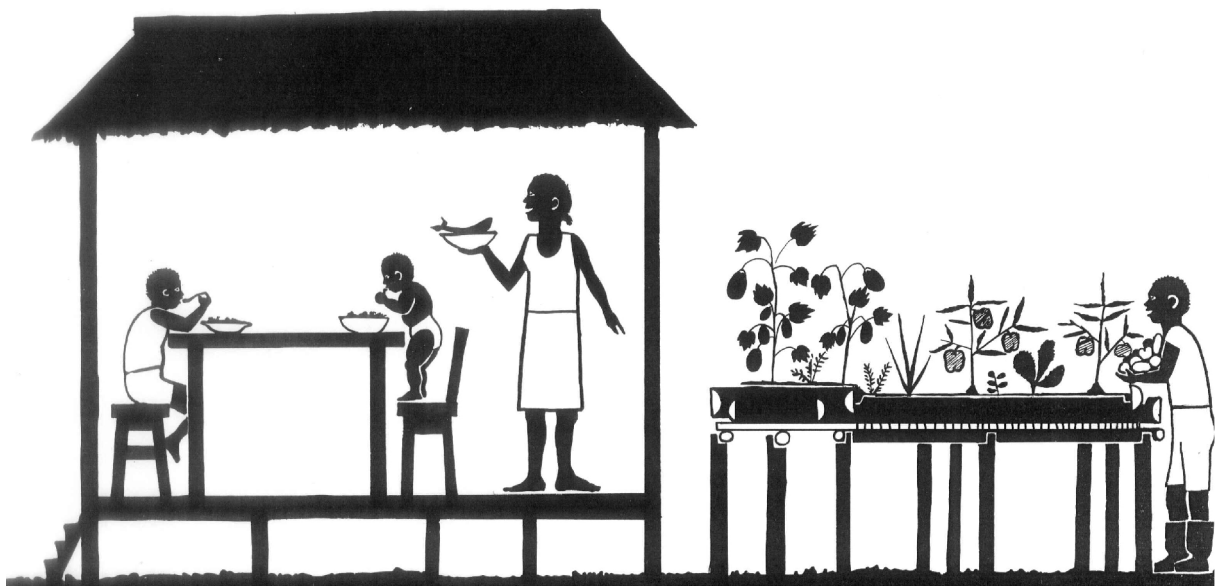


Wageningen University and Research Center – Department of  
Social Sciences  
Rural Development Sociology Group

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# The unexpected impacts of the DIAR project



Hieke Wijbenga

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Student:	Drs. Hieke Wijbenga
Supervisor:	Dr. Ir. Pieter de Vries
Second supervisor:	Dr. Ir. Monique Nuijten

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Cover illustration: derived from teaching materials used in the alphabetization project of the DIAR project. The booklet is titled 'Cartilla 1. Azoteas y hotalizas'.

## Executive summary

This thesis focuses on the unexpected impacts of the DIAR project. The DIAR project was implemented in 1979 in the Chocó region in Colombia by the Dutch government. The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs defined the aim of the project as "to create possibilities for the local population, in order to profit from economic growth in the region". The DIAR project was implemented according to the then fashionable approach; the process approach. New was the focus on participation of the local population, the flexibility and the open ended character of the approach.

One of the curious things about this development project is that DGIS perceives the project as a 'failed project', while the local population in the Chocó sees the project as very relevant for the development in the region and the development of their ethnical consciousness. Therefore, this thesis focuses on the different perspectives about the DIAR project, and the implications for this interpretative discrepancy for our understanding of the development apparatus.

The DIAR project consisted of two phases with two entire new project teams. In both phases the team members were very committed to improve the situation of the local population. The project focused on economical activities (such as rice cultivation) as well as on social activities (such as alphabetization), although the economical activities were seen as the main activities of the project. The project operated in a difficult area where they had to deal with a tropical and humid climate, complex local culture and the unstable local political situation in which corruption and patronage relations were common. Both phases of the project ended in conflict; in both cases a team member did not agree with the development perspective of the team leader. At the end of the eighties, the Dutch government ended its involvement in the DIAR project and handed the project over to the Colombian government.

In order to understand the different perspectives regarding the DIAR project, and the functioning of the development apparatus, James Ferguson was studied because he reflects on why development interventions fail. He argues that the development industry reproduces itself through the failures of development projects. However, contrary to his perspective it will be concluded that the DIAR project had an important politicizing effect in the region. In line with this, Arturo Escobar argues that development is possible through the invention of poverty. Through the development process, he argues that the development apparatus gains control over the objects of development. The argument in this thesis will be that his perspective is too mechanical for understanding the dynamics of development projects at the local level; it mainly suits development perspectives in institutional environments.

David Mosse criticizes the normative model of success and failure; he argues that evaluations of projects are interpretations, and thus success or failure is also an interpretation. In this thesis it will be argued that in the case of the DIAR project, there was a lack of interpretative coherence which caused the different perspectives of DGIS and the local Chocóan population concerning the DIAR project.

The actor perspective of Norman Long was very useful for the understanding of the multiplicity of perspectives regarding the DIAR project; between the local population in the Chocó and DGIS, but also among the former team members who were involved in the project. Long perceives development as a socially constructed and negotiated process. Pieter de Vries focuses on desires for development by arguing that the development apparatus banalises and generalizes desires and hopes for development. Some examples from the DIAR project indicate that indeed DGIS banalised desires for development of the people who were involved in the project.

## Acknowledgements

"It is obvious that people in industrial nations will eventually have to change their lifestyle. But if one realizes how difficult people find it to give up what they have, on the one hand, and how easy it is for people to learn to aspire what they do not have, on the other; if one realizes, therefore, that strong levelling forces are at work which can lead nowhere, one cannot but agree that we are facing some major contradictions on this small earth." (Röling and De Zeeuw 1983; 48)

The quote above describes why I decided to study Sociology of Rural Development at the University of Wageningen. This thesis was an interesting experience in which I faced a complex development project which had been ended over 20 years ago. I heard many interesting stories, and learned a lot from the people I met during this period.

In the first place I would like to thank Pieter de Vries, for being a personally engaged and enthusiastic supervisor. To me it was an eye-opener that you wrote about desires for development, as these are too often neglected in development processes. Also I would like to thank Jilles van Gastel and Monique Nuijten for their involvement in this research project.

As indicated, I met a lot of interesting people while studying the DIAR project. I would like to thank all the people for their time and effort to explain the DIAR project and the local situation to me, searching for interesting documents and picture albums, and for all interesting stories who made this research very interesting and exciting. As the stories were often very personal, I will not name you personally here.

Special thanks to former Dutch minister for Development Cooperation, Mr. Pronk. Thank you for the interesting conversation and for your encouraging words about the future of development cooperation.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	I
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	IV
1. INTRODUCTION.....	7
1.1 Introduction .....	7
1.2 Theoretical framework .....	10
1.3 Relevant concepts.....	16
1.3.1 Alternative development.....	16
1.3.2 Process approach .....	21
1.3.3 Development policy .....	24
1.3.4 Agency and actor orientation.....	27
1.3.5 The development apparatus and the banalisation of hope and desire .....	28
1.3.6 The Chocó.....	29
1.4 Methodology .....	32
1.4.1 Research objectives and research questions .....	32
1.3.2 Research procedure .....	33
1.4.3 Criteria relevant for this research.....	34
1.3.4 Limitations and recommendations for further research .....	35
1.5 Structure of this thesis.....	35
2. THE DIAR PROJECT FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF DGIS DOSSIERS. ....	36
To conclude .....	59
3. PERCEPTIONS OF THE DIAR TEAM MEMBERS.....	61
3.1 The Chocó and its inhabitants.....	61
3.1.1 The Congregation of the Claretians .....	64
3.1.2 La politiquería .....	65
3.1.3 The CODECHOCO .....	66
3.2 Dutch development policies and the DIAR project.....	66
3.2.1 DGIS and the process approach .....	67
3.2.2 The Dutch embassy, the IAC and the DIAR project .....	68
3.2.4 Other Dutch funded development projects in the region.....	69
3.3 The interviewed DIAR team members .....	70
3.4 The first phase of the DIAR project.....	71
3.4.1 Project activities during the first phase .....	72
3.4.2 Organizational setup and project team.....	73
3.4.3 Tensions within the DIAR project team .....	74
3.5 The second phase of the DIAR project.....	75
3.5.1 Project activities during the second phase .....	75

3.5.2	Production systems research.....	77
3.5.3	Organizational setup and project team.....	79
3.5.4	Tensions in the DIAR project team.....	81
3.6	The end of the DIAR project.....	82
3.7	The process approach in the DIAR project.....	83
3.8	Impact of the DIAR project.....	84
3.9	To conclude .....	85
4.	ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS.....	88
4.1	Who were the main actors who were involved in the DIAR project and how can their relationship be described?.....	88
4.2	What are the stories of these actors with regard to the DIAR project?.....	90
3.	What was the role of the development apparatus in this project?.....	91
4.	What were the consequences of the DIAR project for the different actors and their development perspectives? .....	92
4.5	Conclusion .....	93
4.6	Final considerations .....	94
	LITERATURE .....	95
Annex :	Complete list of DGIS dossiers studied for this thesis .....	100

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction

In 1979, a Dutch governmental development project was implemented in the Chocó region in Colombia. The project was named 'Proyecto de Desarrollo Integral Agrícola y Rural' (DIAR). The main aim of the project was to create possibilities for the local population in order to profit from the regional economic growth in the Chocó.

In the period prior to the DIAR project, there had been an extensive discussion about the policies for development aid within the Dutch Ministry of Development cooperation. Instead of the large technical development projects which had been implemented previously, halfway the seventies, the Ministry decided to narrow its focus to the small farmers in developing countries. At that time the International Agricultural Center (IAC) in Wageningen was an important advising body for the Ministry of Development Cooperation on agricultural matters. The IAC and the Dutch Ministry of Development Cooperation decided to start a research and discussion group named the Small Farmers Group. The task of the Small Farmers Group was to conduct research on possibilities for development initiatives for small farmers in developing countries (see also § 3.2.1). Within the Small Farmers Group, the process approach was identified as the new approach for the implementation of Dutch development policies. Although the DIAR project started as a 'traditional' development project, it was later changed into a participatory project, implemented according to the process approach.

Some of the team members of the DIAR project had also been involved in the formulation of the process approach in the Small Farmers Group, and they were very passionate about the participatory character of the process approach. With the process approach they felt that the project would target not only to the economic side of development, but also the social dimensions that would enable a form of sustained regional development.

However, the DIAR project team was situated in a harsh environment and within the team there were different perspectives on development which led to conflicts. Despite all ambitions and good intentions, the DIAR project would be labeled as a 'failed project' by the Dutch Ministry of Development Cooperation. Accordingly, most of the people involved in the DIAR project do not describe the project as unquestionably successful. The Dutch Directorate General International Cooperation (DGIS) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has 'buried' the DIAR project, because the project did not meet their policy aims. When DGIS decided to end the Dutch involvement in the project, DIAR was accused of being a conflictive and colonialist project which did not succeed in achieving its aims. Although the DIAR project did not seem to leave a lasting impression in the Netherlands, in Colombia the project is seen as having had a determining impact on the rise of an ethnic consciousness and the development of local organizations in the region. The local population constructed a communal memory of the project and acknowledges that they were ethnically empowered by the project.

In contrast, in the Netherlands the DIAR project was buried as one more failure in a long list of projects. The Dutch team members of the DIAR project largely ceased having personal contact with each other. Yet, this project did play an important role in the shaping of views and attitudes towards development. These experiences were formative for a generation of development experts who worked in Colombia, but they did not add up to the construction of an institutional collective memory. Their memories and perceptions with regard to the project were influenced by their personal backgrounds and their experiences prior to, during and after the DIAR project.

That this project might have been determining for the ethnical consciousness of the local population is a fact that is also acknowledged by anthropologists working in the Colombian Pacific. Thus two Colombian anthropologists, Arturo Escobar and Eduardo Restrepo encouraged us to conduct a study of this project both in the Chocó and in the Netherlands. Arturo Escobar is a distinguished anthropologist at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; he published much about development and also about the Colombian Pacific. In his opinion, the DIAR project, as the first large scale development intervention in the Pacific, introduced the very idea of development in the region. As he puts it the DIAR enabled the introduction of a view of the Chocó as a region that was amenable to be developed provided the appropriate approach was chosen. This is what he calls the 'developmentalization of the Chocó'. Eduardo Restrepo is an anthropologist at the University of Javeriana in Bogota who also wrote much about the Colombian Pacific.

The Technological University of the Chocó (UTCH, the Javeriana University in Bogota, and the University of Wageningen are co-operating in this research through a higher education project funded by Dutch development cooperation (the UTCH/NUFFIC/NPT project).

This thesis focuses on the Dutch side of the DIAR project and on the experiences and perceptions of the Dutch team members. To that end, I interviewed Dutch experts who were in one way or another involved in the project, and I studied dossiers that were kept at the archives of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This did not lead to an unambiguous story; I was confronted with a multiplicity of standpoints, memories, perceptions and explanations. The DIAR project was implemented in cooperation between the Dutch and the Colombian government. The counterpart organization of the Dutch DIAR team was the CODECHOCO, the governmental regional development organization. Formally they were both responsible for decisions taken in the DIAR project. Although the intention was to work together with the Colombian counterpart, there was no equality between the Dutch and Colombian project staff. Also, as will appear from descriptions of the project, the Dutch team leaders named themselves 'kings of the Chocó' and behaved accordingly. This was one of the causes of a series of conflicts between the Dutch project leaders and some of the Dutch team members. As a result, this thesis will also not present a clear-cut picture of the project, but will make an attempt to grasp the complexity of the project reality, the perceptions of the people involved and the relations of the project with the institutional environment. This institutional environment was constituted by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS), the Colombian government and the local counterpart organization CODECHOCO.

This chapter will consist of two parts. In the first part the theoretical framework will be outlined. In the second part (starting from § 1.4) the methodology of the research will be presented.

The theoretical framework deals with theories on development interventions. Special attention will be paid to the critical approach to development put forward by anthropologist James Ferguson who sets out to explain why development interventions systematically fail. In his perspective, the development industry reproduces itself through failures of development projects. Within this view development projects have unintended side effects, which are called 'instrument effects' by Ferguson, namely 1) the de-politicization of development thinking and 2) increased bureaucratic penetration and control. This critical view has lately become very influential in theories on development. However, as I will argue in this thesis contrary to Ferguson's argumentation the DIAR project did not have a 'de-politicizing' effect in the Chocó. On the contrary, it led to the surge of autonomous producers' organizations based on a strong ethnic consciousness. Paradoxically, this success was not acknowledged by the Dutch ministry of development cooperation.



Arturo Escobar is another author who is highly critical about the development industry. He argues that development has been made possible through what he calls 'the invention of poverty': the representation of people in the Third World as poor and ignorant and therefore in need of 'development'. In development interventions the aim for developing countries is to achieve modernity, during this process powerful institutional actors gain control over the 'objects of development'. The argument of the thesis is that this is a too mechanical view of the workings of development discourse and that it denies the agency of the people who are carrying out the implementation. The case of the DIAR project illustrates that the agency of the people involved in the carrying out of the project influenced the outcomes of the project. When comparing the perspective of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs versus the local people in the Chocó, it is not sure whether DIAR should be seen as a success, or as a failure.

David Mosse who criticizes Ferguson's and Escobar's views strongly argues that the normative model which classifies interventions as successes or as failures should be abandoned. He argues that evaluations of projects are interpretations in which facts and development perspectives are compared; this often leads to an incoherent understanding of the project. In this perspective the fact that the DIAR project is seen as a failure was caused by the lack of 'interpretative coherence' between the stories of the different actors. In this case the fact that no single coherent narrative emerged. Not only were the Dutch experts divided about the aims of the project, also the Dutch embassy in Colombia and the Colombian counterparts had different interpretations about it. Ironically, however, 20 years later there is a certain consensus in the area that this project had a strong effect on the thinking about development in Choco.

Norman Long elaborates on the different images of development from an actor perspective; this is particularly useful when considering the different and contradictory perspectives on development among the people who were involved in the project. Long describes development as a socially constructed and negotiated process. From this perspective it is understandable that different actors have different perspectives. I argue in this thesis that the actor perspective enables a better understanding of the different perceptions with regard to the DIAR project.

De Vries further continues with this, by focusing on the desires for development of the people who are involved in development projects, he concludes that the 'development apparatus' banalises and generalises desires and hope for development. As will appear from the description of interviews with people who were engaged in the DIAR project, the DIAR team members also had sincere desires for development. The argument will be that the development industry has banalised their desires for development due to its need to reproduce itself and thus to label the DIAR project as a failed development intervention. As will be described at a later stage, the same development apparatus succeeded in generating the hope and desire for development among the local population in the Chocó region.

Following on this theoretical framework, some notions which are important for analyzing and understanding the different perceptions concerning the DIAR project will be described. These are: alternative development, the process approach, policy, agency and actor-orientation, the development apparatus and the generation of the banalisation of hope or desire, and the Chocó region. After these theoretical reflections, the methodology with which this research was done will be described.

## 1.2 Theoretical framework

This thesis focuses on the DIAR project. While studying the dossiers and interviewing people who were familiar with the project, it appeared that there were multiple perceptions regarding the DIAR project and its impact in the Chocó region. There is not even consensus about the success or failure of the DIAR project as a development intervention in the Chocó region. The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs tried to forget the project and listed it as one of the many failed projects in development cooperation, while others argue that the DIAR project had an important impact in the region. They argue that the DIAR project succeeded in generating an ethnical consciousness and in politicizing the local population, which resulted in the founding of independent social organizations in the Chocó region. The theoretical question that underlies this theoretical framework is how we should understand that a 'failed project' could have such relevant impacts in the region.

Therefore, the theoretical framework will start with the authors Ferguson and Escobar, who criticize the development industry. Their way of thinking is related to the philosophical thoughts of Foucault, who gave particular meaning to the concepts of 'power' and 'discourse'. Ferguson in particular, is interested in explaining which development projects tend to fail systematically and both he and Escobar tend to underplay the role of individual actors in development interventions.

Mosse is very critical about the approach of these authors, and shifts the focus to the social construction of success through interpretation. In his perspective policies and projects are more dynamic than the way in which they are described by Ferguson and Escobar. Mosse focuses mainly on the relation between projects and policies, while Long pays attention to the social relations between the project team and the beneficiaries. Long also perceives development as a socially constructed process. His actor theory is particularly useful for this research, because it aims at understanding different perceptions of the same project by different actors. De Vries combines the personal perspective of involved actors with the functioning of the development apparatus by arguing that the development apparatus functions through the generation and banalization of desires.

Ferguson describes the development apparatus as a set of institutions, agencies and ideologies that structure development thinking and practice, as a machine that reproduces itself through unintended, unplanned but systematic side-effects that it brings about. (De Vries 2007; 33-34)

Ferguson bases his description of the anti-politics machine on Foucault's conception of the state. Foucault argues that power relations have been governmentalized, "power relations have been rationalized, and centralized in the form, or under the auspices of, state institutions." (Foucault 1983; 224 in Ferguson 1994; 273) Based on this, Ferguson describes the state as "a way of tying together, multiplying, and coordinating power relations, a kind of knotting or congealing power. It is in this spirit that I have tried to describe the effects of the 'anti-politics machine' in terms of (...) 'bureaucratic state power'. (...) The usage is meant to suggest not an entity possessed of power, but a characteristic mode of exercise of power, a mode of power that relies on state institutions, but exceeds them." (Ferguson 1994; 273) Ferguson's main argument is that development as intervention is constituted as an 'anti-politics machine', and that there are two interwoven effects: the expansion of bureaucratic state power, and the de-politization of development and poverty. Ferguson argues that "by uncompromisingly reducing poverty to a technical problem, and by promising technical solutions to the sufferings of powerless and oppressed people, the hegemonic problematic of development is the principle means through which the question is de-politicized in the world today." (Ferguson 1994; 256) And at the same time development projects can end up having an invisible political aim which increases institutional state power, covered up by a neutral technical mission. Thus, Ferguson sees the development apparatus as a

machine for reinforcing and expanding the exercise of state power, which “incidentally takes ‘poverty’ as its point of entry- launching an intervention that may have no effect on the poverty but does in fact have other effects”. (Ferguson 1994; 256)

As described in the introduction, the DIAR project was seen as a failure as well as a success from different perspectives. In the first place, the project was seen as a failure by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, because the project was conflictive and the project could not meet the expectations of DGIS. The project was not an example of a well-managed, homogenous intervention, but obtained a negative reputation in the development world. According to a DGIS report, experts from other projects feared being compared to the DIAR project.

Ferguson argues that the effects of the development apparatus are often disappointing or even disastrous, but these negative effects do not harm the continuing functioning of the apparatus. Instead of dissuading the expansion of the apparatus, failure stimulates its reproduction. (De Vries 2007) After the DIAR project was ended and entered development history as one of the many development failures, it seemed as if the process approach as a former popular approach in Dutch development thinking was also removed from the DGIS policies. The development model according to which the DIAR project was implemented was no longer continued within Dutch development projects; project thinking remained dynamic in the Netherlands, and the way in which projects were implemented in the process approach was seen as the actual reason for failure. These failures have led to new attempts to design development policies which would not lead to the disappointing effects of interventions which were designed according to, in this case, the process approach. In this way the Dutch development apparatus successfully reproduced itself and proved that new policies would be necessary to successfully address the aims of development interventions; ending poverty.

Yet, contrary to what Ferguson would have predicted the DIAR project was successful in the sense that had a politicising effect in the region. The DIAR project had a politicising effect in the sense that it stimulated the development of an ethnic consciousness among the local population in the Chocó region. The team members of the DIAR project were personally engaged in the project, they were committed to improving the conditions of the local people, but this political achievement was in fact a side-effect. As will be explained later, at first the ethnical consciousness was not seen as one of the project objectives. The project members considered that the dependence of the local people on the local elite needed to be diminished in order to increase the economic development in the area. Thus, although the project had a politicising effect in the region, this was different from the politicising effect as described by Ferguson. This effect was not achieved by the larger Dutch development apparatus, in order to increase state power. Instead it was achieved by the work of the team members while they were attempting to find solutions to the practical development problems they encountered while striving to improve the situation in the Chocó. Therefore, the fact that later it appeared that the DIAR project left a positive legacy in the Chocó region probably came as a surprise to the former project members as well as to the DGIS diplomats; “the most important effects of a planned intervention may occur unconsciously, behind the backs or against the wills of the planners who may seem to be running the show.” (Willis 1981, in Ferguson 1994; 20)

Ferguson argues that the political effects of the development apparatus are more consequential than the aims to achieve social and economic transformations in the lives of people in developing countries. He argues that: “In most cases production structures are not transformed, technologies are not transferred and, after the whirlwind of development propaganda and the massive presence of experts and bureaucrats, local people in the end just continue to live their lives as if nothing

important has happened.” (De Vries 2007; 33-34) As previously discussed, this went the other way round in the DIAR project; in this case the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs had no belief in the possible positive effects of the DIAR project, while the local population still attributes their increased ethnical consciousness to this project.

Escobar elaborates on this skeptical perspective on the development industry when arguing that development has been rendered possible through the invention of poverty. Thus, the World Bank defined rural development as a strategy “concerned with the modernization and monetization of rural society, and with its transition from traditional isolation into the integration with the national economy” (Escobar 1995; 162). This illustrates how the rural development discourse even nowadays still maintains the description of development as growth, aiming at capital, technology and about being modern. The fact that developing countries are represented as the ‘other’, as poor, and thus in need of help from the Western world, “is part of the constitution of a network of power relations that both reproduces images of otherness as pathology and of the ‘other’ as a subject to be reconstructed through the knowledge of development”. (De Vries 2007; 35)

In the development discourse, the underdeveloped countries were seen as having a set of obstacles to industrial development and thus having a disadvantage to international trade. (Escobar 1995) The kind of development interventions that were seen as necessary, were characterized by a top-down, ethnocentric and technocratic approach, “which treated people and cultures as abstract concepts, statistical figures to be moved up and down in the charts of ‘progress’. Development was conceived not as a cultural process but instead as a system of more or less universally applicable technical interventions intended to deliver some badly needed goods to a target population.” (Escobar 1995; 44) Although development initiatives were intended to benefit the developing countries, they were often ‘destructive forces to Third World cultures’. (Escobar 1995; 44)

In line with Ferguson, also Escobar argues that the development apparatus reproduces itself, and thus he argues that development will continue to be in the hands of the institutions or actors in power. (Escobar 1995; 106) Yet, he argues not only that the development apparatus uses its power to reproduce itself, but also aims at gaining power over the objects of development, the underdeveloped countries and its inhabitants; “the development discourse maps people into certain coordinates of control. The aim is not simply to discipline individuals but to transform the conditions under which they live into a productive, normalized social environment: in short, to create modernity.” (Escobar 1995; 156) The following chapter describes the DIAR project from the perspective of DGIS dossiers and from this chapter Escobar’s description of the World Bank’s perspective on development will be confirmed.

Indeed this was a quite technocratic and economic perspective on development of the Chocó region, which did not take into account any cultural considerations. In effect, the argument that development initiatives aim at gaining control over the objects of development applies to the DIAR project in general. It is possible that DGIS had certain political aims with the execution of this project, and previously it has been argued that indeed DGIS could reproduce itself as a development apparatus by the need to develop new policies after they had decided that the process approach had failed. However, from this case study of the DIAR project, I would like to argue that individual actors in a development intervention have agency and thus can make a choice whether they will or will not comply with the overall aims of the development apparatus for which they work. Escobar takes ‘modernistic rationality’ as a point of departure, which he bases upon notions of expert knowledge. The DIAR team members were experts in their discipline, but some of them were willing to change their perspectives due to the new perspectives they came across in the interaction with the local population. It can be argued that notions of expertise are redefined when actors (in this case the team members) choose to engage with the local population.

Coming back to the agency of development workers, it is possible that team members of a development project have agency because of their expertise, but also because of their work in the field, far away from the bureaucrats of the development institution. It can be argued that these bureaucrats and diplomats have less agency or commitment in development interventions because they take part in the bureaucracy and are detached from the subjects of development. This leads to two thoughts. The first is that the development apparatus cannot be seen as a homogenous entity that holds to standard notions of expertise. The second is that it is likely that there is a positive relation between agency or commitment and the desire for development. This notion of desires for development will be discussed when describing the viewpoints of De Vries. In the case of the DIAR project, the team members were very conscious of the damage done by 'traditional development projects' and were searching for new ways to implement a project, it is reasonable to argue that they were not striving for domination. As will appear in the third chapter of this thesis, the team members were personally committed to improve the lives of the local people in the Chocó. The team members were definitely closer to the local people than to the larger development institution.

Because of the possible different aims of the project members and DGIS, but also because of their different relation to the project and the local situation in the Chocó, the different actors who were involved in the DIAR project have different 'images' and memories about the project. The theories of Long and De Vries will be described in order to reflect on this heterogeneity of perceptions of the DIAR project, and on the desires for development of the actors involved in the project. Prior to this description, the work of Mosse will be used to reflect on failure or success of development interventions. He takes a critical view of Escobar and Ferguson and for this reason it is interesting to discuss his viewpoints in order to juxtapose his views with those of poststructuralist authors such as Ferguson and Escobar.

Mosse argues that policies and projects are more dynamic than the way in which they are described by the poststructuralists. According to him, success and failure are not the main point of development, but the aim of these interventions is to enable hegemony; "Success itself unifies, just as failure fragments into the dynamics of blame (Latour 1996; 76 in Mosse 1998; 158). As he puts it, "My point will be that development success is not merely a question of measures of performance; it is also about how particular interpretations are made and sustained socially. It is not just about what a project does, but also how and to whom it speaks, who can be made to believe in it". (Mosse 1998; 158) Mosse thus agrees with Ferguson and Escobar in the sense that development projects sustain policy models, and thus they enable the reproduction of the development apparatus. However, this does not mean that there are fixed evaluative standards for judging whether a project is a failure or a success. In fact, success or failure is socially constructed. As Mosse puts it, "The failure of development is seen as self-evident. It is no surprise that management models which isolate interventions from the history and social and political realities of the 'third world', or bend these realities into the discipline-bound logics of diagnosis and prescription, do not achieve their desired end." (Mosse 2005; 3-5) Instead of speaking about development projects in terms of successes or failures, Mosse argues that it is the construction of an intervention what matters. According to him, within development interventions people have their own dynamic and perception of reality, therefore he proposes to view development as a process, because that "marks an important shift away from the focus on project inputs and outputs and the assumed mechanical link between them. Indeed, as a descriptive metaphor for development initiatives, 'process' is increasingly used as an alternative to the machine metaphor. Like other commonly used metaphors (including development itself) the concept of 'process' provides a device for thinking and talking about a complex social reality in new ways." (Mosse 1998; 4) Mosse described the characteristics of the process metaphor

as a flexible design which can change as a result of learning from implementation experience; relations and contextual elements are very important although these were often seen as a source of problems and misunderstandings previously; and last, process implies dynamic, unpredictable and idiosyncratic elements in development programs (Mosse 1998). And, thus, development processes often generate unpredictable effects and the relationship between inputs and outputs is not linear; the same inputs and similar conditions do not always produce the same results. (Mosse 1998)

Probably the shift from traditional technical development projects to development processes posed a challenge on the Dutch DGIS. The flexibility and non-linear perspective on development seems less manageable and controllable. This appeared to be the case for the DIAR project; the project was highly conflictive and was ended by DGIS as a failure. With the failure of the project, also the process approach was no longer applied in the same way in other development projects. But, process thinking was not abandoned, because the DIAR project was seen as one case in which the team had not succeeded in successfully applying the process approach.

Although Mosse argues that we should not focus on the success or failure of the DIAR project, one of the pressing questions of this thesis is why the local people in the Chocó are still grateful for some of the achievements of the DIAR project, while the project members see the project as an interesting experience but they did not expect many lasting effects of the project, while DGIS is at the other end and sees the project as a failure. Mosse would argue that the fact that the project is seen as a failure was imputed to the inability to interpret the project in an unambiguous way: "Project failure is not the failure to turn designs into reality; but the consequence of a certain disarticulation between practices, their rationalizing models and overarching policy frameworks. Failure is not a failure to implement the plan, but a failure of interpretation. Such failures are corrected conceptual rather than practical work; and here evaluations and impact studies have a role" (Mosse 1998; 181-182).

Evaluations and impact studies give an interpretation of a project, and in the case of the DIAR project, this interpretation did not fit the development ideas of DGIS. It can also be argued the other way around, maybe the team leader of the DIAR project did not succeed in presenting his project as a successful development intervention according to the norms and expectations of the Dutch development institution DGIS.

The way in which Mosse describes the link between the interrelationship between policy and the development practice is useful for understanding why DGIS saw the DIAR project as a failure. Mosse poses five propositions about the interrelationship between policy and the development practice. The fifth proposition can be helpful for understanding DGIS' judgment on the DIAR project;

'Projects do not fail; they are failed by wider networks of support and validation. Project failure is not the failure to turn designs into reality, but the consequence of a certain disarticulation between practices, their rationalizing models and overarching policy frameworks. Failure is not a failure, but failure of interpretation. Success and failure are policy-oriented judgments that obscure project effects.' (Mosse 2005; 31)

Subsequent to this reflection on successes / failures of development interventions and on development policies, I will shift attention from the DGIS perspective towards that of the people who were actually working in the project area. For understanding the different images as they are formed by the different actors, the actor oriented methodology of Long is useful. Long agrees with Mosse that development is an ongoing, socially constructed and negotiated process, instead of just the execution of an already specified plan of action with expected outcomes. As he approaches development from an actor perspective, he argues that "Intervention then implies the confrontation or interpretation of different life worlds and socio-political

experiences, which may be significant for generating new forms of social practice and ideology." (Long 2001; 33) Long has more attention for the social relations between the team members and the so-called beneficiaries, compared to Mosse's focus on the relation between projects and policies.

