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A REVIEW OF DS/RAD (DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT
AND DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION)

by

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This report was prepared at the request of Jerome T. French, Director of DS/RAD. It was intended as an independent review of the general approach and performance of the Office to facilitate future planning. As time and resources did not permit a systematic in-depth evaluation, the task of the team had to be conceived more modestly: it called for our best judgments and ideas on how the Office perceived its job and how it was perceived, and on what it was doing and what it should consider doing.

We were asked to pay special attention to the cooperative agreements and therefore we concentrated on the ongoing activities that are performed under this contracting mode. Our report is based on over one hundred interviews with AID staff in DSB, the Regional Bureaus, and PPC; with RAD's cooperators at universities, consulting firms, and other institutions; and with staff of field missions who were available during visits to Washington. We also reviewed documents and papers produced under auspices of RAD and previous evaluations of specific projects. We administered a brief questionnaire to field missions and used the answers that had arrived in time for inclusion in this report.

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Introduction

"/A University of Wisconsin consultancy/ was found by all concerned to be highly productive, practically oriented, and economically effective from our perspective. /The consultant/ proved to be the type of experienced, action-oriented expert often called for but not always found." /Cable from USAID, Mauritania, April, 1981./

"We believe that the OSU consultancy is a very good example of DSB supporting a quick and very incisive technical analysis which enabled us to analyze benefits and spot potential problems of working in an area." /Cable, USAID, Honduras, March, 1981./

"The mission's evaluation of DS/RAD's support through the off-farm employment project is that the quality has been excellent. This support has been, and should continue to be, critically important in the implementation of key mission activities." /Cable, USAID, Honduras, March, 1981./

"MSU is to be commended on putting together a talented team of highly skilled young professionals at very reasonable costs. Both salary and support costs are closer to 'Peace Corps' than usual AID contract standards." /Cable, USAID, Egypt, March 1981./

These cables were dispatched in response to the authors' request for an evaluation of DS/RAD activities that would present views from the field to add to those gleaned from Washington interviews. Accounts gathered here had already provided evidence of "success" stories that RAD itself liked to cite: the Cornell project in Botswana that changed the design of a village water

supply system; the use of Development Alternatives, Inc. concepts by a RAD staff member working in Niger on an integrated rural development project; seminars and papers in Bangladesh and Sierra Leone that had apparently improved the government's capacity to plan a rural finance program and to introduce a small industries project, respectively.

These experiences as reported by AID mission staff members are quite typical. While there were occasional complaints and problems in the relationships with individual consultants, the field's reaction to RAD's work is overwhelmingly positive. This is an extraordinary achievement by a small and often controversial central office which has been the creature of one of AID's most ambitious and high-spirited policy goals: to effectively reach and involve the rural poor in their own development.

The task RAD assumed as an outgrowth of the Working Group of the Rural Poor was not only ambitious but also much more complicated and different than the usual external aid interventions: it involved the identification of fields in which the social sciences could help the rural development effort, to mobilize centers or groups of talent outside the Agency, to persuade the operation arm of AID to try out new approaches, and to make the link between available expertise and field projects. It is not surprising that in the process of working with an as yet ill-defined set of disciplines, theories, and tools, and in struggling with a

shrinking Agency beset by the well-known difficulties and uncertainties which have become features of its own existence, RAD's current status is full of contradictions, dilemmas, and ambiguities. Their very successes in some dimensions have tended to accentuate problems in others; their job, which can only be done well on a long-term, evolving basis had to be fitted into AID's usual style of seeking quick results and dramatic impact; resources and time always limited their ability to do more than a fraction of the tasks they were given or assumed. Furthermore, while many of the earlier efforts are only now fully operational but far from completed, new tasks are emerging. RAD's response to such challenges and pressure has been flexibility and inventiveness in staffing, contract instruments, and field service management. However, these very devices have tended to extract their own price.

Thus, the team felt that instead of elaborating on RAD's success, we might be more helpful for the future by looking at RAD's dilemmas, highlighting the as yet incomplete aspects of their work, and pointing to their future opportunities in the light of their trajectory and experience thus far.

A. Five Dilemmas of DS/RAD

Part of DS/RAD's problem of recognition is inevitable. RAD is a staff office in a central headquarters performing line functions in the field. Its budget is only one-tenth that of DS/AGR but its work is relevant to well over half of AID's projects. It sponsors sophisticated research, but it sees its primary responsibility as serving practical operational needs. It boasts only a small core staff of its own, but it deploys many times its own strength by means of contracts and cooperative agreements. It enjoys a flexible style permitting it to respond to changing needs, but it has to conform to the rigidities imposed by the large agency of which it is a part. But most important of all is its definition of its own mission, which involves ambiguities that make it unlike other offices in AID.

Five basic dilemmas characterize its operations.

1. Tension between knowledge building and field service.

RAD's operating premise is that social science can increase the effectiveness of agricultural technologies in alleviating rural poverty. Rural development is not a science and not a sector, as conventionally defined. There is much that is not known about it, and much to learn about the application of new knowledge in different settings. There is no doctrine defining when rural employment is created most efficiently by changes in farming practice, and when by the introduction of agro-industry. Experience is only beginning to identify the kinds of institutions that can best

mobilize peasant savings, and how they should be administered. What procedures can release the most useful local initiatives and how can they complement - or, if necessary, resist - strongly centralized government operations? Answering questions like these requires analyses of both existing data about past experience and of new data on current operations. But if research is necessary to answer such basic operational questions, how can RAD deliver advice and assistance about them? The Office is forced to apply what is already known about rural development while discovering new approaches. The result is a balancing act without much of a safety net of basic support and understanding in other parts of AID/W.

2. Ambiguity of RAD's mission.

The very title of the Office--Rural Development and Development Administration--bespeaks an ambiguity that denies its staff a strong sense of identity. Neither RD nor DA is a clearly defined discipline, even taken in isolation: What is RD that is not a by-product of agricultural development with its industrial linkages? Is there a distinct social science dimension to RD? What about DA distinguishes it from public administration in its focus or methodology? Such questions can be answered, of course, but putting these two elements together does little to sharpen the identity of either. How does DA relate to RD--does it describe programmatic inputs in the rural sector, or the processes of

guiding social change? The activities of the Office include technical functions that are intended to serve a country's ministry of agriculture, but among other clients the Office also offers assistance to national banks, institutes of training, and universities. Unlike most offices in AID, RAD has neither a stable profession to call on nor a strong bureaucratic constituency to serve.

3. Multiple clientele.

Although the Office accepts service to AID's field missions as a major --perhaps primary-- purpose, it deals with these "clients" through the four regional bureaus, each of which has developed its own style of operating and its own priorities. The bureaus appear sometimes as clients, sometimes as competitors, sometimes as critics of RAD. As might be expected, many of RAD's field projects depend on personal interactions between the mission's staff and an individual in the Washington office or in one of RAD's cooperating agencies. Service initiatives can come from an AID mission's own sense of need, from a regional bureau, from RAD itself, or from one of its collaborators, and the routes by which these transactions finally produce an activity are often circuitous. There are natural tensions in the system: bureaus sometimes object to RAD's direct access and "free-wheeling" style, and RAD encounters difficulties in dealing with field missions through bureau channels. Sometimes RAD's resources in travel and project funds are coveted by the bureaus, and sometimes bureau priorities conflict with RAD's. The relationships between RAD and these

sometimes competing, sometimes reluctant clients add to the ambiguity of the Office's sense of identity.

4. The product spectrum.

Most offices in DSB confine their activities to a fairly coherent or consistent product: policy guideline, manuals, or research reports, for example, all intended for use in field missions or other parts of the Agency. The RAD services, on the other hand, range from complex papers on organization theory through manuals of instruction for conducting household surveys and on to project papers and proposals. Their sources are equally diverse: universities, private firms, other government agencies, professional associations, and individual consultants. Their paperwork for the missions, like their studies, recommendations, state-of-the-art reports, books, and discussion guides, are intended for different users. They may be published privately or publicly, or distributed officially or not at all. Universities in particular generate by-products from their participation in RAD activities, such as graduate theses, journal articles, and chapters in anthologies, some of which are not even seen by AID. As might be expected, given this diversity, the quality of these products varies widely, too; some meet exacting professional standards, and others, not requiring rigorous scientific validity, serve immediate practical purposes. The operations of the Office produce, of course, many other services than these papers: short-term consultancies, resident advisory teams, training programs and workshops, scholarships and fellowships, and participant training

activities of various durations. There is no standard product. RAD's glory and its frustration are diversity and versatility. But that, too, contributes to RAD's ambiguous sense of identity.

5. Experts: "Inners" vs. "Outers".

The RAD staff constantly has to decide conscientiously whether to do a given job themselves or to have it done by an outsider on contract. Using contractors merely shifts the burden from substance to management. The cooperative agreement is an attempt to resolve that issue. It is a flexible instrument that reduces negotiating delays and administrative costs, and aims at a truly cooperative style of operation. But in relying on such concentric circles of cooperators, contractors, and consultants RAD has to sacrifice staff time that would be otherwise available for direct technical assistance in the field.

In keeping with current Agency policy of mounting substantial projects with a small "in-house" staff supplemented by these concentric circles of specialists retained through grants, contracts, and cooperative agreements, RAD has multiplied its expertise many times over. But the core staff itself is also made up partly of "outsiders." Making a virtue of necessity, RAD has supplemented its very small direct-hire staff with colleagues from other parts of the Agency on temporary assignment, employees of other agencies and organizations on loan, and management interns. The Office has quite properly treated these "external" specialists as members of its own staff and has deployed them as full partners in responding

to requests from AID missions and in overseeing and working with contractors and cooperators.

