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CLASSIFICATION

PROJECT EVALUATION SUMMARY (PES) -- PART I

Report Symbol U-44

1. PROJECT TITLE	2. PROJECT NUMBER	3. MISSION/AID/W OFFICE
Urban and Regional Analysis	931-1092	DS/UD 32p

4. EVALUATION NUMBER (Enter the number maintained by the reporting unit e.g., Country or AID/W Administrative Code, Fiscal Year, Serial No. beginning with No. 1 each FY) 1

☒ REGULAR EVALUATION ☐ SPECIAL EVALUATION

5. KEY PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION DATES			6. ESTIMATED PROJECT FUNDING	7. PERIOD COVERED BY EVALUATION
A. First PRO-AG or Equivalent FY 76	B. Final Obligation Expected FY 79	C. Final Input Delivery FY 79	A. Total $ 525 B. U.S. $ 435	From (month/yr.) 1/78 To (month/yr.) 10/78 Date of Evaluation Review

8. ACTION DECISIONS APPROVED BY MISSION OR AID/W OFFICE DIRECTOR

A. List decisions and/or unresolved issues; cite those items needing further study. (NOTE: Mission decisions which anticipate AID/W or regional office action should specify type of document, e.g., airgram, SPAR, PIO, which will present detailed request.)	B. NAME OF OFFICER RESPONSIBLE FOR ACTION	C. DATE ACTION TO BE COMPLETED
This project was evaluated 8 Nov. 1978 and there are no major issues or problems which will delay the accomplishment of the purpose for which this project was approved. See attached report of conference in which three field subprojects were assessed. Final Report on "Excerpts from Final Report Seminar on Urban and Regional Analysis in Central America", by Practical Concepts Incorporated, dated April 30 1978, is available through: DS/DIU Room 105 RPC, SA-18 Agency for International Development Washington, DC 20523 (235-1000)		

9. INVENTORY OF DOCUMENTS TO BE REVISED PER ABOVE DECISIONS

- ☐ Project Paper
- ☐ Financial Plan
- ☐ Logical Framework
- ☐ Project Agreement
- ☐ Implementation Plan e.g., CPI Network
- ☐ PIO/T
- ☐ PIO/C
- ☐ PIO/P
- ☐ Other (Specify) _____
- ☐ Other (Specify) _____

10. ALTERNATIVE DECISIONS ON FUTURE OF PROJECT

- A. ☒ Continue Project Without Change
- B. ☐ Change Project Design and/or ☐ Change Implementation Plan
- C. ☐ Discontinue Project

11. PROJECT OFFICER AND HOST COUNTRY OR OTHER RANKING PARTICIPANTS AS APPROPRIATE (Names and Titles)

John W. Dickey
Office of Urban Development
Bureau for Development Support

12. Mission/AID/W Office Director Approval

Signature: William R. Miner

Typed Name: William R. Miner

Date: 13 November 1978

931109200680 1

EXCERPTS FROM FINAL REPORT SEMINAR ON URBAN AND REGIONAL ANALYSIS IN CENTRAL AMERICA

Presented to:

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Director
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April 30, 1978

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION I: Executive Summary

SECTION II: NEXT STEPS FOR IMPROVING URBAN AND REGIONAL ANALYSIS

"Urban Analysis versus Project Identification: Bridging the Gap," by Dr. Barclay Hudson

"Urban Analysis Conference, San Jose, Costa Rica 16-17 February 1978," by Dr. Bruce Herrick

"Practical Concepts for Improving Urban and Regional Analysis," by Dr. Lawrence D. Posner

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

"Urban and Regional Analysis (URA) in Central America" was the subject of a seminar in San Jose, Costa Rica on February 16-17, 1978. The participants discussed experience in Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Panama using Guidelines prepared by Richard E. Rhoda of AID's Office of Urban Development.

The first day participants discussed the depth and scope of analysis appropriate for URAs. The conclusion was the three experiences were so different that generalization was not very helpful. However, there was clearly a gap between the URA and well-designed projects to improve the welfare of the poor.

The second day was much more lively than the first. Workshops discussed how each URA could have been improved and the discussion was much more concrete about problems and ideas for improvement.

Section III presents three papers prepared after the seminar on how to improve URAs.

Appendix B includes three thoughtful papers about URAs prepared before the seminar to stimulate thinking about the experiences in Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Panama.

The participants evaluated the seminar favorably as follows using scales from "plus two" for strongly positive to "minus two" for strongly negative:

1. "The issues I considered important were treated (1.00)."
2. "The seminar took sufficient advantage of my ideas and experience (.43)."
3. "I learned something valuable in the seminar (1.24)."
4. "My general evaluation of the seminar (1.06)."

Complete results from the evaluation appear in Appendix D.

SECTION II
NEXT STEPS FOR IMPROVING URBAN AND REGIONAL ANALYSIS

PCI requested three papers on next steps to improve URA's. The intent was to build upon what was said in the Seminar and go beyond it to stimulate further thinking. The papers were prepared by Dr. Bruce Herrick, Dr. Barclay Hudson, and Dr. Lawrence Posner. Other participants who have ideas to contribute are encouraged to communication with Dr. Posner at PCI and/or with the AID Office of Urban Development.

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Urban Analysis versus Project Identification:

Bridging the Gap

Barclay Hudson
for
Practical Concepts, Inc.
February 21, 1978

Conclusions from the "Seminario Sobre Analysis
Urbano y Regional (AUR) en America Central"
Hotel Torremolinos
San Jose, Costa Rica
16-17 Febrero 1978

Barclay Hudson
21 February 1978

Background

This report is a postscript to the "Torremolinos Conference" on Urban and Regional Analysis, convened to compare the experiences of Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Panama in applying the AID Guidelines for Urban and Regional Analysis.*

On the second day of the conference, an attempt was made to get beyond generalizations and look more deeply into the special character of each country's own conclusions about the usefulness of the Guidelines. Conference participants divided into country-by-country workshops, each involving host government users of the analysis, foreign consultants, and representatives of the analysis team itself.**

In Costa Rica, the Guidelines had been applied to the design of an Urban Sector Assessment on San Jose, which had been carried out in 1977.*** During the two-hour workshop on Costa Rica, considerable attention was given to the question of how much the Urban Sector Assessment had actually contributed to the identification of practical projects and programs for poverty intervention. The sense of the group was: Not much. Project identification had not been helped much by the analysis, or by any subsequent reading of the Final Report. Of course, it may have been too early to tell at the conference, but five months had passed since delivery of the report, and the general feeling was that practical suggestions for taking action had not risen to the surface, either in the Final Report itself, or in the minds of others who may have been stimulated by reading it.

