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**PROGRAM PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT: STEPS AND
CONCEPTUAL APPROACH¹**

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PROGRAM PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT: STEPS AND CONCEPTUAL APPROACH'

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Introduction

Good programs don't just happen. They are the result of careful consideration as to why the organization exists and what it and its members want to accomplish. The programs offered by an organization project an image which will either attract new people or turn them away. Programs which are well planned can ensure better results both to the organization as well as to the clients it serves. The process of planning and developing a program takes a lot of efforts and time. A good and a comprehensive plan usually cannot be done by one person alone. It needs the cooperation and collaborative efforts from related parties (individuals, groups, and organizations).

The purpose of this paper is to present an overview of several key concepts and steps involve in program development, with emphasis on planning. There are numerous planning models available in the literature. However, I will only attempt to discuss some of the pertinent concepts and approaches relevant to the process of developing a program. Therefore, detail discussions on some related issues will not be included in the paper. Nevertheless, my hope is that the paper will serve as a starting point to generate interest and further discussion amongst members present in this workshop.

Concept of Planning

Let me start by looking at the concept of planning within the framework of program development. Boone (1985) had defined Program development is a comprehensive, systematic, and proactive

process. It is designed to facilitate desirable changes in the behaviour of people and the environment or system in which they live. In the context of Program development, planning can be defined as a process of identifying organizational goals and objectives, developing programs or services to accomplish those objectives, and evaluating the success of those programs vis-à-vis the stated objectives (Kast and Rosenzweig, 1974). The product of a planning process is a plan or a formalized written document. It determines which objectives and services will be allocated various resources (McClure, 1978). Organizations cannot do everything; therefore, they must allocate resources on priority basis to do those activities that lead to the effective accomplishment of goals and objectives.

Program planning is deciding what needs to be done, and who does what, when and where. The two key elements in successful program planning are the program or project itself and the interest or needs and involvement of group members. Boyle (1981) suggests several steps which can help an organization choose and plan a successful program which involve and interest the members of the organization. The steps are diagrammatically presented below.