He agrees with Mosse that development initiatives cannot be evaluated or interpreted by only looking at the material or organizational input, and therefore Long proposes to pay specific attention to the ways in which team members in an intervention develop interpretative strategies. These strategies will be formed by individual interests and cultural understandings. However, Long argues that the way in which they allocate resources and legitimize plans will reflect the development perspective of the development institutions for which they work. "This suggests that inherent to the process of planned intervention is a contest over the dominance and legitimacy of competing images of development. But we must not simplify this by assuming that the contest merely involves the clash between intervening agencies and local interests. It also entails struggles within and between the development agencies themselves." (Long 2005; 36)

From the following chapters it will indeed appear that the personalities, backgrounds and beliefs of actors involved had an influence on the DIAR project. The contests over 'the competing images of development' led twice to a conflict, which indicates the personal ideological involvement of the team members in the development intervention. Long states that "one of the principle failings of recent debates on anthropology in, or of, development is the failure to acknowledge the heterogeneity of hope, politics and critical reflection." (Long 2005; 240-241)

De Vries elaborates on this heterogeneity of hope by focusing on the desires for development of the local population (the so called objects of development), and of people who are working in development projects. He argues that while many are rejecting the notion of development "engaging with development' remains important in relating to Third World people's dreams and desires", because "the disavowal of development signifies the betrayal of its promise." (De Vries 2007; 25). De Vries argues that there is a disjuncture between the desire for development and the banalisation of this desire in practice by the development apparatus. But, "the desire for development fills the gap between the promises and their meager actual realizations, thus giving body to a desiring machine that also operates in between the generation and banalisation of hope." (De Vries 2007; 30)

De Vries sees development as a desiring machine, which first generates desires after which these desires are disposed of. However, development intervention cannot survive without "its virtual supplement: the fantastic images and promises that are evoked by a diversity of small objects that operate as causes of desire." (De Vries 2007; 32) He concludes that "if it is true that the development apparatus sustains its hegemony through the generation and banalisation of hope, then not compromising your desire means refusing to accept the betrayal of development by the anti-politics machine." (De Vries 2007; 40) This is actually the story of the DIAR project. The team members entered the project as young development experts who were engaged in debates about development cooperation, and who had serious desires to increase the development in the Chocó region. They started enthusiastically with this project and the then new process approach, with the intent to really listen to the needs and desires of the local people. Due to conflicts, decisions taken by DGIS and problems with the team leader, some team members were disappointed. As will be argued later, some felt that their desires for development were banalised by DGIS. On the other hand, the desires for development of the local population were awakened by the interventions of the DIAR project and of the church (the Congregation of the Claretians); as a result of these interventions the desire for autonomy and identity was created. Contrary to the viewpoint of Escobar, this indicates that development was assigned a cultural meaning, and it did not lead to the elimination of local cultural practices. The difference with the viewpoint of Mosse is that the success or failure of

this particular development intervention is not expressed in terms of the interpretative strategies of policy makers and project managers, but in terms of the 'desires of the local population'.

### 1.3 Relevant concepts

The following paragraphs will discuss some concepts that are relevant for understanding and discussing the DIAR project. In the first place Alternative development is discussed with the sub-topics 'the development of the development industry', modernization thinking, the search for an alternative approach to development, participation and 'making use of local knowledge'. Then the process approach will be discussed, with a brief description of the term 'poverty'. The following paragraph discusses development policies in the Netherlands and theories on policy in general. Subsequently the notions of agency and actor orientation will be described, followed by a discussion concerning the development apparatus and the banalisation of hope and desire. The last paragraph will describe the Chocó region, the region in which the DIAR project was carried out.

#### 1.3.1 Alternative development

This paragraph will discuss the critique of modernization theory and the search for alternatives to this approach. Prior to this discussion, first the development of the development discipline will be briefly outlined.

The development of the development industry

After the Second World War, the fear of communism became one of the most compelling arguments for development. (Escobar 1995: 34) In 1949, Truman declared for the first time in his inaugural speech the Southern hemisphere as underdeveloped areas. These underdeveloped areas were called the 'Third World', and the First World started to provide development aid to these underdeveloped countries in the Third World. (Rapley 2007: 19) The aim of development aid was to "pave the way for rapid access to the forms of life created by industrial society. Articulated around a fictitious concept ("underdevelopment"), a discourse was produced that instilled in all countries the need to pursue (development), and provided for them the necessary categories and techniques to do so" (Escobar, 1988: 429). Development was seen as economic growth and was closely linked to the faith in science and technology. Technology was seen as neutral and inevitably beneficial, not as an instrument for the creation of cultural and social orders.

The fifties were dominated by the economic development theories, which focused merely on capital accumulation, deliberate industrialization, development planning and external aid. (Escobar 1995: 36)

At the end of the fifties a discussion emerged concerning the nature and scale of development activities. The discussion moved from increasing economic activities and productivity to issues related to education, health and institutional development. The Organization of American States adopted community development as the new approach to development. Key elements of this approach were involvement of the target group in developmental activities and providing aid that would stimulate grassroots initiatives. However, the community development approach was criticized for failing to stimulate participation of the target group and for paying too little attention to the economic aspects of development, mainly to poverty alleviation. As a result the attention to rural development increased. Land reform, as an instrument to provide land to landless farmers, seemed a valuable instrument to stimulate agriculture.

The sixties became famous for the 'Green Revolution'. Within Rural Development the focus shifted from land reform to increasing productivity. Emphasis was placed on the importance of modern technology within the development process. Small scale



farmers were in this way stimulated in their socio-economic development. Unfortunately, these technical improvements were mainly accessible for the larger farmers. (Melman, 1994)

During the seventies the insight grew that the development programs which focused on economic growth failed because they were not adjusted to the needs of the receiving countries. This paved the way for the introduction of the basic human needs approach. This approach focused on the distribution of the benefits of growth. Also the Integrated Rural Development approach emerged. Within this approach, the whole of the rural population, including the small farmer, should participate in the development of rural areas thereby making a significant contribution to national development.

The Dutch ministry of Development Cooperation (DGIS) decided to implement its projects according to this approach. This involved an implementation of programs in cooperation with the government of the receiving country, and on a lower level with the local population. Cooperation with actors from the receiving country would increase the possibility of success of the project, and development would now be seen as a political process which had not only an influence on a local level, but also between the countries involved. Therefore, DGIS developed the process approach, which is called the 'programmatic approach' (programmatische benadering) in Dutch. (Melman, 1994)

In the eighties, a rediscovery of participation took place, and issues such as local knowledge, empowerment and ownership became central concepts for the development discipline. (De Vries 2007; 30) The eighties were also marked by the debt-crises and the adjustment policies, but were also marked by steps in the direction of the liberalization of the world market. Pronk (1990; 20) describes the eighties as the decennium of neo-realism, which were marked by the adjustment policies of the IMF and the World Bank. This approach emphasized the importance of an unimpeded functioning of the free market with minimal interference of governments. This led to the structural adjustment policies in the nineties, in line with IMF perspectives on development. Underdeveloped countries with high debts had no other option than to adjust to the IMF standards, in order to achieve new foreign capital. (Pronk 1990; 20-22)

To wrap it up, the development discussion moved from the industrialization in the fifties to the Green Revolution in the sixties. In this period the inequality increased, and thus it was decided to focus on basic needs in Integrated Rural Development Projects. In the eighties, participation thinking came up within Structural Adjustment Programs. Dutch policies expressed the need to strengthen national institutions to enable them to negotiate with the West, and the poor needed to be empowered in order to be capable to oppose the local elites. Development interventions were seen as an instrument to enable these aims. However, the discrepancy between development policies and the development practice becomes visible in the DIAR project.

The four approaches above were all based on modernization thinking. With the process approach an attempt was made to overcome this modernization thinking. In order to understand why this modernization thinking needed change and to understand the backgrounds of the process approach, the criticism concerning modernization thinking will be discussed in the following paragraph.

#### Modernization thinking

When development studies arose as a distinct field after the Second World War, Western expert became concerned with the modernization of the newly emerging independent countries. Arce and Long argue that "the strategic ideas of modernity were organized around the attitudes and policies based on a sense of superiority of

those nations that had successfully modernized themselves" (1999; 5). According to Western countries, the underdeveloped countries represented an earlier stage of technological inferiority and ignorance. Modernization would offer them the possibility to reach the same level of development as the Western world. (Arce and Long 1999; 5)

Development is long seen as modernization of third world countries according to a Western model; "Policymakers, as well in rich as in poor countries, perceive development often as equal to modernization, and modernization as equal to westernizing." (Pronk 1990; 39, translated from Dutch)

Modernization theory attempted to identify the conditions that had stimulated growth and development in the first world, and to identify which conditions were lacking in the third world. Different conditions were identified varying from the lack of capital in the third world, to the lack of value systems which kept people from making profit and acting entrepreneurial. It was agreed that development would be brought to the Third World by the West. From the sociological, economic and political standpoint, people agreed that underdevelopment was just an initial stage. As Rapley (2007; 25) describes: "The West had progressed beyond it and other countries lagged behind. The West could help speed up the process of development in the third world, for instance by sharing its capital and know-how, to bring these countries into the modern age of capitalism and liberal democracy". Modernization theory was characterized as being optimistic, idealistic and anti-communist.

In reaction to modernization theory, the dependency theory came up. In modernization theory the First World was seen as necessary for providing and stimulating development in the Third World, the dependency theory argued the other way around that the First World hindered the emergence from poverty in the Third World. The underdeveloped Third World ensured a market for the goods produced by Western countries and provided cheap raw materials for Western factories. One of the main implications of modernization theory for project design and implementation was that these often resulted in 'blue print' projects which were implemented top-down. The targets and contents of the development aid were defined by the donor; the only thing the receiving country had to do was to accept the aid. Therefore, the donor was responsible for the execution of the project, and also for contracting employees. As the name of the approach indicates, in the Blue Print approach plans had been made prior to the intervention. These plans were followed strictly during the execution of the project and could not be adjusted to the local circumstances. The intervention followed a strict and predictable cycle. Targets were formulated with reference to a specific problem which was determined prior to the implementation of the project. Training formed a very important part of these kinds of problems. However, there was only little attention for countervailing power; assigning technical knowledge prevailed. The target group was seen as a passive consumer who had no influence over the project.

Arce and Long (1999: 2) make a clear differentiation between modernity and modernization. According to them, modernity refers to materialities, meanings and cultural styles. It entails self-organizing and transforming practices in different strata and sectors of society. Modernization is a 'comprehensive package of technical and institutional measures that are widespread societal transformations and underpinned by neo-evolutional theoretical narratives'. Modernization is usually a policy initiative implemented by multinational administrative and technological national or international elites. Modernity contains a paradox in the sense that it both constructs and erases the Western/non-Western divide. It can be said that "Modernity symbolically constructs indigeneity, otherness and the idea of a fundamental difference between Western and non-Western societies even as it promotes the social and material dismantling of whatever divide may once have existed through

the mixing and hybridization of elements that lie on either side of it" (Dove et al. 2007; 132, see also Escobar 1995; 56). Within modernization a distinction can be made between 'modernity' on the one hand, and 'indigenization or hybridization' on the other hand. Modernization thinking created a developed 'other' who tried to become a modern or western subject, but this resulted in a hybrid 'other'. The search for an alternative development implicated criticism on modernity from the perspective of the 'other'.

The search for an alternative approach to development

The modernization theory was a leading approach in development from the 1940s to approximately the 1970s. As the results of development cooperation were dissatisfactory, the idea emerged that it would be important to actively engage developing countries in the formulation and implementation of development projects. Instead of measuring development in economic terms, development would be measured in terms of growth of autonomy. The major criticism on projects executed according to the modernization theory, was that change cannot be forced upon a strictly planned model formulated externally by a donor country or organization. In modernization theory, development was conceived not as a cultural process but instead as a system of more or less universally applicable technical interventions intended to deliver some badly needed goods to a target population. "The development vocabulary changed, and words as participation and "'community', 'indigenous', 'local knowledge', people's planning' were promised keys to counter top-down technocratic approaches and to unlock the power of development for the poor turn out to be dangerous counterfeits, products of modernity, trailing colonial histories of bureaucratically invented custom and tradition." (Mosse 2004; 643)

Participation

One of the most important characteristics of the new development approach would be participation. The main purpose of participation was increasing community awareness, and to make use of local knowledge in development projects. The outsider would function as a catalyst. Rahnema argues that participation is justified because it expresses not only the will of the majority of the people, but also because it is the way for them to ensure that the important moral, humanitarian, social, cultural and economic objectives of a more humane and effective development can be peacefully attained. Dialogical interaction can make it possible for people to organize themselves in a manner best suited to meet their desired ends. (Rahnema 1992; 121) Also Pronk (1990; 39) argues that policies can only be successful when all actors involved can influence the process from the stage in which needs are identified, until the formulation, implementation and possible adjustment of the policy.

Participation is significant for the development process due to the following reasons:

- People organize best around problems they consider most important;
- Local people make rational economic decisions in the context of their own environment and circumstances;
- Voluntary local commitment of labor, time, material and money to a project is a necessary condition for breaking patterns of development paternalism which reinforce local passivity and dependency;
- Local control over the amount, quality and especially the distribution of benefits from development activities is directly related to those benefits becoming self-sustaining. (Gow and Vansant 1983; 427)

Melman (1994) distinguishes two perspectives on participation which can be interesting when considering the way in which different people thought about participation. In the first perspective, participation is seen as an instrument with which development projects can be carried out adequately. Negative results can be

avoided by taking into account the perspectives and needs of the target group. Development workers should get in touch with the beneficiary groups which were key informers and local leaders. If they agree with the project proposal, the other members of the social group are also expected to agree. Innovations come from external actors and reach the society through some specific key persons (the trickle-down effect).

In the second perspective, participation is seen as the ultimate aim. The external actor is seen as a catalyst. The 'grupo beneficiario' should be empowered in such a way that they can initiate their own development. The external actor and the local population are equal in decision power.

#### Making use of local knowledge: Farming systems research

In the new development approach, research was seen as a necessity to increase an understanding of the needs of the local people. In the DIAR project farming systems research (FSR) was used to gain an understanding of local production systems. A characteristic of FSR is its holistic perspective on farms; instead of focusing primarily on the distinct activities, the farm is seen as a holistic system in which different interactions take place. An advantage of on-farm methods was that they would have the probability to gain an honest insight into the general farming system, because of direct communication of a multidisciplinary research team with farmers. This increases the understanding of the farmers' decision-making environment and enables identification of the technological alternatives which can be applied in this environment.

Beyerlee, Harrington and Winkelmann argue that many small farmers in developing countries make decisions in an environment that leads to a complex farming system. One of the elements that lead to this complexity is a long growing season, which increases the range of potential crops and possibilities of multiple cropping. Another element is the unreliability of input and output markets, an uncertain climate and low farm incomes which increase the importance of risk in farmer decisions. Also, farm households tend to consume what they produce because of high marketing margins and price variability. Family labor is an important factor; seasonal labor has an important influence on the farming system. The last element is that resources employed by the farm household often exhibit considerable heterogeneity, even within the household (for example labor is provided by males, females and children). The authors warn for the "potentially serious inconsistency between our advocacy of a farming systems perspective as a holistic view of an often complex farming system and the use of research methods which are cost effective and emphasize rapid results". Small farmers with limited capital have risk avoidance objectives (and thus a cautious learning process) rarely make drastic changes in their farming system. Often they proceed in a step-wise manner. Development projects should take this into account. (1983; 898)

Also within the DIAR project, there was a need to understand the local farming systems. Leesberg and Valencia (1995) conducted this research for the DIAR project. During preliminary studies data were collected which provided an insight into the existing production systems, production activities and their sequence through the year. This farming systems research aimed at obtaining information on the internal functioning of the production systems. Leesberg and Valencia used a combination of five different research methods: case studies to gain insight into the complete range of activities performed by each family member, a registration game to quantify the most important production activities; precise measurement at selected sites of

agricultural production, short interviews with key-informants and group activities to engage people in analysis and problem solving at the micro level.

The registration game was a new research tool which was developed by the researchers, it was meant to understand patterns of labor investment of local farmers, in order to gain a better understanding of the farmers' reasons to adopt, adapt or to reject technology. Leesberg and Valencia (1995; 59) wrote: "Innovations introduced by the project in rice cultivation have stimulated changes in the pattern of agriculture and labor allocation. (...) There was awareness about the existence of a wide range of production conditions in the project area but the characteristics of each type of production site were not known; neither were the preferences of the farmers." The usual methods for farming systems research were not suitable for the Chocó, due to the following reasons:

- Production in the region is diversified and continuous, with a large number of interdependent sub-systems. Farming is a year-round activity, and differs from seasonal field cropping, or simple cattle-keeping economies.
- The farmers mainly produce for immediate consumption, only a part of it enters the market. Therefore these systems cannot be described easily using conventional farm economies.
- People move from place to place for fishing, hunting, cutting wood and finding new land; all of these labor related areas are seen by them as part of the farm.
- The Afro-Colombian population inhabited the area only recently, and therefore their indigenous knowledge about the environment is limited.

This was just an introduction into the farming systems research which was conducted for the DIAR project, in the third chapter of this thesis a further description of the methodology and outcomes of this farming systems research will be provided.

As indicated, the search for a new approach to development led to the process approach.

### 1.3.2 Process approach

The programmatic approach is the Dutch interpretation of what has been called a process approach in international circles. The programmatic approach (which will be referred to as process approach) was developed by the Small Farmers Group (In Dutch: de Kleine Boeren Groep) which was established by the Dutch Minister of Development Cooperation. The aim of the Small Farmers Project was to assist the Ministry professionally in the effort to effectively channel a great proportion of Dutch aid to the rural poor (Röling and De Zeeuw, 1983). According to Röling and De Zeeuw (1983; 173) the process approach (which they call the programmatic approach) was designed to take a place in between project assistance and program assistance; 'in that it would not be limited to the narrow confines of project cycle planning but would allow open-ended support of poverty-oriented activities over a considerable number of years'. Projects that are based on the process approach were meant to have an integral character. There should be a balance between attention for health and education, and for activities concerning agriculture, infrastructure and institutional development. Due to the flexibility of the programmatic approach, other sectors of importance could be included after the first orientation in the project area (Melman 1994). Projects that were implemented along the lines of the Process Approach, had open ended targets, were aiming at poverty reduction and would be executed for a couple of years (5-10 years). The project would specifically aim at a particular region, target group or sector. The project would work towards an independent functioning of local persons and institutions, also on a national governmental level.

One of the aims of the process approach was to address the needs of the target population. This need would be identified by actively engaging the target population in the developmental process. Prior to the process approach the aims of

development projects were formulated by the donor country, from then on these aims would be formulated together with the authorities of developing countries. The role of the donor country or –organization would be restricted to support during the preparatory stage and possibly during the execution of the project (Melman 1994). Projects implemented according to this approach would not only be organized bottom-up, but would also be characterized by undefined overall aims and an undefined end. A general planning was made previously, but this planning could be adjusted to local circumstances or unexpected events at any time. This would also increase the flexibility of the project to meet and adjust to the needs of the target population; the target group is seen as a group of capable actors who actively take part in the preparation and execution of the project (Röling 1983 and Melman 1994). This meant a significant difference from blue print planning, which was set up according to the project cycle: identification, formulation, preparation, implementation and evaluation. Also, these projects were restricted to a certain period in time, and when coordinated well, these projects were meant to function more or less independently from possible negative influences. Unfortunately, this was a delusion because projects were hampered by multiple factors such as crises (drought, food crises, debts, etc), shortages due to underdevelopment, internal socio-economic policies and external developments (for example the stock markets). These crises limited the budgets that were necessary for the implementation of development projects (Pronk 1990; 316-318). While the Blue Print approach focused on one particular problem, the process approach attempted to present a coherent reflection on all constraints with the attempt to eliminate these. The donor would be an advisor that guides renewals and improvements, and would take into account the environment of the project and intervening factors. In this approach projects should be carried out in a flexible way with possibilities for adjustment. Employees would be contracted by the developing country and would be supported by experts from the donor country. The process approach would be especially suitable for support of development processes and the development of institutional capacities at a grass-root level. Essential elements of these processes are: a phased working plan; an evolution of aims that should be achieved per phase, taking previous results and learning experiences into account; a continuous involvement of the participants of the process, and an on-going adjustment to the changed circumstances; support of and phased handing over of the program to local organizations; a willingness of the donor to support the process financially for a long period in time (Pronk 1990; 316-318). Within the process approach, research was important for providing a framework for the project plan (Melman, 1994). Although the process approach was characterized by an open end and by flexible targets a project plan is needed because “the process approach does not imply a lease for loose, uncontrolled, happy-go-lucky messing about” (Röling and De Zeeuw 1983; 170) According to the new insights that came along with the process approach, interventions should meet the following conditions:

- Prior to the formulation of basic aims for the intervention solid research should be conducted in order to gain an insight into the project area. However, it is impossible to identify in advance what activities are critical to the success of development projects; therefore it is important to establish systematic procedures for eliminating unknowns and for identifying sub-activities.
- The developing country will be actively involved in designing the intervention. The intervention must be interactive and strategic, depending upon the intelligence of the people and institutions.
- The planning of the activities should be flexible and should have possibilities for adaptations during the execution of the project; it is essential that the intervention proceeds, unfolds, grows incrementally and organically from a small start as understanding develops.
- The local population should be involved in the implementation of the activities. This will increase the chance that the results of the project will be

preserved in the project area, and will decrease the possible resistance of the local people.

- All sectors that are relevant for the local population should be involved in the intervention, because external conditions can obstruct the project. However, it is essential to work towards independent functioning people and organizations and to build in guarantees for such independence. (Melman 1994, Röling and De Zeeuw 1983)

Although projects would not have a strict project cycle as blue print projects, the following sequence would be adequate for this new way of executing projects:

- Identification of the local situation and poverty, and determination of an appropriate institutional framework;
- Analysis of local poverty: analysis of the local socio-economic structure, identification of the target groups, analysis of the target group, defining the possibilities for development, defining the strategic and institutional information;
- Searching for concrete possibilities for development and starting a cooperative relationship with the local population through small start activities and providing support to local and governmental institutions;
- Gradual decrease of Dutch aid and increasing local independence;
- Research is an essential element of the project during all stages. Participation is also a concept that is important during the entire process;
- The program will be led by a core team of experts from the receiving country and from the Netherlands. This team is managed by a Dutch program-manager and will coordinate other governmental and private institutions. (Röling 1983; 127)

Not only the bright side of the process approach should be discussed here, like every approach also the process approach has weaknesses. Röling (1983) identifies three main concerns related to the Process Approach. In the first place there is an increased political vulnerability. If the projects are successful, political structures of the region or the country in question can lead to more confidence and activity among local social groups. This in turn, can lead to an increased resistance among local and national elites towards the project. The open ended character of the projects gives more space to external political involvement than the projects that were implemented according to a blue print.

The second concern relates to the scale of the projects and the possibilities for further enlargement. Large and complicated programs are very time- and energy consuming. The projects can easily get caught in the boundaries of their growth. At last, it is not sure if a large, bureaucratic and on the government focused donor can sufficiently adapt to the requirements of the Process Approach. There can be difficulties with the demands of the development process on the one hand, and the donor-bureaucracy on the other; a tension between flexibility and change versus stability and cautiousness. (Röling, 1983)

There were differences in how the process approach was explained by the different actors (project members, policy makers, etc). As described by Röling and De Zeeuw (1983; 172): "Some of these activities were labeled programmatic because they were large-scale integrated rural development programs which started with a large allocation of funds without specification of their purpose. (...) Other activities were called programmatic because they represent long-term support to a sector without specifying a priori what activities needed to be undertaken. Finally, there are a few activities called programmatic because they seek to install the elements of the functional group approach on the basis of incremental, iterative planning-cum-learning." Röling and De Zeeuw criticize DGIS for the loose interpretation of the process approach, "Everyone was left free to interpret the programmatic approach

as he or she linked, and hardly any effort was made to reach a consensus or to train officers in its implementation" (Röling and De Zeeuw 1983; 174). As will appear in the third chapter in this thesis, the way in which the process approach was interpreted by DGIS differed from the way in which the approach was intended when formulated in the small farmers group. This had an impact on the image of the approach and finally on the end of the project.

#### Poverty

The DIAR project was implemented to meet the needs of the local population in order to alleviate their poverty; therefore this paragraph is a small intermezzo in which different perspectives on poverty are described briefly. Colin (1978, in: Röling 1983) argued that poverty reduction can only be successful when a system is developed in which three elements are related; small functional groups from the local population, governmental institutions that are capable in protecting and providing opportunities for rural populations, and intermediary organizations that are capable in bringing the local populations together and train them. The way in which poverty is explained can have consequences for the solution to be sought for the problems that come along with poverty. Röling and De Zeeuw (1983) describe different explanations of poverty. Some examples are; person blame in which the poor are seen as inferior and thus poor; the fact that the poor have been poor for generations has led to socio-psychological adaptations which keep them poor; the lack of basic needs undermine the strength of the poor to further develop themselves; a lack of adequate technologies; a lack of resources such as land, labor, capital, etc.; the unequal distribution of political and economic power; and finally, the inability of the governmental apparatus to provide realistic development opportunities for the rural poor. The fact that the explanation of poverty leads to a certain practical approach is relevant for the understanding of the DIAR project and the perspectives on development of the team members. Although the team members were aiming at poverty alleviation and providing development for the region, their different explanations of poverty might have led to different strategies for poverty alleviation.

#### 1.3.3 Development policy

The DIAR project was a Dutch governmental project, and thus it was an outcome of Dutch development policies. The first part of this paragraph provides an introduction into Dutch development policy; the second part focuses on development policy in general.

##### Dutch development policy

Through time, the vocabulary of Dutch development policies changed; from 'providing aid to less-developed countries' to 'development aid' and finally to 'development cooperation'. (Burger et al 2000; 11) This is not only rhetoric, but is an indication of how the development discourse and philosophy has changed over the years. Van Lindert and Verkoren (2003) describe some characteristics and dilemmas of Dutch development aid. One dilemma is the debate whether Dutch development aid should be provided through bilateral or multilateral channels. Another is the (still actual) discussion concerning the pollution of the development budget; over time, the available budget was used to cover other expenses such as costs for asylum seekers in the Netherlands. Also there was a dilemma whether there should be chosen for fragmentation or concentration of development aid. Due to the increase of partner countries in the seventies and eighties, it was decided in the nineties to concentrate on a restricted number of partner countries. Characteristics of Dutch development cooperation are that the budget grew tremendously between 1950 and 1990 (from a few hundred million to 6 billion guilders); and the Dutch development cooperation is known for focusing mainly on rural development. (Van Lindert and Verkoren; 2003)



Just before the start of the DIAR project, around 1973, Dutch development policies went through some major changes. As a representative of the New Left of the Labor Party, Mr. Pronk became the Minister for Development Co-operation. Minister Pronk integrated technical and financial assistance, as these were separated before. Technical assistance was provided in the form of knowledge sharing by the donor country. Under the influence of the modernization theories, the financial assistance gained more attention. Economic prosperity was emphasized, and a vast expansion of the industrial sector would be necessary to achieve this. For financial assistance, the receiving country was responsible for the implementation of the project, in order to improve self-reliance. Technical and financial assistance already were often both used in most of the aid activities and programs. Also the national context in which the assistance activities were implemented was seen as a determining factor of the whole process; the procedure would now be the focal point of development assistance. (Pronk 1990; 322-323) Another change involved the introduction of a political aim to the development policies; Mr. Pronk aimed for a global redistribution of power and wealth in favor of developing countries through a New International Economical Order (NIEO). The NIEO was seen as a readjustment of the international economic power relations in favor of the developing countries.

In 1977, after Minister Pronk, the Christian Democrat Mr. De Koning became the Minister of Development Cooperation. Under Minister De Koning, the main focus of development policies became the economic and political independence of developing countries and improvement of the position of the poorest. (Burger et al. 2000) His approach is called a two-track initiative, because "aid continued to focus on improving the position of target groups, but in addition it aimed to stimulate political and economic self-reliance" (Hoebink 1999; 188). He aimed for an improvement of the quality of development aid, and therefore he decreased the number of concentration countries. Colombia almost lost its position as aid-receiving country, but was reinstated after a lot of discussion.

Later, in the eighties, development policies moved away from a focus on specific developing countries to a main focus on structural poverty alleviation. Two main sectors were appointed; rural development and industrial development. (Burger et al. 2000) Röling and De Zeeuw (1983) describe a 'new wave' of interventions that aim to alleviate poverty. This new wave is characterized by these features:

- A target group or -category approach
- A focus on designing technology, and employment and other opportunities on the basis of knowledge about, and participation of, target groups of rural poor.
- A focus on local level organizations for or of the rural poor as active counterparts to various government and non-government organizations at supra-local levels;
- The need for simultaneous intervention on different levels and the creation of linkages between these levels;
- The use of a process approach from a smaller start, as relationships develop, understanding and trust are generated and mutual insight increases;
- A focus on making development processes self-generating and self-sustaining.

Around 1983 another important change found place; Dutch economic and commercial interests were emphasized in development policies. An example is that the Dutch Minister for Development Cooperation showed interest in large infrastructural projects such as the Ganges Project. (Hoebink 1999). In the nineties the central issues of the development policies were investment in people and their productive potential, provision of basic needs and extending poor people's participation in political decision-making.

Hoebink argues that "The turning points in the 1970s and the 1980s are shifts in discourse rather than actual changes in policy." (1999; 198) "Whilst in the 1970s the humanitarian motive appeared to take precedence, in practice commercial and

economic interests continued to play the major role in development co-operation. In the 1980s, commercial interests were emphasized in official documents while in practice their role in the implementation of the foreign-aid program had actually diminished.” (Hoebink 1999; 193)

The following figure shows the Dutch hierarchical policy context in the eighties in which the project was carried out. Figure 1.1 distinguishes different operational levels in the left column. Development projects like the DIAR project, which were implemented according to the process approach, are placed at the local level and are connected to their local counterparts. Via the Dutch embassy, the project is connected to the Dutch Directorate General of International Cooperation (DGIS). The embassy also is directly connected to the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs. It is particularly useful to keep this figure in mind when reading the second chapter of this thesis; this chapter provides an overview of DGIS dossiers of the DIAR project.

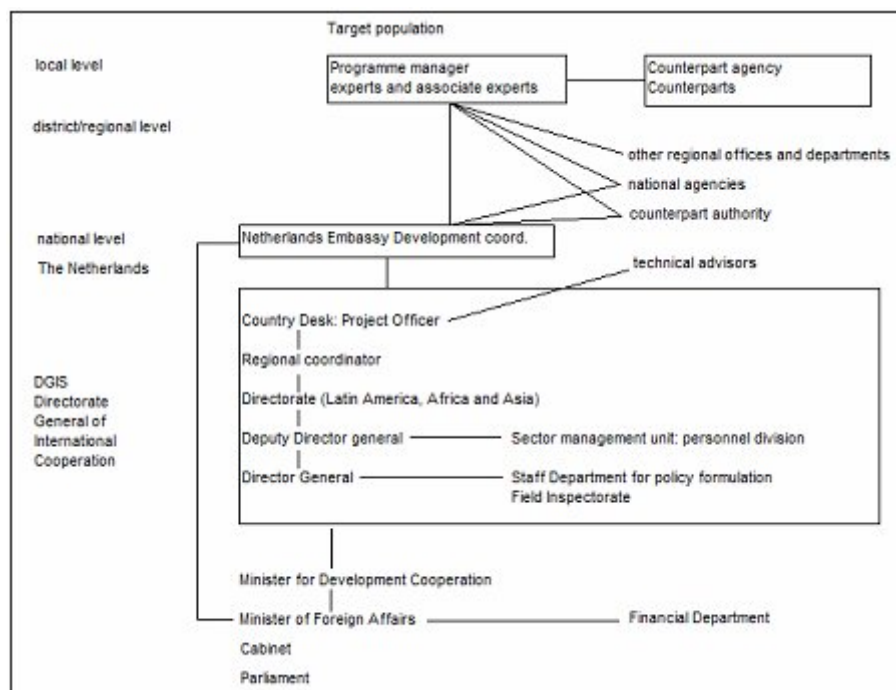


Figure 1.1: The Netherlands Technical Assistance Column. Source: Röling and De Zeeuw (1983; 156)

## Policy

Hoebink distinguishes four motives for foreign aid, which are interesting in the case of the DIAR project, as the Netherlands had no demanding historical relationship with Colombia (it was no former colony for example). According to Hoebink it is important to consider the motives behind development aid, because “the state is not neutral; its policies and regulations reflect the interests of diverse socio-political agents and these interests motivate the provision of foreign aid” (1999; 177). The first motive is political and strategic. Mainly superpowers provide aid for this reason, because through foreign aid, they can “make friends all over the globe” and gain access to the local authorities in developing countries. The second motive is economic and commercial. Aid can be used to expand exports and investments from companies in the donor country, and to safeguard the donor’s markets and supply of raw materials. According to Hoebink, this motive can be best assessed by analyzing the back-flow of aid; the percentage of aid spent by the recipient on goods and services from the donor country itself. The third motive is ethical and humanitarian. This motive stems from religious and social-democratic thinking in which solidarity with the poor and the oppressed is important. However, a common argument is that foreign aid is always given out of self-interest of donor countries.

