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Mid-term Process Evaluation

of

TRAINING FOR DEVELOPMENT

USAID/Kenya

by

John Gillies
Academy for Educational Development

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Training for Development (TFD) project is a $10 million general participant training project that provides long-term and short-term training in the U.S. to approximately 155 Kenyans. The participants are divided between the public and private sectors and are selected on the basis of outstanding personal qualities that evidence potential for professional leadership. All stages of the project, from selection and orientation, through training plan design and follow-on, are oriented toward enhancing the participants' professional leadership skills.

The project is one of the best participant training projects in AID today in terms of the quality of every stage of the training process. The successful implementation of the project is due in part to a good project design and a capable contractor. Equally important, however, has been the ability of USAID, the project committees, and the contractor to continuously monitor, reassess, and improve procedures and rationale. The project has shown perceptible improvements in both conceptual definition and implementation over the years to evolve to its current status.

The project management procedures are operational and effective and have created a high level of commitment to the project from host country and contractor personnel. Training procedures are fully in place and are successful in selecting qualified individuals and placing them in appropriate training programs. The high quality of services are the function not only of a capable contractor, but also of the willingness of AID to provide the necessary funding. Although the cost of the contractor services is unusual, the quality of the services provided are also well beyond the standard.

At this point in the project, there are few if any significant changes to be made in project management, selection, or placement activities. The major new challenge for the remaining time in the project is to expand on the relatively new re-entry and follow-on components. Particularly with respect to follow-on, USAID/Kenya must clearly define the nature of the relationship desired with returned participants. The current activities are exploratory in nature, with a pilot activity in funding small projects proposed by returned participants, a participant directory, and an alumni association if it is initiated by returnees. Other options include support for management seminars or other in-country training programs. The primary question for USAID/Kenya is what level of support is appropriate, for which activities, and for how long. The current program is entirely dependent on contractor services, and therefore is limited in time to the current LOP. Depending on its objectives, USAID may wish to explore other mechanisms for maintaining continuing linkages and support at some level to these individuals in whom it has invested so much.

A range of options for future project design exist should the mission decide to fund a TFD II. Design issues will include the advisability of greater project focus compared to the current demand driven training, policy issues on selection criteria and types of training, and management issues on the structure and scope of an implementation contract.

I. BACKGROUND AND PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Training for Development project is a $10 million general training project that provides long- and short-term training to carefully selected Kenyans who have potential for professional leadership. The participants are from both the public and private sector and represent a diverse set of sectors, professions, and background. The project is seen as a successor to the Kennedy-Mboya airlift of the early 1960's and is a deliberate attempt to expand the training opportunities beyond the relatively narrow focus of project-related training.

The project was started in 1987 and a major project review was conducted in 1989-1990 to assess the continued relevance of the original design. The brainstorming and planning process was highly participatory, progressing from the initial meetings within the HRD office to include other USAID offices, the contractor, and the steering committees. The immediate result of this review was a revised logical framework and EOPS indicators that more accurately reflected the project objectives and facilitated both planning and evaluation. Equally importantly, the process itself generated (1) a common understanding of the concept of professional leadership and how to integrate the idea into each stage of implementation; (2) improved functioning of both the selection and placement processes; and (3) a stronger commitment to the project by all parties in AID, the contractor, and the host country counterparts.

The project will train approximately 155 people, drawn equally from the public and private sector. Recruitment and selection is the responsibility of separate public and private sector committees, both of which include representation by AID and relevant host country institutions. Project support services provided by an institutional contractor include assistance in the private sector recruitment and selection procedures, pre-program preparation, orientation, placement, monitoring, re-entry, and follow-on. The contractor maintains offices in both Nairobi and Washington DC. The clear intention of the contract is to provide the highest quality support and placement services to the participants.

II. GENERAL FINDINGS

The TFD project is one of the best participant training projects in AID today in terms of careful attention to every aspect of the training process. This is partly due to a good project design, a capable contractor, and the mission's willingness to invest in high quality service. Equally important, however, has been the ability of USAID, the project committees, and the contractor to continuously monitor, reassess, and improve procedures and rationale. This flexibility and professional approach to management is evidenced by the perceptible improvements in the project over the past three years.

The critical goal of any participant training is to identify excellent candidates and provide them with appropriate and relevant training consistent with the project objectives. The efficiency of both training and utilization can be enhanced by adequate pre-program preparation and orientation and follow-on support. The TFD project has been successful in all of these areas.

The project management structures have effectively included public and private sector counterparts in both policy and operational decisionmaking and, as a result, have generated strong personal and professional commitment to the project. This commitment is in large part due to the collaborative management style of the project.

All of the participating groups in the project have made significant contributions. On the USAID side, effective management by both Marcia Bernbaum, chief of the HRD office, and Teresa Muraya, the FSN project manager, has kept the project focused on its objectives. In particular the USAID initiative to "revisit" the project in terms of concept, logical framework structure, and procedures greatly improved not only the logical framework, but also the understanding of and commitment to the project by all parties. Although Ms. Bernbaum will be leaving, the project manager, Ms. Muraya, is a capable manager with knowledge of both training and Kenya. The support of the program officer, who has both experience and interest in training, indicates the high quality project management will be continued under the new organizational structure.

The project also has excellent support from both **public and private sector counterparts** representing the Directorate of Personnel Management, the Federation of Kenya Employers, the Kenya Association of Manufacturers, the chamber of commerce, and Moi and Nairobi universities. In particular, Mr. Wanjala wa Muricho on the public sector side and Mr. Tom Owour on the private sector side have provided leadership and support. The active participation of all committee members in the face of sometimes heavy time demands clearly illustrates their commitment and belief in the importance of the project.

The **contractor performance** is excellent, with notably capable people both in the field and in the home office. As with the project as a whole, the selection, recruitment and placement procedures have evolved and matured over the life of the project. The internal monitoring and evaluation processes have been effective in identifying not only problems but

also opportunities for improving the project. The contractor has innovated in selection processes (improvements in criteria and procedures, site visits); pre-program preparation (GRE/GMAT preparation courses, computer training); orientation (participant handbook, spouse orientation); management (records, internal evaluation, TIP and visa status forms, logistics); placement; and communication and support to participants (newsletter, supply of the Weekly Review magazine). The initial efforts in re-entry and follow-on are very promising.

The utilization of the training after return to Kenya was not specifically part of the scope of work for this evaluation. However, during the course of the interviews most of the returned participants identified specific instances in which they have used the training. The effects include a woman who received training in management, TOT, and computers and returned to open her own business; a small business owner who has specifically applied procurement, bidding, and negotiating techniques to double the sales volume of his firm; and a public sector manager who has initiated the computerization of his organization and is organizing computer training programs. In addition, two participants have revised their long-term strategies for company growth as a result of the training. Although not every aspect of every program was successful, all of the returned participants interviewed could identify specific technical or management lessons that have been valuable. Based on the information from these interviews, it is reasonable to assume that the training programs have indeed been well planned around specific needs of the individual participants.

III. SPECIFIC FINDINGS BY SOW

A. Project Management Procedures in Place and Operational

1. Relationships between audiences

The project is characterized by exceptionally strong involvement by both private sector and public sector officials in the recruitment and selection stages as well as project design and policymaking. Individuals interviewed in each of the major audiences -- DPM, USAID, private sector (FKE, KAM), and Pragma are comfortable with their input into the project and with the processes. All parties clearly understand their respective roles and responsibilities in the project and how they interrelate with other actors.

A concern expressed by some USAID officials was whether the heavy time demands imposed by the selection process on high level public and private sector might be excessive. It is worth noting that the commitment to the project by the key committee members is very high. None of the committee members interviewed expressed any reservation about their level of involvement or indicated in any way that the time demanded was inappropriate to the importance of the project.

