

PD AAR-251

CLASSIFICATION

39835

PROJECT EVALUATION SUMMARY (PES) - PART I

Report Symbol U-447

1. PROJECT TITLE Niamey Department Development II	2. PROJECT NUMBER 683-0240	3. MISSION/AID/W OFFICE USAID/Niamey
	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) <u>683-85-02</u>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> REGULAR EVALUATION <input type="checkbox"/> SPECIAL EVALUATION		

5. KEY PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION DATES			6. ESTIMATED PROJECT FUNDING A. Total \$ <u>21,282,000</u> B. U.S. \$ <u>13,582,000</u>	7. PERIOD COVERED BY EVALUATION	
A. First PRO-AG or Equivalent FY <u>81</u>	B. Final Obligation Expected FY <u>85</u>	C. Final Input Delivery FY <u>87</u>		From (month/yr.) <u>Feb. 1983</u>	To (month/yr.) <u>Feb. 1985</u>

B. 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
See PES, Part 1 (attached)		

9. INVENTORY OF DOCUMENTS TO BE REVISED PER ABOVE DECISIONS

<input type="checkbox"/> Project Paper	<input type="checkbox"/> Implementation Plan e.g., CPI Network	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>FY 85/86 Work- plans</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Financial Plan	<input type="checkbox"/> PIO/T	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Logical Framework	<input type="checkbox"/> PIO/C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Project Agreement	<input type="checkbox"/> PIO/P	

10. ALTERNATIVE DECISIONS ON FUTURE OF PROJECT

A. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continue Project Without Change
B. <input type="checkbox"/> Change Project Design and/or <input type="checkbox"/> Change Implementation Plan
C. <input type="checkbox"/> Discontinue Project

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

Assoumane Baoua, Project Director
Kevin Mullally Project Officer

12. Mission/AID/W Office Director Approval

Signature *Peter Benedict*

Typed Name Peter Benedict, Director

Date 5 3 MAY 1985

PDAAR-251

ACTION MEMORANDUM FOR THE MISSION DIRECTOR

Date: 23 May 1985

From: PDO: Sidney Chambers *SC*

Subject: Niamey Department Development Project (683-0240)
Second Interim Evaluation

Problem: Your signature is required to indicate formal acceptance by USAID/Niger of (a) the Final Evaluation Report prepared by Team Leader, Roger Poulin, in connection with the subject evaluation, and (b) the accompanying Project Evaluation Summary (PES).

Discussion: The Second Interim Evaluation of the Niamey Department Development Project (683-0240) took place during the months of December 1984 and February 1985. The evaluation team noted that there has been little change since the execution of the revised implementation plan following the first evaluation due to the poor agricultural year in 1984. In terms of three main measures of project success, the evaluation team made the following observations:

First, under the project there was to have been an increase in small farmer food production. This has been achieved only to the extent that some CPT-graduates (i.e., a very small percentage of the total target population) have successfully adopted certain elements of the improved technical package.

Second, local organizations were to have been strengthened. There has been no widespread impact in this area. Significant progress has occurred, however, in increasing the ability of some cooperatives to manage credit and input distribution.

Third, government technical services were to have been strengthened. The most obvious impact in this regard is the addition of the CPTs to the agricultural extension program. The CNCA program in the Niamey Department has also been strengthened considerably. Two very important organizations on which the project has had almost no impact are the Animation Service and the UNCC. The latter, which no longer exists, has been replaced by the Union Nationale des Cooperatives (UNC).

A key to the success of the project was to have been the active support of the technical services for the implementation of project activities. This has not occurred because the technical services have, in general, not identified with the project. Project objectives and priorities were different and distinct from their own, and their general attitude appears to have been that "the NDD project had its program and they had theirs." The reason for this situation is that, on one hand, the technical services were not fully involved in setting NDD project objectives and therefore felt no particular commitment to them, and on the other hand, the project had no authority to instruct the technical services to give top priority to the activities of the NDD project.

The principal recommendations of the evaluation are listed in the attached Project Evaluation Summary. These recommendations are aimed at (1) increasing involvement in and support of the project by GON technical services, (2) improving training programs and follow-up for trainees, (3) improving credit and inputs management support to local organizations, (4) developing an improved credit system, (5) initiating applied research for on-farm testing of new technologies, including animal traction, in different agro-climatic zones of the project area, and (6) improving project management and administration.

