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**TRAINING PROGRAM FIELD COORDINATOR'S
SUMMARY REPORT**

SUBMITTED TO U.S.A.I.D./DHAKA

PREPARED BY

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INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes information contained in three documents submitted by the U.S.A.I.D. Training Program Field Coordinator during her assignment. They are the reports on: The Women's Overseas Specialized Management Training Program for Group I Conducted in Bangladesh From February 6-March 4, 1984 and in Manila, Philippines, From March 11-23, 1984; The Curricula for the Second Training Program in Small Enterprise Management for BSCIC Women Extension Officers Conducted in Bangladesh from October 7-November 1, 1984; and A Discussion of Problems Encountered In Work With Three Bangladesh Training Institutions.

It also includes recommendations on how to improve the capabilities of the three local training institutions which designed and conducted management training under the U.S.A.I.D. Technical Resources Project from August 1983 to November 1984. The three institutions are: the Academy for Planning and Development (APD), Dhaka; the Bangladesh Management Development Centre (BMDC), Dhaka; and the Village Education Resource Centre (VERC), Savar. Approaches are also suggested for more effective implementation of the Mission's Technical Resources Project training programs.

I. SUMMARY OF INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THREE REPORTS SUBMITTED DURING ASSIGNMENT

A. The Women's Overseas Specialized Management Training Program for Group I Conducted in Bangladesh from February 6-March 4, 1984, and in Manila, Philippines from March 11-23, 1984

1. Discussion of Key Issues and Problems

Training at APD, Dhaka

1. The APD was contracted by the U.S.A.I.D. Mission to conduct a four-week management training program in Bangladesh for 23 multi-sector, governmental and non-governmental, women mid-level managers. This training institution attempted to assess training needs and develop a curriculum according to the guidelines provided, and included 47 topics for instruction. Their method of assessing needs however, was unsystematic, subjective, inconsistent, and lacked a standard questionnaire or checklist to collect data on job performance gaps. Given the heterogeneous training group, this made it difficult for them to isolate the most commonly mentioned required skills, and compute the average skill ratings. In addition, there was little indication of the logical progression of topics from general to specific in the curriculum. Too many topics were included since all job performance problems were assessed as amenable to training. Insufficient time was allotted APD to plan the training with the Mission's assistance.
2. Classroom observations of APD training, a review of their Accomplishment Report, and results of their post-training reaction evaluation indicated the course was implemented as planned. Trainees reported benefitting from it, rated it as very good, and noted a number of job related major subject categories. They thought the training methods were helpful, and rated the trainers as very good. It was not possible, however, to judge whether major topic objectives had been fulfilled, because they were not formulated to be specific and measurable in behavioral terms or otherwise. Other shortcomings of the training included, too much theoretical instruction and lectures and not enough practical instruction and discussion; insufficient planning and coordination with the field agency, resulting

in trainee's failure to accomplish objectives; lack of learning evaluations; and inappropriately administered post-training reaction evaluation.

Training at EDF, Manila

3. The third country portion of the training was conducted for two weeks by the Economic Development Foundation (EDF), Manila, Philippines. It consisted of five modules organized around a central theme of "The Manager As Change Agent." In general, this training was implemented as planned, and according to EDF learning evaluations, participants increased their knowledge to a considerable extent. They also reacted very favourably to the training as indicated in the EDF mid-program assessment and post-training reaction evaluations, and the Mission's own reaction evaluation. It was perceived as job related, trainers were rated as very good, and training methods, especially the use of small groups with facilitators, were found useful. The pre-and post-tests administered were also perceived as beneficial.

4. Some trainees, however, experienced problems with the exclusive English language instruction. Some modules in the curriculum were found to contain too much theoretical knowledge, and require too many trainee outputs, while others contained no theory at all. Most trainees found the Manila based training too short, and recommended an extension to permit the practical application of the theoretical instruction conducted at APD. The insufficient use of visual aids, limited space and absence of academic environment in the hotel where training was held, were also mentioned as problems.