The fourth motive is environmental, and mainly stems from ecological problems that transgress national borders. The lack of funds in developing countries requires foreign aid to combat these problems. The last motive is recently added to this list, it is the refugee motive. The growing number of refugees made it necessary for Western countries to provide support to the home countries of these refugees. Hoebink recognizes that it is difficult to analyze the motives behind development aid policies, because "...development co-operation is very much a façade industry, particularly in European countries." (Hoebink 1999; 179)

From the previous paragraphs the conclusion may be drawn that development projects are in one way or another directed or justified by development policies. However, one can also argue the other way around; development projects have an influence on policies. As described in the theoretical framework, Mosse argues that "development projects are successful not because they turn design into reality, but because they sustain policy models offering a significant interpretation of events. In other words, policy models do not generate practices, they (policies) are sustained by them" (2004; 657). He argues that policy is an aim, instead of a cause. Like Fergusons' and Escobar's arguments that the development apparatus reproduces itself, Mosse argues that policy is maintained by development projects. He sees policy as a result of social processes, policy does not guide a development intervention, policy is reproduced as a result of interventions (Mosse 2004; 663). Long elaborates on this by arguing that policy makers often are not looking for the best way or the most efficient alternative for solving a problem. According to him, policy makers are looking for support for actions that are already taken, and they seek support which serves the policy shaping community (Long 2001). Mosse also describes how policy discourse generates mobilizing metaphors (such as participation, process approach) that should "... conceal ideological differences, allow compromises (...), build coalitions, distribute agency and multiply criteria of success within project systems" (Mosse 2004; 663). In the case of the DIAR project, development policies did not succeed in concealing these ideological differences, or building coalitions. Instead of taking the development policies to task for the conflictive situation in the DIAR project, the team members were blamed for their behavior and were discharged from the project.

On the other hand, the impact of policy on development interventions is debatable. Long argues that policy outcomes can be the result of many factors, some of which are not even directly linked to the particular development program. He argues that policy implementation should not be restricted to top-down, planned interventions, but it should be taken into consideration that "local groups do actively formulate and pursue their own 'development projects' that often clash with the interest of the central authority" (Long 2001; 32). In other words, the different actors in an intervention have agency which should not be denied. The following paragraph will focus on this agency. According to Long it is not enough to modify or seek refinements of orthodox views on planned intervention. Instead, we should break with the conventional models, images and reasoning of planned intervention. He pleads that we should "recognize intervention for what it fundamentally is, namely an ongoing, socially constructed and negotiated process, not simply the execution of an already-specified plan of action with intended outcomes" (Long 2001; 33). For this reason an actor perspective is also useful for analyzing the DIAR project.

#### 1.3.4 Agency and actor orientation

Long provides the definition of agency that will be used throughout this thesis: "The notion of agency attributes to the individual actor the capacity to process social experience and to devise ways for coping with life, even under the most extreme forms of coercion. Within the limits of information, uncertainty and other constraints (e.g. physical, normative or politico-economic) that exist, social actors possess 'knowledgeability' and 'capability'. They attempt to solve problems, learn how to

intervene in the flow of social events around them, and to a degree they monitor their own actions, observing others react to their behavior and taking note of the various contingent circumstances." (Giddens 1984; 1-19 in Long 2001; 16) Long argues that agency is embodied in social relations, and agency can only be effective through these relations. In development interventions all actors have a certain kind of power, or room to maneuver, even the actors in lower positions; "all forms of dependence offer some resources whereby those who are subordinate can influence the activities of their superiors" (Giddens 1984; 16 in Long 2001; 17). This means that all actors are actively engaged in the construction of their own social worlds, although agency is framed by discourses, institutional constraints, and processes of "objectivation" which might promote certain modes of agency. (Long 2001; 4)

Therefore, Long proposes an actor analysis in order to explain the meanings, purposes and powers which are connected to different modes of human agency and which give shape to the outcomes of "emergent social forms". An actor-analysis is especially valuable because development interventions are often complex and contradictory in nature; it involves social forces originating from arenas at different levels (international, national, regional and local). In an actor perspective, intervention is seen as a 'multiple reality' which is made up of differing cultural perceptions and social interests. An intervention is constituted by the ongoing social and political struggles that take place between the actors involved in the intervention (Long 2001). As will also appear from this case study on the DIAR project, heterogeneity is a structural feature of agricultural development. Due to this heterogeneity, interventions are a contest over the dominance and legitimacy of competing images of development. "Thus, rather than eliminating social and normative struggles, intervention practices are likely to radicalize them, introducing new discontinuities and heightening confrontation between differing interests and values" (Long 2001; 41). For an actor analysis, the patterns of interaction between the different groups of actors should be identified and the ways in which their particular histories, collective memories and time-space conceptions shape the reception and outcomes of particular measures should be analyzed. The actors involved in the intervention, their identities and their subjective interests and perspectives must be considered independently of the intervention rhetoric. (Long 2001; 40) A more explicit actor-oriented perspective requires a better appreciation of human agency. This entails, "both the idea of how individuals and groups – not solely class bound- develop social strategies on the basis of existing knowledge, resources and capabilities, and the idea of emergent organizational forms that both enable and constrain their actions, the execution of political power and policy becomes an active and ongoing transformation process, involving both cooperation and conflict among the various parties involved". (Long 2001; 48)

The actor analysis is very useful for gaining an understanding of the DIAR project and especially for exploring the answer to the main research question (see § 1.4.1). The following chapters will indicate the ambiguity of the different perspectives concerning the DIAR project, which require an actor approach instead of a holistic approach which tries to understand the project as a whole.

### 1.3.5 The development apparatus and the banalisation of hope and desire

This thesis focuses on the different perspectives of the different actors who were involved in the DIAR project. The development apparatus in the form of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs can be identified as one of these actors. One of the arguments of this thesis will be that in a certain way DGIS banalised the desires for development of the team members of the DIAR project.

In the theoretical framework, the development apparatus was depicted as a machine for reinforcing and expanding the exercise of state power or for gaining

control over the subjects of development, should be supplemented by a virtual dimension which is the desire for development according to De Vries (2007; 29). De Vries argues that the development industry is parasitic on the beliefs and dreams of the subjects it creates (2007; 30). Thus, he argues that the development industry generates as well as banalises desires for development. As described in the theoretical framework Ferguson also argues that the failure of development projects sustains the development industry; he argues that project failure does not lead to a re-evaluation of the principles of rural development activities, but that the "same cures are prescribed for the same diagnosis", and thus new projects are initiated. (De Vries 2007; 34) De Vries (2007) pleads for a new ethics that refuses to engage in the banalisation of the promises of development. Therefore it is necessary to acknowledge the heterogeneity of hope, politics and critical reflection within the development debate (Long 2005; 240-241). De Vries concludes that "if it is true that the development apparatus sustains its hegemony through the generation and banalisation of hope, then not compromising your desire means refusing to accept the betrayal of development by the anti-politics machine." (De Vries 2007; 40)

The following chapters in this book will make an attempt to describe the relation between the DIAR project team and DGIS, and most important, will make an attempt to describe the perspectives of the different actors involved in the DIAR project.

### 1.3.6 The Chocó

In order to gain an understanding of the region and thus the context in which the team members were working, this paragraph will provide a brief introduction into the Chocó region. The third chapter which describes the perspectives of the team members will further elaborate on this explanation of the local situation.

The following description of the region comes from Arturo Escobar (2003; 158): "The Colombian Pacific is a vast, mostly rainforest region, about 900 km long and 50-180 km wide, situated between Panamá and the north and Ecuador to the south, and between the westernmost chain of the Andes and the Pacific Ocean. It is inhabited by close to 1 million people, 90 % of whom are Afro-Colombians, and 50.000 members of indigenous peoples of several ethnic groups, the most being Emberas and Wounans. It is also considered to be the poorest region in the entire country, and by conventional indicators it certainly is. Forgotten and isolated for a long time, in the 1980s it became a new frontier for development, including macro-development projects. It is also one of the richest world regions in terms of biological diversity, and hence it is the object of great interest on the part of environmentalist organizations. (...) Since about 1996, and with an increase after 1998, the region has been subjected to massive displacement as armed groups- leftist guerrillas and right-wing paramilitaries- moved into many areas. Massacres and massive displacement have become the order of the day as the struggle for this region's rich resources intensifies."

The Chocó is often described as the 'forgotten region' of Colombia; Wouters (2001) calls the Chocó the 'poor rich region'. Despite its natural and biological resources, the Chocó is considered to be one of the poorest regions in Colombia, with a rudimentary infrastructure and high illiteracy and mortality rates. From the first colonial incursions until recently, the developmental initiatives of the state have largely bypassed the region. (Wouters 2001; 505)

In the eighties, about 92 % of the population was African in origin, 6 % was Indian and 2% was European in origin. The Chocó has the highest number of Afro-Colombian inhabitants; approximately 85% of the 500.000 inhabitants consider themselves to be black. This "black population was brought to the area during colonial times when the Spanish used slavery for mining activities. A relatively autonomous population of free and escaped black mulatto peasants was formed through marooning and the legal

practice of setting slaves free. This population of free people lived in small, dispersed communities and villages on the banks of the numerous rivers that crossed the impenetrable jungle where they developed a strong sense of territoriality" (Wouters 2001; 502).

With the past history of slavery, racism is one of the things to which the local people in the Chocó are (still) very sensitive. During slavery it was difficult to maintain or reconstruct their ethnic culture. Also, the blurring of African memories complicated the formation of an Afro-Colombian ethnic identity (Arocha 1998). Colombians still tend to perceive themselves in "binary terms, as 'us' (mestizos) and 'others' (indígenas), while Afro-Colombians were left in a semantic limbo that approached invisibility" (Arocha 1998; 71). Also in politics, there has been little attention and room for Afro-Colombians. Between 1920 and 1950, political publications blamed the 'inferior races', the Indian and black peoples, for the backwardness of the Colombian nation. The following quote, which comes from the politically conservative leader and later president of Colombia Laureano Gómez, is representative of the ideas of Colombian politicians in this period: "The black is a plague. In the countries where he has disappeared, as in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay, it has been possible to establish an economic and political organization with a strong and stable basis." (Gómez 1928;51-52, in: Arocha 1998; 77-78) Throughout the years, Colombians have introduced words that form a modification of racial terms which increased recognition of the weight of cultural regional difference (for example the word 'antioqueño' (for people born in Antioquia). (Arocha 1998)



Figure 1.2: Colombia and the Chocó. The Chocó borders the Pacific Ocean in the West.

The main sources of income of the Afro-Colombian population were fishing, agriculture including small domestic animals, and mining gold and platinum. Other activities were hunting, cutting wood and palms, and gathering fruits, herbs, firewood and fibre from the forest. Leesberg and Valencia (1995) describe the traditional agricultural systems as 'household based and very complex, with year-round harvesting'. These farming systems were carefully researched in the DIAR project, and will be further described in the third chapter.

#### A small historical overview

The seventies in Colombia were the time of land reforms, the reform of church-state relations, and the emergence of left-wing guerrilla groups. Runaway slaves established their villages, called palenques. In the 1980s, the Colombian government increased linkages to the global economy. The exploitation of natural resources in the Chocó grew, which also offered the black people an opportunity to connect to the cash economy. They started to colonize lands that had previously lagged behind. This created an ethnic conflict with indigenous people who were forced to find another habitat upstream from the Chocóan rivers. The Catholic Church supported the black communities by setting up peasant organizations. Their Afro-American Pastoral Program was set up to help 'Afro-American' peasants to organize themselves. However, the names of these organizations, for example ACIA (Asociación Campesina Integral del Atrato), did not refer to blackness (Wade 1995; 345). The social movements that came into existence, concentrated on black consciousness and racial discrimination, and emphasized the necessity of Afro-Colombians to engage in emancipation and social progress. (Wouters 2001)

The eighties were characterized by new forms of collective action and social mobilization by grassroots movements that emerged in opposition to development. These groups attempted to construct new identities through their resistance to development (Escobar 1995; 216). Poor and underprivileged groups in Latin American societies experienced structural injustice from a political and juridical perspective. They lacked the financial means, contacts and juridical knowledge that would be necessary to offer them safeguarding of legal rights, and legal protection. They were threatened by the desires and corruption of bureaucrats, politicians, landowners, middlemen and employers. These poorest groups had very little participation in the political process. (Pronk 1990; 285) In the eighties the commercial and governmental interest in the region grew, as well as the attention from armed groups. This has brought an intensification of the fight for territory. In the context of this tension, many local organizations were formed from the 1980's onward to call attention to the subject of territorial rights and the defense of natural resources. When Law-70 was passed, the ethnic-territorial movement in the Chocó, for the first time, acquired a real perspective to secure the territorial rights of the Afro-Colombian communities. (Wouters 2001; 505-507)

One of the first local organizations to request a collective land title was the Asociación Campesina Integral del Atrato (Integrated Peasant Organization of the Atrato, ACIA). ACIA was the first organization of rural Afro-Colombian communities. Before the DIAR project started in the region, the congregation of the Claretians started with projects to raise awareness among the people concerning the necessity to defend and control the territory, and they started the first cooperatives among the local peasants. Then the DIAR project entered the region and elaborated on this

initiative of the Claretians. Through the DIAR project the organization process advanced and the grassroots committees started to call themselves peasant associations. In 1987 they obtained a legal status. Although the defense of the territory was not initially placed within an ethnic discourse as such, the cultural workshops organized by the missionaries and the substantial research effort within the DIAR project made it clear that territory was of fundamental importance for the physical and cultural survival of the black communities of the Middle Atrato region. (Wouters 2001)

After the DIAR project was finished, social transformations continued. In 1991, the new Colombian constitution recognized that Colombia was a multiethnic and multicultural nation. For the first time in Latin America, Afro-Americans could reclaim collective territories, comparable to the recognized rights of indigenous communities. Law 70 of 1993 recognizes black communities as an ethnic group and defines the right to protect the culture and traditional production of the black rural communities. And thus, the new Colombian constitution attempts to build the nation neither by integration nor by segregation but by pursuing unity through the preservation of ethnic diversity. (Arocha 1998; 71)

## 1.4 Methodology

The following paragraphs will provide a methodological justification, which contains the following issues; the research objective and research questions, the research procedure, the research setting, ethical considerations and the reliability and validity of this study.

### 1.4.1 Research objectives and research questions

This thesis focuses on the DIAR project which was a project implemented by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Chocó region in Colombia. As indicated, the research can be characterized as an explorative, qualitative and ethnographic research. It is explorative because there was no fixed plan beforehand. During the study new respondents and documents were found and led to new insights. This research is ethnographic because the most important information for this thesis was found in the interviews with the respondents, in which they told about their experiences and memories of the DIAR project. And of course, it is qualitative because no quantitative data were collected or analyzed for this study.

While exploring the DIAR project and the different perceptions of the actors involved in the project, the following main research question emerged:  
“How could we explain the existence of highly different stories about the DIAR project and what are the theoretical implications of this interpretative discrepancy for our understanding of the functioning of the development apparatus?”

In order to answer this main research question, the following sub-questions were formulated:

- Who were the main actors who were involved in the DIAR project, and how can their relationship be described?
- What are the stories of these actors with regard to the DIAR project?
- What was the role of the development apparatus in this project?
- What were the consequences of the DIAR project for the different actors and their development perspectives?

The following chapters of this thesis will provide descriptions of the perceptions of the different actors. In the conclusions of this thesis an attempt will be made to answer these research questions.



### 1.3.2 Research procedure

Within this explorative research, three different research stages can be distinguished: an exploration, a data collection and analysis of the data. The distinction between these stages is theoretical; they are not separated in moments of time.

#### Exploration

During the exploration some introductory interviews were held with some former project members of the DIAR project. These interviews served as an introduction into the DIAR project itself, but also into the ways in which the project members had experienced this project.

Another task during the exploration formed the search for respondents. Respondents were identified as people who were in some way related to the DIAR project and could provide useful information for this study. Finally, this stage is also characterized by an exploration of useful literature. Literature was sought to gain a better understanding of the practical and ideological context of the project.

#### Data collection

The second phase, the data collection is divided into three parts.

In the first place, literature was studied as indicated previously. The aim of the literature study was to increase the understanding of a wide range of topics that were related to the (context of the) DIAR project and would provide a solid foundation for the analysis of the empirical data. This literature study resulted in the theoretical framework of the thesis.

The second part of this phase consists of a dossier study. Dossiers concerning the DIAR project in the archives of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs were studied. The aim of this study was to gain an insight into the project as a whole and in the way in which the project was described in the dossiers. A systematic analysis of these dossiers and the documents was not possible. The dossiers were often lacking information, and were often filled with a number of duplicates of the different documents. Thereby, there were so many relevant dossiers that it was not possible to analyze every document in detail. As a guideline for the analysis of these documents, the main research question of this thesis was used, and thus for the analysis I mainly focused on documents that gave information about the project members, or documents that provided information about the organizational, social and political context of the project. The great number of economic documents are not included in this dossier study, because it was not sure whether these documents included all information (as indicated, often parts of the dossiers were missing), and with regard to the focus of this study (the perceptions of the people involved) the financial and economic details are not of major importance. The documents that contained the most relevant information, according to the aim of this study, were included in the analysis. A chronologic overview was made, and resulted in the second chapter of this thesis. The aim was not to present a complete overview of the DIAR project as derived from the dossiers, but the chapter gives a representative insight into the way in which the project is described in these dossiers. This chapter is relevant for the understanding of the Dutch governmental context in which the project was embedded.

The third part of the data collection was made up of interviews held with people who were related to the DIAR project. These were Dutch project members, people working at the Dutch embassy during the DIAR project, people who are familiar with the Chocó and the DIAR project, and a former Dutch minister of development cooperation. In one case, where the respondent was abroad, a questionnaire was sent by e-mail. Altogether 10 interviews were held. During the interviews an attempt was made to maintain openness towards the respondents, and to be aware of the limitations of theoretical insights and information derived through other sources.

Most of the interviews were semi-structured; a list of relevant topics was made up as a guideline. Because the interviews were held more than 20 years after the project was carried out, detailed answers could not always be expected. The semi-structured set-up of the interviews kept the interviews flexible; structured questions could have held back certain memories of the respondents.

Most of the interviews were recorded and were literally transcribed afterwards, to make sure that no misinterpretations could occur afterwards due to a missing context.

#### Analysis

Both the dossier study and the interviews were analyzed from the theoretical perspectives as provided in the theoretical framework.

As said, the documents from the archives at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs were first selected according to their relevance for the aim of this thesis; the perceptions of the people involved in the DIAR project. The documents that appeared to be relevant were copied and ordered chronologically. This chronologic overview was used to make the overview of the documents as presented in the second chapter of this thesis. Most of the documents were written in Dutch. The aim for the translation was to stay as close to the original text as possible. The information from the dossiers was clarified and put into context with some analyzing remarks. These remarks are clearly distinguished from the original information from the dossiers. The chapter ends with a concluding note which summarizes the most important issues that appear from this dossier study.

The literally transcribed interviews were analyzed with the computer program ATLAS/Ti. This program for qualitative data analysis is particularly useful for linking and coding data from different sources. With the help of the program an overview was created of the range of topics, people and events that took place in the DIAR project. This resulted in the third chapter of this thesis, the chapter that discusses the perspectives of the former team members and other people involved in the DIAR project.

The second and third chapter together will be analyzed with the help of the theoretical insight as presented at the theoretical framework. This will lead to the final conclusion of this thesis.

#### 1.4.3 Criteria relevant for this research

Different criteria are important in order to conduct a credible research. For this research, the criteria validity, ethical considerations and reliability are of major importance.

Validity can be achieved by careful descriptions and interpretation of data with respect for the context from which they are derived. This can also be achieved by the use of multiple sources of evidence and information. An attempt was made to conduct a valid research by comparing information from historical files (the DGIS dossiers), literature and the interviews from the respondents. However, the fact that the research centers around the perceptions of the people involved means that validity is less important than in other researches where an attempt is made to describe an objective reality.

Ethical considerations include the privacy of the respondents, as well as the privacy of others who appear in the dossiers or were discussed during the interviews. In this thesis certain conflicts that occurred during the DIAR project are described. The conflicts are important for the overall understanding of the project, but these descriptions could also harm people or current relations between people. Therefore, an attempt is made to describe these discretely without any judgment.

Reliability is an important criterion for this research in the sense that an attempt is made to present true facts and information that approaches the reality. However, the information from the interviews is based upon 20 years old memories. Some information might be remembered in a way that does not accord to the reality at that time. However, this information is useful because the research focuses on the current perception of the DIAR project as remembered by former project members.

#### 1.3.4 Limitations and recommendations for further research

As every research, also this research is hampered by a number of limitations. In the first place, this study has a 'Dutch bias'. The documents studied were all derived at the Dutch ministry of foreign affairs. Also the people that were interviewed were all Dutch (except for one respondent, but this respondent is no former project member). Unfortunately the Colombian perceptions of the DIAR project were not studied during this research, but this might be an interesting recommendation for further research. It would be interesting to compare the perspectives on the DIAR project of the Dutch and the Colombian former project members, as well as their development philosophies.

Another limitation is related to the dossier study. The dossiers were studied at the very beginning of this research. On the one hand this was useful as an introduction into the DIAR project; it provided useful information and names of possible respondents. On the other hand, at the start of this research I had a limited understanding of the project. There is a possibility that documents that would now be considered useful were overlooked at that time.

The last limitation was the fact that some important respondents could not be found. Especially the team leaders of the DIAR project were not found. This is unfortunate because both team leaders got involved in a conflict with team members. These conflicts are now only described from the standpoints of the team members; the perspective of the team leaders on the DIAR project and with regard to these conflicts is unknown.

#### Utility

This research has the aim to contribute to the overall understanding of the developmental context of the Colombian region, the Chocó. Thereby, this study hopes to contribute to the understanding of the Dutch developmental context in which projects were implemented in the 1980s. Most ideally would be for this study to contribute to understanding, respect for and improvement of development cooperation all over the world.

### 1.5 Structure of this thesis

After this presentation of the theoretical framework and the justification of the used methodologies, the following chapter will describe the DIAR project from the perspective of DGIS dossiers concerning the DIAR project. These dossiers provided an insight in the way in which the DIAR project was perceived by DGIS, the Dutch development apparatus. The chapter discusses the relations between the Netherlands and Colombia, and the DIAR project in a chronological order. The third chapter will give an insight into the experiences and perceptions of the people who were somehow related to the DIAR project; project members, people working at the embassy in Bogotá in the period of the project and a former minister of development cooperation.

The last chapter will present the conclusions of this thesis. Insights from the literature study, the dossier study and the interviews will be combined in order to answer the research questions.

## 2. The DIAR project from the perspective of DGIS dossiers.

The aim of this chapter is to provide an insight into the way in which the DIAR project and the relations between Colombia and The Netherlands were discussed in the dossiers of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS). The dossiers contain files such as letters, reports and the like, that were written by Dutch diplomats, bureaucrats and other Dutch people who were in one way or another related to the DIAR project. The chapter presents a chronological overview which is made up of documents from the DGIS dossiers.

These documents will present an insight into the efforts to introduce a process approach so as to counter the bottom up and externalist bias of the conventional modernization thinking (see also the theoretical framework). Also, this chapter will provide an insight into the different relations that were important for the implementation of the DIAR project; relations with the counterpart organization CODECHOCO, relations with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS) and relations between the project members of the DIAR project.

An attempt is made to stay close to the original documents. Therefore, first the original (translated) information from the dossiers is given, followed by analyzing remarks (the *Italic writing*).

For the understanding of this chapter, it is important to realize that two different project phases can be distinguished in which different teams worked on the DIAR project. The first team starts in 1979 (although the team is completed in 1981) and leaves the project area in 1983. Then an interim period follows. The second phase starts in 1984 and ends in 1989. This is also the end of the DIAR project.

As indicated, this chapter is made up of information from the Dutch ministry which implies that the view presented represents mainly a Dutch perspective on the DIAR project and on the bilateral relations between Colombia and The Netherlands.

### 1800-1880

The relations between Colombia and the Netherlands go all the way back to the eighteen hundreds. In 1819, Gran Colombia declared itself independent from Spain. At that time, Gran Colombia was formed by the countries Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador and Panama. Two years after the war against Spain in 1822 the Dutch government opened a consulate general in Bogotá. After the Netherlands recognized the independence of Gran Colombia, both governments concluded to the Treaty of Friendship, Shipping and Trade<sup>1</sup>. Nowadays, this treaty is still in force. (AOD/ON, 1984)

The Dutch king Willem Van Oranje had great expectations of the possibilities for trade between the Netherlands and South America. After all, his expectations appeared to be overestimated and the Dutch Trading Society left Colombia in 1828. (AOD/ON, 1984) In 1830, Venezuela and Ecuador separated from Gran Colombia, and the state of Colombia (by then Colombia was called Nueva Granada) faced a number of civil wars. During this period the relations between Colombia and the Netherlands were less prominent. In 1840 the Dutch consulate general was transferred from Bogotá to Caracas (Venezuela), but as late as 1879 a Dutch consulate general was opened again in Bogotá. (AOD/ON, 1984)

### 1904

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<sup>1</sup> In Dutch: Het Tractaat van Vriendschap, Scheepvaart en Handel

At the beginning of the nineteen hundreds, Colombia's share in the global coffee production grew enormously to 3 %. This is seen as one of the major reasons for the Dutch government to establish diplomatic relations with Colombia in 1904. A new consul was opened in Barranquilla. (AOD/ON, 1984)

1945

During World War II, the Dutch Trade and Industry Society Bogotá NV<sup>2</sup> faced major problems. The Dutch government was situated in London during this period and transferred the seat of the Society to Curaçao, which was not approved and recognized by direction of the Society which was seated in Amsterdam. The Colombian government gave no opinion on which of the directions was entitled to claim the benefits, and blocked all dividends of the Society and even considered nationalization of the Society. In 1946 this conflict was settled in a way considered 'satisfactory for The Netherlands'. (AOD/ON, 1984)

1946-1958

Nowadays, Colombians call the period between 1946 and 1958 'La Violencia'. During this period around 200.000 people lost their lives as a consequence of the civil war. During the global crisis in the thirties, the Liberals won Colombian elections over the Conservatives. This crisis harmed the Colombian export severely. Until 1946, the country was governed by Liberal presidents. After World War II, the Conservatives won the elections which led to major tensions between the parties, and evolved into a civil war in 1946. With the promise to end this period of violence, general Rojas Pinilla got hold of power in 1953, but was deposed by a military junta. The junta offered the Conservatives and the Liberals the possibility to make peace and in 1958 an elected president came to power. The Conservative and Liberal party had agreed to share power until 1974 and to take turns in appointing a president for the country. After 1974, new presidents were chosen through democratic elections. (DGIS, 1975) Despite these political and civil wars in Colombia in the period 1946-1958, the trade relation between The Netherlands and Colombia developed well. In November 1955, the two countries transformed their consul-generals in Colombia and in The Netherlands into embassies. (AOD/ON, 1984)

Around this period, also the World Bank got involved in Colombia. In 1950, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) stated:

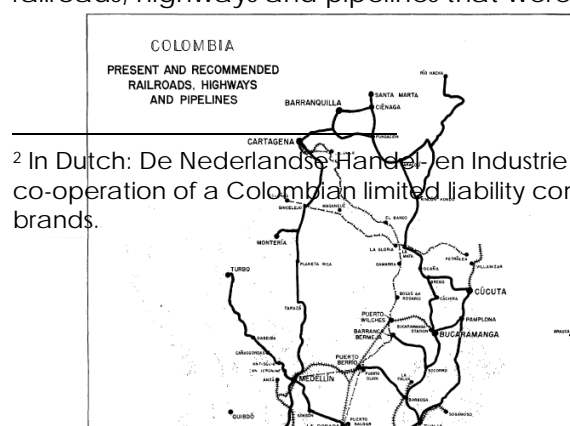
"...success in raising the general standard of living will depend in large part on the possibility of so improving agricultural activity that a much smaller proportion can raise the food, fibres and export crops that the country requires" (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development 1950)

In these days, the World Bank saw development as economic prosperity and increasing wealth.

The following quote provides an illustration of this view:

"Health is probably the most single component of a people's standard of living, and at the same time one of the most important determinants of that standard. Poor health lowers productivity and constitutes a continuing drain on national wealth and resources, resulting from loss of working time, from the need for large capital outlay to build hospitals and similar facilities, and from increased costs of welfare, insurance, and sickness and accident benefits."

The map below comes from the same World Bank document. The map shows railroads, highways and pipelines that were present or planned in the 1950's.



<sup>2</sup> In Dutch: De Nederlandsche Handel- en Industrie Mij Bogotá NV. This was a holding-co-operation of a Colombian limited liability company that traded on a number of beer-brands.

Figure 2.1: Infrastructure in Colombia in 1950

One of the main problems for agricultural development in Colombia was the unequal distribution of land. Great areas were laid fallow by the big landowners; these landowners were less interested in the income they derived from their holdings than in the value of those holdings as a source of security and as a hedge against inflation. (IBRD, 1950)

This World Bank report presents an economic perspective on development. From this

document the impression appears that health is seen as important for productivity and thus for economic growth. Nowhere in the document is public health seen as an aim in itself.

Figure 2.1 shows infrastructure in Colombia in the 1950s. Interesting is that the Chocó region (of which Quibdó is the capital) is not connected to these railroads, highways and pipelines. This map makes visible how certain parts of the Country are isolated due to a lack of infrastructure.

#### 1960-1970

In 1960, the Netherlands and Colombia agreed upon bilateral relations. However, the Colombian income per capita was too high for The Netherlands to maintain Colombia as a so called 'target country'. As a result of reorganization in the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs this relation ended, but because of the historical, cultural and economic relations between Europe and Latin America specific regions were appointed within the sector 'rural development'. Colombia was one of the supported countries through this sector approach.

In this same period, different guerilla organizations came into existence. According to an overview document written by DGIS, a reason for the existence of these guerillas was a lack of possibilities for profiling themselves politically. The largest of these are the FARC and the M19<sup>3</sup>.

The reason for the beginning of the guerilla movements as provided in the text above is quite simplified. In fact, according to Dr. Ir. P. De Vries (Wageningen University) the guerilla movements were established due to a lack of political space to accomplish major social transformations such as land reforms. The guerillas were mainly active in rural areas, and especially in so called 'frontier' areas where the farmers from more intensely populated areas were forced to migrate. Once they were in these 'frontier' areas, they were once again robbed of their possessions.

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<sup>3</sup> Dossier: DLA 1985-1990, Colombia algemeen deel III, 1987. Document: Bijlage 2: kernegevens.

From an overview document of DGIS appears that in 1961 the Colombian Institute for Land reform (INCORA) was instituted and provided land for 170.00 families during the first 13 years, although this land was possessed by the State previously. The expropriation of private property (although the fields laid fallow) appeared to be a wearisome process. (DGIS, 1975)

In 1962, a delegation of the Colombian Government visited The Netherlands in order to obtain support for their development plans. The Dutch government decided indeed to provide financial support, within the framework of the Consultative Group for Colombia<sup>4</sup> which was established under the auspices of the World Bank. In July 1966 an agreement for technical cooperation was signed by the Colombian and the Dutch governments. In 1969 the Dutch government decided to concentrate its development assistance on a limited number of so called concentration countries, and Colombia became one of the nine assistance receiving countries. (AOD/ON, 1984)

1970

From an overview document written by DGIS appears that in the period prior to the DIAR project, in Colombia the richest 10% of Colombians earned half of national income while the poorest half of the population earned only 15% of the national income. In the rural areas more than half of the families were living at subsistence minimum. In 1973 only 13% of the houses were equipped with water, only 6% with electricity. Characteristic of Colombia during the 1970's were the isolated areas all over the country. Transport connections are a scarcity due to the separation of regions by mountain chains. (DGIS, 1975)

1972

In 1972, the Worldbank published a report with regard to development in Colombia, which is expressed mainly in economic or technical terms. In this report, low incomes in agriculture are seen as one of the main problems for the rural areas. These incomes are said to be low because of low productivity and the "extremely small size of the vast majority of farms". Also, according to the World Bank, the inefficient combination of inputs and husbandry resulted in low yield levels for most crops. For Colombia, the World Bank formulated the following main policy questions:

Which crops should be stimulated, through price support, credit and government investment and research? And: At what speed should land reform be carried out? (Worldbank, 1975; 11)

Another problem in Colombia in these times was the regional imbalance. This becomes visible in variations in wage scales for similar skills, differences in illiteracy rates and difficulties in access to medical and other services (72% of the physicians in Colombia resided by then in the four largest cities.) (Worldbank 1975; 77)

The regional imbalance would be an argument in 1978 for the Dutch government to provide aid and assistance to Colombia despite the height of the income per capita. The income per capita was actually too high for the Dutch government to support Colombia.

