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Hard Choices for Technical Assistance Experts

Technical assistance workers must make many decisions about how most wisely to use their time. This article suggests a framework for assessing the alternatives at operational levels.

David W. Brown
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☐ *Arranging for technical cooperation is one thing. But effectively using the talents, energies, and relationships provided to bring about desired changes may be quite another. The successful leader or technician in assistance work needs to be more than professionally competent, dedicated, and skillful at cross-cultural relations. He has also to be a wise manager of his time and effort. He can't do everything at once, and usually there is far more to be done than he and his associates can ever hope to complete. Hard choices have to be made about what to do and how to operate.*

Most readers can envision the dilemma. Here you are, a "foreign expert" assigned for two years with the Ministry of Agriculture to help improve crop pest control efforts. Your working agreement expresses hopes about a self-sustaining control system, upgrading of host country competencies, and significant reductions in crop damage within two years, yet you know you can only scratch the surface in that time.

What should be the substance of your attention? Should you concentrate on a particular region? A particular crop? A particular insect? Should you become involved in efforts to combat an immediate insect crisis? Or should you reserve your time to help generate a better research and action network for solving future insect problems? Should you set your sights directly on organizational and program improvements? Or on helping personnel in the agency to improve their own competencies?

You have choices to make also about your mode of operation. You could seek to have a heavy hand in the actual design and execution of pest control activities, partly to get things done and partly to demonstrate how things can be done (you hope). Or you could assume a more "behind the scenes" role as a teacher, sounding board, catalyst, and reinforcer. You can consider a number of vehicles for conveying your ideas—informal day-to-day interaction, written reports, formal meetings, in-service training courses, and others.

If a person has been designated as your "counterpart," chances are that he is only one of several with whom you could productively work. Who are these persons? Should you work especially with senior officials and technicians who are now in positions of leadership or influence? Or should you be more concerned with helping bright young staff who are handling the details and who may be in key roles later on? Is the agency to which you have been initially assigned the only or best one to work with? Should you actively generate new linkages, or should you wait for persons to come to you for help?

And so it goes.

Making TA Decisions Systematically

Technical assistance (TA) is, of course, heavily laden with uncertainties about whether the relationships established will "click" and what the eventual impacts on development performance will be. Even though these are hard to predict, going through at least a thought process of dissecting the assistance task and the viable choices can make much difference in contributions made. Otherwise the TA worker is likely to drift along without consistent direction, consideration of all

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the relevant alternatives, or a sense of priority and continuity.

To put things another way, TA impact can be said to depend on two interrelated elements: (1) skill in the "art" of carrying out any chosen TA endeavor, and (2) wise choice of TA endeavors to undertake in the first place. This second element is the primary concern of this article.

In many ways the TA decision-making challenge is like that confronting businesses, lending agencies, and action programs concerned with more tangible "products." Time and expertise are limited. Usually these resources can be used in more than one way. Often there will be constraints—institutional rigidities, agronomic or engineering realities, human abilities and attitudes—that rule out certain options or reduce potential accomplishment. The decision-making task is to ascertain the use of TA time and companion resources that will come closest to fulfilling assistance objectives. Choices have to be made about what problem areas to focus on, whom to work with, and how to go about the selected task.

The interrelationships among resource and institutional constraints, action possibilities, and outcomes that need to be considered in TA planning are indeed complex. As with decision-making in other spheres, it is virtually impossible for the human mind to weigh everything at once. Sophisticated devices can be, and occasionally have been, employed to help appraise the options and link them together—benefit-cost analysis, planning-programming-budgeting (PPB), PERT networks, and various operations research techniques. The usual TA worker or team leader will seldom have the time, facts, and facilities needed to undertake such elaborate "systems analyses." But he can usefully take some cues from such analytical approaches, along with some basic resource allocation concepts from economics. He can view things in *systems perspective*, whereby TA objectives, constraints, and viable alternatives are consciously pinpointed, whereby an effort is made to predict the likely results of these alternatives in terms of key objectives, and whereby positive or negative interactions between one proposed endeavor and another are taken into account.

At the heart of such an approach—whether TA planning is a comprehensive exercise or just a few moments' thought—are five basic questions:

1. *What are we seeking to accomplish?* TA aims may be concerned with either reaching a certain achievement with a minimum of time or resource commitment, or using given resources to progress as far as possible toward one or more achievements. Selection of these objectives needs to be undergirded by diagnosis of why present host agency or personnel performance falls short of the ideal and what within the realm of TA might be done to improve this performance.

2. *Within what constraints will we have to work?* These may include not only limitations in time, available expertise, funds and facilities, but also such intangibles as host-agency administrative capacity, aversion to risk, and political sensitivities.

3. *What are the viable alternatives?* These may represent major new undertakings, or they may have to do with "fine tuning" and expansion of TA activities already under way. The constraints that have been identified may clearly rule out some possibilities.

4. *What is the probable outcome of each alternative in terms of TA objectives and demands on available resources?* Here the key thing is to do the best one can to predict what *actually* is likely to happen, both directly and indirectly, not what ideally would occur if everything went well.

5. *In terms of the relevant criteria, what is the best course of action to take?* The answer may be in terms of (a) one activity instead of another, (b) some "optimum" mix of two or more activities, (c) an ordering of priorities, or (d) a time sequencing.

In deciding on TA substance, methods, and working relationships, two principles from economics can usefully be kept in mind. One of these is the *opportunity cost* concept—the idea that you need to judge a proposed commitment of time and companion resources not simply on its own merits, but also in terms of what will be sacrificed by not having used these resources in other possible ways. In other words, when shifting effort from one activity to another, will you gain more than you lose? The pest-control advisor depicted earlier may see that he himself can design and guide a very effective campaign to solve the insect problem immediately at hand. But this may be at the expense of not having much time left to build up a broad base of competency in the agricultural ministry to tackle such problems on its own in the future.

Closely allied with this is the *comparative advantage* concept. The experienced "expert" may be better at a number of things than his host country associates. (This, one hastens to add, is not universally true!) But he will have some contributions to offer that are especially valuable. Some other things his associates can do nearly or just as well as he. And there will be some other things, such as teaching in the local language, gauging farmer reactions, or expediting arrangements, that the host country people can do better. Other things equal, it behooves the visiting technician to build his activities around those in which he has especially strong or unique advantage.

Usefulness of the comparative advantage idea goes beyond technical aspects *per se*. The "outsider," by virtue of not being identified with a particular faction or hierarchical level, may have

some unique helps to offer by way of inter-agency communication or legitimation of local technicians' proposals at higher administrative levels. Also worth noting is the influence that the TA worker's national origin or sponsoring affiliation may have on the contributions which it is *perceived* he can most usefully make, whether in fact true or not in his particular case. Americans, for example, carry the image of having something particularly worthwhile to offer in areas like industrial management and agricultural modernization; they are less likely to have such ready-made rapport in dealing with, say, central planning of land reform.

In defining TA alternatives, one needs to be alert for ways to combine proposed activities so that they enhance one another as much as possible. Some components may be *competitive* with one another. For example, our pest control advisor's concentration of help with certain persons in the ministry will probably mean not being able to work very much with others. Some components may be *supplementary,* in that they do not detract seriously from other accomplishments, as with the practice of utilizing travel time on field trips with host country associates to "seed" new ideas. Still other TA components may be *complementary* to each other. By involving his ministry associates in plan formulation and explaining why things need to be done, our pest control advisor may be able to help the ministry to solve the immediate insect crisis and at the same time make a good start toward improving the agency's own ability to deal with similar problems in the future. Being able to mesh together activities in such complementary fashion is one of the marks of an effective technical advisor.

If TA alternatives need to be judged in terms of several considerations, "trade-offs" are likely to be involved—one alternative may be best with respect to some criteria, but inferior with respect to others. Attempting to weigh these in helter-skelter fashion can be very confusing. A chart like that illustrated in Table 1 can help to systematize one's thinking about the *comparative* results (as best as one can guess) of the various assistance alternatives being considered. If the TA worker can go further and predict likely outcomes in absolute quantitative terms, all the better.

Decision-making aids such as shown in Table 1, or benefit-cost analysis, or PPB do not in themselves provide answers about what is "best" to do. They do help to organize available information about probable impacts so that opportunity cost, or trade-offs, can be examined. But how heavily to weight each of the various objectives and other criteria for comparing TA action possibilities is still a matter of subjective value judgment.

TABLE 1.

