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CILSS SOIL CONSERVATION SEMINAR

FINAL IMPACT EVALUATION

(Project 625-0929)

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| Introduction | 1 |
| A. Data Base | 2 |
| B. Previous Observations and Considerations | 3 |
| C. Methodology | 5 |
| 1) Issue identification | 5 |
| 2) Criteria selection | 6 |
| D. Participant's Performance | 6 |
| E. Seminar Effectiveness | 7 |
| 1) Preselection aspects | 9 |
| 2) Post-seminar factors | 9 |
| 3) Additional information | 12 |
| F. Synthesis of Relevant Criteria | 13 |
| G. Conclusions, Recommendations | 16 |
| Appendix A: Recent Status of Participants | 19 |
| Appendix B: Critical Components of a Successful Seminar | 24 |
| Appendix C: Spinoff Benefits | 31 |

INTRODUCTION

USAID requested a final evaluation of participants who attended a three phase Soil Conservation Training Seminar (Project 625-0929) completed in the spring of 1981. The seminar had the explicit purpose of improving participant's abilities to identify, design, and implement soil conservation activities. The participants came from each of the eight Shaelian countries. Phase I was six weeks long and combined classroom discussion and activities with field visits. Phase II lasted a year during which participants worked in their own countries ideally identifying, designing, or implementing a soil conservation activity, and calling upon various seminar instructors for any needed assistance. Phase III was a summary session where participants came together to share experiences, frustrations and successes with each other and with the seminar staff.

The evaluation was requested to determine: (1) to what extent the participants, a year after seminar completion, are utilizing skills developed during the course; (2) which variables contributed most to long term effectiveness of the training; and (3) what criteria should be used in the future to make host country short course training more effective.

Mr. Fred Weber made a field trip to Niger, Upper Volta, Mali, and Senegal in order to contact participants, their supervisors, key personnel of the services for which they are working, and representatives of a number of donor organizations. The team then analyzed this information on the current performance and experiences of participants, examined the previous reports they had written on Phases I, II, and III, and developed a list of suggestions and recommendations for future training projects.

A. DATA BASE

The evaluation focused on the following topics:

- Job performance, with particular reference to subjects covered (technical lectures, practice sessions, socio-economic and extension component, field trips) during the course.
- Ability and opportunity to apply seminar subjects to present (and future) assignments of participants.
- Various administrative and management aspects (candidate selection, work incentives, overall government policies and planning, etc.)

The following contacts constitute the sampling base of this report:

- Four (out of seven) seminar instructors.
- Five (out of eighteen) seminar participants.¹
- Five donor organizations with on-going projects in which participants are directly involved (World Bank, two German Forestry projects, Euroaction/Accord², USAID, CILSS/Club)³.
- Four direct supervisors of participants.

¹Effectively only ten participants are still active, see "Participant Performance", page 6.

²Euroaction/Accord is European, multi-national consortium of Private Voluntary Agencies.

³CILSS: Sahelian drought committee. Club: Club du Sahel.

---Six agency heads or their deputies who have participants on their staffs.

B. PREVIOUS OBSERVATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Experience with earlier seminars in similar subject areas (forestry, agriculture) raised questions about effectiveness.

Skill training of lower- and mid-level technicians alone, it was found, did not automatically increase host country project implementation capabilities. Quite frequently, technicians who participated in a seminar were transferred to other jobs with entirely different duties. Training in specific subject areas was then no longer relevant.

Recent evaluation of a series of seminars in the environmental field held in East Africa (USAID's ETMA project 698-0427) revealed a serious lack of "linkage" between training of technicians and the necessary higher-level administrative and policy changes that must follow in order for the newly acquired skills to be effectively utilized. (See "ETMA Evaluation", I.S.T.I. AID/AFR/RA, June 1982).

During Phase I, and the Phase II field visits of the soil conservation seminar instructors, other critical issues had been identified: proper selection of candidates, participant motivation and basic commitment, lack of funds and infrastructure to allow those with newly acquired knowledge to carry out their planned activities.

Regional seminars such as this, can bring together a relatively small number of participants from several neighboring countries to focus on subjects of region-wide interest or concern. This format allows broad coverage and an opportunity for across the border dialogue.