1974

In 1974 the negotiations for Dutch technical and financial development assistance for Colombia started. Financial aid was assigned to financing parts of projects that were target group focused and provided technical assistance such as providing drinking water, financing technical and agricultural equipment and agricultural support. A large share of this financial aid was reserved for the regional development of the Chocó region (over 29 million guilders); this was assigned for initiatives such as

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<sup>4</sup> In Dutch: De Consultatieve Groep voor Colombia

providing drinking water, electrification, health services, paving of small roads, and more<sup>5</sup>.

This can be seen as representative for modernization thinking; technical projects with a specified aim.

As indicated before, after 'La Volencia' the Liberals and Conservatives were taking turns in ruling over Colombia. This period (1958-1974) was called 'Frente Nacional'. In 1974, the parties decided to run for elections. During these elections, the Liberals obtained 56%, the Conservatives 32% and the Anapo (National Popular Alliance; the left wing political party) almost 10% of the votes. This resulted in the appointment of the liberal president López Michelsen who promised to pay specific attention to support the lower income groups. (DGIS, 1975)

#### 1975

In 1975 the Colombian government decided to pay specific attention to rural development. One of the goals was to increase job opportunities for the poorest people, who were mainly living in rural areas. Agricultural development was seen as one of the main priorities for achieving development. Other priorities as formulated by the Colombian government in 1975 were: providing support to the poorest regions, decrease malnutrition, improvement of social services, increasing of liveableness in the cities, and expansion and diversification of the country's export. (DGIS, 1975)

In this year the Dutch approach for development projects changed; more emphasis was placed on the effects of the different projects on the poor segment of the population. The take-off point of these projects ideally would be the institutions and programs of the Colombian government that already focused on the underprivileged part of the population. Bilateral aid would focus more on the regions that were less economically and socially developed, which in Colombia are the Chocó, Urubá and the Territorios Nacionales (which are now National Parks). The main aims were described as the enlargement of the production of the different target groups, through small-scale production-units. Production, employment and increasing incomes were seen as crucial for achievement of self-reliance and were seen as one of the few aspects of emancipation in which foreign aid can be effective<sup>6</sup>.

The activities described focus on economic development; no plans for social projects (such as projects for education, health care, etc) were formulated.

#### 1978

During this year within the Dutch parliament, a discussion took place concerning the position of Colombia as an assistance receiving country. The Dutch government argued that the Colombian income per capita was actually too high for Colombia to maintain the status of a concentration country. However, one of the contra-arguments was that the unequal levels of wealth would justify Colombia's position as a concentration country. Dutch politicians were afraid that development aid in Colombia would not benefit the poorest section of the population. Finally it was decided that Colombia would retain its status in the Dutch development aid, but this development aid would focus specifically on benefitting the poor<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Dossier: DLA 1975-1980, 45 t/m 54 Colombia, projecten algemeen 1979. Document: Letter from the Dutch Minister of Development Co-operation Mr. De Koning, to the 'Commissie voor Ontwikkelings-samenwerking van de Gereformeerde Kerken' (Commission of Developmentcooperation of Reformed Churches), 28-08-1997

<sup>6</sup> Dossier: DLA 1975-1980, 45 t/m 54 Colombia, projecten algemeen 1979. Document: Letter from the Dutch Minister of Development Cooperation Mr. De Koning, to the 'Commissie voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking van de Gereformeerde Kerken' (Commission of Development co-operation of Reformed Churches), 28-08-1997

<sup>7</sup> Dossier: DLA 1975-1980, 45 t/m 54 Colombia, projecten algemeen 1979. Document: Letter from the Dutch Minister of Development Cooperation Mr. De Koning, to the 'Commissie voor



In the same year, a Dutch physician visited the Chocó region in order to prepare the health project 'CCH -Atención primaria de SALUD'. He describes the Chocó as a very poor area where all people are equally poor. In his view, Dutch development aid in this region would benefit the population as a whole; there was no danger that the development aid would benefit the local elite only. However, he was aware of the danger that local elites could be created by development projects. The physician described the health care facilities in the region as very poor; there was a high rate of infant mortality, an inadequate and insufficient medical infrastructure, medical personnel operated mainly from Quibdó while the population lived dispersed all over the region. Except a project focusing on providing drinking water, there were no other health projects in the region (Muller; 1978).

#### 1979

In 1979, the main goals for the Proyecto de Desarrollo Integral Agrícola y Rural (DIAR) were formulated. Overall, the aim of the project was to create possibilities for the local population to be able to profit from the regional economic growth in the Chocó. Therefore research would be conducted in order to gain an insight into the main obstacles to growth and regional development. The main obstacles were expected to lie in the fields of infrastructure, technical assistance and training, health care and the like. The DIAR project aimed at:

- Increasing the technological level of agricultural production;
- Increasing the regional production and increasing the incorporation of the local population into the regional economic market;
- Creating new sources of employment in the Chocó region;
- Integration of the local population into the social and economic regional context. (CODECHOCO; 1981)

In line with these aims, the tasks that were formulated for the first DIAR team were identification of technical problems of the agricultural production in that time, finding ways to improve the production, identification of small projects in the area and supporting these initiatives and investigating possibilities for new crops for the use of the local population or for commercial exploitation. At that time, plantains, bananas and cocoa were identified as the most important agricultural products in the region (Muller; 1978) <sup>8</sup>. Not only the goals were formulated, the project also started in 1979.

This description shows that the DIAR project was first described as a traditional development project; it would focus mainly on regional economic growth. Although the project would later be known to be implemented according to the process approach, this document does not give a hint of issues such as participation, flexibility etcetera. In 1981, the project would start working according to the process approach. .

#### 1980

Around 1980, difficulties with the counterpart organization CODECHOCO emerged. It seems like the new director was reneging on decisions taken by his predecessor, which was not approved by the DIAR team. The team leader, ambassador and Dutch policy makers discussed whether the DIAR project could be continued without the cooperation with CODECHOCO. One of the messages even mentions the

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Ontwikkelingssamenwerking van de Gereformeerde Kerken' (Commission of Development co-operation of Reformed Churches), 28-08-1997

<sup>8</sup> This document also describes the tasks of the first DIAR team leader, which formulated as: identification of technical problems related to production, finding opportunities to improve the production, investigation of possibilities for usage of new crops, identification and supporting local initiatives.

thought of ending the DIAR project: "...it is not possible to abandon the DIAR project, because peasants in the region are very positive"<sup>9</sup>.

The documents concerning difficulties with CODECHOCO are not very clear. Most documents just state that there is a problem, but don't give any information about the nature of these difficulties. This means that the explanation of this conflict (as well as others that will appear in this chapter) is limited.

1981

A report of an evaluation mission performed by DGIS diplomats, describes the project as implemented according to the process approach (in Dutch: 'Programmatistische Ontwikkelings Benadering'). They describe the approach as having an open-ended implementation process which starts at a small basis and emphasizes the local reality and participation of the local population. Thereby, increasing the countervailing power of marginalized and vulnerable social groups was one of the basic principles of the process approach. The evaluators describe that traditional development projects were implemented top-down. With the process approach an attempt was made to involve the target group, non-governmental organizations and (local) governments in the development project and to generate bottom-up cooperation. The evaluators recognize that the process approach gives a lot of space for personal interpretation, the report indicates that as a consequence of this approach the team leader tends to pay attention to social groups or activities in the region that have no obvious relation with the project itself (Bruinsma and Laudy; 1981).

In 1979, at the very start of the project, the DIAR project was implemented as a traditional technical development project. Without describing a turning point in the early history of the project, the project would from now on carry out its activities according to the process approach.

Further, the report of this evaluation mission contains mostly technical and financial data concerning the DIAR project. Also is reported that the farmers accept and use the farming systems as advised through the DIAR Project. The Project is seen as very dynamic and important for the development in the Chocó. The final success of the different technical innovations that are being promoted will depend on the level of acceptance and execution by the farmers. A very concrete impact has been achieved in the region already; although, according to the document, the farmers often tend to exaggerate this impact according to the document.

This is not further explained. It can mean that the farmers are too positive about the project and thus have no realistic view on the project. However, this is the only sentence that gives the impression that local farmers were consulted during this evaluation mission.

Also the DIAR project had a positive impact on the identity of the social groups in the Chocó. The report states that women should be included in the DIAR project because they have a very important position in agricultural production. At that moment the target group of the project was restricted to peasants and fishermen. The evaluation report describes two prominent difficulties in the project area. In the first place, there was a small group of wholesale dealers in Cartagena. These dealers are known for having a monopoly on trade in the region; therefore there is no constructive cooperation possible between these traders and the peasants involved in the DIAR project. The project team has plans to break through this monopoly by procuring a boat for the DIAR project. In the second place, recent military operations

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<sup>9</sup> Dossier: DLA 1974-1985, Choco: Regionale Ontwikkeling 1976 t/m 1980. Documents: Telexbericht van de Minister van Ontwikkelingssamenwerking Dhr. De Koning, 26-09-1980. And: Message from the Embassy at Bogotá, 12-09-1980. The quote 'it is not possible to abandon the DIAR project, because peasants in the region are very positive', is literally written as: 'Huidig dilemma: voortgaan met project met of zonder codechoco? Boeren in werkgebied zeer positief, derhalve abandonneren project niet mogelijk'.

in the project areas have stopped some of the projects' activities. The check-ups of the military limit the team's freedom of movement. (Bruinsma and Laudy; 1981)

In a letter, the Dutch Minister of Development Cooperation argued that the long-term Dutch development assistance in Colombia had hardly any positive effect on the trade relations with Colombia so far. The only direct effect of development assistance on trade relations comes from Dutch companies that provide the supplies for the development projects. He states that the Agreement of Cartagena makes it difficult for foreign investors to invest in Colombia; according to the agreement a maximum of 49 % of the capital stock can be foreign property. However, there is a growing interest of Dutch trade and industry to invest in Colombia. The letter concludes that the extended Dutch policies concerning concentration countries (Colombia is one of the nine concentration countries) will probably not affect negotiations concerning trade rights<sup>10</sup>.

From the beginning of the Dutch-Colombian relations the economic interests of the Netherlands in Colombia were obvious. This letter gives the impression that development assistance is used as a tool to improve the trade relations between these countries. As described in the theoretical framework, Hoebink (1991) describes the backflow of aid as one of the motives for providing development assistance. Probably the team members of the different Dutch development projects in Colombia (f.e. DIAR) did not agree upon this instrumental view on development cooperation.

In 1981, the DIAR team was complete and counted all together six team members under which an agronomist, a cattle specialist, two marketing specialists, a forestry specialist and a planning specialist. Later the team was enlarged with four students who were conducting research in favor of the project. The DIAR team would use the 'Finca model' in order to provide agricultural extension to the local peasants. The following model gives an illustration of the 'Finca model':

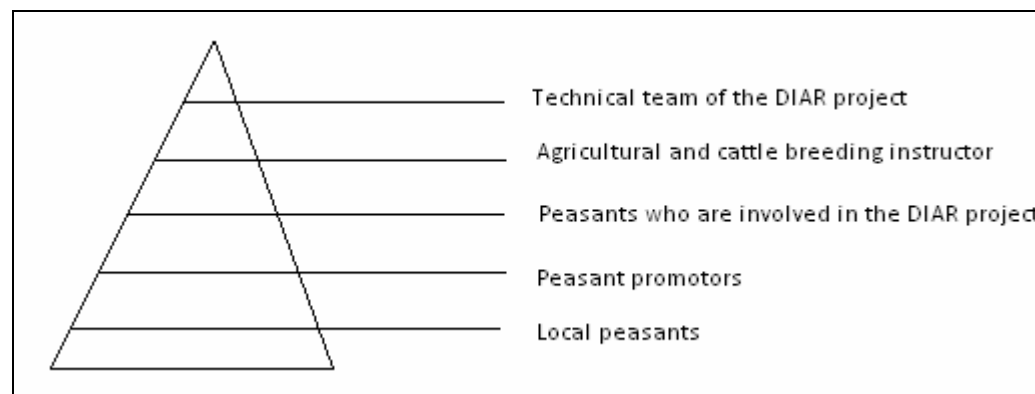


Figure 3.2: the Finca model

The model shows how knowledge is transferred from the DIAR project to peasants and how this affects agriculture in the end (Bruinsma and Laudy; 1981).

The process approach was not yet recognizable in this finca model. As the process approach is concerned with participation, this Finca model seems less concerned with the involvement of the local population. A risk of the model is that when Dutch experts would fulfill the role of instructor, and when the 'campesinos' are local Colombian farmers, that this model represents a top-down development approach.

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<sup>10</sup> DGIS Dossier: DLA 1974-1985, Colombia Projecten algemeen, Deel XII, 1984. Document: Letter from the Minister of International Development to the Ambassador. Topic: the effectiveness of development assistance. 08-04-1981

The process approach appears to cause quite some discussion between the planners of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the DIAR project team. The planners ask for a planning process document every three months, but according to the project team such a planning interferes with the philosophy of the process approach. It is stated that the team leader would lose a lot of freedom if he was expected to present a planning report every three months. It was therefore agreed to present a yearly planning<sup>11</sup>.

Descriptions of discussions concerning the process approach as described in the DGIS dossiers were restricted to organizational discussions between the team leader of DIAR and DGIS bureaucrats. Except from these descriptions, the process approach is not discussed in subsistence in these DGIS dossiers.

1982

During a team meeting of the DIAR team it is discussed that Dario Prado, a director of CODECHOCO, was abusing the DIAR project by trying to gain support from the local population and to gain votes for the political elections. It is seen as one of the successes of the DIAR project that within CODECHOCO, the staff understood that this form of clientelism was no longer appropriate. However, Prado's political party lost during the elections in 1981, and Prado became very cooperative with the DIAR project. This created the opportunity for the DIAR project to identify itself with the CODECHOCO; it is said that at that point the distinction between the two institutions was removed. However, the DIAR team still saw the upcoming elections in August 1982 as a possible danger. With a new president in CODECHOCO, it is likely that the staff of the CODECHOCO would change as well. This ambivalent political situation posed a threat to the DIAR project<sup>12</sup>.

This shows how important local politics were for the DIAR project. On the one hand there was a risk of local politicians abusing the project; on the other hand local politics could be useful to achieve project aims. This will be described in the following chapter.

In 1982, a new administrative agreement described the goals of the DIAR project a little more detailed; according to this agreement, the aims of the project were:

- Increasing the income and wellbeing of the population living in rural areas of the Chocó.
- Stimulating an increase of the productivity of the agro forestry exploitation, using natural resources.
- Increasing the stability of the peasants in the Chocó region, in order to decrease the migration level and the influences of uncontrolled (pressure concerning) colonization of the area.
- Improving the capacity of local government institutions and rural organization.
- Developing the infrastructure necessary for development of the area and for economic integration into the area.<sup>13</sup>

In September 1982, the Dutch ambassador in Bogotá wrote a letter to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in which he stated that 'a separation of minds had occurred

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<sup>11</sup> Dossier: DLA 1974-1985, 57 Colombia, Choco: Regionale Ontwikkeling Deel II 1981. Document: Verslag van de bespreking met de heer Eddy Vos, projectleider DIAR. Gerapporteerd door dhr. C.M. Coops, ambassadeur. 1981. AND: Dossier: Colombia, landen en regioprogramma's, teamleidervergaderingen, osla/1985-1990/00321. Document: Verslag teamleidervergadering gehouden op 29 januari 1981.

<sup>12</sup> Dossier: DLA 1974-1985, 60 Colombia, Chocó: Regionale Ontwikkeling Deel V 1982. Document: Verslag werkgroepvergadering DIAR-Chocó, 20 juli 1982.

<sup>13</sup> Dossier: DLA 1974-1985, 58 Colombia, Chocó: Regionale Ontwikkeling Deel IV 1982. Document: Administratief akkoord betreffende het Project voor integrale landbouw- en plattelandsontwikkeling van Chocó-DIAR. 1982

within the DIAR project'<sup>14</sup>. In the letter it was argued that other Dutch development projects avoided the DIAR team and were afraid to be compared to this team. Also, the ambassador wrote that the team leader declared that he is not willing to prolong the contracts of two of the professionals, because their attitude hampered the continuation of the project. According to the ambassador, exactly these two professionals are distancing themselves from the unusual social behavior of the rest of the team. The inappropriate behavior (also molestation of the houses of the team members) of the team would be caused by excessive drinking. In the end of the letter, the ambassador argued that some of the team members were disapproving the institutional debate or decision making apparatus that was instigated by the team leader.<sup>15</sup>

This description gives a restricted view on the conflict. The following chapter, which discusses the project from the point of view of people involved, will also discuss this internal conflict.

### 1983

Throughout the years the unstable political situation has proven to hamper the DIAR project and the institutional development of CODECHOCO. As a result of this instability, the DIAR team argues that within the DIAR project, policy making should remain the prerogative of the Dutch team. Due to the political instability, this should not become the responsibility of an institution in which the staff changes all the time. Thereby, the DIAR team argues that institutional development should remain one of the goals of the project; without institutional development the project would not have any value at all<sup>16</sup>.

Furthermore, the year 1983 was a difficult year for the DIAR project. In the first place there were difficulties with the counterpart organization CODECHOCO. A letter from the Ambassador to the Dutch Ministry of Development Cooperation reveals that one of the team members found a letter from CODECHOCO which spoke of a lack of funds at CODECHOCO. Without consultation with the DIAR team CODECHOCO insisted on a reduction of fuels, and a drastic decrease of funds for traveling. In reaction to this letter, the DIAR and CONIF project (Corporacion Nacional de Investigacion y Fomento Forestal) wrote a letter to CODECHOCO in which they objected to these measures. The Dutch activities were stopped immediately. Another letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs confirms that difficulties with the Colombian financial contribution to development cooperation hamper the different Dutch development projects in Colombia.<sup>17</sup>

Some other writings consider reorganization of CODECHOCO and the cooperation between the DIAR project and CODECHOCO. This also affected the responsibility of the team leader; previously the team leader had more responsibility than desired by CODECHOCO.<sup>18</sup>

The instable political situation also affected the relationship between the DIAR project and CODECHOCO. Also the difference in funds between DIAR and CODECHOCO made the relationship more complicated. CODECHOCO could not fulfill its obligations due to a lack of funds. The DIAR project is quite a 'rich'

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<sup>14</sup> Literally: 'Dat er zich een scheiding der geesten in het DIAR project heeft voltrokken'

<sup>15</sup> Dossier: DLA 1974-1985, 60 Colombia, Chocó: Regionale Ontwikkeling Deel V 1982.

Document: Formal writing from the Ambassador Mr. Roëll, addressed at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 28-09-1982

<sup>16</sup> Dossier: DLA 1974-1985, 892 Colombia Chocó: Regionale Ontwikkeling, Deel VI 1983.

Document:

Brief aan de Ambassade van Vos, Pendjol, Gerrits, Espinal, Camargo, Gregory. 21-01-1983

<sup>17</sup> Dossier: DLA 1974-1985, 892 Colombia, Chocó: Regionale Ontwikkeling, Deel IV, 1983.

Document: Brief van SMA (Th. Kolstee ) aan Chef DLA, subject of the letter: brief van H.M.

Ambassadeur te Bogota, nabeschouwing over de missie Kolstee-Laudy-van der Gaag. 19-04-1983

<sup>18</sup> Dossier: DLA 1974-1985, 892 Colombia Chocó: Regionale Ontwikkeling, Deel VI 1983.

Document: Bericht van de ambassadeur aan het ministerie. 13-01-1983

project, which also increases the power of the project in the region. The following chapter will also elaborate on this issue.

Also there are difficulties within the DIAR team. The following characteristics were attributed to the team leader: being involved in political intrigues of the CODECHOCO, he was not able to control the Dutch and Colombian team members, he was not able to plan activities properly, and was not able to maintain an adequate administration. The team leader tried to solve the problems by changing the project design, widening the activities and widening the interpretation of the process approach. The other DIAR member, who is described, is the marketing specialist. According to the description, he acts independently from the team leader and does not accept his authority; he prepares and signs contracts without consulting the team leader, and maintains contacts with politically engaged actors. Halfway the year the situation in the DIAR project worsened. In a letter, Mr. Kolstee, who is a well known international development specialist, argued that the past 9 months made cooperation between the Netherlands and Colombia in the Chocó more difficult. According to him, members of the CODECHOCO developed feelings of resentment because of the approach characterized by this Dutch development project.<sup>19</sup>

This can be seen as criticism towards the process approach. As indicated previously, characteristic of this approach is the 'plan as you proceed' approach. This can give a lot of space to personal interpretation. Here it is said that the team leader tries to solve problems by changing the project design, etc. However, Kolstee does not make clear what he means with 'approach'. This could refer to the process approach, but also to the way in which the Dutch staff dealt with the local population and the staff of the CODECHOCO.

In the same year the team leader left the DIAR project. After he had left, there was no team leader for a while. The marketing specialist (the same person as the one that appeared in the previous paragraph) then fulfilled this task because "he had distanced himself from the conflicts in the past and often tried to mediate in these conflicts"<sup>20</sup>. This interim team leader proposed a period of reflection in which also the counterpart organization should realize that their economic and technical obligations were increasing. This period would also provide an opportunity to CODECHOCO to train young professionals in regional development assistance<sup>21</sup>.

Some documents indicate that the book-keeping of the DIAR project was not kept up to date due to a lack of personnel. To a letter which was written by the Ambassador and is now kept in the archives, someone anonymously added with a pen: 'impossible, unwillingness?'<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> Dossier: DLA 1974-1985, 892 Colombia, Chocó: Regionale Ontwikkeling, Deel IV, 1983. Document: Brief van SMA (th. Kolstee) aan Chef DLA, subject of the letter: brief van H.M. Ambassadeur te Bogota, nabeschouwing over de missie Kolstee-Laudy-van der Gaag. 19-04-1983

<sup>20</sup> Dossier: DLA 1974-1985, 892 Colombia, Chocó: Regionale ontwikkeling, Deel IV 1983. Document: Formal letter from the ambassador to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 23-06-1983. And:  
Dossier: DLA 1974-1985, 892 Colombia, Chocó: Regionale Ontwikkeling, Deel VI 1983. Document: Een brief van DLA aan de Chef DLA. 24-01- 1983 Subject of the letter: personeel Chocó.

<sup>21</sup> Dossier: DLA 1974-1985, 927 Colombia DAINCO/CASAM: Alternatieve landbouwsystemen, Deel III, 1983. Document: Letter from Jack Pendjöl to the Ambassador, Ms. Van Gool. 27-04-1983

<sup>22</sup> Dossier: DLA 1974-1985, 892 Colombia, Chocó: Regionale ontwikkeling, Deel IV 1983. Document: Formal letter from the ambassador to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 23-06- 1983

1984

In this year, Colombia lost its status as one of the concentration countries within the Dutch development cooperation. In order to compensate this, the Colombian government received 30 million guilders to be able to end the bilateral projects gradually. Within Dutch development cooperation, Colombia became a 'sector country' and was entitled to funds from the sector programs<sup>23</sup>.

The DIAR team identified two developments that were expected to influence the project. The first was that the land use conflict has removed from Antioquia to the Chocó. Yearly, the number of murders increases by tenfold, but it is expected that the reclaimed land will be cultivated. The second was the possible exploitation of the Anthracite reserves between San Juan and Lloro. The team leader wrote 'This kind of activity will affect the finca-model.' (Van der Zee; 1984)

In this document it is not described how the project or the finca model is influenced. Although the process approach was already the leading approach of the project, apparently the finca-model was still applied in the project methodology.

In October 1984 a report named 'The Chocó-project' was published by C. van der Vugt. The aim of this report was to gain insight into the project, to analyze problems together with the project leaders, and to provide advices for possible solutions. The main conclusion of the report is that the DIAR project had gained back its important place within the Chocó region and in the CODECHOCO. The activities with the farmers in the region were seen as a continuation of the activities that were started during the first phase of the project. After the technical and agricultural remarks and recommendations in the report, one of the conclusions is that especially due to the difficult situation of the project in the beginning of 1984, the situation at the time of this report could be called very positive and gives enough reason for continuation of the project. However, he argues that the relations between the project controllers and the team leaders should be improved. Reports written by project members should present a clear argumentation and foundation for the proposed activities. In return, the Dutch project controllers (DGIS) should react timely to proposals in order to avoid irritation and misunderstandings (Van der Vugt; 1984).

Despite the difficulties that were experienced in the project, the project seems to be recovered according to this report. However, the report gives a hint of some tensions between the project staff and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In December 1984, the second team leader of the DIAR project started and wrote a preliminary project evaluation in which he argued that the so called 'finca models' did not function. Due to the failure of these models, the DIAR project could only focus on the commercialization of rice and maize in the years 1984-1986.

The activities of the coming years were a continuation of the 'Vos-Van Beuningen model', which was designed by the first DIAR project team. This model leaned on two pillars. The first was the technical 'pillar' in which the optimization of production and the ecologic problems are acknowledged, while other aspects with regard to the 'land sustainability concept' were denied. The second 'pillar' was a social one, in which the farmers were consulted with the idea that the farmer is capable to identify his own needs, and that 'foolish' farmers do not exist. According to the team leader, this last assumption might be true, but if the farmers really knew what they needed, then they wouldn't have needed this project. During the second phase of the project, the 'Vos-Van Beuningen' model should be corrected in the following ways:

- More cooperation with other organizations in the project areas in terms of communal policy;

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<sup>23</sup> Dossier: DLA 1985-1990, Colombia algemeen deel III 1987, osla/1985-1990/00575

- Continuation of the organization of associations, assistance in the formulation of strategies, policies, evaluations, etc.
- Stimulating the participation between associations and communities, and between communities and peasants;
- Adjustment of the 'Finca Models', supported by farming systems research.

The team leader also stated that the concepts of development within this project require more attention for social processes. According to him, the lack of policies and strategies from the Ministry of Development cooperation were resulting in a 'cacophony' of divergent opinions of team members, overlap of responsibilities and vague ideas concerning the role of the associations according to the juntas (Van der Zee; 1984).

In reaction to this report of the team leader, the Dutch Minister of Development Cooperation stated that he did not approve some sarcastic and in his view unjust remarks in the report<sup>24</sup>.

This again shows difficulties between the team leader of the DIAR project and the Dutch minister. Also the following paragraph shows difficulties between both actors.

A report of the first half of the year 1984, which is written by DGIS, indicates that there are more employees hired in the DIAR project than were expected according to the budget. Also there was an issue concerning the team leaders' attitude towards the provision of money in advance. He gave money in advance to his own employees, but also to employees of other employers. The fact that these amounts of money often exceeded two monthly salaries was seen as irresponsible.

Another remark concerns the salary of the different team members; one Colombian project member, who had no Masters degree, obtained a higher salary than the counterpart director with a Masters degree. Also flight tickets of the Colombian team members were much more expensive than those of the Dutch team members. The team leader was asked to clarify his financial policies.

In response to the report as written by the team leader (see previous paragraph), DGIS asked for a clear organizational overview of hierarchies, competences and responsibilities of those involved in the project<sup>25</sup>. DGIS was not sure of how to deal with the team leaders' evaluation (the one that was discussed in the previous paragraph), because besides some true facts, there also are some highly debatable interpretations of data in this report. However, DGIS is content to hear that this second team leader has the same approach as the first team leader with regard to the role of CODECHOCO in the future. The team leader strives to decrease this role to technical aspects and an advisory role concerning financial aspects of the project only. The first team leader had the same goal in mind, which included construction and strengthening the power of the target group. One of the basic conditions underlying this goal was, according to the first team leader, an a-political execution of the project. This caused a conflict between him and the corporation. The second team leader also had an a-political attitude towards the DIAR project and should be aware of the difficulties this could cause with CODECHOCO (DGIS; 1984).

However, a little later, the Ambassador reported about the open, pleasant and productive atmosphere during a meeting between the Dutch team leader, his counterparts and the CODECHOCO.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Dossier: DLA 1974-1985, 896 Colombia, Chocó: Regionale Ontwikkeling, Deel X, 1984.  
Document: Letter from the Dutch minister of Development Cooperation to the Embassy.  
Subject: reaction to the report of J.J. van der Zee. 18-10-198.

<sup>25</sup> Dossier: DLA 1974-1985, 896 Colombia, Chocó: Regionale Ontwikkeling, Deel X, 1984.  
Document: DGIS, commentaar 1<sup>e</sup> halfjaarverslag 1984 DiAR CHOCO, door IR. N.M.Th. Laudy.  
Deel 1t/m 3.

<sup>26</sup> Dossier: DLA 1974-1985, 895 Colombia, Chocó: Regionale Ontwikkeling, Deel IX, 1984.  
Document: Letter from the Ambassador to the Minister of Development Cooperation. 24-02-1984



Some issues that recurred from different documents in this year will be summarized briefly below. One is a financial issue; DGIS disapproved the way in which the team leader made use of the Dutch funds of the project. He used project money also for activities and people who are not related to the project<sup>27</sup>. There are also some organizational issues; the team leader sends multiple requests to get permission to visit The Netherlands. Every time his request is denied, without any argumentation for this decision in the dossier<sup>28</sup>. Also, it seems that the project lies behind schedule; although it is not described in which sense the project lies behind<sup>29</sup>. Then, there was an extensive discussion about hiring an agronomist: whether it should be a Dutch or a Colombian agronomist, and if there was really a need for a team member with this profession. Finally, another issue that appears to be much-discussed is the 'physical integration' of DIAR into the CODECHOCO.<sup>30</sup>

## 1985

The DIAR team leader reported that the threat of guerilla entering the Chocó has led to increasing activities of the police, who have attacked some people who are involved in the DIAR project<sup>31</sup>.

Another evaluation mission assesses the DIAR project. One of the findings of the evaluation is that the Dutch project members maintain the role of advisors, while the Colombians are the executors of the project. A change in this task division is required, even when this would slow down the project or when this would lead to a loss of quality. Another finding was that the DIAR project mainly focused on increasing the rice production. This single agricultural product is called an 'irresponsible narrow foundation' for the project. The evaluation report also underlines the fact that the DIAR project has an impact on gender roles in the area, although the report does not describe in which way these roles are influenced. However, the project team is stimulated to take this seriously into consideration<sup>32</sup>.

The following quote could lead to the conclusion that the DIAR project as not entirely successful in improving the participation of the target group; "project members are advisors while Colombians are the executors of the project". This suggests a top-down approach; however, the evaluation mission was

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<sup>27</sup> Dossier: DLA 1974-1985, 896 Colombia, Chocó: Regionale Ontwikkeling, Deel X, 1984. Document: Voorlopig commentaar op de voortgangsrapportage welke met schrijven no. 4928/713 werd ontvangen, DLA 19-09-1984

The remark from the Ministry: 'Een aantal opmerkingen over de manier waarop er aanspraak gemaakt werd op Nederlands geld: "voor de topograaf ook nog een bootje gekocht" In tegenstelling tot het door dhr Van der zee vermelde is het niet logisch dat lasten transport en onderhoud – ook niet voor Nederlands gebruik- voor Nederlandse rekening komen'.

<sup>28</sup> Dossier: DLA 1974-1985, 896 Colombia, Chocó: Regionale Ontwikkeling, Deel X, 1984. Document: letter from the ambassador to the Minister of Development cooperation, 25-09-1984.

And: Document: Letter from the Department of Development Cooperation to the Embassy, 21-09-1984. Quote: 'Werkbezoek V.d. Zee op dit ogenblik niet, herhaal, niet opportuun om verschillende redenen'.

<sup>29</sup> Dossier: DLA 1974-1985, 896 Colombia, Chocó: Regionale Ontwikkeling, Deel X, 1984. Document: letter from the ambassador to the Minister of Development co-operation, 25-09-1984. Quote: 'Zeker gezien het feit dat er te uwent twijfels bestaan over de technische gang van zaken in het project lijkt het zeer opportuun dat van der Zee deze problemen en de hiermee verwante koers van het project te uwent bespreekt zoveel ten departemente als met uw advies beslissingen kunnen worden genomen'.

<sup>30</sup> Dossier: DLA 1974-1985, 896 Colombia, Chocó: Regionale Ontwikkeling, Deel X, 1984. Document: throughout the dossier.

<sup>31</sup> Dossier: Colombia, landen en regioprogramma/ Choco DIAR Deel 02 1988/01796. Document: Report of a meeting with team leaders. 25-10-1985

<sup>32</sup> Dossier: Colombia, Chocó-DIAR: Regionale Ontwikkeling Deel I 1985, osla/1985-1990/01808. Document: Resultaten van de evaluatiemissie DIAR van maart 1985. May 1985

probably not aiming at examining the application of the process approach and thus had maybe another intention with this description. The fact that rice was seen as a narrow foundation of the project was also previously described in a farming systems research. Due to the authority of the team leader, this report remained unpublished.