Illustrative Analysis of Technical Assistance Choices Involving Multiple Goals

Activities and decision criteria being considered by a pest-control advisor. The higher the number, the relatively greater the estimated payoff in terms of that criterion.

	Criteria for establishing TA priorities		
Alternatives being considered by the pest-control advisor	Solution of the immediate insect crisis	Better agency understanding of insect problems	Better future ability to handle pest-control programs
Recommend and supervise a campaign to solve the immediate crisis	3	1	2
Help counterparts plan and implement their own solution to the immediate crisis	4	2	3
Conduct shortcourses for agency personnel on insect-control technology and campaign management	1	3	4
Help establish basic research on potential insect problems and control measures	0	5	1

Some TA Decision Complications

Defining goals, identifying viable alternatives, and predicting outcomes is not simple in any decision-making setting. But technical cooperation entails some complexities and subtleties that make planning especially difficult.

Elusive goals

For one thing, seldom can the aims of technical cooperation be pinned down in definitive terms or viewed as "completed" at any discrete point. Sometimes, yes, as with the engineer who is called in to supervise construction of a port facility. But more often the immediate concern is not so much with decisive results as with improved abilities of LDC people and institutions to do such things themselves. Attending a shortcourse or reorganizing a program does not necessarily mean better performance. Agronomic research, or land reform, or schooling for the masses may progress well, but never can it be said that the job is done. Technicians and managers can always learn more, and organizations can always improve. In fact, the very process of making new inroads may lead to discovery of additional problems demanding attention, as well as generating new aspirations for which technical help is needed. Finding suitable barometers for assessing TA accomplishment is not easy.

Further confounding this is the fact that the real need may not be "technical" at all. Many

countries nowadays have scientists, educators, and program leaders with the needed expertise and dedication. Their problems may stem largely from having to cope with inadequate facilities, bureaucratic obstacles, agency politics, and isolation from peers elsewhere. Especially if young and inexperienced, they may have the right ideas but be hesitant to "stick their necks out." In such instances the TA challenge may not be so much providing new technical knowledge as enhancing the use of expertise already there—helping to clear bureaucratic avenues for making better use of available talents and energies, fostering and sustaining creative vigor, serving as an experienced sounding board for new ideas and helping to "sell" them to higher officials, providing ways to keep in touch with activities elsewhere.

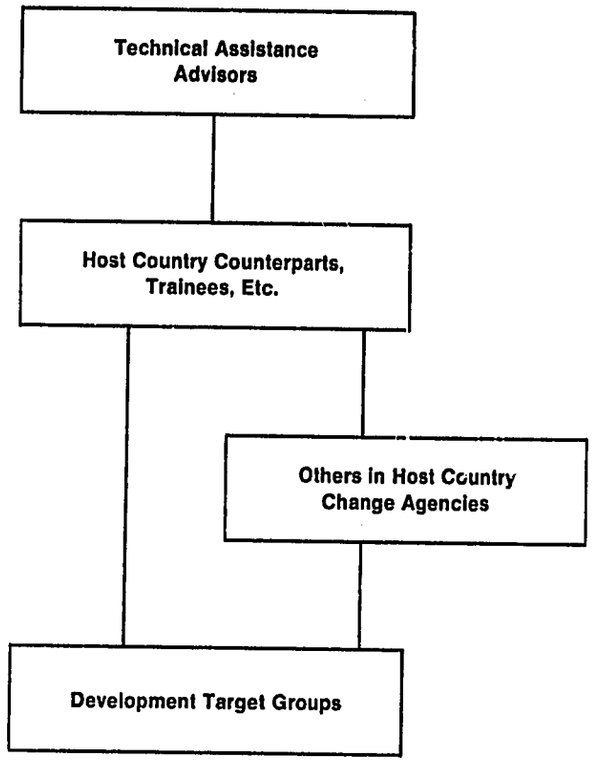
As subtle and hard to gauge as TA purposes are, it still behooves the TA worker to try to clarify in operational terms where he is heading. Sometimes the stated aims of his assignment are cast in broad term encompassing events well beyond his control, such as "the purpose is to help this country increase its food production." If so, the TA worker will probably want to define for himself a clearer set of objectives or targets that relates more precisely to what he will be focusing on and can hope to achieve. He may need to alter these from time to time, and he may never be able to say that any one objective is half or completely done. But such clarification of aims can at least provide a reference point for maintaining a sense of direction and priority.*

Dependency on human interaction and response

A second complication that looms large in TA planning is the degree to which human relationships may either enhance or impair outcomes. In the translation of technical help into concrete results, "slippages" in human response can occur at at least three points. (See Figure 1.)

The first is the linkage between the advisor and his host country contacts. Interaction may be impeded by language barriers, failure of personalities to "click," or resistance to the very idea of such a relationship. Counterparts may be so preoccupied with regular duties that they have little time to work with the foreign technician on new undertakings. The TA worker may fail to relate effectively to host agency felt needs, or to adapt his ideas to practical realities.

Figure 1. Linkages in the Transformation of Technical Assistance Resources into Development Results



The second slippage point is at the interface between TA counterparts and other persons in change agencies through whom there is hopefully a "spread" effect. A foreign professor and his host university partner may introduce some very successful teaching approaches. Yet this may have little impact on methods used elsewhere in the university because of lack of communication, or because the counterpart is not influential among his colleagues, or because there is little administrative reinforcement.

The third point of possible human response slippage is between the change agencies which TA workers are helping and the clientele of these agencies—farmers, villagers, businessmen, etc. People who are provided new opportunities by such agencies may or may not take advantage of them, and the results they attain may or may not be as great as expected.

Wise TA planning will take the possibilities of such slippages into reasonable account and—better yet—try to reduce them. Underlying this is the importance of having empathy for how TA endeavors are likely to be viewed by the other persons involved. A counterpart, his supervisor, or a farmer-client can hardly be expected to accept a new proposal unless (a) he has the

* To be more systematic about it, one can usefully dissect a TA endeavor in terms of a means-ends continuum, ranging from the ultimate development concern to which it relates, through direct TA contributions, down to specific TA activities and resource commitments. For example, the U.S. Agency for International Development asks its personnel to frame noncapital project proposals in the following hierarchical form:

Sector or programming goal
Project purpose
Output indicators (targets)
Project inputs.

Such an exercise can be extremely helpful in linking proposed undertakings to desired results. However, if carried too far, it can carry the danger of TA workers' becoming more preoccupied with filling out forms with prescribed terminology than with really giving creative thought to aims and alternatives.

needed resources and capabilities and (b) he perceives that he will gain more than he loses with respect to professional status, personal security, or whatever is foremost in his mind. What appears to the TA worker as a very good idea may indeed seem unfeasible or unattractive to others concerned.

Uncertainties

A third complication when making TA decisions is the matter of coping with uncertainties of outcome. Certain collaborative efforts may offer very high potentials in terms of *possible* impacts *if everything goes well,* yet the odds of something going wrong may he high. Other possible objects of TA attention may offer less spectacular potentials, but carry greater assurance of generating at least something useful.

These uncertainties may stem from any of several sources. As stressed above, some potential disappointments may come from problems of *human* relationships and response at one level or another. *Biological* realities may lead to TA setbacks; a promising birth-control method may prove not to be effective, or a flood may occur at a crucial stage of a land settlement scheme. Unforeseen logistical problems, interagency rivalries, or other *institutional* rigidities and attitudes could negate well-laid TA plans. *Economic* changes—inflation, loss of overseas markets, funding shortages, etc.—could prevent TA activities from having expected impacts or relevance. *Political* events such as insurgencies, changes in leadership, and even donor-host country diplomatic stresses all could bring a thriving TA undertaking to a quick halt.

The TA advisor or leader who seeks to avoid high risk of, or serious consequences from, setbacks in his undertakings can consider three basic strategies:

1. *Selection of low-risk activities:* for example, emphasis on well-proven community development approaches, rather than generating more innovative but untested patterns.

2. *Diversification of activities:* relationships with more than one counterpart or agency, attention to two or more projects at the same time, etc.

3. *Maintenance of flexibility:* frequent reappraisal of plans, division of effort into small increments, freedom to take advantage of new collaborative opportunites that come along, etc.

Such risk-averting strategies in the use of TA resources may, however, have their costs. At least some success may be assured, but this could be at the expense of spreading efforts too thinly, or of forgoing opportunities to help the host country with some really creative ventures, or of sacrificing momentum. So in assessing TA programming alternatives, trade-offs between maximum potential and risk of failure may have to be weighed.