Our experience indicates however that this approach does contain some unavoidable drawbacks:

---Difference in official language among participating countries. In this seminar, two participants spoke only English, two were fluent only in Portuguese, all others spoke French but none of the other official languages. In spite of considerable translation effort on the part of the training staff many details were lost to those who spoke no French;

---Difference in the physical environment of participating countries. Soil conservation problems and their solutions in The Gambia are completely different from those in Mauritania, etc. Providing course information of equal interest to all participants, therefore requires dexterity on the part of the trainers as well as patience by the participants.

---Government administration and political structures also differ country to country.

Therefore, while purely technical subject matters can be treated within a similar or common physical framework, administrative, socio-political and economic aspects are more difficult to address in a region-wide context.

It is our feeling supported by the participants' end-of-course evaluation and the most recent inquiries, that in spite of these differences, the general subject of "Soil Conservation" was successfully covered at least in its basic aspects. The different participants (with the possible exception of the two Cape Verdians) did not find the course irrelevant mainly because the core instructors were able to adapt the materials based on years of previous working experience in the Region.

C. METHODOLOGY

1) Issue identification

Discussions with participants, their supervisors and others were open ended but included the following specific points:

- Proper selection and briefing of candidates.
- Participants' basic commitment and motivation toward the seminar training.
- Supervisors' constraints and their abilities to effectively use participants returning from seminars.
- Availability of necessary support (funds, material, equipment, etc.) for participants upon return to their jobs.

In addition, all persons interviewed were asked what other criteria they thought affected overall effectiveness of this and other similar seminars.

Everyone interviewed was then asked to identify which points they thought had particular relevance to future efforts. A total of fourteen¹ factors were thus isolated which appear to play a role in overall seminar effectiveness.

2) Criteria selection

The various participants were then rated on a scale from 1 to 10 as to how well they met each of these fourteen criteria. The results are shown on Table 1.

The various values and scores were then analyzed in an attempt to determine:

- a) which basic criteria-mix is the most effective;
- b) among the criteria identifiable before a seminar is undertaken, which could be used to forecast the value and usefulness of a particular training effort, assuming a specific set of candidates.

D. PARTICIPANT'S PERFORMANCE

For a brief description of participants and their current activities, see Appendix A: "Recent status of participants". Eighteen participants were enrolled at the beginning of the seminar.

¹Selection and briefing are combined into one.

Of those, two came from Chad, a country where political unrest occurred which has not yet settled enough to learn about their fate.

Five others were simply badly selected due to their job status or, in one country, because officials felt they had to send "somebody" although appropriate candidates were not available. One participant was called back during the first week.

One participant lacked basic practical skill levels to be effective.

Of the ten remaining:

Five are performing very well; they feel the seminar helped them to increase their technical and managerial competence.

Three are receiving additional training at this time. Seminar participation has helped them to gain an insight into practical aspects which they will not get during academic training.

Two are not making full use of the training offered, partly because of the nature of their work assignment, partly due to a relatively low personal interest or commitment to the subject matter.

E. SEMINAR EFFECTIVENESS

TABLE 1: Participant performance by criteria and total

| PARTICIPANT | APPROPRIATE SELECTION | MIN/MAX ENTRY SKILLS | PERSONAL COMMITMENT | JOB RELEVANCY | PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT | MATERIAL SUPPORT | SKILLS | | | | ATTITUDES | | | TOTAL SCORE | RANK | TOP 1/3 |
|-------------|-----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------|----------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-----------|------------|--------|-----------------|---------------|----------|-------------|------|---------|
| | | | | | | | CONCEPTUAL ANALYTICAL | TECHNICAL | MANAGEMENT | SOCIAL | PROBLEM-SOLVING | COLLABORATIVE | "SPIRIT" | | | |
| A | 7 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 68 | 9 | |
| B | 9 | 8 | 9 | 7 | 8 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 104 | 2 | x |
| C | 8 | 6 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 7 | 7 | 85 | 4 | x |
| D | 6 | 7 | 6 | 8 | 6 | 4 | 7 | 8 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 71 | 8 | |
| E | 3 | 6 | 8 | 8 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 9 | 51 | 13 | |
| F | 8 | 6 | 9 | 9 | 5 | 9 | 7 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 100 | 3 | x |
| G | 7 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 60 | 12 | |
| H | 7 | 5 | 6 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 62 | 10 | |
| I | 8 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 83 | 6 | |
| J | 6 | 6 | 6 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 61 | 11 | |
| K | 8 | 7 | 9 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 8 | 9 | 5 | 6 | 8 | 3 | 3 | 84 | 5 | |
| L | 7 | 7 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 8 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 5 | 81 | 7 | |
| M | 8 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 8 | 9 | 8 | 9 | 7 | 7 | 9 | 8 | 8 | 107 | 1 | x |
| COLUMN NO. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | | |

NOTE: 2 CAPE VERDIANS, 2 CHADIANS AND ONE MALIAN NOT SHOWN AS THEY DID NOT FINISH.