Communication and exchange of information is maintained among all key audiences. In addition to keeping the project committee informed locally, the contractor has established effective communications between the Nairobi and Washington offices. Virtually daily telephone or fax communications keep both offices informed of all developments. This is supplemented by visits of home office staff to the field once or twice a year and field staff to the U.S., visiting both participants and the home office. There is currently no indication of the kinds of communications failure that occur in many training projects and result in seriously inappropriate training programs.

It is notable that the management procedures and relationships have been maintained and continue to improve despite changes in three key personnel (in AID and Pragma) midway through the project. While adjustments stemming from this kind of transition are inevitable, they were handled competently and professionally by all parties. The project management has continued to improve since the transition.

On the USAID side, program management is excellent. Records for all recent participants are consistent and comprehensive. Financial records are effectively in the TCA format and are adequate to answer most budget questions with little difficulty. The USAID mission actively uses the financial records to track expenditures against projections. The project manager has undergone a structured on-the-job training program that leaves her capable of managing the project on her own.

Other technical offices within USAID/Kenya are appropriately involved with selection and debriefing of participants in their respective fields. Notice of the recruitment advertisement is shared with all technical offices, as are the applications of candidates in their field. Their comments and opinions of the candidates are incorporated in the final AID ranking and they are briefed on the final selections. In general, these offices support the opportunity to offer training in areas that do not warrant a full mission strategic objective. A few officials believe that the project should be focused more directly on strategic objectives, but should still not overlap with project-related training. Individuals in all three technical offices want earlier notification of the recruitment schedule so that they have time to actively recruit people they consider leaders in important fields. The two office chiefs who want more involvement recognized and accepted the staff demands that this would require for both identification of and recruitment in priority areas. The other office chief would support staff involvement for recruiting candidates only if there was more certainty of those candidates being selected.

Recommendations: The project should consider two minor changes in recordkeeping. The first is to collect salary information for participants with other participant data so that counterpart contributions can be accurately calculated. This would be a minimal additional burden that improves project accountability.

The second change would be to adjust the budget when the specific placements have been made for each participant. Currently, project financial records based projections on average participant budgets and are checked against actual expenditures at 6 month intervals. The contract calls for maintaining project budgets on the level of each participant. The contractor accounts for expenditures on the participant level but projections are based on average budgets rather than actual. The estimated average budgets are both detailed and generous and are fully adequate for preliminary budgeting. However, long-term programs range from 1 year programs in Houston to 3 year Ph.D. programs at Columbia, so the average budgets are less useful in making specific projections of funding availability once the placements--and commitments--have been made. The six month adjusted budgets adequately reflect changes in projected expenditures on a monthly basis but they do not present information about the total amount of committed funds in the project. This is not a major issue and the participant budgets can be adjusted with minimal effort since the only real changes from the average budgets will be for tuition/training costs, maintenance allowance, and attachments.

B. OUTPUT 2. **Training procedures in place and operational**

1. Recruitment screening, and selection

By any standard, the screening and selection procedures are successful in identifying qualified candidates. The participants are by and large doing very well in their academic and training programs and are highly regarded by their professors, academic advisors, and trainers. The GPA average is 3.49 for the current group of long-term academic participants. (Only a few long-term have returned). While performance in short-term programs is more difficult to assess, there is no reason to believe that the performance of the participants is of lesser quality.

A distinguishing aspect of the TFD selection process is the emphasis on leadership qualities in addition to the standard criteria of education, employment, and employer endorsement. Leadership is clearly difficult to define (and professional leadership is even more intangible), and there is some question within the mission as to whether this approach is worth the difficulties in the current country environment. While it is probably impossible to judge whether the project has successfully identified real leaders, the process is useful in applying additional criteria to identify people with career potential. The project committees have tried to identify specific qualities of potential leaders and to evaluate candidates in terms of these qualities through application essays, site visits, and personal interviews. The result is participants who can clearly articulate their personal and career goals, training objectives, and their potential to contribute to their place of employment and Kenyan development. It is a useful screening technique to find better candidates and need not be restricted to this type of project.

The rigorous selection process relies on clearly competitive procedures based on established and transparent eligibility and selection criteria. The primary mechanism for recruitment is public advertisements in the newspapers. This approach has several advantages: 1) it reaches potential candidates directly, thus minimizing the impact of favoritism; 2) it reaches candidates in provincial areas as well as the capital; and 3) it is widely regarded as a fair and competitive process. This perception of the selectivity and fairness of the process confers respect on those selected. Participants definitely like the competitive process, and several expressed amazement that they could be selected even though they didn't "know someone".

The selection process involves pre-screening of public sector employees by DPM and private sector candidates by Pragma, followed by home ratings, interviews, and final selection by the respective selection committee. Initial screening reduces the number of applications to 30-50 which must be individually reviewed and ranked by all selection committee members. The committee will then spend a full day or more giving personal interviews with 15-25 final candidates. At each stage, the numerical ratings from all committee members are put together and candidates are ranked accordingly. This process effectively removes any potential for favoritism from any group. The final selection process has matured and

now includes candid discussions of the final candidates prior to decision. Each member of the selection committee is encouraged to discuss the reasons behind the high or low ranking, and to discuss the merits of each candidate. This has proven to be useful not only in improving the quality of assessment of candidates but also to help committee members think through the ideas behind professional leadership and understand the viewpoint of the other committee members.

Private Sector Selection: Selection for the private sector goes through an initial screening process conducted by Pragma, followed by site visits to those who make the first cut. The site visits have been a project innovation that appears to substantively improve the decision making process. The site interviews with candidates, supervisors, and co-workers validate both the nature of the business (particularly important for self-employed candidates) and the candidate's potential for leadership in the organization. The site visit establishes a second screening stage and the written results are attached to the applications and sent to the committee for review and final determination of a short-list to be interviewed.

The eligibility requirements for the private sector are slightly different than those for public sector scholarships. The educational achievement requirements for long-term participants are not as strict as those in the public sector. In addition, employers must endorse the application for training and agree to pay international travel costs and salary while the participant is in training, as well as to employ the individual after training. While the requirement for endorsement of the training program, guaranteed employment, and payment of international travel are reasonable expectations, there is reason to believe that the requirement to cover salary costs has a negative impact on the recruitment process, particularly for long-term participants.

The two following suggestions about the private sector selection of long-term academic participants apply to future projects because no further long-term participants are planned under the project as currently authorized.

Employer Endorsement: The issue regarding employer endorsement is centered on the requirement for salary payments rather than endorsement per se. Two distinct opinions exist among the project committee members --1) that the payments are necessary for employers' commitment and utilization of participants after return, and 2) that this is a serious barrier to many qualified applicants, particularly for LT, and it largely predetermines who will apply and be eligible. It is clearly the opinion of the contractor that many people who contact the office about training opportunities never apply specifically because of the salary payment requirement--they know that their employer will not do it. This perception was confirmed by interviews with two employers (former participants) who said that they would not consider sending an employee--it would not be a good investment for the business. (It is noteworthy that both employers sponsor their employees for local training opportunities--it is the cost of the TFD program that makes it prohibitive.) A professional woman interviewed also volunteered that she would apply for the program but her employer would not agree to make the salary support. As a result of this requirement, the private

sector selection process strongly favors candidates who are owners or partners or mid-level employees from large local or multinational firms. Very few participants have been employees of small or mid-sized firms.

The employers have valid concerns. A smaller company will seldom have the financial resources to support salary for a non-working employee for a year or more. Even the cost of international airfare may be a significant expense. Equally important, the employee may leave the firm because the training opens up better job opportunities. In two cases, private sector participants have left the sponsoring company after returning to Kenya - one started her own firm immediately after return. This represents a success for the individual, but for the employer it was a significant loss of both money and skilled personnel. It should also be recognized that employers have little to no real incentive to provide support, because the training plan is designed around the needs of the individual rather than the firm. Finally, it must be recognized that not every employer recognizes the value of investing in training and the project requirements may be inconsistent with established training policies in firms that do support training. Given all of these reasons, I believe that the requirement for employer payment of salary should be reconsidered.

