

Evolving Strategies for Better Health and Development of Adolescent/Young People

**A Twinning Institutional Collaboration Project in India
by MAMTA and RFSU**

**Gordon Tamm
Rukmini Rao
Viveca Urwitz**

**Department for Democracy and
Social Development**

Evolving Strategies for Better Health and Development of Adolescent/Young People

**A Twinning Institutional Collaboration Project in India
by MAMTA and RFSU**

**Gordon Tamm
Rukmini Rao
Viveca Urwitz**

Sida Evaluation 02/40

**Department for Democracy and
Social Development**

This report is part of *Sida Evaluations*, a series comprising evaluations of Swedish development assistance. Sida's other series concerned with evaluations, *Sida Studies in Evaluation*, concerns methodologically oriented studies commissioned by Sida. Both series are administered by the Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit, an independent department reporting directly to Sida's Board of Directors.

Reports may be ordered from:

Infocenter, Sida
S-105 25 Stockholm
Telephone: (+46) (0)8 506 423 80
Telefax: (+46) (0)8 506 423 52
E-mail: info@sida.se

Reports are also available to download at:

<http://www.sida.se>

Authors: Gordon Tamm, Rukmini Rao, Viveca Urwitz.

The views and interpretations expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida.

Sida Evaluation 02/40

Commissioned by Sida, Department for Democracy and Social Development

Copyright: Sida and the authors

Registration No.: 2002-03485

Date of Final Report: December 2002

Printed by Elanders Novum

Art. no. SIDA2092en

ISBN 91-586-8736-4

ISSN 1401-0402

SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY

Address: S-105 25 Stockholm, Sweden. Office: Sveavägen 20, Stockholm

Telephone: +46 (0)8-698 50 00. Telefax: +46 (0)8-20 88 64

Telegram: sida stockholm. Postgiro: 1 56 34-9

E-mail: info@sida.se. Homepage: <http://www.sida.se>

Preface

This is an assessment of an exploratory effort to promote awareness around sexuality, gender, and youth in India. As such the project was still unfolding and the strategies were still evolving at the time of the evaluation, and the evaluation team had therefore literally to try to capture a very dynamic and constantly moving target. For this reason as well as others mentioned in the report it should be stressed that this is more of an evaluation of processes and trends leading to the future than of commissions and omissions of the past.

In carrying out the evaluation the team relied heavily on the willingness and time of the staff of MAMTA, RFSU, and the participating partners in India to share their experiences and concerns with us. We are extremely impressed and grateful for the way all concerned patiently endured our barrage of questions and we can only hope that our effort to capture the issues at stake will be of use in deciding the future course of the programme. Written and verbal comments from Sida/DESO, the Swedish Embassy in New Delhi, as well as MAMTA and RFSU on the draft report have been considered wherever deemed relevant. Needless to say the findings, conclusions and recommendations are, however, those of the evaluation team.

As a guide to the reader we would like to offer the following comments on the structure of the report. After a brief presentation of the setting, background and approach of the evaluation (sections 1 and 2), the report is divided into three parts.

Findings are presented in section 3. This is the key part of the report and presents all the main issues that we have identified as strong points, problems, or issues that need to be confronted. These findings have been summarised in the text in boxes throughout the text. The purpose of these findings is to provide the different actors involved in the programme with a checklist of issues we believe should be continually addressed until they have been resolved. Needless to say the findings are a mixture of factual statements and our interpretations of facts and events as presented to or seen by us. Addressing the findings may therefore range from tackling the underlying problem or issue, to tackling the information surrounding it or the way it has been documented and absorbed by the respective organisations.

Conclusions (section 4) are brief summary statements based on the findings. These cannot be directly translated into calls for action but are intended to provide an assessment of the policy content of the project as it has evolved so far.

In *Recommendations* (section 5) we provide what we believe to be steps that would enhance both the policy content and operational effectiveness of the project when carried into the future. It should be stressed that there is no one-to-one correspondence between 'findings' and 'conclusions' on one hand, and 'recommendations' on the other. In particular, many of the findings are challenges that can only be tackled, absorbed, and resolved by the parties themselves as part of the ongoing project implementation.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
1 Programme background and context.....	7
1.1. YRSHR Context in India	7
1.2. History of project	7
1.3. Project summary.....	8
1.4. Project budget	10
2 The evaluation – approach and methodology	11
3 Findings	13
3.1. Overall	13
3.2. Project components	14
3.2.1. <i>Information centre and dissemination</i>	14
3.2.2. <i>Networking</i>	17
3.2.3. <i>Phased interventions</i>	19
3.2.4. <i>Advocacy</i>	23
3.2.5. <i>Capacity building</i>	24
3.2.6. <i>Research</i>	25
3.3. Twinning & the role of RFSU	27
3.4. Organisation & management	29
3.5. Administration & financial management	31
3.6. The role of Sida	34
4 Conclusions	36
4.1. Efficiency	36
4.2. Effectiveness	36
4.3. Relevance	36
4.4. Impact	37
4.5. Sustainability	37
4.7. Gender	37
5 Recommendations	38
 ANNEXES	
1. Terms of Reference	41
2. Itinerary.....	44
3. Documents consulted	45
4. Debriefing note, Delhi 2002-11-22	48
5. List of findings	51
6. Assessment of library and acquisitions.....	58
7. Workplan for preparing an operational strategy for next phase	61
8. MAMTA notes	62

List of abbreviations

IC	Information Centre (component of the project)
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
INR	Indian rupees
IPPF	International Planned Parenthood Federation
MSEK	Million Swedish kronor
NGO	Non-government organization
PI	Phased Intervention (component of the project)
R&D	Research & Development
RFSU	Swedish Association for Sexuality Education
SEK	Swedish kronor
SFA	State focal agency (lead/coordinating NGO in the state level YRSHR network)
STI	Sexually transmitted infections
ToT	Training (or Trainer) of trainers
TSEK	Thousand Swedish kronor
YRSHR	Young people's reproductive and sexual health & rights

Executive Summary

A. Background

One of the priority areas of Sweden's development cooperation in the health sector is that of young people's reproductive and sexual health and rights (YRSHR), in themselves important parts of the broader struggle against HIV/AIDS. India is the most important country where HIV/AIDS has not yet reached pandemic proportions and where a preventive awareness-building program can have the largest impact

In 1999 Sida supported a project identification and formulation process to be based on collaboration between MAMTA (Health Institute for Mother and Child, New Delhi) and RFSU (Swedish Association for Sexuality Education, Stockholm). This resulted in a proposal entitled 'Evolving Strategies for Better Health and Development of Adolescent/Young People'. Sida approved the proposal in early 2000 and after a series of revisions Sida committed MSEK 10.25 for the period 2000–2003.

The project comprised several components and areas of activities:

- a) *Pilot interventions* in order to provide for an action-learning process
- b) *Networking* to establish a multi-layered YRSHR promotive capacity in the country
- c) *Information centre* around YRSHR issues as a platform for its training, advocacy, and policy initiatives
- d) *Advocacy* to develop effective approaches to influence key decision- and policy-makers with respect to YRSHR issues
- e) *Capacity building*, particularly around the theme of sexuality-gender-youth
- f) *Research*, both in the form of action-research and to identify the profile of nature of the YRSHR issues in India

As the name indicates this was an exploratory project aimed at arriving at an operational strategy on YRSHR that could possibly move into a more focused implementation phase once the experience had been consolidated and analysed. As part of this process Sida commissioned a forward-looking external evaluation of the performance and potential impact. The evaluation was carried out in November–December 2002.

B. Findings

Overall (cf section 3.1)

The activities laid down in the agreed Plans of Action have been pursued on time and within budget, reflecting a very high level of commitment of all concerned. In so doing the project has convincingly shown that it is possible to promote a dialogue and beginning awareness around sexuality, gender and youth in India, in highly varying social contexts and institutional environments.

Information Centre (cf section 3.2.1)

MAMTA has laid a good foundation for its library and the parallel development of the physical library and the virtual library is well planned. There is still some work to be done to clarify and develop the role of the IC as a clearing house/meeting place and as a training facility.

Networking (cf section 3.2.2)

The creation of mutually interactive statewide networks is critical for the reach and effectiveness of any YRSHR effort in India. It is in fact likely that without such networks the other components of the project lose much of their justification.

In a very short period of time MAMTA has promoted a network (Srijan) covering 5 states and involving 94 NGOs. The role of the various members of the network – MAMTA, the state focal agencies, and the network member – needs to be clarified to avoid a continued dependence on MAMTA.

Capacity building undertaken has created a momentum within the network and needs to be sustained to ensure effectiveness and consistency of advocacy and sensitisation at the state and local levels.

Phased Interventions (cf section 3.2.3)

The Phased Interventions have developed as important local development projects in the field of YRSHR with a high degree of local acceptance and rapport. They are, however, still to gain a clear role and design as instances of action research, i.e. in testing and developing approaches, methods and relevant indicators of value for the larger project and network partners.

The relative success with which local health service providers have been activated on YRSHR issues stands in contrast to the difficulties of bringing onboard educational establishments. This illustrates the need for a much broader advocacy and training approach targeting not only individual teachers and schools, but also parents and state/national educational establishments to bring about a change in the curriculum.

The insight and understanding of basic aspects of sexuality (girls) and gender (boys) is still rudimentary among staff and peer educators even in the ‘controlled’ environment of the PIs. This calls for intensified efforts both at the level of training and developing contextually relevant approaches to be explored and tested and should reflect a more direct infusion of RFSU methodologies and approaches.

Advocacy (cf section 3.2.4)

MAMTA has carried out an advocacy/sensitization campaign with a focus on mass media and, more selectively, policy makers as well as technical/professional groupings in the medical and health field. In so doing it has emerged as the recognized reference body in matters regarding YRSHR in India.

Advocacy efforts at the State level appear as yet weak and scattered, with little or no strategic underpinning. Given the fact that advocacy is one of the defining elements of RFSU a more active involvement on their part should have been expected.

Capacity Building (cf section 3.2.5)

Although effective in specific instances, the twinning of RFSU and MAMTA has been played out primarily as a series of training events, and has yet to generate a capacity building strategy.

The numerous trainings provided throughout the project network has been generally well received, particularly as regards ‘sexuality & gender’. However, the level of insight is still very thin and uneven throughout the project network.

Research (cf section 3.2.6)

MAMTA has engaged in a series of studies and analyses to identify the scope, magnitude, and nature of YRSHR issues in India. All of them have effectively reinforced MAMTA’s advocacy and reference roles, in addition to providing an exposure of the staff to the issues. They are, however, weaker as a basis on which to formulate an operational strategy for tackling the issues.

Twinning of MAMTA and RFSU (cf section 3.3)

The YRSHR-oriented ‘twinning’ of RFSU and MAMTA has in the main been confined to training sessions and has yet to exploit its full potentials.

The lack of basic rules of the game (e.g. clear communication lines, regular standard information points/formats, definition of counterparts) as well as of an overall definition of the respective roles and responsibilities have diminished the real and potential contribution of the collaboration.

Organisation & management (cf section 3.4)

Although the present diffuse management system at MAMTA has definite advantages in terms of internal team building and a common sense (and understanding) of purpose, the management set-up of the project appears increasingly problematic. There is a need for clearer and more functional distribution of roles and responsibilities along with an increasing need for specialization as the project unfolds. This is particularly so in the cross-cutting activities such as capacity building, research, and information compilation/dissemination.

While the management style and culture of MAMTA has been a primary driving force behind the overall impressive performance so far, it has also made the organization come close to outpacing the capacity of the network partnership to absorb and consolidate its achievements.

Financial management & administration (cf section 3.5)

The large number of non-specified budget items, along with a liberal overhead provision, suggests the need to review the operational budget in specific areas.

Role of Sida (cf section 3.6)

Sida took an active part and financially facilitated both the formulation of the proposal and the twinning between MAMTA and RFSU. The concept of twinning was a new one for DESO (as well as for the two organisations) at the time of launching the programme, which contributed to vagueness in the respective roles and contributions.

The Annual Reviews have acted as important events for assessing the performance and have raised a number of critical issues that must be faced by the project and its partners. At the same time they have been less effective in giving a clear guidance into the future.

C. Conclusions

Efficiency

The project and its carrying stakeholders – MAMTA, RFSU, and the collaborating NGOs – have shown themselves to be very efficient in implementing all activities according to approved plans and budgets. This is all the more remarkable as the project was in itself exploratory with a number of activities being tried out for the first time in India

Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the project is still to be determined. However, there is no doubt that a foundation has been laid for it to be an active change agent and promoter of relevant YRSHR policy and practice in India.

Relevance

In overall terms the project is highly relevant in that it strives to influence and directly contribute to the development of relevant YRSHR policy and practice in India. It also represents an effort to translate and adapt existing international knowledge and techniques in building up a capacity in the country.

Impact

The Project has explored, and partially succeeded in establishing, channels of reaching out to and sensitise youth. It needs to reaffirm its focus developing approaches to reach beyond the middle class. At the same time it has similarly succeeded in roping in health professionals and service providers, but more consistent effort need to be made with respect to injecting YRSHR information and awareness in schools and the system.

Sustainability

Being to a large extent an exploratory undertaking it is still too early to assess possibilities of financial sustainability. But the project should nevertheless better identify cost structures for different interventions so as to be able to assess cost-effectiveness, and also explore ways of cost-recovery in relation to the Information Centre. The organisational sustainability hinges on the ability of the project to make the network come into its own, including developing clearer strategies for communication, distribution of roles and functions, and synergy effects.

Gender

MAMTA has consciously promoted a gender balance in its organization and management structure. It is still exploring ways by which gender concerns can be effectively included in its peer education efforts, in terms of methodology as well as in terms of content.

Quality assurance

There is as yet no system or indicators in place to assess or ensure quality in the various project components.

D. Recommendations

(a) Information centre

- 1) MAMTA should make an analysis of types of materials for different user groups. Policy makers and media might need background reports while NGOs might need manuals and methodological advice.
- 2) MAMTA should strengthen and broaden its own search mechanism for acquiring appropriate publications. For the future quality indicators should be devised to help prioritisation of new acquisitions.
- 3) Ways should be sought to introduce cost recovery as part of the service provided by the IC – e.g. in the form of subscriptions (physical as well as web-based).
- 4) As part of the definition of MAMTA's role over time the 'clearing house' concept should be explored jointly with other stakeholders, particularly network partners and communication experts.

(b) Networking

- 5) Other components (advocacy, information, phased interventions, capacity building, research) should converge on, and be assessed for their contribution to, the state networks.
- 6) MAMTA must for the next phase more clearly define its own role over time, incl. developing an operational approach to rotation of functional responsibilities among SFAs.
- 7) Capacity building needs to be differentiated over networks depending on strengths and nature of the respective SFAs as well as of the state networks as such.
- 8) Training and capacity building plan, including development and implementation of ToT at state level, to increase to number of trainers at NGO level to a critical mass.
- 9) Selection, role, and support with respect to peer educators need to further developed and communicated throughout the network.

- 10) Current standardized level of funding to state networks should be gradually discarded in favour of one that includes capacity and momentum.
- 11) The Working Group should identify and assist state networks to identify and make alliances with NGOs working with education in order to make inroads into the school system and reach out of school children and youth.
- 12) Quality indicators for the different aspects of YRSHR interventions taken up by partner NGOs need to be worked out in a participatory manner.

(c) Phased interventions

- 13) The Phased Interventions are likely to play a greater role, both as interventions and as action research, if undertaken jointly with a local network partner.
- 14) In both of the ongoing (and in future) PIs more focal efforts need to be made to systematically explore the potentials and constraints of (a) reaching the poorest and (b) involve educational institutions.
- 15) Proper action research protocols (rather than action plans for interventions) need to be worked out as part of the design for all PIs. These must include concrete objectives, programme-related relevance of locality/context, and definitions of exit.
- 16) Gender perspectives need to be further intensified in a creative way to deepen the understanding of the special needs of both boys and girls and how to address them.
- 17) Sexuality education must be reinforced and reiterated for both project staff and peer educators,
- 18) The PIs should include development of concrete models for participation of youth in planning, monitoring, research. This experience should be fed into the network in a structured way.

(d) Advocacy

- 19) MAMTA, jointly with RFSU, should as a specific activity initiate and support state-wise advocacy strategies – e.g. on a rolling basis.
- 20) Indicators of reach, efficiency, and effectiveness need to be worked out – not the least for the Delhi/national level advocacy efforts.
- 21) RFSU systematically share its Advocacy strategy in Sweden and work together with MAMTA and partners to identify suitable strategies for India.

(e) Capacity building

- 22) MAMTA & RFSU should jointly review the training momentum so far. This should form an integral part of a broader ‘capacity & competence needs assessment’ together with the different state networks.
- 23) Based on that a comprehensive cap building strategy with a focus on state networks (individually as well as in terms of synergy between them) should form part of the next phase. This should include considerations of how to ensure quality in the cascading approach, critical mass of trainees as well as trainers at different levels, required screening for personality characteristics of trainers, etc.
- 24) Gender issues to be more firmly and consistently addressed during training so that women trainers overcome culturally induced shame and silence related to sexuality issues
- 25) Identify institutions at national as well as state level such as state Councils of Education Research & Training, through which YRSHR issues can be fed into educational material and curricula development.

(f) Research

- 26) MAMTA must clarify and position itself in relation to the research requirements of the YRHSR. This involves inter alia defining both what issues that must be addressed, whether and what MAMTA should undertake on its own/through others/in alliance, as well as the capacity and organizational modifications required to ensure quality.

(g) General

- 27) One of the major tasks to be borne by MAMTA is that of *quality assurance* of YRHSR activities promoted throughout the network(s). While this is less apparent during a launching phase, it will assume greater importance in the years ahead.
- 28) The *twinning arrangement* between RFSU and MAMTA needs to be made considerably clearer – as regards scope, focus, and roles (Recommendations after review of RFSU).
- 29) Sida should, as a distinct part of its support to MAMTA/YRSHR, makes available an organizational development expert to assist, train, and facilitate the further consolidation of MAMTA.
- 30) The agreement between Sida and MAMTA specifies that any *interest* accrued from Sida disbursements shall be repaid to Sida at the end of the agreement period. It is recommended that in the future such repayments shall be made annually.
- 31) In view of the considerable work to be done prior to a new agreement being entered into between Sida and MAMTA/RFSU, the unutilised balance of the present allocation should be used for a bridging period by extending the present contract period. The purpose of this bridging period is to allow all parties – MAMTA, RFSU, and network partners – to develop a strategic and coherent framework for the coming programme period. A work plan with points that need to be addressed as part of the strategy formulation is found in Annex 7.