Beyond these concentric rings of experts is a network of potential consultants who can be called on for tasks of greater duration or more specialized function than are available through RAD or its contractors. Thus RAD offers many faces to AID. Its staff may be experienced or not in technical matters, or know much or little about the AID context of their work, and they might be effective as bureaucratic operators in a highly structured environment or they may not. Like RAD's mission, its services, its clientele, and its product, the people associated with the Office are diverse.

How well is RAD living with these dilemmas?

B. The RAD experience

1. Origins

The organizational predecessor to DSB, the Technical Assistance Bureau (TAB), was formed in 1969 to provide the Agency with technical leadership in R & D functions and technical services to missions. TAB's Office of Rural Development was created in 1974. From the beginning its program included heavily field-oriented

consulting operations while it pursued simultaneously a series of research efforts aimed at generating new knowledge. Although there was considerable central direction of Office activities, a significant effort was made to get reactions and input from the field. In May 1976 the Office requested AID missions to advise them in designing applied research and consulting programs. The result of these early interactions between the central Rural Development Office and the missions was the development of ten original parts of DS/RD's program:

1. Rural Development Strategies/Foundations of RD Theory and Practice
2. Participation and Local Organization
3. Off-Farm Employment
4. Rural Works
5. Appropriate Technology in RD
6. Rural Credit and Financial Systems
7. Rural Markets
8. Social Science Methodologies for RD
9. Rural Area Development
10. Integration of Social Services and Income Producing Activities

During this period the office of Development Administration, which had previously contributed to the Agency's approach to Rural Development through its "local action" program, remained a separate unit. Its programs, also based on interaction with the field missions, contributed the following additional elements to the current RAD programs:

11. Managing Decentralization
12. Project Management
13. Management Training
14. Sectoral Management (agriculture, health)
15. Institution Building Analysis and Methodology
16. Methodology for Multidisciplinary Project Design
17. Public Program Management and Service Deliveries

In 1978 the two offices were merged.

In addition to serving mission requests, the early Office leadership recognized the importance of meeting the needs of the regional bureaus. RAD perceived the regional bureaus as the major sources of the Office's support in AID.

RAD also responded to two other Agency concerns in rural development. The first was to ensure that rural sector activities go beyond agricultural production, which remained the responsibilities of AID's Office of Agriculture, but which was already so large that additional expansion of its function would be unwieldy. The second was that the Agency's work in development administration was ready for a new focus, going beyond the operational meanings of the public administration era (1950s and early 1960s) and the later sector-based efforts to introduce administrative improvements to the performance of technical functions (early 1970s). The DS/RAD approach was to take selected issues in rural development and administration as the basis for improving current and future project and program operations.

2. Instruments

The cooperative agreement became RAD's preferred mechanism for developing and deploying the external institutional resources necessary to perform these new services during a period of retrenchment in direct-hire personnel. This arrangement was already in use by the Office of Agriculture, which employed it to develop its Sector Planning Model. It had started by identifying several universities with strong competence in agricultural economics and

related disciplines, asking them to work on mutually agreed projects with an AID Mission and LDC government, and providing reimbursement for actual costs incurred. There would be an annual plan of work, to be amended as necessary during the year, and an indicative annual budget, which could be enlarged if necessary and as mutually agreed. The universities also contributed a modest proportion of the total costs.

Some of the cooperating organizations became part of RAD's portfolio when the Office was created. Five cooperative agreements were instituted in the first years: two with Michigan State University, and one each with Ohio State University, Practical Concepts Inc., and Cornell University. The subjects of these agreements had been developed out of a Working Group on the Rural Poor that had suggested the need for studies and operations in off-farm employment, farm strategies, credit, management information systems, and participation, respectively.

RAD regarded this format as more desirable than contracts or grants for involving universities and other institutions in the work of the office. It was more flexible than a contract, but more field work oriented than a 211-d grant. The cooperating institution would have a voice in determining what was to be done. The AID and cooperator staff would work collegially on planning and implementation, and there was an explicit intention to work with LDC institutions to increase their capacity, a task

that is difficult to define and monitor under the standard contract format. There would be a Basic Memorandum of Agreement anticipating that core funding from central AID sources could be supplemented by additional budgetary support from the field missions or other parts of the Agency for specific "add-on" services. This approach was reaffirmed in 1977 when the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act, Public Law 95-224, officially specified its purposes and mode of operation. The AID Handbook 13 (Dec. 31, 1980) describes it as, in effect, a grant "... to accomplish a public purpose of support or stimulation authorized by Federal statutes" except that it also contemplates "substantial Agency involvement." The later University of California (Berkeley) and Syracuse Agreements specifically followed the format suggested by that legislation, both in the expectation of mission-funded additions to the scope of work and in the basic size of the initial agreement. As in the case of contracts, cooperative agreements were written after reviewing competitive proposals.

The cooperative agreement mode of operating was not without its critics. At the outset, the General Counsel objected that too general a scope of work could not be enforced by law, to which the Office responded that AID never resorted to legal enforcement anyway, and that contract management was better performed by continuous oversight (including the withholding of travel and annual budget increments if necessary). Some of the bureaus objected to the size of the agreements, especially the second generation ones,

which were expected, with mission add-ons for field services, to reach as much as seven million dollars. RAD's response was that the critical mass attained by these cooperating institutions would add to their versatility because more specialists would be involved than in a smaller contract. Furthermore the cooperative agreements would encourage new, interdisciplinary ventures because of their sheer size: single departments would not be able to perform all of the specified functions. The expectation was that these agreements would eventually produce highly visible centers of excellence in fields that were important to RAD's operations.

Others objected that the cooperative agreements were a costly way of producing technical assistance, that the Indefinite Quantity Contract (IQC) would achieve the same result faster and more cheaply, and that an excessive amount was going to research and university overhead. RAD's counter-argument was that there was insufficient capacity in the areas where cooperative agreements were involved to rely on existing organizations through an IQC, that research was necessary to develop this capacity, and that university overhead was less than that of other potential contractors. Finally, another group of critics objected that the agreements were more beneficial to the universities than to the Agency. The universities, with rare unanimity, dissented from that judgment, arguing that pressures on them to provide services to the missions created a powerful corrective to their faculties' proclivity toward theory and library research.

The objectives of the legislation included strengthening American institutional capacities, which necessarily involved what RAD staff referred to as "quid" for the "quo" of service to the Agency. In the end, it appears that the cooperative agreements did about what they were expected to do, and that the Agency's alertness to their potential flaws provided some assurance that that particular mode of operating would not get out of control. It has remained an important assurance to the universities that one objective of the legislation is to strengthen American institutional capacities in fields close to the national interest.

In using the cooperative agreement to augment the resources of the Office, RAD attempted to standardize the functions to be performed by the cooperating institutions: (a) to develop State-of-the-Art Papers (SOAPs) synthesizing existing knowledge, practice, and methodology in the assigned area and to develop hypotheses that might be tested in the field; (b) to conduct long-term applied research based on sustained field work; (c) to perform short-term consulting services for field missions as a kind of "reality testing" as well as a contribution to AID's operations; (d) to develop "networks" of professionals in each subject matter area, in the U.S. and abroad, so that there would be communications among specialists as a by-product of the cooperative agreement; and (e) to disseminate information directly to academics and operators in the field. The main focus was on applied research and consulting.

On the whole the Cooperative Agreement format, as it has evolved over the past four years, has worked rather well in achieving its intended purposes. Among its advantages are the following:

- a CAs have proven to be effective vehicles to satisfy short-term field requests. While RAD sometimes had to work around the academic schedules of university staff, this minor difficulty was compensated by the high quality of the experts and by the relative ease with which personnel could be mobilized under existing agreements. There have been few, if any, complaints about the timeliness of such services.
- b. CAs have enormously facilitated field involvement of rural social scientists in mission-related projects by financing their initial visits and preliminary work, until mission financed "add-ons" could be negotiated and completed. Field missions have reported that work was advanced by several months as a result of availability of such CA-funded start-up activity. The CA mode has been useful in allowing for incremental approaches to difficult rural development problems in which the final approach or design could not be foreseen before performing field consultation and exploratory work.
- c. CAs have permitted periodic adjustments in funding and program, as required by the dynamics of the work.

- d. One purpose of cooperative agreements has been to build capacity, and in fact they have helped to maintain a minimal core group at cooperating universities. Staff members paid through CAs would not otherwise have been able to concentrate on LDC issues and other problems of importance to AID; some non-tenured, but experienced research associates could not have been attracted as collaborators and made available for overseas work. Core support has also made possible the effective backstopping of teams fielded by cooperators and in many cases provided them with valuable assistance of young professionals at very low cost.

There is little or no evidence for the charge that the CAs are costlier than other means of procurement. In projects that are fully operational, the so-called "up-front" costs are not large in light of the whole package of services provided by the institutions. The average per-year costs of universities' services compare favorably with those of consulting firms, PVOs, and AID direct-hire personnel. For example, Cornell's average cost for its first three years of operations are \$63,000 per year for applied research and consulting and \$36,000 for home-based knowledge generation, dissemination/networking. These figures are only about two-thirds those even of comparable direct-hire costs.

3. The Service Mode

DS/RAD has set itself the ambitious and difficult tasks of simultaneously promoting knowledge building and field service. Systematic learning requires grounding in actual field consulting

experience, whereas the performance of technical assistance is conditioned by the systematic collection, analysis, and testing of relevant knowledge. Both dimensions are involved in virtually everything the Office has been doing since its inception.

Paradoxically, the efforts to achieve the proper mix and balance of these intertwined goals have at times rewarded RAD teams with recognition and satisfaction, but they have also been the source of much frustration and criticism from other parts of the Agency.