2. Recommendations for Future Training

Training at APD, Dhaka

5. Increased technical assistance and guidance should be provided APD in the needs assessment and curriculum development process for the second group of women managers. Trainees should share at least similar levels of management responsibilities, and be screened properly for English language proficiency. Assistance should include specific guidelines on data collection and preparation of behavioral topic objectives. Learning and reaction evaluations should be planned and

administered appropriately, and trainees' reactions to the relevancy of major subject categories presented in the first training program should be analyzed. The course should be created to contain a limited number of topics, with a balance of theoretical and practical instruction, using lecture, discussion, and other participatory training methods. APD should allot sufficient time to plan and coordinate with the selected field agency. Final drafts of APD's proposed curriculum should be reviewed with the Mission before a starting date for training is set. The Mission should arrange for trainees' travel documents to the third country training site enough ahead of time to assure trainee's arrival on schedule. The APD and EDF training should be viewed as parts of one continuous program, and planned in an integrated manner.

Training at EDF, Manila

6. In planning training for the second group of women managers, EDF should make the appropriate revisions on the Modules evaluated as problematic and ineffective for the first group. It should continue its use of learning and reaction evaluations, and consider the increased use of visual aids. Alternative facilities for training should be secured to provide a proper learning environment.

B. The Curricula for the Second Training Program In Small Enterprise Management For BSCIC Women Extension Officers Conducted In Bangladesh From October 7-November 1, 1984

1. Discussion of Key Issues and Problems

7. BMDC and VERC were contracted by the Mission to design a three- and one-week curricula respectively, and conduct training for the second batch of 21 women extension officers of the Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC). They were requested to follow a somewhat different process than they had used with the first batch of BSCIC trainees in August through September 1983. They were referred to guidelines sent them following the first training program, and given copies of the Mission's needs assessment and curriculum development draft guidelines. They were asked to discuss each of the three forms contained in the latter guidelines when completed with the Training Program Field Coordinator.

8. There were special technical and logistical coordination problems born out of an arrangement where two local training institutions were requested to develop curricula which reflected their separate expertise, but were integrated, connected and non-repetitive. This was further complicated by a change in Course Coordinators at both BMDC and VERC midway through the planning process. There was also confusion during the initial stages of work with BSCIC about their staff member assigned to the program, and it interfered with the assessment of training needs. The training program was conducted by BMDC from October 7 to 25, 1984 and by VERC from October 27 to November 1, 1984.

2. Training Program Field Coordinator's Role With BMDC and VERC

9. During portions of February to April 1984, and August to October 1984, the Training Program Field Coordinator functioned as both an advisor to and coordinator with BMDC and VERC. As an advisor, she provided technical assistance to BMDC and VERC in their assessment of training needs, and design of the training curricula. This involved a review of the completed three forms submitted by each, and discussions most often concerning problems and questions on the purpose of data and research methods. Reference was also made to the guidelines developed after the first training program. Other guidelines and checklists were provided to assist both institutions in categorizing trainees' major work problems and training needs, and developing priority modules or blocks of learning, evaluation instruments, overall training goals, topic behavioral objectives, and a methodical organization of subject content. Affiliations of the trainers nominated to conduct the sessions, a distribution of their work load, and the training time schedule, were also reviewed and discussed with each institution.

10. As a coordinator, she stimulated frequent contact and working sessions between the BSCIC, BMDC and VERC designated staff during the needs assessment and curricula development process. The purpose of this was to facilitate the institution's data collection on BSCIC,

and maximize continuity and minimize duplication in the BMDC and VERC curricula. The BSCIC Training Advisor was also briefed on the preparation needed for the third country field observational component of the training.

C. A Discussion of the Problems Encountered In Work With Three Bangladesh Training Institutions

1. Discussion of Key Problems

Overall Organization and Management, Including Staffing Problems

11. APD and BMDC are reportedly conducting training programs at full capacity. Along with VERC, they appear to put more emphasis on conducting as many courses as possible, rather than on taking more time to better plan for fewer courses of higher quality. All three institutions had vacant staff positions for trainers, with APD being the most understaffed. There also seems to be a fair amount of fluctuation in the positions officially occupied. Thus time and staff constraints may exist which make it difficult for these institutions to plan, design and implement quality, tailor made programs, especially suited to the needs of particular groups of trainees, and according to a specific format.

12. The three institution Directors believe their trainers need further training to upgrade their performance. None of the staff assigned to work with the Coordinator appeared to benefit from close supervision or guidance by the Director or his designees on the technical aspects of planning, designing and implementing a tailor made training program. At BMDC there appears to be little coordination among professional staff, and thus maximum use of resources may not be made. Once training began, BMDC and VERC Course Coordinators did not appear to fully appreciate their roles. They strove to schedule themselves to conduct as many training sessions as feasible. It appeared that some Course Coordinators found it problematic to plan and design the training using almost exclusively spoken or written English.