1 Programme background and context

1.1. YRSHR Context in India

Since the UN conference on population in Cairo 1994 and the subsequent conference on women in Beijing adolescents and especially the adolescent girls have come into focus as an important target group for health promotion intervention in the area of Sexual & Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). The spread of HIV/AIDS across the world has likewise highlighted the need for preventive and health promoting efforts targeted at adolescents for preventive purposes. In India almost 4 million people are estimated to live with HIV/AIDS and the prevalence is over 1% among pregnant women in 5 states indicating that the epidemic is spreading from the so called risk groups into the general population.¹ About 50% of the new infections occur in the age group between 15–29 years.²

There are over 300 million young people (10–24) in India, around 1/3 of the total population. Scattered data are available on their sexual knowledge, habits and service needs for sexual health. Most studies indicate their knowledge is very poor. There is a general belief that young people and unmarried individuals rarely engage in sexual activities and therefore do not need this type of knowledge and services. Studies on the contrary show that around 10% of boys have had their first intercourse by age 15 and almost 50% by the age of 20. Many of the boys have their first sexual encounter with a commercial sex worker but the first partner may also often be an older, married female relative.³

Most young women have their first experience of intercourse within marriage. However many girls still marry at a tender age and become pregnant during their adolescence. Around 35% of married girls in the age group 15–24 show symptoms of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and The Family Planning Association of India maintains that the number has doubled over the past decade.⁴ The girls have little knowledge and are in a weak position to negotiate protected sex or family planning even within marriage. Knowledge about sex and sexuality, as well as familiarity with appropriate colloquial terms that make it possible to conceptualise sex and sexuality as normal concerns, are basic preconditions for empowering people in matters of reproductive and sexual health and rights. The roundabout and muted ways by which such knowledge was traditionally conveyed to young people in India (from aunts, uncles or elder siblings rather than from parents) have been further curtailed by the increasing mobility and rapidly changing socio-economic environment.

1.2. History of project

MAMTA is an NGO that has worked with child health in urban slums and among rural poor since 1990. Over the years MAMTA came to focus more on development and in that process came to identify the youth as a resource with a tremendous zeal to learn and willingness to change. While working with adolescents MAMTA identified their needs for knowledge and services on SRHR and started to develop this line of work. MAMTA rapidly identified a need for building its own capacity. Earlier initiatives from Sida to prepare a program in Rajasthan on SRHR identified MAMTA as an NGO active in the field of YRSHR as well as the possibility of a twinning with RFSU. RFSU is the Swedish

¹ UNAIDS 2002

² India responds to HIV/AIDS, UNAIDS, New Delhi

³ Sexuality and sexual behaviour of Adolescents and Young people in India, Review of existing literature. MAMTA undated.

⁴ MAMTA: Reproductive Tract Infections & Sexually Transmitted Disease. The vulnerability of young people, Working paper series nr 2. 2002

IPPF affiliate and has 70 years experience in YRSHR developing pilot interventions and successful advocacy in Sweden. RFSU also had experience of supporting projects from Tanzania and Zambia. In July 1999 Sida approved a limited budget for exchange visits.

In October 1999 a group from MAMTA visited Sweden and RFSU. MAMTA identified RFSU as a valid twinning partner. Pending a more detailed plan of action (including specification of RFSU's involvement) MAMTA developed a principled proposal for the years 2000–2006. Sida approved an initial phase covering 2000–2003 in February 2000 along with a total budget of MSEK 3.0.

In March 2000 a project identification team from RFSU visited MAMTA. The team confirmed the potential of MAMTA and its institutional environment as a platform for promoting YRSHR and further identified areas of possible technical inputs from RFSU into the project. After a series of amendments Sida approved a final revised plan of action in October 2000 with a total budget of MSEK 10.4.

The project agreement provided for Joint Annual Reviews (two of which have taken place so far) along with an external financial audit (carried out in mid-2002). It also stipulated that an external evaluation of the progress and momentum of the project should be undertaken in time to allow for a possible new phase to be formulated.

1.3. Project summary

The project is called 'Evolving Strategies for Better Health and Development of Adolescent/Young People'. As the name as well as the gradual expansion of activities and budget indicates it was from the start conceived as an exploratory effort which, if successful, would lay the foundation for a second, and more strategically focused phase.

Although not explicitly put in these terms the **overall purpose** can be summarised as

- (a) to develop the capacity and knowledge of an expanding number of NGOs in India to conceptualise and promote issues surrounding sexuality and gender among youth, as part of a broader concern for 'Young People's Reproductive and Sexual Health and Rights' (YRSHR). A key element of this effort was the so-called 'twinning' of the Swedish 'National Association for Sexual Awareness' (RFSU) and MAMTA, for which a separate budget allocation was made for RFSU (MSEK 2.3)
- (b) to develop and explore appropriate initiatives in awareness building – through advocacy, compilation of information and dissemination, and through localised field interventions
- (c) to develop and explore appropriate organisational forms and institutional mechanisms for a multi-layered and possibly nation-wide 'YRSHR alliance'

Within this exploratory framework the project has the following **specific objectives**:

1. To access institutions and facilitate the process of their taking up the issue of YRSHR
2. To collect existing information on YRSHR and disseminate it through various channels
3. To establish countrywide networking and establish common areas related to YRSHR
4. To have pilot interventions in the country and share experiences through various documentations and research efforts
5. To establish an Information Centre in MAMTA for strengthening its training and policy initiatives
6. To strengthen MAMTA's capacity and its Management Information System for taking a leadership role in this aspect.

The project has 5 **components** that should ideally reinforce and mutually support each other:

a) *Pilot interventions*

In order to provide for an action-learning process the project included two ‘phased interventions’ on the ground – one in an urban slum (Koramangala/Ejipura, Bangalore, Karnataka State), and one in a rural cluster of villages (Bawal Block, District Rewari, Haryana State). These were to be run directly by MAMTA’s own staff working closely with local youth, parents, community leaders, and local service providers, resource persons and decision makers.

b) *Network*

It was envisaged that MAMTA should explore and establish networking as the carrying organisational principle for YRSHR in India, with a limited number of statewide networks as a starting platform. MAMTA subsequently identified and approached nodal NGOs (or ‘State Facilitating Agencies’ – SFAs) in 5 states: West Bengal, Rajasthan, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh. These SFAs are in turn to encourage, support, and coordinate interested and locally active NGOs within a state network. The purpose of these networks is to establish a multi-layered YRSHR promotive capacity in the country and to make possible joint and consistent advocacy interventions. The required competence would be instilled through a cascading training approach – with RFSU at one end and local level NGO staff at the other. The project also provides for a limited budget for each of the state networks, apart from the secretarial and coordinating responsibilities of MAMTA.

c) *Information centre*

MAMTA was to create an information centre around YRSHR issues as a platform for its training, advocacy, and policy initiatives. For the purpose of developing the IC MAMTA studied similar activities in RFSU and collaborations partners in Sweden. The library has 2500 titles as well as scientific and other magazines, educational videos and other educational materials. Annotated bibliographies are under development. The web site contains access to the list of materials as well as bibliographies. On the web site there is also a special closed part for the network. This has just started. Thirdly the web site contains a database on YRSHR consisting of collated data from all over India. The web site finally contains a possibility for young people to ask questions and state their concerns in direct dialogue with MAMTA counsellors.

d) *Advocacy*

An important element of the overall effort is to develop effective approaches to influence key decision- and policy-makers with respect to YRSHR issues. While MAMTA should take a lead role in this (incl. influencing national policy-makers), it was assumed that the state networks would gradually take on a similarly active role at the state level and below, with MAMTA providing information support and backup.

e) *Capacity building*

Rather than being a separate component this was seen as a crosscutting activity touching all the operational components. The RFSU input was as per the action plans in practice confined to capacity building in its more narrow sense of *training*, whereas other aspects such as situation analyses and local level organizational support should be coordinated and/or carried out by MAMTA together with the respective SFAs in each state. In addition the Embassy’s ‘Consultancy fund’ was also intended to “strengthen the collaboration and the management system” apart from providing for external follow-up and evaluation. The training is given in 2 steps: one major training event for MAMTA (and possibly selected staff from SFAs) that is supposed to be followed by curriculum development and a repeat session for the network. The purpose with the 2 steps is to enhance MAMTA’s capacity for ToT. The training sessions were given the following contents: Basic training on sexuality, Gender and sexuality, Counselling, Youth Friendly Services, and Peer Education.

In addition, *research* figured as an element in most components. This covered a broad spectrum, ranging from policy analysis, inventories of NGO networking experiences, situation analysis/baseline studies, and topical state-of-the-art working papers, to action research.

1.4. Project budget

The exploratory approach obviously meant that it was not only ‘strategies for better health’ that were to evolve, but also the activities and the budget. Consequently the financial projections expanded gradually as more activities came to be included, reaching a final consolidated cost of **MSEK 10.403**. Out of this Sida’s contribution is MSEK 10.85 (of which MSEK to RFSU 3.23, and to MAMTA 7.12, with 0.5 being retained by the Embassy for follow-up and evaluation as well as for external programme management support). The staggered history of budget allocations as per Sida’s decision protocols is given below:

- (a) Preparatory phase to enable discussions between RFSU & MAMTA (July 1999).
Period: July 15–December 15, 1999
Total cost (Sida): TSEK 300 (MAMTA: 177 and RFSU: 130)
(Note: an additional TSEK 300 was allocated to cover baseline studies beyond the preparatory phase)
- (b) Exploratory implementation phase (Sida decision in February 2000)
Period: February 1, 2000–March 31, 2003
Total cost: MSEK 3.0, of which
 - Sida: MSEK 3.0 (of which MAMTA MSEK 2.1; RFSU MSEK 0.4; ‘Consultancy fund’/Swedish Embassy MSEK 0.5)
 - MAMTA: not specified
- (c) Revised implementation phase (September 2000)
Period: same as (b) above
Total revised cost: MSEK 5.78
 - Sida: MSEK 5.5 (MAMTA MSEK 2.7, RFSU MSEK 2.3, ‘Consultancy fund’/Embassy MSEK 0.5)
 - MAMTA: MSEK 0.28 or 4.8% of total
- (d) Final revised implementation phase (October 2000)
Period: same as (b) & (c) above
Total revised cost: MSEK 10.403
 - Sida: MSEK 10.25 (MAMTA MSEK 6.652, RFSU MSEK 3.102, ‘Consultancy fund’/Embassy MSEK 0.5)
 - MAMTA: TSEK 148.79 or 1.4% of total

2 The evaluation – approach and methodology

The Terms of Reference (Annex 1) required the Evaluation Team to “assess ... the project’s relevance, performance and success to date”. In recognition of the exploratory nature of the phase under review it was specifically mentioned that the evaluation should be forward-looking, identifying “early signs of potential impact and sustainability of results”.

Evaluating an exploratory effort is a delicate task. On one hand it involves an assessment of the performance against the objectives and activities agreed upon. On the other it also means assessing the capacity to absorb the experience of the ongoing efforts and wherever necessary adjust or revise the original agenda. The essence of the project period being evaluated has all the classical elements of an exploratory phase: learning-by-doing, forging alliances and new organizational frameworks, focal capacity build-up, compilation of benchmark and baseline information, development of operational procedures and instruments ... The purpose of all these is less to create an immediate impact than to create tangible experiences that in turn allow the formulation of viable strategy and plan of operation for the future. In a very real sense the evaluative yardstick should therefore be how, by whom, and in what areas these experiences have been consolidated.

However, this consolidation was at the time of the evaluation yet to take off and will form the focus of project partners during the last quarter of the project period – i.e. December 2002 to March 2003. To a large extent this evaluation has therefore come to serve as a kick-off for summing up not only the performance but also the experience so far, and is an input to the future strategy formulation.

Rather than simply assessing performance against given objectives we have therefore tried to “evaluate the future” – i.e. to assess the trends and momentum of what has been achieved so far and project those into the future. In so doing we have tried to identify not only strengths but also problems or ‘cracks’ in the present that, if left unattended or without consideration, are likely to distort the future or undo the strengths and achievements in other fields.

The evaluation was carried out along three basic inroads:

- Assessment of the *organizational* framework and momentum, i.e. ‘the delivery system’. The focus here was on the networking component and the role of MAMTA within it (sections 3.2.2, 3.4 and 3.5)
- Assessment of the *conceptual* framework, i.e. how the YRSHR issues were conceptualised and disseminated (‘the product’). This is discussed primarily in connection with the Information Centre (3.2.1), Phased Interventions (3.2.3), and Advocacy (3.2.4)
- Assessment of the *operational* momentum of all components

After background reading and introductory presentations by MAMTA in Delhi the team visited 3 of the 5 SFAs as well as the field operations of some of their partner NGOs – West Bengal, Bihar, and Rajasthan. During this whirlwind tour of the subcontinent the two ‘phased interventions’ (or action learning-cum-research projects) in Bangalore and Bawal were also visited before a review of MAMTA HQ in Delhi was carried out (Annex 2). During the field visits the team interviewed and held discussions with a very large number of local groups, peer educators, social workers and resource persons. In addition MAMTA and its partners made available a very large number of documents (Annex 3).

Two final debriefings were held before the departure of the team from Delhi – one with MAMTA staff and one with the Swedish Embassy – during which the main findings were presented (Annex 4). The debriefing note summarized the main tentative highlights of our findings. Based on the feedback received, including a written explanatory note from MAMTA on gender and poverty, some of the

findings were modified when drafting the full report. In the main, however, the findings and recommendations presented in the note still hold.

In Stockholm the Team leader interviewed the responsible Programme Officer at Sida/DESO as well as the RFSU Project Team.

The draft report was circulated to MAMTA, RFSU, Sida/DESO and the Swedish Embassy, New Delhi, on December 8, 2002. The comments received were considered as far as factual errors and layout were concerned, and led also in some cases to minor modifications of the findings. That some comments regarding our interpretations and findings have been left out in finalising the report does not necessarily mean that we disagree – only that they belong more properly in a management response than in the evaluation report.

The Evaluation Team comprised

- Dr Gordon Tamm, Swedegroup international consultants AB
Team leader and primary responsibility for institutional and organizational issues
- Ms Viveca Urwitz, Deputy Director, Stockholm Centre of Public Health
Primary responsibility for YRSHR issues
- Dr Rukmini Rao, Director, Deccan Development Society
Primary responsibility for social issues and NGO dynamics

3 Findings

3.1. Overall

Given the short time during which the project has been in operation and the exploratory nature of the activities themselves there is no doubt that the project has performed extremely well so far. In fact, the team found that virtually every activity laid down in the agreed Plans of Action has been or is being implemented as planned and within budget – in itself a remarkable achievement that speaks highly of both MAMTA and its associated partner NGOs.

Finding 1:

The activities laid down in the agreed Plans of Action have been pursued on time and within budget, reflecting a very high level of commitment of all concerned.

Furthermore, and as pointed out in section 1.1 above, India has long been perceived as a society in which questions surrounding sexuality are regarded as socio-culturally extremely sensitive or else treated with extreme indifference. The various studies carried out or promoted by MAMTA as part of this project all pointed at deep-seated and widespread ignorance and misconceptions in all age groups. These seemed to confirm not only the magnitude of the task but also the difficulty of making any break-through at all in promoting a dialogue and awareness around sexuality, gender, and youth. However, throughout our discussions and interviews with people that had come in contact with one or the other of the project components – in villages, in organizations previously shunning the issue, among health workers and community leaders as well as in policy fora – we found constant proof that it was indeed possible to put sexuality and youth on the public agenda and social agenda as an urgent issue to be addressed.

Finding 2:

The project has convincingly shown that it is possible to promote a dialogue and beginning awareness around sexuality, gender and youth in India, in highly varying social contexts and institutional environments.

For an exploratory project these are indeed critical achievements that lend strong support to moving into a next and more systematic phase. However, the nature and strategic focus of a possible next phase depend in turn on a more detailed assessment of the specific components pursued so far – their internal momentum and likely impact as well as their relative effectiveness in terms of promoting the long-term vision of YRSHR in India. Before venturing into the various components we would like to stress one aspect that bears directly on MAMTA's capacity to systematically document experiences gained (as well as conveying a sense of orderly process to outsiders such as this Evaluation Team). In a highly dynamic environment such as MAMTA charged with launching a series action-learning initiatives it is of critical importance that documents are dated. Among the very voluminous outputs, plans, records and other publications produced within the project framework and made available to us extremely few bore any date or indication as to when they were issued (see Annex 3). Although responsible staff members of MAMTA can probably locate them in time as well as in situational contexts, it conveys the image of a rather unstructured and hectic dialogue and will make it difficult to grasp for any new staff joining.

Finding 3

A precondition for building experience from action-learning efforts is that documents that bear on these actions (plans, reports, analyses, etc) are provided with a date that enables all concerned to locate them in time and situational space. Very few of the documents put out by MAMTA have been provided with dates making it very difficult to see the action-learning as an orderly process.

3.2. Project components

3.2.1. Information centre and dissemination

The specific objectives of the Information Centre (IC) have been stated as follows:

- To strengthen training, advocacy and policy initiatives pursued within the project framework
- To strengthen MAMTA's capacity and Management Information System "for taking up a leadership role in this aspect".

The IC was from the start intended to serve primarily (a) MAMTA staff, (b) member NGOs in the YRSHR network (c) policy makers, and (d) the media. The justification for the centre was that YRSHR is normally not a concern central to most partner organisations or potential key players, but if they can obtain the information they need easily they will make use of it and add to advocacy, policy change or implementation of ongoing programs. As such it was envisaged to play three roles:

- (a) Resource centre/Library, both as a physical entity and as a web-portal
- (b) Clearinghouse, and
- (c) Training centre.

During the course of the project implementation some new aspects were added, viz.

- (d) An interactive youth communication via the web-portal, and
- (e) A database on India-specific YRSHR issues

(a) The IC as resource centre/Library

The Library has at present over 2500 titles under 28 headings. They are classified according to a thesaurus of search words and possible to search via computer. In the library there is also a VCR catering to the needs of reviewing such materials before selecting the most appropriate that different actors would want to use. The Library can furthermore be used for meetings and minor training events.

An impressive amount of work has gone into establishing this facility for people who work with or are interested in YRSHR issues. The librarian has had special training and there is also now a small team reviewing catalogues and other publications to find the new materials for the collection.

There are as yet no agreed upon criteria but more of a sort general or common feeling as to what acquisitions should be made – which seems adequate so far although it makes for a somewhat uneven quality and relevance of the publications available in the library. As a special service to its clients MAMTA has started to put out annotated bibliographies on various topics.

The web portal was launched early 2002 and is, although functional in most respects, still in the development stage. The Library is presented on the Website through a list of documents as well as a set of annotated bibliographies.

Finding 4:

MAMTA has laid a good foundation for its library. The work done so far is commendable and has resulted in a wide range of relevant acquisitions. The parallel development of the physical library and the virtual library is well planned. The web page is well structured, with a simple, humorous but clear design.

