

A.I.D. EVALUATION SUMMARY - PART I

PD-ABE-306
22214

1. BEFORE FILLING OUT THIS FORM, READ THE ATTACHED INSTRUCTIONS.
2. USE LETTER QUALITY TYPE, NOT "DOT MATRIX" TYPE.

IDENTIFICATION DATA

A. Reporting A.I.D. Unit: Mission or AID/W Office <u>USAID/Malawi</u> (ES# <u>92-1-232-I</u>)		B. Was Evaluation Scheduled in Current FY Annual Evaluation Plan? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Slipped <input type="checkbox"/> Ad Hoc <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluation Plan Submission Date: FY <u> </u> Q <u> </u>		C. Evaluation Timing Interim <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Final <input type="checkbox"/> Ex Post <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>	
D. Activity or Activities Evaluated (List the following information for project(s) or program(s) evaluated; if not applicable, list title and date of the evaluation report.)					
Project No.	Project /Program Title	First PROAG or Equivalent (FY)	Most Recent PACD (Mo/Yr)	Planned LOP Cost (000)	Amount Obligated to Date (000)
612-0232	Services for Health, Agriculture, Rural and Enterprise Development (SHARED) Project	90	8/99	15,000	9,800

ACTIONS

E. Action Decisions Approved By Mission or AID/W Office Director		Name of Officer Responsible for Action	Date Action to be Completed
Action(s) Required			
A. Instruments, Procedures and Funding:			
1. Develop and approve second annual workplan.		PMU, USAID	4/92
2. Shorten concept paper format, limiting requested information to a synopsis of the problem, the proposed solution, its costs and benefits, implementation approach and strategies for project and organizational sustainability. Modify Operations Manual as appropriate.		PMU, PSC	6/92
3. Streamline concept paper and proposal review process.		PMU, PSC	6/92
4. Identify technical assistance needs and workload schedules for next twelve months.		PMU	4/92
5. Review SHARED budget to identify and implement any economies that might be made to reduce budget overruns. No increase in project funding is anticipated at this time.		PMU	4/92
6. Approve revised, realistic expenditure plan for EIL line item for the remainder of the grant (based on recent cost-saving measures).		PMU, PIC	8/92
7. Review status of PVO/NGO subgrant line item to determine whether additional funds will be required in 1993/4.		PMU, PIC	11/92
B. Reporting, Monitoring and Evaluation:			
1. Critically review and streamline subgrantee reporting and monitoring requirements.		PMU	8/92
2. Based on (1), design, test and finalize computerized subgrant monitoring system to track subgrant implementation progress against critical indicators.		PMU, USAID	9/92
3. Develop and implement overall project level subgrant Monitoring and Evaluation		PMU, USAID	10/92 <small>(Attach extra sheet if necessary)</small>

APPROVALS

F. Date Of Mission Or AID/W Office Review Of Evaluation:			
(Month)	(Day)	(Year)	
May	12	1992	
G. Approvals of Evaluation Summary And Action Decisions:			
	Project/Program Officer	Representative of Borrower/Grantee	Evaluation Officer
Name (Typed)	Daniel J. Walz	Alan Miller	Indira Biswas
Signature	<i>Daniel J. Walz</i>	<i>Alan Miller</i>	<i>Indira Biswas</i>
Date	6/12/92	6/15/92	6/12/92
			Mission or AID/W Office Director
			Carol A. Peasley
			<i>C. Peasley 6/15/92</i>

ABSTRACT

H. Evaluation Abstract (Do not exceed the space provided)

The project aims to increase the economic well being of Malawians in the key areas of agriculture, off-farm employment and health. The project purpose is to expand and increase the impact of development activities of non-governmental organizations (NGO) in Malawi and to strengthen the capacity of Malawian NGOs to provide services with a positive impact in these key sectors. The project is being implemented by the Experiment in International Living (EIL), under a Cooperative Agreement (CA) with USAID/Malawi. The purpose of the "Shakedown Evaluation" was to assess project implementation systems installed to date and to make recommendations for incorporation into the Second Annual Workplan (AWP).