SCALE - 1 LOW
10 HIGH

1) Preselection aspects

| | Qualifications of individual participants | Other factors: given job duties, available support, etc. |
|---|---|--|
| Proper selection and briefing of participants | --- | X |
| Adequate entry level. Participant neither over- or underqualified | X | --- |
| Previous job assignments and experience | --- | X |
| Good conceptual, analytical and learning skills | X | --- |
| Social skills/aptitude | X | --- |
| Innovative, collaborative open-mindedness | X | --- |

2) Post-seminar factors

After the completion of seminars the following factors affect the ex-participant's performance level:

Job Relevancy

Where participants returned to the same assignments after the seminar, they often did not get the opportunity to expand their activities in relation to their newly acquired skills. This is discouraging, not only for the participants, but also for the seminar teaching staff and to those who have funded the training activities. Potential sponsors of future seminars can

point to such inefficiencies as a justification for questioning host country agencies about relevancy of future job assignments before accepting individual candidates.

Adequate support, project funds

In order for returning participants to apply the skills they have learned, not only must their supervisors provide managerial and technical guidance but there must be a minimum of tools, equipment, transport and, above all, project funds. Technical and material support provided during Phase II probably contributed as much to the success of this particular seminar as all other efforts combined. Some examples in which visiting instructors were able to assist participants are as follows:

- The design of a priority project, much to the consternation of the participant, was stuck in the bureaucracy. Visiting seminar instructor intervention on several relatively high levels succeeded in getting the process moving again and the project is currently functioning.
- Following suggestions from visiting seminar instructors, a donor assigned a major resource inventory task to two participants with explicit instructions to identify practical and appropriate conservation activities that could be funded and carried out immediately.

---After a few instructors' visits to the office of one of the Forest Service chiefs, a participant was moved from an administrative assignment to a project staff post where soil conservation activities can become a major project effort.

During the final week of Phase III, several donor representatives (some with region-wide responsibilities) asked the training staff to advise them of participants who did not already have relevant assignments. Donors planned to propose conservation projects to respective host countries with the provision that one of the participants be appointed as local project manager.

Favorable policy climate

Some cases unfortunately exist where even the best intentioned, trained and equipped ex-participant is faced with existing regulations and government policies discourage or oppose introduction of newly acquired concepts.

One of the problems is the strict division of duties especially where soil conservation is the responsibility of one agency, planting trees of another, etc. Before a technician can introduce a more integrated approach, upper-level questions of turf have to be redefined and settled. There again, visiting instructors, if they are familiar with the scene, can greatly help establish cross agency communications.

Local participation

Millions of dollars of project funds have been spent in the Sahel on soil conservation schemes. Hardly a trace is left of many of these activities

because the need to involve and serve the needs of local farmers and herders was overlooked.

Participants coming to the seminar were not aware of the need to interact with local residents. On a self judged needs assessment given on the first day of Phase I, participants uniformly rated extension, and human relation or social science skills as being unimportant to their work. In discussions they referred to farmers as being "like children" and described their own functions as purely technocratic.

As a group, they found the idea that one could learn from male and female farmers to be irrational, and the need for local residents to understand and accept new innovations to be irrelevant.

However, by the end of Phase I, participants all requested field support from the staff social scientist for Phase II. Some of the seminar participants reported discussing their ideas with local farmers for the first time in their careers during the Phase II field visits of the instructor.

It appears absolutely necessary that sociology and human-relation skill training continue to be integrated into the technical coursework in these types of seminars, and that this aspect be supported in follow-through visits.

3) Additional information

Appendix B, "Critical Components of a Successful Seminar" lists the various items most often mentioned by the people interviewed.