For the future there is of course room for improvements. Although MAMTA subscribes to some scientific journals it seems these are not scanned regularly for new publications although such journals always have such sections. There is also no systematic search of the appropriate databases (of the Med line type). There is an imbalance in the scientific journals in favour of the medical side when viewed against the more holistic approach of YRSHR, which should imply more of behavioural scientific input as well as that of Health Promotion (see Annex 6 for further details).

(b) The IC as a clearinghouse/meeting place

The Library room is laid out as a combined library and meeting room which makes it a potential 'think-tank' venue for formal or informal exchange of ideas. However, although the Library room can serve as a physical clearinghouse there is no doubt that the Web is a much more powerful tool for this purpose.

The network sponsored by the project has a special room in the web portal where relevant activities are displayed. This is accessed via special passwords. There are obviously many possibilities to develop the web page for clearinghouse purposes – displaying new or existing IEC materials from different parts of the country; topical 'chat rooms'; topical and targeted mailing lists of relevant publications and events, etc. However, the magnetic attraction of IT should not be allowed to cloud the fact that it is – and is likely to remain for a considerable time to come – a vehicle accessible to a relatively select category of people.

Finding 5:

The Web page lays a good foundation for the Clearinghouse role. During discussion with the IC team it was, however found less attention to development of the clearinghouse idea than should be expected.

(c) The IC as a training venue.

Training was mentioned in the project plans as one of the activities of the future IC. The physical library with its many books, manuals, journals (and possibly new IEC materials) would no doubt provide a good backdrop for training events. It is equipped for this task with tables, VCR etc⁵.

However, we did not come across any plan of how to use the IC as a training facility, either in its physical (the library) or virtual form (the web-portal) As mentioned in the chapter on training there is as yet no full systems approach to ToT, which could explain that there has not been more development of this component.

Lately the IC unit has embarked on a totally different training event, namely school based education for young people through closed cable TV sessions, starting with high profile private school. The whole intervention is documented for the purpose of producing future materials for schools.

⁵ The fact that it is within the main MAMTA office will, however, require considerable discipline so as not to disrupt sessions by office work, telephone calls etc

Finding 6:

Although the physical Library is well equipped as a training venue with possibilities for systematic ToT trainings to support the project network there are as yet no plans on how to develop this aspect of the IC.

d) Direct communication with youth

During the development of the web-portal MAMTA saw this as an opportunity to easily disseminate information as well as get more knowledge about the concerns of young people. The web also allows anonymous communication and counselling. In the West this medium has been very successful in reaching young people, but in the Indian context it must be viewed as having limited relevance as less than 0.5% of the youth in India can currently access the Web. However, the lure of IT and the sheer increase in number of computers being connected to the internet can easily act as a pressure on the IC unit to expand this service, steering scarce information resources away towards a more affluent part of the youth.

MAMTA has also launched and supports a Hindi newsletter – Arushi – produced by young people from different state networks. It takes up issues and questions by and for youth. This may, in our view, be further developed along the lines of the ‘Straight Talk’ model in Uganda⁶, even as MAMTA should continue to search for ways of establishing direct communication with youth.

In the long term of course the Web is a good medium also for Indian purposes. The presence on the Web also gives MAMTA a high profile. The direct communication with youth gives authenticity to MAMTA’s voice. It may also allow MAMTA to systematise its youth work, e.g. through analysing ‘most asked questions and messages’ on different topics.

Finding 7:

The direct communication with youth on the Web has been very inspiring for MAMTA. Currently a lot of energy of the IC is funnelled in this direction and consequently away from the poorer youth groups. The presence on the Web does, however, give MAMTA a high profile.

(e) A database on YRSHR issues in the country.

As part of the ongoing project implementation MAMTA identified a demand to highlight needs of young people in relation to existing services. Putting together such a database was a major effort from the start, both when it comes to accessing reliable data as well as collating them and making them intelligible and consumer-friendly on the portal. After this first considerable investment in time and money it may, however, be possible to keep the costs at a stable or even lower level. It was felt by MAMTA that there are possibilities to recover some of the development and running costs by letting the major users, notably the UN-system as well as planners on national and state level subscribe to the data base as a whole and only have some data accessible for all on the portal. To achieve this there needs to be some type of conspicuous quality stamp like a scientific advisory board.

Finding 8:

The development of the database is impressive but demanding when it comes to technical skills and resources. Considerable organisational and staff efforts (and possibly also financial resources) currently seem to be going into these new initiatives.

⁶ Straight Talk is a simple paper distributed regularly through reliable sources directly to the youth and inviting written contact. At least 10 young persons and being read by literate youth for the illiterate are reading each paper. The NGOs in the network could serve as distributors.

3.2.2. Networking

In line with the learning-by-doing approach that marked the launch of the project there has been certain fluidity as regards defining the objectives and expected outcomes for networking. This sometimes made it appear that networking was an objective in its own right, rather than being a means towards an end. Accordingly the purpose of networking moved from concern to ‘involve young people countrywide’, onwards to ‘break down barriers’, and then to ‘promote young people’s sexual and reproductive health’. The concept was further expanded to ‘maximize young people’s involvement’. In 2001–2002 the defining thrust of networking was identified as ‘advocacy on YRSHR issues country wide’.

Whatever the defining purpose of the network may be at any given point in time (and it should indeed vary if the network is to be something more than merely a technical delivery system), there is no doubt that the network as such is of fundamental importance for the whole programme. Not only would it be futile and counterproductive for MAMTA to establish itself as a national YRSHR NGO – the costs involved would be prohibitive. Under the overall guiding umbrella of union level policies, both health and education are state (and local government) subjects, implying that advocacy and lobbying must similarly be carried out at state and local levels by locally credible organisations. If therefore the project aims at generating a nation-wide momentum there is no alternative to networking.

Finding 9:

The creation of mutually interactive state-wide networks is critical for the reach and effectiveness of any YRSHR effort in India. It is in fact likely that without such networks the other components of the project lose much of their justification.

In order to come to grips with the concept and practice of networking MAMTA systematically studied the experiences of existing NGO’s and tried to draw lessons from them. In close consultation with the nodal agencies identified in different states guidelines were drawn up to ensure democratic functioning and common standards throughout the network as a whole. As of mid-2001 YRSHR networks had been set up in five states (West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh), with another two (Gujarat and Maharashtra) currently being in the process of activation. In total 94 NGOs throughout these 5 states as well as one ‘sibling’ network of People Living With HIV-AIDS are a part of the current national network called *Srijan*. Although the groundwork has been laid it is nevertheless clear that the *Srijan* network is still very much dependent on MAMTA – as an administrative centre but more importantly in terms of YRSHR capacity building, information dissemination/communication and sheer financial underpinnings. In interviews with us (and reflected in their running communication and interaction with MAMTA) many of the participating NGOs incl. some SFAs found it difficult to see the rationale of the network as such. Even more raise questions about the medium- to long-term perspectives given the very short and event-driven time-horizons implied by the present 3-year exploratory project.

Within each state a State Facilitating Agency (SFA) has been identified that is responsible to organize training, motivate partners and lead in the advocacy activities. Agreements of collaboration have been entered into between MAMTA and all the 5 SFAs, along with state-specific action plans and budgets. All of the present SFAs have been involved in health promotion activities for many years, even if the nature of those activities varies considerably. The network also includes small NGO’s primarily involved with local level development issues.

During our visits to and interaction with 3 of the 5 SFAs and some of their associated state partners it was obvious that the strength, capacity, and reach varied dramatically. Although this is to be expected and in some ways adds both diversity and strength to the network as a whole, it also means that their view on and commitment to an YRSHR programme similarly varies. Our discussions with network partners at various levels suggested that there is a measure of confusion about MAMTA's role within and contribution to the network. The trainings provided by MAMTA and RFSU are much appreciated but the contribution to advocacy and intervention in the state contexts are considerably more vague. As many of the SFAs see themselves (with some justification) as senior in terms of organizational and operational experience in health promotion (and sometimes also, but with considerably less justification, in YRSHR) the view of MAMTA as a source of information is also somewhat compromised. As a funding partner MAMTA is appreciated even if the sums involved are limited. But that role is clearly insufficient to inspire and motivate the networks into the future.

Finding 10:

The state networks, although active, are still largely driven and 'owned' by MAMTA. Although there is strength in diversity the networks and their constituent partners exhibit a very uneven understanding of YRSHR issues and largely lack a common sense of direction and purpose.

To promote *coordination, communication, and planning* across state boundaries and throughout the network a Working Group has been set up comprising representatives of SFAs as well as MAMTA. In formal terms it is the Working Group that provides guidance and advice to the network, approves plans, and decides on the 'rules of the game' such as entry and exit criteria. With MAMTA still providing the driving force this appears adequate insofar as an exploratory phase is concerned. But if the network is to come into its own it is likely that a number of organizational measures will have to be introduced – albeit in a gradual manner and over time.

The MAMTA management conveyed to us various possibilities that it was actively considering. Chief among these was a suggestion that various functions now largely held by MAMTA would rotate among eligible and interested network partners. It was, however, not made clear what these functions could be. A key function is obviously that of funding – whether that is wrapped up in secretarial function or not. While we strongly believe that such measures must be introduced for the network to gain an identity and momentum of its own, with MAMTA being but one (although possibly specialized) partner. But we also believe that for this to come about specific plans rather than statements of intentions, must be worked out – covering both competence development, internal organizational and administrative procedures and reporting routines, and carried by well-defined milestones and time-schedules.

Finding 11:

A national Working Group has been set up for the network, charged with overall responsibility to plan, coordinate, and follow-up activities agreed upon for the network. During this exploratory phase this appears adequate: But it is imperative that more responsibilities and functions need to devolve from MAMTA to the network partners in a planned manner if the network is to come into its own.

Network *monitoring* is carried out at two levels – at the state level with the respective SFAs in the lead, and by MAMTA at the national level. Each SFA currently receives on the average INR 500.000 as a budget frame for all activities carried out within its state by itself or the state partner NGOs. The Annual Plan of Action should be submitted to the Working Group and be approved by MAMTA (and indirectly by Sida at the time of the Joint Annual Reviews). While routine monitoring of activities and costs appear adequate little is done to monitor performance and even less the quality of the activities or of the participating NGOs capacity to absorb YRSHR issues. Our admittedly cursory review of field operations suggest that greater efforts need to be made to provide a clear understanding of sexuality

issues among participating NGO staff. We are therefore convinced that little is gained by monitoring quality and performance with respect to activities sponsored by the project unless a concerted effort is first made to instil the necessary skills and insights. The training sessions carried out so far by RFSU and MAMTA are still more in the nature of revelatory appetizers than representing a systematic capacity build-up (see section 3.2.3. below). As a starting point there is an urgent need to develop a systematic database on the profile, capacity and priorities of participating NGOs throughout the network. Without such a basis it will be very difficult to enable the Working Group to develop a strategy for capacity building (and for MAMTA/RFSU to enact their supportive roles)

Finding 12:

Monitoring of the performance and quality of YRSHR activities undertaken by the network partners need to be strengthened to ensure credibility and consistency of advocacy and sensitization at the state and local levels. However such monitoring is of little value until the necessary level of capacity building has been effectively carried out. This requires, in turn, that a database is developed on the profile, capacity, and priorities of the participating NGOs throughout the network.

3.2.3. Phased interventions

In spite of being the most tangible and concrete of all the components, the Phased Interventions are embedded in a very complex and fluid conceptual frame.

The initial objective for this component was as per original Project Document

- to have Pilot interventions in the country and share experience through various documentation and research

According to an undated document titled ‘Design for Phased Interventions’ this was at some later point in time revised to be:

- Overall objective:
 - Design and implement interventions with the active involvement of young people in two areas (Bangalore and Bawal) for promoting YRSHR
 - Undertake intervention research to foresee the scope for future replicability and up scaling
- Specific objectives:
 - to build the capacities of young people to cognise, express and articulate their needs
 - to increase the access of young people to education, information and services
 - to make aware and sensitise the community towards the special needs of young people related to their reproductive sexual health and rights
 - to strengthen local resources for providing young people friendly environment and services.

In yet another undated progress report titled ‘YRSHR: An intervention research. Bawal, Haryana & Bangalore, Karnataka. 2001–2002’ the research aspect of the PIs are presented to have as

- Overall goal
 - effective, replicable and cost-effective strategies for achieving optimal health and development of young people from gender and rights perspectives
- (specific) objectives
 - to identify the factors that are significant in undertaking effective and sustainable interventions for young people’s health and development
 - to understand the aspects of economic feasibility of the intervention design

Finding 13:

Although the Evaluation Team appreciates the difficulties of giving a fixed identity and direction to what is in essence an attempt at participatory action learning, we nevertheless strongly feel that there is a need to firm up both the objectives and the design of the PIs.

Phased interventions in the form of specific on the ground projects was effectively launched in early 2001 by MAMTA at two sites: Bawal (rural cluster) and Koramangala/Bangalore (urban slum), with an additional PI currently being launched in Varanasi. The basic purpose of these interventions was to provide MAMTA with a hands-on experience of exploring ways of reaching out with YRSHR knowledge. As such they can perhaps best be seen as falling somewhere between action learning and action research, and the insights gained were intended to be shared with the network partners.

The team visited both intervention areas and interviewed staff as well as local youth, parents, and leaders. Based on this, as well as on discussions with relevant local professional resource persons, there is no doubt that the work undertaken by MAMTA is very much appreciated and accepted. In a comparatively short time the project staff had gained the respect and rapport necessary for broaching youth and sexuality issues. At the same time it was also clear that the staff had constantly to struggle with balancing the focus of the intervention (awareness about gender, sexuality, and individual well-being) against the overt pressing needs of the social context (employment, income generation, education, etc). On the whole the staff in both localities have handled this in a very impressive manner, retaining as their own priority to promote awareness about YRSHR while forging alliances with competent others to respond to the more tangible socio-economic demands.

Finding 14:

Largely due to the highly responsive and socially competent manner by which MAMTA project managers and staff have launched the interventions, the projects exhibit a very high degree of local acceptance and respect. A focus on YRSHR has been maintained in spite of its private and unobtrusive nature, by forging alliances with other competent organizations to cater for income generation, literacy, employment opportunities etc.

Similarly, the PI staff has been effective in forging links with locally active health professionals in both localities. In both Bangalore and Bawal local health service providers have been mobilized and sensitised on YRSHR issues, integrating this into their ongoing practices. At the same time few inroads have as yet been made into the main structure for dissemination of knowledge to young people – the schools. In Bangalore the main problem has been that the focus has as yet been primarily on out-of-school adolescents (drop outs and/or partially employed) that are accessible during daytime when it is safe for the project staff to move around in the slums. In Bawal the approach has been more direct with project staff getting themselves invited to deliver special talks on general YRSHR issues in schools⁷.

Finding 15:

Project staff has been both active and successful in activating local health service providers, private as well as public. There has been much less success in bringing onboard educational establishments, illustrating the need for a much broader advocacy approach targeting not only individual teachers and schools, but also parents and state/national educational establishments to bring about a change in the curriculum.

The efforts to include health service providers (largely successful in both cases) and the educational establishments (less successfully) illustrate the balance between working directly and in-directly in

⁷ The efforts to involve teachers have been stymied by a recent incidence of a local health worker being raped by a teacher, which has further imposed a reluctance of the male teachers to move beyond the permissible formal boundaries of the official curriculum

promoting YRSHR. While health service providers can be approached and brought onboard individually, teachers act within a set collective structure determined not only by the school management but also by decreed curricula and parents' expectations of what schools should deal with⁸.

Having said this we are nevertheless concerned about the ultimate role and strategic value of the PIs. We do agree that it is vital for MAMTA to gain direct on the ground exposure and experience – both for maintaining the human focus and priority of the organization as a whole, and for enabling it to play a peer role in the YRSHR network. But had that been its main rationale (as it very well might be) then much more could have been done – e.g. by systematically rotating HQ staff for extended exposure and learning-by-doing training to the projects as a pre-requisite for continued tenure and/or promotion with the organization. In fact, it might well be argued that it is only by posting staff from elsewhere in the organisation (incl. senior staff at HQ) to the PIs for shorter or longer periods that MAMTA can fully exploit the learning-by-doing exposure that they represent.

It appears to us that the original strategic objective of the PIs was not put into practice in any systematic sense – i.e. to use the PIs to test, explore, and develop methods and approaches designed for their relevance to the overall project and its network partners. Instead it has been the subsequently elaborated objectives that have guided the interventions – all of which stress direct local impact through (as it turned out) skilful handling of the local context. Again, it can be argued that the PIs are as yet only coming out of their first exploratory launching phase and that only now is the time to turn them into more of R&D efforts. Against this we would argue that the whole preparatory phase, including training of staff etc, should have been much more systematic, as should the situation analyses/baseline studies. More specifically, there is an urgent need to continuously formulate, and possibly revise, the envisaged end-result and/or exit points for the PIs. As they stand there is none – in the locality or among the MAMTA staff – that conceives any other ending point than the possibility of funds drying up.

The dilemma of positioning the purpose, objectives, and end result/exit point of the PIs are reflected also in the reporting and documentation. It should be stressed that the reporting is very extensive and systematic, building on detailed diaries and calendars of events maintained by all field staff and supplemented by frequent visits and interactions by the responsible MAMTA HQ staff. Informative as they are the main impression one gets is that of excellent longitudinal case studies – i.e. a thorough narrative and analysis of events as they unfold in a specific locality. There is a definite value in that, but more perhaps as inputs to training than for generating “effective, replicable and cost-effective strategies”

Finding 16:

While the PIs appear to be quite successful as locally specific interventions the action research aspects have been downplayed, leaving the PIs without any clearly envisaged end results or exit points. As a consequence the purpose, benefits and utility of the PIs for the overall project remain unclear.

Even so there are several aspects that have indeed been started but which can be more systematically piloted and explored, particularly in areas such as

- peer educators (it is only now that MAMTA's own staff is coming out of being themselves peer educators-in-training),
- youth friendly services (advocacy of the project staff has created instances of youth friendly service that need to be recognised and institutionalised in the local environment),

⁸ Discussions with teachers in Bawal vividly illustrated the eager ness with which reluctant teachers referred to both parents' potential ire and the iron framework of the curriculum, even when the principal had invited MAMTA staff to give talks on sexuality and youth.

- Youth Information Centres that have similarly been established, although still more in the nature of social clubs.

Finding 17:

A number of the specific activities that have been started in both PIs can, with some effort and strategic reconsiderations, be more systematically explored as ‘action research points’.