Training/Residential Facility Problems

13. Both BMDC and VERC lack adequate residential and training facilities. BMDC, which also lacks sufficient office space for staff, has already begun construction to fill some of the gaps.

Training Program Development Problems

14. None of the three institutions in practice appears to regularly and systematically assess the training needs of its clients. Designated staff seem to share a similar underlying attitude towards undertaking a formal assessment of training needs. It questions the validity and reliability of information obtained from trainees and supervisors on job functions and training needs. This is because they are perceived as lacking knowledge in those areas, and trainees often do not relate training to problems on the job. Research needed to validate such data can be too time consuming to undertake, especially with non-cooperating agencies receiving training. It may be as well outside the scope of the training institution. It is thus efficacious for the training institution to advise trainees and their supervisors on job related needs based on general impressions simply formed of the job tasks, and develop a curriculum accordingly. Beside this attitude, designated staff at the three institutions appear to lack sufficient appreciation for the needs assessment process necessitating: a) careful planning; b) research which attempts to assure some amount of validity and reliability by incorporating some objective measurements of job performance ratings; and c) a thorough, systematic analysis.

15. Designated staff at the three institutions appear to undervalue the connection between trainees' job performance gaps and needs, and training program subject content as reflected in the curriculum. They also seem to underestimate the importance of setting priority areas or blocks of learning for training, organizing methodically the subject content, and sequencing logically the sessions both for training and evaluations. They appear to habitually neglect developing clear training goals for major topics, and training session objectives are

not formulated to be specific and measurable. BMDC and VERC do not seem to appreciate the crucial connection between the theoretical and practical elements in the curricula. APD and BMDC Course Coordinators seemed unwilling to question trainers scheduled to conduct sessions on the details of their planned training methodology.

Training Program Implementation Problems

16. The majority of trainers at APD and BMDC appear to overemphasize the use of lectures, and underemphasize discussions, group problem solving and exercise, role play, and other innovative participatory training techniques. Similarly, most of the training sessions seemed to overemphasize theoretical knowledge and underemphasize the application of theory through specific practices. Most of the written hand-outs at both institutions were in English, despite the exclusive use of Bangla with interspersed English throughout the training. Some delays in starting training sessions were observed at APD and BMDC. All three institutions appear to undervalue the importance of a thoughtful and objective selection of available trainers to conduct the training.

Training Program Evaluation Problems

17. Designated staff at all three institutions do not appear to sufficiently appreciate the benefit of incorporating valid and reliable evaluation mechanisms in the training program design. When APD and BMDC Course Coordinators did incorporate reaction and/or learning evaluations in the program design, they generally were developed, administered, or used inappropriately.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Suggestions To Improve the Capabilities of APD, BMDC, and VERC

Maximum Participation of Training Institutions During Pre-Course Planning and Orientation Phase

18. Were APD, BMDC, and/or VERC to be considered to design curricula and conduct training locally for future U.S.A.I.D. supported programs,

their maximum participation ought to be solicited during the pre-course planning, and orientation phase. Sufficient time should be allotted for this, and appropriate senior management and technical staff from the training institution(s) involved in the related discussions. This strategy would be multi-purposed. The Mission would take the opportunity to specify what its expectations are for a quality training course. It would identify the necessary components in assessment of training needs, curriculum design, reaction and learning evaluations, and course implementation. It would further outline its views on the necessary processes involved in undertaking each work phase. It would stipulate that Course Coordinators be provided proper supervision, internally or externally, and the most highly qualified available trainers be selected to conduct training sessions. Training institution staff would be asked to analyze thoughtfully these conditions to determine whether they could fulfill them in terms of time, staff and expertise. If so, they would be asked to specify the logistical, financial, and other support services needed. They would be encouraged to point out possible problems which might interfere with the task, and questioned whether there were any facets of it they believed could not be undertaken at all. These latter issues would be discussed, and suggestions for adaptations to the local environment and resources would be considered. If all these issues were resolved and negotiated satisfactorily, agreements with the training institution(s) to develop and conduct the training program would be prepared and finalized.