For the years after 1985, the DIAR project would continue its activities within the current area, in order to provide the Chocó with a viable, tested, reproducible and integral working method for development of the Medio Atrato region. The integral character of the activities will be visible within the following activities: diversification of production (farming systems research and research concerning crops); industrialization and other small investments; marketing and transport and ownership through active participation of the target group<sup>33</sup>.

Another important issue that comes back in different writings is a communication mistake which is caused by the team leader. This had something to do with a geographer and a rice peeling mill in Quibdó.<sup>34</sup>

What happened exactly is not explained, but due to the extensive way in which this is discussed, it seems to be an important issue.

#### 1986

A DGIS document describes that as a result of the elections in 1986, Virgilio Barco was the chosen president. During the elections in 1986, the FARC also participated under the name 'Union Partiotica' and obtained 3% of the votes. Barco ended the national cooperation between the Liberals and the Conservatives. It is argued that due to the problems with the Conservative party, Barco did not get a chance to profile himself distinctly. Nevertheless, it is obvious that this new government gave priority to fighting poverty in the rural areas of Colombia, because they saw this as an opportunity to decrease the endemic social revolutionary violence. Also, they actualized the land reform struggle by presenting a new design of law to parliament.

According to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the progressive emancipation of higher and middleclass women was a very remarkable feature of the Colombian society. Despite disapproval of the Catholic Church, family planning was accepted more and more<sup>35</sup>.

As indicated before, the unstable political situation weakened the counterpart organization CODECHOCO because the staff changed whenever the political situation changed. Also the quality of the staff of CODECHOCO was low. The counterpart organization would not be able to continue the project in the years past 1990, as they had proven during the 8 years experience in the past.

A review of the DIAR project reports that the project has had an important influence on community building. The kin structure in Chocó is characterized by being very loose and exhibiting low levels of cooperation, nevertheless they have united in the Federation and ACIA. During the presence of the DIAR project, a new social cohesion has developed in the local communities of the Chocó. This is evident in the increased independence of the local communities, especially towards the former economic leaders like the intermediarios (middlemen) and the traders along the rivers. Also towards the national Government the population became more independent. The review also emphasizes the important role of women in the Chocó region. They are

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<sup>33</sup> Dossier: Colombia, Chocó-DIAR: Regionale Ontwikkeling Deel II 1985, osla/1985-1990/01797. Document: Letter from Laudy to DGIS/DLA coordinator Latin-America. Topic: the execution of DIAR-Chocó. August 1985

<sup>34</sup> Dossier: Colombia, Chocó-DIAR: Regionale Ontwikkeling Deel I 1985, osla/1985-1990/01808. Document: letter from the Ambassador to the Department of Development Cooperation. May 1985

<sup>35</sup> Dossier: DLA 1985-1990. Colombia algemeen deel III 1987. Document: Bijlage 2: kerngegevens

not only taking care for their families, but also provide food and income for the family; accordingly they are important actors within the production system of the Chocó. For women there are two specific projects, one has to do with vegetable gardens and the other project is a chicken farm. With regard to the methodology of the project, it is stated in the review that the approaches of the DIAR project contain all terms that were popular during the past 19 years within the development cooperation sector. Examples of these popular approaches and terms are: the process approach, participation of the target group, development of income, females/gender and development, rational and ecologic ownership<sup>36</sup>.

In a short report about the activities of the project, it is stated that although the situations in the associations have improved in the past year, there still is no structured supervision. During meetings there appeared to be a lack of understanding with regard to the being and function of the associations.

An extensive discussion arose about whether or not natural resources should be handed over to the communities, in order to achieve rational management of these resources. Another discussion focuses on stopping the issuing of concessions to wood corporations in the Media and Alto Atrato.<sup>37</sup>

Then, several writings discuss difficulties with the labor contracts of local personnel in the different Dutch development projects in Colombia. Colombians, who obtained a labor contract for one of the Dutch projects, had the right to social benefits. If they did not obtain these rights from the beginning of the contract, they can claim social benefits with retrospective effect. To be prepared for these possible claims, the Dutch embassy kept financial reserves. However, no one claimed this money and it was hoped that the Colombians under contract would forget about these social rights. However, in July 1985, some employees of the PAAI project claimed their rights. In first instance the project leaders did not respond to this letter<sup>38</sup>, but when the involved Colombian employees persisted, it was not possible to 'avoid a meeting' concerning these funds. In the end the project leaders and the local workers came to an agreement, which was not disadvantageous for the Dutch development cooperation<sup>39</sup>.

This issue occurred at different projects; it does not present a positive perspective on the Dutch Ministry for Development Cooperation as an employer.

In March 1986 a confidential letter for the Dutch Minister of Development Cooperation states that the Dutch experts in DIAR only want to maintain their position in DIAR when they are put out to contract. The document does not explain why they want to be put under contract, or what consequences this might have for the project. The second project team of DIAR gave the project a new impulse, and might now leave within 5 months after its renewal. This might have serious consequences for the DIAR project and for the Dutch position within the Chocó. With a serious crisis only

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<sup>36</sup> Dossier: Colombia, landen en regioprogramma, Chocó- DAIR, Deel IV, 1986, osla/1985-1990/00031. Document: Beoordelingsmemorandum Proyecto DIAR

<sup>37</sup> Dossier: Colombia, Chocó-DIAR: Regionale Ontwikkeling Deel III, 1986, osla/1985-1990/01796. Document: Short report concerning activities in the DIAR project January-April 1986.

<sup>38</sup> In one letter it was said that on they did not react on purpose with the hope that the involved Colombians would forget about this issue.

<sup>39</sup> Dossier: Colombia, technische samenwerking deel V, osla/1985-1990/00272. Document: Letter from the embassy to the Department of Development Cooperation. Subject: the contracts of local project personnel. March 1986. Literal quote from this letter: "Inmiddels werd gehoopt dat betrokkenen de uitkering van sociale rechten zouden laten rusten. Deze hoop vervloog in juli 1985, toen een 6tal medewerkers van het project PAAI een brief aan de teamleider richtten waarin zij vroegen de bewuste betalingen te realiseren. In eerste instantie is op de brief niet gereageerd, maar toen betrokkenen aandrongen was aan een gesprek terzake niet meer te ontkomen. Uiteindelijk wordt een regeling getroffen met de betrokkenen".

three years ago where Holland had to admit mistakes, people in the Chocó will wonder if the Netherlands are serious about this project.<sup>40</sup>

After the conflicts, that had a negative impact on the project and the way the project was perceived by the local population, the second project team restored the project and made sure that it functioned again. This is also previously described in an evaluation report (see 1984). Due to the previous conflict and the current problems, the local population might lose its confidence in the project.

1987

Colombia received Dutch development assistance through the region programs of the Dutch Ministry of Development Cooperation. The objective for these region programs was formulated as follows: 'to provide assistance in balanced social and economic development in the different countries'. Priorities were transformation of agricultural production, protection of the natural environment, development of industries, development of health care.

Within these region programs a distinction was made between bilateral, multilateral and private assistance. Due to the extended relations with Colombia, the bilateral cooperation was maintained. Some Dutch development projects originated from the 1970's and were still carried out in 1987; DIAR was one of these projects. Although the assistance to Colombia was decreased already, in some instances, it appeared to be difficult to carry over development activities to the Colombian state, because some of the Dutch projects focused on areas in which the Colombian government was not actively involved. Also the increase in violence and worsening safety situation in some of the areas posed a threat to these projects. Nevertheless, the Dutch government decided to finalize some of the larger developmental projects and to hand them over to the Colombian government. Some parts of the other projects were continued in short term projects (DGIS; 1990). The Ambassador reported to DGIS that DIAR is still the 'problem child' of development activities in Colombia. The problems were institutional and personal or social. The Ambassador felt disappointed that in the poorest area in Colombia, where there was the highest desire for development; the activities of the developmental project were not going well and were surrounded by rumors<sup>41</sup>. He also argued that the cooperation between sector programs for industrial development and the development of rural areas was hardly developed. One possible explanation was that the bilateral program at that time contained some large programs focusing on development of the rural areas; these required a lot of time investment on Dutch and Colombian side<sup>42</sup>.

A result of an evaluation mission was that development in the Chocó should come from large projects such as an inter-oceanic canal, construction of havens and roads, hydro-electric power stations and mining; and not from agriculture. In this perspective DIAR was not the proper model for development for the Chocó. On the other hand, the evaluators confirmed that DIAR achieved some important successes, especially in the context of community organization and the establishment of a rice mill, a credit fund and village stores. One example of the success of the project is the empowerment of the local communities which prevented these communities against colonization and penetration of the area. During the evaluation

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<sup>40</sup> Dossier: : Colombia, Chocó-DIAR: Regionale Ontwikkeling Deel III, 1986, osla/1985-1990/01796. Document: Confidential message for the Minister of Development Cooperation. Subject: DIAR, continuation of the project. 21-03-1986 The crisis to which this text refers to, is likely to be the internal crisis in the DIAR project which made it necessary to change the project team and continue the project with a new team leader.

<sup>41</sup> Dossier: Colombia algemeen, Deel III, 1987, osla/1985-1990/01883. Document: Stand van zaken OS activiteiten Colombia, brief ambassadeur-min OS. April 1987

<sup>42</sup> Dossier: Colombia algemeen, Deel III, 1987, osla/1985-1990/01883. Document: Memorandum of named 'uw gesprek met de Ambassadeur van Colombia'. Author: Van Geel. February 1987

mission, the project appeared to be much appreciated by the communities in the project area.

Technically, the evaluator questions the future of rice as a leading crop for development in the region. A reason why it might not be the ideal crop for development is the high transport costs of Chocoan rice to Medellín.

With regard to the process approach, the evaluator declares that:

"The flexible plan-as-you-proceed approach adopted by the project has led to the dispersion of energy and management attention with the result that several activities seem to have faltered or are progressing very slowly if after all." (Donovan; 1987).

From the evaluation report it appeared that DIAR had more and more separated itself from its counterpart-organization CODECHOCO, because of the weakness of CODECHOCO. Some suggestions to improve the cooperation and to strengthen the activities of the project were: training CODECHOCO so that they could take over the project; creating new private entities; spreading different DIAR activities over different specialized entities (CENA, ICA, etc) under coordination of CODECHOCO<sup>43</sup>.

In this evaluation report, the process approach is criticized. Development is not brought by agricultural projects, but larger projects such as an inter-oceanic canal will bring development to the region (which gives a hint of the former modernization thinking). This can be an indication of a shift from the process approach as leading approach for development projects to structural adjustment approaches. The quote above indicates that the evaluator seems to blame the process approach for (according to him) the lack of results of the DIAR project.

In a review of the DIAR project, the team leader argued that the project is a phenomenon that should be preserved for the Chocó; in terms of approach, methods and results the project is relevant. However, there was no agreement of how to continue the project. According to the review "only the forefront of the project still existed, its contents are absent". The local personnel were not motivated because of logistic reasons and because of the absence of education. There is a need for group-formation with the end goal of the setting up a production association. This was never realized before due to a lack of staff, and finally the target group formed an association by themselves. However, these associations lack an orientation and understanding of their tasks and goals. According to the team leader, the programas indígenas ironically owed their success by the lack of political interest and financial support of the CODECHOCO.

CODECHOCO did not want to have anything to do with the Dutch people. So far it seemed that they were only against the team leader; later it appeared that they objected to the Dutch presence in general. Their desire was to get rid of the Dutch experts in order 'to bury the process approach, the DIAR staff and the target group'. Fortunately, the people involved in the CODECHOCO were not representative for the region<sup>44</sup>.

This again shows that there are difficulties between the CODECHOCO and the team members of the DIAR project.

Halfway 1987, DGIS wrote in a letter that the second DIAR team leader had to leave the area; continuation of the project would be in danger if he would stay in the area. Unfortunately, on the word of DGIS, his departure will be seen in the Chocó as a 'victory over the Dutch'. A formula should be designed in which he can stay attached to the project as an advisor. In this way, his knowledge of the project will be saved. The atmosphere in DIAR was highly conflictive and personal; the only solution

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<sup>43</sup> Dossier: Colombia, missie Chocó-DIAR: osla/1985-1990/00574. Document: Evaluatie Choco/DIAR 10 april 1987 Ambassadeur Flaes aan BuZa

<sup>44</sup> Dossier: Colombia, landen en regioprogramma, Chocó- diar, Regionale Ontwikkeling Deel V, 1987, osla/1985-1990/01796. Document: Samenvatting stand van zaken DIAR door Van der Zee mei 1987

would be the departure of the main actors in this conflict. This conflictive atmosphere is caused by the leadership and personality of the second team leader<sup>45</sup>.

At a later stage, a letter indicates that the second DIAR team leader will stop working for the project. Although an attempt was made to preserve his knowledge for the project by giving him an advising role, this did not succeed. The Ambassador states that he finds it difficult to pass over this advice to the involved team leader because of the positive results achieved while he was a team leader<sup>46</sup>.

However, not only the team leader left the DIAR project, also the Dutch team member who was responsible for education and the organizations of peasants left the project. He wrote a farewell address to DGIS, in which he discussed the DIAR project. Because this document contains much valuable information about the DIAR project, it will be discussed here quite extensively.

The team member described how the working structure of the project and the procedures for communication and decision making were hampered by great shortages. As a result, the personnel were not motivated, there were low guarantees for continuation of the project, results were not satisfying and there was a huge gap between theory and practice. This was also caused by the instabilities within the counterpart organization CODECHOCO.

Although the formulation of policies and project plans focused more on organization, development and education, the moral and practical support stayed behind.

Ironically, the project management of DGIS believed that the lack of output was caused by a lack of quality of the people who implemented these initiatives and activities; an example of person blame instead of system blame.

Then also the policies as formulated by DGIS were slowing the project down; DGIS did not provide information when necessary, decisions are delayed, etc.

This is the end of the second conflict within the DIAR team. The team members who were involved in the conflict were removed from the project. This makes clear that the involved project member does not agree upon the way in which DGIS perceives the project and the conflict.

The project member did the following recommendations for formation, education and organization within the project:

- More assistance for the 'practicos agriolas' in the field; assisting in preparation and execution of group meetings, etc.
- Strengthening the system as introduced in the project, and regular training of peasants.
- Increasing the attention for participation of women in rice production, in the associations and in education/ providence of credits.

Involving more female 'practicos agricolas'.

A more systematic and profound training of members of the federation board, and improving the communication between the association and the federation.

Increasing and strengthening the moral and political support for the program 'micro-proyectos con mujeres', and for the technical assistance of the project.

Activities for alphabetization should be adjusted to the demand from the organization.

Then, the team member gives a brief overview of the DIAR project. The first Dutch DIAR team was disbanded in 1982, because of the content of the project, and because of personal differences among the Dutch and the Colombian team. After an interim period of almost a year, the project was continued in 1983 with the appointment of the current team leader. The first team of the DIAR project deserves a lot of respect for the way in which they started the project in difficult circumstances:

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<sup>45</sup> Dossier: Colombia, missie Chocó-DIAR: osla/1985-1990/00574. Document: Open bericht van de Ambassade aan BuZa mei 1987

<sup>46</sup> Dossier: Colombia, missie Chocó-DIAR: osla/1985-1990/00574. Document: letter from the Department of Development Cooperation to the Ambassador in Bogotá.

political instability and the strong patron-client system, a young counterpart organization without experience, a population of peasants which experienced a great number of negative experiences and became very negative towards projects carried out by the government, etc.

The following elements characterize the model according to which the first team was working:

Fast identification and execution of project activities which increased the motivation of the peasant population and resulted in a visible and concrete output. Examples are the provision of salt for the preservation of fish, and the introduction of a new rice variety.

The development of integrated farming systems which enhanced the ecological balance and increased the life conditions of the peasants.

These two elements ideally should have been connected through action research where experiences and research in the field should lead to a better understanding of the socio-economic and the physical-technical situation and to an evaluation of the finca-models.

With regard to this project strategy, the DIAR team of the second phase of the project identified the following shortcomings:

- A difference between the factual and the intended target group. The target group consisted of small peasants in the area, but the local elite were in power (with strong connections with regional, political and economic powerful people and groups). The project was only interesting for a small group of peasants, or was only benefitting the wealthier peasants.
- Conceptual and technical shortcomings of the finca-integral model. The model was hardly adopted by the peasants; the model did not include the factual socio-economic situation and the behavior of the peasants. Also, the model was based upon a limited vision on the environment and development.
- Malfunctioning of the action-research concept. There was only limited feedback from practice and little attention for systematic research. The finca model became a normative model that was imposed upon the farmers through a hierarchical structured education system.
- Malfunctioning of the field structure of the project; low efficiency of the personnel, abuse of alcohol, corruption, absence. This caused a negative reputation of the project personnel among the local peasants. This also lowered possibilities for integration. Also there was a lack of focus on project philosophy and strategy. The personnel in the field were the lowest layer in the structure of the project, and obtained orders from the staff situated in Quibdó, without a clear vision upon the aims of the project and their own role and input.
- The lack of a social basis for the peasant organizations. These organizations are imposed on the farmers and lack connections with the life in the villages and the social relations within and between villages. Peasants saw these organizations as elements of the project, and even as owned by the Dutch.
- Finally, there was a strong focus upon the technical aspects; the social and educational aspects which were not directly tied to production were ignored. The integrated approach was hardly recognizable.

Adjustments that should be made in the new stage of the project:

- No longer working with the finca-integral model, but maintaining the ecological notion and the system thought; moving away from the farming system to the farming system as a central concept.
- Strengthening the research within the project.
- Adjustment of the organization of the project; defining roles and responsibilities within the project again.

- Strengthening of the social component of the project: emphasizing education, increasing the independence of the associations, new programs aiming at women and the Indian population, alphabetization.
- A stronger focus on improvement of living conditions; sanitation, health, food, etc.
- Improving the life- and work circumstances of the personnel, as well as the selection procedure.

Then a description follows of the different programs that were set up during the DIAR project:

- Programa de micro-proyectos con grupos mujeres. Women fulfill a central role within the communities of the Chocó; they take care for the necessities of the household, contribute to the production process and increase the social cohesion within the family and the community. The formal public sector was dominated by men, also governmental activities showed a male-bias. Within DIAR this male-bias was also visible. The project management allowed negative speech concerning activities which were carried out by and for women. This attitude should change.
- Programa de alfabetización. There was a high degree of analphabetism, a low quality of education and a high percentage of drop-outs. Alphabetization was necessary, because this improved the information sharing between the project and farmers, and increased the possibility for attracting employees for the DIAR project. During the first phase of the DIAR project, there already was a proposal for education, but this was never implemented.
- Programa con comunidades indígenas. Until 1985, the DIAR Project paid hardly any attention to the indigenous people in the Chocó. They were not included in the target group, because it was assumed that they were unreachable (due to culture and language and were living in areas that are not very accessible). The project should focus on the strengthening of OREWA, an organization that strengthened the indigenous community, the social/cultural identity, etc.
- Programa 'Medio Ambiente'. Besides the DIAR project, the SALUD project was active in the Chocó for a number of years. These projects have developed separately despite attempts by DGIS to bring these projects together. One of the reasons behind this separation is the negative perception of the DIAR project management with regard to the social-educational approach and quality of the interventions of SALUD. This has changed because the consciousness of the importance of social-educational aspects grew within the DIAR project.

The reason for the ending of the second phase of DIAR was a conflict among project members. The team leader argues that the conflict is caused by different ideas concerning the project management and style of management, strengthened by differences of personal style, norms of behavior and communicative skills. The following table shows the differences between the personal styles of the author of the address (named 'project member') and the project leader, as described by this project member himself.

Aspect	Project member	Project leader
Basic thought	Reciprocal respect and understanding, similar intentions in targets, complementing individual competences, norms	Trusts only his own position of power (external knowledge, money and influence), prescription of rules of behavior.



	developed by the group itself.	
Style of management	Participation, development of functional inter-dependence and teamwork are the central elements.	Autocratic: expanding his own power and building a compliant team.
Communication patterns that are the result of the style of management	Vertical and horizontal communication, information is one of the responsibilities of the project, exchanging information. Rewarding positive behavior.	Vertical communication; information is a result of the project, gathering and storage of information. Punishment of negative behavior.
Resulting professional attitude	Cooperative: creatively searching for solutions, creation of a unity among the team members which is related to communal goals.	Conflictive and fake-cooperative, internal separations because of different 'loyalties' and the search for individual ways to gain a higher position or more influence.

Table 2.1: causes of the conflict that ended the second phase of DIAR

According to the team member, usually the Dutch team leader formulated goals and plans for the project, the counterpart organization and the DIAR team are not systematically involved. There was no regular and planned gathering of the project team. Gatherings were suspiciously seen as ways to gain power or form a clan. Criticism and other opinions than the opinion of the team leader were seen as undermining the authority and ways to harm the project leader. The Colombian project leader had a marginal position. When problems appeared, the team was dependent on the Dutch project leader, while these should formally be the responsibility of the Colombian project leader. The Colombian project director should be more careful with the labor contracts and working conditions. The differences in types of contracts and conditions produce animosities.

The different DGIS documents discuss this conflict only briefly, but the author of this fare-well address was involved in the conflict and gave his interpretation of the conflict in this document. Unfortunately, as indicated in the introduction of this thesis, none of the team leaders of the DIAR project were interviewed. The description of the conflict is one-sided, but gives an insight into the different persons and views on development in the DIAR project.

Overall, the process approach seemed not to be successfully applied in the project. Although participation is an important element of the process approach, this document describes the inequality between the Dutch and the Colombian project directors. The document also describes inequalities between staff working in the project area and staff working in Quibdó, but it is not sure whether this also is a dividance between Dutch and Colombian team members.

According to this team member, important basic principles of the development approach of the DIAR project would be in the first place to identify the communities and small farmers among the indigenous population as the target group. In the second place, mobilization, organization and independence of the target groups should be the basic aim of development. In the third place, direct and active participation of the target groups is a crucial factor for stimulating durable development. Last, development is a multi-dimensional 'building' process: economic

and technological development does not occur separately from social, cultural, economical, political and institutional development.

With regard to the social and cultural identity of the local populations, a collective self-reliance is relevant. The local populations' knowledge, labor and capital should be mobilized. External sources should only be an addition to their own resources; charities increase the dependence and lower their self-esteem. Also democracy and cooperation are pertinent. The farmers should support each other through their organization; their loyalty transcends relationships among family members and political groups. Finally, a social and cultural awareness is crucial. The local population should be aware of their history and cultural background. (De Zeeuw, 1987)

The year 1988 ended with an earthquake in Colombia. The Dutch government provided humanitarian aid in the form of food supplies, mattresses, etc<sup>47</sup>.

1988

The DIAR project would finally be carried over to the Colombian government; the DIAR team predicted a period of struggles. A proposal concerning the ending of the Dutch involvement of the project refers to the fact that the Dutch should be modest while ending their involvement, because of their failures in the past in the planning and execution of this project. This project which is known for its regional process approach, acquired the character of Dutch colonization, according to the report<sup>48</sup>.

This time marks also the end of the process approach; the arguments used to end the DIAR project are the same as those that were used to criticize the process approach. It was said that the process approach led to for example colonization. The report that was described above was quite negative about the DIAR project; it focused mainly on the difficulties of the project, and did not focus on successes.

The team leader states that the project will be handed over to the competent Colombian authorities and will continue as 'Division de Desarrollo Rural Integral' under the sub-direction of the CODECHOCO. According to the team leader, the following elements are lacking from the project proposal:

- Natural resources surveys;
- Identification of socio-cultural aspects; identification of the different groups that colonized the Chocó during the past, as well as their methods of colonization. This should be identified through anthropological surveys of select groups (social organization, family life, worldview, absorption capacity for development), and by mapping of land property.
- Applied research in terms of farming systems, alternative crops, mapping of current land use, etc. (Van der Zee; 1984)

Although a lack of farming systems research is suggested in this report, this kind of research has been carried out during the project. As indicated before, the report of this study was not accepted by the team leader at that time. This report suggests that some choices made in the project were harmful to the existing farming systems. This study will be discussed in the following chapter.

In the planning for the second half year of 1988, it is written that although DIAR had the promise of being an integrated project, it has not fulfilled this promise so far. There are four independent programs in the Chocó region: natural resources, Indigenous people, production processing and commercialization of agricultural crops, health care (Kettenis; 1988).

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<sup>47</sup> Dossier: Colombia algemeen, Deel III, 1987, osla/1985-1990/01883. Document: letter concerning humanitarian aid in Colombia, Oktober 1987

<sup>48</sup> Dossier: Colombia, landen en regioprogramma, Chocó- DAIR, Deel II, osla/1985-1990/00867. Document: Voorstel overdrachtsprogramma DIAR/Choco december 1988, ambassade-BuZa

1989

The best way to end the DIAR project seemed to be to put the project under contract of the company 'Van der Zee en Plaisier B.V.'. This was a company owned by the second team leader of DIAR (DGIS; 1986).

In this year an appraisal of the DIAR project was published. In this appraisal the local population's independence from the regional rice traders again is seen as one of the results of the DIAR project. Then, the continuation of the DIAR project has been endangered because of its isolated position after the conflict between Dutch project staff and its counterpart organization CODECHOCO. The following project activities are distinguished: improvement of the agricultural production and diversification, improvement of small scale agro-industry and the local trade in agricultural products, consolidation and improvement of community organizations, conducting agricultural research aimed at production, stimulation commercial activities among strategic groups of the local community (women, youth, etc.) (DGIS; 1989).

1990

Only half a year of Dutch interference with the DIAR project remains. The execution of the project in the past year has slowed down, on the one hand because of temporal problems such as the appointment of a new project coordinator, on the other hand because of the weak administrative and institutional structure within the Chocó which hampers the execution of programmed activities.

When the project was carried over from the Dutch government to the Colombian government, the DIAR project was named 'Programa Campesino Chocoano'.

## To conclude

This chapter presented an overview of the information from the dossiers concerning the DIAR project of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The overview is not complete, but is representative for the dossiers in the sense that it gives an insight into the way in which the project was discussed. It symbolizes the way in which communication concerning the project within DGIS, or between DGIS and the project team found place. For example, the conflicts that took place during the project were discussed in a quite technical manner in the different DGIS documents. These documents hardly gave information about the nature of the conflict, but rather stated that there was a conflict going on.

The process approach was described throughout this chapter; the approach led to a lot of discussion. Especially the open ended character of the approach made the project difficult to understand for DGIS bureaucrats. More information about the attempt to replace modernization theories with the process approach, and the way in which the process approach was applied in the DIAR project will be presented in the following chapter.

Conflict is an important subject when discussing the DIAR project; the project was surrounded by different conflicts. The previous paragraph already gave a hint of conflicts between the team members and DGIS. Also there were conflicts between DIAR and its counterpart organization the CODECHOCO. This conflict was rooted in the fact that the CODECHOCO was rather inexperienced, unstable and had a lack of funds. Another type of conflict emerged within the DIAR team; twice a team left the project area due to internal conflicts. All these conflicts were introduced in this chapter; the following chapter will discuss these more extensively.

Another important issue is the local political situation in the Chocó. In the eighties this situation was

unstable. The CODECHOCO was closely connected to local politics; the staff of this counterpart organization changed whenever political changes occurred. This chapter described how local politicians tried to use the DIAR project to gain votes in the area. As will appear in the following chapter, the DIAR team also needed these local politics to increase its influence in the area.

At the end of the project, criticism seemed to an instrument to create a legitimate reason to end both the DIAR project and the process approach. DGIS documents are critical about the project and seem to focus more extensively on the failures of the project than its successes. The process approach is finally criticized for stimulating Dutch colonization.

As this chapter discussed a view on the DIAR project as derived from DGIS dossiers, the following chapter will focus on the experiences of people that were in some way involved in the project. This might provide another perspective on some of the issues that were discussed in this chapter.

### 3. Perceptions of the DIAR team members

This chapter will describe the DIAR project from the point of view of the former team members, and also of other people who were involved in the DIAR project as 'outsiders'. Their literal quotes are marked by the punctuation marks (""). Some quotes are anonymous in order to respect the secrecy of the respondents. The topics that will be discussed in this chapter are the Chocó region, the Dutch political background of the project, the team members of the DIAR project, the two different phases of the project, the way in which the project was ended, the process approach and the estimated impact of the DIAR project.

#### 3.1 The Chocó and its inhabitants

As indicated in the first chapter, the Chocó is the poorest region in Colombia. According to one of the respondents; "Colombia has developed into a middle-income country; it is not a poor country anymore. But that doesn't mean that the Chocó is not a poor region anymore. Especially in Colombia the discrepancy between poverty and richness is enormous. You could say that the country is doing well while the people are not doing well at all. There is no distribution; only a few are consuming all the richness. I would compare the Chocó to the poorest countries of the African continent." Prior to the DIAR project, the Colombian government had hardly any attention for this poor region: "the development budget of the national government was practically absent, and there was hardly any funding for the CODECHOCO (the regional development agency). So, the national government was happy that a foreign country was willing to work in this region. Colombia was never interested in what was going on in the Chocó; only in the natural resources such as wood of great quality and gold." A former team member adds: "The DIAR project attracted the attention of the government. It was always seen as an area that could be used as a source for natural resources as much as desired. Later the government started to see that it was a region where people lived who were really willing to work for their development."

All respondents agreed that the Chocó was, and still is, a difficult society; "The people were poor and were living from one day to another. In general they didn't trust each other; trust was based on family relations." Another team member portrays the Afro-Colombians the following way: "They were a completely amorphous group. They were slaves who had freed themselves by running away from their former owner. They started to live in so called 'palenques', which are small villages in the middle of nowhere, often along the lower course of the rivers. After slavery had been abolished, others also settled down in these palenques. In the process they have driven the indigenous population to the higher parts of the river. Most of the Afro-Colombian people originally came from Ghana, but a lot of them had no idea of the descent of their ancestors. They had hardly any communal characteristics and traditions. There were no traditional stories or music. I recognized more Spanish than African characteristics."

Another respondent provided an example of the 'Spanish background' of the population of the Chocó; "I was invited to a party of the Governor. There was an Afro-Colombian dance group performing traditional dances. When I grew up, I learned old European dances at a conservative dancing-school. On this party in the Chocó, I saw an old dance from the eighteen hundreds being performed by this traditional dancing-group. Without any problem I could join them and dance with them. They had learned these dances at the plantations in times of slavery. Now they had incorporated it into their 'tradition'."

#### Social organization

The DIAR project worked more intensively with the Afro-Colombian population than with the Indigenous population, although there were some projects with the indigenous population. It was difficult to work with the indigenous people because they were living deep in the jungle, and also because they only spoke their indigenous language. One respondent who was working at the Dutch embassy at the time of the DIAR project, told about an abusive situation in which some indigenous people died. He contacted the Colombian human rights

committee to report this, but they told him that in the case of indigenous people the ecological commission was responsible for the situation. The Indigenous people were more focused on subsistence farming than the Afro-Colombian population. According to a former team member: "Whenever they needed some money, they would come down the river and sell their goods. They sold their goods for very low prices, because they only asked for the money they needed." Their social organization was much more developed and based on traditional organization compared to the Afro-Colombian population. The indigenous people were organized in so called 'cabildo's, which is a basic organization. They were democratically organized and had their own police. Women had serious positions in the social organization, and elderly people were the advisors of the community. This was very different from the Afro-Colombians; "it was quite a loose community; there also was no leader who stood up for the people or who took care of their well-being. These communities were family-based." Their way of organizing the community was only visible at funerals and wedding; "It is really unbelievable, the people live so scattered along the river, but if someone dies the entire family gathers and they meet in the village within one day. The families were very well organized; for these occasions they brought together thousands of euro's. If we had understood how they organized themselves in these occasions we could have used that for the cooperatives that we were setting up." One former team member remembered as one of her first impressions of the Chocó; "When I first arrived, it was said that the local population was not willing to work, they were only interested in having parties. And this appeared to be true; the most important thing in this community was having good parties. The money people had, was meant for sustaining social relations by throwing parties. This was a kind of insurance; if you would have problems you would have relations to help you. Money was not an aim in itself, it were the relationships with the people who you could trust that were most important."

#### Labour and households of the Afro-Colombian people

The Afro-Colombian people were small farmers, mainly subsistence farmers. The main cash-crop was plantain, a particular banana species. Plantain was growing the whole year and could be harvested at any moment. Thus, when people needed money, they would harvest some plantain and go to Quibdó to sell it. The plantain was also the main nutrition source of the local population; they would eat it the year round. They also grew some other periodic crops such as rice (dry and wet) and maize. They were also growing some vegetables on 'tables' to prevent the crops from drowning in the rain. Figure 1 was drawn by one respondent to explain the area and the appropriate places to grow crops. At the left is the river, the people live on the river walls. Close to their houses they grew some rice, plantain and other crops. The fertile land and less fertile land, where the forest grows, are separated by a ditch which might have been a valley in earlier times. All farmers in the Chocó live along the river, because that is the most fertile area.