In conclusion, the evaluation team felt that the main concern of the project at this point should be to set realistic objectives for the next two years and to lay as solid a groundwork as possible for the design and implementation of a third phase. It was suggested that the project adopt the following four goals for the remaining two years:

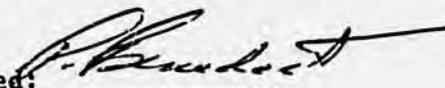
1. Evaluate the experience of the CPTs and determine what their role will be in phase III and beyond. This will involve assessing the effectiveness and impact of the training, relating the impact to the recurrent costs, and identifying the relative roles of the permanent CPTs and the village committees.

2. Assign top priority to strengthening local organizations in the skills that we know they will use. This translates specifically into greatly increasing the quantity of project resources devoted to cooperative training.

3. Continue to obtain concrete impact data on the technical package so that the extension program can become increasingly relevant to the needs of the farmers throughout the project area.

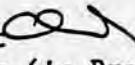
4. Carry out a thorough analysis of what the "Societe de Developpement" means for the Niamey Department in very specific terms. A specific focus of this analysis should be how and to what extent responsibilities can or should be effectively transferred from the technical services to local organizations.

Recommendation: That you sign below and on the face sheet of the accompanying PES, indicating USAID/Niger's acceptance of the Poulin Report and Project Evaluation Summary.

Approved: 

Disapproved: _____

Date: 28 MAY 1985

Drafted by: PDO, C. Doggett 
Clear: PROG, Abbe Fessenden (in Draft)
ADO, Lance Jepson (in Draft)
ADO, Kevin Mullally (in Draft)
D/DIR, Jesse Snyder 

Executive Summary

I. Project Title and Number: Niamey Department Development II 683-0240

II. Project Description and Development Problem

The NDD II Project is described as an integrated rural development project designed to address the problems of (a) low levels of agricultural production, (b) lack of effective rural organizations and (c) ineffective government extension services.

III. Purpose of Evaluation

The purposes of the evaluation were to (a) assess the impact of the changes recommended in the first evaluation on project performance, (b) measure progress to date toward the achievement of project objectives, and (c) make recommendations for the remaining two years of the project.

IV. Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation was carried out by a four person team - a Rural Development Specialist/Team Leader, an Agricultural Economist, a Social Anthropologist and a Financial Management Specialist. Most of the information used in the evaluation was obtained from project documents, including the reports of short-term consultants, and from discussions with project personnel both in Niamey and in the field. Since the evaluation did not take place during the agricultural season the team was unable to observe actual farming practices. The evaluation was planned for November-December to ensure the availability of complete data from the just-completed harvest. Considerable useful information was available from surveys of project-trained farmers conducted by the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit. The evaluation team also had occasion to meet with members of cooperatives and village groups which had benefitted from project interventions. Finally, the team observed NDD training cooperative training programs in progress.

V. Findings

Since the time of the last evaluation the NDD project has made only minimal concrete progress toward achieving the project purposes of (a) introducing an improved agricultural technology to small farmers and (b) strengthening local organizations to enable them to initiate and implement village-level development activities. The present evaluation team deemed that too little

time had passed between the execution of the revised implementation plan following the 1983 evaluation and the present evaluation to assess the results of changes instituted following the first evaluation. The disastrous drought which occurred during the 1984 agricultural season effectively prohibited the project from implementing the revised implementation plan.

During the first two years of Phase II the project extended an improved technical package, distributed agricultural inputs, and provided credit, mostly for animal traction. The 1983 evaluation found that the project was only partially successful in attaining its objectives. In general the technical package was not being fully adopted by a wide range of farmers, credit was not being repaid at a high rate, and too few resources and attention were being addressed to developing local organizational management capacity. In short, the project, as originally designed, was trying to do too much too fast. Further, the 1983 evaluation noted that there was an over-emphasis on the achievement of quantitative targets at the expense of qualitative objectives.