Recommendation: The project should maintain a more flexible stance toward employer payment of salary, and regard it as a cost sharing issue for negotiation rather than an eligibility issue. Future projects should return to the idea in the original PP - minimum payment of round trip airfare, plus endorsement and willingness to employ the participant--leaving salary as an issue of negotiation between the participant and the employer. This more flexible stance should clearly apply to all long-term training. While the impact of the requirement on short-term training is less clear, the use of flexible rules for one cycle might be a useful test to determine if the nature or quality of applications changes appreciably.

Obviously the financial security of the participants' dependents must be assured prior to approving any training plans. The project will need to establish some standard documentation for proof of support. In addition, some care must be given to assure that the rules are clearly understood and are consistent in applying to all employers.

Rating of Academic Qualifications: The evaluation of candidates for most of the selection criteria -- professional leadership, relation to Kenyan development, experience, and quality of the training program--are fairly subjective. The one indicator of achievement and quality that can be objective is academic achievement. However, at present there appears to be no set standard for awarding points for academic achievement. As a result, the point range in this category is very narrow and different levels of academic achievement may not be reflected in the scores. In one example, a rating sheet awarded the full 25 points to a candidate who had achieved only a "pass" grade in the local university (and not in a medical faculty where this is a common grade). The project can easily establish some standards that would assure that a candidate who has achieved first class honours clearly and consistently is awarded more points in that category than candidates who achieved second class or pass grades.

This is not to say that minimal academic achievement should be established for eligibility to the program. The education criteria is used as one proxy indicator of leadership qualities--commitment, hard work, goal-achievement orientation, excellence. etc. The other criteria provide indicators of leadership qualities in other areas -- work, community involvement, clarity of career goals, etc. Each criteria is judged separately and candidates with the highest overall score are selected. It does not discriminate against individuals with great leadership skills but poor academic performance any more than it favors those with high grades but minimal other leadership skills.

Recommendation: The private sector selection process should consider use of consistent standards for grading academic qualifications.

Academic Standards for Graduate Degree Programs: The public sector selection process establishes a minimum level of academic achievement of second class honours, upper division (or the equivalent in another grading system) to be eligible for long-term training programs. The private sector selection criteria only requires that candidates have a degree. On average, the public sector participants have clearly better academic records and achieve a somewhat higher average GPA in their coursework in US universities than private sector participants. The question is whether a minimal academic standard should be required for private sector participants to enter into graduate degree programs. [Again, the issue is not eligibility for sponsorship in the program, but rather the appropriateness of degree oriented graduate programs.]

In addition to the performance in undergraduate courses, the project has access to the GRE/GMAT scores (after preparatory courses) for long-term participants. To the degree that these scores in combination with undergraduate grades can adequately serve as a predictor of graduate performance, they can establish a minimum standard for graduate degree programs. Participants without that level of achievement can be placed in non-degree or short-term programs.

At this point, there is no clear answer as to whether this is a good idea. (It is also moot because no further academic programs are planned). Existing evidence shows that at least some participants with relatively low GRE scores have been excellent graduate students. There probably is a cultural and Western bias to the GRE tests that artificially lowers the relative scores of candidates from developing countries. The Pragma home office is planning to do an analysis of the relationship of GRE scores and later academic performance to use in their negotiations with universities.

Recommendation: It would be a useful exercise at the end of the TFD project for USAID or Pragma to analyze the relationship between the various factors -- undergraduate grades, GRE scores, and graduate grades--to shed some light on the issue. The result of the analysis should discuss the value of these factors as a predictor of graduate performance and should recommend what minimum standards, if any, should be required. This would be useful not only for a TFD II project, but for any participant training activity in Kenya.

Public sector selection process: The DPM screens all applicants prior to sending them to the committee. The primary criteria established for the first level screening are those established in the advertisement--academic qualifications, years on the job, sector of employment, etc. The second level screening introduces additional criteria that reflect GOK training priorities and development objectives, geographic and tribal balance, gender balance, etc. These criteria are adjusted each year. They are deliberated and documented prior to the second level of screening. The process appears to produce good quality long-term participants whose leadership qualities are subsequently assessed and confirmed in the interview stage. Given the results, there would not appear to be any reason to question the validity of the process, despite adjustable criteria at the second screening stage. After the initial screening, the joint DPM-AID selection committee reviews documents, selects a short-list for the committee to interview, and makes the final selection.

It is useful to note the differences between the needs of long-term and short-term training programs in terms of utilization. Long-term academic education strengthens general capability while short-term technical training is usually intended for immediate applicability. From this perspective, the importance of the participant's ability to apply new skills in the organization and the support/opinion of the supervisor is critical. DPM should consider the value of site visits for public sector candidates in order to improve both the selection and relevance of the training to the organization. The experience with this project might use a useful test case for the general applicability of this approach for other training programs coordinated by DPM.

Recommendation: The DPM should consider using site visits to help select public sector employees, particularly for short-term training.

2. Training Plans

The careful development of training plans that reflect the needs and interests of the participants as well as the professional leadership objectives of the project is a major strength of this project. Participants are given a group introduction to the program followed by one-on-one counseling to refine their training objectives, clarify specific skills or topics to cover, and review and comment on the TIP developed by the Washington office.

Some short-term participants in the early cycles believed that they did not have adequate information about their programs or opportunity to adjust them before leaving. This does not appear to be a problem anymore--as in other areas, Pragma has learned from experience and tightened the process. It is important to emphasize here that in those cases where participants found themselves in inappropriate placements, the contractor was attentive and flexible enough to change training activities even in the middle of short-term programs. This ability and willingness to address and resolve problems is an important factor in the project's level of success in that potential failures were avoided.

3. Orientation

Orientation of participants to the personal, cultural, academic, and logistic challenges they will face in an overseas study program have long been recognized as important in scholarship programs. The TFD project provides an adequate orientation that includes both in-country and U.S. orientation programs that are coordinated to avoid unnecessary duplication and yet reinforce some issues. As with other parts of the program, the orientation activities have improved over the life of the project. A particularly important element of the orientation program is the emphasis on participants identifying their own goals and actively pursuing them--of taking charge of their own training. Some training experts believe that this proactive approach is crucial for foreign students to get what they need from U.S. training programs. Many participants have emphasized that the program in the Washington International Center was also useful in giving them a positive and proactive view of the cross-cultural nature of the experience.

The project has introduced several useful innovations, including a spouse orientation session (the first one will be held for the current training cycle), and courses to prepare candidates for the GRE/GMAT and to introduce them to using computers. All of these are excellent additions to the program. The spouse orientation will be useful not only for clarifying dependent travel regulations, but also to allow families to better understand and share the experience.

Many participants emphasized that talks by returnees were very useful. Several recommended that this aspect be strengthened -- that more returnees be invited, with experiences in different parts of the US, and that they should specifically discuss stress topics such as housing, transportation, and budgeting as well as cultural adaptation. Indeed, it was clear that these high stress topics cannot be overemphasized and should be discussed as unambiguously as possible. Pragma staff recognize the importance of the issue and have conscientiously attempted to address them adequately.

4. U.S. Training Activities

Placements have generally been excellent and at times very creative. Academic placements are well targeted to subdisciplines as well as general fields, most attachments have been appropriate and useful, and most short-term programs have been excellent. Indeed, some of the training plans have been extraordinarily well targeted to the very specific needs of the participants. The percentage of poor placements appears to be very low for a project of this kind.

As noted above, the examples of inappropriate placements were primarily from the earlier training cycles and the contractor has improved over time. The purpose of mentioning them at this point is more to note the continuing improvements in the placement process than to identify current problems. The most common problem was placement of

private sector people in courses whose primary target group was civil service or social workers, or vice versa. These problem placements represented only segments of any individual's training program and the contractor responded quickly to resolve the problem whenever possible.

The U.S. contacts (academic advisors and short-term liaisons) have usually been well briefed on the objectives and background of the participants. Participants are pleased that their hosts in company visits and internships have been informed and enthusiastic.