The original linking of field services with knowledge building can be attributed to RAD's perception that there never has been enough readily available knowledge and experience about rural development to implement the New Directions mandate. This proposition holds not only for novel or innovative concepts such as participation or area development, but also for traditional activities such as credit, marketing, and land tenure. Indeed, even valid knowledge drawn from past experience is only partly relevant now because of changes in clientele (poorer rural groups), the New Directions' stress on local organizations (local coops, informal credit groups), and a broadening of the geographic coverage (in Africa, for example, where there was very little information about dealing with land tenure issues). American social scientists have approached rural development through baseline surveys and problem identification rather than by observing or participating in problem-solving and other action-oriented programs. Field involvement under the CAs has increasingly given them an opportunity to learn about actual operations from concrete country situations.

Currently RAD is experiencing some doubts about the value of the knowledge-building portion of the program as the momentum of field service has grown, but a careful review of past experience offers reassurance about the original approach in spite of some disappointments. The services RAD has obtained from academic and other centers draw on both existing talent and emergent knowledge drawn from field involvement. Moreover, much of the value AID is now obtaining from its cooperators has been the result of previous AID investments and of opportunities provided by RAD for action-oriented research. This case is illustrated by the work of Carl Eicher and his group at MSU, Dale Adams and the Rural Credit group at OSU, and the Land Tenure Center activities at Wisconsin. Consulting services have drawn heavily on knowledge generated by AID-sponsored research.

RAD is also finding that knowledge building benefits from consulting. The quality of research on development problems is vastly enhanced by increased exposure of the researchers to practical problems faced by decision makers in government or in external aid agencies. The RAD experience also indicates clearly that policy-oriented research gains relevance when it is based on data derived from a working situation. One example is the work of an Ohio State University team in Peru in establishing that savings mobilization was a viable and successful complement to small farm credit, a finding made possible by OSU's previous extensive consultation on practical farm finance issues.

RAD's access to current experience has sharpened its cooperators' research on emergent problems. The Land Tenure Center at Wisconsin is doing a systematic exploration of the nomadic pastoralism problem in several African countries where the institutional environment differs markedly from that of Latin America, the location of most of the Center's earlier work. DAI also seems able to extract lessons from its own consulting experience and from short case studies in a considerable number of countries of their choice. DAI regards this comparative research as a backbone of their consulting effort: "service without research gets poorer," they assert.

The philosophy of the cooperative agreement has assumed that the missions would pay only for specific units of field work. Long-term involvement requires core support supplemented by continuing demand for a group's services. Some field projects may contribute to local knowledge building in a given mission but not necessarily to the systematic building of topical experience. Some state-of-the-art papers produced by the universities have not derived as much cross-country experience as might still be the case if they were to be used to develop and test hypotheses or redefine problems. The present short-fall is partly a function of the limitations of access to key countries, or to a shortage of resources for systematic field data collection, and partly to inadequate attention and resources for comparative studies. The amount of funding for knowledge building in the current cooperative agreements is just enough to keep a small team together with some

essential central facilities such as libraries, a few research assistants, and secretarial help. Very few resources have been made available for research-related travel or for gathering and analyzing original data.

The service-oriented approach to knowledge building has worked best for projects that could establish long-term country relationships in several countries and on similar topics (in some cases financed with non-RAD resources), permitting comparative learning from a spectrum of field laboratories. It has been least successful when the work of interpreting, classifying, and generalizing field-based information has been neglected or under-funded.

4. Operations and Reported Impact

RAD serves a diverse set of potential clients, including AID field missions, and regional bureaus, US universities and consulting companies, and LDC institutions. RAD affects mission activities by means of short-term technical assistance visits to the field. RAD-initiated activities are used either to explore the possibilities for longer term involvement or to maintain contact with an existing project. Table 1 shows how these activities are distributed among the geographic regions.

TABLE 1. RAD Mission Services.
including cooperative agreement activities

<u>Region</u>	<u>Number of Visits</u>	<u>Number of Countries</u>	<u>Number of Work Weeks</u>
Africa	58	16	671
Asia	63	6	583
LAC	56	16	510
Near East	27	4	314

* 1979-1980

** FY 1980

Table 2 helps explain why RAD staff activities in the field are a source of tension as well as satisfaction: only about half of them are "putting out fires," the rest serve other functions including the development of long-term relationships. Still, a substantial amount of time in the field (about 70%) is devoted at least partly to serving mission needs. The specific functions served by the field visits are summarized in Table 3. The figures show that teams from the cooperating institutions made about 55% of the visits, RAD staff made about 19% of the visits, and 25% of the visits were joint RAD-cooperator efforts.

TABLE 2. Purpose of RAD staff activities in the field, 1978-1980.

<u>TDY Category</u>	<u>Number of work-weeks</u>
Exploratory discussions only	31 (22%)
Exploratory discussions plus short term TA	20 (14%)
Negotiations only	18 (13%)
Negotiations plus short term TA	4 (3%)
Long-term or recurrent advice	0 (0%)
Short-term advice or TA	72 (50%)
Maintenance visit	8 (6%)
Total	143 (100%)

TABLE 3. Functions served by DS/RAD-sponsored field visits, by staff classification, from October, 1978 to March, 1980.

<u>Type of visit</u>	<u>RAD only</u>	<u>Cooperator only</u>	<u>RAD and Cooperator</u>	<u>Total</u>
Preparing mission papers	3	10	9	22 (11%)
Evaluation and assessment	11	13	11	35 (18%)
SOAPS, applied research, and other studies	5	24	10	39 (20%)
Direct consulting	12	49	13	74 (37%)
Seminars & conferences	2	8	3	13 (7%)
Maintenance activities	6	7	4	17 (8%)
Total	39	111	50	200 (100%)

RAD's impacts on mission activities, as well as the types of technical assistance it offers, can be classified into those that are short-term and those that are long-term. Short-term impacts include help in project conception, design, and evaluation, and other interventions such as helping to write CDSSs. Long-term impacts include interventions that have changed mission strategy, resulted in a long-term project that probably would not have existed otherwise, redesigned a long-term project, cancelled a long-term project that had been planned, or resulted in a series of short-term projects that together form a long-term presence of a cooperator in country.

Long-Term Impacts

RAD's long-term projects appear to have evolved in two ways. The first is out of a short-term TDY or a series of short-term TDYs. The long-term arrangement may be an extension of the short-term work, perhaps to a broader geographic coverage (as was the case with the Cornell involvement in Jamaica), or it may be an expansion of both the substantive and geographic scope of the original TDYs (as is the case with the evolution of the Rural Off-Farm Employment Assessment project in Thailand, which grew out of a short-term financial sector assessment TDY). The second pattern is when a mission perceives, perhaps vaguely or in very broad terms, a strategy or program that it wants to pursue but doesn't have the necessary expertise in hand to do so.

A common thread running through both patterns is that the long-term arrangements have their genesis in mission needs. These

needs may be rather well-formed or they may be inchoate. After the initial (apparent) match between mission demand for and RAD-cooperator supply of expertise, a period of negotiation and planning follows during which the details of the long-term arrangement are worked out among RAD, the cooperator, and the mission. It is during this negotiating stage that RAD and its cooperators have their first real chance to influence AID missions. For example, when the Project Management Center (PMC) and the Jamaican Mission were discussing how the PMC could help the Mission do some work with national planning and management of resources, the PMC persuaded the Mission to emphasize the development of Jamaican management capability through an "action training" approach that had been previously developed at Vanderbilt University.

Our evidence shows that the projects vary greatly in their potential or actual effects on mission policies and activities, and on host countries. Such projects as Cornell's in Jamaica appear to have fundamentally changed mission appreciation of an aspect of rural development that had not been considered important previous to the cooperator's work. Others, like OSU's in Thailand and Peru, have produced research results that will probably be incorporated into future mission projects. A third type of project, such as Syracuse's in the Philippines and the Project Management Center's in Jamaica, will probably have little or no effect on mission activities, but will have important effects on the host country institutions that served as counterparts.

RAD's long-term technical assistance has been mostly in the form of in-depth project design, either directly by writing the project documents, or indirectly by gathering and analyzing data necessary for project identification and design. (See Appendix A for a detailed summary description of the projects covered by the cabled questionnaires.) In addition to data analysis and work on project documentation, the information we have suggests that RAD's long-term cooperators have done a certain amount of training of host country personnel and have tried to make their research results available to them.

Table 4 shows that, on the whole, missions had a good impression of the quality of the work that RAD's cooperators supplied during their long-term interventions. In all categories, the cooperators were judged, on average, to have performed better than other sources of technical assistance.

TABLE 4. Comparative mission rankings of RAD's long-term cooperators

<u>Item</u>	<u>Better=3</u>	<u>Same=2</u>	<u>Worse=1</u>	<u>Mean</u>
Timeliness	3	1	1	2.40
Financial cost to mission	4	0	0	3.00
Administrative cost to mission	2	1	1	2.25
Team's ability in language & culture	5	0	1	2.70
Team's technical quality	4	0	1	2.60
Long-term effects on mission	2	1	0	2.70
Short-term effects on mission	4	0	0	3.00
Benefits to host country agencies	2	0	1	2.30
Benefits to host country individuals	2	0	1	2.30

Short-term Impacts

The short-term work performed by RAD's cooperators (summarized in Appendix B) also includes project design and data gathering and analysis, but these activities were less extensive and intensive than the long-term TA. In addition, the short-term TA involved several training sessions for host country personnel, including both those who worked in USAID projects and those who didn't. It is obvious that there was considerable variation in the impact that the short-term TA had on missions and host country agencies. It should be noted that the TA did not have to affect mission activities directly in order to have an impact on the host country, and vice-versa.