This in itself was not astonishing: analysis and planning documents are often filed and forgotten. But Costa Rica was supposed to have been different, and so were the Guidelines. The Urban Sector Assessment was promoted by AID/Washington to serve the very practical purposes of its own resource allocation and programming, as well as that of host country counterparts. The Guidelines themselves were an attempt to take a vast literature on urban and regional planning from academic sources and convert it to the language, problem solving tasks, and working context of people engaged in the everyday operations of technical assistance and foreign aid. Those in the Torremolinos workshop, however, felt that analysis had not led to policy, due to

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*"Guidelines for Urban and Regional Analysis: Types of Analysis Applicable to A.I.D. Activities." Richard E. Rhoda, author. Office of Urban Development, Bureau for Technical Assistance, Agency for International Development, U.S. Department of State. Washington, D.C. 20523. October 1976.

**The Costa Rica contingent at the seminar included Edward Butler, Jose Antonio Calvo, Mario Delgado, Daniel Driver, Vinicio Gonzalez, Hernan Gutierrez, Bruce Herrick, Barclay Hudson, Carlos Montero, Emilia Rodriguez, and David Straley. Most but not all of these participated in the special two-hour workshop on Costa Rica.

***"Urban Assessment of San Jose, Costa Rica: Focus on Poverty." San Jose, September 21, 1977.

either the Guidelines, or the way they were applied in Costa Rica, or the way the analysis itself was carried out, or the way it elicited response. Participants in the workshop sought the reasons, and reasons soon became apparent. They are listed below--ten of them.

Three things have to be made clear about this summary. First, the problems below were perceived problems, and not necessarily the real ones or the most important ones. Some of them involved misperceptions of other people's intentions. Some were the result of special circumstances surrounding the Sector Assessment in San Jose, while others reflected the classic and unavoidable dilemmas of technical assistance. Nevertheless, some of the perceived problems listed are undoubtedly real, and capable of being corrected in future efforts to carry out policy analysis aimed at poverty intervention.

Second, the problems listed here do not necessarily represent perceptions by the group as a whole, but in some cases represent minority opinions, or the perception of one person. I have tried to render accurately the variety of views expressed by workshop members. Nevertheless I have gone considerably beyond mere reporting, in order to present views and interpretations of my own, based on my 1977 experience in Costa Rica as foreign consultant working on the Urban Sector Assessment, and evaluator of the Guidelines' adaptability to the Costa Rican context.

Finally, the "ten points" need to be read keeping in mind the basic issues: Why did the Urban Assessment fall short in specifying policy interventions for Costa Rica; and why they were vague, especially when it came to defining the distinctive needs of the poor. This is a double issue, really: the practicality of the analysis regarding project identification; and the adequacy of the analysis in focusing on poor people as beneficiaries of any project, programs, or policies proposed.

The Ten Points: Gaps Between Analysis and Project Design to Serve the Poor.

1. The problem of superimposition. (The academic bias; the problems of integrating diverse frames of reference.)

The Guidelines were an heroic effort to convert a somewhat sterile and unconvincing literature on regional development into a vital statement of cause-effect linkages that decision-makers need to consider in programming resources. The Guidelines continue the best traditions of PPBS, MBO, and logical framework applications, in attempting to relate means and ends, to make narrow resource allocation decisions sensitive to a larger vision of consequences, and to help create a greater sense of shared context for individual actions. The Guidelines, like these other approaches, ask simple, important questions.

But like PPBS, they ask "organization men" to think in terms of a larger, different (and in some ways threatening) frame of reference for decisions. They are being asked to adopt a viewpoint originating outside their own agency, and having policy implications operating at cross-purposes with their own. (If the Guidelines did not have this effect in changing people's sense of mission, they would not be fulfilling their basic purpose.) Nevertheless, the superimposition of any new viewpoint is often met with mistrust, resistance, and attempts (often unconscious) to insulate decisions from the implications of new directives. This is a common, almost universal pattern, that is well documented in reviews of experience with implementing PPBS in federal, state and local agencies in the U.S.; and it is fully predictable from theories of organizational development.

To summarize: the Guidelines have attempted to bridge the gap from academic models, methods, and language, to more traditional organizational frames of reference for decision-making. As might have been expected, the new ideas were difficult to integrate with the more established ones. Although there was no overt resistance, attempts to integrate different perspectives were half-hearted. As usually happens with externally-imposed planning requirements, the analysis tends to remain somewhat of a facade, or mask.*

As footnote to this discussion, there exists a useful body of literature on the problems of forcing or assisting an organization to become more sensitive to its larger environment. A central thesis of this literature is as follows: that in a "dynamic" environment (comprising new demands for responsiveness, new technological opportunities for response, new scientific methods for treating problems), organizations facing such conditions must actively promote highly differentiated viewpoints within their own staff. Consequently however, they must also make extreme efforts to re-integrate these different problem perspectives when it comes to formulating policy.** In the Urban Sector Assessment of San Jose, no such "extreme effort" was attempted. On the contrary, as work pressures grew with the impending deadline for delivery

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*See Faber and Seers, The Crisis In Planning, 1972.

**This theory, often identified with the work of Paul Lawrence and Jay Lorsch (1967) has been summarized and applied to technical assistance problems in Hudson, Davis et al, 1976, Chap. 3.

of the final report, the analysis team became increasingly fragmented, as divisions of labor were worked out in order to get the product completed.

Another footnote is deserved, regarding "superimposition" of Guidelines. The academic tradition which provided the analytic framework for the Guidelines was characterized above as "sterile" and "unconvincing." Not all would agree with that judgment but the following points should be noted: (a) Much of the existing theory of urban and regional development is too abstract to have recognizable fit to any particular setting, and is therefore unreliable for generating policy implications; (b) theories derived from one setting often prove "wrong" when applied elsewhere. They have limited transferability; (c) the literature cited in the Guidelines makes little reference to Latin American conditions, or theories developed in Latin America, even though there is a long and strong Latin tradition of urban and regional planning (beginning several hundred years before textbooks began appearing on the subject in the U.S.); and (d) there is a growing feeling among U.S. analysts and planners that the traditional models are seriously flawed by a bias toward preserving political-economic structures that are themselves the cause of urban regional problems, at least as they affect the poor and powerless. (See pp. 30-33 in the Final Report on the San Jose Urban Sector Assessment.)

2. Analysts as technicians rather than policy-makers.

Although the Urban Sector Assessment in Costa Rica was housed in the National Planning Office (OFIPLAN), the Assessment team itself had little perspective on national policy. Most saw themselves in technical roles without policy formulation or project identification responsibilities. Most felt that policy-making would come at a stage subsequent to the analysis itself, and would be left up to others. Policy implications were added to chapters at a late stage of drafting the Final Report, but without systematic consultation with Costa Rican policy-makers. (AID officers, however, did take a hand in this, being more aware of the need for links between analysis and program design in areas of foreign aid for which they were themselves responsible.)

In fact, tentative policy directions had already been specified in advance, emphasizing housing and employment generation projects. The Urban Sector Assessment could have been used to systematically explore, critique, modify and/or reaffirm the design of these earlier policy formulations. This was not done and in my own view, it was a badly missed opportunity from the standpoint that broad analysis of the type suggested by the Guidelines is only useful when it can be sufficiently focused, for example by examining the pros and cons of a definite but malleable plan of action set out at the beginning, in accordance with local political realities, and reinforcing efforts already underway.

