-operation. In a note to the International Labour Conference (June 1999) he states: *"Technical co-operation, including both advisory services and operational activities, will be a major instrument of the ILO to promote opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work, in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. The role of ILO technical co-operation is to help create the enabling environment, at the national and the international levels, for the realisation of the values and principles of the Organisation in terms of development, institutional capability, legislative framework and socio-economic policy."*

2.2.2 Strategic Planning and Objectives

In a move to make a clear statement to the outside world of ILO's approach, the Director General sets out four strategic objectives for the Organisation:

- promoting and respecting fundamental principles and rights at work;
- creating employment and income;
- improving social protection, and;
- ensuring effective social dialogue.

In addition to these strategic objectives, "InFocus Programmes", which will be given a high priority in the 2000-2001 biennium, have been developed. These are:

- promoting the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its follow-up;

- progressive elimination of child labour;
- reconstruction and employment-intensive investment;
- investing in knowledge, skills and employability;
- boosting employment through small enterprise development;
- safe work: security and productivity through safety and health at work;
- economic and social security in the twenty first century;
- strengthening the social partners.

There are two issues that cut across the InFocus Programmes: gender and development. Gender is crucial to ILO if it wishes to attain social justice. Furthermore, it is a tool in pursuing equitable and sustainable human development, and an indicator of how effective this pursuit is. ILO's approach to development is based on a number of elements of which creating decent employment is of primary importance, because it contributes to reducing all forms of inequality. Other developmental aspects relate to workers' rights, participation, protection, skills improvement and international labour standards.

The regular ILO budget for the 2000-2001 biennium amounts to approximately US\$ 480 million. 42 % (or about US\$ 200 million) of this budget will be allocated to the technical programmes contributing to the four strategic objectives, with the following distribution:

- fundamental principles: 22 %
- employment creation: 37 %
- social protection: 25 %
- social dialogue: 16 %

In the context of a progressively changing global economy, the Director General's proposal of an InFocus Programme on "Reconstruction and Employment-Intensive Investment" is key to ILO's strategic objective of employment creation. Through this programme the ILO will, among others, develop and promote policies and strategies for employment-intensive growth. An important part of these employment-intensive investments is in infrastructure that allows both short and long-term job creation by means of the construction and maintenance of productive and durable public and community assets. The relevance of promoting and introducing employment-intensive methods for infrastructure works is emphasised in a number of important recent policy statements of ILO and received strong support from ILO's Governing Body during its November 1998 session.

2.2.3 The new Employment-Intensive Investment Branch

As a consequence of the above, the future of the ILO's Employment-Intensive Programme (EIP) in the new biennium have been re-determined in a positive sense, at least in terms of organisational structure but maybe less in size. This repositioning of the programme took place as from 1 October 1999. The ILO organisation includes now a new Employment-Intensive Investment Branch within the Recovery and Reconstruction Department. This new Branch has been set up in parallel to the InFocus the Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction, which forms the other main part of the Department.

When it comes to the size of the programme, regular budget funding will not be fully ascertained before the reorganisation of the ILO field structure has taken place next year. So far the programme has maintained a status quo at Headquarters compared to the resources made available over the very recent years. With only four regular professional positions, the programme will be in need of additional resources (i.e. extra-budgetary resources) to fully enable it to respond to the demand for these services. However, this is nothing special for the Employment-Intensive Investment Branch; all units across the organisation will have to work on securing financial and technical supplements to their financial resource base and operational capacities. The new Director General puts a lot of emphasis on ILO units ability to attract extra-budgetary resources through projects and programmes.

As mentioned, it is only when the reorganisation of the field structure has been finalised that it is possible to judge the entire resource base for the EIP as a whole. It is however our belief that the new organisation will lead to a strengthening of the EIP capacity, both at Headquarters and in the Multidisciplinary Teams (MDTs). This in turn should have a positive impact on the functioning of the ASIST programme.

2.3 Institutionalisation of ASIST Functions and New Directions

One of the major tasks set by the ASIST review and forward planning meeting of 1996, which led to the formulation of ASIST III, was to explore the possible institutionalisation of the advisory support, training and information services of ASIST. These initiatives have been described in the relevant sections of the background documentation and reports.

In general, the feasibility of institutionalising the above services depends on:

- the level of development in the technical field concerned;
- the nature of the service to be provided,
- the complementary services to be provided, and;
- the absorptive capacity of the available organisations or institutions.

2.3.1 Advisory services

Regarding the technical fields, it may be concluded that the work done in the rural road sector has progressed to such a level that most of the advisory services can now be carried out by commercial organisations. On the other hand, the urban work, community participation and the (accessibility) planning in which ASIST is involved, are areas in which a great deal of experience has been obtained, but this experience is not yet accessible in the form of guidelines and training materials, community contracting documentation, etc. These relatively new areas for ASIST also demand much more promotional and awareness raising work of a nature that cannot readily be provided on a commercial basis.

In fact, the neutral and non-commercial status of the ILO as a UN agency, of which ASIST is seen to be a part, is essential for the successful delivery of this type of services. For example, ASIST contributes to long term initiatives such as the work ILO carries out in:

- influencing planning and civil engineering courses of developing country higher level learning institutions and;
- the establishment of national level policy planning units assessing the impact of technology choice and management of labour-based programmes.

This requires initiatives and follow-up in terms of awareness creation and product development, which will need to be subsidised financially and materially.

Furthermore, the absorptive capacity of non-ILO organisations and institutions to take over (part of) the advisory services currently provided by ASIST, varies a great deal with the type and nature of the service to be provided. As stated, commercial consultants - international and local - should now in many cases be able to deliver quality backstopping and training work at the national level in the rural road sector, where the available material is well developed. This is not yet the case in the urban and planning fields.

In addition, in situations where awareness creation, promotional initiatives and capacity development for policy planning are required, the ILO still has a role to play in the rural road sector as well, considering its neutral and non-commercial status. Indeed, this is fully supported by international consultants with whom ASIST works on both a regular and irregular basis.

Finally, the linkage to the information services, the delivery of an integrated package, where the advisory capacity serves in the provision of adequate levels of information and quality assurance of

the information services and, *vice versa*, the information services provide well-organised support mechanism to the technical advisers. Separating these functions at this point in time leaves the two units without the ability to provide the level of services, which they are providing and well known for today. This goes as much for the information provision as it goes for the advisory support activities.

Based on the above arguments matched with the neutral status of the ILO, ASIST feels that it is mainly the part of the advisory services that deals with the direct project support, which could be taken care of by private consultants, both international and national consultants. For these consultants to provide the advisory services at local level, ASIST must work as a door opener and broker for their access to work. This is already, more and more so, the order of the day and the way in which ASIST is prioritising its work.

2.3.2 International training

On the international training side, during the period 1989 to 1999 the Kisii Training Centre (KTC), has successfully delivered annual international courses in Kenya for (i) engineers and (ii) senior technicians, managing and supervising labour-based road programmes. In addition "Training of Trainers" courses were delivered during the same period, although not on an annual basis as the demand for this course is less regular and sustained than for the first two target groups. ASIST has been involved in the quality control of these courses as well as in their marketing. As from 1 January 2000, these international courses are fully institutionalised within KTC.

In 1998/99 the demand for new international courses was assessed for community-executed urban works and supervisors of labour-based road contracts respectively. The potential demand for both categories appeared adequate and in 1999, KTC developed and ran a pilot course for labour-based road contract supervisors. Whereas the evaluation rated this course as satisfactory, additional efforts have to be made to produce a complete set of internationally relevant course materials for this target group. In respect of the community-executed urban works, an initial assessment has been made of the demand for and nature of an international course and an inaugural pilot course has just been developed. The subscription to this course for planners and engineers, which will be held in Dar es Salaam in partnership with UCLAS (University College of Land and Architectural Studies), goes far beyond the availability of seats. The course participants will therefore cover the costs of this course and the next course should follow suit.

Specific inputs on rural accessibility planning were developed and integrated as awareness creation sessions into the regular engineers' and senior technicians' courses at KTC. Eventually, the target group for a complete international course on this subject would be Government planners at different levels. Again, the course materials for a course of this nature still need to be developed.

Although some of the other national training institutions are getting more involved in the international market, in terms of the institutionalisation of this component, KTC has proved to be well ahead of other institutions because of:

- its in-house specialised lecturers' capacity;
- its links with the practical labour-based work sites of the Minor Roads Programme and the Roads 2000 initiative;
- its facilities for catering and hosting international courses;
- its specialised experience in organising study tours and guiding international courses.

Its weaknesses are related to its very limited management base, its marketing capacity and its limited research and development capability. For these aspects KTC remains heavily dependent on external support, to date provided through ASIST and the SDC bilateral programme.

Other institutions such as ESAMI could provide commercial courses and do marketing, but lack the specialist expertise and practical programme links of KTC.

Some international courses in the labour-based technology field have been developed and are conducted on a commercial basis by European consulting firms (such as Intech Associates and

TRL) and universities (e.g. IHE Delft, Loughborough). These courses are of shorter duration without practical fieldwork and are in general aimed at the upper end of the market. The daily costs for these courses is 50 to 100% higher than the longer and more practical courses provided by KTC.