Appendix C, "Spinoff Benefits" describes several - some unexpected - positive results from the seminar activities. Some are of considerable mid-

and long range importance to host-countries and donors alike and should be included in an analysis of the cost effectiveness of the seminar.

F. SYNTHESIS OF RELEVANT CRITERIA

A definite sequence of conditions appears to predetermine the ultimate success of training seminars. Each step sets the stage for how well or successfully the following can be covered, addressed or resolved. This ladder of conditions consists of the following, basic steps:

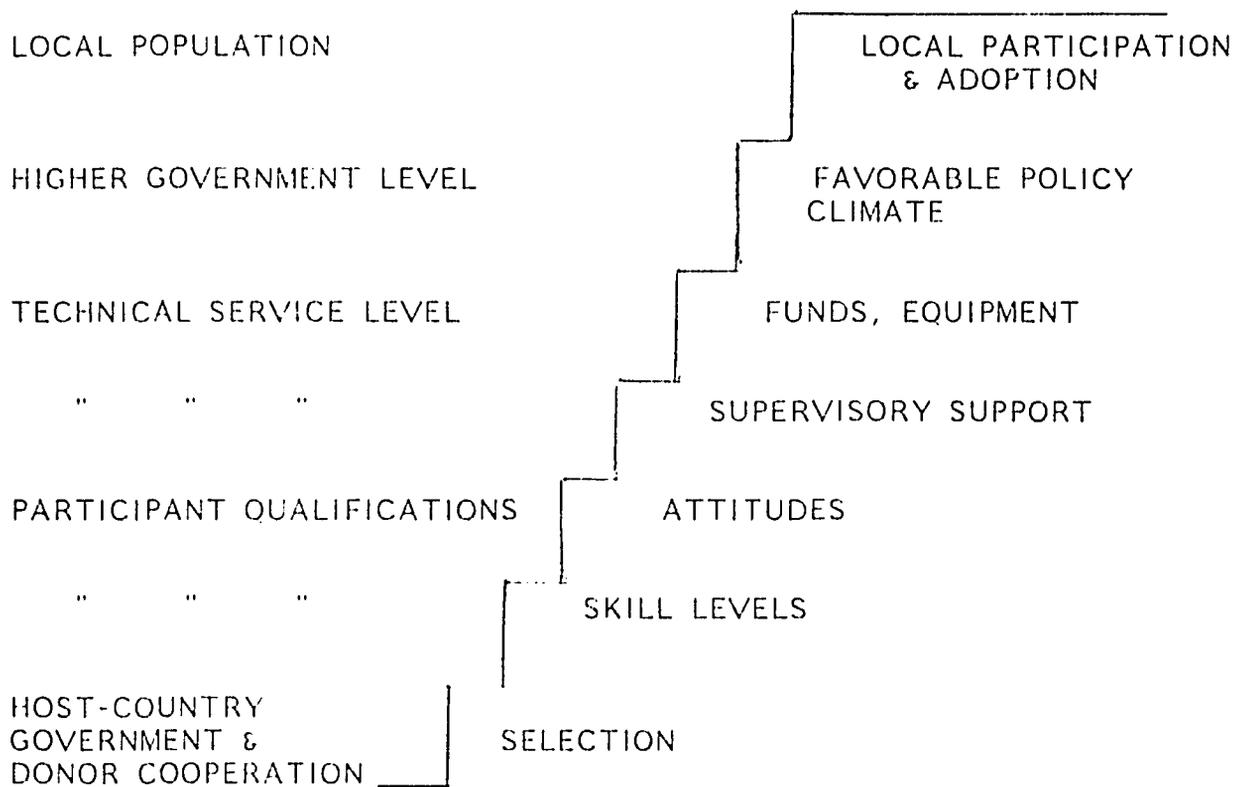


Table 2 shows the result of analysing each participant's potential and likelihood of successful seminar input, based on six relevant questions, each corresponding to one of the ladder steps shown above:

TABLE 2: Participant Potential According To
the Six Basic Questions

| | SELECTION | SKILLS | ATTITUDES | SUPERVISORY SUPPORT | FUNDS, EQUIPMENT | POLICY CLIMATE | SCORE | RANK | RANK ACCORDING TO TABLE 1 |
|---|-----------|--------|-----------|------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------|------|------------------------------|
| A | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 8 | 9 |
| B | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 10 | 2 | 2 |
| C | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 8 | 4 | 4 |
| D | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 9 | 8 |
| E | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 12 | 13 |
| F | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 10 | 3 | 3 |
| G | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 13 | 12 |
| H | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 11 | 10 |
| I | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 8 | 5 | 6 |
| J | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 10 | 11 |
| K | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 7 | 7 | 5 |
| L | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 8 | 6 | 7 |
| M | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 12 | 1 | 1 |

Note that ranking is almost identical
to the more complicated approach used
in Table 1.