VI. Lessons Learned

a. In marginal agricultural areas considerable effort is needed to adapt available improved technical packages to actual on-farm growing conditions. A project extending agricultural technologies must take into account variations in soils and rainfall patterns, and must determine whether one, or several, technical packages will apply to all conditions.

b. It is useless to attempt to organize villagers to carry out development projects unless there is something for them to do that is of obvious value to them. This means that they need to participate in selecting activities to be carried out, and those activities must have a clear social or economic value to the group.

c. In an area possessing a meager resource base, finding development activities that will provide an incentive for villagers to organize is a difficult and long-term process. There are simply very few remunerative activities possible in areas of limited purchasing power, and there are few local resources available to carry out social projects. The sole viable approach is to devote considerable time, effort, and resources in the effort to make villagers more aware of what their options are (including outside sources of assistance) and in conducting dialogues to determine their felt needs and the manner in which they wish to address them.

d. Carrying out local organization development as envisioned in the NDD project is an extremely personnel-intensive process requiring trained and committed cadres.

VI. Recommendations

The evaluation team made 25 separate recommendations centering on (a) improving village level training, particularly in the area of monitoring, (b) increasing support to the development of local organizations, (c) increasing the level of support from government technical services to the project, (d) improving project administration, (e) strengthening the applied research program, including increased incorporation of research findings into training programs and (f) improving procedures for agricultural credit extension.

Project Evaluation Summary, Part I
Niamey Department Development
Second Interim Evaluation

B. Action Decisions Approved by the Mission Director

ACTION	Respons- ibility	Due Date
<u>A. CPT Training and Follow-Up</u>		
1. To further improve the content of the training at the CPTs: a) train CPT chiefs in ways of adjusting the training program to the needs of the trainees, b) increase the effective involvement of the Technical Services in CPT training, c) assure that literacy training for women is functional to their needs or discontinue this part of the program.	NDD	ongoing
2. The project and the Agriculture Service will make a comprehensive analysis of reasons why the follow-up system did not function well in 1984 and take concrete actions to improve performance of the system in 1985.	NDD SDA	5/85
3. Continue efforts through the Groupments Mutualistes to recruit better trainees, recognizing that their impact as extension agents is related more to the value of the technical package they learned than to their status in the village.	NDD	ongoing
4. Explore ways for villagers to pay part of the operating costs of training centers, but do away with the idea that they can ever be self-financing. To reduce operating costs of the village centers, explore the possibility of using CPT-graduates as trainers.	NDD	4/86
5. Define the relative roles of CPTs and village training centers, and explore the possibility of reducing the number of CPTs to as low as three.	NDD	12/86
6. Develop a series of surveys of CPT graduates to meet three concrete objectives: 1) obtain more information on the reasons for the adoption or non-adoption of all or parts of the technical package, 2) attempt to measure the on-farm impact of the technical package on yields and production, and 3) obtain concrete and reliable information on	NDD	ongoing

the benefits of animal traction especially the impact on yields and area planted. Prepare workplans for 1985.

B. Support to Local Organizations

1. Set up a system of regular follow-up visits to cooperatives and village groups now receiving training in credit and input management. NDD ongoing

2. The effort to transfer credit and input management responsibility to cooperatives should work only with those cooperatives who have the most potential for success, probably fewer than 20 in number. Prepare a preliminary list of cooperatives which may qualify for 1985. On a more general level, the project must give higher priority to the development of local organizations, including the strengthening of cooperatives which are not yet able to manage development activities. Project advisors for cooperative development, credit, and input distribution need to get together with Arrondissement Coordinators as soon as possible to work out an approach for carrying out this task over the next two years. Prepare a workplan for 1985. Finally, the project should carry out an analysis of what the "Societe de Developpement" means for Niamey Department in very specific terms. The analysis should focus on 1) how and to what extent responsibilities can be transferred from the technical services to local organizations, and 2) what concrete opportunities are there for cooperative development initiatives (either income generating or social) at the village level. The local organization study should make an important contribution to this analysis. NDD 5/85

C. Support from GON Technical Services

1. Implement the existing plan to increase the provision of department level technical services to the project. If this is not possible, AID will condition further disbursement on satisfactory implementation of project activities by the technical services. GON USAID 8/85

D. Project Administration

1. Establish output targets for the next two years with a view to setting as solid a groundwork as possible for Phase III. It is essential that the process involve the Prefecture, and the Department-level Technical Services. NDD USAID 7/85

2. In order to address more efficiently the many implementation problems facing the project, information flows to and from senior management need to be improved. At a minimum, the monthly meetings of project staff, arrondissement coordinators, and the technical services should be reinstated. NDD ongoing

3. Transfer day to day administration of the project from the Director and DOT to the Director of Administration and Finance. The DAF position should be filled as soon as possible by a competent individual in whom the Director has complete confidence. NDD 4/85