Major findings and conclusions are:

- 1) The project is doing well, despite initial difficulties, and with organizational tasks largely accomplished, has high promise for generating the outputs that will enable it to reach its purpose and goal.
- 2) USAID/Government of Malawi (GOM) relations during the initial phase of the project have benefited from the balance struck in the Project Paper (PP) and Cooperative Agreement (CA) which provides for a necessary but limited degree of GOM involvement in project implementation.
- 3) The current concept paper format needs to be redesigned into a short, succinct document (i.e., 5-10 pages) which gives readers a synopsis of the problem, the proposed solution, costs and benefits, implementation approach and key information on the sustainability of the project and the organization.
- 4) Based on the Datex Report, EIL should design and implement a monitoring and evaluation system (M&E) that compiles gender disaggregated data under each subgrant, as well as aggregated data to measure overall impact of subgrant activities. M&E also should measure the degree to which project has achieved its purpose.
- 5) EIL has accrued a \$137,397 budget overrun during the first twelve months of project implementation. Actions to reconcile this overrun will need to be identified and implemented.

Major lessons learned are:

- 1) The SHARED project has become a new and dynamic element within the fledgling Malawian PVO/NGO community. However, developing effective and sustainable NGOs which are able to deliver services in a society where literacy rates and incomes are extremely low will be difficult and management-intensive.
- 2) While GOM may participate in the acknowledging NGO development activities, it should not be involved in management of these NGOs/PVOs.
- 3) It is important to emphasize that subgrant funding ceilings are not targets and that proposed NGO budgets should reflect actual needs rather than aspirations. This will help ensure institutional and financial sustainability.

C O S T S

I. Evaluation Costs

1. Evaluation Team		Contract Number OR TDY Person Days	Contract Cost OR TDY Cost (U.S. \$)	Source of Funds
Name	Affiliation			
John Blumgart	Carderock Consultants, Inc.	28	\$19,814	SHARED: \$14,646 PD&S: \$5,168
2. Mission/Office Professional Staff Person-Days (Estimate) <u>10 days</u>		3. Borrower/Grantee Professional Staff Person-Days (Estimate) <u>20 days</u>		

A.I.D. EVALUATION SUMMARY - PART II

SUMMARY		
<p>J. Summary of Evaluation Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations (Try not to exceed the three (3) pages provided) Address the following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose of evaluation and methodology used • Purpose of activity(ies) evaluated • Findings and conclusions (relate to questions) • Principal recommendations • Lessons learned 		
<p>Mission or Office: USAID/Malawi</p>	<p>Date This Summary Prepared: April 27, 1992</p>	<p>Title And Date Of Full Evaluation Report: Feb. 1992 Shakedown Evaluation, SHARED Project</p>
<p>1. <u>Purpose of the Activity</u></p> <p>The SHARED Project, with a LOP funding level of \$15.0 million, aims to increase the economic well being of Malawians in the key areas of agriculture, off-farm employment and health. The purpose is to (1) expand and increase the impact of development activities of NGO/PVOs in Malawi in these key sectors, and (2) strengthen the capacity of Malawian NGOs to provide services with a positive impact in these areas. The project aims to address inadequate NGO institutional and service delivery development and a shortage of funds within the fledgling Malawian PVO/NGO community. The project fits within all of the Mission's strategic objectives by supporting critically needed development activities in agriculture, off-farm employment, and health.</p> <p>2. <u>Purpose of the Evaluation</u></p> <p>This evaluation was a preliminary review or "shakedown" evaluation, held 17 months after project inception, to see how the mechanisms and procedures designed for the project are working in practice. To this end, the review examined operational procedures, activity review and grant making systems, reporting, monitoring and evaluation methods, backstopping and intra-project relationships, and, in general implementation progress and difficulties. The results of the review are to be incorporated into the project's second annual work plan.</p> <p>3. <u>Findings and Conclusions</u></p> <p>The project has gotten off to a promising start despite delays and an initial mismatch of USAID/implementing agency viewpoints and relationships. USAID/PMU relations have been poor, but with recent staff changes, should improve dramatically. SHARED has established visibility, credibility and good working relations with its PVO/NGO clientele and other donors. It has recruited a talented and hard working Malawian staff. As a result, SHARED's Program Management Unit (PMU), coordinated by EIL, is becoming increasingly effective as a mechanism for providing the fledgling Malawian PVO/NGO community with guidance, technical assistance and managing the subproject preparation and review procedures. As a result, the "shakedown" phase of the project has been virtually completed and SHARED can now directly pursue its purpose and goal.</p> <p>a. <u>SHARED/GOM Relations</u></p> <p>The SHARED/GOM relationships and approval procedures worked out in project design have held up reasonably well but it is clear that the GOM continues to feel uneasy about an undertaking that is quite out of step with the top/down approach which the GOM follows on many other matters. The current situation provides for a degree of involvement in acknowledging NGO activities without direct GOM control. Maintenance of this situation is crucial to project success. EIL's strategy of carefully moving ahead with implementation appears to be a good one.</p> <p>b. <u>Budget Overruns</u></p> <p>EIL has accrued a \$131,397 budget overrun during the first twelve months of project implementation. Actions to reconcile this overrun will need to be identified and implemented.</p>		

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c. Annual Work Plan

The AWP continues to be a critical tool for planning and management purposes. The development of the next AWP should include the participation of SHARED's Malawian staff as well as members of the NGO/PVO community.

d. The Concept Paper and Approval Process

The current concept paper format needs to be redesigned into a short, succinct document (i.e., 5-10 pages) which gives readers a synopsis of the problem, the proposed solution, costs and benefits, implementation approach and key information on the organization. Additional attention should be placed on the financial sustainability of the proposed activities and the NGO.

e. Funding Thresholds

It is important to emphasize that subgrant funding ceilings are not targets and that proposed NGO budgets should reflect actual needs rather than aspirations. Otherwise, fledgling NGOs might develop organizational structures which will be difficult to sustain and may not reach the intended beneficiaries.

f. Status of Project Outputs

Project outputs for organizing, establishing and gaining acceptance of the SHARED apparatus have been largely accomplished. However, the grant review and award process is lagging behind projections. Review and award targets were not met, and actions to facilitate the process without lowering quality standards should be an important priority for the next stage of implementation. Increased experience, greater collaboration and procedural improvements (as recommended in this evaluation) should greatly improve matters.

g. Technical Assistance Needs and Availability

PMU-funded technical assistance will change focus from sectoral and technical workshops to grants management and assistance. The second AWP will include a project monitoring and evaluation workshop for key staff of subgrant recipient organizations.

h. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and reporting requirements included in subgrant agreements should be reviewed and streamlined to lighten NGO reporting burden to PMU without jeopardizing effective grant management.

Based on the Monitoring and Evaluation System developed by Datex, PMU should fully develop and implement a M&E for collecting and evaluating gender disaggregated data at the subgrant and overall project levels. This system should measure the degree to which project has achieved its purpose.

4. Principal Recommendations

a. Instruments, Procedures and Funding

i. The preparation of the Annual Work Plan (AWP), which is a critical tool for project planning, should actively involve the Malawian staff of PMU, USAID's Project Assistant, and members of the NGO/PVO community in Malawi.

ii. Greater collaboration between USAID and PMU during development and review of concept papers and proposals should be encouraged to expedite approval of subgrants.

iii. Duplication of time and effort can be reduced by redesigning the concept paper as the key decision point document - a short but succinct articulation of the concept, the problem it is designed to address, costs and benefits, mode of implementation, and the experience and capability of the proposer. USAID, through the Project Implementation Committee (PIC), would take the lead on concept papers and include, where necessary, conditions, provisos or areas for clarification or additional information to be satisfied during proposal preparation. PMU would take the lead on proposal review to assure that PIC guidance was reflected in the final document. The foregoing division of labor and responsibility should be allowed to evolve over a period of months as confidence and good will build between the two parties.