SCALE: LOW - 0
MEDIUM - 1
HIGH - 2

- 1) How well did the participant meet entrance qualifications and how well was he briefed? Note that in the case of this seminar, briefing -across the board - was completely inadequate.
- 2) To what extent did the participant possess conceptual and learning skills in both technical and social fields?
- 3) To what extent did the participant show an innovative, collaborative and open-minded attitude?
- 4) Was the agency for which he is working able and willing to use his skills upon return?
- 5) Does the participant have a minimum of material and administrative support to carry out activities?
- 6) Is the government's policy and administrative climate such that the participant can implement what he has learned without constraints.

Table 1 provides a useful method to predict participant performance. However it is somewhat cumbersome and time consuming. Ranking the seminar participants by using the format of Table 2 provides almost identical results to those obtained using Table 1.

However, this analysis by itself does not provide sufficient statistical evidence. The sample is too small and the specific training activity covered, too narrow to allow expansion over the entire rural development sector. Nonetheless we strongly feel that proper interpretation of the answers of these test questions (selection, skill level, attitudes, supervisory support, funds and equipment, favorable policy climate) can serve in the future as an important tool to forecast overall success of short term training efforts.

Some of these questions are difficult to answer from an outsider's vantage point. Most Sahel AID missions, however, have Human Resources Development officers on their staffs. When a host country is invited to nominate participants to future seminars, this specialist could intervene on behalf of the seminar sponsor. Based on his knowledge of the local situation and conditions in the respective ministries, he could provide valuable assistance in the selection of the candidates. He also could discuss with host country agencies what conditions must be met to make seminars worthwhile. Quite often, merely making host country agencies aware of past problems and oversights will help to remove some important post-seminar constraints.

Previous to this seminar, CILSS technicians suggested that USAID provide each participant and each country team with a minimum of basic surveying and drafting equipment. This was done and in all but one of the checks made, the equipment issued in 1979 is still in use and in some instances has made a crucial difference between action and non-performance for lack of means.

G. CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

1) Briefing and selection should be done much more carefully.

Invitations to seminars must include:

- basic training objectives and expectations for participant use of skills after seminar.
- minimum and maximum entry levels (technical as well as social skills) with an ideal participant profile.

---a clear and complete description of what facilities will be available, what living arrangements will be provided, how much money participants get and,

---what services will, what services will not be provided.

Host country agencies, in selecting participants, should be asked to answer the six basic questions previously outlined in the text, preferably with someone from the sponsoring agency assisting.

2) Technical subject coverage must be combined with coverage of pertinent social sector training to address socio-economic and traditional elements involved in soliciting local participation in conservation activities.

3) Past problems of underutilization of ex-participants must be discussed with the supervisors. Training people without giving them the opportunity to apply what they have learned, is a waste.

4) Even if other conditions are met, technicians need basic material support and project funds. One option is to have participants design small scale, practical projects for which funding is available, perhaps from a private voluntary organization.

5) Participants may need assistance to resolve government regulations and policies that are counterproductive to their efforts or to restructure the planned project to be effective within general policies and laws.

6) Each seminar should contain follow-up visits by instructors who are familiar with the country and its technical services. Participants can be

greatly assisted in their new roles by instructors discussing questions 4, 5, and 6 with host country government representatives. A three phase model, in which (during Phase II) participants return to their posts and are visited by the instructors, proved very effective.

APPENDIX A: Present Status of Participants

SENEGAL

Djouf presently is in France training to become an instructor at Bambey (Senegal's school for rural technical agents). At present, trainers are not focusing on specific subjects; Diouf may thus be teaching several forestry-related subjects, including soil conservation. In this case the seminar served well to prepare him to incorporate basic resource conservation in anything he eventually may be teaching. Training materials, especially the "Tech Sheets" which were developed by the staff and were reproduced by USDA¹ may be of special importance in this case.