There have been no placements to date in Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Despite the failure to meet the 10% mandate, no blame can be attached to either the USAID or the contractor. Pragma has made diligent efforts to seek out appropriate programs in HBCUs, provide participants with materials and applications for the schools, and encourage them to apply. When members of the steering committee (Mr. Muricho and Mr. Owour) and the project manager visited the U.S., they visited two HBCUs and discussed programming possibilities with faculty and administrators. Some participants have applied to HBCU institutions, but none have enrolled to date.

A few selected comments on the placements from participants are offered here as food for thought. As they represent the opinions of individuals rather than trends or patterns, they should be viewed as general feedback. The contractor appears to already take these issues into consideration in participant counseling and placement:

- Some programs may make minimal effort to relate the education to developing country issues. Students at Johns Hopkins and the New School of Social Research commented on this. These opinions can be communicated to future students and/or relevant attachments can be planned to round out the training. (It is fair to note that both of these students strongly requested placement in these specific schools.)

- Short-term placements and attachments should be balanced between large and small firms with different levels of technology and management. At least one visit should be to a company with a similar scale of operations to the participant's firm.

- The practice of placing participants in non-degree programs prior to acceptance in the degree program can be very stressful for the individual. The one participant interviewed who was in this situation strongly recommended against it. This conditional acceptance is sometimes the only way to get into a particular school. In such cases, the options and advantages/disadvantages should be carefully discussed with the participant.

- Participant counseling should directly discuss the pros and cons of big city vs smaller town sites. If possible, expose participants to both.

The supplementary activities (attachments, leadership seminars, other training) have been of generally high quality and have improved over time. Lessons from the earlier stages of project implementation appear to be applied in current programming. Possibly the most important of these lessons is to clearly identify the target audience of seminars and short courses (public or private sector, small firm owners or large institution managers) and place individuals appropriately. In some early programs, concerns over the planned length of the program limited participation in appropriate attachments. Related to the above, the other clear lesson that has been learned and applied is the need to adequately inform participants about options for attachments and of the specific content of each to enable them to make informed decisions.

Participants were asked to identify particularly useful seminars. Since many seminars were taken only by one TFD participant, a clear ranking is not possible. Nonetheless, it is useful to know that the MTDI courses are well regarded, as was a strategic planning seminar in Hew Hampshire and a banking course at the Economics Institute in Boulder. One woman attended a WID program at USDA that she believes gave her an entirely new perspective on the role of women in society. The MSI courses were regarded as high quality (for the most part) and valuable, but were not top ranked by any of the individuals I interviewed.

The **leadership seminars conducted by the subcontractor MSI** deserve special note. The subcontract was expressly intended to provide customized leadership development courses to meet the needs of these specific Kenyan participants. In addition, the key personnel, Larry Cooley, is to coordinate the seminars and to provide a month of additional services each year in submitting "occasional" articles for the newsletter, one-on-one counseling of participants when appropriate, and other assistance in conceptualizing and implementing the project. To date, Mr. Cooley has provided less than one week of billable services to the project in his capacity as coordinator. It should be noted that this does not reflect his major role in the first two seminars, which was covered under training costs rather than as the coordinator. No original articles have been submitted for the newsletter, although a photocopied article on management was proposed and rejected for reasons of length and limited relevance to the program. Pragma should encourage the submission of an original article that follows up on the seminars already completed. This would be a valuable addition to the newsletter.

Three leadership seminars have been conducted. Two of the three were well received, but the most recent seminar was more controversial in terms of both content and process. The seminars are focused on professional leadership and management skills and generally are an appropriate approach to the challenge of meeting the needs of such a diverse group of participants. The types of management principles and skills discussed in these seminars are generally applicable and may require little or no adjustment to be relevant to Kenyan professionals. The primary type of customization required is to reflect the background and needs of the specific audience -- in this case, the relevant mixture of public and private sector participants. A failure to recognize the audience and adapt the

program accordingly was a major contributing factor to the difficulties of the recent seminar on entrepreneurship, which had limited applicability to the many public sector participants attending. (It is fair to note, however, that while some participants from the public sector questioned the usefulness to them, at least one specifically supported the value of the seminar for him).

In general, participants who have attended the MSI seminars find them useful and interesting (with some exceptions in the most recent seminar), but few find them uniquely valuable. In ranking the importance of seminars and attachments to their professional development, none of the participants interviewed placed MSI on the top of the list. While the importance of this statement should not be overemphasized, it is an indication that the MSI seminars may not warrant preferential programming. They are useful seminars that should be presented as an optional attachment to be selected on its merits. The revised subcontract specifies that a two day re-entry workshop be held at the end of the summer seminar. There is a stronger rationale for requiring attendance at this workshop, as it specifically directed to the immediate needs of participants who are returning home.

Regardless of whether the seminars are required, adequate advance notice to AID, the prime contractor, and the participants is necessary. The subcontract requires such advance notice of the agenda and curriculum of the workshops, but it has not been provided for the previous seminars. This is not only a management issue, but is also important for the participants to have information so they can make an informed decision about whether to attend.

Recommendation: Pragma should use the subcontract more effectively. At a minimum, this would include requiring adequate advance information about all seminars. In addition, MSI should provide appropriate articles to the newsletter to serve as follow-up to the seminars. Finally, the one month per year time of the seminars coordinator should be more effectively used, either in planning activities, conducting one-on-one or even correspondence follow-ups with participants who are interested, preparing other materials for follow-on, or other activities. If Mr. Cooley is not able to devote this amount of time to the project (which is understandable given his other responsibilities), he should propose another member of his firm to serve as key personnel. MSI has sufficient talent to find an acceptable substitute.

5. Re-entry

The initial efforts at re entry and follow-on are encouraging. The re-entry meetings in 1989 and 1991 were successful and useful for returnees to share their experiences. The attendees clearly appreciate these get togethers and want further follow-on activities. The March 1991 meeting was notable in that participants felt very strongly about the difficulties of readjusting to Kenya, particularly dealing with the indifference, or resentment, of their co-workers.

The re-entry component has only recently been initiated. To date, little effort has been made in either the public or private sector organizations to assist participants. In some ways, re-entry is even more important for a project like this one than for project-related training. The linkage between the training and the workplace is limited in a project that has leadership development as its primary focus. Therefore, the re-entry phase may be particularly important not only in helping participants to readjust, but also in forming a bridge to utilization of the training once back on the job.

Re-entry activities can: (1) encourage participants to talk through their experiences with each other (consolation re-entry); and (2) assist employers and supervisors to reintegrate the participants. The first is useful for the participants themselves. As in the March meeting, they appreciate being able to talk about the problems. Re-entry sessions with employers and supervisors might be a useful bridge. It is likely that few supervisors have given much thought to the idea of reintegrating participants.

DPM should institute re-entry assistance to help reintegrate participants in their jobs. This might include a formal debriefing of returned participants and formal notification of their return to their sponsoring institutions. In addition, DPM could directly assist reintegration by briefing supervisors and directors on ways to deal with both the personal and professional problems of returned participants.

Recommendation: Both Pragma and DPM should increase their efforts to facilitate re-entry of the participants. At a minimum, this should include formal notification to the employer. Ideally, it could be extended conceptually to be a bridge between the training of individuals and the application in the workplace.

6. Follow-on

The most important decisions remaining for the implementation of the TFD project are related to establishing a follow-on program that addresses the mission objectives and interests. The first step is to clearly define those objectives and interests.

The current approach being taken to develop a follow-on program is useful--to utilize a pilot approach with modest funding to better define what the participants want to do. Efforts to date include a re-entry workshop in 1989, a re-entry/follow-on meeting in March 1991 that further explored ideas presented in the first meeting, the establishment of a small project fund to support initiatives of returned participants, the development of a returned participant directory, the extension of subscriptions to professional journals, and an opportunity for participants to create an alumni association. The recognition that any successful alumni association will have to come from the interest of the returned participants is important and accurate.