Allocative Issues in Other TA Contexts

We have been examining TA resource-use issues as viewed by the technician or team leader who has been assigned to a fairly specific task in a developing country. Assistance organizations are confronted with analogous decisions at higher administrative levels. In what countries and problem areas should efforts be concentrated? To what extent should a visiting advisor-counterpart approach be used instead of, say, providing overseas study opportunities, fostering cross-national professional interaction, or establishing new in-country training institutes? Should TA efforts be built around improvement of individuals, or of institutions, or of specific programs? How can technical help best be combined with development loans and other forms of assistance? To what extent should TA personnel be hired directly, instead of this work being contracted out? These are just a few of the broader TA strategy questions that bear analysis in a goals-constraints-alternatives framework.

Host governments and agencies themselves have decisions to make about the use of technical help. Even though the technicians, scholarships, and other TA forms may be provided without reimbursement, in a sense they are not "free." Accepting assistance may mean committing more of one's own personnel and funds to particular institutions or lines of endeavor. "Strings" may be attached, such as providing duty-free privileges or agreeing to certain policy actions. TA arrangements may imply identification with certain ideologies or political postures of the donors—if not in fact, possibly in the eyes of politicians and general publics. So the recipient nation, too, is confronted with opportunity costs when considering whether to seek or accept TA and, if so, from whom, how much, for what purpose, and in what form.

At this point you may be wondering whether planners would not have TA donors and recipients spending all their time assessing alternatives, locking themselves into rigid plans, and worrying too much about things that can go wrong.

Not so. Some trial and error may be very rational. Seldom are TA arrangements cast initially in a frame that reaches the heart of a human or organizational performance difficulty. But collaborative work on an immediate problem—as short-lived, ill-defined, or tangential as it may be—may well generate handholds for tackling more fundamental and enduring needs. An important part of the art of technical cooperation is "staying loose"—being flexible enough to take advantage of changes in felt needs, events, and personal relationships to advance progress toward the TA aims. There may be unanticipated side-benefits of TA activities, such as a new spirit of endeavor, which much more than offset any disappointments that can occur. Getting started

with something is usually better than analyzing everything to death and undertaking nothing.

But there are efficient and not so efficient ways to use assistance resources. At critical junctures one needs to ask: Are we keeping our sights on the important concerns? Are there better ways to do things than those now proposed? Are we being realistic about the probable results? The urgency of human needs, the immensity of the task, and the scarcity of expertise in the world today make it imperative that technical help not be squandered. □ □ □

Hard Choices for Technical Assistance Experts

In technical assistance activities as in other endeavors, time and expertise are limited and hard decisions must be made as to the best way to use available resources. A technical assistance worker or team leader must decide what goals to pursue in the framework of his assignment and what methods to use in arriving at his goals. To evaluate and weigh alternatives, the TA worker can usefully adapt some tools from systems analysis in order to pinpoint objectives and constraints and predict likely results of alternative plans.

There are five basic questions to be asked in this approach to planning: 1) What are we seeking to accomplish? 2) Within what constraints will we have to work? 3) What are the viable alternatives? 4) What is the probable outcome of each alternative in terms of TA objectives and demands on available resources? 5) In terms of the relevant criteria, what is the best course of action to take?

Two principles from economics can also be useful in making TA decisions: the opportunity cost concept (balancing what might be gained from a plan against what might be sacrificed); and the comparative advantage concept (deciding where the expert can most usefully contribute rather than attempting to do all things when some can be done as well or better by counterpart personnel).

TA decision-making is made more difficult by several factors: it is difficult to pin down specific goals; human relationships may impair outcomes; and outcomes cannot be specifically predicted. By selecting risk-averting strategies—using low-risk activities, diversifying activities, maintaining flexibility—the TA worker can avoid serious setbacks in his undertakings. But such decisions may sacrifice maximum effectiveness.

This approach to TA decision-making can be used also by assistance agencies, which make similar decisions about resource allocation, and host governments,

Choix difficiles pour les experts en assistance technique

Dans l'assistance technique, comme dans les autres domaines, le temps et les connaissances sont limités et des décisions difficiles doivent être prises concernant la meilleure façon d'utiliser les ressources disponibles. Un assistant technique ou un chef d'équipe doivent décider des buts à poursuivre dans le cadre de leur mission et des méthodes qui permettront de les atteindre. Pour évaluer et peser ces options, l'assistant technique peut adapter avec succès certains des outils de l'analyse de systèmes pour mettre le doigt sur les objectifs et les contraintes et prédire les résultats probables des divers plans possibles.

Cinq questions fondamentales doivent être posées dans cette méthode de planification: 1) Que cherchons-nous à accomplir? 2) Dans quel ensemble de contraintes devrons-nous travailler? 3) Quelles sont les autres options possibles? 4) Quels sont les résultats probables de chacune, en termes des objectifs d'assistance technique et des exigences concernant les ressources disponibles? 5) En considérant les critères en la matière, quelle est la meilleure façon de procéder?

Deux principes de sciences économiques peuvent être également utiles lors d'une décision portant sur l'assistance technique: le concept du coût d'option (comparant ce qui pourrait être gagné par un plan et ce qui pourrait être sacrifié) et celui de l'avantage comparatif (décider du domaine où la contribution de l'expert peut être la plus utile, plutôt que tenter de tout faire, quand le personnel de contrepartie peut être tout aussi efficace, ou même d'avantage).

La prise de décision en matière d'assistance technique est rendue plus ardue par un certain nombre de facteurs: il est difficile d'établir avec précision des buts donnés; les relations sur le plan humain peuvent entraver les résultats; et ces derniers ne peuvent être prédits d'une façon concrète. En adoptant des stratégies sans risques (utili-

Decisiones difíciles para expertos en asistencia técnica

En actividades de asistencia técnica, así como en actividades de otro tipo, el tiempo y la experiencia son limitados y se deben tomar decisiones difíciles en cuanto a la mejor manera de utilizar los recursos disponibles. Un trabajador en asistencia técnica o jefe de grupo debe decidir que metas perseguir dentro de la estructura del trabajo asignado y que materiales utilizar para alcanzar tales metas.

Con la finalidad de evaluar y pesar alternativas, el trabajador en asistencia técnica puede, con beneficio, adaptar ciertas herramientas del campo de análisis de sistemas con el objeto de definir objetivos y obligaciones y predecir el resultado probable de planes posibles.

Dentro de este enfoque del planeamiento se plantean cinco cuestiones básicas: 1) ¿Qúe buscamos lograr? 2) ¿Dentro de qué restricciones deberemos trabajar? 3) ¿Cuáles son las alternativas viables? 4) ¿Cuál es el resultado probable de cada alternativa en terminos de los objetivos de asistencia técnica y de las necesidades en cuanto a recursos disponibles? En terminos de los criterios pertinentes, ¿cuál es el mejor camino a seguir?

Dos principios de economía pueden también ser de utilidad en la toma de decisiones de asistencia técnica: el concepto de oportunidad y costo comparar lo que se puede obtener de beneficio mediante un plan contra lo que podría ser sacrificado; y el concepto de ventaja comparativa (decidir donde el experto puede efectuar una contribución más util), mas bien que tratar de hacer todo cuando ciertas cosas pueden ser hechas tan bien o mejor por personal local).

La toma de decisiones de asistencia técnica se hace más difícil debido a diversos factores: es difícil definir metas especificas, las relaciones humanas pueden afectar desfavorablemente los resultados; y los resultados no pueden ser predecidos especificamente. Mediante

which must make decisions about the use of technical help.

This decision-making framework is suggested not as a means of locking TA donors and recipients into rigid plans, but as a method of periodically reviewing plans and ensuring that available resources are used in the most efficient way.

sant des activités où ces derniers sont faibles, en les diversifiant, en conservant une certaine flexibilité), l'assistant technique peut éviter des échecs importants. Mais de telles décisions peuvent entraîner à sacrifier l'efficacité maximum.

Cette manière d'aborder la prise de décision en matière d'assistance technique peut également être utilisée par les organisations d'assistance qui prennent des décisions du même ordre sur la répartition des ressources et les gouvernements des pays hôtes qui doivent décider de l'utilisation de l'assistance technique.