Provision of Increased Technical Assistance and Guidance

19. Increased technical assistance and guidance on the assessment of training needs, design of the training curriculum, selection of suitable training methodology, and preparation of course evaluations should be provided to the three institutions, were they to be requested to develop and conduct Mission supported training in the future. Guidelines, especially on data collection methods for needs assessments and preparation of behavioral topic objectives, should be specific and pretented for their suitability. The Mission might best offer this assistance by employing an expatriate professional training specialist for specific programs. This person should be experienced in designing, organizing, implementing and evaluating training programs in developing

countries, and should have a working knowledge of Bangla to use in assisting the planning and implementation of courses. This specialist could also serve as a resource person once training sessions begin.

Consideration To Train Selected Trainers

20. If the Mission is oriented to utilize the three institutions for future local training programs, the training needs of the institution's core staff should be further explored. If appropriate, carefully selected staff with backgrounds especially suited to the area might be considered for a specialized training of trainers course offered in relevant third countries.

Provision of Bangla Language Support Services

21. If APD and BMDC continue to design curricula and conduct training for specific groups at the Mission's request, consideration should be given to providing special support services to translate and type training curricula and teaching aids from English to Bangla. This could be useful and increase comprehension for both trainers and trainees, who would be provided with written material in the same language of instruction.

B. Possible Approaches For More Effective Implementation of Mission's Local Technical Resources Project Training Programs

Prior Research On, and Agreements With, Organizations Requesting Training

22. Local organizations requesting Technical Resources Project (TRP) training for sizable numbers of their staff should be carefully researched by the Mission before it agrees to provide assistance. This must include a determination of the organization's reasons for selecting training as a solution to its perceived needs and/or problems. Training would be an appropriate response only if the solutions clearly appear to rest in the improvement of employees' work-related skills, their knowledge, and/or attitudes or feelings towards their work. If training is determined to be an appropriate response,

agreements between the Mission and the local organization should specify the latter's willingness to: a) assist the designated training institution to clarify trainees' job tasks, skills, and major performance problems; b) participate in the curriculum design process as needed; and c) discuss the provision of a work environment following training that will encourage the application of the new knowledge, skills, and attitudes acquired by the trainees.

Assessment of Local Training Institution Capabilities and Overall Resources Prior to Selection

23. Local training institutions should be selected to design and conduct TRP training for specific groups of trainees only after a thorough assessment of their capabilities and overall resources. There should be an attempt to match the subject matter, course development and instructional design competencies of the training institution with the primary needs of trainees. This might be facilitated by utilizing a comprehensive checklist to collect relevant data on the training institution's policy, organization and management, staff, facilities and equipment, budget and funding, training capacity, training program development, implementation, evaluation and followup.

More Limited Subject Focus for TRP Training With One Selected Training Institution

24. Consideration should be given to establish for TRP training a more limited subject matter focus related to strategic programmatic goals with one carefully selected training institution. This would permit the Mission to develop a close working relationship with one training institution, which might be more inclined to build on common core skills in specific areas which have been stressed in previous training programs. These might include systematic needs assessment, curriculum development, selection of appropriate training methodology, and course evaluation skills.

Training of Specific Upper Management Personnel In Selected Organizations

25. Consideration could be given to training specific senior management personnel within carefully selected organizations in strategic programmatic areas. Training could then filter down to the other line workers. This might help stimulate changes in employee performance throughout the organization.

Similar Levels of Management Responsibilities For Heterogeneous Groups of Trainees With Mixed Organizational Affiliations

26. In cases where training groups are a heterogeneous mix of non-governmental and governmental managers with varied organizational affiliations, trainees should share at least similar levels of management responsibilities. This will facilitate the systematic assessment of training needs and curriculum relevancy.

Training Institution Awareness of Selection Criteria Used For Heterogeneous Groups of Trainees With Mixed Organizational Affiliations

27. In cases where training groups are heterogeneous and have varied organizational affiliations, the selection criteria used by the relevant government division to determine eligibility for course participation should be explicitly reviewed with the designated training institution. This will assist in the assessment of training needs and the development of a relevant curriculum.

Systematic English Language Screening of Candidates For Combined Local and Third Country Training

28. The Mission should systematically screen candidates proposed for combined local and third country training programs on their English language proficiency. This should be done using a standardized test prior to referring biodata on prospective trainees to selected training institutions.

On-Site Training For Staff of Selected Organizations

29. Selected local organizations might be offered on-site training in specific areas amenable to change by the staff of a designated training institution. This approach could provide increased opportunities for demonstration and discovery through experiments and field training, and stimulate the direct application of what has been learned to specific work tasks.