Participants attending the March 1991 follow-on meeting were enthusiastic about maintaining contact with each other, networking within the group to use other participants

as resources, having occasional management seminars, and using the small project funds to provide training programs to other Kenyans. Interest in an alumni association was high and after the formal meeting a group of participants created a steering committee to begin working on a charter. Pragma has started a small resource library and has received suggestions about other materials that should be included in it, including such items as computers, software, and training materials. As yet, participants know little about what resources are available in the library.

Pragma has published three project newsletters to date. This is an innovation that is not part of the Pragma contract and therefore has not received significant management attention. Publication is on an occasional basis. Interviews with participants, both in training and returned, indicated that the newsletter is very important to them. They clearly want to keep up with both the project and other participants. An article by MSI that is linked to the leadership seminars would be a useful addition.

Pragma has started a returned participant directory. Participants clearly want this directory and want it to be expanded to include information on their various skills and expertise. This will encourage the commercial and professional networking that they are interested in. This has already begun--a participant has contracted with another returned participant to conduct computer training in his organization.

Follow-on is the primary issue for the remainder of the project. While the current activities form a good basis for assessing interest and feasibility of alternatives, a clear definition of USAID/Kenya's interest and objectives is needed. Superimposed on the question of what activities to do is the issue of sustainability. At this point, follow-on is linked to and dependent on contractor services. When the project ends, so does all follow-on. If AID's programmatic interest is not limited to the next couple of years, then a mechanism must be developed for maintaining some continuing relationship. The question boils down to this: you have bought the car. Do you want the maintenance agreement?

AID must determine what its interests are in a continuing linkage with and support of these people in whom it has invested so much. Once AID's programmatic interest is clear, then determination of appropriate funding levels and activities is a lot easier. The issue for such programs often comes down to an argument against continued funding--"AID provided the training, now it is their responsibility to use it". It should be remembered that the agency had objectives in sponsoring the scholarships to begin with and often has legitimate continuing interests. AID can and should make a contribution to those elements in which it has an interest. The design challenge is to find a balance between infinite dependence and unrealistic expectations of self-sufficiency.

Once the question of AID objectives is very clear, then the design can address issues such as cost sharing and specific activities. My own feeling is that a continuing small project fund is not a critical AID concern, whereas support for continuing education through

arranged seminars and workshops, and continued contacts with participants, probably are.

Both the re-entry and follow-on components should be reviewed creatively as means of bridging the training and the eventual utilization in the workplace. The basic project paradox is that selection and training plans are centered on individual needs, while effective utilization can only occur in an organizational setting. Therefore, this element is particularly important in developing a linkage.

Recommendations: USAID/Kenya must clearly define its interests in the follow-on program. If these activities are not to end with the contract, efforts to make other arrangements should begin now. In addition to the activities planned, participants have indicated an interest in other activities as well. The following are activities that may have merit.

Conduct leadership or management seminars once a year in Kenya, with local training resources if possible. It would be useful if participants can invite a supervisor or colleague to these seminars to build more support within their organization. These seminars could be organized around common management or leadership problems and include resources from the broader Kenyan management community, including such people as Mr. Owour and Mr. Muricho.

Encourage better networking between returned participants (from this or any training activity) and USAID project needs. The participants are professionals trained in fields of relevance to AID and can effectively contribute to the program. They want to be more involved.

7. Evaluation

The project has three levels of evaluation:

1) An on-going monitoring and evaluation function assesses participant opinions of the training, administration, and attachments on a regular basis.

2) A mid-term process evaluation (this report) provides an outside review of project implementation.

3) An impact evaluation is intended to explore the relationship between the operational stages and the degree to which the training is eventually used. The intention of the impact evaluation is not primarily to be a summative report for accountability, but rather as part of the dynamic process of providing feedback to improve project design and implementation decisions.

The monitoring function is effective in soliciting useful information on a timely basis and the feedback is clearly used in improving the project implementation. The combination

of written forms, verbal debriefing in both Washington and Nairobi, and other informal communication provides an appropriate range of opportunities to comment on general program concerns and reactions to specific courses. It might be useful for the contractor to pull together an annual memorandum, possibly as an attachment to the annual report, that summarizes what they have learned from the feedback. I would see this as a reflective summary rather than a statistical compilation of responses.

The process evaluation needs little discussion. It was conducted exactly on schedule and the scope of work was carefully prepared to meet the specific interests of each of the project audiences. This careful attention to the details of the evaluation is an essential requirement for any evaluation to be useful. This is indicative of the overall management of the project.

The final impact evaluation of the project was intended to be a continuous evaluation to feed back into the design and implementation process. This innovative approach was carefully developed by evaluation specialists and widely reviewed and debated in the mission. Due to circumstances outside of AID's control, this particular approach is no longer possible. An alternative approach is needed. Some thoughts on how the mission might proceed, outside of the specific scope of work for this study, are included in the annex.

IV. OTHER ISSUES

A. Project Cost

The administrative and training costs of this project are high by the standards of many other projects. Approximately 60% of the administrative costs are attributed to the field office, and the remainder to the home office. The question of cost is really two questions -- does this project spend too much or do other projects spend too little? The answer to the latter is clearly yes, in my opinion. The answer to the first question is harder.

It is very difficult to compare the administrative costs of this project to other projects. These costs are much higher than the "average" placement costs charged by PIET or other contractors, but direct comparisons are very difficult to make. The range of activities conducted under this project are much greater than normal, both in the field office and home office. The intensive recruitment, selection, placement counseling, orientation, and academic preparation far exceed both in scope and quality the "standard" efforts. Moreover, the field office is instrumental in both conceptualizing and conducting the re-entry and follow-on activities. The home office is responsible for extensive placement efforts not only in normal academic programs and short-term training courses, but also for customized observation tours, internships, and other training. The "attachment" program for all long-term participants is very time consuming -- the effort required for one session of summer attachments was estimated at 90 person days. The quality of both the placements and monitoring is quite high -- the placement officers really understand the needs of the participants and are able to effectively monitor and adapt programs as necessary. Finally, the true costs of other programs are difficult to estimate because much of the work is done by direct hire staff, whose time is not included in other calculations.

The important questions are:

Are the costs reasonable given the level of services? Yes, probably. Quality of services is excellent.

Will the higher quality of services result in higher success rate? It is reasonable to assume that this is true. Many of the returned participants commented on the immediate applicability of the training because it was so well targeted to their needs.

Is this level of effort beyond the point of decreasing marginal returns? There is no way of knowing.

In the future, whether in this project or another with a similar contract, some adjustments can probably be made to reduce the overall cost of the contract or at least increase the efficiency in terms of numbers of participants served. Optional approaches might include:

- Reduce the U.S. specialist in the field office from full time for life of project to part time. The critical tasks are to set up procedures, management, train staff, and help develop working relationships. This might require six months in the first year and occasional visits in subsequent years.

- Increase the number of participants through a buy-in from other mission training activities. This would give all participants from all projects access to the more intensive services possible with this approach--GRE and computer testing, orientation, placement counseling, placement, re-entry, follow-on, etc. Obviously there would be some impact on scheduling and staffing, which the current contractors could help the mission think through. This can be an effective approach if the intent is to improve the quality of the process and standardize procedures mission-wide. **With or without a TFD II, the mission should consider the appropriateness and value of this approach to assure uniform quality and nature of services for all mission training.**

- The contractor can probably draw more on the USAID project manager, particularly in peak periods. Should the contract be extended to cover other mission training, the other mission training staff could also serve this function. This would stretch the capacity by using all personnel efficiently without directly increasing contract costs.

- A more narrow focus of training opportunities in the project would reduce the amount of time needed by placement specialists to custom design every training program.

- The mission and contractor could review the frequency and structure of the selection cycle to increase the efficiency of this very labor intensive process. An option might be to create a pool of all of the qualified candidates in any cycle and then stagger the placements over more time.

- Begin to develop a "core" group of leadership or management attachments based on experience to date. This would not necessarily replace customized programs, but could be useful in reducing the level of effort wherever possible. This might include developing a "profile" of the right type of participant for each attachment.