The USAIDs similarly had positive reactions to the work of RAD's short-term cooperators, as Table 5 demonstrates. With only one exception, the responses show that missions thought that the cooperators' short-term work was at least as good as comparable work supplied from other sources, and in many cases was definitely superior.

Table 5. Comparative mission rankings of RAD's short-term cooperators

<u>Item</u>	<u>Better=3</u>	<u>Same=2</u>	<u>Worse=1</u>	<u>Mean</u>
Timeliness	7	4	1	2.50
Financial cost to mission	10	1	0	2.90
Administrative cost to mission	10	1	0	2.90
Team's ability in language & culture	7	4	1	2.45
Team's technical quality	9	3	1	2.58
Long-term effects on mission	0	5	1	1.80
Short-term effects on mission	3	5	1	2.20
Benefits to host country agencies	2	4	1	2.14
Benefits to host country individuals	4	3	0	2.57

RAD's Impact in the field--summary

In conclusion, it is clear from the cabled responses from USAIDs that RAD's technical assistance, delivered through the cooperators and contractors, was highly appreciated. It is fair to say that, on the average, RAD's TA compared very favorably to other kinds of TA (presumably supplied through standard AID procedures of bids and proposals). Table 6 shows the combined mission rankings.

TABLE 6. Comparative mission rankings of shortand long-term cooperators

<u>Item</u>	<u>Better=3</u>	<u>Same=2</u>	<u>Worse=1</u>	<u>Mean</u>
Timeliness	10	5	2	2.47
Financial cost to mission	14	1	0	2.93
Administrative cost to mission	12	2	1	2.73
Team's ability in language & culture	10	4	2	2.50
Team's technical quality	13	3	2	2.61
Long-term effects on mission	2	6	1	2.10
Short-term effects on mission	7	5	1	2.46
Benefits to host country agencies	4	4	2	2.20
Benefits to host country individuals	6	3	1	2.50

Although the cables were mostly laudatory, there were some criticisms. It should be noted that most of the complaints were about management issues, personality clashes, and handling of reports, rather than about substance. Many of the suggestions that missions made about how to improve RAD's service in the future fit in well with the recommendations found at the end of this paper. In particular, the missions recommended that dissemination of useful knowledge should be improved. It was pointed out that missions often are not aware of what other missions are doing in similar fields, and that mission personnel often come across useful information purely by chance. Often, however, when such information is available, it is not in a form that is immediately useful to missions or to host country personnel.

This brings up two other relevant comments: First, the multi-disciplinary approach that RAD has adopted, both in its portfolio and in the composition of the teams it and its cooperators send to the field, is appreciated by the missions; there are even some suggestions for the teams to have greater disciplinary breadth. Second, RAD's teams, especially those from universities, sometimes follow their own agenda when in the field instead of the mission's. Several missions requested RAD to be more careful in clarifying the scopes of work with the teams it sends to the field so that the mission's needs are served. A final comment is that missions sometimes notice tensions between regional bureaus and RAD and one suggested that RAD and the bureaus work more closely together in arranging technical assistance to the missions.

C. Examining the Dilemmas

The RAD experience, especially that involving field operations, shows that to a large extent the dilemmas described in Section A are products of earlier decisions and the circumstances within which RAD had to operate. In the forthcoming period of transition in AID, it is likely that some of these dilemmas will become more explicit and that efforts to resolve some of them will be necessary.

1. The tension between knowledge building and field service

There are components of RAD's program which represent straight technical assistance. (e.g. where technical expertise is already available and once the material is suitably packaged and standardized it can be repeatedly delivered to a series of clients). But

much of RAD's work is in fields where readily applicable knowledge is not available. In such cases field service is as much a transmission of whatever knowledge already exists as a "learning-by-doing" process and a testing ground.

RAD's "applied research" involves field data collection and analysis for project identification and project design, and in some cases for monitoring policy experience. Such work contributes to knowledge for specific country projects and programs, but is not generalizable unless a purposeful design and feedback mechanism is part of the whole process. For example, studies of "participation" or "decentralization" cannot become cumulative elements of knowledge until experiences in specific situations can be generalized to other similar situations. The conversion of field service to knowledge requires (1) situational definitions in terms of standard variables that permit comparisons, and either (2) inductively generated propositions or hypotheses defining and generalizing those experiences, or (3) a body of theory deductively structured so that some of its component elements can be verified by recourse to experience.

Knowledge building thus requires more than a contribution to the success of specific rural development projects. It also means an improved perception and understanding of the rural development process, a clearer understanding of the opportunities for action at key points of intervention, and better techniques for diagnosis, planning, and evaluation. It also implies efforts to keep

abreast of advances emerging elsewhere in the profession and to extract from the accumulating evidence ideas and lessons that can become useful for improving AID's program. These key components of RAD's responsibility are currently undervalued.

RAD's effort to combine knowledge building and field service is producing results, but the work is unfinished. Even a modest knowledge-building enterprise based on field work requires a systematic collection of case studies of AID and host government operating experience. Such an effort, however, will require changes in current procedures. Case studies that go beyond memoirs and anecdotes require rigorous in-depth research. End-of-tour reports, casually mounted project evaluations, and sporadic debriefings do not create a useful body of case materials, as the Agency has now had ample opportunity to discover. Contrary to many Washington-based perceptions, mission responses to a questionnaire distributed in the course of this inquiry endorse the value of case studies from other countries.

The effort will require access to countries chosen on the basis of knowledge-building needs, where consulting opportunities are also available. This trade-off offers a quid-pro-quo for country involvement that provides some benefit to a mission or host country. There may also be cases where for cross-country research or "reality-testing" purposes, missions should grant access to individuals or small teams even when not much benefit is immediately perceived. Access to current experiments is important to basic research but it also has great benefit as a learning device. So

far, RAD has not exploited the potential value of learning from ongoing rural development projects.

The charge that AID has no institutional memory is a major reproach to an organization that has occupied the intellectual frontier in its field for so many decades. Should an organization engaged continuously in more complex operations, on something approaching a global basis, continue to neglect the possibility of learning from its own experience? One reason AID has resisted such efforts is uncertainty that they could be carried out effectively and economically; starting on a pilot scale with selected rural development activities would help resolve that uncertainty.

An example of opportunity for initial knowledge building is one project where progress was seriously hampered by the largely abortive attempts at establishing long-term relationships with missions. With hindsight it appears that the effort might have been more fruitful if a manageable portion of the task had first been conceived explicitly as an exploratory task undertaken with the active cooperation of mission personnel as part of a cross-country survey. The reports prepared by the project teams after relatively short visits were valuable; but eight or ten of such short-term visits, planned in a systematic way to review the status of area-oriented RD project proposals and to examine common problems encountered in ongoing projects, could have produced a substantial knowledge base as well as immediate by-products of value to several missions. They also could have facilitated

long-term involvements that would continue to further our understanding.

There are a number of alternatives for resolving the tension between knowledge building and field service. These range from developing testable hypotheses by linking RAD's research support to field consultancies, to studying selected operations undertaken overseas with its assistance. These alternatives are examined later in this paper.

2. Ambiguities of the Mission

A. The first dilemma of RAD's existence is the choice between meeting existing demands and tailoring its programs to anticipated needs. This perception has determined its selection of major fields of activity - its portfolio. It was not surprising that initially there was little demand for social science expertise from missions whose rural development personnel were mostly agricultural technicians. RAD's original list of topics, although it represented the Agency's new doctrine and was chosen on the basis of mission preferences, still appeared to some field missions to be vague and not readily applicable. In the initial years, RAD's rural development portfolio was far ahead of perceived demand largely because AID's policy commitments were ahead of its field capabilities.

In contrast to missions, the regional bureaus, including their representatives on the RAD Steering Committee, were sympathetic to the new Office. They supported experimental, broadly-conceived projects with the expectation that field missions would gradually learn how to use research and advice emerging from social science findings. The result was that in practice mission personnel needing assistance with specific problems of project design or implementation requested the help of RAD experts or groups who were known to be available through cooperative agreements and contracts. In most cases, the missions report that they obtained what they wanted (good advice on technical and managerial matters), but they also got something they may not have initially asked for: data and advice on the importance of socio-political factors in RD, decentralization possibilities, new ways to benefit the landless, planning and management in a participatory manner, and small-scale technology--in short, what the Office was really created to provide.

It is true that in some instances missions or their key staff members were very much in step with the New Directions and also had either the background or receptivity for what RAD was offering. In these cases a natural congruence developed between field interest and the Office portfolio. In the earlier years of the program, however, these were exceptions rather than the rule.

The extent to which RAD can satisfy demand is not the best measure of RAD's portfolio, however. A more crucial question is to what extent RAD was able to address missing and crucial elements in the non-technical aspects of poverty-oriented rural development for which very little actual demand existed. Thus RAD's achievement is not merely the competent delivery of routine services; it is also its ability to change in the Agency's service functions themselves.

- B. In resolving the second dilemma, RD versus DA, RAD has three choices. (1) It could decide to work exclusively on the administrative aspects of rural development and confine the development administration activities to government operations in the rural sector. This option would sharpen the focus of the Office and create a new identity for it, but it would sacrifice some aspects of both RD and DA as they are generally conceived outside the Agency. (2) RAD could divide the Office into two distinct but overlapping elements by strengthening its capacity in rural development and development administration. For this purpose it would have to add new expertise to its core staff, especially in agricultural social sciences and in the measurement and evaluation of government interventions through programs designed to influence the direction or rate of social change. (3) RAD could ignore the intellectual niceties of the distinction and resolve the ambiguities by selecting a

few well-defined topics for research and service and remaining with them. Each choice implies some costs as well as benefits.