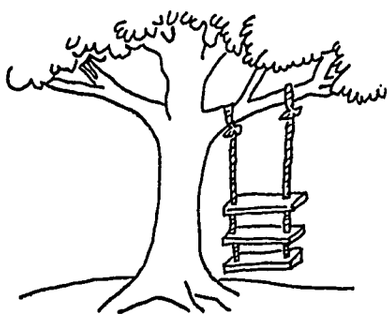
Ce cadre de prise de décision est suggéré, non comme une façon d'enfermer dans des plans rigides ceux qui donnent et reçoivent une assistance technique, mais comme une méthode de révision périodique des plans afin de s'assurer que les ressources disponibles sont utilisées de la manière la plus efficace.

la selección de estrategias poco arriesgadas — utilizando actividades de bajo riesgo, diversificando actividades, manteniendo flexibilidad — el trabajador en asistencia técnica puede evitar serios contratiempos en las tareas que emprende. Pero tales decisiones pueden sacrificar la efectividad máxima.

Este enfoque de la toma de decisiones en asistencia técnica puede también ser utilizado por agencias de asistencia, las cuales toman decisiones similares acerca de la asignación de recursos y por países receptores de ayuda los cuales deben efectuar decisiones acerca de la utilización de asistencia técnica.

Esta estructura de toma de decisiones no se sugiere como medio de colocar a donantes de asistencia técnica y países receptores de ayuda dentro de un marco rígido, sino como método para periódicamente revisar planes y asegurar que los recursos disponibles son utilizados de la manera más eficiente posible.

Is This What They Mean by the Sector Approach?



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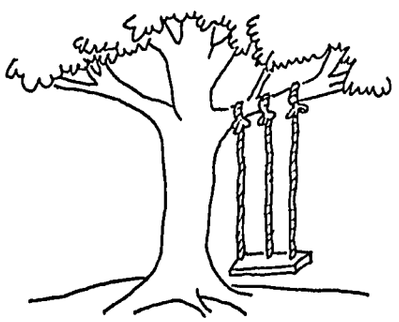

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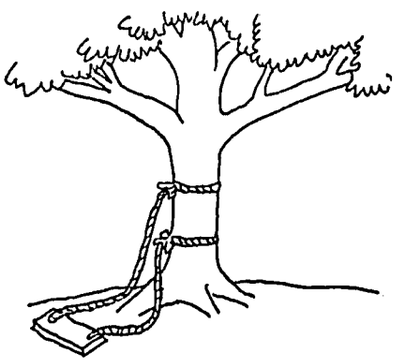

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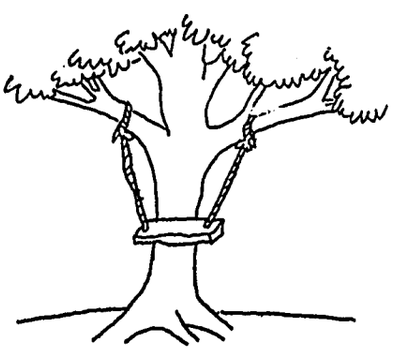

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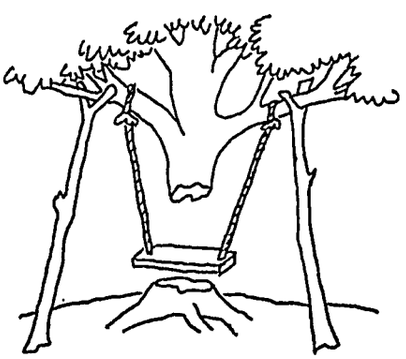

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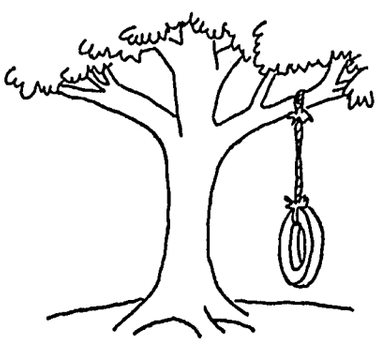

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A New Approach to Technical Assistance: Periodic Short-Term Assignment of Experts

For some projects, outside expert assistance can be more effectively provided by consultants on recurring short-term assignments.

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☐ The standard practice in international technical assistance has been to assign one or more foreign experts or technicians to work with nationals of the host country over a number of years.

In the case of large-scale projects assisted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), a team of experts is put together to help prepare resource surveys and feasibility studies, develop new institutions or strengthen existing ones, or to provide substantive technical support to activities such as the preparation of a development plan. The experts' assignments vary in duration according to the nature of the project activity to be carried out, but generally speaking they range from one year to five years, although short-term consultants are also used in assignments lasting from a few weeks to a few months.

The rationale behind the long-term assignment of experts is that experts bring to the project specialized knowledge and experience in carrying out similar tasks elsewhere, but they do not usually have the intimate knowledge of local conditions that nationals of the host country have. It is believed that by working with the nationals, the experts can adapt their knowledge and experience to suit the specific needs of the host country. At the same time, they can train a core of nationals to carry on the work after the termination of international assistance.

For example, the establishment of a technician training institute calls for the development of curricula, the preparation of course syllabuses, teaching materials, etc., in different fields, and the training of national personnel in carrying out these and other tasks. It is generally believed that such tasks have to be carried out in the field so that curricula and other materials, although basically similar to those in other countries, are made specifically relevant to the circumstances and requirements of the host country.

In general, this approach has proven to be valid. However, some difficulties have been experienced in its application. One of them is the difficulty of recruiting qualified international personnel and bringing them to a project at the time they are needed. Another is the tendency on the part of a host country or its officials to rely on the international personnel to do the job, rather than encouraging them to train local personnel in the necessary skills. The experts face the same temptation; it is sometimes easier to do the work themselves than to train others to do it.

These difficulties, together with the fact that in a number of countries the long-term services of resident international experts are not needed because there is sufficient local expertise, has recently led to a modification of the established approach. Under the new plan, a number of

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highly qualified international experts are contracted to make periodic visits to a project to advise and assist local personnel in implementing it by and large on their own. Local personnel can also visit the international experts for consultations and study when necessary.

This approach is now being applied in two countries in the Middle East.* In one of them, the UNDP has already helped establish a research centre, and a Phase II project to consolidate the achievements of the earlier project and further develop the programme and staff capabilities of the institution concerned is being planned. It is judged that this research institution has become self-reliant enough to benefit from the new approach.

In the other Middle Eastern country, the modified approach is being introduced into four new projects because it is considered that, in the fields concerned, national personnel are skilled enough to need only intermittent contact, guidance, and assistance.

A reviewer of these cases indicates that an international expert may have to be appointed on a long-term basis as "project manager" or coordinator to provide general guidance and to coordinate and phase the assignments of the short-term experts or consultants. He would also have the specific responsibility of monitoring the progress of work between the periodic visits of each short-term expert. In certain cases it may be possible to designate a national of the host country as the "project manager." The approach thus offers a degree of flexibility.

In addition to helping to overcome the difficulties previously mentioned, the new approach appears to offer a number of advantages:

1. It should encourage, rather than overshadow, local talent and should promote greater initiative and self-confidence on the part of the host country nationals.

2. It should make possible the recruitment of high-level specialists who are generally not available for long-term appointments.

3. It should open up a greater possibility of marshalling for the benefit of the project the resources of the organizations to which the short-term experts or consultants belong.

4. It should encourage the development of long-term links between the institutions from which the short-term experts are obtained and the assisted institution in the host country.

5. It is more economical than the traditional approach and, moreover, should make it easier to reorganize a project or even terminate it in mid-stream, if necessary, without too great a loss of resources.

The new approach can be really effective only under certain conditions:

1. The government of the host country should provide an institutional framework for its "counterpart" team of nationals that will allow them to use effectively the expert advice.

2. The work programmes and the timing of the services of the international experts should be carefully coordinated. This would usually require the assignment of international experts on a long-term basis to serve as coordinators or "project managers."

3. The principles governing "programmed learning" should be applied. For example, periodic visits of an international expert to a project should be so phased that by the time he returns for his second or third engagement, the national personnel will have carried out the agreed work plan on their own. In other words, it should generally be the case that an international expert advises on and assists in the setting up of the work programme and provides guidance on how it should be carried out; on his return visits he should help review the progress made and provide whatever additional guidance may be necessary. In between visits he should be available for consultation through correspondence, etc.