Even though these courses operate fairly independently of ASIST, promotion of the courses and limited technical support are provided by ASIST at international forums and through publications. However, a case has been made by the providers that the courses should receive more attention from ASIST, in particular in terms of accreditation and a more comprehensive promotion of accredited labour-based technology courses at large.

2.3.3 Information services

The specialised information services provided by ASIST (now both from Harare and Nairobi) have become recognised by a wide range of users as a comprehensive and unique service in the fields covered. The number of enquiries has been steadily rising, while the streamlining and structuring of the response system has led to a decrease in the time requirements to deal with individual information requests. ASIST sells books and other documents on a cost recovery basis and has been allowed to sell ILO publications for which it obtains similar discounts as the book retailers used by the ILO. The details of these aspects are reported on in the different progress reports.

During the ASIST III programme period, contacts have been made with other information providers in the different fields covered by ASIST (e.g. ITDG, CSIR, SKAT, Universities) in order to assess their capacity and willingness to take over some or all of the information services currently provided by ASIST. Two major factors are evident in this respect:

- first, the provision of comprehensive information services of this nature cannot be independently commercialised and will require subsidies for the costs of staff and facilities. Only certain elements can be commercialised (e.g. the distribution of priced publications), depending on the objectives of the service and the financial capacities of the clients;
- second, the type of services provided by ASIST are unique in that they focus on a well defined, specialised and expanding market. This market is currently only partly covered, and in a fragmented way by the institutions mentioned above.

Whereas it may be feasible to hand over part of the ASIST information services to a combination of the above providers, the disappearance of this central and specialised service would undoubtedly adversely affect the level and quality of information reaching the end users. ASIST information specialists, although being very conversant with the technology and available material, rely to a large degree on the information from the advisers in terms of acquisition of material and their assistance in providing quality and targeted information.

Again, the comprehensiveness of the services provided by ASIST is one of its landmarks, and there must be a very good alternative produced, i.e. developed, if these services were to be discontinued. Apart from shedding some of the most commercial elements, there is in fact a bigger scope for the services to largely remain within the responsibility of the ILO. There may be less to lose by working for such an institutionalisation strategy than to rapidly transfer the services to a non-sustainable commercial service, a service that partner agencies and private actors would not fully appreciate.

3 ASIST OF TOMORROW - Some Challenges for ASIST IV

3.1 Choice of Technology - How to ensure that planners and policy-makers are aware of, believe in, committed to, optimising the use of local resources?

3.1.1 Background

Technology choices that optimise the use of local resources have been incorporated into a number of projects in ASIST's target countries. Most of these projects have been in the rural road sector, but an increasing number are being developed for the urban infrastructure sector, and more recently in the water storage sector.

The main argument for employment-intensive investments is that there exist technology alternatives favourable to employment. However, the viability of these alternatives depends upon the cost of labour, relative prices and exchange rates.

Where the cost of labour is low, and where relative prices and exchange rates are market-determined, the argument for employment-intensive investment is strong. In these circumstances public and private investments can be relatively more labour-intensive, provided institutional constraints can be overcome, such as access by small enterprises to tenders, information, training, etc.

Employment or labour-intensive investments, in poverty areas, in assets of benefit to the poor are a means not only of generating employment, but also of fighting poverty. Here the argument for pro-employment technology choices must be coupled with an argument for pro-poor investments. Technology would be one criterion, and choice of infrastructure or assets would be the other.

Labour-based technology can be applied to public and community works programmes encompassing among others afforestation, irrigation, rural roads, soil conservation, urban infrastructure works, and water supplies. The use of this technology can result in the creation of direct and indirect benefits to the poorer parts of the population. Examples of these benefits include:

- the creation of jobs in the rural and urban areas where other wage earning opportunities did not exist before;
- the acquisition of skills by workers for maintenance of the infrastructure;
- the creation of community infrastructure assets;
- the fostering of a sense of ownership on the part of the beneficiaries;
- the empowerment of communities in the management of rural and urban infrastructure assets created;
- the increased use of local resources, reducing dependency upon imported heavy equipment, fuels, spare parts and lubricants, and;
- the saving of scarce foreign exchange, while channelling money into the local economy.

3.1.2 The present situation

Much of the investment funding for infrastructure provision in ASIST's target countries is donor driven. A common approach is that the donor will commission a study to identify possible investment opportunities, based on a needs assessment dialogue with government. Out of this will come a project document, which has probably been written by donor staff, or by consultants

appointed by the donors. The project will then be put to government for approval and execution. The choice of technology incorporated into this project document will most likely reflect the views and experience of the planning team, and of the government staff they deal with. If these people have little or no knowledge or experience of the potential for making specific use of local resources in the provision of infrastructure, this choice of technology will not be written into the project document.

In most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa the present situation is that there is no formal mechanism to ensure that technology choices about optimising the use of local resources are made during the project planning process. This means that opportunities to invest in employment-generating activities are generally overlooked, and therefore the opportunity is lost.

In a recent example from Tanzania, an agricultural development project targeted towards marginalised districts in the northwest of the country earmarked over half the funds for the rehabilitation of farm-to-market roads and small dams. The project document assumed that all this work would be given out to machine-based contractors. Such contractors have to invest heavily in imported plant, spares, fuel and lubricants. Since under-employment is widespread in the beneficiary villages, a re-planning of the project deliverables could have pumped considerable amounts of money into the local economy. The reason why the project document was not written with an employment-intensive bias is that the planners did not know about the possibility and subsequently, did not consider this as an issue.

3.1.3 How to respond to the present situation

If more employment-intensive investments are to be promoted, there are two main target groups that need to be sensitised to the potential for optimising the use of local resources: government staff and donor staff/consultants. The government staff in particular need to be drawn from the highest level of the decision-making structure, since these are the people who decide how investment funds will be spent.

Since staff comes and goes, this sensitisation exercise needs to be repeated from time to time. For the sake of continuity, there also needs to be a constant reference centre or unit that can promote, advise on, and be a certain watchdog concerning the application of employment-intensive investments.

An appropriate mechanism for the initial sensitisation process is the short seminar or workshop. It will be beneficial to have members from both target groups in the same workshop together. The workshops should be long enough to treat the issues adequately, and to provide opportunities for the participants to work through case study exercises. On the other hand, they should be short enough to allow busy staff to be absent from their desks for the whole period of the workshop without jeopardising their work commitments.

As regards the reference unit, one option is to establish a cell similar to the LAPPCOM unit in Uganda or the Labour-based Forum presently being set up in Namibia. The location of this cell is crucial. It must command respect for its professional approach and advice, and at the same time be seen as an influential agent of government policy development and implementation.

Although there was implicit in ASIST III a certain amount of advocacy work in promoting the application of labour-based technology, comparatively few resources were allocated to this aspect of the programme. Resources were planned for and subsequently directed towards technical backstopping of ongoing projects, and to designing new ones. However, experience has shown that the policy-enabling environment is essential if employment-intensive investments are to become institutionalised, such that the existing "pilot" projects can be mainstreamed.

ASIST should therefore devote more resources to establishing this enabling environment. Specifically, it can set up and run the initial sensitisation workshops described above, and be instrumental, perhaps in conjunction with the ILO/UNDP Jobs for Africa programme, in establishing an employment-intensive investment planning and advisory unit in appropriate government ministries in partner countries.

3.2 How do we involve rural and urban communities in planning for future infrastructure development?

3.2.1 Background

The Access and Rural Employment (ARE) programme component cannot be envisioned without understanding the socio-economic trend globally and related to it, the trends in Africa. It is within this framework where the role of ARE and its contribution can be explored and appreciated.

The world economy has gone through radical changes since 1980s with the introduction of structural adjustment programmes. This process has emphasised economic liberalisation through deregulation of prices and foreign capital controls decreasing state budget deficits through cuts in subsidies, devaluation of national currencies and privatisation of inefficient public enterprises. The primary aim of these policies and instruments have been to bring about improvements in the market for production and services by removing trade barriers and rigidities. However, many developing countries have been ill equipped to take part in and benefit from the increased international trade. The consequences have been reflected in an increase in unemployment, vicious cycle of poverty, social tension over scarce resources and insecurity in many developing countries, including those in Africa.

In response to the global economic trends and changes, the decentralisation policies (among other measures) in many African countries have been pursued and accelerated. This has led to an increased vested responsibility in the regional and local level institutions for economic development and employment creation, though not necessarily with the means to carry this out. Subsequently, the need for building the local capacity for planning, implementation and monitoring is critical if decentralisation is to effectively enable a more rational allocation of scarce resources according to real priorities.

3.2.2 The present situation

Relevant to the serious problems of unemployment and poverty in Africa, the ARE interventions maintains its focus on improving rural access contributing to a reduction of poverty in rural areas. There is an inherent relationship between lack of access to socio-economic services / facilities and poverty. These services are often not accessible to rural populations depriving them from employment opportunities, education, health care, safe water, markets, etc. Unless a community has access to these facilities and services, it has little chance of pulling itself out of poverty. There is a strong felt need to address these problems of rural access in many African countries.