On the whole, the first option mentioned above seems the most promising. Current DA operation addresses RD functions only indirectly. Much of its present portfolio remains closely identified with traditional public administration functions. For example, the short-term training courses by the USDA and NASPAA groups focus on project management; some elements of the PCI and DAI activities include organization development and project design, but the content and approaches of this training are intended to improve generic management skills. These activities continue to be well received in the field, but they do not exhaust their potential for RD; they have not placed rural development issues into the center of their concerns. They do not focus on the specific behavioral implications of agriculture-based services or on the community responses that might be associated with an RD focus, nor have they operationalized in management tools the issues that the Office has made its own, such as participation, decentralization, land policy, or the management of rural credit.

The future of DA may not lie within the confines of RD as currently conceived. But that seems a good place to start

integrating the two elements. Rural project management is in many respects a more demanding set of tasks than those required in conventional work of development agencies, with their clearly-defined careers and standardized bureaucratic operations. Recent research calls attention to opportunities available to rural project managers that are not recognized in current training doctrine: the discretion available for relating to local organizations of special publics; the possibility of coordinating the inputs of agencies, PVOs, and individuals not under their control, calling for coordinating skills that are not part of management doctrine as currently taught. Accommodating the needs of RD project managers calls for knowledge and skills in DA that are only now becoming apparent. Such an agenda could occupy the available resources of RAD for years and produce in the meantime markedly better performance in the management of rural projects and enterprises.

3. The Multiple Clientele.

When RAD took service to the field as one of its primary responsibilities, it began by sending its core staff abroad as consultants, by attaching its project managers to travelling teams of its cooperating agencies to act as intermediaries, observe performance, and facilitate logistics, and by funding its cooperators' work in the field. It has encouraged its contractors and grantees to recruit specialists to supplement their own capacity to respond to requests from AID's overseas missions. RAD directly

or indirectly sponsored short-term visits and consultancies to 42 countries in 1980. Most of their reports during this review expressed satisfaction.

But RAD's Washington constituency is at the regional bureau level. The four bureaus name its Steering Committee, which in turn approves or challenges its programs, reviews its portfolio of active projects, and increasingly serves as a transmission belt to the field. The Bureaus' concerns are not a mere summation of those of the country missions in their respective regions, and their own priorities are sometimes distorted when missions add their own resources to RAD-based projects. There have been instances in which Bureau policies went against activities that a field mission had succeeded in arranging directly with RAD.

Nor are the demands of the four Bureaus administratively parallel. The Near East Bureau, for example, works with a relatively small number of very large programs which it has to design and support. Partly as a result of previous RAD activities, it has now developed a substantial professional capacity in Washington, including nine social scientists out of a total of eleven professionals in rural development. Its primary task at the moment is to find ways of mobilizing large-scale development projects quickly. Administering numerous small-scale activities, as RAD prefers to do, imposes a much larger administrative burden upon the Bureau than would the provision of larger and more concentrated amounts of technical assistance offered through conventional contracts. The Africa Bureau, on the other hand, has very

little staff capacity in rural development or development administration and lacks the funds to supply enough technical assistance to serve its own countries. Thus its administrative burden is not to develop a few large projects, as is the case with the Near East Bureau, but rather to provide administrative backstopping to the many small-scale technical services RAD can offer.

Sometimes overworked regional staff members have called on RAD to help in reviewing CDSS's and project documents, but there is also a reverse flow of reviews, clearances, and assessment of RFP responses emanating from RAD to burden the regional offices. There is a resulting erosion of bureau support which has become apparent in recent Steering Committee actions.

Resolving the dilemma of its multiple clientele will require a series of incremental decisions rather than a choice among options. For priority-setting, first of all, the Steering Committee will have to meet more frequently and hold longer discussions than its members now consider desirable, and it will have to find ways of keeping its membership constant instead of rotating them on different assignments within the regional bureaus as is it now does. In addition, RAD should consider developing prototypes of distinct service modules for the four regional bureaus. For NE, it might develop substantial in-depth capacity, focussing primarily on development administration needs to support decentralization objectives there. It should explore ways of supplying the Africa Bureau with personnel on loan to process and facilitate the administration of field activities under RAD's sponsorship.

RAD should also seek to identify patterns of program and policy experience in regions and subregions that might illuminate issues of project design at the bureau level. The Office now regards country-level project experience as an important source of information on rural development and development administration, and as a possible means of testing hypotheses and models that are relevant to field operations. But the regional bureaus also develop important data on development planning, since they are constantly in search of improved methods for generating projects and enhancing their impact. In addition, they seek to economize on scarce resources by establishing regional projects that relate to country activities, and their own mechanisms for comparing country-level experience are a potential source of policy guidance. The bureaus, as well as the missions, thus provide an important source of "reality checking" for the rural development and development administration activities that are the central concerns of RAD.

RAD should also take the initiative to negotiate with Regional Bureaus, PPC, and DS/AGR a longer-term research/action agenda that would encompass a limited number of key topics within RAD's portfolio that are especially relevant to a large number of countries in each region. Bureaus could participate in defining longer-term programs that are applicable to all or most of their countries. Key subjects should be developed jointly. The Asia Bureau and the Latin American Bureau have already identified some

issues for such longer-term efforts, which gives RAD a better opportunity to collaborate with the regions and reduces the effort needed to initiate country involvements. This agenda should explicitly take account of the time and resources needed to produce a meaningful advance in knowledge and make it applicable to field missions and host country personnel. Finally, it should incorporate from the outset the ultimate goal of RAD's work: enhancing host country capacity.

The Product Spectrum:

Most of RAD's cooperators are university-based groups. About three-fourths of RAD's program budget is operated through six universities, currently supporting eight projects. The choice of universities as RAD's agents in knowledge building takes advantage of their position as focal points of organized expertise. But it has also produced complaints, especially in the regional bureaus, that their work is academic and theoretical, that they take AID's money to support their own research, and that they are not available except on an academic off-season. This view does not square with testimony available from mission personnel describing their performance in the field, but it is plausible enough in an agency that is hard-pressed for results. And it is reinforced by some of the early SOAPs produced by university personnel. Apart from the usual handful of stories about personality clashes and occasional delays in reports, there are few complaints of poor performance in the field, but the link between that performance and university-based research is tenuous.

For both field service and knowledge building, the most fruitful relationship has been in long-term country involvements. They have absorbed most of the resources, both in the cooperators' budgets and also of the RAD staff's time. They have also produced the greatest satisfaction in the field and the most useful research products. The measure of appreciation is the number of "add-ons" by missions resulting in long-term country involvement at considerable cost in staff effort.

An example of such an involvement is the "Off-Farm Employment Assessment Project" in Thailand, in which MSU and OSU are collaborating with Kasetsart University in Bangkok. This project is a major research/training/consulting effort involving five types of field studies, six PhD dissertations (of which five are being done by Thai students), and capacity-building at Kasetsart to do applied research and provide advisory services on project and policy issues. The AID mission in Bangkok considers the knowledge already developed an important resource for itself and for the host government. Such arrangements maximize the overlap of interests between the scholarly community and AID.

Less satisfaction and limited knowledge are derived from short-term relationships that are exclusively problem-solving arrangements. Yet with the passage of time, all of the cooperators are finding themselves devoting more of their efforts to field visits and other services: one estimate reported that Wisconsin's Land Tenure Center spent only 10 to 15% of its time on AID

activities in 1978, rising to about 80% in 1980. As their experience with country operations increased, the cooperators have been able to fund correspondingly greater portions of their activities by mission-sponsored add-ons to the original agreement.

RAD's knowledge-building efforts linked to field operations have generated materials that are already becoming standard fare in courses in development administration, public management, rural sociology, and comparative policy analysis. The two sets of DAI case studies, though brief, are among the few source materials on project management available in convenient and comparable form for instructional purposes. Although the DAI analysis and interpretations are controversial, even the controversy constitutes a useful tool in teaching methodology and appraising the wisdom of using regression and other forms of quantitative analysis for policy judgments.

Cornell's country studies in local organization have likewise been influential in training American and foreign students of international development. Their definition and analysis of participation represent a major achievement in operationalizing a concept that has been in the literature for several decades. The earlier reports on managing planned agriculture, too, produced before RAD assumed its present form, are still in great demand, especially since so little is available in French and Spanish.

Two sets of papers by MSU on farming systems and on rural non-farm employment have been very well received and widely requested.

Other papers which have been used by AID and operating agencies include Stavis on extension, Holdcroft on community development, Uphoff and others on participation, and Esman on landlessness. More recent RAD entries in the state of the art of rural development also show signs of promise. The Syracuse Studies of Local Revenue Administration break no new ground, but they do conveniently present the major findings and theories in the subject. The next step for Syracuse should be the formulation of propositions and hypotheses and the identification of contextual variables that can be used to test them through field observations. The Berkeley studies of decentralization are also preliminary statements of what is already known; indeed, some of the formulations are provocative and innovative. They will lend themselves well to the improvement of project designs, the diagnosis of situational requirements, the development of criteria for formative evaluation, and the enhancement of long-term planning capabilities. But those steps will take time: converting theory to practice is the most difficult task of applied science. Much of the so-called applied work that dominates the field is improvisatory. Theoreticians in social science can retreat behind vagueness and obscurantism when they are unsure of themselves, but that escape route is denied to operators who are under constant pressure to look for answers.

RAD must continue to strengthen the links between scholars and practitioners. It must find additional ways of making its

experiences and its unsolved problems part of the agenda of scholarship. Such efforts should delineate new and restate familiar problems, invite further proposals, offer support to small-scale research, and provide for frequent appearances on professional conference panels and workshops. If RAD accepts as a serious obligation the mobilizing of America's intellectual resources, it must take many small steps as well as a few large ones in that direction.