Application of a version of the new approach was undertaken in Venezuela in a project to assist the development of a national hospital maintenance programme. This project required the preparation of maintenance manuals in a number of technical fields and, for this purpose, a number of international personnel were brought in for only a few weeks. They did not make return visits. The exercise was quite successful, in part because the work to be carried out by each consultant was identified in advance, and conditions were created whereby the work could be completed quickly and efficiently. However, the success of the exercise was due primarily to the fact that the project had a national director who knew exactly what had to be done and an international "project manager" who coordinated both the consultants' assignments and the utilization of their contributions. □ □ □

* In one of the countries, the term "task force" has been used to describe the new approach.

A New Approach to Technical Assistance: Periodic Short-Term Assignment of Experts

In the past, experts have usually been assigned to technical assistance projects on a long-term basis. It has been thought that projects benefit from having resident experts

Une nouvelle approche du problème de l'assistance technique: missions périodiques à court terme des experts

Dans le passé, les experts ont été habituellement assignés à long terme aux projets d'assistance technique. On pensait que ces derniers

Nuevo enfoque de la asistencia técnica: Asignación periódica de expertos durante cortos plazos

En el pasado, los expertos han sido generalmente asignados a proyectos de asistencia técnica por largos plazos de tiempo. Se pensó que los proyectos se beneficiarían

in the host country long enough to adapt their knowledge to local conditions and to train local personnel. This approach has been valid in most cases, but it does have certain disadvantages: it is often difficult to recruit qualified consultants for long-term assignments, and host countries sometimes tend to rely on resident experts rather than local personnel to do the job. Moreover, for some projects there is need for only intermittent guidance from outside experts, as local personnel have enough expertise to carry out the work.

A new approach is therefore being tried on selected projects. Under this plan, experts are used on a short-term basis: they aid in the initial planning of a project and advise host country personnel on the work to be done. After that, the consultants make periodic visits to the project to provide further evaluation and guidance if it is needed.

The use of short-term assignments has some advantages: local initiative and self-reliance are encouraged; high-level specialists are more easily recruited; links can be developed between the host country institution and the institution from which the short-term experts come; less money is needed for projects; and projects can more easily be reorganized or terminated after they are started.

In the case where the plan has been tried it has been found that the plan succeeds best when there is an institutional framework in the host country that allows nationals to use experts' advice effectively; and when an outside expert, or, where possible, a host country national, has been assigned to coordinate programmes and visits of consultants.

bénéficiaient de la présence des experts dans le pays hôte s'ils restaient assez longtemps pour adapter leurs connaissances aux conditions locales et pour former le personnel autochtone. Cette approche s'est avérée satisfaisante dans la plupart des cas, mais elle présente certains inconvénients: il est souvent difficile de recruter des consultants qualifiés pour des missions à long terme et il arrive que les pays hôtes tendent à compter plus sur les experts résidents que sur le personnel local pour effectuer le travail. En outre, dans le cas de certains projets, les directives des experts étrangers ne sont nécessaires que par intermittence et le personnel local est assez qualifié pour remplir sa tâche.

Une nouvelle approche est donc mise à l'essai dans le cas de quelques projets. D'après ce plan, les experts sont utilisés à court terme: ils aident à la planification initiale d'un projet et avisent le personnel du pays hôte du travail à accomplir. Les consultants reviennent ensuite périodiquement inspecter les projets pour effectuer une nouvelle évaluation et donner de nouveaux conseils, si cela est nécessaire.

L'emploi de ces missions à court terme présente certains avantages: elles encouragent l'initiative et l'autonomie locale; il est plus facile de recruter des spécialistes de calibre supérieur; des liens peuvent se créer entre les institutions du pays hôte et celles d'où viennent les experts à court terme; les projets réclament moins d'argent; enfin il est plus facile, par la suite, de réorganiser ou de mettre fin aux projets.

Dans les cas où ce plan a été expérimenté on a découvert qu'il connait plus de succès quand il existe un cadre institutionnel dans le pays hôte qui permet à ses citoyens d'utiliser l'avis des experts d'une manière efficace, et quand un autre expert, ou, si possible, un citoyen du pays hôte, a été assigné pour coordonner les programmes et les visites des consultants.

con la presencia de expertos residentes en el país receptor de ayuda durante un plazo suficientemente largo como para adaptar su conocimientos a las condiciones locales y para entrenar personal local. Este enfoque ha resultado válido en muchos casos, pero presenta ciertas desventajas: A menudo es difícil reclutar asesores calificados para proyectos a largo plazo y los países receptores de ayuda a veces tienden a confiar an expertos residentes más que en personal local para llevar a cabo el trabajo. Además, para algunos proyectos solamente es necesario asesoramiento intermitente por parte de expertos extranjeros, ya que el personal local posee suficientes conocimientos y experiencia como para llevar a cabo la obra.

Por tanto se está ensayando un nuevo enfoque en ciertos proyectos seleccionados. Bajo este plan, los expertos son empleados durante cortos períodos de tiempo: ayudan en la planificación inicial del proyecto y asesoran al personal local en cuanto al trabajo a llevar a cabo. Luego, los asesores efectuan visitas periódicas al proyecto para proveer mayor evaluación y asesoramiento si ellas son necesarias.

La utilización de expertos a corto plazo tiene ciertas ventajas: La iniciativa y confianza en sí mismos son alentadas; es posible reclutar expertos de alta cualidad con más facilidad; y se pueden establecer vinculos entre la institución del país receptor y la institución que provee los expertos; se necesita menor cantidad de dinero para los proyectos y estos pueden ser más facilmente reorganizados o terminados una vez comenzados.

En aquellos casos en que el plan ha sido puesto a prueba se ha hecho evidente que es mayor el grado de efectividad cuando en el país receptor existe una estructura institucional que permite al personal local utilizar el asesoramiento de los expertos extranjeros en forma efectiva; y cuando un experto extranjero o, cuando es posible un experto local, ha sido asignado para efectuar la coordinación de programas y visitas de asesores.

Technical Assistance and International Development: A Need for Fundamental Change

Current development strategies of the technical assistance "establishment" perpetuate the Third World's dependency on developed countries and are not responsive to the real needs of underdeveloped societies. Fundamental changes are needed in the present assistance system.

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☐ The authors of the "end of the decade" development reports (i.e., Jackson, Pearson, Peterson, *et alii*) devoted considerable attention to the technical assistance process. Yet these reports failed to reckon with some very real political, social, and psychological problems which the technical assistance process poses for the Third World.

Basically, the authors of the "end of the decade" development reports reflected a worldview of underdevelopment that perceives underdevelopment as primarily a condition of absolute and relative economic deprivation. This is the view of the conventional technical assistance expert, who attempts to solve what he sees as the specific problems of deprivation. If people have less than enough to eat, he attempts to feed them, or if people are less than well, he attempts to cure or prevent disease. Some experts work at a grander scale. If the economy does not provide a minimum standard of living, then such an economy is designed and implemented. If the economic resources are scarce, as they indeed are, there are planners (and I am one by training) who try to allocate as efficiently as possible what resources there are. In short, traditional technical assistance attempts to solve perceived problems of absolute and relative deprivation through economically-linked, discrete inputs and allocations.

However, a growing number of Third World spokesmen, such as Julius Nyerere, Celso Furtado, Victor Urquidi, and Paulo Freire, observe that the description of the condition of underdevelopment as absolute and relative deprivation is only partially adequate. It does not take into account the most significant dynamic dimension of underdevelopment—the underdeveloped world's interrelationship with the rich and powerful countries of the world. Underdevelopment is a *relational* condition rather than simply a condition of absolute and relative material deprivation; it is the historical by-product of the dynamic relationship between the poor countries and the rich and powerful "developed" countries. A country is underdeveloped because of its past and present relationship with the developed countries. This interrelationship has economic, political, social, cultural, and psychological components.

Thus I would suggest, along with many of the "new thinkers" in or about the Third World, that we need to focus deliberately and carefully upon the relationship between developed and underdeveloped societies in such a way as to cast light on the full social and human consequences of this relationship, a relationship which has meant, as the sociologist Andre Gunder Frank rightly observes, that ". . . the entire social fabric of the underdeveloped countries has long been penetrated by, and integrated into, the world embracing system of which it is an integral part."[1]

One intellectual consequence of this particular worldview has been a growing preoccupation with the role of power in the dynamics of underdevelopment and development—that is, the role of power in the *relational* dimension of underdevelopment. Many Third World spokesmen have been developing the hypothesis that it is the cultural, social, political, economic, psychological, and intellectual *powerlessness* that is, in fact, the most manifest condition of an underdeveloped

[1] Andre Gunder Frank, "Sociology of Development and Underdevelopment of Sociology," *Catalyst*, no. 3 (Summer 1967), p. 32.