Andre is still with the German revegetation project in North Senegal. Presently prospects are good that he will go to Germany for additional academic training. The seminar served to give him more indepth awareness and technical skills for the future. The fact that he attended this seminar may enhance his academic record.

NIGER

Habi is in charge of dry-site plantations of the Worldbank project in Niger. The efforts still concentrate on the orthodox (and expensive) tree-planting approach including extensive mechanical ground preparation and introducing exotic species. Habi is aware that several conservation

¹and the Club du Sahel (French translation)

techniques could be included in the project efforts and he may be able to apply what he has learned. Project management, however, has not yet considered such steps. Habi very much appreciated the field trips where he was able to see first hand how others approach problems similar to those he encounters in Niger.

Aboubkar is presently suspended from service (total 12 months) apparently for disciplinary reasons. He is now working for a private construction contractor. He is intelligent, and did the best project preparation during Phase II of the seminar, but his behavioral problems, which also surfaced during the seminar, are apparently affecting his government service career.

MALI

Keita has been in charge of a forestry/conservation public radio program. We did not had any contact with him on this final evaluation trip. During the seminar he appeared most anxious and ready to please. However, as the small project he tried to start in the field during Phase II proved, he has serious problems applying technical skills and knowledge, understanding practical realities and in working with people.

Chouffi, as district forester (Kayes) is in charge of a German funded reforestation effort, which includes a substantial component of tree planting/soil conservation. He is able and capable of integrating soil conservation and forestry into meaningful project efforts. Operating in a relatively remote location, he is independent and must rely on his own

resources. He is doing exceptionally well and his efforts are appreciated by the donor and his supervisors in the capital. The seminar helped him considerably in getting a better and more complete skill base.

UPPER VOLTA

Diallo is now working as staff forester at the chief's office in the branch responsible for the management of natural vegetation. He attended the seminar as student-observer. He has since graduated and entered career service. At present he lacks job authority to directly apply soil conservation techniques in the work he is doing, but he has made suggestions, observation and is certainly aware of possibilities. The seminar has helped him in his future career where he will be able to apply conservation techniques. Like Djouf, the "Tech Sheets" will be of considerable value to him.

Tompoudi is now district forester in Kaya. In this position he is in charge of a soil conservation project funded by a European voluntary agency. The project has started well technically, but Tompoudi has some personal management problems to resolve with the donor sponsored expatriate technician at the scene. The introduction into donor-host-country relations given during the seminar was particularly relevant to this case but under the circumstances perhaps some additional coverage would have been desirable.

Tiemounou is working with a newly established agency responsible for soil management. Considerable administrative, funding and authority problems of this agency are apparently blocking his potential application of seminar and other skills.

THE GAMBIA

Jallow is stationed upcountry as a field forestry agent. He is engaged in a program that includes village forestry efforts. Reports on his success are ambivalent. The present political change-over affecting the entire government operation probably is adding an element of transitional uncertainty. How much the seminar helped him in his performance under these circumstances is unknown. He certainly was interested and very open during the course and undoubtedly retained a considerable amount of the technical information. Together with the Tech Sheets as a reminder and some additional support on the social aspects of forestry, he could make a valuable contribution if given the right opportunity.

Fye presently is in the US getting a degree in soil science. The seminar helped him to be that much better prepared, and now that he is getting his degree here, he undoubtedly will get much better and more complete technical coverage in the subject matter. During the seminar, he had been working under USDA/SCS auspices in a USAID funded project and thus had good professional and technical guidance. In his case, attending the seminar probably provided some background and insight (also: field experience visiting projects in neighboring countries) which helped to supplement the US technicians' training efforts.

CHAD

Due to the political instability of the situation in Chad, there have been no further contacts with the two seminar participants since the end of Phase I.

CAPE VERDE ISLANDS

Contact with the two Cape Verdian survey crew chiefs that attended the seminar has been lost since the end of Phase III. Their selection and participation, contrary to their colleagues from the other Sahelian countries, was based on a different level and background. We assume that they probably got some valuable experience especially during the field trips but since the situation in Cape Verde is very different from other Sahelian countries, the value they got out of the exercise may be rather limited. They came to the program with limited French and no English language skills; they therefore missed much of the information presented at the seminar.