One large issue which exceeds RAD's reach concerns the maintenance of the American capacity in rural development. AID's ability to draw on academic groups has depended either on past investments or on funding from other sources. RAD's present budget can add very little to the maintenance of knowledge-building facilities. Cooperating university staffs and administrators indicate quite clearly that funds for development work are drying up. Without continued core funding, campus groups that so far have been able to maintain a strong interest in rural development may not be able to function in the future. If they are permitted to decline, AID and other development agencies will find it much harder in the future to recruit qualified individual staff members, let alone multidisciplinary teams. If cumulative knowledge building and intellectual interchange cease, the training of social scientists for rural development will decline, and US expertise will not be replenished.

RAD does not, of course, possess either the mandate or the budget to build and maintain centers of excellence. But whose job should it be? RAD should help AID find the answer.

5. Inside-Outside Expertise

What is the proper mix of RAD staff functions? They currently perform at least four services:

- mobilizing expertise for AID missions
- managing contracts and cooperative agreements
- performing technical assistance for missions and other parts of AID
- performing (or collaborating on) research and development approaches and syntheses.

The greatest functional conflict is between the role of the staff as "facilitators" or "brokers" and their role as performers or actors. The brokerage role is demanding: it requires both bureaucratic and substantive skills. It places a premium on RAD's ability to negotiate with various parts of AID and to link its cooperators with the missions. The staff's professional background and knowledge of the subject matter has been essential for the performance of the Office, but there is agreement both inside and outside the Office that it is now desirable for RAD to perform more of the technical and fewer of the managerial functions.

RAD needs staff with both social science training and field knowledge. The predominant backgrounds in the office staff are development administration, general economics, and financial management. Few have had actual RD project experience especially in problems of rural production units (farms) and rural labor-consumption units (families). More expertise is needed in agricultural economics, rural sociology, and perhaps development anthropology or social psychology to make effective linkages to DS/AGR, other Bureaus, RDOs in missions, and external centers of RD knowledge.

D. Implications for the Future

1. Character of the Office: Portfolio building

For future portfolio building, recent experience warns against the expectation that such global projects as participation, decentralization, or farm strategy will easily establish an identity, find ready clients, and become immediately operational. The early history of MSU's Strategies project illustrates the difficulty of narrowing a general topic down to a few manageable fields that would match MSU's capabilities with mission interests. Projects featuring concrete topics and dealing with wellunderstood areas (credit, land tenure, and management, for example) have had an easier time because they dealt with recognized operations where assistance was needed. This experience indicates that in the future RAD's portfolio should be organized to generate operational outputs as soon as the state of the art identifies the opportunity for them.

Recent trends in the Office are to focus already existing projects more narrowly and to test the potential market for new projects much more thoroughly than before. This effort should improve the definition and recognition of RAD's portfolio.

Another issue in portfolio building is whether it contains too many diverse activities to permit product differentiation. Perhaps some overlap among projects is inevitable and even healthy, but if there is not a clear focus of purpose or methodology in each project, observers outside the office --especially in the field-- are confused. The confusion is heightened when RAD's cooperators compete against each other for mission support of their projects. The ABS for FY 1982 contains 15 separate projects. If they were consolidated to 8 or 10, the thrust of the Office as a whole would be clearer.

The integration between DA and other aspects of RAD's portfolio is only beginning. There has not been as yet very much DA input to activities on credit, area development, off-farm employment, or land tenure. The DA activities of the Office have remained the domain of political scientists, with very little input from economists, anthropologists, and others working on matters more closely related to rural economy and rural society. Relatively little cross-fertilization between the two halves of the office has taken place. The need for merging these elements becomes more obvious as evidence accumulates that rural development involves institutional development, perhaps most of all.

This need is also indicated by the growing complementarity between RAD and DS/Agriculture. The strength of DS/AGR is in crop and animal production technology and in macro-economic policy and sector analysis; RAD's natural complementarity lies in sub-sectoral specialization, micro-oriented rural social science analysis, and the management sciences. A possible division of labor between RAD and DS/AGR would argue for the following fields of emphasis in RAD:

A. Key rural sub-sectors

- land tenure and group farming
- marketing and cooperatives
- credit, rural finance, and revenue
- extension and technology transfer
- off-farm employment and enterprise
- land and natural resource development
(irrigation, forestry)

B. Micro analysis

- farming systems
- households and community organization systems
- food systems

C. Management sub-sectors

- sectoral activities in rural development
- integrated or multi-sector and area-based projects
- training systems

The advantage of this sort of grouping is that it represents different cuts through the present subject matter and illustrates interaction among components of the program. The sectoral groupings under "A" are clearly understood building blocks of RD programs. They have institutional and project specificity at the country level. The topics under "B" are tools of data collection and analysis and they are the natural complement to the items in the "A" set. Topic "C" includes the managerial and administrative dimensions of RD with applicability to several of the sectoral subjects.

2. Dissemination and the Training Role

RAD has already accepted some responsibility for informing AID operators of the results of its knowledge-building effort, and it regularly offers training to officials in less developed countries, although, as suggested above, there is some doubt whether these training courses incorporate many of RAD's research findings in their standard packages. But RAD has respected the bureaucratic distinction between the in-service training of AID personnel and that of host government managers. Even the proposed

strategy paper in development administration specifically rejects an internal role in training AID staff members, though it proposes to use mixed rotating teams of specialists to work on management problems in the major sectors of development, and will unavoidably present training by-products as team members shift from site to site and problem to problem.

We think RAD's role cannot exclude dissemination of its new approaches within the Agency. Most of RAD's successful large-scale, long-term, mission-supported efforts have emerged from perceptions among AID's field staff that better projects are possible. These perceptions are usually based on personal knowledge of the work of RAD's cooperators. A more systematic dissemination of such perceptions could gradually improve AID's performance in rural development projects everywhere. A specific step RAD can take would be to work with the Training Office and with the Development Studies Institute to include workshops and seminars on the advancing arts and sciences of rural development in the continuing series of in-service programs mounted by the Agency for its own personnel.

Dissemination in general deserves greater attention by RAD. It involves more than document distribution or better information system; it requires, more fundamentally, matching product with clientele. It calls for attention to the relevance and utilization of RAD's work. A first step is closer collaboration with training activities for both AID and host country managers.

3. Links within AID/W

In many ways, RAD's responsibilities are Agency-wide. Most AID programs are related to rural development or development administration or both. But the Office has chosen not to become involved in general policy-making or guidance within its areas of expertise and to maintain a "service" posture instead. Its links to other parts of the Agency do not, however, fully support even that limited role. RAD's Steering Committee meets infrequently. Committee members often cannot become fully acquainted with RAD's operations. It is not clear whether members speak for themselves, for their offices, or for their Bureaus. Technical offices like Agriculture and Nutrition are not represented on it at all, although they could contribute to and benefit from closer relations with RAD. In recent years the Committee has not had much of a substantive function beyond reviewing new project proposals. The Steering Committee should not merely be a filter or control mechanism for RAD's program but also a means for communicating RAD's concerns back to the Bureaus and for working out collaborative arrangements.

The Steering Committee could become a more useful instrument for providing a link between RAD and other AID/W groups concerned with rural development. For example, it might be given responsibility (1) for working out service packages for region wide or inter-country projects, and (2) for assessing priorities among mission requirements for services that exceed RAD's capacity, and that of its cooperators, to perform effectively. It should (3) take the additional responsibility of helping identify countries and

programs that would be suitable sites for developing and testing proposed improvements in rural development strategy, and (4) provide access to those chosen for centrally funded efforts. Finally, the Committee might also (5) assist in obtaining complementary funding for certain institutions and groups with unique capacity to supply services in rural development.

In addition to the advisory and collaborative activities of the Steering Committee, RAD needs regular access to the thinking of other parts of the Agency, especially those engaged in technical guidance and policy formulation. Any mechanism set up to accommodate this additional access should be concerned not with immediate operations, but with emergent policies and technological innovations. The format to be taken might resemble a conference, seminar, or workshop more than an action group with an agenda of decisions, but the participant membership should be as constant as life in AID permits. It should include representatives from the top rungs of the Agency's management, of DSB, PPC, and the technical offices.

4. Links with Missions

RAD has no direct "links" with the field missions. Its points of contact are individuals and personnel acquainted with one another, and the cables and other communications it exchanges with the field when announcing a new service or soliciting opinions on a proposed approach. Its official "links" are through the bureaus.

That is as it should be. A central staff office in Washington cannot maintain direct communications with even the 42 country missions it is currently serving. But RAD does need access to the thinking and experiences of high-level AID personnel in the field, including both program and technical specialists. Moreover, it would benefit greatly from exchanging information with host country individuals and institutions that share a professional interest in rural development and development administration.

Three approaches are possible:

- a) To give RAD staff members regional assignments so that they could develop enough area expertise and personal acquaintances to provide the desired links. This proposal is probably impractical because it would spread RAD's expertise too thin and weaken its capacity to work closely with its cooperators, whose concerns are functionally specific but worldwide.

- b) To develop direct links with host country institutions, chosen on the basis of their own close relations to AID missions and their concern with the problems that lie within RAD's portfolio. This proposal is probably too threatening to the missions, too likely to be subject to political manipulation, and a more appropriate function for RAD's cooperators. It is possible that in the future RAD might enter into cooperative agreements with foreign institutions, but that day seems far off.

- c) To conduct seminars and workshops in the U.S. and abroad, but with mission personnel and host country institutions participating in discussions of current R & D, new approaches, and proposed areas of activity. These efforts should be regarded as "listening conferences," not as a form of dissemination or briefing session. They should attempt to do on a small scale what PPC carried out so successfully in the Spring Reviews of the 1960s, until those became too large and ambitious. The proposed conferences should be highly professional but low key. They should set agenda rather than disseminate new doctrines.