In general, ASIST activities have substantially contributed to the increased awareness on serious problems of rural access in target countries and among target groups. Achievements of the component, as explained in the reports, have been reflected in the provision of services regarding:

- project technical and advisory support in rural accessibility planning and implementation of access interventions, focusing on building the capacity at the district level;
- contribution to the development of Rural Travel and Transport (RTT) policies;
- production and dissemination of information materials;
- provision of information services on rural accessibility issues;
- training services on rural accessibility planning;
- inputs to regional and international conferences and seminars;
- collaboration with, and technical support to universities and training institutions.

In addition, there has been a close collaboration with UN organisations, donor agencies, World Bank, the International Forum for Rural Transport and Development (IFRTD), NGOs and other development agencies on initiatives pertinent to rural accessibility planning, research and studies, institutional capacity building and production of information and training materials. This has

increased the profile of this component and the demand for services with less use of resources than would have been possible in the absence of the collaborating and co-ordinating efforts.

To have a maximum impact and an effective use of available resources, the focus of the component activities has been on a few countries with interest in the rural accessibility services. The emphasis has been on the facilitating role of project activities, the quality of what has been provided, building the local capacity for planning and implementation and a proper monitoring services.

3.2.3 How to respond to the present situation

ARE in view of its past experiences, lessons learned and achievements can address the aforementioned problems and contribute to closing the existing technical and advisory gaps. ARE achievements provide strong indications of the programme being on the right path, with a strategy and interventions which are addressing rural poverty and unemployment. ARE interventions will continue their focus on:

- contributing to sustainability and institutionalisation of activities through:
 - building the local capacity in planning, implementation and monitoring based on a need-based, multi-sectoral, gender sensitive and participatory approach, linked to available resources, the existing planning structure and development goals at different levels. This is complementary to on-going and planned initiatives of governments, donors and development organisations in many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. The created synergy will greatly contribute to a better and more efficient use of scarce resources in the region;
 - expanding the existing collaboration with major rural travel and transport players / partners and UN organisations in the region through complementary and joint activities and pilot projects;
 - increasing the technical and advisory support to training and learning institutions, universities, NGOs and local organisations while maintaining the on-going type of support to these institutions;
- identifying gaps in information and training material, producing and disseminating manuals, training and information materials on subjects pertinent to:
 - planning and rural access;
 - gender and transport;
 - rural infrastructure;
 - financial management for affordable, appropriate and accessible means of transport;
 - impact studies of pilot projects related to rural access;
- assisting governments and local NGOs to raise funds for implementation of pilot projects whose focus are on improvement of rural accessibility.

3.3 Community participation in infrastructure works – widening the scope?

3.3.1 Background

The last years have seen a renewed interest in community participation and management in infrastructure works both in rural and urban areas. Governments, NGOs and donor agencies alike embrace the new trend, in which communities might be given a passive role (being consulted), active role (provide ideas), or may even manage the interventions. The approach has many advantages:

- infrastructure works may be planned according to the needs of communities;
- it may create a feeling of ownership;
- it may create skills for community maintenance of created assets;

- partnerships between Governments, private sector and community organisations may reduce construction and maintenance costs.

However, few guidelines exist on the most appropriate levels and modalities for community involvement in infrastructure provision. The risks are thus that:

- community participation remains a buzz-word, while in reality communities have no influence;
- quality of works may be reduced due to inadequate technical support to communities;
- communities may become overburdened with work and responsibilities.

A trend strengthening community participation is the ongoing decentralisation process. Responsibilities are decentralised from central to local level, where decision making is closer to the people. Often, participatory processes are being developed for community involvement in the planning of infrastructure. However, the trend requires capacity building at the local level to manage the process and adopt labour-based technologies and community participation techniques.

Many countries have set up Social Development Funds or Poverty Eradication Funds, which generally aim to alleviate poverty through participatory processes. Community infrastructure provision tends to be one of the services provided.

Labour-based methodologies fit well into the approach of community participation, since it allows for local employment creation and skill development in construction and maintenance of community infrastructure. The new trends thus provide ample scope for labour-based approaches.

3.3.2 Present situation

The trends described above result in an expansion of the target group for labour-based works. It is no longer only engineers working for the Central Government who deal with labour-based works, but also Government staff at local councils, project managers and managers of social development programmes, NGOs and CBOs. As a result, ASIST receives more requests for technical advice, training and information from people unaware of the specific requirements of labour-based technology and unaware of appropriate levels of community participation in infrastructure works. The requests deal with many kinds of public infrastructure works, be it roads and tracks, water crossing structures, drainage, irrigation, water supply, soil and water conservation or other kinds.

With the World Food Programme, the ILO has developed a guideline on "Food for Assets and Sustainable Employment" (FASE). The guide aims to bring topics together which are relevant for food-for-work and to provide key points on planning, design, monitoring and evaluation of food-for-work projects. Community participation is one of the key concepts.

ILO recently published the guide on "Labour Policies and Practices", which addresses issues such as appropriate levels of pay in community projects. However, practices differ widely and different organisations use different approaches (no pay or self-help, food-for-work, payments in kind and cash). Labour productivity and quality of work differ hugely. Dissemination of the guidelines and awareness creation are important to promote sound labour practices in community-based works.

3.3.3 How to respond to the present situation

It is on this background of a renewed interest in community participation that possible new or larger target groups are brought into the field of labour-based technology. Most of them are not yet familiar with professional labour-based technology and community participation techniques for infrastructure works. As a result, ASIST services should be expanded to include those new organisations. More specifically, ASIST may:

- (i) create awareness on labour-based technology and participatory techniques (such as community contracting) within the new target groups. Not only should labour-based technology be promoted, but also the associated quality standards and productivity should be addressed as key issues for community-based projects;

- (ii) disseminate information that is accessible to technical and non-technical staff, NGOs and community organisations. The required information is not always available and should be developed;
- (iii) provide technical advice and training to the new target groups;
- (iv) develop and disseminate working papers and guidelines on the appropriate level of community participation for (labour-based) infrastructure works, payment systems, standards of infrastructure, methodologies of construction and maintenance work and quality control, and partnership arrangements.

3.4 How to establish and disseminate best practices in Rural Infrastructure Works?

3.4.1 Background

ILO had a large support to multi-sectoral programmes in the 70s and 80s through its Special Public Works Programme. This worked in parallel to the Construction Technology Programme. Whilst the two programme had much in common, they had a different approach to the implementation strategy. The Special Public Works Programme was more of a response to natural and man-made catastrophes like droughts, flooding, wars, etc. whilst the Construction Technology Programme worked with sectoral ministries to develop a professional cadre of labour-based planners, engineers and technicians. The former had large investment funds over a short period of time to disperse with marginal long-term effects as a result, the latter focused on the long-term development targets with sustainable capacities as a result.

The capacity building within the CTP had a focus, to a large extent, on the road sector and could single out pertinent problems and address these. The multi-sectoral programme faced, logically, a multi-faceted range of challenges which were much more difficult to solve, in particular when they were carried out with a very strong desire to deliver over a short period of time. Nevertheless, major experiences were gained and some has been documented in terms of technical documents and training manuals.

3.4.2 The present situation

The road sector activities are progressing well with many countries. ILO has followed the market situation (major investments to the road sector and high gains/differences in employment effects) and has developed the labour-based technology for force account operations by public and community operators, as well as for the new private sector environment. Technically, the work has been developed to a level where refinements obviously still are needed and desired, but competent technical advisers and consultants can simply transfer much of the knowledge from one place to the other. There is however still a continued need and demand for the dissemination and promotion of the achievements in the labour-based road sector construction and maintenance technology.

Whereas the road sector "always" will be there, the other sector have been given less priority by the ILO. Much of this stems from the situation described in the background above, but also from the fact that the financing agencies have going been through a period of less focus of the "integrated development programme" type of activities. This situation may be a result of planners not having understood the linkage between providing priority infrastructure at local level which facilitates social and economic development, and at the same time capitalising on the process by providing short- and long-term employment possibilities for local people. The latter is a major factor in injecting some start-up capital into impoverished communities for their entry into a more competitive market than ever.

The need and demand for support to the labour-based development of different types of rural infrastructure is increasing. Many project activities are still continuing along the old lines of equipment-based approaches and international competitive bidding due to lack of knowledge and

capacities to plan and implement labour-based programmes. Many a gravity water supply scheme could have been built using local contractors and national competitive bidding among a cadre of labour-based civil engineering contractors if available. They could be implementing soil and water conservation programmes either linked to water supply schemes or irrigation development for small holder farmers.

The rural access interventions identified by the communities and given priority by investors, necessitates a labour-based production capacity at local level. Health centres and clinics, schools, market places, tracks and trails, paths, footbridges, etc. are infrastructure elements which can and should be carried out by communities and/or supporting contractors using labour-based methods.

Indeed, more and more communities and supporting agencies like district councils are requesting support in the application of labour-based approaches to their infrastructure development following increased awareness among agencies and the local people themselves.

