

## Independent Study: Section 1 & 2 Overview

"I know my name and I know the place where I came from"

~ Ron Hynes, folk singer, on remembering who you are in the midst of change

**Remember: The first two sections of your Independent Study are primarily based on your own experience and knowledge. It is not necessary to introduce a lot of external sources of information at this time. The main reference source is YOU!**

### Section 1 (3-4 pages)

- Purpose of the Study
  - Why this topic? What do you hope to achieve through this study?
- Nature of the Development Issue / Opportunity
  - Brief introduction to the issue: What is the problem or opportunity your organisation or community faces? What is the scope of your study?
- Vision and Mission of your Organization
  - Brief description of your organization's values and activities. Place your organization in the context of this topic.
- Your Position and Experience
  - Introduce yourself to the reader. What personal and/or professional experience do you bring to this topic?

### Section 2 (6-8 pages)

- Detailed Description of Issue or Opportunity
  - Expand on the issue you introduced in the first section.
  - Include both local and structural dimensions. What factors are community-based, and what external influences exist?
  - You may provide background information, historical/economic/social context that is *relevant* to the topic. Citing some reference sources may be included (statistics, reports) if they can help your description. Maps, photos, charts may be included if you wish, but are not required.
  - How did the current situation develop? What has been done to address it so far?
- Develop 3-4 Key Questions
  - Choose these questions *carefully*. They will provide the focus for your reading and research.
  - Be specific, avoid general questions that you already know the answer to, or have already been dealt with in your background analysis. This is an exploration of ideas, not simply a demonstration of existing knowledge.
  - Recognize that the topic you have chosen may reflect a very large, complex issue, so be clear to focus on just a few aspects of the issue.
  - When you have constructed a few questions, reflect on them and think if they will help you to achieve the goals you really want to accomplish with this study? Will answering these questions provide you with the information you need to develop effective strategies and recommendations?

## Sample Key Questions

### **Example: Integrating a Micro-Insurance Product into the Existing Microfinance services of CARE Zambia.**

1. What types of insurance models do other microfinance providers use internationally?
2. What types of insurance products would be most appropriate to the needs of the poor in the peri-urban settlements of Lusaka?
3. What would CARE Zambia's role be in developing / delivering a microinsurance scheme?

### **Example: Indigenous Peoples' response to dam construction: the People's Movement of Tipaimuk**

1. Are there any success stories of opposition to dams by indigenous people's movement?
2. What are the relevant lessons from these experiences to the Tipaimuk indigenous people's movement of Manipur?
3. What is the potential role of CSD in resisting dam construction?

## Sample Introductions and Key Questions

### **Empowerment of Rural Women in North India through Education and Microfinance:**

#### **Section 1:**

Purpose of Study:

"This study is an attempt to prepare myself to work for the development of the rural villagers. In this project, I look closer at the existing reality of the rural poor and envisage the possible entry points into these communities to facilitate effective participation of rural women in community development. For this, I wish to learn from the experience of existing organizations which are engaged .... through adult education and microfinance".

Nature of Development Issue:

"The issues I wish to address are poverty, illiteracy and discrimination against women." (One paragraph descriptions of each)

#### **Section 2:**

More detailed descriptions of the issues of poverty, illiteracy and discrimination as it relates to the rural area in which the author is interested.

Key Questions:

1. Which are the existing strategies for the development of rural women through adult education and microfinance and how effective are they?
2. Will these existing models be effective in the extremely poor socio-economic and cultural background of the people of our project areas?
3. What will be the ideal strategy according to the needs of the poorest women of Northern India for their development?

## **Youth Organization: the Pillar of HIV/AIDS Prevention**

### **Section 1:**

The author begins with a two-paragraph description of HIV/AIDS in Rwanda.

"My own experience in the Rwanda National Youth Council", proves that the organisations of young people can play an important role in the prevention of HIV/AIDS....the topic for my independent study is 'the potential role of youth organization in community development, in relation to the HIV/AIDS prevention'. I chose my topic because young people are a vulnerable group; at the same time they constitute the sharp force of the nation because of their number and their youthful energy."

### **Section 2:**

The author elaborates on the impact of HIV/AIDS in Rwanda, the problems of its spread, the achievements of organizations in confronting the problem so far.

Key Questions:

1. What is the potential role of youth organizations?
2. What are the relevant lessons from the HIV/AIDS program of RNYC and other youth organizations?
3. How to reinforce the capacities of youth organizations involved in HIV/AIDS prevention?

## **Emancipatory Gender Education for Karayu Pastoralists**

### **Section 1:**

Introductory paragraph on the concept of gender followed by:

"The general issue of my independent study focuses on gender education, which involves women and men. In particular, I will look at gender education in the Karayu pastoralist community living in Ethiopia....I hope to lobby with Gada leaders for the rights and benefit of women, insist that the school incorporate gender in all subjects, and develop a gender training program which is appropriate for the Karayu community."

### **Section 2:**

Description of the pastoralist community, the environment in which they live, education, economic conditions, etc.

Key Questions:

1. What are the challenges of gender education with the Karayu
2. How can we develop gender education through emancipatory adult education?
3. How can we mainstream gender in all GTF programs?

## **Sources of Information**

### **Books**

- Search Novanet Catalogue
- Table of Contents, Index, Bibliography, Back Cover!
- Introductory chapter, and summaries
- Keep detailed notes!

### **Journals**

- Academic, Technical/Specialist, Popular
- Abstracts
- Bibliographies
- Organizations in your field of interest

### **Videos**

- Films shown in class, Library
- Watch a few times, take detailed notes

### **Electronic Sources**

- Coady Courselinks
- Try different Search Engines, "Advanced Search"
- Again, take detailed notes, make copies of important web pages.