One respondent told how "these farmers live from various productive activities; if there is fish, they go fishing, otherwise they live from agriculture, collecting food from the forest, searching for gold, wood logging, and some small domestic animals. The wood they were cutting was placed along the river and was sold to traders who would transport the trees over the Atrato river to Cartagena. In the dry periods they would cut trees and leave them in the forest, when the period of floods began, they could float this wood to the village and sell it from there. Wood logging posed a threat to the environment; "Large parts of the local ecosystem were destroyed, and it was a very rich ecological area, I believe it even was the second area of the world. Anyway, it was a very precious area; this kind of activities had severe consequences for the preservation of the area."

"When searching for gold, the working conditions were horrible. They would go by boat, and attached to the boat was a air-pipe, a tube and a water pump was quite a complicated exercise for which one person would have to go under water with the air-pipe in his mouth, while others were pumping water, with the pressure that developed, a hole was blown under water in the side of the riverbank. They would collect the sand and search for gold in it. Another method involved the digging of tunnels. Just at random places, they had no idea of where they would find gold. These tunnels would be filled with water instantly (because it is

raining all the time), but they would enter the tunnels to search for gold. This was very dangerous because these tunnels could collapse at any time."

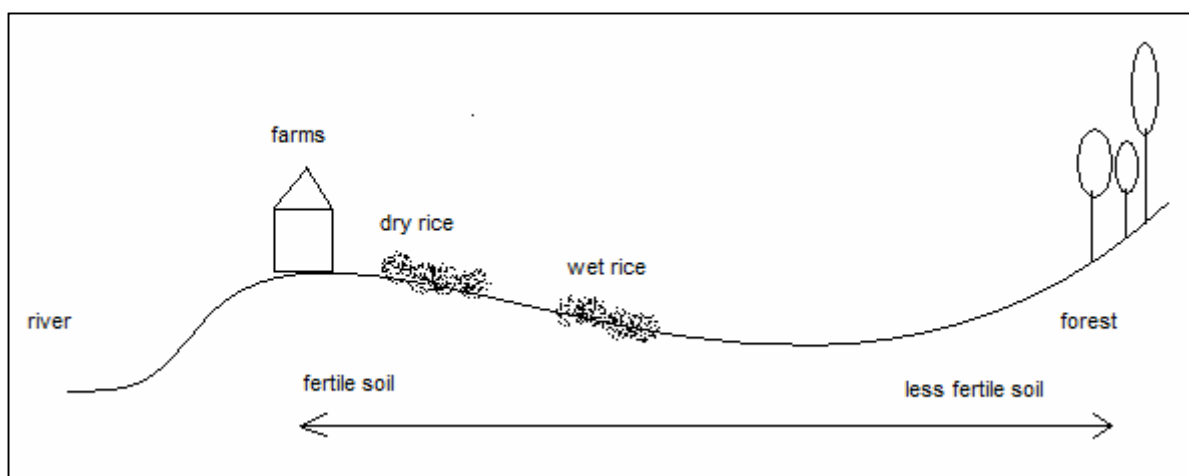


Figure 3.1: Schematic representation of agricultural setup in the Chocó

The families in the Chocó are headed by women; "It seems as if men make the decisions, but in fact the women are doing that. The men travel a lot; I would call them 'ambulatory husbands'. It was a polygamous society; most of the men had multiple women, and the women had children from various husbands. The women take care of their families, and receive their husbands every now and then, but when they fed up with their men, they kick them out, saying 'leave, you are not doing anything and you are not bringing in any money. Go to 'mi contraria', one of your other wives.' These wives knew each other; they were friends and were supporting each other, also because they could not deny the fact that their children were all brothers and sisters. Maybe they were jealous at each other every now and then, but they had no choice but to accept this situation. Some of the women had multiple relationships, but for them it was not as acceptable as it was for the men. They had to hide this, because it would be unbearable for the man with whom they had a 'formal' relationship if people would say that she was also seeing other men." In a small society as the Chocó, rumours spread fast as people gossip a lot about each other.

Thus, men had their own money, and women managed the income of the household. The men were working at different places in different times of the year, sometimes they would also work to help the women, and sometimes they would give some of their money to their families. The women worked on their land plots for self-subsistence, but they also earned some small money with it. In the end the women were responsible for their family; they had to feed their children and enable them to go to school. Children were seen as the "largest treasure one could have, but also as a kind of insurance for when you were getting old".

Different circumstances such as the climate, the local culture and the local political situation made it difficult for the DIAR team members to carry out the DIAR project. All respondents confirmed the difficulty of working in the area; "As a project member you need a strong personality when working in the Chocó. Other regions are more protected; the Chocó is heavy in many ways."

One of the respondents who is Colombian and worked for the Salud project in the Chocó told; "I was the first woman to work in this difficult area. One professor said 'Are you going to work in that area? You are going to work with the devil, are you crazy?' My friends warned me for getting sick. They said that the people in the Chocó did not want to work and believed in the devil, and had frightening rituals. However, I was not afraid; I wanted to learn from working in a difficult area. When I was eventually working there I realized that it was easier than I had expected. I was surprised by the beautiful nature, it was amazing." Another DIAR team member argued: "The Chocó is a place that can drive people mad. And the DIAR project was the largest project in the region, so everybody was circling around it."

### 3.1.1 The Congregation of the Claretians

Before the DIAR project was implemented in the region, the Congregation of the Claretians were already active in the Chocó; "the Claretians focused on values and social organization within the village communities. They did not only explain Christianity as something between you and God, but also between you and your fellow-man. So, they made an attempt to increase social consciousness." Another former team member argues that "the Claretians were partisans of the freedom-theology. At a certain moment, they were accused for co-operating with the guerilla. Ideologically the Claretians might have agreed with the guerilla, but they had nothing to do with the organization of the guerilla."

Although the Claretians were working already in the region before the DIAR project started, co-operation between the two groups was not common, at least not in the beginning. According to a former team member "at first the DIAR project did not see the importance of the Claretians for the region. Although they already had started their program before the DIAR project came, the Dutch did not consider making co-operation arrangements at first. I think that the Claretians did approach the project but I think that the team leader did not really respond to this. Maybe the DGIS diplomats were afraid of giving a religious connotation to their project. Maybe they even saw the Claretians as a rival group, and they wanted this mission to be owned by DGIS alone. At that time, Dutch governmental development projects did not co-operate with other organizations such as NGO's."

Another former DIAR member adds: "In the beginning there was no good relationship between the DIAR project and the Claretians. But we also started to focus more on social activities, and thus we could not only focus on functional organizations, but we also had to look at social initiatives. Thus we started our co-operation with the Claretians within the alphabetization project. They already had been working on alphabetization, and we saw that that would also be an important component of our project."

Another former team member describes some criticism that the Claretians had towards the DIAR project; "At a certain moment we started to co-operate with the Claretians. They saw that the DIAR project was running straight through their projects. They were already working on the organization of village communities. This laid a foundation for the associations which were later started by the DIAR project. The Claretians were working at a more abstract level, the organization of the villages and communities at a welfare level. But the DIAR project was growing so fast, and interrupted their work with the large amount of project money. In the project plan of the DIAR project, cooperation with the Claretians was not described. But everything that would increase the development of the local people was seen a valuable and would be included in the project. The Claretians saw how the availability of money disrupted the society. At the beginning of the cooperatives, every now and then someone stole the communal money. That was difficult for the community; they had invested their money and trust and then at once it is gone. These things were not beneficial to the coherence within the community, and therefore the Claretians criticized the DIAR project. On the other hand, they saw that the project functioned as a catalyst in the region."



As previously described, the Claretians were accused for co-operation with the guerilla at the time when the guerilla started to enter the region (this was somewhere half-way the eighties); "the Claretians were stuck between the local politics and the guerrilla. We also started to recognize that."

### 3.1.2 La politiquería

The local political situation had a strong impact on the entire region and social cohesion, and it posed a challenge to the DIAR project, as well as to the Claretians as previously suggested. Before discussing this, I will render a description by a project member of how elections were organized in Colombia in the eighties; "it was a very obscure situation. Voting cubicles were placed besides the streets in Bogotá, and people had to search for the place where they had to vote. They had to search along these streets that were kilometres long. All cubicles were open; there was no possibility to vote privately. Instead of one voting-paper, there were different papers per candidate. When you entered the room, you'd get overwhelmed by a lot of people who were trying to give you the paper of their favourite candidate. You were being watched by the people to whom you promised to vote, because that was determined previously. You had no other option than to obey to these appointments; otherwise your family members were very likely to lose their jobs. After you had voted your finger would be coloured by black ink, which meant that the other day at work it was visible who had or had not voted. Refusing to vote would also mean trouble. Fortunately this has changed nowadays, and people can vote privately now."

One characteristic of the local political situation concerned the system of patronage relationships in the region. The manipulative political situation was called 'la politiquería' locally. This was soon recognized by the DIAR project as a major problem that needed change. A former team member who was involved in the first phase of the DIAR project stated; "soon we began to realize that if we were to achieve something in the region, we needed to counter the monopolistic power of this one employer, which was the state as the factory was a minor employer compared to the state. We came up with a commercial activity, a co-operative activity, and thus we believed that organizing the local peasants would be a good idea. At that time, we did not yet think about civil society activities, or about NGO's. We did not consider a society as an arena in which different powers would counter each other, we just thought about another party that could oppose the power of the state."

But on the other hand, the DIAR project needed the local politics to 'get the work done'; "that was the strength of the project, but I think that in the end it was one of the major problems of the project. The project leader had no choice than to get involved in local politics." As another team member puts it: "when you are involved in such means, you really have to know how to handle it without becoming corrupt yourselves". Local politics could not be ignored; "If you live there, you will see that there is no way to avoid it. Everything in the Chocó is politicized." The DIAR team was aware of the risks and the opportunities of involvement in local politics; they saw politics not merely as an obstacle for development, but as something that had to be negotiated.

This view is well represented by the former Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Pronk argues that every development project is political; "you are always entangled in between local power relations. It is impossible to remain completely impartial, but you should make sure that your choice is in favour of your target group, the people that need your support. And then you end up being involved in politics. Development is conflict, and that is what makes it very complicated. You can only speak of development when it involves an improvement of more and more people. That means that the status quo also affects the status quo of power relations, because there are always some people in the region who have an interest in the continuation of the current relations, while others require a changing situation. Even when you try to avoid it, you are always involved in causes, structures and processes of development. Sometimes it seems as if you are not involved, but then you have to be careful, because you might just not see it."

With this description of the local political situation, the story is not complete. At a later stage of this chapter will be described how the team leader of the DIAR project got personally involved in politics and also how the DIAR project is said to have had an influence on the fact that the local people became more independent of local political leaders.

### 3.1.3 The CODECHOCO

The CODECHOCO was the counterpart organization of the DIAR project. The CODECHOCO was the regional governmental development organization; the organization was mainly concerned with economic activities. CODECHOCO was also the forest administration in the region, and apart from a liquor factory it was the only employer in the Chocó. Thus, this organization had a powerful economic and political position in the region; "The main activity of the CODECHOCO was the procurement of wood logging licences. We came with the message that the corruption should be expelled, and the licences should become forest management contracts. A lot of money was paid for these licences." Another former team member who was involved in the first phase of the project states; "The CODECHOCO was as corrupt as an organization can be. Every 3 to 4 months a new director was appointed to the organization. In a hotel in Quibdó, I once saw a senator together with the governor of the Chocó. They had a list of personnel of the CODECHOCO and the government, and they were going through it to see whether the employees were members of the right political party. If they were not, they would lose their job. The director of this liquor factory was very wealthy; he also used the factory to pay the senators, which was corruption to extremes. Besides this factory, the government was one of the main employers which attributed to the power of the senator; he could decide who would get an income and who not."

The co-operation with CODECHOCO was difficult for different reasons; one was the involvement of the CODECHOCO in local politics. Local peasants who were involved in the project signed their contracts with the Dutch director of the DIAR project as well as with the Colombian director of CODECHOCO. A team member, who was involved in the second phase of DIAR, explained how this challenged the DIAR project: "In principle, everybody is bribable, even the people in your team who are functioning very well. An example is when we had contracted some peasants who were introduced to us by the CODECHOCO. We found out that they were all told that they could lose their job if they did not provide enough votes for the upcoming elections. The DIAR team leader provided legal counselling for these peasants, because he realized that this could run out of hand. This was a serious threat to the project."

One of the team members (of the second phase) describes how he experienced difficulties with the CODECHOCO when he had hired a social worker. For the selection of a capable social worker an application procedure was set up which included an exam. The weekend in which the candidates would make the exam, this team member was away, and his counterpart and the director of the CODECHOCO would take care of it. When he came back, they had hired someone who was not selected as a candidate for the function. He describes this as typical for the region; "patronage relationships, friendships and membership of local political parties was more important than formal procedures." The appointment of an employee had to be confirmed by the Dutch project leader, and in this case he just confirmed the appointment of this social worker.

Another reason for the difficult relationship was that the DIAR project very rich compared to CODECHOCO according to one of the former team members; "The DIAR project gave money to the CODECHOCO by hiring people for the project. The presence of the DIAR project was an advantage for the CODECHOCO. We were also housed in the same building. But at a certain moment you have to draw the line, CODECHOCO kept complaining that they had a lack of resources."

## 3.2 Dutch development policies and the DIAR project

Before describing the DIAR project, first this paragraph describes the Dutch policy context at the time of the DIAR project and the way these affected the project; particular Dutch policies are discussed as well as the process approach, and the role of the Dutch embassy in Colombia.

### 3.2.1 DGIS and the process approach

In the period before the DIAR project, at the end of the seventies, Mr. Pronk was the Dutch Minister of Development Cooperation. At that time there were still very large development projects which were aiming mainly at the technical assistance in which there was hardly any attention for social processes in development. With his policies, Minister Pronk was rethinking ways to develop planning and control systems which would enable participation and local knowledge of the subjects of development. Mr. Pronk was succeeded by Mr. De Koning. Mr. De Koning designed a two-track initiative, which meant that besides technical assistance, some programmatic assistance should be provided, for example by providing funds for development of technical infrastructure. About these policy changes and terms such as 'process approach', one of the former DIAR team member said; "these were all fashionable words, some of which were derived from findings of the Small Farmers Group from Wageningen. Their work was used for the development of the new strategy of the programmatic development approach. The DIAR and PAAI projects were seen as tests for implementation and carrying out of this approach."

The former Minister Pronk describes his policy perspectives as follows; "When I became minister, I tried to change development policies, in order to focus more on development holistically instead of focusing mainly on economic development. (...) One of the main aims was to make sure that development aid would aim at the basic human needs. But the formulation of these basic needs is not something that we could do for the people, but we needed to do it with and through these people. In these years, development was seen as development of, for and by the people. That is how a process- and participation approach came into existence. From there, some pilot programs were started which were expected to last for a longer period and would be aimed at a specific region. During the process of developing the program, an attempt would be made to influence the development. This means that the aims were not formulated beforehand, but in accordance to the aims and desires of the local people. (...) One of my successors, Herfkens, abolished this again, partly because of another development perspective, partly determined by politics, but another reason is also the urge to justify the development expenditures, which made it important to make projects controllable." (...) Mr. Pronk argues that development should not be restricted to a single approach, it is important to choose for an approach which fits the local situation.

When asking why this approach was ended to a respondent who was working at the Dutch embassy at the time of the DIAR project, the answer was: "Theories about the ways in which we should deal with development problems change with the times, advancing insights. In my opinion none of the different approaches is perfect, mainly and mostly because it is not possible to develop one single approach for all these different counterpart-countries. I do not regret these changes; it keeps our minds and those of our partners keen. Sometimes this happens at the cost of some efforts and money, but a lot is realized in the sense of insights, mutual understanding and professionalism in the partner countries."

The previous paragraph gave an indication of Dutch policies at the time of the DIAR project and with regard to different development perspectives. The DIAR project was implemented according to the process approach, which was developed at the Small Farmers Group, and was later translated for application to DGIS projects. As indicated previously, the Small Farmers Group was a project of the International Agricultural Center in Wageningen. The IAC was related to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs as an advising body on agricultural matters. Within the IAC and the University of Wageningen, the current policies of development cooperation were discussed and a new thoughts came up which recognized the need for participation of the target group in development interventions. Therefore, the Dutch Ministry for Development Cooperation and the IAC founded the Small Farmers Group in order to investigate the possibilities for increasing local participation and connecting to the needs of Small Farmers in developing countries. Within the Small Farmers Group, the process approach was identified as an adequate approach for Dutch development projects. The Dutch Directorate General for International Cooperation 'translated' the approach to make it

suitable for application in Dutch development projects. Some of the former team members of the DIAR project were involved in the Small Farmers Group, and thus it is interesting that the explanations of the process approach by the former Minister Pronk and by team members of the DIAR project differ.

Mr. Pronk interprets the process approach in the following way: "When you choose for a basic human needs approach in a region, then an approach for the region as a whole is needed. It is important that the people can decide by themselves what they need and find important. If people decide by themselves, then it becomes a joint approach, a planning for the region as a whole. That means that it is not just a project anymore, or a bundle of projects, but it is a coherent approach. You could call that a program, and a program is flexible, activities are adjusted every now and then, it might even have an open ending which means that you have no pre-assumptions about the final results of the program. That is how we used the word, but I don't believe it is an internationally used policy term. It is a logical term and a specific approach for moving away from macro top-down projects."

A respondent, who was involved in the CONIF project in Colombia, describes it as following: "At the end of the seventies, DGIS was overwhelmed by all kinds of new ideas. Every 2/3 years there were new approaches and at the end of the seventies, that was the process approach. This approach was developed by Niels Röling and Henk de Zeeuw. They wrote a publication concerning poverty alleviation in which they focused particularly on small farmers. They described how a project should be carried out. Before that projects were thought out too precisely. The process approach was formulated in order to counter the way in which projects were executed previously. With the process approach, the project plan could be described in one single page in which an agreement with the counterpart should be formulated. From there on the project should start working with small farmers, while the project is constantly developing itself. The projects were intended to be participatory, which meant that project plans were formulated together with the local peasants. This approach sounds very interesting, and the intentions are good, but of course these kinds of projects get completely out of hand. There are no boundaries; when the development process starts, you will see that the needs are very high. Schools, hospitals, infrastructure, waterworks, there often is nothing. The problem is, when you start working with such a method, where does it end?"

The difference between the original intentions of the process approach and the way in which it was conceived by DGIS, is described by the following DIAR team member who was engaged in the second stage of the project: "With DGIS, the process approach was ended soon because every development program was said to be carried out according to the process approach. Some of the projects originally had completely different intentions beforehand. The DIAR project is an example, the project was traditionally formulated as a technical development project, only later it was said that it should be carried out according to the process approach. In fact, hardly any project was from the beginning formulated according to the process approach, most often that happened only half-way the project. It did not happen often in the process manner where the project started with a search for appropriate partners to formulate and develop the project with. That is why the process approach lost its original signification; many started to criticize these projects. The approach was soon forgotten, although a substantial part of the ideology remained, such as the flexibility, the focus on long-term sustainable results, strategic thinking instead of starting a project from a blue-print. Also thinking of development in terms of processes, assigning an important role to the partners, attention for capacity-building, these are all terms that were added to development thinking. I have the opinion that the rigid way in which the process approach was translated for the Dutch governmental development projects, was very harmful for the approach"

### 3.2.2 The Dutch embassy, the IAC and the DIAR project

The International Agricultural Center in Wageningen played an important role in the formal contact between the DIAR project and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Formally the project leader had to report to DGIS, but in fact the rapport was sent to the IAC. One of the former team members declares: "Only the IAC read our reports. DGIS only looked at the figures, and at the judgment of the IAC, and then they sent us a formal reply. The relationship

with the IAC was most important to us. If we needed to achieve something, then we needed to convince the IAC. When we had conflicts or other problems in the team, someone of the IAC visited us to talk about it." As indicated previously, the IAC was responsible for advising the Dutch Ministry of Development Cooperation on agricultural matters. Therefore, also evaluation missions were carried out by the IAC, and the findings were reported to the Ministry. It is not sure how tasks were divided formally between the Ministry of Development Cooperation and the IAC, but it is clear that the IAC had an important role in evaluating and deciding over development projects.

The Dutch embassy in Bogota had a task in supervising the execution of project activities. In those times, the embassy was an intermediate between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS) and the DIAR project. Formally, the team leader had to report to the Ministry, but there was contact between the project and the embassy on a regular basis. A former employee at the Dutch embassy in Bogota argues that for the embassy it was sometimes difficult to combine the rules of DGIS with the reality or feasibility of, or aims of the project. Two respondents, one a former DIAR project member, and a member of another Dutch development project in Colombia were very critical about the embassy.

The former DIAR team member asserted that the embassy sometimes reproached the DIAR team for not coming to Bogota frequently enough, according to the embassy the DIAR project members were hiding in the Chocó region. He argues: "we were not really fond of the bustle at the embassy. Embassies find themselves very important, but in fact they are so much detached from reality. Some people of the embassy really did not understand what we were talking about. Some of them just came by every now and then, they took some notes, but when we read the report, it appeared that they had completely missed the point. One of the problems of embassies is that they are more sensitive to fashion. They have no own criteria and thus they do whatever DGIS tells them. Actually, the IAC was more important to us, the role of the embassy was more accompaniment of the project, they were hardly involved in the project. The role of the embassy has changed; nowadays the embassy is more involved in for example development activities."

Another respondent who was involved in another Dutch development project in Colombia describes how he felt neglected by the embassy: "I had problems with corruption in Uruba. I had just discovered that the director of CORPURUBA accepted incentives from building contractors. At first I didn't see it, but after a while I started to realize what was going on. When an evaluation mission visited our project, I told them what I knew, but I could not prove them that this happened. A while later the ambassador and I went to a meeting with Colombian authorities in which we would put this on the table. However, in the meeting I was ignored, they did not even give me a chance to speak, at this crucial moment they neglected me. No one has ever said that I was right, but a year later the director of CORPURUBA was locked up in jail. "After this had happened, this respondent decided to leave the project. He argues that the ambassador did not really want to listen to his stories about corruption, because that would lead to trouble; "At the embassy they always attempted to avoid becoming involved in political problems. However, when you start with participation, political problems are inherent to a development project. In this case the embassy did not support us as project members, but the embassy was concerned with avoiding political problems. "

Of course these are personal experiences of two people who were involved in Dutch development in the eighties. These stories are an example of the banalisation of the desires for development of the project members. On the other hand, these issues of corruption of local governments probably posed serious difficulties for the ambassador. These problems at a lower governmental level could have transcended the local level and could have caused political problems between both countries. However, when things had been communicated differently the team member might have felt differently about this situation.

### 3.2.4 Other Dutch funded development projects in the region

During the DIAR project, there were also some other Dutch development projects in the region. The first project to be described is the SALUD project which focused on primary health

care. The other project is the CONIF project; this project focused on forestry research and was outsourced by the Dutch government.

#### SALUD

The Salud project was part of the Colombian Ministry of Health. The DIAR and the Salud project were supposed to work together. However, according to a former team member of the DIAR project: "the team leaders of both phases of the DIAR project saw the health project as something that should be done, but it was not the main priority. Production was the most important aim according to both team leaders." A former team member of the Salud project declared that an official co-operation between the projects was lacking; "sometimes we would work together, but then only because of the relations between the teams of both projects, there was no official co-operation between the projects."

This is an interesting fact, because the process approach perceives development as a holistic process and from this description emerges the impression that the DIAR project focused mainly on the economic and technical component of the development process. There might have been some more cooperation between both projects during the second phase of the DIAR project, as the DIAR project then started with activities concerning illiteracy and also had more activities focusing on the indigenous population. According to a former team member who was involved in the second phase, "there was co-operation between both projects. Every now and then we discussed what needed to be done. We mainly worked together in projects with the indigenous population. The Salud project worked more intensively with the indigenous population, and thus they often took the lead in this co-operation."

#### CONIF

CONIF was a forestry project which worked together with the DIAR project, because "in an area as the Chocó, agriculture and forestry go hand in hand." CONIF is an abbreviation for Corporación Nacional para Investigación Forestal. The project was carried out in the regions Uraba, Chocó and Guaviare region in the Amazon. The CONIF project was one of the first projects to be sourced out by the Dutch government, its budget was provided by the Dutch Ministry of Development Co-operation and private companies. The CONIF project had three test plots for forestry, forest conservation, planting forests and agro-forestry. The CONIF project conducted agro-forestry research for the DIAR project. Small experimental gardens were laid out in the Chocó with the intention to find out what would be suitable crops for farmers to grow besides the traditional crops. During this time a discussion emerged about the question whether it was appropriate to lay out these test plots along the river, at the most fertile soil, and thus a very profitable place for agriculture.

At the end of the eighties the CONIF project was privatized and became a consultancy company. Nowadays the CONIF project does not exist anymore, although the test plots are still recognizable in the area.

### 3.3 The interviewed DIAR team members

This paragraph will briefly describe how some of the team members of the DIAR project became involved in the project. The people who are described here were respondents for this study. In general the DIAR teams (of both phases) are described as engaged people, the one was more idealistic than the other. However, they were all were pro-active and committed to bring development for the region.

One of the first team members of the first phase had been working at a project in Peru before he was hired in the DIAR project. He told that when he was asked to work for the DIAR project, the response of the team leader of the project in Peru was that their friendship would then be over. In the DIAR project he became responsible for the marketing and extension activities. He became close friends with his counterpart. When he started, the process approach was still quite new, he argued: "we started to work according to the new approach. The idea was to connect to what was already going on in the field. I was very enthusiastic about this approach. We just started to work. I still have positive thoughts about the process approach."

Later he got involved in a conflict with the team leader. After he had left the DIAR project, he worked in Yemen where he heard that his counterpart died in an accident. Once later he had a conversation with a man from DGIS about a new project, and before he was admitted to the project, the man from DGIS wanted to know if he would be loyal to his new team leader. He argued that loyalty was one of the most important things for him, but that the conflict in the DIAR project could not be avoided, because things were seriously going wrong. After the DIAR project he worked at DGIS as the Latin-America coordinator after which he worked at a NGO.

One of the respondents entered the project (first phase) as a student. He was an agricultural expert. As a student he was involved in discussions concerning new concepts such as participation and farming systems research; "We, as students, saw that there was often also an underlying social problem, and we wanted to focus also at elimination of poverty. We were searching for ways to deal with it." He became engaged with a Colombian woman who was working for the Salud project. She was also interviewed for this research. She went to the Chocó because she wanted to work in a difficult and challenging environment. She was involved in discussions concerning development and the future of their country with the local intellectuals in the Chocó. Because of their relationship there was a better co-operation between the DIAR and the Salud project. After their time in the Chocó, they worked in Uraba, and later in other developing countries.

One of the team members had been working as a coordinator of the Small Farmers Group; he was involved in the formulation of the process approach. He saw a need to connect to the activities of the local people, instead of bringing pre-designed projects to the region. When he was still working for the Small Farmers Group, the second team leader of the project asked him to start working for the DIAR project. He became responsible for the social part of the project. In the second phase, new project plans were formulated and one of the major changes was to connect better to the local dynamics. This team member introduced farming systems research to the project, to gain a better understanding of the way in which the traditional farming systems were organized. At the end of the second phase, he got involved in a conflict with the team leader and he decided to leave 3 months prior to the end of his contract. After he had left the project, he wrote a report in which he explained the situation which led to the conflict. This report is described in the second chapter of this thesis. He told that he had a great time in the Chocó. He never returned to the Chocó, but kept contact with some of the other team members.

The team member who conducted the production systems research, was contracted in the second phase of the project after an application at DGIS. At Wageningen University she was trained in Farming Systems research. The report that was written as a result of the project provided a valuable insight into the dynamics of the local production and the functioning of the DIAR project.

These are the former team members who were interviewed for this research. Other team members and team leaders will be described throughout this chapter. It was remarkable that all respondents remembered much from the DIAR project. They remembered many details such as names, events, situations and could describe each other quite detailed. Even after 20 years they still had a firm memory about the project. During the interviews I got the impression that they had been personal involved in the region and that the well-being of the local people was an important aim for them.

### 3.4 The first phase of the DIAR project

The first phase of the DIAR project started in 1979 and ended as a result of a conflict in 1983. The aim of the project was that of strengthening the economic position of the local peasants. Two team members who were involved in the first phase of the project were interviewed. One was involved in the project as a student; the other denominated himself a 'post-harvest expert' and was also responsible for the social part of the project.

They describe how the project plan was developed at the drawing-table. The team leader had drawn a large ordnance map on which different arrows illustrated the planned development for the Chocó. A respondent who worked for the CONIF project describes the entrance of the team leader of the DIAR project in the project area: "He was of the opinion that if a development project should be set-up in a developing country, and then you would have to design the project by yourself and not in consultation with the local population, H.W.). He designed a farming plan that was identical for all farmers irrespective of local and family condition, one hectare with forestry, rice and cassava (this was the 'finca' model; the farming plot model). The farmers were willing to co-operate, but without radically changing the way in which they already worked. Through time they developed a certain way to handle risk; they could not give that up entirely. And thus, they cultivated one hectare as they were told to do, but they used a less fertile land plot (see figure 3.1). "The plan was also to develop the income on the local farms with the finca model. The example of the way in which the project leader started the agricultural activities of the project and the use of the finca model do not represent the process approach; this first phase of the DIAR project was pre-designed as a top-down project without attention for participation of the local community.

### 3.4.1 Project activities during the first phase

A range of different activities was carried out during this first phase. The project started with small activities which intended to win the 'hearts and minds' of the peasants. One of these starters' activities was the distribution of salt. In the humid rainfall region of the Chocó it is difficult to preserve salt, while it is used for conservation of fish.

Another activity was forestry research which was conducted to find ways to increase the local production, and the trees would mark the property of the peasants. Also forestry was important to diversify the plantain fields with different crops and trees. This was also seen as important to retain the ecological diversity of the region. Another function of the trees would be to mark the property of the different peasants.

One of the main activities of the DIAR project became the introduction of a new rice-variety in the area. Although rice had been cultivated in the region previously, the new rice variety appeared to be very profitable. It grew fast with only little attention from the farmers, and it was of good quality. Therefore, this rice variety was particularly suitable to sell on the local market. The post-harvest expert was involved in the project from the beginning, and he was responsible for the marketing of the rice. He tells about the first marketing activities:

"With a boat we passed by all villages, via the Atrato to Cartagena. We bought rice in Tagachi, Buchado, Puerto Conto and Acandi. It was a lot of work, some farmers had not dried their rice properly. Some farmers frauded on us and added stones to the rice. The people who bought the rice paid for it immediately, so I had a large box of money. All together we had sold over 100 tons of rice. The people in Quibdò were surprised, they were proud of this achievement of their farmers. It was so much money for them. IDEMA (a Colombian governmental organization for commercialization of agricultural products) paid the same price for rice in all places; from Quibdò to Cartagena the price was equal. The second year the prices increased and the third year it increased because we had rice-dryers at three different places. The success of rice was an enormous stimulus for the local people and it had a positive effect on their self-consciousness."

Plantain is a banana species which grows naturally in the region. The project members tried to increase the production of plantain, but it appeared to be difficult to get quality guarantees for this fresh project. Rice for example, was sold as a dried product and thus could be stored to await price increases. And then there were also some smaller activities such as the breeding and keeping of pigs and growing vegetables and herbs on tables.

All these activities were mainly commercially oriented; they focused directly on an increase in income. Another activity which was initiated by the Congregation of the Claretians and further developed in the DIAR project, was the organization of the local peasants in cooperatives. A former team member who was engaged in the second stage of the project states: "During the first phase of the project they already started to think about organization. It was not yet so firm and there was not yet one co-coordinating organization, or administration.



It was fragile, but during the first phase they made a start on which we could build further." The formation of these organizations was an important part of the project.

### 3.4.2 Organizational setup and project team

The following figure is a schematic representation of the DIAR project as it was situated in the project region. The curved line at the right represents the Atrato river. The vertical lines crossing the river mark the territories of the different co-operations. The CODECHOCO was the counterpart organization of the DIAR project. A team member perceives the co-operation between the CODECHOCO and the DIAR project in the following way: "Like in traditional development projects, it was still common that the Dutch project team took care of everything. The Dutch project leader was responsible for all activities. The local counterpart was involved pro forma, but in fact he had no decision power."