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people. In this view, *powerlessness* over the forces that determine one's personal and historical destiny *is* a primary condition of underdevelopment and perpetuates the dependency of an underdeveloped people. Denis Goulet, a very articulate philosopher of development ethics, associates the condition of "powerlessness" and "dependency" with the broader concept of vulnerability: "Vulnerability is exposure to forces one cannot control. In the present context it is the inability of underdeveloped societies to determine the outcome to their own responses to pressing social forces."[2]

Here I would distinguish between two forms of power and control that contribute to the condition of powerlessness, dependency, and vulnerability of the Third World. These are forms of power and control exercised by the dominant "developed" societies over the "underdeveloped" societies:

1. *Normative Control:* psychological, intellectual, and cultural control over "norms" and values that determine behavior.

2. *Structural Control:* political, institutional, legal, and bureaucratic control of actions.

It follows from the hypothesis advanced above that it would be useful to examine the dimension of power in the relationships between the powerless and poor and the powerful and rich people of the earth and how this relationship relates to the condition of underdevelopment.[3]

An additional consequence (or perhaps cause) of the dissenting worldview of underdevelopment that I have described is an alternative hierarchy of values to guide development actions. The unstated or unwritten values of many conventional technical assistance development strategies are largely material and economic (when they are not simply ethnocentric). The economists took charge of designing development strategies in the Third World after World War II, and since then there has been a growing confusion between the "means" and the "ends" of development strategies. Notwithstanding the lip service given to extra-economic goals, development strategies that may have been designed to attain social and human objectives have become strategies designed to attain economic objectives and have been measured in economic terms. The development models as they presently exist are essentially economic growth models. Social and cultural factors have become part of the "means" for attaining economic "ends."[4]

This trend has led, unfortunately, to the perversion of the whole concept of "development"—a situation that some individuals operating within the technical assistance process have begun to recognize.[5] Modern economists do not seem to have in their professional "toolkits" the tools to design and put into operation development strategies that have essentially social and human objectives. In fact, economists feel uncomfortable in this area.

Nyerere is representative of the Third World spokesmen who have attempted to reverse the trend of defining development objectives in material and economic terms. He has defined development in human and social terms (in terms of social justice, for example). He has reassigned economic strategies to the role of primarily serving human and social objectives. Nyerere has placed highest value upon the intangible human assets such as self-esteem, dignity, self-reliance (independence rather than dependence), and he has emphasized programs that improve the quality of social relationships. Nyerere's current development efforts are efforts at making operational his value priorities. He invests his resources and actions in this hierarchy of values rather than simply investing in the rhetoric of these human objectives.

The point I have attempted to make thus far is that the differences between worldviews and value systems of the conventional technical assistance establishment and of the Third World dissenters are extremely profound. We are speaking of different sets of assumptions and sentiments, of a different "paradigm" of development. We are literally speaking of "two cultures" of development workers.

Conventional development personnel, who serve the traditional technical assistance agencies, exert vast control over the technical assistance process, and thus exert considerable influence over the development process itself. This power is exerted through their virtual monopoly over the following most important "assets" of the technical assistance process:

[2] Denis A. Goulet, *The Cruel Choice, An Ethical Approach to Development* (New York: Atheneum, 1971), vii. I would recommend another work by Mr. Goulet which relates very closely to many of the concerns expressed in this article: *The Myth of Aid* (New York: IDOK North America, 1971).

[3] I have examined this condition of "normative" powerlessness in greater detail in my unpublished doctoral qualifying paper: "An Analysis of Certain Variables That Operated on the Peace Corps-Tanzanian Aid Relationship 1961-1969," Center for Studies in Education and Development, January, 1971.

[4] A good review of development models since World War II appears in Chapter 29 of Volume III of Gunnar Myrdal's *Asian Drama* (New York: Pantheon, 1968).

[5] Recent studies (some of which were presented at the last SID Conference, May 1971) indicate that even when GNP in a LDC is increased, a more equitable distribution of income is not necessarily achieved. In fact, it often worsens. The unattained goal of the economist is not economic growth, but economic justice.

1. *Material resources, techniques,* and *delivery systems.*

2. *Manpower:* monopolization of occupational access to technical assistance roles and the social status system of international personnel.

3. *Worldview* and *value hierarchy:* monopolization of the legitimizing mechanisms that confer validity and credibility to worldviews and value hierarchies.

Many aid agencies are large bureaucracies and technocracies. These features and the features of monopolization generate an organizational type that is not fully responsive to real needs, is not accountable to its clients, and is self-serving, self-perpetuating, bewildering to those on the outside, and stifling to many who work on the inside.

The trend toward further internationalization and institutionalization of aid is not necessarily a step in the right direction. Although ostensibly it is a move away from unilateral and politicized aid—and this is seen as desirable—this trend can only bring with it more complete monopolization and bureaucratization, further diffusion of authority and accountability, and less flexibility in approaching development problems we still do not understand.

Monopolization of the aid "assets" cannot but contribute to an increasing sense of economic, political, social, cultural, and intellectual powerlessness of the poor people of the world, and, hence, to the dynamic condition of underdevelopment itself. In the next sections, I shall attempt to outline briefly how monopolization of the aid "assets" and control of the technical assistance process contributes to the Third World's sense of powerlessness and dependency.

1. *Monopolization of Material Resources, Techniques, and Delivery Systems*

Technical assistance is a segment of the vicious circle of recipient country dependency. Technical assistance becomes a necessary development input because the prerequisites for obtaining capital aid usually include sophisticated feasibility studies, planning documents, and operational technical advice. The current process of aid-giving merely perpetuates the dependence upon technical expertise (whether or not the technical expertise is provided by a foreign expert or a Western-trained national). The mode of operation of experts is to deal with problems at levels of complexity that only the experts are trained to understand. In addition, experts are preoccupied with highly technical solutions to the problems of development.

One consequence of this approach is the inadvertent transfer of the occupational and social structure and values. As a result, a leader of a developing country whose goals are to gain cultural, social, and intellectual control over his country's historical evolution and to foster egalitarian values and social structures will find that the technological trend is likely to frustrate the achievement of these goals. The structures of dependency and vulnerability that keep people dependent upon technology's leaders inhibit goals of human liberation. (The industrial nations are beginning to cope with these problems themselves!)

One of the most important criticisms of the current technical assistance establishment is that it is controlled by the rich and powerful nations who have ultimate power over the purse strings. Whether or not technical assistance is further internationalized, it is structurally impossible for the technical assistance establishment to challenge the international vested interests of the donor countries. This fact alone can discount considerably anyone's faith that the current systems of technical assistance will be able to do anything to solve fundamental problems of underdevelopment. Aid efforts are palliatives. We must reckon with this, or we cannot expect technical assistance to contribute to substantive solutions to the problems of underdevelopment.

Moreover, the technical assistance establishment is itself a vested interest quite distinct from the vested interests that support technical assistance efforts. The technical assistance agencies are both bureaucratic and technocratic structures that generate the dynamics of self-aggrandizement, perpetuation, and expansion. The careers, prestige, and positions of the "experts" are vested interests, valuable commodities to be protected. I think more attention needs to be devoted to the examination of the kinds of vested interests that the technical assistance agencies implicitly or explicitly protect and perpetuate. This is a real analytic project beyond the scope of this paper.

Often the recipient country government contributes to the perpetuation of the condition of underdevelopment by its particular use of technical assistance resources. A government can manipulate the direction of a technical assistance program in order to strengthen its own control over its people, or it can direct the efforts so that they will have only a minimal effect upon any positive change that might upset the vested interests of the recipient government and powerful elites in that country. There have been many such undesirable "alliances" between recipient governments and technical assistance agencies.

2. *Manpower: Monopolization of Occupational Access to Technical Assistance Roles and the Social Status System of International Personnel*

The monopolization of occupational access to technical assistance roles tends to inhibit a pluralism of development strategies in the technical assistance process. The "successful" expert gets ahead not because of his performance on behalf of his clients—he is not accountable directly to them—but on the basis of his perform-

ance on behalf of the aid agency he serves, or the professional association with which he may identify. The institutional norms or professional norms that technical assistance personnel must accept are not consistent with norms of reciprocity, risk-taking, and responsiveness to the masses—norms that are absolutely necessary if an effective aid relationship is to be developed.