Among agencies, there is an increased focus on health and education and on democratisation processes. Social funds are also providing an increased funding of rural infrastructure, which facilitates the social and economic development with a focus on the above sectors. Whilst infrastructure development in itself has been questioned as a goal in itself, there is a renewed focus on appropriate rural infrastructure as a means to reach the bold goals of poverty eradication.

3.4.3 How to respond to the present situation

A labour-based approach is an efficient means of production which goes well with recent priorities as outlined above. ASIST will contribute to the expanded applicability of labour-based approach for a larger part of the rural infrastructure investment. This will be done by expanding the present knowledge base to professional organisation cover:

- irrigation development programmes with a focus on small holder farmers;
- soil and water conservation matters;
- water supply schemes;
- rural access infrastructure.

New partnership arrangements will be explored, as will contracting mechanisms and financing instruments. The operation and maintenance functions will be a major focus of these programmes. The development of local capacities among communities and their members, as well as among the sectoral ministries to provide adequate policies, procedures and a legal framework, will be important for the fulfilment of these objectives.

Much will be built on the former and ongoing labour-based programmes in these fields. As much of the civil engineering work can be mutually beneficial to different sectors, a synergy effect is expected from these complementary programmes.

The work in different sectors also provide the contractors with a wider base for their operations compared to many of the present programmes where the contractors are specialised on road sector activities only. Both their technical training and, in particular, their business training need to be enhanced to cater for the new challenges faced by a diversification. Experiences show that whereas the diversification provide a very much needed base for expansion and growth, a fundamental feature of the contracting business, it may also provide a much too large challenge for a contractor not having been nurtured with that perspective in mind. The focus of ASIST work with contractor diversification will be to analyse the market situation for the "rural contractor" in order to provide targeted training which ensure a sustainable growth and development path for the contractors.

3.5 How to improve the environment for small-scale contracting in infrastructure provision?

3.5.1 Background

Small-scale contracting development in the provision of infrastructure has been around for some years now. The focus on such development was accented following the move from centrally planned to market economies in a major part of the African countries. A lot of these programmes combine the national and/or small-scale contracting development with an employment-intensive approach to infrastructure development.

Much has been learned and a lot has been written about experiences gained and approaches developed to foster a new contracting industry build on sound engineering and business practices. Among others, ILO has developed guidelines and recommendations on how to support the development of contractors for construction and maintenance of infrastructure, and in particular rural road infrastructure. The contracting environment has likewise been given a lot of attention in the form of necessary changes to the rules of the game, to levelling the playing field and to introducing measures that will nurture the future capacity by the private sector to provide such necessary services to society.

3.5.2 The present situation

Although the competitiveness of the labour-based technology has been proven for many major tasks in the new contracting environment; demonstration programmes and documentation are available, the situation is however still calling for improved emphasis on a number of issues. This stems from different factors, among others the fact that the focus of the development programme has been on the direct support to the contractors in forms of technical, managerial and business training, access to capital and, access to continued work. The latter has proved to be one of the major challenges.

The decentralisation process underway in many countries has meant that the clients of infrastructure development work have changed from central ministries or agencies to those of the local authorities, governments and communities.

Already with the central agency responsible for the contracting of works, contractors often run the risk of being without work for a shorter or longer period. Whilst shortage of funds is a main contributor to the lack of work, it has been experienced that even with funds available, work is too often not available to the trained contractors. When it comes to the local authorities, it has been no surprise that the experience is even worse than within the central ministries. Most local agencies do not possess the necessary skills in planning and programming, contract preparation, management and supervision. They are also notorious for not having funds available on time for the settlement of work certificates.

Another element of great concern is the bias, amongst clients, against the letting of (many) small contracts instead of a big contract to one contractor. This is leaving the infrastructure works with major and often international contracts. Whereas it may be argued that an increased workload is one of the major reasons for the reluctance to let smaller contracts, it is evident that the incentives understood to be a part of larger contracts result in clients favouring larger equipment-based contractors. Corruption within ill-prepared contract management units and their superior organisations contribute seriously to the somewhat ineffective growth of small-scale labour-based contractors. The potential is much greater.

Many countries are members of the road sector reform programme being promoted by the lending and donor agencies. These programmes do to a certain degree address the issue of contract management capacity. However, so far the focus has tended to be more related to the establishment of financing systems and the development of a financial management capacity. Too little has been done in capacity building for maintenance contracting, spot improvement systems

and small contract management. This is particular true when it comes to the local level outside major cities where a majority of the small-scale infrastructure investments will be found.

3.5.3 How to respond to the present situation

The decentralisation vogue calls for an increased focus on the need to support the development of contract management capacities at local level. Only by decentralising the functions of contract preparation and supervision, as well as approval of certificates and payments, the potential of the investments manipulated to larger international (and national) contractors can be tapped into.

The work has to be closely linked to the local governance programmes presently being supported by many countries in the region. It is in particular necessary to promote the idea and support the agencies in developing the decentralised management structures and production capacities of their agencies. Many a local authority will learn that they actually need to strengthen the engineering capacities without losing out too much on the other fronts of administrative functions. Looking at the present division of responsibilities and allocation of tasks within the local authorities, it is however clear that the number of technical staff will continue to be a strain on the future of the local authorities. Comprehensive and long-term plans for the development of this capacity and for securing funding will have to be given a high priority by responsible planners, advisers and politicians alike.

An important support can be provided to clients in this process by the development of local consultants. The lack of appropriate consultants with low mobilisation costs and a knowledge and comprehension of the need for appropriate technology solutions to local needs must be overcome with a targeted training of consultants. These consultants do not necessarily possess the higher level of technical qualifications, but they rather come from the level of field engineers and technicians with the right attitude and experience, somebody who do not necessarily aspire to move to the city as soon as possible. Only then will local agencies be able to procure services at a cost affordable to them. Only then are the services likely to remain in the region or province and be at their disposal also for future assignments.

ASIST should continue and accentuate the development process of local consultants initiated over the recent years. The programmes initiated lately in Lesotho and Zambia must be capitalised upon, the strategy initiated and linked to private international consultants must be strengthened and the partnership brought into being with international organisations like PIARC will be useful in the support to this programme. The ASIST partner consultants will have a major role to play in the further development of the local consultants' capacity building programme.

3.6 How do we support infrastructure upgrading in low-income urban areas?

3.6.1 Background

In 2015, for the first time in history, more people in developing countries will live in urban than in rural areas ¹. The challenge facing the developing world today is to cope with the adverse consequences of rapid urbanisation, which include a deteriorating living environment and high unemployment. Nearly a third of the world's urban population is living in a state of absolute poverty, whereby the incidence of urban poverty is highest in African cities ². According to the Human Development Report 1992 of the UNDP, the rate of urbanisation is expanding at about 7 % per year, particularly in urban slums and squatter settlements (for further information, see Urban Employment Guidelines, ILO, 1998).

¹ United Nations, 1995

² ILO, 1998, The Future of Urban Employment.

In some African cities 50-70 % of the residents live in unplanned settlements (e.g. Dar es Salaam, Nairobi, Lusaka, etc.) that lack basic services such as water and sanitation, access roads, drainage structures and waste management. Severe health hazards are resulting of the prevailing situation, cholera and malaria are just two examples of diseases which are widespread and increasing due to the growth of unplanned settlements often on very marginal and flood-prone lands.

In the past, many governments felt that these unplanned settlements were only a temporary phenomenon and would disappear as soon as the economic situation would improve. However, time shows that this has not happened and the number of people living in unplanned settlements is only increasing (Kibera is an unplanned settlement in Nairobi with half a million people, in South Africa Khaelitsha outside Cape Town is said to house some 1.5-2.0 million inhabitants). Many African governments have by now recognised that unplanned settlements will not disappear, that the available resources for a full urban infrastructure development is not available in the medium term perspective, and are therefore embarking on policies to provide basic services to the urban poor.

3.6.2 The present situation

The labour-based and community-managed approach has been developed and promoted by ASIST to support local communities and local authorities in improving basic infrastructure in low-income areas. Within this approach, emphasis is given to:

- the use of local resources and the promotion of labour-based methods;
- improving the living and working condition of the urban poor;
- skills upgrading and the creation of employment opportunities;
- capacity building of local communities and councils, and;
- partnership arrangements between government, communities and private sector.