- Program costs (as opposed to the administrative costs referred to above) could be reviewed also. In particular, the current project policy of placing participants in the high cost "brand name" schools (when requested) might be changed to make this an exceptional practice. As noted above, many of these schools are also located in high cost large cities where living on the maintenance allowance is difficult.

B. Counterpart contributions

The SOW calls for an estimation of counterpart contributions and an indication of whether or not they will meet the 25% requirement. Counterpart contributions include all international travel costs, salary and benefits while participants are in training, and the in-kind costs of the time of committee members. Since salary information is not collected from participants, I have used estimated salary levels that are considered realistic by project staff. The salary range for public sector employees is estimated at 9,000-13,000 shillings per month and for private sector employees at 18,000-22,000 shillings per month.

If these figures are even close to correct, counterpart contributions under the project will not meet its counterpart contribution of 25%. The estimated counterpart payments by the end of the project will be $1,865,010, which represents slightly more than 15% of total project costs.

It should be emphasized that few if any training projects can be realistically expected to meet the 25% counterpart target. The nature of the projects is such that in-country costs are necessarily low compared to US costs. Nor has this been a major issue raised in the past. Finally, it should be remembered that the 25% requirement applies to programs rather than projects, so the overall counterpart contribution to the mission is the more important calculation.

C. Family and Dependent Policy

The difficulties imposed by AID policy on dependents accompanying participants on long-term training programs is well understood by everyone familiar with training. The contractor has made every effort to clearly communicate AID policy to the participants and in the future will hold special orientation sessions with family members to discuss the problems. Some unusual dependent issues have arisen in the TFD project which the mission has attempted to resolve. USAID/Kenya has sent a cable to OIT requesting clarification in these circumstances and suggesting that a review of the inflexibility of these policies be made.

In many ways, the TFD project beneficiaries are unusual - they are all employed, solidly established with their families in the community and workplace, are older and more mature than many AID participants, and many are financially able to support their families in the US. Moreover, they have gone through an extensive selection process. It is reasonable to assume that the risk of non-return for these people is minimal. An argument can certainly be made that the current policy places unnecessary stress on people who do not represent a threat of non-return. Furthermore, it can be argued that it is advantageous for families to share in the experience to reinforce new values and attitudes.

In the current project, USAID and the contractor have responded appropriately to the problems. In future projects of this sort, the mission might want to explore the

possibility of a waiver, or special arrangements, for the project. This would have to be worked out not only with OIT, but also with the consular service. An analysis of the experience in TFD, and specifically the rate of non-returnees, should illustrate the very low danger of non-return by this type of participant.

D. Dissertation Research in Kenya

The participants in Ph.D. programs are interested in conducting their dissertation research in Kenya. Discussions with several of them indicate that the policy on this issue was not clearly understood early in the program. Pragma has responded to these requests with a clarification of the conditions under which in-country research can be approved. Unfortunately, the clarification appears to some participants as an attempt to discourage such research with innumerable obstacles.

While some information on this subject had been given to participants as part of the orientation, it clearly needs to be discussed in detail for Ph.D. candidates. The TFD participant handbook implies that in-country research can be funded up to the amount that would have been paid in the US for maintenance allowance. This is apparently not the intention of the project and has caused some confusion.

Another point of contention for some people is the requirement that the Mission Director certify that the research is relevant to the development of Kenya. They argue, with some justification, that this judgement was already made in selecting them for the training program.

At this point in the project, there is no major action to be taken other than revising the participant handbook. Pragma has made an effort to remedy the poor communication of policy and all of the affected participants are aware of the conditions. In the future, both AID and the contractor should establish a clear policy on this from the beginning. In this case, the PP was unclear--funds were included in the budget for in-country research but no clear statement of policy or intent was made.

My own opinion is that this is a cost-effective use of funds in terms of improving the relevance of the education to the participant and the usefulness of the research for Kenya. If the project objectives justify the relatively high cost of a Ph.D. program, the additional cost of supporting relevant research would seem to be worthwhile.

V. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CURRENT PROJECT

As emphasized above, the TFD project is managed and implemented in an exemplary fashion. There are no significant changes to be made in the daily operations of the program. The single area of major future effort is follow-on which is already recognized by AID, the Kenyan committee members, and the contractor.

- Clearly establish AID objectives in the follow-on program and determine whether it is to be dependent on the contractor and the LOP or whether AID has a longer term interest in maintaining linkages and support to these people in whom they have invested so much.

- Modify projected expenditures accounting procedures to reflect the actual program costs for each participant rather than the average costs used for preliminary budgeting. Collect salary rates as part of basic participant information for later review of counterpart contribution.

- DPM should consider using site visits for selection of public sector participants, particularly for the short-term training programs.

- Orient the re-entry and follow-on programs to better form a bridge from the training to the workplace.

- Consider supporting an annual management seminar in Kenya as part of follow-on. Encourage technical offices to draw on the expertise of returned participants for project-related studies.

- At the end of the TFD project, USAID or Pragma should analyze the accomplishments of participants in graduate academic programs and determine to what degree undergraduate grades and GRE scores are a good predictor of graduate grades. If these are useful as predictors, the USAID should consider establishing minimum standards for candidates for graduate degree programs.

- Pragma should more effectively use the subcontract for articles, seminar planning, and other services.

VI. CONSIDERATIONS FOR FUTURE PROJECTS

Training for Development II

If mission objectives and funding levels justify a follow-on project, a number of design options or modifications might be considered.

Project Focus: The current project accepts candidates from any field or sector who can make a persuasive argument that the proposed training will make a contribution to Kenya's development. The next project should consider the advantages, and disadvantages, of focusing the project more. There are several possible ways to focus the project: on strategic objectives; sectors; specific skills; geography; key industries (manufacturers, or export oriented agriculture, or some other industry of the future); increased proportion of private sector participants; increased proportion of short-term training; or with a rotating focus that changes each year.

The current system has pros and cons. The disadvantages include a lack of program continuity that limits the potential for economies of scale and increases administrative costs. Almost every training program must be designed from scratch under the current system. Moreover, the impact is spread all over the country and economy -- there is no possibility for a critical mass in any one area. (However, how many leaders are needed in any one area?)

On the other hand, the idea of a demand driven training program has a clear appeal, at least for the private sector. AID, or any government agency for that matter, is unlikely to be able to accurately predict the need for specific skills or to pinpoint the "industry of the future". Manpower requirements are notoriously difficult to predict even for relatively stable occupations like teaching. At least when individuals or firms select the area for training, they assume the risk. When AID limits the opportunities, it distorts the market.

Part of the appeal of the market demand approach has to do with the experience to date. A substantial portion of the current private sector participants are business owners who, as a group, are proven initiators who are working in an enabling environment and can directly apply any relevant training. Therefore, the potential for effective use of appropriate training is very high.

Employer Endorsement: For the long-term private sector participants, employer payment of salary during training should not be an eligibility requirement. This should be an element for negotiation between AID, the employer, and the employee. However, some adequate measure does need to be taken to assure that families are provided for.

Eligibility: The current TFD project selects individuals entirely on merit, although the criteria for eligibility has been informally adjusted over time. Any new project should clearly define policy positions on the desirability of providing U.S. taxpayer funds for

independently wealthy business owners, sponsoring graduate degrees for individuals who already have a degree or two from the US, staff training for multinational firms, and similar circumstances.

While the "best and brightest" approach has a consistency and lack of ambiguity that is appealing, the same basic approach can be pursued within a policy framework that more strictly delineates the appropriate use of USG funds. These policies may be based on a sense of where the highest marginal return is to "broadening and deepening the leadership pool" (i.e., those without previous US degrees are eligible for long-term training), appropriateness (multinational staff), or need (millionaires need not apply). Moreover, eligibility on any of these issues can be seen as an issue of form rather than absolute eligibility. For example, individuals with prior US degrees might be sponsored for short-term programs, millionaires and multinationals might use the placement/programming services on a cost-sharing basis, etc.