3. Foreign technical assistance: a "tender trap."

Project identification was not a central mandate either of the Guidelines or the Urban Sector Assessment in Costa Rica. In each case, the broad scope of analysis considered "minimum" more than exhausted the time and energy available, and this ruled out serious attention to more "peripheral" concerns, including project identification.

In theory, the Guidelines and Sector Assessment both provided sufficient flexibility for analysts to seize initiative and make them more pragmatically oriented toward action implications. In practice, however, this was not a

real option: (a) time pressures reduced scope of work to the minimum absolutely required. (b) The definition of "minimum" was itself negotiable in theory, but in practice analysts were aware that the scope of analysis had been originally defined by AID (in the Guidelines) and had already been re-negotiated (in the Urban Sector Assessment "Project Agreement"). (c) There was a strong reluctance to press AID/Washington or AID/Costa Rica for further changes, given that this might jeopardize either the timing or amount of funds poised for release on projects already identified. (d) There was no overt threat of this kind, so far as is known. The danger was simply a perceived one, reflecting a normal (and otherwise productive) attempt to "look between the lines" of stated intentions. It was felt, perhaps, that doing anything different than the "minimum" - which meant doing less than the "minimum" as previously negotiated - would be seen as "irresponsible" in Washington. The fact that more than the minimum would have also been carried would not offset the Washington's disappointment. After all, it was AID's study - designed by them, supervised by them, and analytically cast toward sectors which Washington was interested in funding (housing and employment). The flexibility that was there in principle was ruled out by the context of implicit expectations.

4. Political flux.

The Urban Sector Assessment was completed in Costa Rica five months before the national presidential elections, and at a time when leadership was changing within OFIPLAN itself. Uncertainties about the political context also inclined the analysis team to remain unspecific about the kinds of projects implicated by the Sector Assessment. The less said, the more free hand was left for the emerging new leadership.

The same might be said about the political context in Washington. None of the analysts was completely sure about the degree of consensus or scope of divergent opinion in Washington regarding key determinants of project identification: how to define "the poor;" how closely projects had to serve U.S. economic interests; how much tolerance there was for politically risky programs, such as community organization for self-help development. Uncertainty of this kind reflects in part the newness of the Carter Administration; but also the normal (and healthy) divergence of thinking within AID/Washington.

5. The bias toward "objectivity"

There is a pervasive belief that analysis can be more "objective" if it avoids a preconceived idea of policy conclusions that might result from it. Some observers (including this writer) would disagree, pointing out that: (a) it was already too late to ignore "preconceived" solutions in Costa Rica, where housing and employment had already been identified as focal sectors for AID intervention; (b) implicit biases always exist toward some projects anyway, and these can only be overcome by making the biases explicit and subjecting them to systematic critical analysis. (This can be approached through the "assumptions" column of the logical framework; or by a fortiori analysis, in connection with other types of sensitivity analysis; or by dialectical scanning.)

On the other hand, the analysis team in Costa Rica attempted to avoid biasing the analysis of urban problems toward preconceived solutions. For

example, an attempt was made to conceptualize poverty in a variety of ways, some of which were clearly not likely to support the choice of projects in housing and employment generation. In striving for this breadth of viewpoint, the analysts sought to avoid pre-mature closure on the "poverty problem." The Final Report of the Sector Assessment did not undermine the logic of housing and employment projects as appropriate projects; but it did suggest in important ways that poverty was not going to be solved by these programs alone. It also suggested that the policies needed to complement housing and employment generation would require both (a) political support of a type not yet articulated in Costa Rica, and (b) a different vision of "economic and social development" than the traditional view incorporated into the Urban and Regional Analysis Guidelines (see Final Report, pp. 30-33). In this context, the analysts were not able to go very far in identifying projects other than those already contemplated in the housing and employment sectors.

6. Avoiding duplicative efforts.

The Urban Sector Assessment put little emphasis on project identification in part because there was a parallel study already in progress (also AID-sponsored) which was designed to do just that. The Urban Environment Analysis, focussing on housing and employment strategies, was being carried out with participation of some of the same AID-provided staff who had a hand in the Sector Assessment, and definition of projects in both studies must have seemed redundant.

The sense of "going over the same ground" may have been felt even more acutely by those familiar with earlier studies (both AID- and Costa Rican-financed), dealing with the overall problems of poverty, regional development, and urban strategy coordination. Those earlier studied were alluded to in terms of their existence, but scarcely in terms of their substance, at least for their bearing on policy. Had the Guidelines' intentions been realized in providing a genuinely innovative approach to policy analysis, and transcended the traditional, sector-by-sector framework of policy analysis, the sense of deja vu might have been overcome. Housing and employment policies might have been approached with a fresh appreciation of inter-sectoral linkages, indirect effects, and unrealized opportunities: how to get the poor employed in delivering solutions to their own problems? How to ensure that the poor benefit as suppliers of the biggest single item in "poverty budgets" - food? Based on findings from previous analyses of agriculture and nutrition in Costa Rica, what would it take to develop urban-based agriculture in San Jose, along the lines of large-scale experiments elsewhere? The Final Report was explicit in acknowledging that such issues are not likely to be treated within the analytical framework proposed by the Guidelines.

7. Not by projects alone.

Yet another reason why the Urban Sector Analysis "failed" to specify projects was a feeling that this may not have been as important as specification of policies. For example, a policy might consist of working through community organizations, or strengthening the stabilized territorial identity of upwardly mobile groups, or developing appropriate salary guidelines to attract marginal workers into the labor force, or incentives to encourage appropriate technology. These could have a strong and pervasive impact going beyond the scope of any particular project or set of investments. They would be especially relevant to

ensuring that subsequent projects, however chosen, would be selectively beneficial to the poor; and this might be more important than the selection among projects themselves.

8. "Selective Outreach" to the Poor: Projects without clear distributional impacts.

Here the question shifts from neglect of project identification to neglect of their distributional impacts. One reason why the analysis fell short in addressing the distinctive needs of the poor reflects the apriori choice of focus on "urban infrastructure." Can a street be said to serve the poor? Can a new factory serve the poor, if the most qualified applicants are well above the poverty line?

It turns out that this problem of concentrating benefits on the truly poor is especially challenging in Costa Rica. As the Urban Sector Assessment itself revealed, poverty is not very spatially concentrated in San Jose. Three quarters of the "poor" (defined by subsistence-level income poverty lines) live outside slum areas. The slums themselves show a remarkable intermixing of rich and poor. Consequently, the focusing of anti-poverty programs on slum areas is not likely to be very selective in reaching the poor, unless accompanied by the other measures to reach people truly in need. Costa Rica has taken major strides in developing selective out-reach to the poor, through its family assistance program (asignaciones familiares). The Urban Sector Assessment perhaps gave too little attention to the unique opportunities to build on Costa Rican experience in selective outreach programs of this type, as part of any project design or policy formulation effort designed to reach the poor.