More importantly, our discussions with the youth and staff in the PIs revealed that basic knowledge in key areas of sexuality (particularly for girls) and gender (for boys) is still very weak. While this in itself illustrates the need for a continuous and vigorous training on these issues throughout the project, it also reflects the need for a better definition of the ‘products’ to be generated by the PIs as well as of the chain of events leading up to these ‘products’. This might, for example, take the following sequential form:

- (a) recurrent and guided interviews with systematically selected individuals to gain a qualitative understanding of young people’s notions of sexuality/gender, feeding into (b) FGD around norms and values, in turn used for (c) developing improved methods of dialogues and learning, leading to (d) better and increasingly more in-depth discussions around problems of sexuality/gender and possible ways to resolve them with young people and relevant others in the community, that (e) enables staff and local peers to explore and test new approaches.

This is an area where in our opinion the twinning arrangement with RFSU should have manifested itself, in terms of infusing the PIs with the methodologies and approaches developed by RFSU and using the PIs to adapt and further develop them in a local Indian context. A more active involvement of RFSU would also have enabled MAMTA to define more clearly the desired outputs or ‘products’ of the PIs as inputs to the overall project.

Finding 18:

The insight and understanding of basic aspects of sexuality (girls) and gender (boys) is still rudimentary among staff and peer educators even in the ‘controlled’ environment of the PIs. This calls for intensified efforts both at the level of training and developing contextually relevant approaches to be explored and tested and should reflect a more direct infusion of RFSU methodologies and approaches

Furthermore, although both PIs have been located in socio-economically weaker areas this does not in itself mean that they reach the poor or marginalized segments of the population. Poverty and marginalisation is not only an absolute fact e.g. in terms of disposable assets or incomes. More importantly it is a contextual and relational fact. And it appears to us that the PIs could have (and possibly still can) systematically explored ways by which such boundaries are transcended. As it is both PIs appear to have settled for reaching those that are both socially accessible and reachable, thereby reaching some effectively but possibly leaving out the most vulnerable.

Then again, the issue of reach illustrates the fluidity that surrounds the purpose and design of the PIs. In the case of local level YRSHR promotion reach is very much a question of a conscious selection of peer educators representing those groups that is accorded priority. This is particularly important in India where the difficulty of transcending the often very rigid and multiple boundaries of caste, locality, language, neighbourhood etc is a perennial barrier to change. Although MAMTA claims to have included social and socio-economic considerations in the selection of peer educators we are convinced that much more can be done in this regard.

Finding 19:

Even if the PIs have indeed been located in relatively deprived localities, ways and approaches of how to reach the vulnerable and marginalized groups/individuals remain to be explored. This involves revisiting the basic design and priorities of the interventions, the inclusion of specific step-wise development of improved methodologies, and a continuous attention to the selection of peer educators.

3.2.4. Advocacy

As with the other components the objectives for Advocacy have undergone a series of modifications over time. The original project proposal provided a general objective as:

- To access institutions and facilitate the process of their taking up the issue of young people's sexual and reproductive health

This was in later action plans revised to read:

- (a) Facilitate the process of building an enabling environment for YRSHR
- (b) Give voice and visibility to young people in formulation of policies and programmes

MAMTA has been very active, and in our assessment quite successful, in gaining access to and attention of a wide range of key audiences. This is particularly so as regards national level actors. To a large extent this is no doubt the result of the extra-ordinary drive, standing, and extensive contacts of the founder-director of MAMTA. But there are indeed clear signs that MAMTA as an institution has come to be increasingly recognized as the most credible and knowledgeable 'voice of young people's concerns' in matters of YRSHR. That the competition is not all that strong does not detract from this fact, as witnessed for example by the large number of professional committees to which MAMTA has been invited (see Annex 8.3). Similarly, it is widely regarded as an authoritative reference and information centre on YRSHR in India (and for India abroad) amply illustrated in our interviews with various central technical bodies and international agencies in Delhi.

Similarly, the two PIs exhibited a fairly successful advocacy effort, primarily in the form of sensitisation of local health service providers and community leaders. This was less pronounced in the case of peer educators – largely due to the fact that the project staff had themselves to learn the practice of peer education at the start of the interventions – as well as among schools/teachers.

Finding 20:

MAMTA has carried out an advocacy campaign with a focus on mass media and, more selectively, policy makers, technical/professional groupings in the medical and health field. In so doing it has emerged as the recognized reference body in matters regarding YRSHR in India.

The advocacy at the national level, along with the sustained sensitisation at the local/PI level (see above, section 3.2.3), stand in marked contrast to the much more modest advocacy role of the project at the state level. There are no doubt instances of individual efforts such as those undertaken by the very enthusiastic and energetic Bihar SFA. But advocacy at the state level is both more complex and cumbersome than at either the national or local level – but also likely to be decisive for the impact of YRSHR.

Finding 21:

Advocacy efforts at the State level appear as yet weak and scattered, with little or no strategic underpinning. Given the fact that advocacy is one of the defining elements of RFSU a more active involvement on their part should have been expected.

To some extent this lacunae is no doubt a reflection of the fact that the state networks are still in the formative stage, as is the relation between MAMTA and the respective SFAs. But it probably also reflects the fact that YRSHR is for most SFAs and their partners a novel venture. Whatever the reason it is to us clear that the capacity and skills required for advocacy at state level need a very direct and focused attention in the evolving strategy. Again, we believe that this is an area where the experience and approaches of RFSU should have been more actively exploited.

3.2.5. Capacity building

As capacity building was defined as a pervasive activity touching all the operational components no specific objectives or expected results were given in the various project documents. Partly as a result of this capacity building came to be seen as a series of topical *training events* in relation to the specific issues to be tackled within each component.

During its planning and familiarization trip to India in March 2000, the RFSU team identified following priority areas for training:

- Basic training and skill building on YRSHR perspectives for key persons
- TOT training of MAMTA staff
- Gender and sexuality
- Youth friendly services for health care staff
- Sex education methodology and IEC for adolescents/ curriculum development
- Counselling
- Condom Promotion
- Advocacy
- Sexual Abuse

It was visualized that these issues would be addressed through structured training sessions with MAMTA staff, in field intervention sites or together with network partners. The Action Plans included some of the above as joint RFSU/MAMTA training events, and added study tours to Sweden and Tanzania to understand the situation of peer educators. The approach to training was a cascading plan where MAMTA staff would be trained first and would work together with RFSU or alone (hands on training) to train network partners and field staff.

The number of training sessions has been large, covering a very wide range of issues within the general field of YRSHR (see Annex 8.4). Since January 2001 21 training events have been organized with a total participation of 443 individuals. Most of these have taken place at the state level and have involved staff from MAMTA normally acting as ‘master trainers’ or resource persons and with staff from the respective SFAs and their local partners as participants. In addition MAMTA has carried out various in-house or hands-on training, particularly in relation to the phased interventions.

Finding 22:

The numerous trainings provided throughout the project network has been generally well received and have, particularly as regards ‘sexuality & gender’, reportedly acted as revelations to most participants.

Although the Evaluation Team did not come across any evaluation or assessment of the different training sessions carried out we are convinced from interviews with participants that the training efforts of the project has been much appreciated and well received. Many individuals we met – inside and outside the project framework – pointed out that the training sessions had acted as revelatory eye-openers. This was particularly so with respect to the sessions on ‘sexuality and gender’.

In principle the training has followed a cascading approach, with RFSU training MAMTA and selected network staff (YRSHR perspectives, gender & sexuality, youth friendly services & counselling), who in turn have trained their peers throughout the network. However, while this has resulted in a fairly intense training schedule this does not in itself ensure that skills are turned into insights, or that quality and consistency in the approach towards YRSHR is generated. This was very evident both in the way by which the various situation analyses/baseline studies (by PIs as well as state networks) avoided questions about sexual behaviour, and the cursory way by which both sexuality and gender were included in the interaction with boys and girls in the PIs.

Finding 23:

The approach to training as a series of topical training events have created an enthusiasm among those trained. But the level of insights is still very thin and uneven throughout the networks and PIs, reflecting a need to deepen the knowledge and capacity of MAMTA around sexuality and gender.

The issue and event based training approach so far pursued has no doubt generated a certain enthusiasm for taking on YRSHR issues throughout the network (and PIs). But this is so far built on a very thin and uneven layer of insights. The experience of being able to talk and discuss previously forbidden issues such as masturbation or even menstruation tend to gradually open up towards an ever-expanding number of questions – as is illustrated by the experience of the PIs. It is then extremely important that adequate responses to such questions can be given there and then if the interest and momentum is to be maintained.

Finding 24:

Although effective in specific instances, the twinning of RFSU and MAMTA has been played out primarily as a series of training events, and has yet to generate a capacity building strategy.

We strongly believe that the achievements of and response to training so far should not be seen an instance of capacity building as much as providing evidence that (a) sexuality and gender can indeed be made subject matters for training even in the socio-culturally prohibitive Indian environment; and (b) there is a pent up need for systematic knowledge around such issues among service providers, health oriented NGOs, as well as among local level community workers.

The challenge now is therefore not to simply continue with a succession of training sessions, but to develop the experience gained from these exploratory training events into a strategy of building and sustaining an YRSHR capacity throughout the network. In so doing it is important to incorporate the considerable training experience and expertise of the SFAs (e.g. CINI and CHETNA). We also see this as a critical area in which the RFSU-MAMTA collaboration should be reinforced – not only as regards substance and strategy but also to introduce a measure of quality assurance.

3.2.6. Research

As noted in section 1.3. above ‘research’ was conceived as a crosscutting and supportive effort to the different operational components. In the context of the exploratory nature of this project research can be understood to have essentially two purposes:

- Identifying and defining the scope, depth, and magnitude of the issues taken up. This implies in the main inventories and situation analyses – of existing policies, profiling through secondary data, benchmarking of the state-of-the-art on different issues, baseline studies, etc
- Systematic monitoring, evaluation, and analysis of ongoing activities. This implies stocktaking of findings and experiences within each of the 5 components – for their relevance, their quality, and their replicability/scaling-up.

In our discussions with MAMTA as well as in plans and documents research was repeatedly stated as a vital component for the development of its work. This ambition to have an evidence-based approach is commendable. In many other parts of the world it took several years of HIV/AIDS crisis management and interventions before anyone even considered the possibility of measuring impact of interventions or researching the sexual behaviour. However there is now a considerable experience in performing baselines studies in the form of Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice (KAP) studies. Likewise there is a growing case for qualitative study of norms and values in local communities for the purpose of understanding gender roles and behaviour. There is also an increasing awareness on how to document and learn from interventions for health promotion. All of these approaches form different platforms for MAMTA's research ambitions.

(a) Research as identifying the scope, depth, and magnitude of YRSHR issues

MAMTA has in this context used different approaches:

- The database as manipulated and displayed on the web-site shows an ambition for exploring *epidemiological dimensions* of YRSHR issues
- *Surveys by interview* on youth and sexuality have been carried out (or sponsored) both in connection with the Phased Interventions and in selected stateside localities. These studies were as much a hands-on-learning for MAMTA as well as the partner organisations in the different states. It is therefore natural that they reflected in varied measure the assumptions and (pre-)conceptions of those that carried out the survey as well as the attitudes and (mis-)conceptions of those interviewed. But they also illustrate the problems with survey techniques when dealing with sexuality issues and highlight the need for other research methodologies. In this respect India is no different from many other countries where qualitative research has been found to display much more valid information. Even in Sweden there are constant struggles to put questions on sexuality in population surveys because the researchers are afraid it will cut response rates
- Policy *inventories* and issue specific discussion/working papers compiled on the basis of primary or secondary data

All three can be accessed on the web and reinforce MAMTA's advocacy capacity as well as its role as a reference centre for YRSHR issues in India. Also, through the very effort to produce them they involved a novel exposure of the staff to sexuality issues and were therefore also effective as training exercises.

Finding 25:

MAMTA has engaged in a series of studies and analyses to identify the scope, magnitude, nature of YRSHR issues in India. All of them have effectively reinforced MAMTA's advocacy and reference roles, in addition to providing an exposure of the staff to the issues. They are, however, weaker as a basis on which to formulate an operational strategy for tackling the issues.

(b) Evaluating and consolidating the project experience

As the project was in effect launched only some 18 months ago, it is hardly surprising that there are very few conclusions or insights put together as yet – except the important one that it is indeed possible to introduce the issue of sexuality, gender, and youth as a concern that must be dealt with in communities, NGOs, service providers, media, and decision-making fora.

The difficulty is, however, not only a question of time, nor is it because of lack of reporting as such. Indeed MAMTA has put out a very impressive number of reports on and around the activities (see Annex 8.2). They also hold regular meetings of senior staff to discuss and review the progress made and experience gained. As already noted earlier, the problem is that even in the action research under-

taken it is unclear what is being tested, by whom, and in what way. The emphasis in the reporting system from the PIs is on what is being done and when, not on what is being tried out with what expected result. As a consequence the PIs are better for the purpose of advocacy than for the actual learning experience from the interventions⁹. This is problematic since learning is one of the stated objectives for the interventions.

Learning from the experiences of interventions requires a special type of inductive research of qualitative nature. It has to be based on systematic documentation and subsequent analysis and conceptualisation. This can be done in a simple and straightforward way. MAMTA urgently needs to develop a format for this. RFSU has experience of this type of research. They often do pilot projects that are then analysed and documented in a simple way.

Finding 26:

The analysis of experience gained in terms of deepened insights into prevailing the notions and misconceptions around sexuality and gender among youth is hampered by the weakly developed action-cum-learning research of the PIs.

Furthermore there is an as yet unexplored possibility of letting the population (or even an expanded group of peer educators) in the interventions site perform research on certain topics in a participatory manner. This “self-survey” approach, which should not be confused with the much vaunted PRA, can be a powerful tool for insight and subsequent action. It does, however, need to be carefully guided.

(c) General

Establishing and maintaining a reasonable research competence is difficult for an any NGO. Although the work done so far is in many ways impressive, MAMTA needs to prioritise its own research needs against an assessment of its own strength and weaknesses as well as against its other priorities. It is hardly possible for a small NGO with an otherwise very extensive agenda to have quality research in epidemiology, in surveys, in qualitative research as well as in action research.

3.3. Twinning & the role of RFSU

The ‘marriage’ between MAMTA and RFSU was initiated and actively brokered by the DESO Programme Officer in charge of India at the Sida HQ. In fact, a collaboration between the two should in our view have been seen¹⁰ as a pre-condition for financial assistance by Sida. The purpose behind this was to enable MAMTA to have a structured and planned access to the considerable and internationally recognized experience of RFSU in matters of advocacy, capacity building and pilot activities around sexuality, gender, and youth. At the same time it was foreseen that RFSU stood to learn a lot from MAMTA’s ambition to innovate and develop new approaches to YRSHR, and that too on a continental scale.

The collaboration was designated as ‘twinning’, which signifies that it was intended to have a broader scope of organizational interaction than one of technical exchanges and inputs. As part of the overall allocation to the project Sida provided RFSU with a separate budget, based on a separate but parallel agreement to that with MAMTA. In line with the step-wise expansion of project activities the RFSU budget was similarly increased to a final total of MSEK 2.3.

⁹ This also comes out of the some of the comments from mass media representative as reported in the Evaluation of Advocacy 2001–2002.

¹⁰ Neither Sida/DESO nor the Swedish Embassy admits to this involvement being a conditionality. However, it was hopefully clear to both (as it was to MAMTA itself) that the expertise that RFSU represents was both necessary for the project and lacking in MAMTA.

The collaboration was initially explored in late 1999 when a MAMTA team visited Sweden to familiarize itself with RFSU and its experiences. A ‘response visit’ and problem identification mission was undertaken by a RFSU team in March 2000, subsequent to Sida’s approval of MAMTA’s project proposal and signing of contract with Sida.

Since then, RFSU has undertaken 4 training sessions in India with the participation of MAMTA staff and representatives from the state networks as well as the PI project teams – two in 2001 and two in 2002. In addition, RFSU organized and guided the visit of a MAMTA team to Tanzania in 2002 in order to look at the peer education efforts undertaken there.

The RFSU/MAMTA sessions have covered ‘YRHSR perspective building’, ‘Gender & Sexuality’, and ‘Youth Friendly Services & Counselling’ (which was followed by a ‘hands-on’ training on the same topic). As pointed out earlier, there seems to be a general consensus that the training sessions were very well received, although some participants (and even more those that did not participate but got ‘trained’ by those that did) have voiced opinions that they should be more frequent as well as recurrent.

It appears to us that the two organizations had a different view on the collaboration from the start, both as regards scope, focus and the respective roles. MAMTA seem to have defined the collaboration instrumentally in the sense that RFSU should provide a given number of training sessions on a set of topics jointly agreed upon. As the project ‘owner’ and manager MAMTA planned and executed all the operational components, and defined RFSU primarily as a training provider according to plans jointly agreed upon (capacity building). RFSU (and partly Sida), on the other hand, appears to have seen itself more as a ‘process adviser’ to the project as a whole, even if the focus of its concrete inputs were on training and training materials.

It should be stressed that none of these views is more ‘correct’ than the other. The simple reason is that there was no instrument that defined the purpose and scope of the collaboration beyond the understanding arrived at by the parties themselves. It was therefore left to the persons (and personalities) involved to make sense of the other, with the result that the collaboration became ‘minimalist’ or sub-optimal – an assessment to which both parties agree.

Twinning of organizations is in any situation a difficult process, and doubly so when it involves cross-cultural twinning of two organizations that lacks a common professional language or mode of operation¹¹. And it is bound to be even more difficult or sub-optimal when, as in this case, it is only based on parallel agreements with a third party (Sida).

Finding 27:

The involvement of RFSU in the project in order to provide an expertise in sexuality and gender has in the main been confined to training sessions and has so far failed to exploit its broader potentials.

In discussion with RFSU staff it was quite apparent that the communication system - including follow-up of past, information about ongoing, and forward planning of future activities/events/outputs – is not working. More particularly, the lack of specified counterparts within MAMTA in the form of a designated team of Master Trainers implied that the collaboration lacked continuity and depth.

While some of these constraints can be regarded as teething problems, it is quite clear that the lack of simple procedures and rudimentary counterpart definitions seriously hampers the effectiveness and impact of RFSU’s inputs, even in the narrow field of training.

¹¹ Twinning is normally easiest between research institutes or uni-dimensional professional bodies (e.g. legal, engineering, media, etc).

Finding 28:

The lack of basic rules of the game (e.g. clear communication lines, regular standard information points/formats, definition of counterparts) as well as of an overall definition of the respective roles and responsibilities have diminished the real and potential contribution of the collaboration.