E. Agricultural Production and Research

1. The NDD project should not have a full-fledged farming systems research program. However, the Applied Research Unit working closely with the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit should do on-farm testing of new technologies in different agro-climatic zones of the project area. An important part of this effort should be the testing of modified animal traction equipment. Prepare workplan for 1985. NDD ongoing

2. Single out those production practices that have been shown to work well in the different agro-climatic zones of the project and teach these as effectively as possible in the CPTs and village training centers. CPT chiefs should recognize that if the use of some practices is low it is most likely because there is something wrong with them, and they probably should not be taught without further applied research. NED ongoing

3. Make arrangements for the systematic incorporation of applied research findings into the training programs of the CPTs. NDD ongoing

F. Agricultural Credit

1. CNCA must follow standard procedures for repossession in case of defaults, but more important, the top priority of CNCA and NDD must be to make sound loans. CNCA should lend only for economically viable activities and only to creditworthy borrowers. (It must be emphasized that lending to CPT graduates for animal traction equipment may not meet either of the above criteria.) NDD and CNCA should prepare a document NDD CNCA 11/85

on criteria to be used in approving loans in 1985.

2. NDD and CNCA need to increase the down payment percentage required on its loans. Any credit institution that consistently requires less than 20 to 30 percent down payment is certain to have unacceptably high default rates.

NDD 9/85

Niamey Department Development II
Second Interim Evaluation
(683-0240)

PES, Part II

13. Summary

With two years left in the Phase II Niamey Department Development (NDD) Project, there has been little concrete progress toward achieving the project purposes of (a) introducing an improved agricultural technology to small farmers and (b) strengthening local organizations to enable them to initiate and implement village-level development activities. During the first two years of Phase II the project extended an improved technical package, distributed agricultural inputs, and provided credit, mostly for animal traction. A project evaluation carried out in 1983 found that the project was not succeeding in attaining its objectives. In general the technical package was not being adopted by farmers, credit was not being repaid, and local organizations were neither interested nor able to carry out village-level development initiatives, even with project support. In short, the project, as originally designed, was trying to do too much too fast. Further, the evaluation noted that there was an over-emphasis on the achievement of quantitative targets at the expense of qualitative objectives.

Accordingly, the project was redesigned in early 1983 following the evaluation. The project retained its original objectives but recognized that an intermediate stage was needed before quantifiable results could be achieved. Since then the project has focused on qualitative improvements such as:

1. improving the technical package;
2. strengthening key government institutions, particularly the Agriculture Service, CNCA, and developing a staff of trainers to work with cooperatives and village groups;
3. training a small number of selected cooperatives in credit and input management; and
4. pilot activities to motivate villagers to form groups to undertake development initiatives.

The present objective of the project is to establish, by the end of the project in two years, a much better understanding of what can be done in the project area and how to go about doing it. This should provide a solid basis for a third phase which should finally achieve the objectives originally set for Phase II. (The evaluation team deemed that too little time had passed between the execution of the revised implementation plan fol-

lowing the first evaluation and the second interim evaluation to assess the results of changes instituted following the first evaluation.)

14. Evaluation Methodology

The project design called for two interim evaluations. The first of these took place in 1983 and, at an overall level, recommended an increased emphasis on institution building and stronger project management, particularly for the credit and input distribution components. Specific recommendations were made for each project component in line with these overall recommendations. The purposes of the present, second evaluation were to (a) assess the impact of the changes recommended in the first evaluation on project performance, (b) measure progress to date toward the achievement of project objectives, and (c) make recommendations for the remaining two years of the project. As noted above, the team was unable to measure the impact of reforms brought about at the time of the First Interim Evaluation. Findings and recommendations associated with the present evaluation, therefore, are to be taken in the context of the project as a whole.

The evaluation was carried out by a four person team. The expertise and responsibilities of each member were as follows:

Rural Development Specialist, Team Leader and primary author of Chapter VI, Project Management: Roger Poulin

Agricultural Economist, primary author of Chapter III analyzing the technical package and evaluating the performance of the Applied Research and Monitoring and Evaluation components of the project: Douglas Barnett.

Social Anthropologist, primary author of Chapter II, CPT-Based Extension, and Chapter V, Cooperative Development: Thomas Painter.