This discussion is especially important from a Washington perspective, given the general disillusionment with models of development that assume "trickle down" of benefits from rich to poor; and given the increasing congressional concern with poverty groups as "targets" of international aid; given also the increased world-wide concern with "basic needs" (rather than aggregate GNP) as the object of development strategies; and given the tendency for Costa Rica to be viewed as a relatively "well-off" country without need for foreign aid--an illusion perpetrated by the failure to pull out the threads of poverty from the heterogeneous fabric of statistical averages applying to this country.

9. Problems in defining poverty, and derived problems of appropriate policy.

Another gap between analysis and project identification also bears on "selective outreach to the poor." Success will depend greatly on how one conceives of "poverty." According to one view, poverty might derive from lack of capital and income, reflected in local economic conditions and physically deteriorated real estate. If "poverty" is conceived in these terms, solutions logically follow in housing and employment-generation programs. Another theory, however, conceives of poverty as a state of mind; one version is summed up as a "culture of poverty;" another as the "culture of wealth" inflicted by the pernicious addictions of mass consumption. Other concepts of poverty allude to multinational monopolies over the means of production, and the dominance of inappropriate technologies; or "dependency theory" regarding core-periphery relationships within national boundaries.

Each theory depicts its own spatial field of poverty processes and consequent "action-space" for poverty intervention; each theory sees the substance of poverty differently; each theory uses different analytical methods to describe poverty and weigh its significance; each theory uses a different epistemology to understand the phenomenon of poverty--some grounded in empiricism, others in experiential contact with the poor, others in ideology (for example, consciousness-raising about the interdependence of poverty and moral responsibilities of the analyst). Substance, action-space, methodology, epistemology are closely linked, and perhaps inseparable.

The Final Report of the San Jose Urban Sector Analysis listed seven different concepts of poverty, and acknowledged that only a couple of them fit within the scope of analysis laid out by the Guidelines. The resulting analysis was therefore quite modest in scope. The very idea of defining "project identification" as the ultimate outcome of the analysis could be interpreted as a highly restrictive mandate, insofar as some theories of poverty implicate the need for political-economic reforms of structures going far beyond mere "projects."

10. No new projects needed, but reinforcement of ongoing efforts.

The lack of projects identified by the analysis has a final explanation: the attempt may have been seen as counterproductive. There are already many imaginative and far reaching projects underway, some well-proven, others experimental. Among these, some clearly meritious programs are starving for support. Foreign aid selectively allocated among these existing programs could help assure that funds will be well spent, through administrative channels already mounted, and yielding benefits whose results (and relative focus on poor groups) can already be evaluated from past experience.

This assumes that (a) the most critical variables affecting success are not to be found in imported theories, but local conditions which dictate how successfully good ideas can be adapted to specific absorptive capacities for outside aid; (b) fresh new ideas are not the missing ingredient, but reinforcement of older, well-established efforts that have proven effective; (c) implementation efforts are tough enough without the additional problems of satisfying new analytical requirements to qualify for foreign assistance; (d) analysts rarely have enough field experience in poor communities to feel confident in evaluating the merits of existing programs; consequently their analysis is almost never oriented toward building on the best of ongoing efforts: instead, there is a pervasive bias toward "fresh starts." To people who have been struggling firsthand with problems of poverty in Costa Rica over the years, "fresh starts" may well appear ineffective and even threatening, insofar as new programs will end up competing for resources and political support. "Fresh starts" are likely to be derived from urban and regional analysis guidelines, not just because these guidelines provide a "broader perspective" on poverty problems, but also because the "expert" is relatively ignorant of local conditions, local successes, and local support for programs already underway.

To the extent this is true, and to the extent analysts recognized their ignorance in this respect, they may well have been wise in hesitating to draw policy implications from their own work.

Tactics for Project Identification: Uses of Short-Cut Analysis

There are no simple solutions for the range of problems cited above. In light of the previous discussion, however, two general suggestions are offered:

1. Identification of concrete projects should come at the beginning and mid-point of analysis, and not just at the end. (a) The projects initially proposed should be treated as a "null hypothesis" to be critically examined, modified, accepted, or rejected in favor of other options as the analysis procedes. (b) Halfway through the analysis a mid-point report should be submitted* and this should include recommendations on the need for revision of the initial "null project," based on analytical findings to date. (c) The final stage of analysis should further confirm or revise the "mid-point project" but in this later stage, the methods, scope and style of analysis should shift from the framework used earlier, in order to incorporate new viewpoints, acknowledge deficiencies in earlier assumptions, and correct some of the biases of a purely scientific, objective knowledge base in weighing the merits of policy options.

2. Alternative styles of analysis, beyond the tradition of urban and regional studies cited in the Guidelines, should be systematically catalogued and made available to all those concerned with designing and evaluating projects jointly sponsored by AID and host governments. Emphasis here should be on short-cut methods.

The first suggestion--identification of "null projects" and "mid-point projects"--has the following points in favor:

1. It helps orient new policies toward the much-neglected possibilities of building on the best of programs already operating locally.

2. It helps avoid re-inventing the wheel: potentially useful projects are obvious, especially if programs are intended to serve the poor and focus on basic needs. Employment and housing are natural candidates--and were indeed major policy targets in Costa Rica. But one could ask, why was food production not identified, especially as a potential employment sector for the urban poor, given the very high proportion of income that goes to food purchases among the poor, and given the high proportion of this cost that goes to middlemen? (There may have been good reasons why urban agriculture for and by the poor might have been rejected as a policy alternative; but was it ever seriously considered?)

3. Identification of projects in the beginning helps to make explicit the political considerations that dictate focus on some options and rule out others. This prior step avoids subsequent wasted effort on the part of analysts in considering politically meaningless options. (For example, in Costa Rica, how politically feasible would it have been to consider projects that tended to make the economy independent of U.S. or Central American economic interests?)

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*See Final Report recommendations of Barclay Hudson for Practical Concepts, Inc., December 1977.

4 Early identification of projects allows analysts to explore options in greater depth, and to do so with more critical insight, because the analysis can focus on specifics. For example, in close inspection of housing projects, one can ask: What is the history of success and failure of such projects in the country, and in other countries? What facts are problematic and need special analytical attention? What value premises are problematic? What cause-effect assumptions are problematic? What secondary impacts, both negative and positive, are involved, and what is their general magnitude, as a context for evaluating direct and intended effects? What other documents, reports, analyses, or expert opinions should be integrated into the weighing of pros and cons?

5. The Guidelines are explicit about the kinds of general analytical models and procedures available, but they can say little about studies and research previously done in any specific country on any specific problem. Nor can the Guidelines say anything about incorporation of specific evaluative studies of interventions reflecting a particular country's experience. This was a major shortcoming in the Costa Rica Urban Sector Assessment. These resources of experience and local knowledge and experience can never be incorporated into any analysis unless one starts by investigation the pros and cons of specific policy options.