Whatever the vagueness surrounding its role, it should in our view have been understood by RFSU that one important aspect of its involvement in the project was to take a lead in *quality assurance* of the training component. This is all the more important as training and communication around sexuality and gender is a very delicate balance between private and public domains and can easily backfire or become very superficial. This should inter alia include laying down relevant criteria for selection and training of Master Trainers and the modus operandi of the cascading approach adopted in the project down to the level of peer educators. It must also involve a very clear and straight-forward dialogue with the management of MAMTA on what, in RFSU's opinion, are necessary conditions for its training contribution to be effective for the project and not only for any particular training event. The apparent failure to do so has left MAMTA somewhat in the dark as to what the contribution of RFSU might be beyond that of the actual training sessions, and in so doing failed to generate a capacity building strategy.

Finding 29:

One implicit but nevertheless apparent role of RFSU is to provide the YRSHR trainings with quality assurance, which in turn requires a very open and straight-forward dialogue with MAMTA management. This has not been fully appreciated so far, in turn diminishing RFSU's contribution.

3.4. Organisation & management

Since its start in 1990 MAMTA has gradually developed from a highly personalised and small effort into an organisation with a 'brand name'. In the process the reliance on the founder-director has diminished and there has been an effort to transform the organisation from a centralised pyramid towards a flat matrix organisation based on overlapping task groups each with a senior coordinator. This is reflected also in the management set-up for this project (see organogram next page).

The Sida assisted programme is managed by a Coordination Team comprising four persons, with the Executive Director (Dr Sunil Mehra) having overall responsibility. The Team is assisted by two consultants.

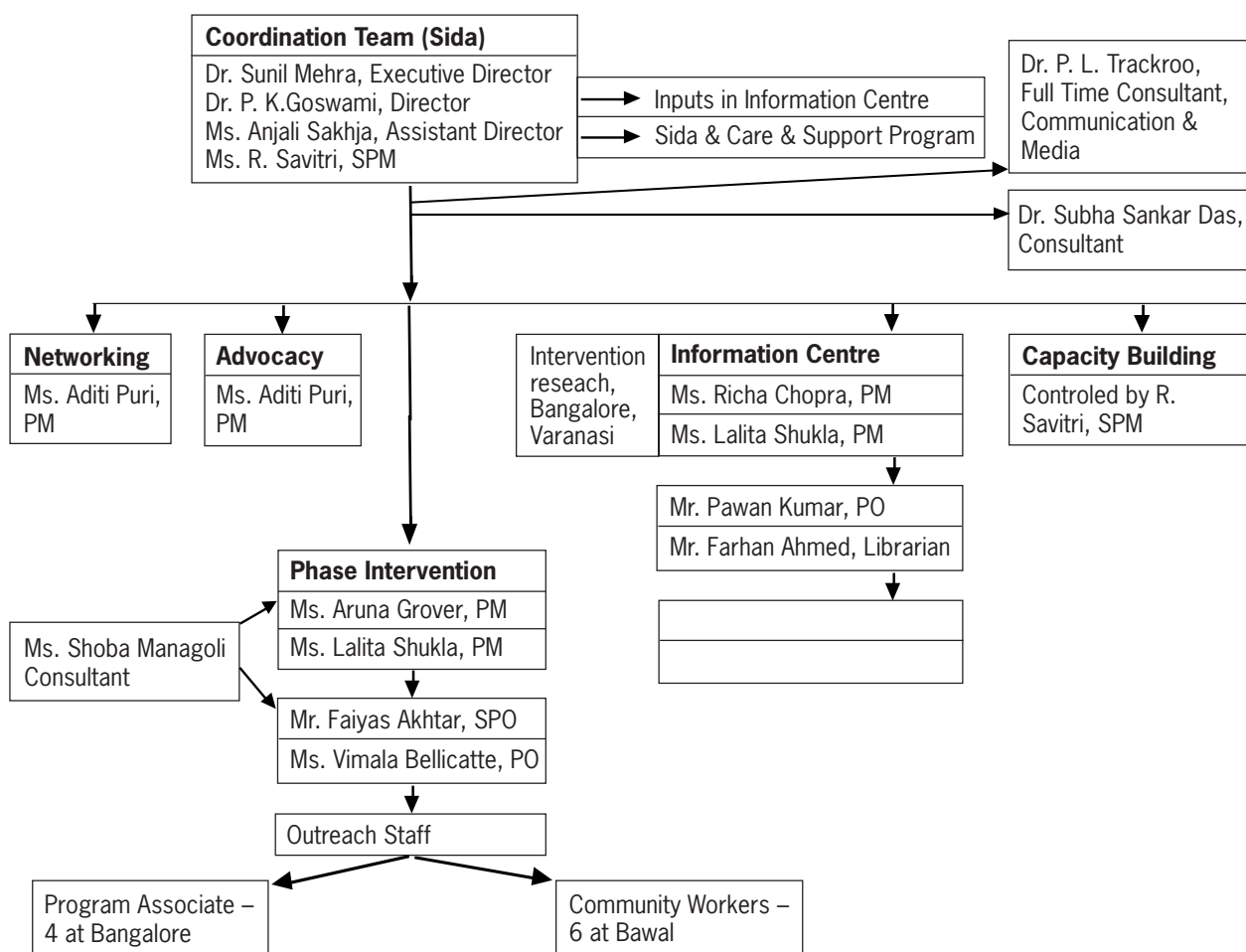
Finding 30:

However useful the Project Coordination Team with its budgeted non-specific time input corresponding to 4 fulltime Senior Project Managers may have been during the initial phase of the project, it does not appear justified at present

Of the 'line' managers one doubles as a member of the Coordinating Team and as operational coordinator for both Phased Interventions and for Capacity Building. Similarly one programme manager coordinates both Networking and Advocacy. While a functional integration of these activities is essential, all of them require extensive specialized input from MAMTA, including a very heavy travel schedule. Against this background we do not find that the present top-heavy project coordination is justified, with a Project Coordination Team of 4+2 people and a budgeted non-specific time input corresponding to more than 4 fulltime Senior Project Managers.

Our review of HQ operations as well as the visits to the field strongly suggests that a clearer and more even distribution of managerial/advisory responsibilities and workload is required. In addition, and despite the advantages of working with overlapping responsibilities and task groups, there is a need for

MAMTA YRSHR Project Team



a growing specialization and professionalism along the lines of the different components. This goes particularly for those areas that are cross-cutting, such as the Information Centre, Capacity Building, and the as yet organizationally non-distinct ‘research’.

Finding 31:

Although a fluid management system has definite advantages in terms of internal team-building and a common sense (and understanding) of purpose, the management set-up of the project appears increasingly problematic. There is a need for clearer and more functional distribution of roles and responsibilities along with an increasing need for specialization as the project unfolds. This is particularly so in the cross-cutting activities such as capacity building, research, and information compilation/dissemination.

One of the problems with a flat organization such as that attempted by MAMTA is that it is very demanding in terms of clarity and proper balance between specialized knowledge and generalized experience. For example, training activities needs to be managed and carried out by persons with special competence, even if capacity building (which is a much broader issue) relies more on general program insights and organizational experience. A failure to handle this leads not only to inability to pursue operational strategies, but also to faulty communication such as that illustrated by the RFSU-MAMTA collaboration. Furthermore it makes the organization very sensitive to any staff turnover as it is the internalised familiarity with the project rather than clarity in roles and professional demands on which the management relies.

A flat organisation is also very sensitive to management culture and style, where informal (but very real) patterns of dominance can easily turn it into an equally informal (but also very real) hierarchical organization. In the case of MAMTA there is no doubt that the Executive Director has worked hard to instil an open and frank management style. At the same time it is a fact that much of the dynamism and impressive tempo of the organization stems from his direct and indirect influence and inspiration. Without denigrating the competence of drive of MAMTA's general management and staff it is hard to believe that the project would have come as far as it has in the short span of 1^{1/2} to 2 years had it not been for the lead taken by the Executive Director.

At the same time we are convinced that this very management style and the tempo it engenders has come close to outpacing the capacity of the organization to absorb and consolidate its achievements – in capacity building, in networking, in research...

Finding 32:

While the management style and culture of MAMTA has been a primary driving force behind the overall impressive performance so far, it has also made the organization come close to outpacing its capacity to absorb and consolidate its achievements

3.5. Administration & financial management

The agreement between Sida/Embassy and MAMTA made room for an external financial audit, to be performed with or without prior notification to MAMTA. This was carried out in July–August 2002. While the auditors made a number of specific observations and recommendations the audit report can nevertheless be regarded as un-qualified, i.e. as endorsing the financial statements and accounts maintained by MAMTA. A management response is still to be forthcoming from Sida¹².

As the financial administration has already been dealt with by the external auditors we will here concentrate only on the budget and its underlying principles and priorities. As already noted in section 1.4 above the final cost estimates for the project was arrived at after a series of revisions and expansions in the action plans, in turn reflecting the project as both evolving and exploratory. In a similar vein it is also obvious from a perusal of the budget that unit and activity costs are also somewhat 'exploratory', with considerable room for manoeuvre. In what follows we have used the budget for 2002/2003 as our reference point as this is the most detailed and presumably also the most accurate.

¹² It should be stressed that such a management response should have been produced and conveyed to MAMTA much earlier. Such audits literally leave the audited organisation hanging, and delays in providing a management response can cause considerable problems for the audited organisations.

MAMTA's aggregate project budget for the year is stated as INR 13.021.365 (app. MSEK 2.84), split up as shown in the table below:

Budget head	Total	Of which staff (%)	Of which operations ¹ (%)	Of which overhead ² (%)
I. Project coordination	927.400 (7%)	100	0	0
II. Networking	3.555.000 (27%)	2 ³	92	6
III. Advocacy	1.186.000 (9%)	7	84	9
IV. Information centre	1.912.000 (15%)	32	57	11
V. Phased interv's	2.684.600 (21%)	36	64	0
VI. Capacity building	1.904.500 (15%)	0	90	10
Total I-VI	12.169.500 (93%)	22	72	6
Administrative cost	851.865 (7%)	0	0	100
Grand total	13.021.365 (100)	20	62	18

Notes:

1. Includes all direct activity costs

2. Includes items such as non-specified 'organizational costs', administration etc. This differs from MAMTA's own definitions of overheads but is in line with international (and Swedish) practice

3. Excludes staff funded in the SFAs

Reviewing the budget in detail we have the following comments:

(a) Staffing

The budget for the various components provides for a total of 25 professional person-years (spread over 31 individuals). Of these 8 person years (11 individuals) are based at the Delhi HQ, and 20 in the field/PIs, incl. the provisions for the third PI at Varanasi being launched. In addition 'project coordination' comprises non-specified staff time, primarily at the level of the senior management and corresponds to slightly more than 4 fulltime senior management positions. A conservative estimate is therefore that 29 to 30 professional person years are carried by the Sida budget, of which 12+ at the HQ in Delhi. This in turn corresponds to some 60% of MAMTA's total professional staff.

Finding 33:

While the budgeted number field staff is adequate, there is an imbalance at the HQ level between small allocations for component-wise management and large non-specified senior management 'project coordination'.

While we believe that field staff carried by the project is well justified, we find the justification for the HQ staff less clear. In particular we fail to understand the non-specified provision for 'project coordination'. It is true that an exploratory project such as this one will require a continuous supervision and follow-up of ongoing activities. At the same time each component (except 'advocacy') has its own budget provision for a senior full- or part-time manager. Moreover, MAMTA is funded on a programme basis by 12 donors/agencies other than Sida (although Sida is the largest) and one would presume that some or all of these programmes have either an administrative overhead or similar provisions for senior management inputs.

(b) Overhead

The budget is to provide for an 'administrative cost' which is put at 5% of total expenditure as per the original understanding with Sida. However, the budget for 2002–2003 gives an administrative cost that is 7% of the total budgeted expenditure. It may be that this includes a carry over from previous year(s)

allocations which, however, does not make sense as it is supposed to be proportionate to the expenditure incurred and not constitute a fixed overhead.

Moreover, each component has also included provisions that are normally included in administrative overheads, such as non-specified 'organisation costs' for workshops, meetings, etc. If these are included the real overhead as per budget comes to 18%.

Finding 34:

The overhead agreed with Sida to cover sundry administrative costs for the project was originally put at 5% of total expenditure. The budget for 2002-2003 suggests, however, a real overhead of 18%.

The point here is that by having all costs covered already as part of direct budget heads within each project component, the administrative overhead of 5% appears as what in a commercial undertaking would be defined as a 'risk and profit' margin. In MAMTA's case it allows for building up the core or reserve fund. To establish and maintain a core fund is in itself a very important step towards a more sustainable future, but should in that case be seen as such and agreed upon between the funding agency (or agencies) and the organisation, rather than appear as an administrative overhead.

(c) Operational costs

It goes without saying that many of the unit costs have to be indicative, and as long as they concern items that are procured from the outside or else involve agreed staff costs this is an accounting and audit issue. However, when the unit cost is set by MAMTA itself (even if approved by Sida) the matter is different. Reviewing the budget from this perspective we observed some items that suggest that the budget needs a closer scrutiny and vetting, by MAMTA as well as by the Embassy/Sida.

- Per diems: the budget provides for per diems that in at least two cases go beyond that specified by the Swedish tax authority (Tanzania, Sweden). Similarly, allowances in India do not appear to be synchronised with the local rates applied by the Embassy
- While the budgeted rent for the library may in itself be reasonable, it should in our view fall within the 5% administrative overhead.

Finding 35:

The large number of non-specified budget items, along with what appears to be unjustifiable unit costs in cases where MAMTA itself determines the cost level, suggests the need to review the operational budget in specific areas. This is obviously so in cases of per diems where the levels violate those laid down by the Swedish Tax Authority, regardless of whether the budget has been approved by Sida/Embassy or not.

(d) General

With exception of the findings given above the overall budget appears reasonable as does, according to the recent external Financial Audit, the financial management and accounting system. As this constituted an exploratory launching phase, it is also natural that a fairly large number on non-specified cost items are included in the budget.

However, it is clear to us that any future phase must be based on a thorough review of the actual costs incurred against the different activities and components. The importance of this stems from three basic considerations.

First, being an exploratory phase one of its specific tasks must be to estimate the most cost-effective ways to reach given objectives and results – which was indeed a specific objective for the action research inherent in the Phased Interventions. Only on this basis can an expanded implementation phase and future strategy be reasonably costed.

Secondly, for MAMTA itself it is extremely important to be very clear about what liabilities (and actual cost structure) it has as an organization. Non-specified budget posts and overheads often leads over time to equally non-specified liabilities being incurred which makes it extremely difficult to survive should external funding in one way or the other start to dry up.

Third, Sida is likely to emerge as the dominant funding agency of MAMTA, should a next phase be approved. This implies special obligations on the part of Sida as the major financial stakeholder, and it also increases the risk on the part of MAMTA by becoming dependent on primarily one funding source.

Apart from such a thorough review of unit costs and wherever possible the cost-effectiveness of specific activities undertaken so far, we also believe that MAMTA's own cost contribution (as per the budget agreed upon in 2000) should be included in the annual project budgets and financial reporting.

3.6. The role of Sida

The role of Sida and the Swedish Embassy has in the context of this project been threefold:

- (a) To act as a respondent to MAMTA's initial proposals, including being an active proponent and broker of the RFSU involvement
- (b) To assess, review, and approve the project proposal, including laying down the conditions compatible with Sida's own policies, procedures, and general experience of development cooperation with NGOs in India
- (c) To annually review project performance and financial reporting, and approve annual action plans and budget

Of the three (a) can be considered a joint Sida HQ/Embassy responsibility, while (b) and (c) were the responsibility of the Embassy, albeit in active consultation and participation of Sida HQ/DESO

(a) Project preparation

MAMTA was well known to Sida prior to the present project, which is the main reason why Sida and the Embassy provided an initial non-binding allocation for a 'project identification'-cum-organizational familiarization in 1999. The purpose of this was basically to provide MAMTA and RFSU an opportunity to establish a collaborative platform on which a proposal around an YRSHR could be built.

While this initial support worked as intended it is to us somewhat surprising that Sida, with its considerable experience of forging alliances with the Swedish resource base as well as of working with NGOs in India, did not require as a concrete output of this initial phase a Memorandum of Understanding between the two parties. This failure can no doubt be attributed to the fact that 'twinning' was a new concept for Sida as well. But had this been done we are convinced that many of the later weaknesses of the collaboration (as well as of the project design) could have been avoided.

Finding 36:

While Sida took an active part and financially facilitated both the formulation of the proposal and the underlying collaboration between MAMTA and RFSU, it did not require the two parties to jointly produce a Memorandum of Understanding. Had this been done many of the later weaknesses emerging in the collaboration could have been avoided.

(b) Project assessment and approval

The Project Proposal that was formulated and submitted to the Embassy in February 2000 was approved but cut to involve only 3 years rather than the proposed 5 years. In so doing the Embassy endorsed a provisional plan, with the understanding that a more detailed and comprehensive Plan of Action would evolve subsequent to RFSU's project identification mission in March 2000. Following that a first revision was approved, and then later in conjunction with the first Annual Review a second and final revision.

This provided for a flexible but controlled expansion which we find to be a very responsive way of supporting an exploratory effort such as this. However, we find that in the process some important considerations were overlooked:

- The development of the collaboration between MAMTA and RFSU was taken for granted, in spite of a formal allocation (the 'Consultancy Fund') to assist the coordination and management information system (cf sections 3.4 & 3.5)
- The budget was not thoroughly scrutinized for unit costs, overhead provisions, or for MAMTA's contribution (cf section 3.5)
- The clause pertaining to interests accruing from Sida advances to MAMTA was put in such a way as to complicate both its calculation and the liquidity planning for MAMTA

Finding 37:

The project assessment and approval was carried out in a very flexible and responsive way by the Embassy. However, the effective collaboration between MAMTA and RFSU was taken for granted, and the scrutiny of cost projections was somewhat superficial leading to some questionable budget provisions and financial arrangements.

(c) Follow-up

The basic instrument whereby the Embassy (and Sida/DESO) followed up the performance and forward planning of the project have been the Joint Annual Reviews (Embassy/Sida/MAMTA/RFSU). There have to date been two such reviews: the first in March 2001, and the second in February 2002.

Apart from providing an opportunity for all parties to discuss and take formal stock of what has been achieved and what is required to be done, they have provided an important platform for informal discussions around the style of working and atmosphere within as well as around the project. In both respects the Annual Reviews have been very effective and have raised important questions. In particular, the Reviews have insisted (somewhat belatedly perhaps) on more clear expressions of the collaborative venture between MAMTA and RFSU – e.g. through joint rather than separate plans and reports. They have also pointed at the need for consolidation and for moving more decisively into issues such as youth involvement, gender, and a more active stance vis à vis the educational establishments/schools.

Finding 38:

The Annual Reviews have acted as important events for assessing the performance and have raised a number of critical issues that must be faced by the project and its partners. At the same time they have been less effective in giving a clear guidance into the future.

At the same time the Reviews have also encouraged and/or tacitly supported a further expansion of the project into new issues or geographical areas (e.g. condom production and distribution, regional YR-SHR seminars, new state networks, research) which seems somewhat surprisingly at odds with the concern for consolidation otherwise voiced by the Embassy/Sida. This gives the Agreed Minutes a somewhat ambiguous quality and has in our view undermined their role as guiding instruments.

4 Conclusions

Based on the findings of the assessment of the project performance and achievements so far the Evaluation Team makes the following conclusions:

4.1. Efficiency

The project and its carrying stakeholders – MAMTA, RFSU, and the collaborating NGOs – have shown themselves to be very efficient in implementing all activities according to approved plans and budgets. This is all the more remarkable as the project was in itself exploratory with a number of activities being tried out for the first time in India

4.2. Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the project is still to be determined. However, there is no doubt that a foundation has been laid for it to be an active change agent and promoter of relevant YRHSR policy and practice in India.

- (a) *Information Centre*: the IC has already proved itself in making MAMTA the premier reference and information body with respect to YRSHR in India. It has still to develop a corresponding presence as a clearing house and as a platform for training
- (b) *Networking*: State level networks have been established but are still very much dependent on MAMTA for their existence. The role of MAMTA needs to be clarified, as does the actual capacity and contribution of the network partners
- (c) *Phased Interventions*: the PIs have shown themselves more effective in promoting locally specific awareness than as action research, and their relevance for the overall project remains to be determined
- (d) *Advocacy*: this has been very effective at the national/Delhi level and (in the form of sensitisation) also at the local/community level. It has yet to make its mark at the state level
- (e) *Capacity building*: the training so far undertaken has so far contributed more to awareness than to insights, particularly at the cutting edge of peer educators
- (f) *Research*: the research undertaken so far has primarily been one of overall inventories and profiling of the problems associated with YRSHR. It has yet to be developed as underpinnings of a forward looking operational strategy for dealing with YRSHR

4.3. Relevance

In overall terms the project is highly relevant in that it strives to influence and directly contribute to the development of relevant YRSHR policy and practice in India. It also represents an effort to translate and adapt existing international knowledge and techniques in building up a capacity in the country.

- (a) *Information centre*: the relevance of IC component stems from the fact that it is increasingly being sourced by youth, policy-makers, health professionals and practitioners for authoritative information around YRSHR. It must, however, intensify the search for cost-effective approaches that give priority to developing channels of information accessible to local level institutions and individual youth outside the IT technology reach.
- (b) *Networking*: the NGO network represents an outreach potential into the crucial state contexts as well as into areas where the existing health delivery system is very weak. The extent to which this poten-

tial translates into reality depends very much on whether MAMTA can further develop and identify 'tie-activities' and communication/information models that can instil dynamism and quality criteria into the network operations. The relevance of the entire effort stands and falls with this, and other components are justified mainly by how they contribute to and sustain an effective national network

- (c) *Phased Interventions*: the PIs relevance hinges on the ability to give them a clearer role and more concretely define the contribution they can make to the overall project efforts. Similarly, although they are organizationally well placed there is a need to further develop effective approaches to peer education – in selection, preparation, and follow-up support.
- (d) *Advocacy*: the relevance of the activities undertaken appears high, although still somewhat unsystematic and lopsided in favour of mass media. The main weakness is primarily related to what has so far not been given adequate attention, i.e. how to establish effective advocacy at the state level
- (e) *Capacity building*: provided that the present cascading approach to training is deepened and based on clearer strategic considerations (e.g. identification and competence development of Master Trainers at various levels, determination of critical mass and intensity of training sessions) the capacity building will be highly relevant and lay the basis for a sustained YRSHR momentum
- (f) *Research*: this component needs to be clearer defined, in organizational and managerial terms as well as in terms of focus and methodology. A considered balance has to be struck between what MAMTA can and should do, and what had better be done by others (within or outside the network).

4.4. Impact

The Project has explored, and partially succeeded in establishing, channels of reaching out to and sensitise youth. It needs to reaffirm its focus developing approaches to reach beyond the middle class. At the same time it has similarly succeeded in roping in health professionals and service providers, but more consistent effort need to be made with respect to injecting YRSHR information and awareness in schools and the system.

4.5. Sustainability

Being to a large extent an exploratory undertaking it is still too early to assess possibilities of financial sustainability. But the project should nevertheless better identify cost structures for different interventions so as to be able to assess cost-effectiveness, and also explore ways of cost-recovery in relation to the Information Centre. The organisational sustainability hinges on the ability of the project to make the network come into its own, including developing clearer strategies for communication, distribution of roles and functions, and synergy effects

4.7. Gender

MAMTA has consciously promoted a gender balance in its organization and management structure. It is still exploring ways by which gender concerns can be effectively included in its peer education efforts, in terms of methodology as well as in terms of content

4.8. Quality assurance

There is as yet no system or indicators in place to assess or ensure quality in the various project components

5 Recommendations

(a) Information Centre

- 1) MAMTA should make an analysis of types of materials for different user groups. Policy makers and media might need background reports while NGOs might need manuals and methodological advice
- 2) MAMTA should strengthen and broaden its own search mechanism for acquiring appropriate publications. For the future quality indicators should be devised to help prioritisation of new acquisitions
- 3) Ways should be sought to introduce cost recovery as part of the service provided by the IC – e.g. in the form of subscriptions (physical as well as web-based)
- 4) As part of the definition of MAMTA's role over time the 'clearing house' concept should be explored jointly with other stakeholders, particularly network partners and communication experts

(b) Networking

- 5) Other components (advocacy, information, phased interventions, capacity building, research) should converge on, and be assessed for their contribution to, the state networks.
- 6) MAMTA must for the next phase more clearly define its own role over time, including developing an operational approach to rotation of functional responsibilities among SFAs
- 7) Capacity building needs to be differentiated over networks depending on strengths and nature of the respective SFAs as well as of the state networks as such
- 8) Training and capacity building plan, including development and implementation of ToT at state level, to increase to number of trainers at NGO level to a critical mass
- 9) Selection, role, and support with respect to peer educators need to be further developed and communicated throughout the network
- 10) Current standardized level of funding to state networks should be gradually discarded in favour of one that includes capacity and momentum
- 11) The Working Group should identify and assist state networks to identify and make alliances with NGOs working with education in order to make inroads into the school system and reach out of school children and youth
- 12) Quality indicators for the different aspects of YRSHR interventions taken up by partner NGOs need to be worked out in a participatory manner

(c) Phased interventions

- 13) The Phased Interventions are likely to play a greater role, both as interventions and as action research, if undertaken jointly with a local network partner
- 14) In both of the ongoing (and in future) PIs more focal efforts need to be made to systematically explore the potentials and constraints of (a) reaching the poorest and (b) involve educational institutions
- 15) Proper action research protocols (rather than action plans for interventions) need to be worked out as part of the design for all PIs. These must include concrete objectives, programme-related relevance of locality/context, and definitions of exit

- 16) Gender perspectives need to be further intensified in a creative way to deepen the understanding of the special needs of both boys and girls and how to address them
- 17) Sexuality education must be reinforced and reiterated for both project staff and peer educators
- 18) The PIs should include development of concrete models for participation of youth in planning, monitoring, research. This experience should be fed into the network in a structured way

(d) Advocacy

- 19) MAMTA, jointly with RFSU, should as a specific activity initiate and support state-wise advocacy strategies – e.g. on a rolling basis
- 20) Indicators of reach, efficiency, and effectiveness need to be worked out – not the least for the Delhi/national level advocacy efforts
- 21) RFSU systematically share its Advocacy strategy in Sweden and work together with MAMTA and partners to identify suitable strategies for India.

(e) Capacity building

- 22) MAMTA & RFSU should jointly review the training momentum so far. This should form an integral part of a broader ‘capacity & competence needs assessment’ together with the different state networks
- 23) Based on that a comprehensive cap building strategy with a focus on state networks (individually as well as in terms of synergy between them) should form part of the next phase. This should include considerations of how to ensure quality in the cascading approach, critical mass of trainees as well as trainers at different levels, required screening for personality characteristics of trainers, etc
- 24) Gender issues to be more firmly and consistently addressed during training so that women trainers overcome culturally induced shame and silence related to sexuality issues
- 25) Identify institutions at national as well as state level such as state Councils of Education Research & Training, through which YRSHR issues can be fed into educational material and curricula development

(f) Research

- 26) MAMTA must clarify and position itself in relation to the research requirements of the YRHSR. This involves inter alia defining both what issues that must be addressed, whether and what MAMTA should undertake on its own/through others/in alliance, as well as the capacity and organizational modifications required to ensure quality

(g) General

- 27) One of the major tasks to be borne by MAMTA is that of *quality assurance* of YRHSR activities promoted throughout the network(s). While this is less apparent during a launching phase, it will assume greater importance in the years ahead
- 28) The *twinning arrangement* between RFSU and MAMTA needs to be made considerably clearer – as regards scope, focus, and roles (Recommendations after review of RFSU)
- 29) Sida should, as a distinct part of its support to MAMTA/YRSHR, makes available an organizational development expert to assist, train, and facilitate the further consolidation of MAMTA
- 30) The agreement between Sida and MAMTA specifies that any *interest* accrued from Sida disburse-

ments shall be repaid to Sida at the end of the agreement period. It is recommended that in the future such repayments shall be made annually

- 31) In view of the considerable work to be done prior to a new agreement being entered into between Sida and MAMTA/RFSU, the unutilised balance of the present allocation should be used for a bridging period by extending the present contract period. The purpose of this bridging period is to allow all parties – MAMTA, RFSU, and network partners – to develop a strategic and coherent framework for the coming programme period. A work plan with points that need to be addressed as part of the strategy formulation is found in Annex 7.

Annex 1

Terms of Reference

Evaluation of “*Evolving strategies for better health and development of adolescent/young people*”, a project implemented in India by MAMTA and RFSU

1. Introduction

Since 1990 MAMTA, an NGO based in Delhi, has been working in the urban slums on issues related to the health of women and children. In the past five years the focus of their work has been with young people (10–24 age group) in promoting responsible behaviour for their well being, ensuring adequate use of their potentials through provision of opportunities and the right to information, skills and services.

In 1999, MAMTA initiated a twinning project with RFSU, an NGO based in Stockholm. RFSU has extensive experience of working on issues addressing adolescent reproductive health needs for the past thirty years. After an initial support of SEK 300,000 to initiate the partnership, the Embassy approved a contribution of SEK 10.25 million to the project “Evolving strategies for better health and development of adolescent/young people” for a period of three years, February 2000 – March 2003.

The objectives of the project are:

- To access institutions and facilitate the process of their taking up the issue of young people’s sexual and reproductive health;
- To collect existing information on young people’s sexual & reproductive health and disseminate it through various channels;
- To establish countrywide Networking and establish common areas of concern related to young people’s sexual and reproductive health and development;
- To have pilot interventions in the country and share experiences through various documentation and research efforts;
- To establish an Information Centre in MAMTA for strengthening its training, advocacy and policy initiatives;
- To strengthen MAMTA’s capacity and its Management Information System for taking up leadership role in this aspect.

2. Objective of the evaluation

This evaluation has been initiated by the Embassy in compliance with Sida’s Evaluation Plan 2002 and Evaluation Policy, dated 7 October 1999 (attached as Annex I).

The project will complete its first phase of implementation in March 2003. Before continuing support for the next phase, an evaluation has been planned. The evaluation will attempt to assess systematically and objectively the project’s relevance, performance and success to date. The evaluation should also be forward-looking, including recommendations to ensure the sustainability of results and lessons learned that would feed into a possible next phase of the project.

The main stakeholders of this evaluation are the two partner agencies, MAMTA and RFSU and the Development Co-operation Section (DCS) of the Embassy of Sweden in New Delhi and Sida’s Health Division in Stockholm.

3. Scope of the evaluation

The evaluation will cover all important aspects and components of the project as outlined in the project document and later amendments, taking into account developments since the signing of the agreement between MAMTA-RFSU and the DCS/Sida to date.

4. Issues to be addressed by the evaluation

Guided by Sida's Evaluation Policy, the evaluation team shall particularly address the following issues:

- The continued relevance of the project (approach, objectives, modalities of implementation, etc.) with regard to the prevailing context and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, CEDAW and other relevant conventions;
- The project outputs with regard to the expected end-results;
- The effectiveness of the approach/strategy being used to produce these results;
- Gender concerns at various levels of project implementation and gender sensitivity of the project staff;
- The efficiency of project management, including the quality, quantity and timeliness of delivery of inputs;
- The efforts put in for capacity building and institutional development and the development of networking systems and coordination;
- The institutional collaboration between MAMTA and RFSU: clarity in roles and responsibilities, scope for improvement;
- Early signs of potential impact and sustainability of results, including the contribution to capacity development;

On the basis of this assessment, the evaluation team should identify problems and constraints, if any, and propose recommendations for follow-up action to consolidate project sustainability. A number of generic recommendations should also be made that have bearing beyond the project.

5. Products expected from the evaluation

The evaluation team will produce an **evaluation report** of not more than 25 pages, apart from relevant annexes, containing the following six sections (1) Cover page with date of version and name of consultants; (2) Executive summary; (3) List of contents (4) The Project: design, objectives, and results; (5) The Evaluation methodology; (6) Findings; (7) Conclusions and recommendations; and (8) Lessons learned. The report should include a list of reference material as well as list of people interviewed.

The findings and recommendations of the evaluation team should also be verbally presented to MAMTA and RFSU and the DCS/Sida. A draft version of the evaluation report will be shared with these organisations for comments at least three days before the presentation/s. The final evaluation report will be submitted to the DCS in 5 bound hard copies, one unbound hard copy and one electronic copy (in MS Word or compatible software).

The Evaluation Team Leader will also be required to fill out the Sida Evaluation Data Work Sheet and the Evaluation Newsletter form.

6. Methodology

As a first task, the evaluation team will, in consultation with MAMTA and the DCS, prepare a detailed scope of work and time schedule reflecting this ToR and present it to the DCS/Sida for approval.

The evaluation team will carefully review all relevant documentation, including the original project document and the project progress reports.

The team will conduct interviews with relevant staff in the DCS/Sida, MAMTA-RFSU and partner NGOs of MAMTA, as well as other stakeholders in the activities undertaken.

7. Composition of the evaluation team

The evaluation team will be consisted of minimum three members designated jointly by MAMTA-RFSU and the DCS/Sida.

The team should possess demonstrable skills in evaluating capacity development of organisation as well as substantive experience from dealing with adolescent SRHR issues, gender issues and networking processes. Excellent (English) oral and writing skills is essential. Work experience in India/South-Asia is of advantage and good knowledge and ability to apply Sida's goals and Sida's Health Policy in carrying out the evaluation is needed.

The team leader is responsible for the conduct of the evaluation team, for ensuring that the ToR is fully understood by all the team members, and for ensuring that the evaluation report is completed in accordance with this ToR.

8. Implementation arrangements

The evaluation will be carried out during four/five weeks in November/December 2002. It is proposed that the evaluation be carried out in four steps as follows:

- Documentation review (desk study) and preliminary consultations with the DCS/Sida and MAMTA-RFSU, including the development of a work plan;
- Visit to the project site, including collection of relevant written material as well as interviews with the staff of MAMTA-RFSU, partner NGOs and other stakeholders;
- Analysis of the information collected and preparation of a first draft of the report; and
- Debriefing, information validation, and preparation of the final version of the report.

Logistical arrangements for the project visit will be decided upon once a detailed work plan has been developed.

Annex 2

Itinerary

Nov 5	GT & RR internal consultations	Delhi
Nov 6	Briefing by Embassy	Delhi
	Planning and consultations with MAMTA	Delhi
Nov 7	Meeting at NIPCCD	
	Meeting at NIHFW	
	Presentation & discussions on project	
	Components, MAMTA	Delhi
Nov 8	Presentation and discussion on project components, MAMTA	Delhi
Nov 10	Arrival VU to Delhi	
Nov 11	Presentation and discussion with CINI & state network partners	Calcutta
Nov 12	Field visit	24 Paraganas
Nov 13	Presentation and discussion with PI field staff	
	Field visit, intervention area	Bangalore
Nov 14	Meeting with local resource persons, community leaders, peer educators	Bangalore
Nov 15	Review of Information Centre	
	Meeting with UNIFEM	
	Internal team work	Delhi
Nov 16	VU departs from Delhi	
	Disc with Arogyam, Patna, field visits & disc with state network partners (GT)	Patna/ Bihar
	Disc with Chetna, Jaipur and interaction with state network partners (RR)	Jaipur/ Rajasthan
Nov 17	Field visits (RR)	
Nov 18	Review MAMTA	Delhi
Nov 19	Field visit to Bawal PI, meeting with staff	Bawal/ Haryana
	Visit to school and Health Centre	
	YIC, disc with peer educators	
Nov 20	Review of MAMTA, meeting with Secy of The Board of Governors	Delhi
Nov 21	Internal work	Delhi
Nov 22	Debriefing at MAMTA	
	Debriefing at Swedish Embassy	Delhi
	RR departs from Delhi	
Nov 23	GT departs from Delhi	
Dec 2	Interview G Essner, Sida/DESO (GT)	Stockholm
	Review and disc with RFSU staff (GT)	
Dec 11	Debriefing with Sida/DESO, G.Essner	Stockholm

Annex 3

List of references

Org	Title	Date
Arogyam	Sexual & Reproductive Health Needs of Adolescents And Youth In Ranchi and Marghanda	No date
CAR	Evaluation report of Advocacy efforts of MAMTA on YRSHR (Oct '01–March '02)	No date
CINI	AdolescentSpeak – Voices from the ground	2001
CINI	Annual Report 2001	Feb 1, 2002
CINI	Communicating with Young People – A resource directory	No date
Delhi Pediatrics	Voll, No1 (Speical issue on YRSHR)	July–August, 2002
Emb of Sweden	Decision: Support MAMTA-RFSU collaboration (B-055/99)	1999-07-07
IDEA	IDEA at a glance	No date
MAMTA	List of outputs 2000–2002 (Sep)	No date
MAMTA	Action Plans for YRSHR 2002/3, 2001/2, 2000/1	No date
MAMTA	Perdspective document on YRHRSR Network	No date
MAMTA	Guiding principles for the YRHRSR Network	No date
MAMTA	Presentation on 'Networking in YRHRSR Program'	(Nov 2002)
MAMTA	Adolescent Helath and Development in India – An Action Approach	Jan 2002
MAMTA	RFSU visit to MAMTA 13–24/3/2000 – A report by MAMTA	No date
MAMTA	Basic Training on Sex & Sexuality (Jan 23–27, 2001) – A report	No date
MAMTA	Annual Report 2001–2002	No date
MAMTA	Audit Report – MAMTA's comments	24 Sep, 2002
MAMTA	Information Centre 2000–2002, YRHRSR (compilation of documents)	No date
MAMTA	Young People – an investment for the future (advocacy kit)	No date
MAMTA	Training Manual for facilitators on Sexuality and Gender & Young People	2002
MAMTA	Suppllementary reading for facilitators on Sexuality and Gender & Young People	2002
MAMTA	Young People's Reproductive and Sexual Health and Rights – an analysis of urban and rural setting	2000–01

MAMTA	Reports of Networks in the Country – A step towards the India Network on YRHSR	No date
MAMTA	Presentation on ‘Advocacy for YRHSR’	(Nov 2002)
MAMTA	Presentation on ‘Phased Intervention’	(Nov 2002)
MAMTA	Presentation ‘YRSHR – 1999 onwards’	(Nov 2002)
MAMTA	Phased Interventions 2000–2002 (compilation of docs)	(No date)
MAMTA	Annual Reports – ‘Evolving Strategies for better health & development of young people’, 2000–2002	(No date)
MAMTA	Evolving strategies for better health & development of young people’ – Monthly report Apr–Sep 2002	No date
MAMTA	Evolving strategies for better health & development of adolescent/young people’ (Proj. Doc. 2000–06)	
MAMTA	Design for Phased Intervention (Bawal, Koramangala, Pindra) – 2002–2003 (?)	No date
MAMTA	YRSHR: An Intervention Research – Bawal, Haryana & Bangalore, Karnataka. 2001–2002	No date
MAMTA	Bangalore Quarterly process documentation – July to September 2002	No date
MAMTA	Quarterly process document for Bawal – April to June 2002	No date
MAMTA	Quarterly process document for Bawal – July to September 2002	No date
MAMTA	Bangalore Quarterly process documentation– April to June 2002	No date
Mittal & Ass	Audit Report – MAMTA, New Delhi	Sep 2002
NIPCCD	Micronutrients & HIV/AIDS – Report of the Consultation Meet	7–8 March, 2002
NIPCCD	Symposium on Street Children & HIV/AIDS (March 27–28, 2000) – A report	No date
RFSU	Annual Report MAMTA – RFSU Collaboration (October 2000–March 2001)	07 March, 2001
RFSU	Proposed Workplan (till March 2001)	26-02-01
RFSU	MAMTA – RFSU Collaboration: Report from RFSU study visit to MAMTA/India 12–25/3/02	No date
RFSU	MAMTA – RFSU Collaboration: Report from RFSU’s visit to MAMTA, January 22–Feb 2, 2001	26-02-01
Sida	Health is Wealth – Policy for Health and Development	No date
Sida	Beslut: Bidrag till RFSU för deras samarbetsprojekt med MAMTA i Indien 15/7–15/12/99	24-08-99
Sida	Beslut: Contribution to RFSU for their collaboration with MAMTA – (DESO 0693/00)	22-09-00
Sida	Sida’s Evaluation Policy	okt-99

Sida/MAMTA /RFSU	Agreed Minutes for the Annual Review 2002	21-05-2002
Sida/MAMTA /RFSU	Agreed Minutes for the Annual Review 2001	
Sida/RFSU	Avtal mellan Sida och RFSU (för samarbetsprojektet mellan MAMTA & RFSU) 15/7–15/12 1999	24-08-99

Annex 4

Evaluation of 'Evolving strategies for better health and development of young people'

Debriefing summary – MAMTA – New Delhi 23-11-2002

General

- 2000 to present: launching phase (exploration, gaining experience, focal capacity build-up, development of procedures and instruments)
- Evaluation two-pronged: (a) performance during project period/launching phase, (b) medium-term (e.g. 5 year) future prospects and trends given performance until now
 - Performance as per action plans by and large very satisfactory in all fields
 - The urge/imperative of putting the YRHSR issues on the public agenda, coupled with a reliance on event-based planning and follow-up, has left medium-term strategic issues unattended

A. Networking

Findings

- The creation of statewide networks critical, particularly as most YRHSR issues are state responsibilities
- Networks still largely driven & 'owned' by MAMTA
- State networks uneven in momentum, orientation, and sense of common purpose
- Role of MAMTA and nature/strategy of programme unclear and/or varying to state networks

Recommendations

- Other components (advocacy, information, phased interventions, cap bldng, research) should converge on, and be assessed for their contribution to, the state networks
- MAMTA must for the next phase more clearly define its own role over time, incl. developing an operational approach to rotation of functional responsibilities among SFAs
- Capacity bldg needs to be differentiated over networks depending on strengths and nature of the respective SFAs as well as of the state networks as such.

B. Advocacy

Findings

- Advocacy efforts strongest at Delhi ('national') level and local/community level (=sensitization). State networks/SFAs appear to have little or no advocacy strategy
- Involvement of RFSU in advocacy appears weak in spite of this being one of its strong points
- Evaluation of advocacy efforts at Delhi/'national' level undertaken but unclear what lessons drawn in practice or in terms of strategy

Recommendations

- MAMTA, jointly with RFSU, should as a specific activity initiate and support state-wise advocacy strategies – e.g. on a rolling basis
- Indicators of reach, efficiency, and effectiveness need to be worked out – not the least for the Delhi/national level advocacy efforts

C. Information Center

Findings

- The IC has been well developed as a resource center/library. Its role as a ‘clearing house’ (incl. that of the web portal) as well as its use in ToT activities still require attention
- Although the IT-based platforms (communication, interactivity, database, resource inventory) are no doubt effective, this must not divert attention or organizational capacity from finding ways to reach the poor

Recommendations

- Ways should be sought to introduce cost recovery as part of the service provided by the IC – e.g. in the form of subscriptions (physical as well as web-based)
- As part of the definition of MAMTA’s role over time the ‘clearing house’ concept should be explored jointly with other stakeholders, particularly network partners and communication experts

D. Phased Interventions

Findings

- Largely due to the hard work put in by MAMTA staff, the PIs clearly illustrate the difficulty of balancing the private/individual nature of sexuality issues with social/contextual issues of development needs
- While it is clear that PIs are critical for MAMTA’s ability to keep in touch with ground realities, the PIs have developed more as locality specific interventions than as ‘action research’ within the overall programmatic effort. As a consequence the purpose, benefits and utility of the PIs remain unclear
- In practice the thrust has been primarily on girls, thereby losing out on an integrated gender approach
- Insofar as a conscious attempt to reach the most vulnerable/marginalized/poor constitutes a pervasive cross-cutting imperative of the programme, this still remains to be systematically explored

Recommendations

- The PIs are likely to play a greater role, both as interventions and as action research, if undertaken jointly with a local network partner
- Greater efforts must be made to develop relevant approaches for boys (to avoid the YICs becoming social boys clubs) and a more integrated gender approach
- In both of the ongoing (and in future) PIs more focal efforts need to be made to systematically explore the potentials and constraints of (a) reaching the poorest and (b) involve educational institutions
- Proper action research protocols (rather than action plans for interventions) need to be worked out for all PIs. These must include concrete objectives, programme-related relevance of locality/context, and definitions of exit

E. Capacity building

Findings

- Trainings provided (RFSU-MAMTA-network partners) have generally been well received and have often acted as ‘revelations’
- The cascading approach followed has, however, led to a rather thin and uneven layer of insights throughout the networks (and PIs)
- Although effective in specific instances, the twinning of RFSU & MAMTA has failed to generate a capacity building strategy and has been played out primarily as a series of issue-oriented training events

Recommendations

- MAMTA & RFSU should jointly review the training momentum so far. This should form an integral part of a broader ‘capacity & competence needs assessment’ together with the different state networks
- Based on that a comprehensive cap building strategy with a focus on state networks (individually as well as in terms of synergy between them) should form part of the next phase. This should include considerations of how to ensure quality in the cascading approach, critical mass of trainees as well as trainers at different levels, required screening for personality characteristics of trainers, etc

F. Research

Findings

- MAMTA has been instrumental in bringing out several relevant features of YRHSR in India, and has come to be seen as a legitimate platform for analysis of overall trends and issues
- The baselines/needs assessments/situation analyses undertaken have been valuable primarily as exposure processes for the staff and organisations involved. However, as studies they have a limited value
- The action research dimension of the PIs is still weakly developed, partly because of the undefined role and nature of ‘research’ in the PIs as well as in MAMTA as a whole

Recommendation

- MAMTA must clarify and position itself in relation to the research requirements of the YRHSR. This involves inter alia defining both what issues that must be addressed, whether and what MAMTA should undertake on its own/through others/in alliance, as well as the capacity and organizational modifications required to ensure quality

G. Other

- One of the major tasks to be borne by MAMTA is that of *quality assurance* of YRHSR activities promoted throughout the network(s). While this is less apparent during a launching phase, it will assume greater importance in the years ahead. (Recommendations will be included in the final report)
- The *twinning arrangement* between RFSU and MAMTA needs to be made considerably clearer – as regards scope, focus, and roles (Recommendations after review of RFSU)
- MAMTAs can presently be characterized as ‘*flat organisation*’. This is a very demanding type and requires considerable attention to handle such issues as networking facilitation, staff turnover and competence retention, delegation of powers, specialization vs comprehensive familiarity with all fields, monitoring and evaluation, etc. It is recommended that Sida, as a distinct part of its support to MAMTA/YRSHR, makes available an organizational development expert to assist, train, and facilitate the further consolidation of MAMTA (suggested TOR will be attached to the report)
- The agreement between Sida and MAMTA specifies that any *interest* accrued from Sida disbursements shall be repaid to Sida at the end of the agreement period. It is recommended that in the future such repayments shall be made annually
- In view of the considerable work to be done prior to a new agreement being entered into between Sida and MAMTA/RFSU, it is recommended that the unutilized balance of the present allocation is used for a bridging period of 3 months, i.e. April to June 2003. The purpose of this bridging period is to allow all parties – MAMTA, RFSU, network partners – to develop a strategic and coherent framework for the coming programme period (suggested workplan along with criteria for the programme document will be attached to the report)

The role of RFSU and Sida will be assessed as part of this evaluation, and findings and recommendations will be included in the report

Annex 5

List of findings

The following list of findings is taken directly from the report. It is intended to provide a

‘lazy-dog’ checklist for action by the relevant party/parties. Such action may range from analysing and/or structuring already existing information, to initiating corrective measures or improvements.

Finding 1:

The activities laid down in the agreed Plans of Action have been pursued on time and within budget, reflecting a very high level of commitment of all concerned.

Finding 2:

The project has convincingly shown that it is possible to promote a dialogue and beginning awareness around sexuality, gender and youth in India, in highly varying social contexts and institutional environments

Finding 3:

A precondition for building experience from action-learning efforts is that documents that bear on these actions (plans, reports, analyses, etc) are provided with a date that enables all concerned to locate them in time and situational space. Very few of the documents put out by MAMTA have been provided with dates making it very difficult to see the action-learning as an orderly process.

Action taken:

Date:

Finding 4:

MAMTA has laid a good foundation for its library. The work done so far is commendable and has resulted in a wide range of relevant acquisitions. The parallel development of the physical library and the virtual library is well planned. The web page is well structured, with a simple, humoristic but clear design

Finding 5:

The Web page lays a good foundation for the Clearinghouse role. During discussion with the IC team it was, however found less attention to development of the clearinghouse idea than should be expected.

Action taken:

Date:

Finding 6:

Although the physical Library is well equipped as a training venue with possibilities for systematic ToT trainings to support the project network there are as yet no plans on how to develop this aspect of the IC

Action taken:

Date:

Finding 7:

The direct communication with youth on the Web has been very inspiring for MAMTA. Currently a lot of energy of the IC is channelled in this direction and consequently away from the poorer youth groups. The presence on the Web does, however, give MAMTA a high profile

Action taken:

Date:

Finding 8:

The development of the database is impressive but demanding when it comes to technical skills and resources.

Considerable organisational and staff efforts (and possibly also financial resources) currently seem to be going into these new initiatives.

Action taken:

Date:

Finding 9:

The creation of mutually interactive state-wide networks is critical for the reach and effectiveness of any YRSHR effort in India. It is in fact likely that without such networks the other components of the project lose much of their justification

Finding 10:

The state networks, although active, are still largely driven and 'owned' by MAMTA. Although there is strength in diversity the networks and their constituent partners exhibit a very uneven understanding of YRSHR issues and largely lack a common sense of direction and purpose

Action taken:

Date:

Finding 11:

A national Working Group has been set up for the network, charged with overall responsibility to plan, coordinate, and follow-up activities agreed upon for the network. During this exploratory phase this appears adequate: But it is imperative that more responsibilities and functions need to devolve from MAMTA to the network partners in a planned manner if the network is to come into its own

Action taken:

Date:

Finding 12:

Monitoring of the performance and quality of YRSHR activities undertaken by the network partners need to be strengthened to ensure credibility and consistency of advocacy and sensitisation at the state and local levels. However, such monitoring is of little value until the necessary level of capacity building has been effectively carried out. This requires, in turn, that a database is developed on the profile, capacity, and priorities of the participating NGOS throughout the network

Action taken:

Date:

Finding 13:

Although the Evaluation Team appreciates the difficulties of giving a fixed identity and direction to what is in essence an attempt at participatory action learning, we nevertheless strongly feel that there is a need to firm up both the objectives and the design of the PIs

Action taken:

Date:

Finding 14:

Largely due to the highly responsive and socially competent manner by which MAMTA project managers and staff have launched the interventions, the projects exhibit a very high degree of local acceptance and respect. A focus on YRSHR has been maintained in spite of its private and unobtrusive nature, by forging alliances with other competent organizations to cater for income generation, literacy, employment opportunities etc

Finding 15:

Project staff has been both active and successful in activating local health service providers, private as well as public. There has been much less success in bringing onboard educational establishments, illustrating the need for a much broader advocacy approach targeting not only individual teachers and schools, but also parents and state/national educational establishments to bring about a change in the curriculum.

Action taken:

Date:

Finding 16:

While the PIs appear to be quite successful as locally specific interventions the action research aspects have been downplayed, leaving the PIs without any clearly envisaged end results or exit points. As a consequence the purpose, benefits and utility of the PIs for the overall project remain unclear.

Action taken:

Date:

Finding 17:

A number of the specific activities that have been started in both PIs can, with some effort and strategic reconsiderations, be more systematically explored as 'action research points'.

Action taken:

Date:

Finding 18:

The insight and understanding of basic aspects of sexuality (girls) and gender (boys) is still rudimentary among staff and peer educators even in the 'controlled' environment of the PIs. This calls for intensified efforts both at the level of training and developing contextually relevant approaches to be explored and tested and should reflect a more direct infusion of RFSU methodologies and approaches

Action taken:

Date:

Finding 19:

Even if the PIs have indeed been located in relatively deprived localities, ways and approaches of how to reach the vulnerable and marginalized groups/individuals remain to be explored. This involves revisiting the basic design and priorities of the interventions, the inclusion of specific step-wise development of improved methodologies, and a continuous attention to the selection of peer educators

Action taken:

Date:

Finding 20:

MAMTA has carried out an advocacy campaign with a focus on mass media and, more selectively, policy makers, technical/professional groupings in the medical and health field. In so doing it has emerged as the recognized reference body in matters regarding YRSHR in India

Finding 21:

Advocacy efforts at the State level appear as yet weak and scattered, with little or no strategic underpinning. Given the fact that advocacy is one of the defining elements of RFSU a more active involvement on their part should have been expected

Action taken:

Date:

Finding 22:

The numerous trainings provided throughout the project network has been generally well received and have, particularly as regards 'sexuality & gender', reportedly acted as revelations to most participants

Finding 23:

The approach to training as a series of topical training events have created an enthusiasm among those trained. But the level of insights is still very thin and uneven throughout the networks and PIs, reflecting a need to deepen the knowledge and capacity of MAMTA around sexuality and gender

Action taken:

Date:

Finding 24:

Although effective in specific instances, the twinning of RFSU and MAMTA has been played out primarily as a series of training events, and has yet to generate a capacity building strategy

Action taken:

Date:

Finding 25:

MAMTA has engaged in a series of studies and analyses to identify the scope, magnitude, nature of YRSHR issues in India. All of them have effectively reinforced MAMTA's advocacy and reference roles, in addition to providing an exposure of the staff to the issues. They are, however, weaker as a basis on which to formulate an operational strategy for tackling the issues

Action taken:

Date:

Finding 26:

The analysis of experience gained in terms of deepened insights into prevailing the notions and misconceptions around sexuality and gender among youth is hampered by the weakly developed action-cum-learning research of the PIs

Action taken:

Date:

Finding 27:

The involvement of RFSU in the project in order to provide an expertise in sexuality and gender has in the main been confined to training sessions and has so far failed to exploit its broader potential

Action taken:

Date:

Finding 28:

The lack of basic rules of the game (e.g. clear communication lines, regular standard information points/formats, definition of counterparts) as well as of an overall definition of the respective roles and responsibilities have diminished the real and potential contribution of the collaboration

Action taken:

Date:

Finding 29:

One implicit but nevertheless apparent role of RFSU is to provide the YRSHR trainings with quality assurance, which in turn requires a very open and straight-forward dialogue with MAMTA management. This has not been fully appreciated so far, in turn diminishing RFSU's contribution

Action taken:

Date:

Finding 30:

However useful the Project Coordination Team with its budgeted non-specific time input corresponding to 4 fulltime Senior Project Managers may have been during the initial phase of the project, it does not appear justified at present

Action taken:

Date:

Finding 31:

Although a fluid management system has definite advantages in terms of internal team-building and a common sense (and understanding) of purpose, the management set-up of the project appears increasingly problematic. There is a need for clearer and more functional distribution of roles and responsibilities along with an increasing need for specialization as the project unfolds. This is particularly so in the cross-cutting activities such as capacity building, research, and information compilation/dissemination

Action taken:

Date:

Finding 32:

While the management style and culture of MAMTA has been a primary driving force behind the overall impressive performance so far, it has also made the organization come close to outpacing its capacity to absorb and consolidate its achievements

Action taken:

Date:

Finding 33:

While the budgeted number field staff is adequate, there is an imbalance at the HQ level between small allocations for component-wise management and large non-specified senior management 'project coordination'

Action taken:

Date:

Finding 34:

The overhead agreed with Sida to cover sundry administrative costs for the project was originally put at 5% of total expenditure. The budget for 2002–2003 suggests, however, a real overhead of 18%.

Action taken:

Date:

Finding 35:

The large number of non-specified budget items, along with what appears to be unjustifiable unit costs in cases where MAMTA itself determines the cost level, suggests the need to review the operational budget in specific areas. This is obviously so in cases of per diems where the levels violate those laid down by the Swedish Tax Authority, regardless of whether the budget has been approved by Sida/Embassy.

Action taken:

Date:

Finding 36:

While Sida took an active part and financially facilitated both the formulation of the proposal and the underlying collaboration between MAMTA and RFSU, it did not require the two parties to jointly produce a Memorandum of Understanding. Had this been done many of the later weaknesses emerging in the collaboration could have been avoided

Action taken:

Date:

Finding 37:

The project assessment and approval was carried out in a very flexible and responsive way by the Embassy. However, the effective collaboration between MAMTA and RFSU was taken for granted, and the scrutiny of cost projections was somewhat superficial leading to some questionable budget provisions and financial arrangements

Action taken:

Date:

Finding 38:

The Annual Reviews have acted as important events for assessing the performance and have raised a number of critical issues that must be faced by the project and its partners. At the same time they have been less effective in giving a clear guidance into the future

Action taken:

Date:

Annex 6

A rapid assessment of the materials in the MAMTA library

The following three components were reviewed:

- The topics
- The search-words
- The manuals and handbooks

The topics

MAMTA aims at covering topics (on Youth and Sexuality) that are not included or easily found in other libraries. At the same time the library needs to cover enough topics to make it broad enough to be worth the visit. In the assessment the number of titles were assessed and a ranking list was made on which topics were most prevalent in the library. An effort was also made to see how the publications were placed, i.e. were they adequately placed. The consultants found that the library does cover a useful number of topics. However there is a dominance of health perspectives and hence a need to balance medical and health issues with more publications with a focus on the “normal” psychosocial, pedagogical and sociological aspects of youth. The topic *Psychosocial Aspects of Adolescents and Young people* was found to include mainly psychosocial problems. Youth sexuality was included in this topic but should perhaps merit a shelf in itself being one of the main topics of the project.

Table 1. Ranking-list of 14 “top topics” according to their volume in the library

Ranking	Topic
1	HIV/AIDS
2	Reproductive and Sexual Health of Adolescents and Young People Maternal Health of Adolescents and Young Women
3	Psychosocial Aspects of Adolescents and Young People
4	Gender
5	Medical books (mainly Public Health and Social and Preventive Medicine from a Paediatric perspective)
6	General Health of Adolescents and Young People Policies and Programmes on Young Peoples Health and Development
7	Child Health
8	Women's Health IEC and Training
9	Youth Friendly Services
10	Adolescent Health Services
11	Life Skills of Adolescents and Young People

The very rapid assessment gave at hand that most volumes were adequately placed. However under the heading *Adolescent Health Services* there were no volume covering the adolescent perspective. These were to be found under *Youth Friendly Services*. This is of course no grave problem since everything can be found via a computerised search system. It might however point to the need of reviewing the topics before the library becomes too big.

The search-words

The assessment found 91 search words in the list. It is unclear however if these are all words. Within the list presented some words were repeated, e.g. education. The search-words form a sort of matrix of topics, population groups (men, women youth etc), the type of organisation either covered by the document or generating the document (e.g. NGO, ILO) and types of documents (e.g. bibliography, classification scheme). When listed according to these three groupings there are some striking gaps. The word *homosexuality* is not appearing, *girl child* appears but not *girl*. The word *school* is missing.

Search words have to be dealt with from the perspective of contents as well as potential users. Thus type of document is of great importance. The library is supposed to cater to people who themselves should be active in YSRHR planning and/or implementing programs and educational events. According to the experience of the consultants they would be searching for plans, programs, manuals and materials. Such words are scarce in the list. The consultants would advise MAMTA to contact and/or visit other resource centres to get inspiration for systematic thinking in developing their list of words.

Manuals and handbooks

As mentioned above the information centre should cater to people who want to be active in the field of YSRHR. Most of these persons are only dealing with the issues on the marginal of their main task. A biology teacher has perhaps 4 hours for sexuality education. A doctor wants to have 3 hours for young people and make the practice more youth friendly, an NGO wants to include HIV/AIDS education in their non-formal education and need to develop a small curriculum. They have already understood something of the problem. They might want to deepen their knowledge on youth and very often easy access to methods materials are essential. They want “cook-books”. As an indicator of the quality of materials an assessment of 9 manuals on YSRHR/Life skills were reviewed. The review is based on the evidence base of sexuality education /aids education. In short summary such education should:

- Be participatory and focus on knowledge as well as processing norms and values
- Be adapted to the varied needs of girls and boys
- Not be based on negative messages

The result can be found in the table below. The table clearly shows the variations in quality.

Although all sorts of materials should have a place, MAMTA clearly needs to be able to enlighten their customers on which manuals they recommend.

Table 2: Review of manuals and hand-books on YSRHR/Life skills

Publication	Target group	Sexuality perspective	Gender perspective	Methods
NAZ Foundation: Teaching about sexuality New Delhi 1998	adults	Sexuality is seen as a positive. Matter of fact tone on sexuality	Both men and women and youth have sexual needs and are seen as actors	Methods are participatory and need a fairly advanced facilitator. Knowledge seems the main goal rather than affecting norms and values. There are many right/wrong exercises.
Watson, C: You, your dream: a book for adolescents. Publishers: Family care India 1997	adolescents	Sexuality seen as positive although Abstinence is advocated for adolescents	Both women and men have sexual needs and are seen as actors	Methods participatory. Values and facts
Educators source book. FPA of India 1997.	For trainers	No contents on youth sexuality. Only sexuality within marriage	Both women and men have sexual needs	Fairly advanced methodology needing good facilitator skills Participatory. Mostly knowledge and facts but also values
NACO: Building life skills for better health. Delhi 2000	People who work with youth	Sexuality is poorly elaborated. Fairly negative view on youth sexuality.	Poor gender perspective. Women are seen as victims.	Participatory exercises focussing on right and wrong to a large extent.
Dr G. Bitra: Teaching life skills and reproductive health. Salaam Baalak trust	People who work with street children	Poor	No gender perspective	Most street children are very vulnerable too sexual abuse. Considering this the contents on sexuality is meagre and negative. Lacks contents on violence
A Dyalchand: Life skills for girls. IHMP, Aurangbad.	Unclear	Lacks contents on sexuality		
UNICEF: Training manual for middle level health workers, New Dehli	For adults who work on health education for children	Lacks contents on child or adolescent sexuality		
CEDPA: Choose a future: issues and options for girls/Boys. 2 separate publications one for each sex Printed in USA	Teenagers	Limited sexuality contents. More focused on choice of marriage partner	Extrem gender bias. Boys should focus on carers, money and health. Girls should make the best of whatever little they have.	Participatory

Annex 7

Workplan for preparing an operational strategy and project document for the next phase

The following workplan was arrived at during follow-up consultations in Stockholm December 16–19, 2002, between MAMTA, RFSU and the teamleader of the evaluation.

Assumptions and preconditions

- Embassy/Sida to decide on 3-month extension of the current contracts with MAMTA and RFSU up to 2003-06-30, including whatever balance that remains as per 2003-03-31. The extension should cover both running operations and costs for programming.
- Requires: (a) that MAMTA estimates the outgoing balance remaining by March 31, 2003; (b) that MAMTA estimates the cost of running operations April–June 2003 (commitments, not expansions even if planned); (c) that MAMTA & RFSU estimates the cost of programming over and above the ongoing operations for January to June 2003.

Programming timeplan:

A. Review and assessment, Jan–March 2003

- *SFAs and resp state networks* to review their experience & understanding of the YRSHR work, plus establish a database for about their partners (profile, scope of work, activities pursued within each component, role and input of MAMTA). To be undertaken without MAMTA involvement
- *Each PI team* to undertake a participatory review and planning exercise with the involvement of peer educators. Highlights re the methodology of this given in annex to the evaluation report
- *MAMTA with RFSU* the experience of each component regarding focus, achievements, and quality
- *Srijan Working Group* to review network dynamics and suggest possibilities of moving forward

B. Back-to-back Workshops iduring one week in the beginning of April comprising representatives of state partner NGOs (say 3 from each state) + repr from each SFA + site manager of each PI + Working Group members outside SFAs + MAMTA (the 2 component coordinators + 2 senior management) + RFSU, and Sida/Embassy as possible participant observer, with the purpose to

- define strategic roles
- develop operational strategy along LEA lines
- outline indicative financial needs

The initial workshop will be with the SFAs and the network partners, wherein the networks will share the outcome of their discussions and suggest the possible movement of the network. A plan for the network would be drawn here. This will be followed by a workshop with the SFAs and the managers

C. MAMTA and RFSU to draft the Project Document which should be submitted to and endorsed by the Srijan Working Group during April 2003 before being submitted to Sida/embassy by end April 2003

D. External appraisal early May, report by mid-May (preferably desk-study, by Swedish as well as Indian expert ...?)

E. Possible revisions with final PD submitted to Sida/embassy by end May

F. Sida/Embassy decision before end-June, new phase starting as per 2003-07-01

Annex 8

Notes supplied by MAMTA

1. Job description for YRSHR staff (funded by Sida)
2. Project outputs (documents)
3. MAMTA representation on technical committees etc
4. Trainings undertaken

1. Roles and Responsibilities in Sida team

Executive Director:

- Providing overall vision and direction to the project
- Strengthening the conceptual clarity of the team and streamlining the various strategies towards common goals
- Providing direction to MAMTA-RFSU twinning
- Bringing clear correspondence between project goals and organisational mission
- Interactions with senior and distinguished individuals from Government, NGOs and the UN systems and participation in various forums for advocacy

Assistant Director

- Overall responsibility for project outcomes and outputs
- Supervision of the team from time-to-time
- Directing the inter-strategy coordination
- Supervision of undertaking of activities within the time-frame and budget
- Involvement in key activities such as meetings and consultations in the various strategies
- Responsible for the finalisation of key outputs/documents
- Primary responsibility for planning and communication in MAMTA-RFSU twinning
- Primary responsibility for communication with Sida

Senior Programme Manager

- Final responsibility for project activities and outputs on a daily basis
- Supervision of roles and responsibilities of the other team members
- Responsibility for undertaking of activities within given time and budget on a regular basis
- Primary responsibility for inter-strategy coordination
- Involvement in many of the project activities – meetings, consultations, technical visits, interactions with consultants
- Supervision of field-based activities
- Also responsible for finalisation of outputs and documents
- Direct responsibility for capacity building strategy
- The other team member who is responsible for planning and communication in MAMTA-RFSU twinning
- Also responsible for communication with Sida

Programme Manager

- Planning of activities in monthly/weekly calendars and undertaking these within given time frames and budgets
- Directly undertaking the activities in the strategy (except in phased interventions where there is a Senior Programme Officer for day to day implementation of the activities)
- Drafting all important outputs/documents
- Responsible for all Communication related to the strategy
- Responsible for coordination of meetings/consultations in the strategy
- Responsible for regular field visits in correspondence with strategy
- Supervision of roles and responsibilities of other team members contributing to the strategy
- Contribute in specific ways to inter-strategy coordination

Senior Programme Officer/Programme Officer

- Actual undertaking of all field-based activities with the outreach staff
- Responsible for planning of activities on a monthly/weekly basis
- Supervision of outreach team and all administrative and financial matters related to it
- Drafting of documents/reports
- Attending meetings related to the intervention

Consultants

- Providing technical and expert inputs into focused areas, viz, advocacy, counselling, research or IEC
- Providing inputs to the overall project in their specialised area and seeing its role in the entire project

2. List of Outputs of the YRSHR Project for the period 2000–2002 (September)

Project Action plans

Plan for the year 2000-01

For the year 2001-02

For the year 2002-03

Project Reports

Annual reports: 2000–2001; 2001–2002.

6 Monthly reports: April – September 2001

Annual reports of RFSU – 2000-01, 2001-02

Networking

Perspective document on networking

Justification note on YRSHR networking

Review of existing networks

Reports

Report of brainstorming workshop on networking

Reports of the working group meetings

Report of the network partners' training on sex and sexuality

Report of the network partners' training on sexuality and gender

Report of the network partners' training on adolescent friendly health services

Advocacy Reports

Reports of peer educator workshops

Reports of the advocacy meetings with media

A few reports of one-to-one interactions with different constituencies

Advocacy training reports

Advocacy kit (printed)

Peer educator newsletter – Arushi (printed)

Information centre

YRSHR portal –

www.yrshr.org

www.mamta-himc.org

Working Papers

Adolescent Growth & Development (printed)

Reproductive Tract Infection & Sexually Transmitted Diseases (printed)

Training Manuals

“Sexuality & Gender and Young People” (printed)

Statistical Generation of Tables on YRSHR issues

Rationale, objectives along with compilation of tables

YRSHR Promotional outputs

Posters in English (printed)

Brochure on “Adolescence”

Concept note for “initiating school sessions”

Reports

Note on YRSHR portal

Report of launch of YRSHR portal

Phased interventions Reports

Report of the first year of intervention research

Reports of some of the key activities in the intervention

Report of the needs assessment done in Bangalore and Bawal (printed)

Capacity building Reports

Report of the exposure visit to Sweden, October 1999

Report of the exposure visit to Sweden, November, 2000

Report of the exposure on summer campaign in Sweden, July, 2001

Report of the staff training on sex and sexuality Report of the staff training on sexuality and gender

Report of the staff training on adolescent friendly health services

Report of RFSU visit to MAMTA, March, 2002

3. Technical committees of which MAMTA is a part include:

- Technical sub-committee on adolescent health for the 10th plan
- Technical sub-committee on women's empowerment
- Member of Technical sub-committee on Child Health
- Member of First National Coordination committee on child health under Population Policy, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
- MAMTA is in the special consultative status with Economic and Social Council of the United Nations
- Member of Adolescent Expert Committee, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
- Member of Expert committee on Dai Training in Reproductive and Child Health, under the aegis of UNICEF
- Member of UDISHA project supported by World Bank in Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India, Dept. of Women and Child Development, ICDS project to incorporate Adolescent Health and Development in ICDS curriculum.

4. Trainings undertaken

Trainings Of Network Partners At Central Level

S no.	Month	Issues covered	No. of participants
1.	March 2001	YRSHR perspective building	30
2.	Oct 2001	Gender and Sexuality	26
3.	Feb 2002	Youth friendly services and counselling	23
4.	Oct 2002	Hands on training on youth friendly services and counselling	18

Trainings At State Level

State	Month	Issues covered	Participants
-------	-------	----------------	--------------

Andhra Pradesh			
a. AP YRSHR network partners training	Oct 2001	Brainstorming on YRSHR and training on Research methodologies	36
b. Second training program	Dec 2001	Sexuality and sharing preliminary findings of baseline survey	30
c. Third training program	Feb 2002	TOT in training methodology and communication methods	20
Bihar			
a. Orientation workshop	Nov 2001	YRSHR issues	23
b. Training of trainers	July 2002	Youth friendly services & counselling	26
Rajasthan			
a. Training of trainers	Nov 2001	YRSHR issues	16
b. Orientation Workshop		Counselling in reproductive and sexual health	16
West Bengal			
a. Training of network partners – Batch 1	Nov 2001	YRSHR issues; research methodologies	22
b. Training of network partners – Batch 2	Nov 2001	YRSHR issues; research methodologies	17
c. Training of master trainers – Batch 1	Sep 2002	YRSHR issues and FLE	24
d. Training of master trainers – Batch 2	Oct 2002	YRSHR issues and FLE	16
Uttar Pradesh			
a. Orientation and Capacity Building Training & Action Planning	Nov 2001	YRSHR issues	14
b. Orientation workshop and planning meeting	Aug 2002	YRSHR issues	20

Capacity building Of MAMTA Staff by RFSU

S no.	Month	Issues covered	No. of participants
1.	Jan 2001	YRSHR perspective building	20
2.	Sept 2001	Gender and Sexuality	17
3.	Feb 2002	Youth friendly services and counselling	20
4.	Oct 2002	Hands on training on youth friendly services and counselling	9

Recent Sida Evaluations

- 02/29 Network for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases in Central America – NeTropica**
Mikael Jondal
Department for Research Cooperation
- 02/30 Sexual and Reproductive Health of Youth in Northwestern Russia: an Evaluation of the project**
Ivonne Camaroni
Department for Central and Eastern Europe
- 02/31 Welfare Economic Assessment – Reconstruction of 11 Bridges in Honduras.**
Kjell Jansson, Hans Örn, Alf Carling
Department for Infrastructure and Economic Cooperation
- 02/32 Programa de Protección a las Poblaciones Afectadas por la Violencia en Perú**
Raúl Lizárraga Bobbio, Lilian Sala Morin
Departamento Regional para América Latina
- 02/33 Supporting Ownership: A Study of Swedish Development Cooperation Programmes in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda**
David Andersson, Chris Cramer, Alemayehu Geda, Degol Hailu, Frank Muhereza, Matteo Rizzi, Eric Ronge, Howard Stein and John Weeks
Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit
- 02/33:01 Supporting Ownership: A Study of Swedish Development Cooperation Programmes in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda – Vol I: Synthesis report**
David Andersson, Chris Cramer, Alemayehu Geda, Degol Hailu, Frank Muhereza, Matteo Rizzi, Eric Ronge, Howard Stein and John Weeks
Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit
- 02/34 Syntes av Svenska Enskilda Organisationers Utvärderingar.**
Holger Nilén, Per-Ulf Nilsson, Jocke Nyberg
Avdelningen för Samverkan med Enskilda Organisationer och Konflikthantering
- 02/35 Implementation of the 1999–2003 Country Strategy for Swedish Development Cooperation with Vietnam**
Bob Baulch, Mick Moore, Anuradha Joshi, Jan Rudengren
Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit
- 02/36 Implementation of the 1999–2003 Country Strategy for Swedish Development Cooperation with Laos**
Dan Vadjal, Tim Conway, Jan Rudengren, Marc Juville
Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit
- 02/37 Country Plans: the Missing Middle of Sida's Country Strategy Process.**
Samuel Egerö, Göran Schill
Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit, Asia Department
- 02/38 Samata's Centre for Advocacy and Support – Project Activities and Directions for Future in India**
R. Sridhar, R. Rajamani
Asia Department
- 02/39 Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) to Support Democratic Decentralisation in India**
James Manor, R Parasuram, Anand Ibanathan
Asia Department

Sida Evaluations may be ordered from:

Infocenter, Sida
S-105 25 Stockholm
Phone: +46 (0)8 506 423 80
Fax: +46 (0)8 506 423 52
info@sida.se

A complete backlist of earlier evaluation reports may be ordered from:

Sida, UTV, S-105 25 Stockholm
Phone: +46 (0)8 698 51 63
Fax: +46 (0)8 698 56 10
Homepage: <http://www.sida.se>



SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY
S-105 25 Stockholm, Sweden
Tel: +46 (0)8-698 50 00. Fax: +46 (0)8-20 88 64
Telegram: sida stockholm. Postgiro: 1 56 34-9
E-mail: info@sida.se. Homepage: <http://www.sida.se>