The future challenge for many governments to provide basic services in unplanned settlements is vast, and it includes:

- lack of resources. Governments and donors are still mainly focusing on addressing rural poverty. In addition, in many countries the decentralisation of funds to councils has only just begun and especially councils often lack funds, manpower and equipment;
- lack of knowledge on appropriate methodologies whereby local resources are used to improve basic infrastructure. For example, the Ministry of Local Government and the Urban Councils in Kenya were not aware of, or did not link with the possibility of using labour-based methods, despite the 25 years of experience in labour-based rural road construction in Kenya. Therefore, study tours have been conducted recently (involving 40 municipal officials) to Kisii Training Centre. Lesotho is another example where the Labour Construction Unit is very experienced in labour-based road construction since many years, but the Maseru City Council has only recently adopted the approach for urban upgrading works following an awareness raising from outside. Unfortunately the Maseru City Council still lacks the know-how and experience in applying labour-based methods;
- unaffordable standards for infrastructure and services, which have been set at levels that are way beyond the capacity of urban councils. Urban infrastructure is expensive if the current conventional standards are being applied. It will also result in serious demolitions of already built houses. In the short to medium term, such an approach would be too costly for an application on a wider scale. Appropriate standards could include the acceptance of gravel roads for low-volume access roads within settlements or alternative surfacing methods and techniques, both which can be maintained by the community themselves;
- rapid urbanisation which exceeds the capacities of urban councils to deliver even basic services. Local government authorities are not able to address the problems themselves. Therefore, they have to work in partnership with Non-Governmental Organisations, Community-Based Organisations and the private sector. In Uganda and Tanzania, community contracts have been developed to formalise these partnerships;

- lack of suitable maintenance arrangements. It has been recognised that, in the short term, Local Government Authorities will not have sufficient resources to regularly carry out maintenance activities including those in unplanned settlements. Therefore the sense of ownership and the availability of skills within the community will be essential for establishing routine maintenance arrangements. For example, in an unplanned settlement in Dar es Salaam a toll-road system was established and authorised by the council, whereby the community collected funds from users for routine maintenance. The community issued small maintenance contracts to community contractors who had been involved in the construction of the infrastructure.

3.6.3 How to respond to the present situation

ASIST must strive to:

- (i) provide policy guidance and awareness creation on the use of labour-based and community managed approaches in urban upgrading;
- (ii) develop and disseminate best practices (guidelines) on labour-based community managed urban construction and maintenance;
- (iii) mainstream the current experiences and integrate the approach in large-scale investment programmes. Establish labour-based support units at country level;
- (iv) develop demonstration projects in countries that are not yet familiar with labour-based urban upgrading works;
- (v) network with other organisations and institutions such as UNCHS (Habitat), WEDC, CARE International, IHS, IHE;
- (vi) develop appropriate technology related to drainage, drinking water supply, sewerage, street pavement, etc.;
- (vii) develop and facilitate training for all partners;
- (viii) develop contracting and maintenance guidelines;
- (ix) develop and disseminate labour policies and practices in community works.

3.7 How to cope with solid waste management in urban unplanned settlements?

3.7.1 Background

Urban low-income areas are characterised by a high-density population and hardly any services from urban councils. One of the services needed is waste collection. People are producing waste. Normally low-income households produce less waste than high-income households, and a higher proportion of the waste is organic. However, the lower waste production per household is more than compensated by the higher population density. For example, an average sized unplanned settlement of 20 000 people produce a daily waste of approximately 33 m³ (0.5 kg/person and density of 300kg/m³).

The municipal authorities do not regularly service low-income areas and the waste is dumped at various places within and at the border of the settlement. Some households, in an attempt to clean the environment, bury the waste, but this causes health hazards as it pollutes the drinking water that is often derived from shallow wells. In many cases there is not enough space to bury the waste and households will dump it in drains and at roadsides.

It should be emphasised that many urban dwellers do appreciate a clean environment and do understand the health hazards related to waste, but they have simply no solution to the problem as they are living with the following situation:

- no collection by authorities;

- no appointed dump sites close to the settlement. The distance to the legal municipal or city dumpsite can easily amount to 30 - 50 km;
- no organisation at the settlement level, and;
- unclear land ownership preventing communities to appoint dump sites themselves.

3.7.2 The present situation

Upgrading in low-income urban settlements will be difficult if the problems within the settlement are not addressed in an integrated way. Solid waste management will influence all other infrastructure construction and maintenance activities, and although various organisations provide support to local authorities to manage waste at city level (e.g. UNCHS), little has been done on waste collection in low-income areas.

The linkage between solid waste collection and the existing ASIST urban programme includes:

- the connection between the need for maintained and clean drains and the lack of solid waste collection;
- the need for access roads and tracks for waste collection;
- the construction of transfer stations;
- the focus on community based groups and partnerships with councils through community contracts;
- community-based waste collection systems is a lasting type of employment-intensive service delivery, providing employment opportunities to a large number of people.

In general, it can be said that urban infrastructure upgrading activities are only sustainable if an appropriate solid waste collection system is in place.

3.7.3 How to respond to the present situation

The ASIST experience in Dar es Salaam and other places has indicated that low-income communities and councils are willing to provide time and money to set up a community based waste collection system. ASIST can help those communities and councils with the following issues:

- (i) assist with setting up private community waste collection groups under a simple contracting system (e.g. community contracts). This could be combined with routine maintenance activities on roads and drains. The construction or rehabilitation of infrastructure should facilitate a general awareness in the community that the urban environment can be improved;
- (ii) assist in designing and building (preferably with contractors) transfer stations at the border of the settlement. The transfer station should be easily accessible for community groups with wheelbarrows and handcarts depositing the waste and to the council trucks or tractors collecting the waste;
- (iii) integrate the upgrading of infrastructure (such as storm water drainage, access roads and drinking water supply) with the community waste collection system (for example the water fee could include a waste collection fee);
- (iv) make linkages with other waste programmes on recycling and land fill/dump site construction. Labour-based methods can be very suitable for the construction of landfills/dump sites. The design of such elements must be made in close co-operation with other specialised agencies;
- (v) providing information services to cities/institutions/projects regarding urban infrastructure development. The ILO waste management project in Dar es Salaam (which will probably end in December 99 without any heritage project) receives regular requests for information on their systems and experiences. The ASIST office already has a substantial document collection on solid waste management and the materials collected by the Dar es Salaam

project can be made available to ASIST to ensure continuity of the services after closure of the waste project.

Therefore ASIST should have a mandate in developing and implementing appropriate approaches on community-based solid waste management with a focus on the above-mentioned 5 points.

3.8 Community contracting - What are the modalities for contracting out urban community works?

3.8.1 Background

The rapid urbanisation far exceeds the capacities of local authorities to develop and carry out city development plans. As a result, in many cities in developing countries the urban poor live in unplanned settlements without basic services.

The urban low-income settlements are characterised by:

- high unemployment;
- limited space available for infrastructure due to the unplanned character and high population density;
- lack of basic infrastructure services such as safe drinking water supply, drainage, access, and sanitation;
- insecurity of land tenure;
- lack of resources.

Involving the communities in planning, design and implementation of works would facilitate solutions regarding lack of space and land tenure as communities can negotiate between themselves compensation related to the use of land for essential infrastructure. By carrying out the works using labour-based methods and by involving residents in the actual construction activities skills upgrading and employment opportunities can be created. The residents can later use the skills to carry out maintenance activities within the settlement.

Many of the unplanned settlements are also characterised by high level of criminality (due to lack of law enforcement) and without the full support of the community, contractors are at risk working in these settlements.

3.8.2 The present situation

Community contracting is perceived as a tool for actively involving the community in the implementation of the works. The community members keep the initiative, partnership with the council is promoted and technical and contract management skills are imparted to the community (e.g. Tanzania and Uganda experiences). In addition labour-based contracting starts to be used by large scale programmes such as the Kenya Urban Transport Infrastructure Programme (World Bank) for urban labour-based maintenance contracts and the Community Infrastructure Programme in Dar es Salaam (World Bank, Irish Aid).

In an unplanned settlement in Dar es Salaam infrastructure improvements (storm-water drainage, access roads and drinking water supply) have been carried out with technical assistance from ASIST. A community managed and labour-based approach has been used, whereby employment and skills upgrading of residents within the community was a major objective. During the first years the community expressed their reservations about working with private contractors as they felt they were unreliable and would not employ the labourers from within the settlement. Therefore the infrastructure works during the first years (1994-1996) were carried out with community contracts under guidance of a technical support team and a city engineer. Even major works (1.8 meter deep, lined and reinforced storm water drain) was carried out under community contracts.

However, to allow a comparison and because the community has achieved more skills during these first years, it was agreed that currently some contracts have been tendered to private contractors. Currently two private contractors are working in the unplanned settlement, employing skilled and unskilled labourers from the community.

3.8.3 How to respond to the present situation

The above example in the “present situation” indicates that the experiences during the last years have resulted in strategies being developed and carried out on implementation of construction works in urban low-income areas. ASIST also printed a working paper on community contracting. More and more government authorities, non-governmental organisations and specialised agencies (including consulting firms) request information on community contracting and small-scale (petty) contracting in an urban environment.

Therefore ASIST response should concentrate to:

- (i) study, develop and disseminate best practices (guidelines) on community contracting and labour-based small-scale private contracting in an urban low-income environment. More linkages should be made with different experiences in South Africa and Asia;
- (ii) assist in providing policy guidance on (community) contracting in urban low-income areas;
- (iii) provide technical advice (upon request) on urban small-scale labour-based contracting and documents experiences;
- (iv) develop simple maintenance contract documentation and arrangements;
- (v) develop training on community contracting for urban contract managers (government, NGOs, CBOs);
- (vi) develop training on community contracting for urban labour-based private/community contractors.

3.9 How to provide international training in labour-based technology in a changing market?

3.9.1 Background

One of the main pillars of ASIST is the support to the development and implementation of training courses in labour-based technology for infrastructure planning and development.