6. Another advantage of beginning with concrete options is that it allows the analysts to go directly into the communities destined for assistance, and test the recipients' own reactions to the proposed projects. (Of course, one could simply ask people, "What do you want?" but such a broad question can be disorienting and may be greeted with suspicion, perhaps well-founded.)

7. The use of a "null-project" and "mid-point project" helps guide the analysts in their choice of their methods and data. The definiton of a mid-point project can also help insure delivery of a mid-point report, which is useful in itself. The mid-point report can constitute a demarkation line, albeit arbitrary, between the "core" tradition of urban analysis as contained in the Guidelines, and alternative styles which also deserve attention, as outlined below.

This leads to the second suggestion: provision for a "more appropriate technology" of project analysis, not to replace the Guidelines, but to complement them. Emphasis here is on short-cut methods, consistent with the general finding at Torremolinos that there was not enough time to undertake the range and depth of analysis sought by more traditional methods. Emphasis is also on methods that drew on intuition, acquired expertise, experience with the host country setting, or experience with proposed solutions in other settings. Less importance is given to strictly scientific criteria for presenting findings. The goal is more to sensitize policy makers to the overall shape of a problem, in terms of qualities that may be elusive to objective measurement, but subjectively shared and socially powerful in determining the significance of one proposal against another.

The following list is merely illustrative of alternative styles for evaluating urban projects. Most would be designed, carried out, or supervised by a team of experts, much as the Guidelines are presently interpreted

and implemented. The composition of expertise within the team would likely be shifted, however, to include an anthropologist and a spokesperson for the recipient community, represented either by a service delivery agent or neighborhood council official from a representative area. Under most circumstances, it would also be desirable to include specialists in the particular types of interventions proposed (labor economists, housing experts, cooperative agents, urban administration, community development professionals --depending on the nature of key constraints to project implementation). The economic and geographical perspectives stressed in the Guidelines would also need to be represented, but in lesser proportion on this team of, say, five to seven persons.

Short-cut Qualitative Analysis: Some Illustrations

1. Delphi analysis applied to the "assumptions" column of the logical framework. These are fairly standard techniques, the logframe drawing on planning and programming skills, and Delphi drawing on substantive expertise relating to ad hoc problem solving.

2. Systems analysis: schematic diagramming of strong links between policy interventions, goals, and indirect effects, mediated by environmental factors and strategy design variables. As a short-cut, qualitative methodology, systems analysis constitutes a heuristic technique rather than algorithm: links are specified by theory and judgment, not just empirical data (as distinct from operations research); multiple outcomes are considered simultaneously (as distinct from most optimization procedures); uncertainties are made explicit, including disagreements about facts, values, and cause-effect relationships (non-convergent opinions can be treated through sensitivity analysis in an "if...then" format); strategy elements are taken to include redesign of the system, or consideration of environmental factors as potentially malleable variables.

3. Field interviews with intended beneficiaries. These may be structured (participant observation, PADCO formats, links with existing outreach programs, special forums through neighborhood councils), or relatively informal (investigative journalism, photo-journalism, interviews with service agents, projective interpretation of photos by residents). Distinct findings are likely to emerge from structured vs. unstructured techniques, verbal information vs. visual images, outside observers vs. inside knowledge, individual views vs. opinions derived from groups. This does not mean the techniques are invalid, but it does mean that a mix of approaches is probably desirable, and the biases of each should be taken into account when selecting methods and interpreting results. (The same is true for supposedly "objective" analysis, whose biases are usually unrecognized unless juxtaposed with other methods.)

Note: involvement of beneficiary communities in project selection helps keep pressure on politicians to follow through with implementation. Another point to consider: the poor are among the foremost experts on poverty. They were not consulted, however, in the Urban Sector Assessment in Costa Rica, and the Guidelines give little attention to this option.

4. Tapping local knowledge networks. Examples: local neighborhood councils; DINADECO field agents; local newssheets; local banks that may be promoting "seed credits" (very small-scale loans in poor areas to identify good risks subsequently eligible for larger scale credit); voluntary agencies; family allowance administrators. The nature of "local knowledge networks" will vary greatly from one country to another. It is precisely this diversity--which makes them hard to generalize about--that also makes them sensitive to special local conditions affecting appropriate project design.

5. Selective injection of theory. One criticism of the Guidelines voiced at Torremolinos was that they were "too theoretical, not practical." But theory is practical, when it is relevant to understanding the effects of proposed interventions. It is a short-cut alternative to learning old lessons over again through trial and error. It is an alternative to lengthy ad hoc analysis in the sense that it makes hypothetical statements that can be verified or criticized by knowledgable people drawing on accumulated experience (local or otherwise).

In Costa Rica, selective expertise could have been used on key questions of the Urban Sector Assessment, that would have greatly contributed to the evaluation of proposed projects in housing and employment: an expert on alternative theories of poverty; an expert on tipologies of communities, with respect to their differing absorptive capacity for assistance (PADCO has begun to develop schemata for this in connection with housing programs); experts on urban economics (as opposed to laymen attempting to applying Guidelines derived from unfamiliar academic theories); experts on national politics, or the history of particular communities (not all experts are professionals); experts in the theory and practice of investigative journalism (the Peace Corps has used this approach in self-evaluation of field projects).

Two important points regarding selective injection of theory into project analysis and design: first, much depends on the confidence one can place in the individual expert, as to his/her personal qualities of sensitivity to decision-making as a mixture of technical and political considerations. Second, selective short-term use of "visiting experts" (whether from abroad or from the beneficiary community) requires the expert to learn quickly about the specific decision-making context at hand; and this is best accomplished by starting with "null projects" and tracing out their ramifications and uncertainties, rather than starting with an unfocussed overall assessment of "the situation."

All this would require basic changes in the way the Guidelines are applied: it calls for tentative project identification preceding analysis; greater mix of analytical techniques; greater commitment to sustaining current programs rather than superimposing untried new schemes; more face-to-face contact with the beneficiary communities; more emphasis on learning from local experience. With these provisions, both the Guidelines and ad hoc use of "visiting experts" can be better trusted, because the context for judging their validity becomes a more explicit and concretely defined frame of reference for judging the applicability of newcomers' ideas.

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NEXT STEPS FOR IMPROVING URBAN AND REGIONAL ANALYSIS

(Based on "Urban Analysis Conference, San Jose, Costa Rica")

by Dr. Bruce Herrick

Following our meeting in San Jose, I'd like to share what seem to be the most important reactions to urban analysis voiced at the conference, as well as some reflections stimulated by the proceedings themselves.