MAURITANIA

Shortly after the end of Phase I, the two participants from Mauritania were sent to another seminar on wildlife management in Cameroon. Since then, we have not heard from them though efforts to find out their present involvement continue. Their current director has expressed frustration that they had been assigned to training in another field under a previous director. He emphasized the need for soil conservation activities and has expressed the desire to train and use more staff in soil conservation.

APPENDIX B: Critical Components of a Successful Seminar

The following issues were identified by the people interviewed as affecting the usefulness of seminar on any short-term, in country training:

1) Selecting candidates.

Based on the training objective of the course, candidate profiles must be defined completely enough to allow selection of the "right" participants. Especially when participants come from several countries, the groups often are extremely heterogeneous with widely ranging skill levels. To minimize the obvious disadvantages, minimum as well as maximum skill levels should be clearly defined and the margin should not be too wide.

Many technical seminars are currently being offered in the Sahel. Although host-country officials do not want to forgo opportunities to send participants, the shortage of properly qualified (and available) technicians is such that agencies either can not take advantage of all the courses offered or are tempted to send people who are under-qualified or serve in jobs not relevant to the course subject offered. Candidate availability should be more carefully considered in seminar planning.

2) Briefing candidates.

A great deal of administrative confusion is reported throughout Africa particularly for seminars where donors provide funds for lodging and food. Much of this confusion derives from differences in cultural expectations and

past experiences. Participants who are used to being paid to go to school, not visa versa as in the United States, and who are frequently given benefits to support low salary levels, often make demands donors find annoying and disruptive. For example:

---Participants may insist that money for cab transportation from the training site to downtown and back is provided for evening entertainment, or for souvenir shopping. Free medical services, a laundry allowance, money for phone calls to their home country, etc. may be expected.

---time-off for sight-seeing or shopping is requested during regular working class hours; participant class attendance may be low.

---participants complain that meals and/or lodging at training sites are not equal to first class hotels provided for experts and consultants. Participants often expect to make money attending these seminars either from a rather stiff "walk around" allowance or by saving money on food that is being offered. If relatively elaborate meals are served, they'd rather eat more modestly and pocket the difference, when simpler meals are furnished, they may ask for fancier food or cash to buy their own.

Most of the confusion and angry feelings originating from these different expectations can be avoided by more complete briefing before

participants arrive at the site: it is important to define in writing what they can and can not expect.

3) Personal commitment to learning and job performance.

Many participants are locked into a civil service system where their formal educational level, limits their chance for advancement, increasing responsibility and higher salary, regardless of their performance. This is a major detriment to initiative and motivation far beyond the attitude candidates may have toward seminar participation. Within the given constraints, however, some potential candidates are more flexible and willing to commit themselves than others. It is essential that individuals who are self motivated and committed are selected to attend these seminars.

4) Relevancy of job assigned to participants after their return.

As obvious as this point should be, many seminar participants are not able to utilize their training because, upon return, their work assignments do not allow them to put to use what they have learned.

In view of the general shortage of technical skill in host-countries, this is a deplorable situation that must be remedied. Supervisor cooperation, understanding and ability to effectively use personnel is one of the essential keys to successfully meeting seminar goals.

5) Professional support, understanding, and encouragement.

Once participants have returned, those that receive encouragement and support from their supervisors perform far better than those that have to "fight the system" in order to do their job well.

6) Adequate infrastructure and material support.

Even well trained, well motivated and properly supervised technicians can not function effectively if there are no tools, no facilities or no funds with which to carry out projects.

7) Conceptual and analytical skills.

Newly acquired knowledge, particularly where support and supervision are limited, can not be applied effectively unless the participant has the dexterity to adapt, adjust and introduce the new skills into an existing system, even when it is limiting and constricting.

8) Technical skills.

The participant must have the basic tools and requirements permitting him or her to profit from the training levels offered by the seminar. Once the training session has begun, she/he must be able to learn, as well as be willing to listen and observe, in order to improve skill level. This would seem to be an obvious point, but it appears from our experience that it can not be taken for granted.

9) Basic management skills.

Some informants pointed to specific cases where the participants were technically adequate but had serious difficulties applying newly acquired skills because they did not properly manage their available time, tools, equipment or funds. Inadequate record keeping, lack of basic provision for maintenance and poor planning skills kept them from performing better. Management training needs to be integrated with technical and socioeconomic skills.

10) Social skills (job situation).