Kisii Training Centre (KTC, Kenya), in collaboration with ILO, has provided international courses on labour-based rural road works since 1988. Three courses were developed by the ILO in partnership with KTC:

- rural labour-based road works for Engineers and Managers;
- rural labour-based road works for Senior Technicians;
- rural labour-based road works for Trainers of Trainers.

More than 400 people from Africa and beyond have been trained in these courses. Over time, the management of the courses has been gradually transferred to KTC. As from 1 January 2000, these courses will be fully managed and delivered by KTC and approved by ILO.

The same development has taken place regarding study tours, which started in 1990. Study tours aim to convince policy makers that labour-based technologies are a sound technology choice. They have proven to be very effective.

Other training providers have developed labour-based technology courses in partnership with ILO or individually. These include among others IHE, TRL and Intech Associates. IHE provides an Orientation Course in Labour-based Technology over two weeks (in Delft, Holland), whilst TRL/Intech Associates provides a two-week course in Appropriate Road Technology for

Developing Countries (in England). They also run an International Course in Contract Management for Managers over a two weeks period in Harare, Zimbabwe. All these courses are held annually.

3.9.2 The present situation

While KTC has the capacity to manage and run the mentioned international courses, the market for international training is changing rapidly. The two key changes are:

- countries are moving away from force account operations to contracting;
- the application of labour-based technology is widening to community infrastructure in rural and urban areas.

Although training in contracting, and in particular contractor training, has been undertaken at national levels for a number of years, there has been little available internationally. The above-mentioned course on contract management by Intech Associates is the only relevant example. With a view to the above considerations, work has started to introduce new courses and adjust the present international courses at KTC. In May 1999, KTC ran the first international course for contract supervisors, with assistance from ASIST and SDC. The objective of the course and target group were selected to ensure:

- the training addresses an identified training need (i.e. clients often face difficulties in supervising contracts);
- the training complements the international course on contract management for managers (held by Intech Associates) and complements national training, which tends to be directed at contractors;
- the training makes optimum use of the comparative advantage of KTC, which is that the centre is experienced in running international courses, they have a good physical set-up and practical sites are available for training.

Though the course was evaluated positively by the participants, more work is needed to bring it up to the required international standard. It should in particular be pointed out that KTC staff still have limited exposure to contracting, and that the course content may further be targeted to the specific group of supervisors.

The situation is fairly similar to contracting when it comes to accessibility planning and community participation. ASIST supported KTC to include a section on Integrated Rural Accessibility Planning in its international courses. This is a first step in responding to the growing attention to proper involvement of communities in planning and their participation in labour-based road infrastructure construction, operation and maintenance. Another question is how to respond to the development towards community infrastructure, be it urban or rural (see sections MOmmOO and MunuiMMMM). There is a massive need for training on labour-based technologies for any kind of community infrastructure.

3.9.3 How to respond to the present situation

Focusing on KTC, it is clear that not only should KTC respond to the changing market, but the institutional set-up for training must also become conducive for KTC to remain market oriented. The institutional set-up of the KTC is an area of concern. The Kenya Institute of Highway and Building Technology (KIHABT), of which KTC is a part, has requested to become a quasi-executive agency. As such, KTC might become better placed to respond to the ever-changing market. Furthermore, whilst the trainers at KTC are doing a good job, the capacity of KTC staff must be strengthened to meet the demand of the future.

The other training providers, both those mentioned above and others, who would like to enter or expand into the international market, would benefit from a further recognition, accreditation and support in the promotion of their courses. ASIST should play a role in providing this basis for different providers.

To sum up, the present situation calls for further interventions with KTC in three areas as described below:

- contractor development;
 - support KTC to improve the international course for contract supervisors and assist in producing training material;
 - develop the capacity of KTC in contractor development;
 - adjust all international courses accordingly.
- community participation;
 - add the topic of community participation to the international courses;
 - consider developing training for community infrastructure on labour-based technology;
 - widen the target group of international training to community infrastructure.
- institutional set-up;
 - further build the capacity of KTC staff to respond to the changing market, through training and international exposure;
 - further support KTC to become a market-oriented training institute;
 - continue to approve KTC courses.

Other training providers should be receiving:

- recognition by helping other than KTC to provide training courses for different target groups of labour-based planners, managers, operators and practitioners at large;
- accreditation of courses by ASIST in order to promote an accredited product which therefore would be accepted and catching interest more widely, and;
- support by ASIST in the promotion of their courses. This would be a strengthened marketing effort by ASIST of the accredited courses, a marketing which would go beyond what is practised today.

3.10 How to provide international training on urban labour-based and community-managed upgrading

3.10.1 Background

In November 1998, ASIST conducted a training needs assessment of technical staff working in urban low-income settlements. The assessment was conducted in Kenya and Tanzania through workshops and interviews with engineers, technicians and foremen working for the Government, Private Sector, NGOs and CBOs. Kisii Training Centre (KTC) and ASIST have conducted a training needs assessment for the Hanna Nassif project in Dar es Salaam. The studies revealed that the technical staff was unaware how to:

- work with communities;
- use labour based methods to upgrade low-income settlements;
- set appropriate standards of infrastructure;
- contract work to the private sector and communities.

These problems are frequently experienced in the various initiatives in which ASIST is involved. As a result three courses were proposed:

- course for engineers and planners on sustainable community-managed and labour-based upgrading of urban low-income settlements (two weeks);
- course for foremen concentrating on skills for labour-based and community-managed upgrading (4 weeks);
- course for technicians, combining both courses (3 weeks).

In addition, it was realised that policy makers need to be made aware of the approach through study tours.

3.10.2 Present situation

The first international course for engineers and planners will be held in Dar es Salaam from 1 to 12 November 1999. The course is organised by ASIST, a local organisation and an international consultancy firm. Full course notes have been prepared to allow easy replication. Sixteen to eighteen participants will attend the course, funded by GTZ, NORAD, the Dutch Government, City Councils, UNDP and a consultancy firm.

In partnership with KTC, a foremen course (foremen of the private sector and the community) has been prepared and implemented.

The capacity of KTC to run urban-oriented courses has further been strengthened by:

- developing a partnership between KTC, a CBO and the Municipal Council in Kisii for urban road works with lined drainage. This will allow for practical experience and a potential training site;
- organising study tours together KTC and the Ministry of Local Government in Kenya;
- KTC participation in training course for engineers and planners on urban upgrading;
- promoting partnerships between KTC and the Ministry of Local Government / World Bank "Kenya Urban Transport Infrastructure Programme".

Various study tours have been organised and a standard package has been developed.

3.10.3 How to respond to the present situation

ASIST needs to support the further training development to:

- (i) replicate the international engineers and planners course on urban labour-based and community-managed upgrading, and publish final training material and a handbook on urban labour-based and community-managed upgrading;
- (ii) prepare and pilot the international courses for technicians and foremen, and publish and distribute the training material;
- (iii) institutionalise the international courses, if and when feasible. The engineers and planners course may be institutionalised within the local organisation in Tanzania, in partnership with other agencies. The foremen course, once it has been developed and piloted, may be institutionalised within KTC. This will require considerable local capacity building. Over a period of at least three years, the courses should slowly be transferred to local organisations;
- (iv) facilitate and organise courses "on demand" to respond to specific needs. These are likely to include an urban contractor and maintenance course. Experience gained from these courses should be included into the international courses;
- (v) facilitate and organise study tours for policy makers, to create more awareness on labour-based and community-managed upgrading of urban low-income settlements;
- (vi) facilitate the participation of training centres in urban labour-based and community-managed works and the development of urban training sites.

3.11 How to rejuvenate and expand ILO's research role?

3.11.1 Background

ILO has always been active in research into improvements in employment-intensive investments. In the 1970's there was a clear need to develop proper information on the choice of technology and the use of local resources including labour. In particular there was a great deal of research activity

into best practices, including methods of work and appropriate hand-tools which centred around the Kenyan Rural Access Roads Programme (RARP). This was later expanded to include research on appropriate equipment, community involvement, and socio-economic issues.

As awareness of the concept of labour-based methods has increased (although it is by no means as widely accepted as it could be), the research needs and implementation have become less focused. The working environment and the globalisation of the economy have posed new challenges to Governments and private sector alike. Labour-based practitioners are no exception and those responsible for planning and managing infrastructure need to address systematically several issues linked to labour-based technology in the new environment. Although efforts have been made to address issues during the period of resources diminution, ILO and ASIST must play a more active role in research and development work.