The team leader of the first phase is described as a person who put his stamp on the project, and called himself 'The King of the Chocó. He is also described as a very engaged, creative and inspiring person who was committed to bringing development to the region. A respondent who did evaluation missions for DGIS describes the position of the team leader as: "He was a kind of 'he-man' who saw himself as the emperor of the region. We could have expected the problems beforehand. I was not surprised by the personal conflicts. The conflicts were not necessarily caused by the team leader, but when you become the team leader of such a difficult project, you need a firm personality."

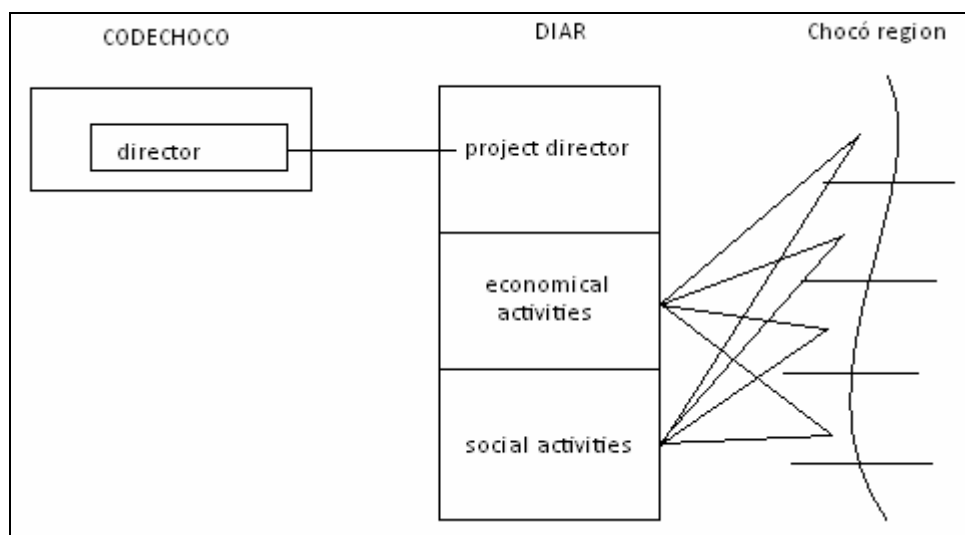


Figure 3.2: Schematic representation of the DIAR project<sup>49</sup>

The DIAR project was divided in an economic part and a social part. During the first phase the distinction between both parts was less strictly than in the second phase, because there was only one project member responsible for the social component of the project during the first phase. In both project phases, there were some tensions between the economic and the social part of the project. As described by a former team member: "In those times the farmers' organizations and extension were seen as a means to another end, not as an aim in itself. As social expert you were always second-rate. The most important things were always the rice and the market." Both parts of the project were on their own way involved in the different cooperatives. Especially in the second phase of the project, this led to ambiguities in the cooperatives because the cooperatives sometimes got contradictory messages from the economic and social parts of the project.

The team member who was responsible for the economic activities during the first phase of the project was not interviewed for this study. He shared his economical perspective on

<sup>49</sup> In this thesis the project director is also named the project leader or team leader

development with the team leader. He was an agronomist. One team member describes him as "being interested in the local people, but he lacked a holistic perspective on how the process approach could be applied in a project." He was the person who introduced the new rice varieties in the region. Another team member describes him as: "He had great ideas for the project. He was not the person to conceptualize ideas and try them out, but he stepped into the mud and looked around for the things that needed to be done. " The 'post-harvest expert' of the project, who was also responsible for the social activities of the project, describes the project as a valuable experience where he felt personally committed to. One of the respondents described how he started with this project: "He was very enthusiastic. He said that this would be 'the real work'. With the DIAR project he would be really involved in the region and with the local people. He expected a lot from this project." He became close friends with his Colombian counterpart. He describes how his daughter and the sons of this counterpart were baptized together, which was seen as 'unprofessional' by some other team members. A team member who was involved in the second phase of the project, describes the achievements of this team member as follows: "He was responsible for the extension, but also for the social part of the project. He had no team, and the other people in the project then were quite technical, it was still a blueprint project by then. When I started working at the project, I found a report in which he had clearly described his vision for development of the region. It was very clear and coherent. "

### 3.4.3 Tensions within the DIAR project team

Celebrations are an important component of the Chocoan society, and thus the DIAR project team became engaged in these parties; "When we celebrated the opening of the centre de accopio in Puerto Conto, we also invited the team leader. It was a huge party. Everyone was drunk; all kinds of animals were shot in the forest and brought to the party." However, during the first phase of the project, sometimes there was just a thin line between enjoying the festivities and misbehavior. The dossier study of the previous chapter described in 1982 a letter of the ambassador in which he described the abuse of alcohol and the damage to the houses in which the team lived. A respondent, who was involved in evaluation missions for DGIS, described the conflicts: "There were high fights between the team members, and then all the household goods were thrown on the streets. I disliked it, because it confirms this image of the rich Westerners who can do whatever they want and have enough money to fix the damage. Sometimes they even seemed proud of it. One day the team leader pulled the phone from the wall and threw it on the streets. He was drunk and said that he would divorce his wife. But the next day he was sorry and he was irritated because the phone was not working. The area and the fact that the project members often lived separately from their families really was a major challenge. It was a difficult situation for the team members. "

A respondent who worked at the Dutch embassy during the DIAR project describes the relations between the DIAR team members as follows: "The team members spent much time together. Some of them went to their families over the weekend, others stayed in the area for longer periods. In common the relations were friendly, but sometimes the frequency of the contact led to personal tensions." These conflicts evolved in a conflict between the team leader and one of the team members. Unfortunately this team leader was not interviewed for this study. The team member who was involved in the conflict gave the following explanation of the conflict: "I was working in the community; I worked with everyone who wanted to be involved. Everyone could become a member of the collection centres ('centros de acopio'). I don't know where it came from, but at once there was a rumour that the team leader did not want to include the poorest farmers anymore. The argument was that it was too much work, all those small portions of rice, and these smallest farmers would have no potential for development. I did not agree on this perspective, I found that everyone should have a chance for development, not just the farmers with the highest economical potential. I thought that excluding the small farmers would be destructive for the local society. I think that the idea of only working with the larger farmers came from The Hague."

A respondent who was working at the embassy gives the following explanation: "Some of the team members were more idealistic in their work while others were more practical. The team

leader was responsible for the planning and the expenditures. It is evident that not all team members would always agree with his development perspective or with his plans. That happens in every project."

According to the then present team members, the conflict never got out of hand; "In this kind of conflicts, the people who are actually involved in the project easily lose control over the situation. For some reason, people started to take part for one of us, but I didn't want that kind of support. Then a mission from Quibdó came to visit us, they wanted to talk to us. Actually, they took over the conflict; I still don't understand why we never succeeded in solving this conflict. Suddenly we got a letter from The Hague which said that we both would be called off the project." Another team member who was also involved in the project during this conflict accuses DGIS for "having just one way of responding to such situations. When there is a conflict, they send a mission to the project area and if that doesn't work, then the entire team will be replaced."

As is described in the previous chapter, there was a short interim period in between both phases. After this period, a whole new team continued the project (or started again). The following part describes the second phase of the DIAR project.

### 3.5 The second phase of the DIAR project

This phase of the project, which started in 1983, will be described more extensively than the previous phase, because most respondents worked for the DIAR project in the second phase of the project. In the second phase there was a whole new project team. In order to formulate the aims for the project, the team spent two weeks in Medellín. One of the team members who was involved in this project formulation describes it as follows: "Everyone had ideas, we all discussed about these ideas and then formulated the aims and targets for the project one by one. This was well prepared by the team members. Everyone agreed on these aims. The team was very enthusiastic about the results of the meeting. The project document contained a creative strategy for development and change. It felt the same as when you see a beautiful piece of art; you get touched by the perfection and by the feeling that it looks exactly how it should look. That is what happened. Synergy. Everyone knew what we had to do, and there we went." One of the main changes which were made in the second phase of the project was that the team moved away from the finca approach as a methodology. They argued that the finca approach was a blue print approach which was not really based upon the dynamics of the local people. According to one of the former team members, during the first phase the project was aiming too much at the production of rice; "in our phase we started with the strengthening of the farmers cooperatives as one of the aims of the project. But while we were working on that, the local people also needed food. We knew that rice would not be the appropriate product for the farming systems in the long run. But we needed to start with something, and we had a legacy from the first phase of the project." At a later stage, when describing the farming systems research, this topic will be further described.

#### 3.5.1 Project activities during the second phase

As indicated, the strengthening of the local farmers cooperatives was an important pillar of the project; "slowly but surely the cooperatives started to work, the people were getting organized. We were looking what we could do with the local people besides agricultural activities; we tried to look for other activities together with these people." Another team member remarks: "these associations did not function well at first instance, because different people from different communities come together and they do not trust each other at first." A respondent who worked for the CONIF project during the second phase of the DIAR project remarked: "I still remember the DIAR project as one of the first projects in which the people were asked what their needs were, with the intention to improve the future of the local population. They really believed that the situation could be improved. So far, the local people were just trying to survive, and now they were involved in the planning and that was quite a revolution for the local population. Especially the second phase was carried out in the period when participation of farmers became important."

Like in the first stage, also in the second phase many different activities were carried out. One of these was an alphabetisation project, in which the DIAR project also involved the indigenous population. This was a true challenge, as the indigenous population had not yet an alphabet. The DIAR project hired an anthropologist who spent quite some months developing an alphabet. Although the indigenous population was difficult to reach (geographically and linguistic), and they were not involved in the first phase of the project, during the second phase there were projects for them which were organized together with OREWA, the organization for the indigenous population or the Claretians; "OREWA, the organization of the indigenous people, gained a lot of support from the DIAR project. A lot of people could now be educated, and the first indigenous people were enrolled in a university. These small activities easily remain unnoticed in a large project such as the DIAR, but they were very important for the organization." The team member who was responsible for the social part of the project argues: "these kinds of things (social activities, HW.) were separated from the mainstream program. The rice peeling mill and other rice activities were the economic component of the project, and this was a whole different way of thinking. The project members who were more focused on these economical activities found this (alphabetization, HW) all rubbish." However, also this team member confirms the desire of the local people to connect to the local/national cash economy: "the first thing people were asking for was food. And they needed cash to be able to buy food. The more people integrated into the Colombian society, the more the need for cash increased. People also became familiar with electrical equipment such as radio and television." One of the first important things that were achieved was the establishment of the rice peeling mill. This mill was built with the money that was earned by the cooperatives, and thus the mill was owned by the farmers. The improvement of the production remained an important project activity in the second phase, therefore a good quality and quantity of the product was necessary to enter the local markets. When asking one of the respondents whether an increase in production was demanded by DGIS, the answer was; "I cannot remember that DGIS put us under pressure, it was more the general development perspective and logic. Development was seen as an increase in income. Rice offered a great opportunity for an increase in income, and thus it became one of the most important activities of the project. However, to make a factory profitable and to have an interesting position on the local market a certain amount of rice was necessary. It is a self-generating system." Other activities were research for other suitable crops (for example borojo, a local fruit which is processed as juice, which was successful), and the breeding of a kind of hamster which could be eaten.

In the second phase of the project there was more attention to the social component of development, and also in the second phase the team decided to start working together with the Claretians (see § 3.1.1). The first team did not recognize the importance of the Claretians for the development in the region; "you are a technician, and you work on increasing the production of rice, why would you need a priest then? No, they did not yet understand that the Claretians were very important in the region."

The theoretical framework (§ 1.2) and the description of the CODECHOCO (see § 3.1.1) already briefly indicated difficulties with land right issues in the Chocó. In the first phase of the DIAR project the land rights issue was already seen as a problem and a start was made to gain collective ownership over lands in the region. With the support of the DIAR project, the region was entitled to be a reserve and the lands now were owned by the local communities. Although the communities had a traditional right of usage over the lands, it was difficult to protect these from exploitation by for example wood loggers. With all the high quality wood, wood logging was a lucrative business. One of the former team members told how the wood industry tried to gain control over the CODECHOCO and the DIAR project: "There was a moment when the director of the CODECHOCO (the counterpart of the DIAR team leader) appeared not to be capable for his function, and we found a very nice man who was willing to become the director of the CODECHOCO. After a while we found out that he was actually involved in the wood industry. We could have known, because there was a saw mill in the

area which carried his name. It was a mistake to appoint him as the director of CODECHOCO and counterpart in DIAR, because his aims were exactly the opposite of the aims of the project." The communal ownership rights were very important, in certain areas the wood industry had already started to chase away the local people in order to cut the trees.

Another threat to the habitat of the local people in the Chocó was the upcoming guerrilla movement and the coca-industry. One former project member remembers this; "It started in the North of the Chocó. We also had a project region there. It was a whole different area because it was no rainforest anymore; it was an area of cultivated lands. The drug traders started to buy up the lands, they bought as much as they could get and the farmers were left without any land. We took people from the rainforest to these areas to show them the consequences of selling their lands and not protecting the communal ownership rights." At a certain moment the Claretians were accused of having contacts with the FARC, as intermediaries between the people and the guerrilla, covered by the name of the church. According to the respondents it was difficult to understand what was going on, people accused each other of all kinds of activities. At a certain moment the national army was sent to the region to keep control, "that was the only sign that the Colombian government was present in the region" according to a former team member.

The following paragraph continues with the description of the farming systems research that was conducted as a project activity.

### 3.5.2 Production systems research

Another important activity during this second phase was farming systems research. The farming systems research was executed by the team member who was then responsible for the social part of the project. The aim of the farming systems research would be to gain an understanding of the functioning of the traditional farming systems in practice, in order to understand the development possibilities of the local community and to link up with the traditional farming activities. The DIAR project hired an agricultural expert to work together with a Colombian counterpart on this research.

The agricultural expert describes the beginning of the research: "I was hired as a Farming Systems Researcher. However, general economic laws which explained economic development in financial terms could not be applied in the Chocó. Moreover the systems were based on a broad variety of productive activities, not on farming alone. So we had to develop a completely new framework to do the research. We decided that we had to classify the scarce factors of the local people." 'Time' was identified as the scarce factor which would be used to base the research upon; the amount of time invested in an activity indicated the importance of the activities. In order to measure the amounts of time spent on different activities by men, women and children, a registration game was developed by the researchers. The game was made up of a suitcase which contained different cards that represented different amounts of time, different activities, the way in which these different activities were carried out, the products harvested or collected, and the person who did that. Besides this a broader exploratory research was performed, identifying different types of systems and their geographical location. The researchers trained a team of assistants, who visited the respondents (families who took part in the study) on a regular basis. According to the researchers "the people liked the game very much. At the end of the day they gathered and played the game, they liked to show their activities to the other members of the family. We collected very relevant data about the agricultural system and the household in this manner."

Plaatje van het spel

As a result of the research, the local production systems appeared to be very complex systems. There were significant differences in different regions and in different seasons of the year, but in the same region and the same time of the year, most people were doing the same things; "There were no specialized crafts such as shoemakers, but there were different tasks for men and women. All people worked very hard." Another result was that plantain was the most important component of the production systems in the region. An important characteristic of these bananas is that they can be harvested the year round, and thus the local people could sell them the whole year through. Whenever people needed money they would sell some plantain, and plantain was also one of the main sources of food in the region. Depending on the seasons, there were also other agricultural activities, such as cultivating rice, maize, collecting of different products from the forests, fishery, vegetables and herbs growing on tables (in order to prevent them from soaking in the rains), gold washing and mining, and wood logging. In certain areas people were more dependent on gold digging than in other regions. From the research it appeared that the people in the regions with more gold digging had more cash money was often poorer because they had a low level of food security.

Traditionally rice was not an important cash crop like plantain; wet rice in palm basins was introduced in the region by the DIAR project. Some areas were permanently under water and thus only the palms that were growing there naturally had to be removed, and then the rice could be planted. Once the rice was planted, almost nothing needed to be done, the people just had to await the right time to harvest the rice. The success of the rice cultivation proved for the DIAR project that it would be a promising development activity. Due to the success of the rice, the cooperatives of the farmers became more active and were able to purchase a rice peeling mill. This mill increased the price of the rice which made the rice even more successful, and the cooperatives became a source of power in the region. Now the DIAR project had chosen for rice which had proven to be very successful, there was no way back. From the farming systems research appeared that the single focus on rice as the main cash crop posed a risk to the region. In the traditional farming systems, plantain was a way of spreading risk for the farmers, as they could harvest the plantain the whole year through. Rice could only be harvested once a year. After the rice was sold, people had a lot of cash money. However, they were not used to saving money and often they spent their money instantly which meant that they had limited financial reserves in other times of the year. At a certain moment a disease (cicatoca negra) threatened the plantain. The whole production system was threatened and unbalanced; if plantain would not survive this disease, then people had to switch to monoculture (rice) instead of the diversity of agricultural activities to which they were used.

The findings of the production systems research did not comply with the project aims and strategies. According to the team member who had proposed this kind of research for the

DIAR project, the research was useful for the project because it made the technical assistants (técnicos) of the project aware of the importance of not just relying on one crop. According to him, the project leader was at first very positive about farming systems research. However he states that "I can imagine that the publication of the findings led to difficulties within the project. At that time I had already left the project, but I can remember that someone told me about these problems. Of course there is a difference between telling the project team that the focus on rice is too one-sided, and reporting it officially to DGIS. I can imagine that that must have been difficult times for the researchers."

This also provided an insight in the project team and the way in which the team members worked together, the following paragraph will describe the team and some of the team members more extensively.

### 3.5.3 Organizational setup and project team

The second team of the DIAR project was larger than the team in the first phase; altogether, there were about 100 people employed in the project in the second phase. There were four project regions and in each of these regions a team of 6 or 7 people was stationed with a regional co-ordinator (see figure 3.2). Once in a month the entire project staff, the people from the regions and from Quibdó gathered. In Quibdó there was one team of supervisors, this team was divided in a financial/economic team which focused on credit and marketing, and a team which focused on capacity building, extension models and alphabetisation. Sometimes the separation of the economic and the social team in Quibdó caused problems in the field when they gave contradictory messages to the local people: "then the technical man would go to the people and tell them that they needed to collect the credits, and later the social man would go to the same people telling them that they had to co-operate with the local peasants. Then the people were confused and would wonder what to do; should I shoot these farmers or hug them?"

A respondent who is a Colombian former employer of the Salud project describes the Dutch project members of DIAR as "Westerners with colonial characteristics, but also people with a lot of enthusiasm and power who had the true desire to do something for the people. The people saw their good intentions and they appreciated that."

According to the team member who was responsible for the social part of the project: "The Dutch project leader had power over the entire project. There was also a local counterpart director, but he had nothing to say. According to the project proposal they had equal decision power, but in practice the power relations were not equal. This different position of both directors often caused tensions."

Although according to the respondents the project improved in the second phase, the management style was not improved in the second phase; in both phases the team leaders behaved as 'Kings of the Chocó'. The process approach offered a lot of space to the team leaders to change their plans and to do whatever they liked. According to one of the team members "the Dutch project members placed themselves in the spotlights, saying 'with my money and my influence I can do whatever I want'. They overestimated their own importance in the region."

In terms of religion or beliefs the project was neutral but there were a lot of Colombian project members who "listened to Radio Cuba". These people were involved in the project, but they saw the project as a beginning of a more profound process of social transformation. Also the church held a clear social point of view; "The Claretians aimed at improving the region from a Christian perspective. Other people had the same aims, but tried to achieve it from a socialist perspective. The Chocó as a region has always been oppressed and exploited. The intellectuals in the region sympathised with these critical ways of thinking."

Like the description of the first phase of the project, some of the team members of the project will be described briefly here. These descriptions are important for understanding the conflict that also emerged in this second phase.

The first person to discuss is the team leader of the DIAR project. This second team leader was a geographer and had a passion for maps. Also in the Chocó he invested much in drawing maps, which he used for designing project activities (f.e. he marked suitable areas for certain crops). One of the formed team members described him as a authoritarian leader: "he was the kind of person who wanted to prove that what he did was good and that he knew what would be good for the people. He placed himself on a throne as the most important person of the region." On the other hand, he is also described as "a visionary director who had an enormous capacity for understanding the complexity of the region and identifying the bottlenecks." Another former team member describes the team leader as: "he was a man with two faces. He had good management skills and a broad perspective, but his attitude was wrong. His way of leading the project was disapproved by most of the Dutch and Colombian team members. He was a typical authoritarian ruler. But, he did provide space for discussion in the team, and the local people were invited to his house. He listened to them and he offered opportunities. But the way in which he communicated that was often not really appreciated." There was a moment when the Colombian team members had meetings in which they were discussing how they could get rid of this team leader. The Dutch team member who was responsible for the social part of the project said that he would not get involved in these discussions although he was not best friends with the team leader: "I could not take part in this discussion, because then they would have involved me saying that I supported their initiative. It was dangerous to get involved. There are so many things at stake, and when you take position between the local team members and the director, and then it will only become more complicated. It all ended quietly, the team leader went to such a meeting and talked himself out of the trouble." He is not described as a great communicator who is sensitive to socio-cultural issues. He agreed with the participative process approach. Although he saw development as economic prosperity, he had selected his own project team and thus invited some people who were known for their critical and social perspective on development.

One false rumour surrounding this team leader concerns the disease that hit the plantain; it was said that this disease came in handy for the project leader so that he could prove the importance of rice. A former team member argues: "These accusations sound as if he had spread the virus personally. But the disease was spread over the entire region, it was a disaster. In a way the people were lucky that they at least still had the rice. The disease gave more space to rice for becoming the most important crop in the region, but it was never the project's aim to switch to monoculture. Whenever someone already had a bad name, these rumours spread fast. He was not happy with the desire; in the end he wanted what we all wanted; to improve the life conditions of the local people."

As indicated previously the project could not avoid local politics, as everything was politicized in the region. However, the project became even more involved in the politics when the team leader started to work intimately together with a Colombian woman who was working for the CODECHOCO and member of a prominent political party. Her sister was a lawyer and was involved in the DIAR project. They often visited different project areas in order to make contracts and provide legal assistance to farmers and cooperatives. These visits were interpreted as ways to increase the political power for their party. The team members of DIAR did not agree because it seemed as if the DIAR project now supported this particular family. At the end of the second phase of the project, the team leader had a conflict with the team member who was responsible for the social part of the project.

The team member who was responsible for the economic activities, shared his economical perspective on development with the project leader. He is described as a capable merchant: "he was very committed to the project and was very good in marketing. I once saw him throwing water on the rice. The quality was so good that the rice weighted so light that it would not be profitable enough. Now he could sell it for a reasonable price." The social part of the project criticised him for being the leader of the mill and the marketing system, instead



of supervising the farmers while they themselves ran their own business. The team member who was responsible for the social part declares: "Sometimes the farmers did not even know the price of the rice. In our opinion he should teach the farmers to do it themselves, they should learn how to market their products. Instead he just set up a system and managed it alone; we knew that his effort would be lost when he would leave the project."

The team member who was responsible for the social part of the project, was a 'Western sociologist'. Before he became engaged in the DIAR project, he was a member of the Small Farmers Group (see § 3.2.1), where he was involved in setting up the process approach. He set up all kinds of social activities in the project. Although the team leader of the project had still a quite economic perspective of development, he hired this team member in order to set up social activities. Despite this, he felt that sometimes the social activities were neglected or found less important than the economic activities. He told that although he got the possibility to carry out his activities, his achievements were often ruined by the team leader. One example is that he planned to make a video which could be used as an educational instrument. He had written a script and reserved money to make the movie. He was abroad when the moviemaker would come to the Chocó. When he returned, another filmmaker was hired and made a whole different kind of movie which had nothing to do with his project; "It was a nice movie about the people in the Chocó, nice to show in the Netherlands. But I could not use the movie for anything, and my budget was gone. All the work we had done to prepare the movie had been for nothing and I could not continue the educational programme. Briefing this to DGIS made no sense; they would wonder why I was complaining because the money was used to make a nice movie, just as had been the plan." The following paragraph will further describe the conflict which marked the end of the second phase of the project.

#### 3.5.4 Tensions in the DIAR project team

Like in the first phase of the project, also in the second phase of the project there was a conflict between the team leader and team members. As also the second team leader was not interviewed for this study, the description of the conflict is one-sided.

The main actors in the conflict were the team leader and the team member who was responsible for the social part of the project. This team member describes the situation as follows: "I left the project 3 months before my contract would end. I had a conflict because of the way in which he managed the project. From the start I had seen this as a problem, but I was young and thought I would find a way to deal with it. Sometimes we talked about our different opinions, and then we understood each other. But then the other day he sometimes damaged my work, for example he sometimes just fired people he didn't like, and then I was stuck with the problem that I could not find other capable people to hire instead." Another reason for the conflict was the different perspective on development between these two men; "The team leader had a large map on which he marked areas that would be suitable for commercial rice cultivation. That was his idea of development; developing a commercial activity with which the people would become rich. The people of the social group had a very different perspective; they wanted to see what people were already doing and how that could be improved. They focused at the smaller level, not at the big commercial plans". Other team members who had experienced this conflict declared that it never really erupted; it was a kind of tension that was always present.

Also in this conflict the team members argue that DGIS was afraid to really take a decision: "When the conflict became more intense, there was a mission from the IAC, but they were afraid to take a decision. And thus it seemed as if they agreed with the team leader and gave him the permission to continue. When I left I wrote a document in which I explained the whole situation, after DGIS had received that document they started to do something" according to the team member responsible for the social activities. After this document (see the second chapter of this thesis for a description of the contents of the document) was finished, also the team leader was taken off the project and was no longer hired for DGIS projects.

Some of the respondents criticise DGIS for their way of dealing with conflicts. According to them, DGIS avoided these and just dismissed the people who were involved in these conflicts. However, the former Minister of Development Co-operation Mr. Pronk argues that sometimes it is difficult for DGIS to understand what really happens in the project reality. There is always a risk that big mistakes are made and that the project ends up in a conflict with the local authorities; "There is always a risk of a situation so difficult that it will rise above the conflict and that the national governments get involved. I am not sure what happened in the DIAR project (Mr. Pronk was Minister prior to the DIAR project, HW.), but sometimes a Minister has to take a decision like this. I also had to resign people because the situation was getting out of hand. Sometimes you have no choice. But for the people who are called off the project this is not always a happy ending, of course they often think that it was the easiest solution for DGIS to call them home."

Although this had brought the project close to its end, it took a while before it was officially handed over to the Colombian government, this will be described in the following paragraph.

### 3.6 The end of the DIAR project

After the second phase had ended, the project approached its end. One of the former team members described that the second team leader had a conflict with the CODECHOCO, and as a response he tried to set up an independent own organization. He had in mind to set up this organization according to the organizational structure of ACIA, an overall organization which would coordinate the local cooperatives. With his own organization he would not have to work together with the CODECHOCO anymore.

According to a team member, the plan of the project already included the development of an overarching organization which would co-ordinate the cooperatives. The idea was that this organization would also manage the rice peeling mill, which would lead to profit with which the organization could finance its own activities and become financially independent at the end. The team member, who was responsible for the social part of the project, describes the founding of ACIA: "ACIA was founded in the last year, but it started as a 'personal joke'. The project was not yet ready for it, but the team leader was ready for it. It was an aim of the project to work towards the foundation of an organization which would co-ordinate all 20 different cooperatives. But we were not ready for it at the time when I left the project." However, another former team member disagrees with this, arguing that the founding of ACIA was a logical result of the success of the associations and the cooperatives. This team member argues that an overarching organization was one of the aims of the DIAR project, was described in the project description.

At the end of the eighties, the Dutch government started to sub-contract more development projects. The team leader set up a company named 'Van der Zee en Plaisier' with which he hoped to continue with the DIAR project with his own overall organization which would coordinate the local organizations. However, according to one of the former team members, most of the people who were then involved in the project did not want him to take over the project. According to a former project member, his intentions were to gain more control over the region by taking over the cooperatives, this could have been harmful to the CODECHOCO severely.

In the end DGIS decided not to give the company 'Van der Zee en Plaisier' the lead over ACIA, because of the negative stories about this team leader. If the team leader would have taken over the project, then DGIS would have lost all its influence over the project. Just a couple of months later the team leader resigned from the project, and succeeded by an interim team leader who was responsible for the Colombian overhead. It is likely to think that the document of the team member who described the conflict between them had an influence on this decision of DGIS. As was described in the second chapter of this thesis, the Dutch government carried over the project to the Colombian government, and that is how the Dutch governmental involvement in the Chocó region was ended.

When asking the Dutch former Minister of Development Co-operation Mr. Pronk, when DGIS usually decide to end projects, his answer was: "Well, you can be involved in certain activities for too long. When you are catalysing, also in a process approach with an open end, then the

end is open but at a certain moment there has to be an end. You don't want to make the local people dependent on the contacts and the support. Some things are ended too soon so that they had no chance to develop, while other things are continued for too long. It is important to be careful with dependency relations and to stop in time. But, you cannot just stop; you need an exit-strategy in which you have formulated criteria which have to be achieved at the end of the project. You have to make sure that the process will not stagnate when you leave the region. That means that you have to invest in capacity building, so that the local people are capable of continuing the project."

Before describing the impact of the DIAR project according to the respondents, the following paragraph describes how the process approach was put into practice in the DIAR project.

### 3.7 The process approach in the DIAR project

As indicated previously, the DIAR project was first formulated as a traditional development project, and later it was decided that it should follow the lines of the process approach. The process approach with its concept of participation was still quite new. Although the team members and the team leaders of the project all agreed with the approach, it can be questioned if the project really ended up being implemented according to this participatory approach.

Although it can be seen as if the process approach posed a challenge upon the team leaders who now had to take into account participation of the local people, one of the former team members argued that "the process approach was actually very convenient for the team leader, because everything is open. They could do whatever they wanted to do. They were not restricted to a fixed project plan. They could do whatever they liked to do." Another former team member agrees: "We started with some small activities, and when some successes were achieved, we would just continue with those. We had no idea of how long the project would last, it could be 10 years, it could be 15 years, we had no idea. So, the team leaders who were used to projects which were restricted in time, plans and budget, now had all freedom. According to the budget, the sky was the limit. Also for technical assistance, we could rent a small airplane or a boat, whatever was necessary. Whatever we could imagine could be realized within this project."

It can be concluded that the DIAR project was indeed very flexible and open ended, the team leaders had a lot of room for manoeuvre.

Another characteristic of the process approach is its broad focus on different sectors and activities, instead of the restricted limited scope of the traditional projects. Very important in this process was the participation of the local population with sensitivity to their needs. One former team member argues that "one of the good characteristics of the process approach which was also visible in the DIAR project was that it started to become a part of the local dynamics. It did not separate from the local reality as an island, but it connected to what was already going on."

One respondent, who was responsible for development co-operation at the Dutch embassy, describes the implementation of the process approach in the DIAR project as follows: "At the beginning it was a whole new way of thinking, a change from project thinking to process thinking. All different actors had to get familiar with the approach and the way in which it would be implemented in practice. Especially the project team and the local counterpart organization. When I look back at it, I think that it was too ambitious considering the capacities and the absorption limitations of the counterpart. For the counterpart, the financial support from the Netherlands was the most important. The project team believed in the process approach, and they also propagated that."

One of the respondents who was hired by the DIAR project and worked for the CONIF project criticises the way in which the process approach was implemented in the DIAR project; "There was no method behind their way of working, while the process approach requires a certain

way of working. You cannot just do whatever you want to do, there are guidelines. The intention was that they should have formulated their plans together with the local population, but in my opinion that failed."

### 3.8 Impact of the DIAR project

One of the reasons for conducting this research was that the local population in the Chocó still says that the DIAR project had an important positive influence on the region, while this is not acknowledged in the Netherlands. DGIS listed the project as one of the failures of development co-operation, and the former team members hope that the project had lasting effects in the region but don't expect these. A thing that shouldn't be forgotten is that the Claretians laid an important foundation for the DIAR project. The team members described that the Claretians were already working on development issues as co-operation between the local farmers, literacy, and community awareness etcetera with both the Afro-Colombian and the Indigenous people.

One of the most important results of the project was a growing ethnical awareness amongst the local population. During the first phase of the project, the proposals still focused on economic and technical development, ethnical awareness was not described as one of the aims of the project. One of the former team members stated that "we were not intentionally trying to increase the ethnical awareness, but with a project like this we brought a form of functional thinking into the region, which is different from the patronage relationships. We tried to bring development and set up local organizations which would also be able to enhance development. There were not yet local organizations which were led by the local people themselves."

This is confirmed by a team member who was involved in the DIAR project from the start; "It was a difficult and tough society. Nothing was organized collectively. This worked, and the people were proud of the centres de acopio (collection centers). These centers were important for their ethnical consciousness and for their self-consciousness."

Another important effect of the DIAR project was, according to the respondents, that the people became less dependent on local politics. When the cooperatives became more important in the region, the people became less dependent on the few employers in the region.