Rural development efforts require that a technician has a basic understanding and respect for the population with which he works. Conservation/forestry project failure is almost inevitable even where necessary technical expertise and funds are available, if the basic understanding and insight of working with and relating to the local population is missing.

Unfortunately, the basic training most host-country agricultural and forestry technicians receive lacks coverage of such important and basic subjects as extension methods, needs assessments, techniques for assessing social impact and incentives, group dynamics, techniques for encouraging participation, etc.

Worse, technicians are often exposed to in-service attitudes of top-down "management" by fiat and edict. Many host country technicians are convinced

that since they have had basic elementary and some technical training, they know how, when and why to do everything better than the local people. As a result, they may be insensitive or insecure when confronted with a situation that requires a more service-oriented approach. Even awareness of the need for socially oriented skills is frequently not found in participants. To gain this new orientation during a seminar requires a basic aptitude toward a people-oriented and social-consciousness model. The format of this seminar gave time for participants to focus on methodologies during Phase I and allowed for one on one support for solving specific people-related problems which arose in the field during Phase II.

11) Problem solving attitude.

Participants with an open minded and uninhibited attitude toward trying to overcome seemingly unresolvable obstacles of lack of equipment, money or specific guidance or support, perform better than others who are more orthodox and locked into specific tracks of thinking and acting.

12) Innovative attitude.

A good dose of individualistic ingenuity coupled with a "make-do" spirit goes a long way to work around the many constraints, limits and discouraging set-backs that occur in the field. Those with conceptual dexterity and a willingness to experiment, to look for new approaches, and to find different ways to do things will be able to use their new technical skills much more effectively than others.

13) Desire to collaborate.

Some participants are much more willing than others to listen to different view-points, and to share and exchange ideas and experiences with those outside their own technical field. Security and personal emotional stability are important characteristics enabling participants to get involved in interdisciplinary dialogue, as well as to work effectively with local people.

14) "Spirit".

Finally, another quality is often mentioned that is particularly difficult to describe. It has to do with a basic drive to try something new. It includes a belief in the future, hope, self-confidence and, invariably, a desire to solicit help and support from others in the search for different, better and more exciting things. It does not necessarily require a desire for leadership. A commitment toward inspiring others, coupled with the extra physical and emotional energy to activate and "turn on" others seems to be one of the basic ingredients. Whatever the correct description of these attitudes, this "spirit" can be felt, is readily apparent, and participants that have it inevitably do better than their colleagues who do not.

APPENDIX C: Spinoff Benefits

Actual benefits of these seminar activities appear to reach considerably beyond the primary objective: skill upgrading of participants. According to the various people contacted during this evaluation, particularly donor representatives and agency heads, the following indirect benefits resulted from the seminar efforts:

1) Increased host country design capability.

The concept of splitting seminar session into two parts, with a period inbetween where participants returned to their posts with orders to design a project, helped to build up experience in practical project design. Bringing participants and donors together during the final phase, where the participants were able to show the donors the results of their efforts turned out to be a very important move. Participants gained some firsthand knowledge about project design and various techniques of document preparation. In view of the short supply of this kind of background among host country agencies, this exercise made an important contribution.

2) Donor confidence.

The fact that the participants were visited by the seminar instructors during Phase II where their progress and work was supervised and reviewed by experienced specialists, provided a backup service that the donors very

much appreciated, especially those that do not have their own technicians in the field. This model provides something like a "first year" guarantee that can help overcome initial inconsistencies and in-experience on the part of the participants.

3) Soil Conservation Awareness.

Instructor visits during Phase II also resulted in increased awareness of the importance of soil and vegetation conservation needs (and potential interventions) among agency supervisors and donors, especially among the Non Government Organizations (NGOs) or Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs). Visiting technicians found numerous opportunities to point to practical ways soil conservation components can be blended into on-going, more production oriented project efforts.

4) Tech Sheets.

In the course of the seminar, instructors prepared some training material in handbook form. Each of the various conservation techniques were summarized in info sheet form containing basic data on application a range of techniques, basic design procedures, references to past successful examples, basic aspects relating to local participation, literature references, etc.

Use of these field and training handbooks has apparently spread. Demand for additional copies of both English and French versions has been

increasing. These manuals are being distributed and used by technical services and donor organizations in large numbers. In Niger they have been adopted as standard procedural manuals for all Forest Service sponsored conservation activities.