5. Contract Modes

RAD makes use of three different devices for mobilizing external institutional and individual resources: cooperative agreements, standard contracts, and indefinite quantity contracts. These three modes should be distinguished as clearly as possible to eliminate the current confusion about the purposes and cost effectiveness of the cooperative agreement.

A. Cooperative Agreements

The strength the cooperative agreement is that it can serve as an instrument for developing new approaches to problems the Agency is facing or expecting. It can be used to create a problem-solving capacity in universities and non-profit research organizations while permitting the Agency

to draw on the emerging expertise. Its service components and "add-ons" can provide data and access to countries where the problem in question is recognized and new solutions are sought. The criteria RAD should use in selecting cooperators are (1) their institutional capacity in the subject area and (2) their previous research and experience. When new institutions are being developed, the choice should be made on a competitive basis, following the issuance of RFPs that define the problem but offer maximum leeway to the bidder in providing a methodology or approach. In some cases, small grants should be made to promising institutions to permit them to produce satisfactory proposals and to raise the level of submissions under review. These grants should also be made competitively.

B. Special Purpose Contracts

Contracts may be either mission-funded or centrally funded. Mission-funded contracts for follow-up services are a logical sequence ("add-on") to the work produced in cooperative agreements, though of course they need not draw on the same institutions for them. They can involve individuals from cooperating institutions as well as the institutions themselves. Special purpose contracts involve standard functions as well as new approaches, and usually go to institutions and individuals who have an established reputation either in a traditional field or as participants in the development of the new approaches.

Centrally-funded contracts can provide in-depth research as well as services, but they are much more rigidly structured when knowledge building is involved and therefore should be used only when well-recognized methodologies are being applied. They are subject to review by DSB's Research Advisory Committee.

C. Indefinite Quantity Contracts

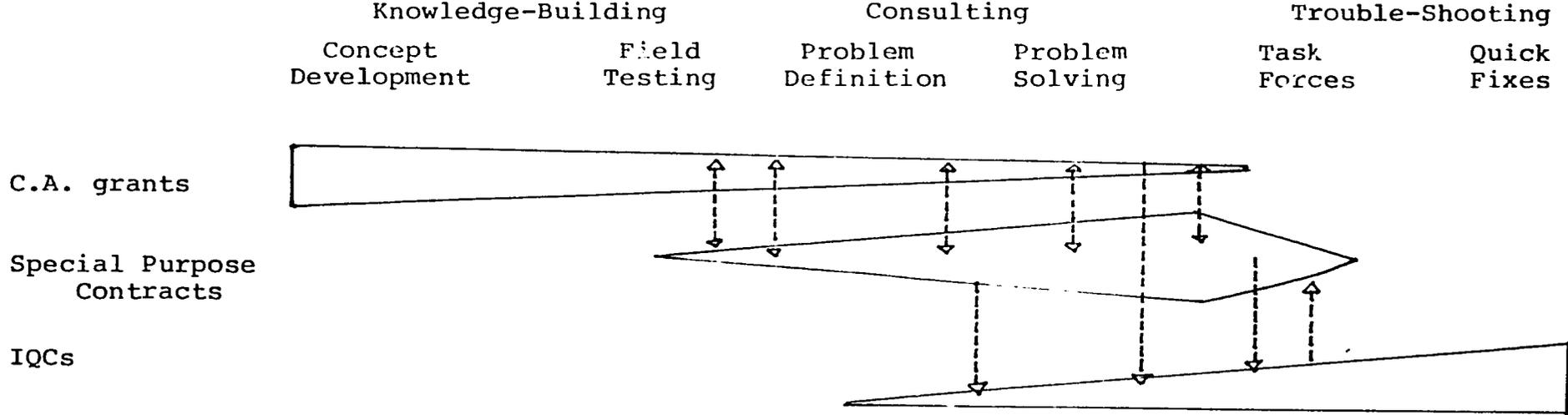
The IQC should be used when an adequate pool of technicians or specialists is to be found in one or more organizations that are interested in supplying their personnel on short-time assignments. From RAD's viewpoint, the IQC creates an employment agency; from that of the bidding organization, it may create an opportunity to develop staff along lines of interest to it, or to pursue a comparative advantage already developed as a result of previous contracts or through its own recruitment efforts.

The IQC is not reaching its potential as a source of knowledge. At the moment it is used simply to supply manpower, and the experience gained by individual men and women on short-term assignments is either lost or, at best, retained as a kind of private folk-wisdom by the consultants themselves. Much of this folklore could be captured for future reference if the most valuable experience could be merged with other knowledge-building activities. For example, a particularly useful field assignment carried out under

mission sponsorship on an ICQ could be followed by an "add-on" from RAD itself, which could assign the same consultant a few weeks of writing time in connection with one of its cooperative agreements.

This mixture of cooperative agreements and contracts makes it possible for universities and research organizations to develop knowledge through the cooperative agreement and then transfer the knowledge effectively by means of special-purpose contracts or IQCs with them or other institutions. The universities' and research organizations' long-term involvement is funded by the CA until a field is advanced sufficiently to become part of standard procedures subject to contractual services. As new problems emerge and new approaches are sought, they might become the focus for a new cooperative agreement with the same institution as a long-term follow-on. RAD's contract and grant beneficiaries and cooperating institutions ought to be deployed under whatever enabling instruments are most suited to the desired function; there should be no bar to any combination or mixture of these institutions and instruments that provides the desired services within a context of competitive efforts. (See chart.)

SUGGESTED INTERACTION BETWEEN RAD MODES AND FUNCTIONS



Dotted lines represent flow of personnel.

E. Recommendations

1. There is no reason for a radical change of directions: RAD is on the right track. Drawing from the lessons learned in its first four years of experience, it needs incremental improvements to reduce the ambiguities of its existence, strengthen its relations with other parts of the Agency, sharpen its focus, and improve its effectiveness. Its main challenge in the period just ahead will be to build on the solid foundations laid so far, and at the same time maintain the spirit of innovation and experimentation that have characterized the Office in its initial years.

2. RAD should give priority to long term field involvement in rural development programs by linking centers of expertise with AID programs in countries and regions. In-depth, more continuous involvements (a) encourage host country participation, learning, and institution building; (b) enhance the values of different components of a package of services such as training, field research, technology transfer, and policy analysis; (c) make the best use of cooperators' resources in new, innovative areas of work. Such linkages are most effective in countries where AID missions have competence in rural development, where governments have a degree of commitment to poverty-alleviation, and where cooperating US institutions can exercise multi-disciplinary strengths.

3. In order to strengthen its capability and effectiveness in rural development and development administration, RAD should complement

its present involvement in direct technical assistance by devoting more attention to other elements of its mandate, specifically (a) generating systematic knowledge that is relevant to the solution of rural development problems, (b) focusing and adopting such knowledge to operational needs, and (c) disseminating knowledge to practitioners. All of these activities contribute to RAD's ability to provide adequate service to AID missions and extend its impact beyond immediate technical assistance.

4. Knowledge building deserves continued prominence as a key component in the RAD program, not only to sustain newly launched projects, but also to re-focus and renew some ongoing activities that are only now reaching the stage of yielding substantial payoffs. High priority should go to continuing the work with cooperating institutions that have proven themselves and have learned to focus on operational problems. RAD must demonstrate to AID that its reliance on the social science capacity of certain universities and other research institutions for rural development services depends on an adequate level of core funding, beyond that available to RAD and the universities at present. The DS Bureau should attempt to provide complementary funding from other sources such as centrally funded research grants, or Title XII, so that a critical mass can be achieved and maintained at selected centers of excellence.

5. RAD should orchestrate its different contracting modes to fit the different capacities of its cooperators to AID's needs. Cooperative agreements should be used primarily for work in fields in which new knowledge and new approaches are needed and a longer-term, cumulative

process of research, institution-building, and training is valuable. Cooperative agreements should provide for a somewhat longer period of work than the current four to five years, with definite staging and approval of annual work plans. IQCs and most contracts (unlike the few which have permitted flexible operations similar to CAs) should be used for fields in which knowledge is already relatively established, or for tasks that are more specific and require single interventions such as trouble-shooting.

6. RAD needs to assume a stronger role in the substantive aspects of its program. This role is especially crucial in linking centers of excellence to operational needs by assuring that the work is relevant to practitioners and that operational concerns are converted to researchable topics. The professional staff can keep up with the developments in their fields by maintaining links with all of the services being deployed by RAD.

7. In discussing future program thrusts, RAD might wish to develop new activities related to low-cost, locally focused food production and distribution systems in which the Office's previous concerns with participation and rural poverty can be effectively combined with the emerging need to achieve food sufficiency. Similarly, new activities are warranted in the social science aspects of energy/ intermediate technology and in improving group services for small producers and households. Marketing, off-farm employment in the private sector, land tenure, and local participation deserve continued prominence in the RAD

program, perhaps in some cases with more sharply focused projects related to mission work.

8. The complementarities of DS/RAD and DS/AGR should be further enhanced. Collaboration in new projects as planned for FY 82 should continue. It is highly desirable for the staffs of the two offices to have more knowledge about each others programs.

9. In order to allocate staff time to substantive and professional tasks, RAD should seriously study ways of reducing the burden of logistical and administrative support which now represents such a great share of the project managers' work. One approach is to centralize some support functions; it may be possible to simplify or standardize procedures, or in some cases to perform support functions elsewhere.