According to the team members, the project had an influence on the Afro-Colombian population as well as on the indigenous population; "With support of the project, the first indigenous people went to university. And with the land right issues, the awareness of the indigenous people grew; they learned that this was their land. They learned that they could claim it. This was maybe not an intentional and planned result of the project, but it was a result of the education that was offered in the project."

One of the respondents, a former team member of the CONIF project, is less positive about the Dutch development projects in this region of Colombia: "if you hear the whole story about these projects, than there are some positive effects, but an enormous amount of money was invested in these projects. I am surprised that people talk so positive about these projects; I think that people sometimes feel the need to admire the good old days. Because when you look at it objectively, then the results of the projects are disappointing."

Another respondent who took part in evaluation missions for DGIS argues that "It is interesting that it was originally a commercialization project, and it appears that the social part had the most impact on the region. Maybe still some commercial activities remained in the region, but I believe that the social impact on the ethnical consciousness was the most important for the people."

The project also had an influence on the team members, according to one of them; "Many of the team members involved in the project learned that there is more than only a technical side to development. The technical people in the project were not used to take issues such as gender roles into consideration. So, they had to learn to look at the existing activities to see what the role of for example gender is in these activities. I think that we worked on the relation between technical, economical and social issues in development activities. The technical

people had to learn that there is more than just the production of rice, it has to be sold at the market and it has an impact on the lives of the local people. In the project all cooperatives were trained in administration, organization, marketing etcetera. Unfortunately the project leaned on a small group of involved people and when they left, the activities were no longer continued." According to another former team member one of the lessons to be drawn from the DIAR project is that "development is not a linear process. We tried to grow a second crop next to the main crop of the production system, but then the main crop was threatened by a disease, and that was not planned in the project plan. Development processes are only to some extent controllable, they cannot be planned previously. Development means interacting in a dynamical process. In the traditional projects there was not much flexibility, thus there were some improvements with the process approach. The second lesson is that capacity building is more important than the technical part of the development process. The people do need to eat, but the project wants to achieve an increase of income and production capacity, and then the development of capacities of the local actors is more important."

### 3.9 To conclude

This chapter presented the insight of the former team members and other people involved in the DIAR project. Unfortunately some people with an important function in the project, for example both team leaders and the Colombian team members, were not interviewed. Their perspectives concerning the project and the conflicts which took place in the project are lacking. However, an attempt is made to give an overview of the project which is as complete as possible. The following paragraphs will present the conclusions for this chapter. The DIAR project was implemented according to the process approach, although it was first designed as a traditional project. The process approach was designed by the Small Farmers Group in Wageningen. After the approach was formulated, it was translated into an operational approach by DGIS. At the end of the eighties, DGIS argued that the process approach had failed, and the process approach was no longer used in Dutch development projects. One of the team members who was involved in the formulation of the approach in the Small Farmers Group, argued that the narrow translation of the process approach by DGIS led to the failure of the approach.

It is clear that the Chocó was a difficult place to work in. The climate is difficult, but also the culture posed challenges to the team members of the DIAR project. Before the DIAR project there was not much social cohesion in the region, families were the basis of the social organization. The Congregation of the Claretians made a start with social organization in the society; the DIAR project used this basis as a foundation for the cooperatives of local peasants.

One of the difficulties of the local culture was the political situation; patronage relationships and corruption were very common. The local counterpart organization of the DIAR project, CODECHOCO, was also involved in politics and patronage relations, and thus it was impossible for the DIAR project to avoid all political involvement. Eliminating corruption was soon seen as one of the aims of the project. One of the reasons why these patronage relations were maintained in the region was a lack of employment. There were only two main employers, CODECHOCO and a liquor factory, which thus had a powerful position in the region. With the commercial success of growing rice, the cooperatives also became successful. This showed to the local people that they could be successful. Also the effort of the project to help the local population to protect their lands as communal property instigated a growth of ethnical consciousness. This ethnical consciousness was actually an unintended result of the project, but it is the legacy of the project that nowadays still reminds the local people of DIAR.

Besides the introduction of rice, many other different activities were carried out in the DIAR project. Another important activity was the production systems research in the second phase of the project. The aim of this research was to gain an insight in the traditional production activities in order to connect to these instead of introducing new activities. From this research

the insight emerged that the local farmers were small subsistence farmers who had multiple activities in different times of the year. One of the criticisms of the research was the narrow focus of the project on just one agricultural activity, the cultivation of rice. In the diverse traditional system, the farmers had an income and food the whole year through. With rice as the main cash crop, the farmers would have an income twice a year which meant that they had to learn to think on the long term. The report of the research was seen as a threat by the second team leader, and before the report was even finished the researcher was denied access to the data. The report was finished, but forgotten. This was a disappointment for the researcher.

The project team was divided into an economical team which focused on commercial and marketing activities, and a social team which focused on different kinds of social activities. Although all team members are described as being committed to development and agreeing with the process approach, this division was also a division in development perspective. The team members who worked for the social part of the project often felt second rate team members; they argue that the economic activities were seen as the most important activities of the project. Of course the success of the rice cultivation (which was meant as commercial activity) was seen as a confirmation of the project activities. The separation between both teams sometimes led to contradictory instructions to people in the field.

Although all team members were personally committed to bringing development to the region, they interpreted the process approach in different ways. To some of the team members the process approach stood for participation and adjusting the project activities to the local needs, the approach gave a lot of freedom to the team leaders. With its flexibility and the open end of the projects, the team leaders had more space to do whatever they found necessary. According to the respondents they agreed with the approach, but in the daily practice their behavior was often not in accordance with the approach. Some of the team members became close friends with their local counterparts and kept contact. Although there were differences in the two phases of the DIAR project, the team leaders have some remarkable resemblances. They were both authoritarian project directors. Also they still had a quite technical and economic perspective on development which differed from that of other team members who were more into participation and believed in the relevance of a sociological approach to development. Both phases of the project led to conflicts after which DGIS recalled the team from the project. According to one of the team members who was involved in the first conflict, the situation was taken over by DGIS and before they understood what was going on, they were dismissed from the project. The second conflict was different in the sense that DGIS was blamed for not taking a decision. An involved team member left the project voluntarily and wrote a report over the situation. Because of this report, the team leader was later also fired by DGIS. Both conflicts were caused by differing development perspectives. The team members who were involved in these conflicts were so much committed to their development beliefs that they could not agree with what in their own perspective was a technocratic and non-participatory working method of the project leader.

The relation between the DIAR project members and DGIS or the embassy is difficult to describe, because there are many perspectives on this relationships. In the relations with the DGIS, the IAC played an important role. The DIAR team sent their reports to the IAC and the IAC advised the Dutch Ministry of Development Co-operation what they should do. Some of the former team members argued that they felt not very connected to DGIS, because DGIS was physically and ideologically far away from the project reality. Due to this specific project reality the team leaders often had the feeling that DGIS and the people at the embassy could not understand their situation well.

The DIAR project did not only have an impact on the local population or Dutch development co-operation, but it also had an impact on the people who were involved in the project. For some it was an important learning experience in which they saw for example the relevance of social processes in development situations. Some people had disappointing experiences in

the project. However, most said that they had positive memories with regard to the DIAR project. It was remarkable that even after 20 years most of the people who had been team member or otherwise involved in the project, had many detailed memories about the project. From this we can conclude that the project was an important experience for them.

The following chapter will combine the insights from the theoretical framework, the dossier study and this empirical chapter in order to describe the final conclusions for this thesis.

## 4. Analysis and conclusions

This thesis focussed on the DIAR project from different angles. The DIAR project was carried out in the eighties as a Dutch governmental development project in the Chocó region in Colombia. Although the project was set up as a traditional development project, it was later implemented according to the process approach.

The previous chapters described the DIAR project from different perspectives.

The first chapter provided an introduction into the project, and described a theoretical framework. The theoretical framework focussed on the different perspectives of the people who were involved in the DIAR project and on the functioning of the development apparatus. Therefore the work of James Ferguson, Arturo Escobar, David Mosse, Pieter de Vries and Norman Long was studied and described in the chapter. Their theoretical insights are used for answering the research questions in this chapter of the thesis.

The second chapter discussed the DIAR project from the perspectives of the DGIS dossiers. This study of the dossiers gave an idea of the communication between different actors regarding the DIAR project. The main issues which appeared were the process approach because it was difficult to control for DGIS, the conflicts which took place in the project and the difficult local political situation. Also the dossiers provided an insight in the criticism of DGIS towards the process approach; at the end of the project, DIAR was in one document even called an example of Dutch colonisation.

The third chapter described the DIAR project from the perspectives of the people who were involved in the project as team members, or were in another way related to the project. This resulted in a description of different perspectives concerning the project.

In this chapter an attempt will be made to answer the research questions which were introduced in the first chapter of this thesis. The sub-questions will be answered first, which will result in answering the main research question. This in turn results in the conclusion of this thesis.

### 4.1 Who were the main actors who were involved in the DIAR project and how can their relationship be described?

As is the case in development projects, many different actors were involved in the DIAR project. They all had their own agenda, influence, power and desires. The different actors who were involved in the project will be briefly described in this paragraph.

The Ministry for Development Cooperation and the Directorate General for International Cooperation (DGIS) were responsible for the DIAR project. DGIS worked together with the International Agricultural Centre (IAC) in Wageningen. The IAC was responsible for policy advice and research on agricultural themes. The IAC was much involved in the DIAR project through evaluation missions, deciding on requests of the project team and advising the project as well as DGIS. The Small Farmers Group was founded by the Dutch Ministry for Development Cooperation and the IAC to conduct research on new development policies. The Small Farmers Group decided on the process approach as the adequate approach for Dutch development cooperation. The DIAR project was also implemented according to this approach, although it was first implemented as a traditional development approach. In Colombia, the Dutch Embassy in Bogotá was an important actor as representative of the Dutch Ministry of Development Cooperation. The Embassy also kept an eye on the DIAR project and reported the Dutch Minister for Development Cooperation and the IAC about the situation in the different development projects.

Then in the field, there was the DIAR project team. The local counterpart organization of the DIAR project was the CODECHOCO. The team consisted of a Dutch team leader (also named project director), a Colombian team leader (or project director), and several Dutch and Colombian team members. Each of the Dutch team members had a Colombian counterpart. The project region was divided in four different sub-regions, and into a sociological and an economical part. From the interviews the impression appeared that the team members were



very personal involved in the development of the region and of improving the local population's life conditions. Some of them became friends with their local counterparts. Other respondents, who were involved in the project as 'outsiders' described the team members as personally committed to bringing development to the local people and as idealistic. Both team leaders of the project were also described as sincerely motivated to improve local conditions, but also as traditional leaders who still saw themselves as hierarchical leaders. They named themselves 'Kings of the Chocó', and acted accordingly.

The local counterpart organization of the DIAR project was the CODECHOCO, a regional governmental development organization. The director of the CODECHOCO was also the counterpart of the Dutch team leader of the DIAR project. The CODECHOCO had an important economic position in the region, besides a liquor factory the CODECHOCO was the only employer in the Chocó region.

The CODECHOCO posed some challenges on the DIAR project. One was that the CODECHOCO was closely linked to the local political situation; when the local government changed, also the staff of the CODECHOCO changed. Another was the fact that the DIAR project had more funds than the CODECHOCO. Therefore, the DIAR project controlled the money and thus the power in the region. The last challenge to be named here was the corruption in the CODECHOCO. The CODECHOCO was also responsible for wood logging licences, in which a lot of money was involved. As the CODECHOCO was the counterpart organization of the DIAR project, the DIAR team was striving to eliminate the corruption within the CODECHOCO.

The Catholic church which was represented in the Congregation of the Claretians in the Chocó region. They were already working in the region before the DIAR project was implemented. The Claretians already had social projects in the region which aimed at social organization, for example in alfabetisation. The DIAR project and the Claretians started to work together during the second phase of the DIAR project. Possibly the DIAR project disturbed the work of the Claretians, as the DIAR project entered the region with a huge amount of money. The DIAR project grew fast and according to a former team member of the DIAR project, the Claretians saw how the availability of money disrupted the local society.

And then there were the subjects of the development intervention; the local population of the Chocó. The largest ethnic groups in the region were the black peoples whose ancestors were brought to the region as slaves; and an indigenous population which was hiding upstream the rivers. They were very poor and lived in difficult circumstances in this tropical rainforest region. It was a harsh society in which patronage systems, polygamy and poverty were common. The DIAR project was the first development intervention in the region, and it was the first time that the local people saw the development potential of their region.

In order to understand the different perceptions of the different people involved Norman Long's actor perspective is useful. From this perspective that development is an ongoing socially constructed process, it is useful to take the context of the different actors into consideration. DGIS was responsible for the DIAR project and tried to control the project to a certain extend. For DGIS, the process approach with its flexibility was a challenge and it must have been difficult to understand the situation in which the team members were living. To say it in Long's words, it must have been difficult to "interpret the life worlds" of the team members. The local situation in the Chocó was harsh and difficult, and the local circumstances had an impact on the project strategy and on the choices made by the project team. It is thinkable that DGIS diplomats who were situated in The Hague often did not agree upon choices made by the project team because they did not understand why these choices were made.

On the other hand, it might have been difficult for the project team to understand choices made by DGIS. An example is the way in which both conflicts were ended. In both cases DGIS called back the people who were responsible for these conflicts, and in both cases the involved team members were surprised by this rigid decision. Maybe this misunderstanding

was caused by a communicational problem, but it is also arguable that both sets of actors did not succeed in interpreting each other's life worlds correctly. Another example is an evaluation report written in 1984 (see p. 39) which describes the problematic relationship between the project controllers of DGIS in The Hague, and the team members of the DIAR project. However, this problematic relationship is understandable considering the different objectives, perspectives and working environment of both actors.

#### 4.2 What are the stories of these actors with regard to the DIAR project?

All different actors, individual actors and institutional actors, tell a different story about the DIAR project. They had a different perspective on development, and on the DIAR project. The previous chapters described the desires for development of the people involved in the project, their struggles, the successes and the cooperation between the different actors. The largest discrepancy between perspectives of actors involved in the DIAR project is to be found in the Colombian and Dutch perceptions concerning the project. The Dutch team members spoke about the project passionately and remembered a lot of details regarding project activities. However, none of the team members called the DIAR project an unquestionable successful project. They agreed that some of the activities of the project had a positive success on the local population, but were surprised to hear that the Colombian perspective on this project is actually very positive. The local people in the Chocó argue that development was brought to the area by the DIAR project, and that their ethnical consciousness grew as a result of the project. The local social organizations which exist nowadays in the region are seen as an indirect result of the project.

As described in the theoretical framework, Mosse argues that the construction of the intervention is more important than the success or failure of the intervention. Mosse describes how people have their own dynamic and perception of reality within development projects. The team members in the project all had different backgrounds, some of them had been involved in other development projects before, some worked for the Small Farmers Group before they were involved in the DIAR project; everyone had different experiences with which the activities of the project and personal relations with others in the project were interpreted. Both of the team leaders were involved in other projects before the DIAR project. As the process approach was still a quite new approach, it is likely that these projects were traditional development projects with technical or economical objectives and a top down approach. These experiences might have influenced the behavior of the team leaders in the DIAR project; although they supported the process approach with its bottom-up participatory approach, they did not succeed in applying this approach in their project. Some of the respondents argued that the team leaders gave space to the local people through discussions, but the process approach gave them the freedom to fulfill their own needs and desires. Unfortunately both team leaders were not interviewed for this study, and thus their interpretation regarding the DIAR project is lacking.

The two large conflicts which took place within the project team can be declared with the use of the following proposition of Norman Long: "Inherent to development is a contest over the dominance and legitimacy of competing images of development". From the descriptions of the former team members and the DGIS dossiers it can be said that the conflicts were caused by the difference between the development perspectives of the team leader and some of the team members. They could not find an agreement concerning their development perspectives. However, DGIS prevented disruption of the conflicts by withdrawing the team members from the region. When DGIS heard of the conflict during the first phase of the project, the team leader and one of the involved team members were withdrawn from the project. The team member in question declared during an interview that DGIS had taken over the conflict without giving an opportunity to the project team to solve the conflict. Thus, the contest over the dominance of competing images of development was won by DGIS in this case.

The way in which the involved actors formed their memory and perception of the reality in the DIAR project had an influence of the way in which they remembered the project.

The local population saw the project team coming and working in the area, they noticed the commitment of the team members, the conflicts that took place among the project team, and they saw how the project was ended and the team members left the region. The local people remained in the region and together they shaped a communal memory of the DIAR period and the impact of the project. In contrast, the team members of the project left the region and separated, they formed their personal memory which was influenced by experiences before the DIAR project, personal experiences and difficulties in the project. Also the fact that the project took place 20 years ago, might have influenced their memories of this period.

The construction of the project was complex as a result of the flexible process approach, cultural differences and the different personalities with different perceptions and tasks in the project. When all these factors are taken into account, it comes as no surprise that there is no unambiguous decision upon the success or failure or success of the DIAR project. Also the heterogeneity of hope as described by De Vries, might have influenced the memories of the different actors. The team members had personal desires for development of the local people, but maybe also had personal desires such as a successful career maybe as a result of successes of the DIAR project. Although they were not interviewed for this study, it is thinkable that the DIAR project created hopes among the local population. This was the first time in which they were confronted with (economic) development. The desires of DGIS which represents the development apparatus in this case, will be discussed in the following paragraph.

However, from this reflection the insight appears that judging on the success or failure of a development intervention is a highly complicated matter, which involves personal perspectives of the actors involved.

### 3. What was the role of the development apparatus in this project?

As the DIAR project was a Dutch governmental project, the development apparatus had a strong say in the project. Ferguson criticises the development apparatus heavily, for example by arguing that development interventions are intended to expand bureaucratic state power. Although the Dutch and the Colombian governments have a history of trade relations which dates back to the eighteen hundreds, it is not likely that the DIAR project was implemented in order to increase the power of the Dutch state in Colombia. Thereby, there was a large physical and ideological distance between the DIAR project and the DGIS bureaucrats in The Hague. As indicated previously, the team members were very personal committed to improve the situation of the local people. As appeared from the third chapter, the team members felt more connected to bringing development than they felt committed to fulfilling the needs of the Dutch Ministry of Development Cooperation. The former team members were often criticising DGIS diplomats for not understanding the local situation and the process approach.

Ferguson also argues that projects have an invisible aim which increases institutional state power through a neutral technical mission. Although it is argued in the previous paragraph that increasing state power was not an aim of the project from the perspective of the team members (who were responsible for the execution of the project), it might be that the Dutch government had political or economical interests in strengthening the relations with the Colombian government. Historically, both governments decided on some important trade relations. Although the Dutch development support to Colombia has been debated often (due to the high Gross National Product of Colombia), the Dutch government decided every time again to maintain the support to Colombia.

In a letter written in 1981, the Dutch ambassador describes that the development aid to Colombia did not have any impact on the trade relations between the countries. The only small effect was that Dutch companies delivered supplies for the Dutch development project; this is what Hoebink calls the 'backflow of aid'.

Another interesting consideration is the way in which DGIS dealt with conflicts within the DIAR project team. In both conflicts DGIS interfered abruptly by calling back the team members who had been involved in the conflict. It is thinkable that the Dutch government was afraid of damaging the relations with the Colombian government, and was thus carefully preventing escalation of these conflicts.

It is a bit speculation, but possibly the Dutch government had an advantage in mind when deciding on development assistance for Colombia. However, this had no influence on the way in which the project members carried out the project.

Flexibility, participation and a non linear process are some of the characterisations of the process approach. This complies with the way in which David Mosse described the development process; as a flexible process with unpredictable outcomes. At the time of the DIAR project, the process approach was still a new approach for DGIS. The plan-as-you-proceed approach posed a challenge to the controllers of DGIS. Some of the DGIS dossiers describe criticism of DGIS towards the DIAR team concerning expenditures and the way in which the team leader reported to DGIS. As described in an evaluation report: "The flexible plan-as-you-proceed approach adopted by the project has led to the dispersion of energy and management attention with the result that several activities seem to have faltered or are progressing very slowly if after all." (Donovan; 1987) The DGIS dossiers give the impression that the process approach is blamed for the lack of successes in development interventions. In 1987, the same evaluation report states that development in the region should come from large technical projects, such as the constructions of havens and roads. According to the report, the process approach was not the proper model for development in the Chocó.

The previous paragraph described how DGIS won the competition over the dominance of their images of development. The way in which the team members were withdrawn from the project can be seen as an example of what De Vries calls the 'banalisation of the desire for development by the development apparatus'. In this respect, DGIS played an important role in the way in which the team members experienced the project and shaped their memories with regard to the project.

#### 4. What were the consequences of the DIAR project for the different actors and their development perspectives?

The consequences of the project for the different actors and their development perspectives are influenced by their experiences during the process. Also the success or failure of the project influenced their development perspectives. After the DIAR project was ended, most of the team members remained active in the field of development cooperation, while some of them chose a new career. However, the perceived failure of the project deprived some of the former team members from their idealistic development perspective.

Although Ferguson's theory with regard to the failure of development interventions can be applied to the DIAR project, the side effects of the DIAR project had a positive effect in the region. The process approach was blamed for the failure of development interventions such as the DIAR project, and thus DGIS developed a new approach to deal with development cooperation. This complies with Ferguson's statement that through the failures of development interventions, the development industry reproduces itself. Contrary to Ferguson's argumentation concerning the instrument effects of development intervention, the DIAR project did not have a de-politicizing effect in the Chocó. Instead, the DIAR project led to a strong ethnical consciousness and to the founding of social ethnical- and producers' organizations. This social effect was not intended in the project plans; the DIAR project was first identified as a technical project. Later, when the project approach was adjusted to the process approach, the attention for social processes in the development project increased. From the social perspective it appeared to be necessary to change the local political situation with its patronage relations and corruption. According to the local people the project succeeded in bringing change in this local social situation, and therefore the project can be seen as successful. As argued by David Mosse, 'failure is not failure, but a failure of

interpretation'. In this case, DGIS interpreted the impact of DIAR in a different way than the local people in the Chocó. Mosse describes failure as the consequence of a 'disarticulation between practices, their rationalizing models and overarching policy frameworks.' The DGIS dossiers do mainly describe the project in economic or organizational terms, even the conflicts among the DIAR team are organizationally described, the contents of the conflicts are not described in the dossiers. With the difficult local circumstances with which the team members were confronted, it probably was difficult for DGIS diplomats to interpret the local situation. Thus, it must have been difficult for them to interpret the impact of the project on the local situation, or to say it in the words of Mosse, to translate adequately between practices and the overarching policy models. I agree with Mosse that "success and failure are policy-oriented judgments that obscure project effects". As indicated before, the structure of an intervention is more important than the question whether it was a success or a failure. And in the case of the DIAR project, the structure of the project was successful and had a positive impact on the local population. However, the Dutch development apparatus succeeded in reproducing itself by designing new development approaches and policies after the failure of the process approach.

The conflicts which took place within the project are a sign of the commitment of the team members to the development of the region. De Vries warns for the banalisation of desires for development by the development apparatus. He pleads for not compromising the personal desire for development, which means a refusal of the 'betrayal of development by the anti-politics machine'. The team members of the DIAR project did not compromise their desires for development; they expressed their disagreements with each other, the team leader or DGIS.

## 4.5 Conclusion

This last paragraph aims at answering the main research question of this thesis:

"How could we explain the existence of highly different stories about the DIAR project and what are the theoretical implications of this interpretative discrepancy for our understanding of the functioning of the development apparatus?"

In this thesis the different perspectives of the actors involved in the DIAR project were studied by focusing on the personal experiences of these actors. The actor theory as described by Norman Long provided a foundation for this approach, as he perceives development as a socially constructed process. Also the perspectives of DGIS as an institutional actor, and those of people who were involved in other Dutch development projects were studied.

This led to a multiplicity of different insights which were often contradictory. Therefore, it can be argued that there was an interpretative discrepancy between the different actors; some described the DIAR project as a failure, while others were more positive about the impacts of the project. As described by Mosse, success and failure are normative concepts and interpretations. Therefore, this thesis will not assess whether the DIAR project should be seen as a success or failure.

In the descriptions of the people who had been involved in the DIAR project; it was clear that they were driven by the desire to improve the conditions of the local population. They were directly involved in the development process at the local level, while DGIS was involved in the development process at an institutional and multinational level. Certain cases, for example the conflicts which took place in the project, can be seen as examples in which the desires of the people involved were banalised by the development apparatus as is described by De Vries.

As there was a large distance between what happened on the local level, and the decisions taken at the institutional level, it can be generally argued that the DIAR project was not an example of a development intervention in which the development apparatus aimed at obtaining control over the objects of development or at increasing bureaucratic state power. Therefore, the team members of the DIAR project were too personally committed to bringing development and improving local conditions. The local people in the Chocó perceive the DIAR project as a relevant development intervention, as it increased the ethnical consciousness in the region. This is one of the instrument effects as distinguished by Ferguson;

despite his skepticism concerning development interventions, the DIAR project had a politicizing impact in the region. However, as described, this was achieved because of the personal commitment of the people involved. Therefore, it can be argued that Escobar's description of the development apparatus is too narrow to apply to development interventions at the local level; the DIAR project indicates that people who work on 'bringing development' have agency to achieve positive results in the development process, despite the power of the development apparatus.

At last, the DIAR project provides an example of how the development apparatus reproduces itself through failures. At the end of the DIAR project, the process approach was seen as a failure, and thus new policies and approaches were formulated.

## 4.6 Final considerations

The conclusions above were the inspiration for the following recommendations for further research:

- Considering Escobar's theory on the functioning of the development apparatus, it would be interesting to further study the agency of people who are working in the development apparatus. As shown in the DIAR project, the commitment and desire of these people to improve the local situation are a strong force, and can impact the development process in another direction than intended by the development apparatus.
- When focusing on a development project as a whole, the banalisation of desires for development by the development apparatus as described by De Vries is often visible. It would be interesting to find out if this banalisation is recognized by the local actors themselves, and to reflect about ways to counter such banalisation.
- The DIAR project was an example, within the development apparatus, of a project where different perspectives exist, mainly between the project team and the DGIS diplomats. This comes as no surprise as they have different positions in the development process and a different relation to the project region. Although this maybe is not a very renewing topic, I would find it interesting to further study the different realities which exist between the different actors in development interventions; the local population, the people involved in the interventions, and the controllers in Ministries of Development Cooperation.

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Wageningen

Annex : Complete list of DGIS dossiers studied for this thesis

DLA 1975-1984

880	Bezoeken aan Colombia, Deel II
883	Nederland, Technische samenwerking Deel IV
45 t/m 54	Projecten algemeen
55	Chocó algemeen
56 t/m 60	Chocó, Regionale ontwikkeling Deel I t/m V
892 t/m 897	Geen titel vermeld, maar valt waarschijnlijk onder: Chocó, Regionale ontwikkeling Deel VI t/m XI
911	Chocó, regionale ontwikkeling. Col 76/05. Bijlagendossier: eindrapport
63	Chocó, gezondheidsprojecten
64, 65, 917	Chocó, radio en tv project Deel I t/m III
66	Chocó, kleine weggetjes
958	Teamleidersvergadering Deel I (1977-1984)
900	Proyecto Aguas subterranas Costa Atlantica
67	CONIF col. Deel 1
899	Coöperatieve boerderij Atratacuara Deel III
918	CIAF fotointerpretatieproject Deel XIV
948	Grondwateronderzoek Deel V
910	Grondwateronderzoek: CALL-INSFOPAL Deel I en II
176/177	Alternatieve landbouwsystemen Deel I t/m VI
926 t/m 929	Alternatieve landbouwsystemen Deel I t/m VI
938	Telecommunicatieproject
274 t/m 287	Programa de cooperacion para el desarrollo Holanda-Colombia Anexo 1 t/m 17

DLA 1985-1990

- Colombia/ler/programma de pequeños proyectos productivos. osla/1985-1990/01197
- Colombia algemeen. osla/1985-1990/00575
- Colombia algemeen. osla/1985-1990/01883
- Colombia algemeen, financiële aangelegenheden. osla/1985-1990/01890
- Colombia algemeen, mensenrechten inzake ontwikkelingssamenwerking osla/1985-1990/01884
- Colombia algemeen, projectlijst. osla/1985-1990/01889
- Colombia, contact bedrijfsleven inzake project Chocó diar. osla/1985-1990/00622
- Colombia, landen evaluatierapport. osla/1985-1990/00002
- Colombia, missie Chocó diar. osla/1985-1990/00574
- Colombia, missies. osla/1985-1990/00566
- Colombia, overzichten en rapporten. osla/1985-1990/00576
- Colombia, resultaat stage onderzoek. osla/1985-1990/00577
- Colombia, sectorprogramma en industriële ontwikkeling. osla/1985-1990/00271
- Colombia, seminars, conferenties en congressen. osla/1985-1990/01888
- Colombia, technische samenwerking. osla/1985-1990/00272
- Colombia, landen en regioprogramma. osla/1985-1990/00581
- Colombia, landen en regioprogramma. osla/1985-1990/01789
- Colombia, landen en regioprogramma. osla/1985-1990/00147
- Colombia, landen en regioprogramma. osla/1985-1990/00326
- Colombia, landen en regioprogramma, bosbouw. osla/1985-1990/01266
- Colombia, landen en regioprogramma, bosbouw. osla/1985-1990/01793
- Colombia, landen en regioprogramma, Chocó- diar. osla/1985-1990/01808
- Colombia, landen en regioprogramma, Chocó- diar. osla/1985-1990/01797
- Colombia, landen en regioprogramma, Chocó- diar. osla/1985-1990/01796
- Colombia, landen en regioprogramma, Chocó- diar. osla/1985-1990/00867

- Colombia, landen en regioprogramma, Chocó- diar. osla/1985-1990/00030
- Colombia, landen en regioprogramma, Chocó- diar. osla/1985-1990/00031
- Colombia, landen en regioprogramma, Chocó- diar. osla/1985-1990/00283
- Colombia, landen en regioprogramma, Chocó- diar. osla/1985-1990/00284
- Colombia, landen en regioprogramma, Chocó- diar. osla/1985-1990/00584
- Colombia, landen en regioprogramma, Chocó- diar. osla/1985-1990/00585
- Colombia, landen en regioprogramma, conif geïntegreerd programma van onderzoek. osla/1985-1990/00034
- Colombia, landen en regioprogramma, conif geïntegreerd programma van onderzoek. osla/1985-1990/00035
- Colombia, landen en regioprogramma, mensenrechtenproject. osla/1985-1990/01820
- Colombia, landen en regioprogramma, alternatieve landbouwsystemen. osla/1985-1990/00037
- Colombia, landen en regioprogramma, alternatieve landbouwsystemen. osla/1985-1990/00038
- Colombia, landen en regioprogramma, alternatieve landbouwsystemen. osla/1985-1990/00039
- Colombia, landen en regioprogramma, alternatieve landbouwsystemen. osla/1985-1990/00040
- Colombia, landen en regioprogramma, alternatieve landbouwsystemen. osla/1985-1990/00041
- Colombia, landen en regioprogramma, alternatieve landbouwsystemen. osla/1985-1990/00287
- Colombia, landen en regioprogramma, alternatieve landbouwsystemen. osla/1985-1990/00288
- Colombia, landen en regioprogramma, alternatieve landbouwsystemen. osla/1985-1990/00289
- Colombia, landen en regioprogramma, fonds voor ondersteuning o.s. activiteiten. osla/1985-1990/01843
- Colombia, landen en regioprogramma, fotointerpretatieproject. osla/1985-1990/00033
- Colombia, landen en regioprogramma, gezondheidszorg medio Atrato. osla/1985-1990/01807
- Colombia, l&r, pec regionale ontwikkeling. osla/1985-1990/01212
- Colombia, l&r, programma de pequeños proyectos productivos. osla/1985-1990/000613
- Colombia, l&r, programma de pequeños proyectos productivos. osla/1985-1990/01204
- Colombia, l&r, programma de pequeños proyectos productivos. osla/1985-1990/00843
- Colombia, projecten in eigen beheer. osla/1985-1990/00281
- Colombia, l&r, teamleidersvergadering. osla/1985-1990/00321
- Colombia, ler, programa campesino chocoana. osla/1985-1990/01209
- Colombia, ler, financiële hulp. osla/1985-1990/01311
- Colombia, ler, financiële hulp code choco. osla/1985-1990/01653
- Colombia, ler, programa campesino chocoana. osla/1985-1990/01645
- Colombia, ler, programa campesino chocoana. osla/1985-1990/01646
- Colombia, o.s. beleid derde landen. osla/1985-1990/01788
- Colombia, onderzoek en onderwijs. osla/1985-1990/00877
- Colombia, plattelandsontwikkeling. osla/1985-1990/01891

