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Research exercise: ETHOS A Review on the Importance of Maintaining Standards in Appropriate Technology

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ETHOS: A Review on the Importance of Maintaining Standards in Appropriate Technology

“If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us struggle together” ~anonymous

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Objective -

To review the importance of Appropriate Technology as it applies to the practical implementation of ETHOS projects. This is pre-work for an ETHOS immersion in Aurouville, India for projects focused on energy consultation with locals and the construction of wind turbines.



Introduction -

What are the goals of the ETHOS program?

- *Appropriate Technology*: do more with less
- *Cultural Sensitivity*: respect inherent values of the culture
- *Partnership*: spread hope
- *Cultural Immersion*: act in solidarity through service
- *Personal Transformation*: let the world change you

What is Appropriate Technology?

It is generally recognized as the application of technology for the purpose of development that is “small-scale, decentralized, labor-intensive, energy-efficient, environmentally sound, and locally controlled.” (Hazeltine)

3



Why is Appropriate Technology an essential consideration in implementing ETHOS projects?

In general, the GOAL of these projects is to identify a need and fill it in order to enrich the quality of life of the locals. One of the most important parts of an ETHOS immersion is being sensitive to the needs of the community in which you work, and finding the best solution for them considering the resources and expertise the locals have access to.

Evidence in favor of Appropriate Technology

- Learning from past examples

EXAMPLE: Solar ovens to replace traditional three stone fires

PROS: this would decrease (1) deforestation and (2) carbon emissions by reducing the need for wood fires.

CONS: (1) on cloudy/rainy days these ovens do not work as efficiently. (2) smoke from wood burning three stone fires abates insect activity - without smoke to keep them away the potential for insect borne diseases would increase.

Conclusions -

Using the most advanced technology will do little good in an area where the resources to maintain it are not readily available. This is why many development projects have failed in the past. In terms of water and sanitation systems alone, “An appalling 35 to 50 percent of systems in developing countries become inoperable after five years.” (USAID 1981, quoted by Improve International).

So, why are so many development projects failing?

One reason is lack of local materials & local know-how to maintain projects - they are TOO COMPLEX!

There are also cultural considerations.

4



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