Selection: As noted in the discussion on selection, some revisions of the selection and placement criteria could be considered for long-term academic participants.

- Objective standards should be employed whenever possible in the selection process. The main opportunity for this is in grading academic qualifications, particularly for the private sector candidates where a minimum level is not required. This is not to say that academic criteria should be given more weight, only that within that category individuals with better academic records should consistently be given more points than those with poor records. The other point categories offer opportunities for subjective grading of other indicators of leadership and accomplishment.

- As noted above, USAID/Kenya should determine whether experience justifies establishing a minimum level of undergraduate performance or GRE scores to qualify for placement in a graduate degree program.

- Site visits are a useful addition to the process that should be continued and expanded as needed.

Contracting: The basic approach to contracting for the full range of services is valid, and even essential for a high quality training project. The alternative ways of structuring and managing the contract discussed above should be considered.

Ph.D. Dissertation Research: The project design should clearly state the expectations and requirements for conducting dissertation research in Kenya. If this is to be encouraged, an appropriate budget should be established to provide adequate support. My recommendation is that if Ph.D. level study is appropriate for the project (which is another issue), then the default expectation should be that research be conducted on issues relevant to Kenya.

Maintenance Allowances: The establishment of maintenance allowances is clearly outside of the control of USAID/Kenya. However, the prominence of the issue in participant evaluations and interviews should not be discounted. The problem appears to be concentrated in the larger urban areas which tend to have both high living and transportation costs. To the extent possible, placements in these areas should be limited.

Lessons learned for other USAID training activities

In some important ways, the TFD project is unique. The emphasis on leadership in recruitment and selection and the high degree of individualization in training plans are unusual in training projects. At the same time, however, most of the activities are common to all training.

There is no implicit judgement about other mission training activities in recognizing the high quality of placement and support provided under the TFD project. The degree to which these activities represent an improvement over the "standard" training activities is beyond the scope of this evaluation. In fact, it is beyond the scope of any existing program evaluation in AID. However, it is reasonable to assume that the more intensive efforts have some value.

The approach taken in the TFD project--careful selection, participatory decision-making in placements, adequate orientation, inclusion of "attachment" activities, and re-entry/follow-on--is appropriate and necessary for any training activity. The level of effort seen in the TFD project is not solely a reflection of special needs of the target group, but rather a concentrated effort to "do it right". Training under any project that is worth doing is worth doing right. And doing it right requires adequate attention to every stage.

That said, there are also clear cost and logistical constraints to providing this level of service across the board. Project-related training is seldom planned in the type of cycles that can be done under general training activities, so it is often difficult to achieve economies of scale in activities like orientation, pre-program training, or re-entry/follow-on. Probably the only practical means of providing these types of support would be to have a mission support contractor and coordinated training plans or to add mission staff to the training office. There is an obvious cost involved in either option.

Recognizing that funding or other constraints might preclude support for a mission-wide contract regardless of the merits, one might attempt to look at the priorities for increased effort. A (somewhat off the cuff) priority listing of activities that warrant additional effort would be 1) placement counseling and participatory decision-making, 2) programming individualized attachments, 3) selection, 4) re-entry and follow-on, and 5) in-country orientation and pre-program preparation. These priorities are backed by nothing other than my opinion.

Beyond the general lesson of investing adequately in the process, many of the specific experiences in TFD are useful in planning other training programs. At the end of the project, the contractor staff might usefully prepare their own list of "lessons". Some that come to mind immediately include the following:

- Flexibility in project design is a critical element in enabling the implementing organizations to continually improve the process and project. This flexibility was used by the mission and contractor to incorporate outside parties into the process and continually review procedures, criteria, and targets.

- Selection procedures are greatly strengthened by site visits and careful preparation for interviews. In the case of TFD, the interview planning included frank group discussions about both criteria and individual perceptions of candidates.

- Site visits of private sector business owners should include companies with a similar scale of operations. Sometimes, the ability to discuss common management concerns is as important as exposure to technology and management systems.

- The target audience (public sector, private sector, level of employee, etc.) of any workshop or seminar should be clearly understood.

- Participants should be effectively and substantively included in the planning and decision-making process for their training programs. They should be given adequate opportunity to react to training implementation plans and should be encouraged to make constructive changes. This increases both commitment and the potential for relevant training experiences.

- Long-term academic training should be complemented, if possible, with individualized internships to apply academic lessons in a practical setting.

- Efforts to build relationships among participants can be beneficial in facilitating re-entry to their home country and in applying their skills.

- Participants should be encouraged from the initial training stages to take responsibility for their own learning. This should include a proactive role with both the placement specialists and the training institution. This should be integrated into all orientation activities <u>and accepted as legitimate by all the other parties involved</u>.

- The difficult of the re-entry process should not be underestimated. Even small efforts to ease the transition and integration should be considered.

Group sessions with other returned participants are useful to let them share their experiences and frustrations.

- While it is too early to learn specific lessons from the TFD follow-on component, it is reasonable to expect benefits from responding to specific follow-on interests of the participants.

- Project management should include frequent monitoring of project progress, both at the level of participants and at the overall program level. This provides opportunities to build on experience during project implementation.

- Involving spouses at appropriate points in the program can be useful in building a commitment to the program, relieving anxieties about separation, improving understanding of visa requirements, and assisting in re-entry for the participants.

There are probably many other useful lessons to be drawn from this and other training activities that a few good brainstorming sessions would reveal.

Annex A: List of Interviews

United States

Pragma

Melanie Sanders-Smith, Project Director
Caroline Curtis, Home Office Placement Coordinator
Kate Dickie, Placement Coordinator
Charles LaDuca, Project Assistant
Prem Gupta, Financial Manager
Tom Moser, former field coordinator

Participants

Philip Wambugu
Daniel Songony
Rose Namu
Gideon Wakesa
Charles Maringo (by telephone)
Mary Nyoike

Academic Advisors

Dr. Darrel Mundy, Univ of Tennessee
Dr Seth Kreimer, Univ of Penn Law School
Prof. James Binkley, Purdue
Carolyn Pribble, Univ of Illinois
Prof. J. Wendt, University of Arizona

MSI

Larry Cooley

Kenya

USAID/Kenya

Dr. Marcia Bernbaum
John Westley, Mission Director
Sandi Severn, Private sector
Jim Gingerich, Agriculture
Jeff Borns,
Holly Wise
Stephen Ragama
Teresa Muraya
Carol Steele
Carla Barbiero
Migwe Kimemia

David Oot
Nelly Mwanzia
Maria Mullei

Pragma/Kenya
Al Bisset
Susan Githuku
Rosalind Wangui

DPM
Mr. Wanjala wa Muricho
Mr. G.L.M. Nzioka
Mr. M.K. Katsivo
Mr. R.K.A. Siele

KAM
Mrs. Muthoni Muturi

FKE
Mr. Tom Owour

Returned Participants
Joseph Githenji
Alfred Getonga
Agripah Katetei
James Kongoti
Margeret Ngau
Helen Motiga
Edwin Kinyanjui
Evelyn Rono
George Omondi
Michael Ng'etich
Yusuf Keshavjee
Awori wa Kataka
Edwin Kiptiness

Annex B: Contract Cost Calculations

Based on placements to date and projections through the end of the project, administrative costs will be approximately $1,305 per person month of training, for a total of approximately $2.8 million. This does not include the costs of AID management (FSN and USDH), participation of other offices in selection, or the oppportunity costs of the Kenya committees.

Approximately 60% of this cost is related to the operation of the field office, with the remaining 40% attributed to the home office. More specifically, the cost of the full-time U.S. manager in the field office is roughly $360 per person month--more than 25% of the total administrative costs for the project. While the home office cost is high, it is not strikingly out of line with costs in other projects with similar types of placement demands.

It should be emphasized that it is very difficult to compare the administrative costs of this projects to other projects. These costs are much higher than the "average" placement costs charged by PIET or other contractors, but there are some complicating factors. The range of activities conducted under this project are much greater than normal, both in the field office and home office. The intensive recruitment, selection, placement counseling, orientation, and academic preparation far exceed both in scope and quality the "standard" efforts. The home office is responsible for extensive placement efforts not only in normal academic programs and short-term training courses, but also for customized observation tours, internships, and other training. The "attachment" program for all long-term participants is very time consuming -- the effort required for one session of summer attachments was estimated at 90 person days. The quality of both the placements and monitoring is quite high -- the placement officers really understand the needs of the participants and are able to effectively monitor and adapt programs as necessary. Finally, the true costs of other programs are difficult to estimate because much of the work is done by direct hire staff, whose time is not included in other calculations.

Even given all of these caveats, the contract is high cost. With the benefit of reviewing the experience of the last several years and of having systems now in place, it should be possible to reduce some of these costs. However, it should be emphasized that the additional quality of placement, selection, and monitoring is money well spent.

Annex C: Discussion of Impact Evaluation

The mission needs to find an alternative evaluation design to replace the fulltime evaluator that had been planned. While in Nairobi, I proposed a general approach to evaluating the project that would require less time and labor, with a corresponding reduction in the amount and type of information collected. It is my opinion that most of the questions can be answered in adequate detail to allow for appropriate decision-making about a follow-on project.

At Marcia Bernbaum's request, I have discussed the alternatives with two evaluation specialists in the U.S.: Harold Levine, who participated in the original evaluation design, and Ray Chesterfield, who also has considerable experience in qualitative evaluations. They both responded to my suggested evaluation design and provided their own views as to what an appropriate approach might be.

There are two basic types of questions that might be addressed with a final or impact evaluation. The first is the focus of the plan that now exists - to build up information about the EOPS indicators for all participants and to see the changes in application over time. The EOPS indicators are carefully constructed to illustrate the highest level indicator of "have an impact" through increased confidence, better peer review, improved performance as employee, and better firm performance for employer. (In passing, I might suggest reconsidering the indicators for self-employed. Any of them could be negative for acceptable reasons--outside factors, increased efficiency, long-term investments, or changes in corporate strategy). Some information on all of these can be collected relatively easily. The issue is the marginal value of additional information and analysis for factors of time lag, skill area, organizational culture, etc.

The second set of questions that would be useful for future training activities in any project deal with an evaluation of the relative value of the project design used in the TFD project. TFD applied very high standards of performance for every stage of the training process from recruitment through follow-on. The services were of very high quality, but were also expensive. The obvious question is whether this level of services are worth the expense. The specific questions might include:

1. Are the people being selected under this extensive and expensive process any different from those selected under other processes? Are they more likely to succeed and assume leadership positions?

   Is this related to the selection or the sector?

2. Can equally valid results be achieved with less effort? Is the project level of effort past the point of decreasing marginal returns?

3. Are the placements and training plans any better than those prepared under less intensive management? What is the relative value of the customized training plans with substantive attachments compared to a regular graduate training program?

The study needed to answer these questions is much broader than a longitudinal study of the TFD returnees. It is not clear that such a broad study is envisioned by the mission. These issues are clearly not part of the existing evaluation design.

It appears to me that substantial information on the EOPS indicators can be gathered through relatively simple project feedback from returned participants, including the types of interviews that were conducted for this process evaluation. My suggestion was to use a reduced level of effort in two phases. The primary mechanism for collecting impact information and identifying variables that enhance or constrain use of training would be structured sessions at an annual management seminar. The sessions could be similar to those recently conducted for the HRDA training program, in which participants collectively share their experiences, accomplishments, and frustrations in a structured format. This format is essentially a focus group approach to data collection. The session could include written responses as well as the discussions. The second level of review might be directed case studies either to look in more detail about problems that were raised in the seminar or to assess the experiences of types of participants or training that were not well represented in the seminar.

The focus group could be conducted by either a local or expatriate specialist and USAID/contractor staff could be trained in the focus group techniques. The case studies could also be done by the training staff, possibly working from a structure developed by a social scientist who has trained them in qualitative data collection and analysis.

Prior to revising the evaluation design, the mission should reassess the evaluation questions it wants answered and specify how it anticipates using the information collected to adjust either this project or future projects. This clarification should be as specific as possible -- how can you use the information to develop project focus, revise selection criteria, or favor certain types of training?

Both of the evaluation specialists contacted agreed that some of the questions could be answered using this approach. Harold Levine specified that evaluation questions (from page 7 of the evaluation plan) 1, 2, 4b, 5, 6, 7, and 8 could be answered with this approach. For questions 7 and 8, however, he believes that it is necessary to talk to the same people twice. He argues that what you lose with this approach is the longitudinal dimension of following the same people over time and the ability to identify emerging issues or obstacles. He noted, correctly, that the focus group approach in management seminars allows no control over who is providing feedback. The same people, or even mix of types of training, will not necessarily come to every seminar and attendence may be influenced by some type of self-selection that is not known to the evaluators. For example, maybe only the successful

people will want to attend the seminars -- or maybe only the less successful ones will keep coming back.

Both Ray and Harold agree that the training and contractor staff (Teresa, Susan, etc.) could be trained in qualitative data collection, data reduction, and to some degree data analysis. Levine believes that the analytical quality will be limited to counting and summarizing the responses--simple comparisons of long-term and short-term participants, categorizing the types of experiences, and the number of instances for each category. He believes that a more subtle analysis identifying critical factors influencing utilization could only be developed using evaluation specialists. Chesterfield, who has been extensively involved in training Colombian field evaluators in data collection, reduction, and analysis, does not see significant limitations in what the training staff can be trained to do (although it is clear that this level of training cannot create a full qualitative researcher equivalent to a Ph.D. sociologist).

Levine suggested that some information on the longitudinal aspects of training impact can be achieved even with the focus group approach by dividing the respondents by the amount of time since they had returned. For example, there might be three focus groups --one consisting of people who had only been back for 2 months, one of people who had been back for up to 6 months, and a third with people who had been back more than 7 months.

There are two formative types of questions that can be addressed with an evaluation. Marcia is interested in project design issues -- how to focus the project better by identifying those types of skills or training that have the greatest payoff. Given the great diversity of types of training and situations in which individuals are applying the training, it will be difficult in any case to identify a "winner" with any degree of confidence. In addition to the problem of having only a small number of cases in each "cell" and a large potential number of variables that might influence the nature of utilization, this requires that the mission set some standards for what level of utilization constitutes enough success to warrant concentration of future resources in that area. It is not enough just to "do something". How does one "grade" the example of an Evelyn Rono? The sponsoring firm lost, the participant succeeds, and the critical variable may well have been a pushy husband who wanted to start a business. The skill, computers, clearly has demand, but is the demand enough to justify an emphasis in this type of training--with the implicit exclusion of other types of training? Nothing in the evaluation data will really justify that decision--it cannot effectively compare types of training and it is based on past use, not future potential.

Equally important is whether the information that can be used to focus the project will be appreciably better given more rigorous data collection and analysis. The hypothesis, for example, that owners of small businesses are able to directly apply any relevant training, and therefore should be given training opportunities can be judged with relatively straightforward data collection.

The other type of decision that can be influenced by evaluation data is process--how to better select, orient, prepare, place, and support participants. You start with a null hypothesis that effective training builds on the following elements:

1. an enabling environment;
2. selection of highly qualified and motivated candidates;
3. careful development of appropriate training plan;
4. adequate preparation;
5. support while in training;
6. follow-on support.

To the degree that evaluation data can effectively improve each of these stages, identify elements of an enabling environment that can be incorporated into selection criteria or identify personal characteristics that are predictive of success. This is the research element of the study. While some of this information would clearly be useful, it is not clear to me that it can be collected in any cost effective manner. Not even the original evaluation design effectively linked impact to these operational stages. For example, a critical factor may well be an enabling organizational environment. To be useful, the evaluation must not only identify the factors that facilitate use, but also suggest a means of incorporating this knowledge into the selection process.