10. RAD should review the composition of its staff to determine whether all the skills and field experience necessary to permit a shift toward a greater functional concentration on key topics of the office agenda are available internally. In particular, it should consider strengthening its staff capability with personnel experienced in the micro aspects of rural and development in such fields as agricultural economics, rural sociology, and development anthropology. The stress in new core staff should be on breadth and experience, rather than on disciplinary specialization.

11. RAD should arrive at a workable division of functions with the regional bureaus, depending on the staffing and interests of each

region. It should develop with the bureaus, possibly through the Steering Committee, standard operating procedures for providing "packages" of services that address some of the unique longer-term needs of each region, and suggest priorities among the functions to be performed regionally. The bureaus could facilitate carrying out such a program by (a) encouraging missions interested in working along the agreed lines to use RAD services, and (b) assuring country access for knowledge building or testing of "packages" that are not directly related to missions' short-term needs.

12. Regional Bureaus with long-term interests in capacity building might be encouraged to "buy into" cooperative agreements or to support "add-ons" for RAD's cooperators to develop special skills in problem areas of regional concern (e.g. Asian irrigation institutions, Mid-East group settlement, African land tenure or government decentralization).

13. A new charter should be drafted redefining the functions and responsibilities of the Steering Committee. These tasks should include a concern with AID's broader issues of approaches and programming in the rural development area. In the future, the Committee should become a more effective link between RAD and the Regional Bureaus and facilitate the type of cooperation suggested in recommendations Nos. 11 and 12. Membership in the reformed committee should be of a sufficient level so that it can address Agency-wide issues and receive serious attention from all parts of AID that work in rural development.

14. Parallel to a systematic knowledge-building effort suggested in paragraphs 3 and 4, RAD should strengthen its capacity for short-term consulting at mission request in a limited and well-recognized set of subjects. This "quick response capacity" can, of course, be built into future cooperative agreements, as in the past, but it must also include a much more purposeful networking and maintenance of expert rosters to be utilized under IQCs and other procurement instruments. RAD's role in short-term consulting should include (a) indentifying talent and checking on professional quality, and (b) making sure that such consulting, under whatever auspices, contributes to the knowledge-building system and becomes a part of knowledge testing in the fields selected for long-term attention.

15. Dissemination and training should become stronger concerns of the Office. For example, RAD should arrange for conferences and workshops in which the major findings of its cooperators and the most important consulting experiences of its contractors are reviewed and compared, with participation by interested mission and bureau personnel. Such workshops should provide full opportunities for challenge, for consideration of transferability and generalizability, and for review of further research or policy implications. Opportunities for this sort of work might be arranged through the Development Studies Program. At any rate, the proposed workshops must be small, specific and well prepared.

16. RAD should consider designing a logo to be used in publications prepared and distributed by cooperators and contractors under RAD auspices as a means of identifying its products and improving feedback to the Office on the quality and relevance of its products.

17. The RAD work program should place greater stress on the preparation of case histories of RD and DA projects in parallel or comparable form as a means of accumulating knowledge derived from selected field testing and consulting experiences. In this respect, collaboration with the Evaluation Office of PPC is advisable.

18. As long as DA and RD are joined together, the Office has a unique opportunity to introduce administration/management expertise into rural development practice. A concerted effort is needed to achieve such cross-fertilization. The RD portion of the program should have a DA input and DA expertise should be targeted more sharply on RD projects such as marketing, credit, rural industry, land reform, and other key areas. Collaboration of mixed teams to the field and workshops for mixed clientele should also be stressed.

19. The nature of the state-of-the-art papers should be clarified. Future work should distinguish among (1) SOAPs written in the beginning phases of a project to take stock of existing knowledge and to identify key areas to be addressed; (2) reports summarizing and generalizing from research experience for AID and host country practitioners; (3) methodological guides and manuals for specialized use; (4) case studies with lessons and applications to similar situations. RAD staff need to assume a stronger role in determining the nature and form of such state-of-the-art papers to enhance their utility for AID.

<u>USAID</u>	<u>Cooperating Institution</u>	<u>Description of TA</u>	<u>TA's use to mission</u>	<u>TA's use to HCG</u>
Jamaica	NASPAA	Help GOJ prepare devel. projects for external financing; assist in design of agricultural and RD projects.	Helped design PP and agricultural add-on.	LT assistance provided to Ministries of Finance and Agriculture "Action training" provided to several hundred GOJ personnel thru seminars and workshops. New project development system instituted.
Tunisia	Wisconsin (AD) and Cornell (Participation)	Design subprojects for rural potable water and extension; train HC personnel in regional planning; design pilot projects, information system; help in regional development plan for central Tunisia.	TA yet to be completed; however mission very unsatisfied, especially with Wisconsin.	Mission thinks Wisconsin spent too much time on its own project; viz., a SOAP, and not enough on building Tunisian institution.
Honduras	MSU (OFE)	Design rural technologies projects; do study and assessment.	Timely assistance at low cost to USAID.	Trained HC personnel; beneficial effects on HC agencies and personnel.
Cameroon	MSU	Determine possibility of agricultural projects in densely populated areas; develop baseline data for specific region.	Helped USAID decide whether to proceed with long-term projects.	Helped GURC decide whether to proceed with long-term projects.
Jamaica	MSU (OFE)	Provide background information on impact of strengthened small business sector on employment.	The information from the first stages of this TA has been "vital and indispensable in helping to guide and influence our initial design of a small business project."	The study "has been in great demand by those concerned with the sector both within and outside the government."

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SHORT TERM

<u>USAID</u>	<u>Cooperating Institution</u>	<u>Description of TA</u>	<u>TA's use to mission</u>	<u>TA's use to HCC</u>
Accra	N. A.	DS/RAD's DH & IPA staff have done design and evaluation work in Ghana, esp. DA and IRD projects.	Help in project design and evaluation.	Not mentioned.
Haiti	MSU (OFE)	Survey & analysis of small business which contributed to design of small rural enterprise projects and also OPG to create private Haitian foundation.	The part of the survey dealing with Port au Prince very useful in designing the OPG.	MSU's final report was widely circulated. Presumably an effect on the OPG-created foundation.
Liberia	DAI (IRD)	Two workshops to improve management skills of ag. dev. project personnel.	Indirect, by making project staff more effective.	Improved skills and helped solve problems of middle & upper level proj. staff.
Mauritania	LTC	Do overview of LT in country; after in-depth exam; help design LT proj.	General analysis of LT was very good, but project design was not.	Unclear. Survey done for Ministry of Economy & Finance.
Dacca	OSU (RFM)	Conduct seminars on RF issues.	Provided important information for AID PMs on RF research, issues, experience.	Provided same information to BDG officials, incl. high level.
Cameroon	U. of Wisconsin	Identify a regional planning activity in Northwest Prov.	Helped USAID focus on possible planning.	Indicated to GURC need for regional planning.

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SHORT TERM

<u>USAID</u>	<u>Cooperating Institution</u>	<u>Description of TA</u>	<u>TA's use to mission</u>	<u>TA's use to HCG</u>
Dom. Rep.	OSU (RFM)	Develop & evaluate data, make rec. for establishment of RFM project.	Data produced by team useful to USAID for a variety of projects. Most important rec was for USAID <u>not to do the project</u> , for which mission very grateful.	Contributed to Government thinking about rural finance, especially interest rates.
Manila	DAI (IRD)	Provide org'l dev. training for inter-agency GOP personnel.	Improvements in team very useful to USAID in one of its subprojects in Bicol.	Helped improve performance of GOP interagency team; approach used by another US consultant.
Manila	Berkeley	PDAP eval.; conceptualization of Loc. Res. Mgt. (LRM) proj.	USAID used "Lessons Learned" paper that was written as part of PDAP eval. UCB visits partly resp. for generating GOP support for LRM project. UCB's good relations with GOP officials will help USAID in design and imp. of future LRM projects.	GOP also used "Lessons Learned" paper as reference for design of local development projects.
Manila	Syracuse	Evaluate Real Prop. Tax. Adm. Proj.	Eval. was the basis for a badly needed redesign of RPTA proj. When research is completed, should have major impact on future LRM projects.	Provided separate research and TA to GOP on local revenue issues. Will have joint seminar with top GOP officials related to research findings.
Panama	Wisconsin	Collected & analyzed data, eval. institutions in connection with making recs. on IRD loan.	Provided useful info. and insights to USAID.	Not mentioned.

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SHORT TERM

<u>USAID</u>	<u>Cooperating Institution</u>	<u>Description of TA</u>	<u>TA's use to mission</u>	<u>TA's use to HCG</u>
Cairo	MSU (OFE)	In-depth study of rural non-farm industries.	Too soon to say.	To soon to say.
Mbabane	NASPAA	Assist in developing a PID for the support of Swaziland Inst. for Mgt. & Pub. Adm.	USAID/S revised its strategy for upgrading civil service/pub. adm. to be much more in line with operational realities.	Not mentioned.
Indonesia	DAI (IRD)	Assess inst'n. bldg. features of a USAID-supported loc. gov./RD program (PDP).	Somewhat useful.	Not mentioned.
Nepal	Cornell	Help define overall strategy for Rapti Zone IAD proj.	Indirect, through use to GON.	Through a well-attended seminar, helped focus GON attention on local participation.
Nepal	DAI (IRD)	More refined design work on final plans for Rapti.	As above.	Helped create "dialogue" between USAID and GON officials.
Nepal	OSU (RFM)	Not specified.	Not specific.	Enhanced awareness of GON regarding interest rates and group lending problems.
Guatemala	USDA	Provide analysis and recommendations for a project to help GOC Ministry of Finance improve its mgt. of externally funded dev. projects.	Helped in the proj. design.	Were "instrumental in stimulating interest and discussion within GOC and bringing along host govt. personnel directly involved in the proj.

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