iv. GOM review and acknowledgement can be made more efficient and timely by introducing a tracking system for DAG concept papers and appointing SHARED liaison officers in the relevant technical ministries.

v. SHARED funding guidance to applicants on funding thresholds should be strengthened/clarified to be more need and demand driven. The three tiered thresholds themselves should be kept, but an organized procedure for exceptions should be introduced. Thresholds should be lowered to permit the award of "micro grants" to worthy communities or associations to help them qualify for ISGs.

vi. Technical assistance is a key ingredient in the project. Emphasis in the future should be on utilizing the growing expertise of PMU's Malawian staff, local consultants and local and regional training facilities.

vii. The next AWP needs to take a hard look at the SHARED budget to see if economies can be effected without damaging the project.

b. Reporting, Monitoring, Evaluation

i. There is an overload of reporting and monitoring requirements in the initial subgrant agreements. PMU should critically review and streamline subgrant reporting and monitoring requirements.

ii. The proposed DATEX M&E system provides a good model for SHARED, but modifications are needed to adapt it to Malawian realities and to PMU and subgrantee capabilities. A PMU-administered M&E for SHARED is of growing urgency and PMU needs to gear up for this task by staff changes or reassignments.

c. Implementation Issues

i. The USAID Project Assistant should be invited to play a growing role in PMU's grant review and approval process, thereby improving and streamlining it.

ii. The allocation of funding among program sectors in the original PP should be maintained as a rough guideline and funding allocated to the "other" sector should be devoted to valid targets of opportunity or to supplement successes in the other sectors.

5. Lessons Learned

The SHARED project has become a new and dynamic element within the fledgling Malawian PVO/NGO community. However, developing effective and sustainable NGOs which are able to deliver services in a society where literacy rates and incomes are extremely low will be difficult and management-intensive.

While a government may participate in the acknowledging NGO development activities, it should not be involved in management of these NGOs/PVOs.

It is important to emphasize that subgrant funding ceilings are not targets and that proposed NGO budgets should reflect actual needs rather than aspirations. This will help insure institutional and financial sustainability.

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ATTACHMENTS

K. Attachments (List attachments submitted with this Evaluation Summary; always attach copy of full evaluation report, even if one was submitted earlier; attach studies, surveys, etc., from "on-going" evaluation, if relevant to the evaluation report.)

Shakedown Evaluation: Services for Health, Agriculture, Rural and Enterprise Development (SHARED) Project

COMMENTS

L. Comments By Mission, AID/W Office and Borrower/Grantee On Full Report

The "Shakedown Evaluation" of the SHARED Project was fair and complete. Important achievements were noted, in particular, that the project has gotten off to a promising start despite delays and an initial mismatch of USAID/implementing agency viewpoints and relationships, and that the SHARED Project is becoming increasingly effective as a mechanism for providing the fledgling PVO/NGO community with guidance, technical and financial assistance.

Important weaknesses were also noted such as budget overruns and a grant submission process which is lagging behind projections. These should be addressed through the actions outlined in Section E. Some of the major recommendations to address these weaknesses include: 1) streamlining the concept paper and proposal review and approval process; 2) reviewing NGO monitoring and reporting requirements to lighten NGO reporting burden without jeopardizing effective grant management; 3) emphasizing that NGO budgets should reflect actual needs rather than aspirations in order to help ensure institutional and financial sustainability; 4) taking a hard look at the SHARED budget to see if economies can be effected without damaging the project.

The evaluator recommended that the PMU should award "micro grants" (grants for less than \$10,000) for technical assistance to help individuals, groups or communities to start up Malawian NGOs working in key project areas. USAID and EIL concluded that technical assistance for these "micro grants" could be provided through the PMU line item.

The evaluation provided answers to all the questions posed in the scope of work. The evaluator was objective and carefully analyzed project and interview data before drawing up principal conclusions and recommendations. The findings and lessons learned which are listed in the report generally concur with the conclusions reached by A.I.D. staff and the NGO community.