3.11.2 The present situation

What are the new and continuing challenges facing the proponents and implementers of labour-based programmes? In brief, some of them could be, as described below:

- appropriateness of labour-based technology:
 - to continue the provision of evidence of the competitiveness and quality of labour-based works;
 - to assess the impact on the technology and its application with a view to the trend towards decentralisation by governments in the region;
 - in line with the above, to assess the improvement to client organisation and capabilities;
- appropriate standards of roads and tracks:
 - to look at the “trade-off” between expensive road construction standards and the subsequent cost of maintenance;
 - to increase the amount of spot improvement work being carried out on low-volume roads;
 - to look at the replacement of gravel as the main surfacing material for many rural roads;
 - to make available appropriate surfacing technology to enable sealed surfacing of sections of low-volume roads;
- urban infrastructure works:
 - to make available appropriate surfacing technology available to enable sealed surfacing of community urban roads;
- appropriateness of small-scale contractor development approaches:
 - to possibly increase the use of locally-based small contractors;
 - to increase the development and breadth of work for locally-based contractors to different sectors;
- assistance to different implementers of labour-based works:
 - to improve the understanding and capacity of other players to capitalise on present knowledge, such as the implementers of food-for-work schemes, social fund investments, etc.;
- access interventions:
 - to provide information to implementers and artisans, which could be in the form of guidelines and training manuals, on a number of interventions like infrastructure elements and services. The information will largely be based on studies of available documentation from previous projects and programmes related to these fields;
- financial management of Intermediate Means of Transport.

Much of the above work cannot be dealt with in isolation from the fact that, increasingly, work will be carried out by the private sector, and in some cases will be let by district / provincial authorities

rather than central ministries. The question is what are the implications of these trends and how will they affect the formulation of the research work?

3.11.3 How to respond to the present situation

ASIST should have the capacity to co-ordinate, develop with partners, contribute to and comment on as well as reinforce proposals for research. The bridging of countries and programmes will improve the chance that research ideas related to labour-based technology will complement one another, reduce overlap, and possibly allow for trials and testing under different conditions which will enable wider reaching conclusions to be drawn.

The benefits will be that researchers are kept informed about developments and can make more informed proposals and co-operate in reducing costs and increasing the applicability of their research.

Perhaps more important is that together with main research partners, a strategy could be mapped out on the most important issues to be investigated and the interest of various partners in the implementation and outcome of the research. This process will have to recognise the competitive nature of many of the organisations involved in research and the reservations there may be about sharing ideas. However, based on earlier experience, the research institutions and donors may be more willing to share their ideas and develop a framework with ASIST than with other private commercial research institutions. The "regular" group of consultants working for and with ASIST will be very useful partners for research institutions, and ASIST will be able to bridge these knowledge bases.

Why is a new approach needed? There needs to be a pooling of resources and preparation of a research focus that can act as an umbrella under which various initiatives can be accommodated. The purpose of the umbrella is to act as a framework within which various pieces of research will be developed and undertaken, to produce compatible and verifiable results, which will reinforce the findings of parallel studies or research works.

3.12 How to fully exploit the developments in information technology to effectively disseminate information on employment-intensive works?

3.12.1 Background

The world is rapidly becoming an information society. People and organisation are recognising the value of information as a resource and are becoming more demanding in their needs for information. The global explosion of information technology presents several challenges and risks, but also opportunities.

In Africa where the trends have been relatively slower in penetrating, there still exists vast opportunities that can be tapped into. Now computers with CD-ROMs can be found in some of the most remote areas; e-mail access is becoming increasingly available to larger numbers of users and access to the Internet is increasing daily.

As awareness and scope for labour-based technology and rural access intervention expands, so has the diversity and number of both the existing ASIST's target group and the future potential. The information needs of these target groups has also diversified. Developments in information technology provide numerous opportunities to effectively and efficiently satisfy these diverse needs.

The increase in access to e-mail and the Internet in the region has meant that more of ASIST's target groups have access to this technology which has led to an increase in demand for information disseminated electronically. Now 50% of the enquiries received and processed by the Information Services are electronic through e-mail.

In addition, ASIST clientele are seeking information synthesised into readily digestible formats, in terms of both content and format. That is, users want information that is relevant to their local situations and concise to rapidly satisfy their needs and also in a format that can be quickly disseminated, assimilated and reproduced if necessary.

What is now required is the ability to **rapidly** provide information in a readily digestible form in terms of content and format to our clients **on demand**. Developments in information technology provide the opportunities to deliver this.

3.12.2 The present situation

In order to achieve ASIST's objective, information dissemination and exchange were recognised as essential tools to the promotion of the effective and efficient use of employment-intensive technology in transport and infrastructure programmes. The Information Services were established to provide timely access to relevant information to various target groups, and to provide a forum for practitioners to network, share and exchange knowledge, skill and experience from around the region.

At the onset of ASIST, information on and related to employment-intensive technology was widely dispersed across various sources and difficult to access. The initial primary focus was therefore to identify and establish links to information sources, gather and catalogue a comprehensive collection of documents of both published and unpublished documents, and develop mechanisms to disseminate information to target user groups. This has been achieved and the Information Services have now evolved to a comprehensive service providing value-added information services and products, supported by a pool of technical advisers, who provide the necessary technical inputs to ensure the quality of the information disseminated.

A vast amount of information has been accumulated and links to other information providers have been established, and the critical challenge is now to improve the accessibility, not only in terms of physical availability, but also in terms of user comprehension.

Currently the primary mode of dissemination is via printed media, where copies of (complete) documents are posted to clients. More recently ASIST has embarked on various initiatives for electronic information dissemination which have proved to be extremely cost effective and have considerably reduced the time required to respond to our clients, these include:

- the distribution of the bibliographic database in electronic format on disk, via e-mail and through the Internet;
- the development of a web-site carrying background information, key documents in full-text and the bibliographic database;
- distribution of full-text electronic documents to clients via e-mail, on diskette and CD-ROM;
- production of the first full text CD-ROM databank of currently available full text electronic documents, databases and other information (currently piloted for internal distribution).

3.12.3 How to respond to the present situation

Although now a growing majority of the ASIST target group have access to basic information technology, from those with a computer maybe including a CD-ROM drive to those with access to the information super highway of Internet; ASIST cannot ignore those who are still relying on paper-based information. The previous and somewhat less cost efficient way of disseminating information will still need to be kept up in the foreseeable future.

Therefore, the nature of the ASIST clientele is such that the Information Services needs to position itself in a way that it can rapidly respond to the varying needs of the clients, be they "information technology enabled" or not. This would entail:

- gathering information in electronic format where possible, and converting key documents to electronic format;

- establishing databanks of electronic information that can be easily manipulated for different purposes, printed on demand when necessary, transmitted electronically to our clients, and also posted on the Internet;
- using appropriate information technology to design information dissemination packages based on who we want the information to reach, how it will be accessed and used by the target audience, i.e. audio-visual materials such as video, TV and radio programs; computer-based presentations for local or on-line dissemination, paper-based material such as guidelines, information leaflets, etc;
- establishing a virtual network for information exchange on the Internet to enable users to pose questions, share their experiences and discuss their ideas. This would be in the form of a discussion group;
- strengthening networking links with related complimentary information providers to stimulate information resource sharing via e-mail and Internet, especially now as the scope for and interest in labour-based technology and rural access intervention expands. This would entail browsing other information sites for relevant information, establishing information exchange networks, establishing more of reciprocal hyperlinks to web-sites of other institutions involved in sectors/areas where a potential exists for labour-based technology and access interventions;
- establishing a network of local intermediaries, focal points who act as “brokers and clearing houses” i.e. involved in both the gathering, storing and dissemination of information locally. These would constitute databanks within the country and could be used as a means to filter information relevant to local norms and values, as they would be able to recognise what suits their local conditions most, what the local needs and interests are. Such focal points would also be valuable as “information gatherers” or collection centres of local information difficult to access by ASIST, particularly if the advisory services have less direct involvement in projects and programmes at country level. These focal points would maintain online Internet/e-mail links as well as offline links to ASIST information services and advisory support for information retrieval and dissemination. These would also be valuable assets in the institutionalisation (particularly as the ASIST offices become more centralised).

3.13 How to get practitioners to take labour issues seriously?

3.13.1 Background

ILO has since its involvement in labour-based construction works always concerned itself with the welfare of the casual workers employed. In the past, much of the work has been carried out using force account (direct labour) operations. It was therefore possible to make provision for and monitor recruitment procedures, payment of wages, minimum age requirements, etc. Although it must be admitted that equal opportunities and speed of payment of wages, amongst others, were far from perfect, there was a recognition of certain basic labour standard and rights, and these were included in field manuals and training materials.

3.13.2 The present situation

What has been lacking is a systematic follow up on the use of the standards adopted by programmes and the monitoring of their use on site. Usually information of this type has been left for review missions or impact assessment studies to consider. Even where information is available, it is often scattered in different documents with procedures in manuals and results in the different reports. It has also been seen that where information exists, it is compiled in a project/programme specific manner, and it is difficult to make regional or even sometimes national comparisons. This has meant that it has been difficult to assess accurately the actual working conditions for many of the casual workers.

With the recent trend towards an increased use of the private sector, coupled with a drive to decentralise supervisory powers within government, there has been a resulting reduction in the modest monitoring ability of central government departments, as to the actual practice in the field. In recognition of this potential problem and the need to persuade the private sector that they can benefit from treating casual workers properly, a guide was prepared by the EIP of the ILO entitled "Employment-Intensive Infrastructure Programmes: Labour Policies and Practices".

3.13.3 How to respond to the present situation

Based on the guidance offered by the above mentioned document combined with an examination of the conventions ratified by each country in the region, it is possible to first develop national checklists of all worker's rights that are mandatory under the signed conventions. Having established the mandatory rights, it is then possible to look at the guide and add recommended codes of practice and minimum rights.