Financial Management Specialist, primary author of Chapter IV, Credit and Input Distribution: David Harmon.

Most of the information used in the evaluation was obtained from project documents, including the reports of short-term consultants, and from discussions with project personnel both in Niamey and in the field. Since the evaluation did not take place during the agricultural season the team was unable to observe actual farming practices. However, considerable useful information was available from surveys conducted by the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit. The evaluation team also had occasion to meet with members of cooperatives and village groups which had benefited from project interventions. Finally, the team observed NDD training cooperative training programs in progress.

15. External Factors

Two major institutional changes have adversely affected the achievement of project objectives. First, the Union Nigerienne de Credit et de Cooperation (UNCC), which was responsible for cooperative development, experienced continuous staffing, financial, and management problems from the start of the project, and finally ceased to exist in 1984. This development had an adverse impact in the project in that there was no effective organization to implement NDD-funded cooperative development initiatives.

Second, the agricultural credit institution, Caisse Nationale de Credit Agricole (CNCA), had been in continuous financial straits due to the existence of large unpaid loans to agricultural parastatals. As a result, it had been precluded from providing the full range of credit anticipated by the project, particularly short-term credit for fertilizer.

16. Inputs

Delivery of inputs has not been a major cause of non-achievement of project objectives. However, two instances related to technical assistance are worth noting: First, the project was unable to recruit an agronomist advisor for the 1984 crop year. Since a very ambitious research program had been planned for that year, this could have had a serious impact on project activities. As it turned out, poor weather in 1984 would have rendered the agronomic trials largely useless in any event.

Second, and more important, was the failure of the project to recruit a Women's Participation Advisor since the original incumbent departed in 1983. The position has been filled by two individuals for short periods since that time, but the lack of continuity has made it impossible to achieve significant progress in this component of the project. (It should be noted here that a full time Women's Participation Advisor arrived to take up this position at the mid-point of the evaluation.)

17. Outputs

The present status of outputs for each of the project components is as follows:

a. CPT Extension

The project has trained the target number of farm couples in the CPTs. In addition, the project has succeeded in increasing the quality of trainees selected to attend the CPTs. Major short-

falls concern the quality of the training, which has not been well adapted to the needs of the trainees (mainly due to inadequacies in the training of the CPT chiefs), and which has not received adequate support from the technical services. Although the project began addressing these problem in earnest in 1983, not much progress has occurred since that time.

b. Local Organization Development

The project was to have trained cooperative officials in cooperative management, credit management and input management, and the training was to have been limited to the best cooperatives. The targets for this activity are being met.

There was also to have been training in non-farm income generating activities. This did not occur as planned because not enough information was available on the social and economic feasibility of the proposed projects.

There were also to have been efforts to motivate villagers to organize themselves for the purpose of undertaking development initiatives in their villages. This activity is behind schedule. Efforts to work with villagers foundered because of a lack of implementation capacity in the villages and a general lack of commitment on the part of technical services field staff. A study of the social feasibility of creating village groups to carry out development projects that was to have occurred in 1984 is just now getting underway.

c. Credit

The institutional development targets for this component are being achieved. Loan records have been reconciled, a computerized credit management information system has been developed, and improved credit policies have been instituted by the project and the CNCA. In addition, selected cooperatives have received training in credit management including the maintaining of records in the local languages. The amount of credit being disbursed, however, is much less than expected, primarily because the animal traction package is proving to be unprofitable, and because few other economically viable uses of credit have been identified. The volume of credit cannot increase significantly until cooperatives are able to manage their own credit and input distribution.

d. Input Distribution

The project has installed all of the storage and transportation capacity needed to meet the requirements of farmers in the project area, and the cooperatives which have received training in credit management have also received training in input management. A timely and accurate system of demand estimation has not been put in place due to communication problems between villages,

cooperatives, arrondissements, and the Department headquarters.

e. Women's Participation

This component experienced the least progress relative to objectives. The women's training at the CPTs continues to be not very relevant to their needs, particularly in the area of literacy training. It is evident that there is a long way to go before women are effectively integrated into village group activities. This is an area where progress is particularly difficult, and the absence of a long term women's advisor since 1982 has resulted in discontinuity and a general lack of direction. The position was finally filled in January 1985.

f. Applied Research

There were to have been two years of reliable agronomic data on the improved technical package by now. This has not occurred as the trials were not well managed in 1983 and the rains failed in 1984. Plans are now underway, however, which should ensure well managed trials in 1985.