I believe an argument can be made that the most creative, sensitive, and innovative people are not attracted to the current type of technical assistance agencies and, if attracted, are not kept very long by the agencies. New and young professionals are often so driven by career competition that they join these institutions without full realizing the extent to which they too have become socialized into accepting the institutional and professional norms. Even if the young professional is very concerned, he may feel he has invested too much in his education and has too much family and personal responsibility to seek alternative employment, simply because the technical assistance establishment maintains a monopoly over technical assistance roles.

Very often young professionals do perceive the tension between their own values and the norms of the technical assistance establishment or are willing to trade these perceived deficiencies for the prestige and upward mobility an international career can provide. Thus technical assistance recruitment acts as a self-selection mechanism, harboring its own kind and rejecting new breeds.

It is often argued that the training of recipient country personnel to perform the traditional role of the outside expert can solve some of the inadequacies of the current technical assistance process. I do not agree. The "local" expert is usually trained under the auspices of the technical assistance agencies and thus picks up all of the negative behavioral, institutional, and professional norms and development strategies of the outside expert. He becomes, in short, co-opted in that international professional orbit. He is rewarded within its professional or institutional association, and, hence, identifies with his peers within these associations. Through this process of socialization the local expert is not likely to increase his identification with the poor and powerless people of his country. He has cast his lot with the external, dominant culture, and is thus alienated from his own people.

3. *Worldview and Value Hierarchy: Monopolization of the Legitimizing Mechanisms that Confer Validity and Credibility on Worldviews and Value Hierarchies*

The most subtle monopoly, but certainly one of the most powerful, is the monopoly over worldview and value hierarchies. The technical assistance establishment is a veritable intellectual and cultural power structure. Its worldview of underdevelopment reality and its hierarchy of values determine the priorities, methodologies, and instrumentalities to be used in dealing with the condition of underdevelopment. This is a monopoly that provides the technical assistance establishment with powerful normative and methodological controls over the "development" process. We could also refer to this particular monopoly as the power to perpetuate a dominant "paradigm" of development.[6]

It is this "paradigm power" that concerns me the most. It is a "paradigm" that has dominated development thinking and approaches for a long time. It is a paradigm backed by the technical assistance institutions and resources. In short, it is a paradigm with a lot at stake and is therefore very difficult to change or challenge.

Nevertheless this dominant paradigm is beginning to break down as many Third World leaders and sympathizers are challenging both the adequacy of this paradigm and the claim of authority that technical assistance experts have to impose their solutions.

These critics have begun to realize how parochial and inadequate this dominant paradigm is. It is rooted in the "objective consciousness" of Western intellectual tradition. The critics are challenging the authority of the Western scientific method of knowing and validating reality. This is a system preoccupied wtih a method of knowing, with how reality is perceived and validated rather than with what one perceives. Such a rigid methodology excludes important dimensions of human experience.

The dominant paradigm is under attack not only because of the growing theoretical and empirical inadequacy of the approach, but also because the control of the aid process by the technical assistance establishment contributes to the condition of cultural and intellectual powerlessness of underdeveloped people. The dominant paradigm reinforces normative controls over the underdeveloped world.

[6] Thomas Kuhn's concept of "paradigm" helps give meaning to my use of that word. In Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, paradigm is defined as "the entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques shared by members of any given community" (1970 Edition, page 174). A paradigm not only gives direction as to how a particular problem can be solved, but it also defines what the problem is in the first place. A "dominant development paradigm," then, determines not only the methodologies and instrumentalities by which a problem of underdevelopment is solved, but it also defines the nature of the problem of underdevelopment. I should like to suggest that the new worldviews and values generated by many Third World and radical thinkers may eventually contribute to a crisis and breakdown of the dominant development paradigm. There are many parallels between periods of crisis in scientific thinking which precede scientific revolutions, and what can be interpreted as a coming crisis in dominant development theory and practice.

The Third World will have to stumble along in its efforts to articulate and operationalize a new paradigm—its worldview and value hierarchies. But meanwhile the commanding intellectual power structure of the technical assistance establishment suppresses and psychologically oppresses those individuals who generate fundamental alternatives.

I realize that the kind of diagnosis of the technical assistance establishment that I have presented is not at the same time an effort to find solutions to the problems. But a recognition and discussion of the problems is a first step, and perhaps it will encourage others to engage in discussions of fundamental changes in the present system of technical assistance.

□ □ □

Technical Assistance and International Development: A Need for Fundamental Change

The accepted worldview of underdevelopment has been to perceive it as primarily a condition of absolute and relative economic deprivation, which technical assistance agencies traditionally have attempted to solve by economic means.

This view of underdevelopment, it can be argued, is only partially adequate. It does not take into account the underdeveloped world's interrelationship with the rich and powerful countries. Some Third World spokesmen hypothesize that it is the powerlessness of underdeveloped countries vis-à-vis the developed world that is the primary condition of underdevelopment. In this view, the developed countries exercise both normative (psychological, intellectual and cultural) control and structural (political, institutional, legal and bureaucratic) control over underdeveloped societies.

A consequence of this control is that development strategies have been primarily designed to attain economic objectives. An attempt is now being made by some development workers and Third World leaders to define development objectives in human and social terms and to reassign development priorities on the basis of a new hierarchy of values.

However, it is difficult for the dissident development thinkers to have much impact because the traditional technical assistance agencies exert vast control over the aid process and, thus, over the development process itself. They have a virtual monopoly over the aid "assets"—the material resources, techniques and delivery systems; the manpower; and the mechanisms that serve to legitimize values.

The control of resources contributes to the condition of cultural and intellectual powerlessness of underdeveloped people. The resources are funneled through the technical assistance establishment, which has vested interests to pro-

Assistance technique et développement international: des changements fondamentaux sont nécessaires

Dans le monde entier, le sous-développement est avant tout considéré comme une condition de pauvreté économique, absolue et relative, que les organismes d'assistance technique ont traditionnellement tenté d'éliminer par des moyens d'ordre économique.

On peut avancer que cette notion du sous-développement n'est qu'en partie exacte. Elle ne tient pas compte des rapports entre ces pays et ceux qui sont riches et puissants. Certains des porte-paroles du Tiers Monde avancent que c'est l'impuissance des pays sous-développés vis-à-vis du monde industrialisé qui forme la condition fondamentale du sous-développement. Selon cette opinion, les pays développés exercent à la fois un contrôle normatif (psychologique, intellectuel et culturel) et un contrôle structural (politique, institutionnel, légal et bureaucratique) sur les sociétés sous-développées.

Il résulte de ce contrôle que les stratégies du développement ont été avant tout conçues de façon à atteindre des objectifs économiques. Certains spécialistes du développement et certains chefs d'état du Tiers Monde s'efforcent actuellement de définir les objectifs du développement sous un angle humain et social en redistribuant les priorités de développement selon une nouvelle hiérarchie des valeurs.

Mais ceux qui ont adopté une conception dissidente du développement ne peuvent guère exercer d'influence parce que les organismes traditionnels d'assistance contrôlent en majeure partie le processus de l'aide et par conséquent celui du développement. Ils ont en pratique un monopole des "avoirs" de l'aide: ressources matérielles, techniques, systèmes distributifs, main-d'oeuvre et mécanismes qui servent à legitimiser les valeurs.

Le contrôle des ressources contribue à cette situation d'impuissance culturelle et intellectuelle des peuples sous-développés. Les

La asistencia técnica y el desarrollo internacional: Necesidad de cambios fundamentales

La visión mundial prevalente acerca del subdesarrollo ha sido la que lo califica, pirmordialmente como una condición de privación económica absoluta y relativa que las agencias de asistencia técnica tradicionalmente han tratado de resolver por medios económicos.

Puede argumentarse que esta visión del subdesarrollo es sólo parcialmente adecuada. No toma en cuenta las relaciones mutuas que existen entre los países del mundo subdesarrollado y los paises ricos y poderosos. Ciertos portavoces del Tercer Mundo mantienen hipótesis de que es la impotencia de los paises subdesarrollados vis-à-vis el mundo desarrollado lo que constituye la primordial condición de subdesarrollo. Dentro de tal visión, los paises desarrollados ejercen tanto control normativo (psicológico, intelectual y cultural) como estructural (político, institucional, legal y burocrático) sobre las sociedades subdesarrolladas.