Having compiled the lists (part mandatory and part advisory), the main question is how to get the standards adopted and implemented. A seminar programme for national dissemination of the guide in countries in the region has been planned, and this would be an excellent starting point. These seminars should result in an action plan endorsed by the main players within the country as far as labour-based works and labour standards are concerned. Within this context, one will be discussing labour standards with programme directors with a view to see how many could be included in contractual obligations, how many are already included by virtue of the legal framework within which contracts are signed, and which standards should be encouraged on a voluntary basis.

The next and somewhat difficult task would be the monitoring of the implementation of the labour standards agreed for each programme / country. Most countries do have some mechanisms in place to report on the application of adopted labour standards. These are sometimes insufficient and a decision would need to be made on the most important information to collect, and how to effect the collection without adding too much work to already busy officials. However, there would need to be an incorporation of a summary in project / programme reporting.

Reporting the results is not sufficient, an agreement would need to be reached about non-compliance. Should there be a possibility for the contractor to receive a warning and advice on improving his or her performance? In cases where the ignorance of labour standards persist, could legal action be taken based on national laws, or action by the programme based on contractual obligations, or could it be taken as part of a performance criteria for remaining on pre-qualification lists for future work? These are questions, which have to be discussed and solutions sought for, at national levels.

With more pressure being exerted to use self-help work as a means to overcome shortages in budgets, it is important that a constant watch is kept to ensure the distinction between self-help and "forced" labour. Self-help must be based on community priorities arrived at through proper consultation and planning exercises. The possibility of "forced" labour arrives where communities are expected to give their labour free on a project not of their own choice or of direct benefit to them, but rather as a result of a manipulative or forceful process. It will become increasingly important to have guidelines on this issue for local authorities and NGOs, many of whom are engaged in community-based projects.

ASIST is well placed, and indeed has a moral obligation, to pursue the question of protection of workers rights, and should be instrumental in instigating the measures suggested above. ASIST are also well placed to call on specialised support from other ILO branches and staff members.

This exercise, if carried out, would focus attention on labour standard issues. Without this focus, there could be a real risk of exploitation and damage to the image of labour-based methods with the resulting loss in employment opportunities. If labour-based methods are to be sustainable they must be implemented in a fair environment. With information being regularly gathered and

reported, all partners in the implementation of labour-based construction works will be in a better position to protect the basic rights of casual workers.

The expected benefits would be a speedier identification of problems related to labour standards and provide a faster access to methods of resolving the problems. It would also provide information to answer critics on the fairness of using labour for construction work. It might also aid the private sector in highlighting their difficulties (i.e. late payment of workers may be a result of late payment of the contractors by government, in which case the discussion on improvement in payments must be with government and not with the contractor).

This would also assist in advising local authorities and NGOs on the clear distinction between forced labour and properly consulted and planned self-help activities.

4 RESOURCES

4.1 Programme staffing

ASIST staffing consists at present of four senior professional staff, four technical advisers and three information officers, as well as seven administrative and support staff. Most of the professional staff in Harare were new to the programme at the start of ASIST III. This changeover of staff with the recruitment of new junior staff in particular, leaves the programme with an important task in upgrading skills and know-how within the team, and to establish a sufficient institution memory for serving the ASIST's partners.

It has been observed both internally and externally during this ASIST period that the task list is long and staff resources fall short of being sufficient to serve the needs of the programme. During preparation of the detailed work-plan, it has been experienced that an increase of about thirty percent would be needed to cover the present task list, even with a very firm cut and some postponement of activities.

If the list of planned outputs would remain at the same level or somewhat increased, it would be hoped that the staff resources needed for an efficient implementation of the programme would be allocated. This should also include a possible upgrading of the junior staff presently working with the programme. The junior staff has taken on duties and responsibilities sometimes far beyond what would be expected of similar staff in the international organisations.

More specific, the national professional project personnel (NPPP) bear no recognition of being a staff member of the ILO and are only provided limited benefits (e.g. no pension rights). This type of contract was set up for professional detachments from Government agencies to work with national projects within their own environment after which the incumbents would return to their posts inside their own departments. The contracts only apply to staff (candidates) with a residence or work permit in the country where the programme is situated. For ASIST, this system therefore only applies for staff recruited from the country of the two offices (Kenya and Zimbabwe). Being a regional programme, ASIST should be able to employ staff from the region and provide these staff with working and employment conditions comparable to the rest of the team. Expert posts at comparable grades should therefore replace these posts, and the present ASIST personnel should be given a priority to enter into these positions.

The associate expert positions (presently three) are very effective for recruitment of new personnel for training in labour-based technology. The training received during the ASIST employment period have proved very useful for ASIST and sponsoring agencies, and several of previous associate experts have found employment in related programmes or as independent consultants. However, for ASIST this also means that a lot of the investment in its personnel are lost with respect to the implementation of its programme, as positions are not available to recruit the staff at the end of their associate expert period. There should be greater flexibility to offer employment within ASIST for some associate experts on expert positions following their completion of the associate expert employment as found appropriate by the ASIST management.

Considering the strategies of the ASIST programme, there is a need to at least upkeep or slightly increase the senior advisory capacity. Much of their time has been devoted to internal training and upgrading of staff in order for the new and younger recruits to gain momentum. If the suggestions above are followed, which should be resulting in a longer-term perspective for junior employees, it should be possible to "get more out of" the senior personnel in terms of programme delivery. Both factors would therefore contribute to increased programme efficiency.

4.2 Location of offices

ASIST was split in two offices in 1994 following the move to work closer to the ILO decentralised structure. This split has not been only positive for ASIST.

The professional linkage to an MDT is an important point for ILO and ASIST. Whereas the possibility for co-operation and collaboration with the MDT on a number of issues is great, it must however be said that so far, ASIST has not been able to capitalise much on the close linkage in professional terms. This situation comes from the fact that the teams (MDTs) may not have functioned as intended so far, it is not an indication of a wrong move by ASIST. As mentioned initially, the new ILO Director General intends to revitalise the entire ILO organisation and the decentralisation and capacity building is not to be reversed, but rather reinforced through the possible creation of sub-regional offices. This may result in some four offices in Africa, and Harare is a natural candidate for such an office.

However, at this point in time, it cannot be ascertained that the above reorganisation will take place. The process will gain momentum towards the end of the year, following the ILO Governing Body meeting in November 1999. Whatever comes out of the reorganisation, ASIST still believes in the decentralised technical advisory services of ILO as a major partner. It does provide advantages in terms of information sharing, access to professional staff in fields which ASIST need to tap into, synergy effects in terms of administrative services, office space and equipment, etc.

The location of one ASIST office in Nairobi and one in Harare does, as a point of departure, carry positive effects in terms of serving the countries in which the offices are located, and to a certain degree, reduces the travel time to different locations. It also means that the close linkage to KTC has been upheld in a period when KTC and ILO were much in need for such a partnership to further develop the courses before they were institutionalised within KTC.

However, what has been discussed above regarding the partnership with the MDT also counts for the operation of ASIST itself. Two offices are costly in many ways. The obvious costs are linked to double administrative operations, office equipment and space, etc. In addition, much time and money is lost in communicating on professional and programme matters between the two offices. Staff in the two offices is working on similar programme matters, and need to consult each other. The Programme Director needs an improved access to colleagues for a better programme and resources management, and the staff needs a better access to the Programme Director for guidance and directions on both programming and field project matters.

It is also ASIST's understanding that the possible negative effects of moving out of the Nairobi office can be mitigated against. KTC is now more an more independent, but a strong link need to be maintained. ASIST will therefore make sure that a programme of close monitoring and backstopping is maintained even from a remote office.

Following the discussion above, it would be beneficial to merge the two offices and base the entire operations in one office in Harare.

4.3 Funding

ASIST receives its funding from different project agreements with a somewhat different time schedule. These agreements will at present take the Nairobi office operations through to the end of June 2000. The two agreements with an addendum financing the operations in Harare started a bit later and could therefore if agreed with the donors be extended for another few months.

The income made by ASIST and savings in operations, both under the previous and the present phases, means that the funds available under the present agreements could take the programme towards the end of year 2000. This has to be worked out and budgeted in detail, and agreed with the different donors.

Similarly, budgets for the future years' operations need to be worked out with the donors following the consensus between partner country representatives and donors on what operations should be included in a possible ASIST IV. However, the recent years' turnover could be a guiding figure with amendments according to the recommendations made above.

The accounts show that in broad terms, following an expenditure of some US\$ 1.7 million in 1998, the turnover for 1999 is likely to be close to US\$ 2.1 million.

If ASIST is to improve upon the present work situation for its staff and meet the needs discussed in this note, it is necessary to increase the budget allocations. The increased allocations must take the necessary height for an improvement to the workload, the conversion of some staff positions from national professional positions, the allocation for a possible employment of some associate experts after the fulfilment of their associate expert contracts, and the increase in senior adviser positions.

Budget figures for the ASIST programme will be discussed at the November workshop.