Research on animal traction equipment will begin on schedule this year, meaning that two years of data will be available by the end of the project.

The surveys of CPT graduates were well carried out in 1984 and provided much useful data. Two more years of similar data should provide good insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the technical package and the extension system.

The farming systems studies that were to have been carried out in 1984 did not take place, primarily due to the lack of personnel. The surveys have been designed, however, and it appears likely that they will be carried out in 1985 and 1986.

18. Purpose

At the purpose level there are three indicators of how well the project is doing. First, there was to have been an increase in small farmer food production. This has been achieved only to the extent that some CPT graduates (i.e., a very small percentage of the total target population) have successfully adopted certain elements of the improved technical package. There has been virtually no spread effect from these CPT graduates to the rest of the population.

Second, local organizations were to have been strengthened to enable them to initiate and implement their own development projects. Although the project has had no widespread impact with respect to this objective, significant progress has occurred in

increasing the ability of some cooperatives to manage credit and input distribution. The major constraints with respect to the strengthening of local organizations are (a) that there is very little to build on in terms of existing capacity and (b) that the resource base is so low that there are few opportunities for sustainable development initiatives, either income generating or social.

Third, government services were to have been strengthened. The most obvious impact in this regard is the addition of the CPTs to the Agriculture Service extension program. The CNCA in Niamey Department has also been strengthened considerably. Two very important organizations on which the project has had very little impact are the Animation Service and UNCC.

19. Goal

The goal of the project is to achieve a self-sustaining rural development process. With two years left, it is clear that this goal will not be achieved. One reason is that the purposes are not being achieved, but the main reason is that the goal itself was much too ambitious. Even had the project succeeded in introducing an improved technical package and strengthening local organizations, this would have been only the beginning. Self-sustaining rural development can only be achieved through long-term training and institution building efforts to increase village-level capacity to initiate, manage and finance development programs. This is a task that cannot be achieved in five years.

20. Beneficiaries

The main beneficiaries of the project have been the more than 700 farm couples who have attended the CPTs. They have received training in the improved technical package and have received credit for animal traction equipment, including carts. Other beneficiaries include a small number of farmers and blacksmiths who have received credit from the project, and members of cooperatives and village groups who have received training in cooperative, credit, and input management. The institutions that have benefitted the most from the project are:

a. the Niamey Department Agriculture Service, whose activities were expanded and improved by the CPTs and by the technical assistance provided by the project, especially as relates to improving the technical package; and

b. the Niamey branch of the CNCA which now has a much better control over its loan portfolio, and a better system for approving loans and managing its credit program.

The main shortfalls with respect to intended project beneficiaries are the farmers in the home villages of the CPT graduates who were to have received extension advice from the graduates but hardly ever did, and women who thus far have received almost no concrete benefits from project activities.

21. Unplanned Effects

The evaluation found no unplanned effects as a result of this project.

22. Lessons Learned

The following may be taken as lessons learned from the evaluation:

a. In marginal agricultural areas considerable effort is needed to adapt available improved technical packages to actual on-farm growing conditions. Within the project area there are considerable variations in soils and rainfall patterns, and there is no one technical package that applies to all conditions. The NDD project has extended essentially only one technical package since it started. Attempts to adapt that package to actual growing conditions in the project area began in 1984 when it became clear that only a small percentage of farmers being trained by the project were applying the recommended package on their own fields. As a result, one of the main objectives of the project, increased small farmer production, was not achieved.

b. It is useless to attempt to organize villagers to carry out development projects unless there is something for them to do that is of obvious value to them. This means that they need to participate in selecting activities to be carried out, and those activities must have a clear social or economic value to the group. In the NDD project almost none of the local organizations that were formed ever initiated development activities, and their performance in implementing activities initiated by the project (e.g., managing credit and input distribution) was rarely satisfactory.

What was learned in this project is that, in an area possessing a meager resource base, finding development activities that will provide an incentive for villagers to organize is a difficult and long-term process. There are simply very few remunerative activities possible in areas of limited purchasing power, and there are virtually no local resources available to carry out social projects. The sole viable approach is to devote considerable time, effort, and resources in the effort to make villagers more aware of what their options are (including outside sources of assistance) and in conducting dialogues to determine their felt needs and the manner in which they wish to address them.