I. Reporting Conferees' Reactions

A number of interesting similarities and differences among the three countries (Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama) emerged that affect their urban and regional analysis efforts. Among the more noteworthy are:

- Scope of urban and regional analysis. The scope differed in each country. In Panama, responding to an explicit policy favoring decentralization, the analysis dealt exclusively with areas outside the capital. In Nicaragua, following extensive physical damage of the 1972 earthquake, the analysis emphasized areas near the capital but outside its immediate metropolitan boundaries. Finally, the Costa Rican analysis centered in the capital's metropolitan area and did not consider other urban districts.

- Regional planning. In all three countries, regional planning efforts have been made formal. One manifestation of the institutionalization of regional planning is the official division of each country into planning zones. In Nicaragua, eight zones have been distinguished; in Costa Rica, six; and in Panama, four.

- Continuing analysis. In each country, the urban analysis is a continuing process. The time necessary for completion in Panama was estimated, at the time of the conference to be six more weeks; for Costa Rica, four weeks. Past performance might lead us to some skepticism about these estimates. In Panama, the process has gone on for five years; in Costa Rica, "one more month" has been the estimated time necessary for completion since August 1977.

- Governmental change. All policy activities, and urban policies in particular, depend on the government in power. Uncertainties exist at present in at least two of the three countries. In Costa Rica, the February 1978 elections defeated the party that had been incumbent since 1970. Because the elected president is the leader of a loose coalition of political groups rather than heading a formal and long-lived party, it is difficult to anticipate the directions that policies might take. At the same time, in Nicaragua, mounting instability of the Somoza government leads to policy inaction until that situation is more clearly resolved.

- Primate city. Each of the three countries is, on a world scale, small. Each is governed from a primate city, i.e., from a city more than ten times as large as any other urban agglomeration in the country.

- Project background for analysis. Each of the urban analyses was the result of interest in a particular project, rather than being spontaneously generated by more general interest. In Nicaragua, earthquake reconstruction stimulated the analysis; in Costa Rica, housing; and in Panama, secondary cities. At least one study-team leader said that the urban analysis would not occur without outside funding. If so, this underscores the nature of the analysis as an activity imposed from outside, rather than one that is likely to gain its own momentum and on-going domestic finance.

- Flexibility of guidelines. The Rhoda guidelines were seen by all three countries as flexible rather than fixed. Some topics suggested in the guidelines were discarded in some cases; in others (Nicaragua), new topics were inserted.

- Office space. Problems of obtaining physical office space were reported by at least two of the study teams. This can be interpreted as another manifestation of the lack of enthusiasm for the analysis of the "cooperating" national planning organization.

Besides these similarities and differences in the process of urban analysis noted among the three countries, other analytical aspects deserve reporting here.

Cottage Industry. At least one study team commented very favorably on the attractions of what can be called, using language from the eighteenth and nineteenth century English industrial revolution, cottage industries. Their low requirement for urban infrastructural investment was emphasized. If workers work and live at the same site, needs for public transport, electricity, gas, water, sewerage, industrial park sites, etc. are diminished. Cottage industry is likely as well to be labor intensive, although paradoxically, it may use more capital per unit of output than more "modern," capital-intensive activities.

Plan coordination. The conference made abundantly clear the necessity for coordination, at some appropriately high level, of the plans and projects of the various ministries and autonomous agencies. Urban and regional planning, in particular, is likely to involve the activities of a wide variety of a country's public service agencies as well as private companies. This variety, in turn, led to the desire for overall coordination.

Foreign advisers. The discussion concluded that the best technical assistance to an urban and regional analysis from foreign advisers, was methodological, emphasizing research design and interpretation, and bringing news of state-of-the-art methods. Short-term advisers should leave behind sets of instructions. Language capabilities also play a large role in their effectiveness. If no terms of reference exist for a consultant, the discussants noted the variability in the effectiveness of his participation. Contracts, they suggested, ought to be drawn by the Ministry involved, and a national counterpart established. A try-out visit of, say, one week by the proposed adviser would act as an insurance policy. It would serve as an audition for the visiting expert, who could in principle be rejected after this short try-out.

Bottom-up planning. Bottom-up planning would recognize explicitly the notion of a culture of poverty and, in the words of one participant, would seek to "respect the poor as human beings and stop worrying about whether they'll become Communists." However, the same speaker who stressed respecting the poor also emphasized the possible role of adult education among them. That education, however, rather than underscoring the survival values built into their own culture, would transmit a set of largely middle-class values whose contribution might be more de-stabilizing than helpful in the lives of the poor. And the education -- or, more accurately, psychological conditioning -- that many of them have already received lead them to conceive of solutions to poverty as being handed down from above (from government, the grace of God, blind luck or fate, etc.). Involving people previously conditioned in this fashion in their planning process ("bottom-up planning") is difficult at best. We're not talking only of the poor here. A conditioned fatalism can be present as well among the municipal officials into whose hands project execution may fall.

II. Reflections

In addition to reporting some of the most noteworthy results of the discussion, I should like to record the following reflections that were stimulated by the conference. At least some of these reflections are the outcome of post-conference discussions with PCI personnel and other consultants.

Inter-institutional cooperation. The AID and government agency personnel present emphasized the necessity of cooperation among institutions, largely because many, if not most, of their working hours are spent in trying to ensure just that. The Nicaraguans had one concrete suggestion in this regard. They suggested that part-time "help" from other agencies was likely to prove unsatisfactory as an administrative arrangement. They concluded either that full-time persons should be used in the analysis, lent by other agencies if desirable and available, or that contributions from other agencies should be forgone.

Use of statistical indicators. All countries based their analyses on the statistical indicators available. The methodological implication was clear: what can be measured can be considered; wh[illegible]n't be measured may be neglected or ignored. If our measurements were perfect, both in concept and execution, this approach would be appealing. But we know in fact that we can't measure everything and that urban measurements we make are sometimes flawed. As a result, a great deal of room ought to be left for impressionistic judgments, despite their absence of scientific purity.

Use of maps. Maps were used by all countries, in part as guides to the urban and regional analysis. Maps are visual devices, but they don't (can't) explain some of the changes associated with social development, i.e., with social processes. Social processes of interest in urban analysis are frequently micro-economic in scale and cannot therefore be spatially differentiated using maps as an analytical tool.

The filing cabinet of previous studies. Every country has a pile of old studies, e.g., rural development studies, educational analyses, etc., that bear on urban and regional analysis. Why do study teams generate wholly new studies, rather than simply using older studies and extending them where necessary? The answers are many, some substantive, others procedural or organizational:

1. Costliness of information retrieval from previous documents. It may take more time to read and digest data previously generated for other purposes than to make a new study. Technically speaking, this is a question of the costs of systems of data storage and retrieval.

2. New studies automatically achieve a more precise focus on the problem in question than research done for other purposes. Each agency may have its own system of planning. The studies of each may therefore not be compatible with the others, requiring a new study for the urban and regional analysis.

3. New studies are more up-to-data than older ones.

4. A researcher may receive more professional recognition for leading a new study than for pulling together some strands from a variety of older works.