Una consecuencia de tal control es que las estrategias de desarrollo han sido principalmente diseñadas para obtener objetivos económicos. Actualmente ciertos trabajadores en desarrollo y líderes del Tercer Mundo llevan a cabo un esfuerzo para definir los objetivos del desarrollo en términos humanos y sociales y para reorganizar las prioridades del desarrollo en base a una nueva jerarquía de valores.

Sin embargo, es difícil para los pensadores del desarrollo disidentes tener impacto considerable ya que las agencias de asistencia técnica tradicionales ejercen enorme control sobre el proceso de asistencia y de tal manera, sobre el propio proceso de desarrollo. Poseen virtual monopolio de los "bienes" de asistencia — recursos materiales, técnicas y sistemas de entrega; potencial humano y los mecanismos que sirven para legitimizar valores.

El control de recursos contribuye a la condicion de impotencia cultural e intelectual de los pueblos

tect. It therefore perpetuates the development process's dependence on technical expertise and in so doing rejects the professional seeking a career in development who does not accept the traditional norms and values. The establishment's values determine the priorities and methodologies to be used in dealing with underdevelopment, and it is therefore difficult for others to generate fundamental alternatives.

It is hoped that recognition of these problems will lead to discussion of the need for fundamental changes in the present system of technical assistance.

ressources passent inévitablement par les organismes officiels de l'assistance technique qui ont des intérêts à protéger. Ils tendent donc à perpétuer la dépendence du processus de développement envers les connaissances techniques; ce faisant, ils rejettent celui qui cherche à faire carrière dans le développement qui n'accepte pas les critères traditionnels des valeurs. Celles des organismes officiels déterminent les priorités et les méthodologies à utiliser envers le sous-développement; il est donc difficile, pour les autres, d'établir d'autres solutions de base.

On peut espérer que la prise de conscience de ces problèmes amenera à discuter de la nécessité de changements fondamentaux dans le système actuel de l'assistance technique.

subdesarrollados. Los recursos son canalizados a traves del sistema de asistencia técnica, el cual protege sus propios intereses. Por tanto perpetúa la dependencia del proceso de desarrollo en el peritaje técnico y así rechaza al profesional que desea una carrera en el campo del desarrollo cuando éste no acepta las normas y valores tradicionales. Los valores del sistema de asistencia técnica determinan las prioridades y metodologías a ser usadas en el tratamiento del subdesarrollo, y por tanto hace difícil para otros el generar alternativas fundamentales.

Es de esperar que el reconocimiento de estos problemas lleve a discusiones acerca de la necesidad de cambios fundamentales en el actual sistema de asistencia técnica.

Technical Assistance Bookshelf

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Proceedings of the Truman International Conference on Technical Assistance and Development
Truman Research Institute Publication No. 6
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem
1971, 288 pp.

The new Truman Research Institute of the Hebrew University is devoted to study of two subjects: conflicts, using the Israeli-Arab conflict as a study model, and problems of developing countries. The Institute dedicated its formal opening to President Harry S. Truman. A conference of thirty experts was held to survey what has been done in the last two decades to implement President Truman's Point Four Program. The proceedings of the conference offer the reader a set of papers and discussions setting forth in challenging terms reflections on past accomplishments and failures of Point Four and projecting the problems and issues ahead.

The book is organized around the nine themes of the conference, and one is impressed with the scope and diversity of the format: 1) philosophy, objectives, and perspectives of the Point Four Program; 2) strategies; 3) operations of development assistance; 4) the role of development assistance in societal transformation; 5) agriculture; 6) health; 7) nutrition and education; 8) criteria of assistance effectiveness; and 9) economic and social implications of aid programs.

Recognition was given to the contribution President Truman made when he inaugurated the Point Four Program in 1949. It was the beginning of a process of expanding collaboration among men of all nations in working on common problems of adjustment in a rapidly changing world. The height of the assistance effort has seen nearly every developed nation and some developing nations offering bilateral technical assistance. Altogether it adds up to a massive outpouring of humanitarian concern and economic, social, and political investment in a better future.

The authors of the papers are candid about the numerous primary problems of development. They recognize that growth is not tantamount to development and that the early implicit assumptions of the Point Four Program must be called into question, namely that the sharing of know-how is adequate for the problems of less developed countries. That know-how has usually been directed toward production problems and, while there have been striking successes such as the green revolution, the secondary and tertiary problems simply illuminate the systematic truism that change induced at one point in a system has

concomitant effects in other parts of the system.

Among the issues to which the authors devote special attention are the problems of sustaining moral and political commitment among donor nations. The norm of aid giving for donor nations has been about 1 percent of the GNP. For the last few years, however, while the measurable benefits have been becoming more visible, the percent of giving has been flagging. From the perspective of two decades the tensions in relationships between donor and receiver are reviewed, and it is recommended that donor-receiver relationships be restructured along new participatory lines of mutual endeavor. The issues of population explosion, nationalism, inflation, conflicts between philosophies of accumulative and welfare societies, lack of resilience of political systems and their lack of capacity to delineate and articulate goals and plans and to accommodate subpolitical groups, migration to urban centers, rising unemployment and underemployment, and aristocratic centralism at the expense of equitable regional balance are all discussed.

The authors of the papers represent a wide array of the physical, biological, and social science disciplines; they include administrators of key programs and persons in political roles such as ambassadors. Each region of the world is represented.

Of particular interest to this reviewer is the number of papers that address the growing questions of the human and institutional response to the impact of technology and technological assistance. The following paraphrased points give some of the flavor of the discussion about this issue.

- Social aid will have to be given progressive priority over predominantly economic aid. Social progress cannot be assumed as an automatic byproduct of economic progress.
- Ninety-nine percent of research and development money is spent in the developed countries where only one-third of the world's population resides.
- The role of women in development is a serious missing resource component.
- The roots of dysfunctional trade barriers, tariff quotas, and internal subsidies for high cost products need to be re-examined in terms of their psychological, political, and economic rationale.
- The development of public policies and social institutions may be more important motivators of economic progress than the contributions of technical know-how and capital.
- Along with theories of development take-off there is need for theories of development breakdown, including analysis of system tensions, competitions, and conflicts.
- The progress of the less developed countries toward a tolerable standard of living is so agonizingly slow as to be almost irrelevant in shaping its pattern of political life.
- It must not be forgotten that it is man himself who is at the heart of the development problem.

The presentation of data, logic, and rationale surrounding the discussion of the issues and questions makes compelling reading. Once drawn into the debate it is difficult to put the book down. This series of papers provide indispensable resources for the development assistance administrator, practitioner, or academic instructor.

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and Life Science
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Peter Vas-Zoltan
United Nations Technical Assistance
Budapest: Akademiai Kiado
1972, 404 pp.

There is a considerable interest in having the United Nations Technical Assistance Programme analysed through eastern glasses darkly —darkly because the purpose of the book as stated is to "reduce illusions" about the programme. However, the book, although critical, is not hostile. The value of the programme—indeed the need for a much larger programme—is readily recognized.

The reader should not be put off by the length of the book. Most of the volume consists of a statistical annex giving detailed data for 110 countries, both donors and recipients of the UN programme, containing full year-by-year details of contributions and share in benefits, by agency and source, and a number of ratios, such as share in total contributions, etc. These tables will be useful to researchers. Even the main text is permeated with statistical calculations trying to define by different criteria the various categories of main beneficiaries and main contributors. These latter calculations, however, seem unnecessarily complicated and sometimes confuse the issue rather than elucidate it. Specifically, a complicated "multiplicator index" and combined index seem statistically unsound and meaningless.

There is much in this volume with which even an "economist of the imperialist countries" — although hopefully a "progressive bourgeois economist"—can readily agree. This includes, for instance, the emphasis on the composition and nature of aid rather than on its volume, the criticism of the lack of proper machinery for examining projects in UN approving bodies, the danger of fragmentation of programmes and lack of a guiding development concept, the vested interests of contributing countries, etc. But equally, there is much to be rejected by one of the "bourgeois economists of the UN," like myself, who has seen these programmes develop and watched them in the field. For instance, there may be worthier motives than "neocolonialism," for making newly independent countries the main beneficiaries of technical assistance. Or, again, the UN has a special responsibility for a country such as Zaire. Nor does the author's contrasting list of countries that seem specially favored and those that he considers discriminated against seem, to the neutral reader, to support the thesis of an "im-

perialist trend—giving priority to allies to the disadvantage of developing countries not supporting imperialism."

The history of the UN programme omits mention of the catalytic effect of President Harry S. