

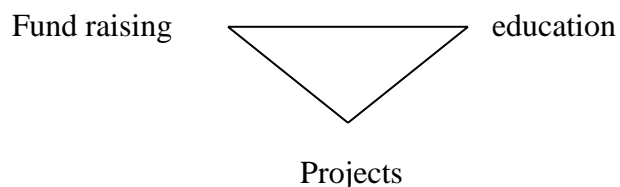
FREEDOM FROM HUNGER - some observations
F. Emery April 1977

There are a number of ways in which the organizational effectiveness of Freedom from Hunger might be improved. I have limited myself to a couple of suggestions.

1. The present arrangements do not make adequate provision for a long range and overall sensing function.

The rate of change in Australia, in the Third World and even in our scientific understanding of aid problems makes this sensing function a matter of prime importance. Without it the ship is rudderless and each of the many rowers is trying to paddle the ship onto a course determined by his or her ad hoc theory of what is happening.

The sensing function needs to take the overall view because of the inter-dependence of the three main operational functions of fund-raising, projects and education. These three functions can be conceived of as the three points of a triangle, where the area of the triangle is a measure of the effective impact of Freedom from Hunger.



You cannot know the area of a triangle if you know only the location of one of the points: you have to know where it stands relative to the other two points. Similarly for the management of freedom from hunger. The impact arising from a decision on any of the operational functions cannot be determined unless it is looked in the context of what is happening to, or what will happen to the other two functions.

2. This sensing function cannot be carried out by a committee, run by a chairperson and debating items on an agenda. It requires a much less structured setting where the relative statuses of the participants plays much less of a role in determining who 'has the floor' and who is listened to. It requires much more time so that the participants are not impatient about going around in circles, having second thoughts about their earlier conclusions. It also requires that the participants, as a group, free themselves from the burden of coming down with concrete practical decisions.

The sensing function is not the decision making function. It is only an adjunct to it; even if the decisions on their recommendations legally constituted governing committees. Effective performance of the sensing function should alert the decision makers to the context within which decisions ought to be considered and particularly alert them to the 'breaks in the weather' that appear to be on the horizon.

If the meetings for sensing and searching purposes are not clearly distinguished from meeting in committee there is a good chance that they will search out no further

than the ends of their noses; because of the pressing matters of current practicalities that have to be considered to formulate a workable directive.

3. Search conferences of this kind have been widely used to serve this function by all sorts of Australian organizations and communities. I think that Freedom from Hunger should at least try this approach in order to achieve a greater degree of consensus and a firmer basis for forward planning. First time around some help would be needed. It is available.

4. I have at this point in these notes decided not to comment on the other matters that I had in mind e.g. the composition of the management committee and the possibility of developing a regional basis. These sort of things are more usefully discussed by a search conference.

5. Practical considerations for such a search conference have been discussed with your officers.