Time requirements. An infinite amount of time could be used in the urban analyses. It's therefore difficult to know how to interpret complaints about there being too little time. At least in part, the question of the optimal period of time desirable for performing such studies is associated with the amount of professional experience of the members of a study team. If they are not used to working under time pressures and if they lack the experience of bringing studies to closure, then they are likely to feel unusually pressed for time, and to whimper (or squeal) accordingly. Yet if no deadlines were imposed, the process of urban and regional analysis could easily drag on for years without yielding any usable concrete results.

Revision of guidelines. The most easily remediable flaw in the guidelines as they stand is the lack of articulation among the different sections. Less easily subject to easy revision are the guidelines' emphases on:

- education and supply of services, rather than project execution
- development indicators rather than theories of the origin and maintenance of poverty
- fairly conventional economic geography, rather than the politics of power, an element that probably affects strongly the ultimate distribution of income and wealth
- analysis rather than planning, project management, or inter-institutional cooperation

One need not (and I do not) conclude that the guidelines' emphases "ought" to be converted in the ways indicated above. At the same time, it is useful to understand what the guidelines do and what they do not do.

Urban migration influences urban poverty, but the directions of that influence are far from clear. Migrants demand public services, but they also generate output and pay taxes. If one were to try to discourage migration, the "problem" resulting from their demands would not be avoided. Its site would merely be changed.

Migrants and economic policy. While it is true that migrant-nonmigrant comparisons fail to indicate completely the impact of migration on urban environments, the comparisons are nevertheless valuable. They allow us to avoid incorrect policy recommendations that would, without foundation, orient some policies directly toward migrants, presumed to be particularly needy or indigent. The comparisons show migrants not to be selectively needy as a group, and permit a focus on poor people rather than on migrants as somehow exemplifying a group of the poor.

Multiplicity of users. It bears repeating that the urban analysis has many users, not all of whose performance criteria are congruent. Such multiplicity creates problems for analysts and outside consultants. Among the clients for urban and regional analysis are the following users:

- AID/Washington
- AID missions in the field
- Government planning ministries and autonomous agencies
- The public in low-income countries, as distinct from the official agencies
- AID contractors such as Practical Concepts Inc.
- Other international agencies concerned with technical assistance and economic development, such as the World Bank
- The international community of social scientists and planners

At any given moment, it's easy to focus on one or two of these users and to neglect the others, but in the longer run this will lead to an undesirable narrowing of the field of inquiry.

Concentration on projects. When AID managers concentrate on projects, development policies that don't require project approaches may be neglected. Such policies may, however, be as important for development as are projects. For example macroeconomic recommendations about wage policy may be as important as project identification of, say, a credit subsidy program for small scale industry. Concentration on projects is understandable in terms of career evaluations: advancement is based, in part, on "moving the money," something that's possible only with projects.

Problems with generalizations. Countries, even in Central America, differ widely in size, income, level of development, and future prospects. In addition to knowledge of a general theoretical background, successful analysts must, it appears, be conversant with a great deal of country-specific detail. Generalizations, even for the three countries represented at the conference, are difficult for persons whose knowledge includes (or is cluttered by?) this degree of detail.

Causes and symptoms. Admonitions that analysts ought to treat causes of poverty, rather than dealing only with symptoms, may be empty. Given the difficulty, and indeed, the impracticality of finding ultimate causes, a more realistic framework would recognize that one person's list of "causes" would likely be another's list of mere "symptoms." Failure to recognize this possibility leads to superficial agreement on the importance of localizing "causes," which masks the deeper methodological (epistomological) confusion and ambiguity about the differences between them.

To resolve the matter, one must specify the level of generality at which the analysis will be conducted. This avoids discussions in which one discussant takes an overall view and another treats micro-level phenomena. Income generation, some of it connected with employment, is an example of one level. Focus on individual government agencies and their potential responses to specific client needs is another.

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Sincerely yours,

Bruce

Bruce Herrick, Ph.D.

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PRACTICAL CONCEPTS FOR

IMPROVING URBAN AND REGIONAL ANALYSIS

By

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A. INTRODUCTION

The question that kept surfacing throughout the San Jose Seminar* was: What type of analysis is necessary to derive a useful strategy for urban and regional development that AID will assist? There was concensus that AID-assisted projects and other interventions should be "grounded" or "anchored" in a strategy that reflected a broad perspective on the nature of urban poverty, its causes, and alternative approaches to improving the situation. The participants concerned about the high cost of analysis and the potential delays in project approval that could result from making large scale Urban and Regional Analysis (URA) a prerequisite for AID funding. They requested clarification whether the Guidelines and the URAs were intended to be aids to the host country for its analysis or alternatively if they were the requirements to get AID funding. If the Guidelines were an optional aid, the participants welcomed more materials. On the other hand, if the Guidelines were destined to

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*"Seminar on Urban and Regional Analysis in Central America," San Jose, Costa Rica; February 16-17, 1978.

become AID requirements, the preference was to integrate the pieces, sharpen the focus on a core of essential items, and minimize the bureaucratic requirements that might not fit the diverse situations where URAs were potentially applicable.

B. SOME CONCEPTUAL PROBLEMS

The participants were frustrated by a gap between URA and development of interventions to help the poor. The planned interventions were not readily derivable from the URA. In Panama and Costa Rica, the interventions were identified before the URA and the de facto function of the URA was to demonstrate that the chosen interventions meet AID requirements regarding the neediness of the target groups and the degree of documentation of that need. In Nicaragua the URA was done first and interventions have yet to be developed from it; in the meantime there has been heavy investment in the reconstruction of Managua. The gap in Costa Rica and Panama appeared to be bureaucratic. In Nicaragua the risk was that insulation of the technocratic planners from the political and bureaucratic decision-makers might result in the plans never influencing important decisions.

Spatial analysis shares the strength and weakness of traditional economic analysis for designing poverty programs. The concepts and techniques of analysis are oriented to description, explanation and perhaps optimization for society as a whole. It is assumed that political processes and transfer payments can compensate any losers out of the gross benefits to the winners. Consequently, a spatial analysis can focus on where industry should be located and how land should be used to achieved efficiency. Unfortunately, benefits tend to go to the groups with property, capital, and skills who are prepared to take advantage of the

opportunities that come with change; the transfer mechanisms often don't work for the poor. The economic analysis usually does not treat the transfer process and the political and bureaucratic determinants of the distribution process are never analyzed systematically. There are easy cases where interventions yield important benefits for the poor as well as the non-poor, e.g., an industrial park in a poor area providing unskilled jobs and training. However, often there are hard cases where the unequal competition for benefits may yield nothing to the poor, e.g., agriculural wholesale markets in Northeast Brazil may have improved profits for wholesalers and retail grocery chains while leaving food producers no better off and poor urban consumers worse off to the extent they buy through traditional retail outlets. In a chain of intermediaries, the best-organized group may capture all the benefits instead of benefits disseminating to all parties. This line of reasoning suggests that analysis of global efficiency is inadequate where the objective is to improve the welfare of the people.

An alternative approach is greater attention to analysis of poverty, its determinants, and alternative interventions to improve the situation. More attention would go to distribution of income and wealth, economic and social power, transfer processes, evolutionary strategies where the interest of the poor conflict with the non-poor, (e.g. minimum wages; labor rights, subsidized social benefits). The analysis of "hard" situations will involved sensitive subjects where the interests of the intended beneficiaries may conflict with the perceived interests of the analysts, the users of the URA, the "establishment" of the host government and the perceived interest of the USA, e.g., nationalization or confiscatory taxation of foreign investments, tariff protection, etc. These problems are immediately apparent.

1. The analysis is less familiar to social scientists who do URA-type work. The results are likely to be more polemical and less scientific, at least in the short run until the techniques for objective analysis of conflict situations are refined. (I may be overly pessemistic on this point.)

2. Marxist and radical spokepersons have pre-empted this field in analyzing the causes of poverty through exploitation, dependency, and unequal exchange. As a result, non-Marxists and analysts who strive to be politically neutral are reluctant to become labeled as communist ideologues, and reluctant to break ranks with their colleagues (and superiors) who want to do value-free work and may not like the implications of the work even when the methodology is acceptable. Implementing the poverty-oriented programs may also create some strange bedfellows in many developing countries (and in the USA).

3. There is a risk that the poor people in the target group may end up worse off as a result of explicit analysis and clear statements * of the results from managed interventions. The logic of this position is that the "establishment" of non-poor only tolerates poverty programs because of the vagueness about the real redistribution impacts that will emerge; fuzziness is a kind of lubricant for reconciling conflicting interests in getting approval from voters, politicians, bureaucrats, and analysts. If vagueness leads to poorly managed programs that only deliver a quarter of the loaf promised to the poor, explicitness may deliver nothing at all!

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* This argument is attributed to Lindbloom.

C. THE PRACTICAL CONCEPTS FOR IMPROVING URBAN AND REGIONAL ANALYSIS

There are practical approaches to breaking down the insulation around URA planners. The objective is more realism about planned interventions that will be (1) realistic with respect to political and bureaucratic constraints on change, (2) appreciated by the poor, and (3) feasible with respect to the participation of the poor.

1. Analysis of the "Dynamics of Change"--What is Politically and Bureaucratically Viable?

Political and bureaucratic realities could be introduced into URAs using the "dynamics of change" approach. PCI managed a national health sector assessment in the Dominican Republic with a section on "dynamics of change" in the health sector. Analysis was led by a sociologist and focused on the historical pattern of important changes. What were the sources of new initiatives? What groups supported change? What groups opposed change? What was the style of interactions? (e.g., lobbying, negotiation, subtle subversions, intimidation, confrontation, physical conflict, coup d'etat, etc.?) What were the roles of key institutions? (e.g., the legislature, universities, the medical establishment, industry, agriculture, military, foreign governments, etc.)

"Dynamics of change" analysis provides insight into the political and bureaucratic viability of managed interventions. It should be possible to document what happened fairly objectively, leaving room for more subjective interpretations about causal relationships. The planners should see more clearly the perspectives of the real world actors who must be influenced for "managed interventions" to succeed. As a minimum, planners should be able to separate "easy cases" from some "hard cases" where extraordinary efforts will be

necessary for success. A question that arises immediately is what to do with the analysis that is too "hot" to publish. The response is not to publish it but at least force planners to think about political and bureaucratic viability and be realistic about their plans, their strategy and tactics for getting approval, and their resources allocations and time estimates for implementations

"Dynamics of Change" analysis for URAs in Central America would probably focus more attention on the relationship between the central government and decentralized municipalities or regional governments. There has been a marked trend toward national agencies to operate functions (at least outside the primate cities) that could be operated in a decentralized fashion--education, health, police, water, electric lighting, sewers, roads, telephones, etc. The revenue from some services and the power involved in their operation are controlled from the national level. Talented people gravitate toward the institutions with money and power. The extent of the trend toward national agencies can be documented objectively for specific situations and the advantages or disadvantages economically are calculable. The political and bureaucratic significance of the trends will require careful interpretation in designing projects that will succeed.*

2. Analysis of Values and Attitudes: What will be Appreciated by the Poor and the Non-Poor?

Emilia Rodriguez gave an eloquent anecdote about the need to analyze values and attitudes. In the San Jose neighborhood of Villa Esperanza, she observed the women were stable and the men

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* Julio Cordoba Collinet called my attention to the trend in Central America and its significance for political viability of organizations like INFOM in Guatemala and IFAM in Costa Rica to strenthen municipalities.

were transitory. Her interpretation was that programs dependent on the men investing in the neighborhood would fail. However, there was a good chance for success for programs oriented to women in the area, providing employment or services in the area and compatible with child-raising.

Emilia Rodriguez argues the methods of the anthropologist and sociologist are the key to understanding attitude and values. She does not demand a year-long ethnography and a comprehensive academic analysis; she pleads for one day to sit in the central square of a community to observe and listen. I suspect that more time would be useful, too. Her point is that values and attitudes can and should be analyzed on a non-academic basis to produce useful insight.

3. Analysis and Participation by the Poor

Shifting analysis to the community level changes the planners/managers problem. Poor people instinctively understand their own "felt needs," aspirations, and constraints (although this does not deny the usefulness of surveys to provide a broader perspective for setting priorties). The poor typically lack valid information about alternative interventions to make the situation better, and the implications for thier communities. They may naively underestimate the amount of work and money and energy to get tasks accomplished. They may naively overestimate the obstacles to change. The community may have no experience to judge the pitfalls and the payoffs from project ideas that have never been tried there before.

One approach is to identify local successes and build on them. The implied strategy is to capitalize on a selection process that has already taken place in this community. The success of the

first activity is taken to be the best foundation for generating further success. Community organizers using this approach emphasize the importance of morale, generating success models that are quickly visible, and creating a process that will be cumulative.

Appropriate planning and management systems can be developed to support management by the poor or by decentralized communities. PCI has helped develop a health information and planning system (HIPS) that appears effective in small Nicaraguan communities near Esteli. The system provides a simple process for communities to diagnose their problems, articulate strategies, judge resource adequacy, make realistic plans, monitor progress and plan as appropriate. In two years, the communities have undertaken different projects and their systems have evolved somewhat differently. However, they have displayed maturity in their choice of activities and impressive results in improved health practices. One approach to assistance is identifying and cataloging some successul experiences (and unsuccessful ones), dissecting them, and disseminating ideas about what works and pitfalls encountered elsewhere. This can become the basis for a central information system oriented to serving decentralized users, reversing the normal procedure of collecting information at the periphery for use in decisions by a central government office. The challenge is for planners and government ministries to provide information to decentralized planners without usurping responsibilities or being manipulative. The management system should be helpful for getting resources needed for decentralized projects but even more important, to help with implementation and replanning after projects are launched.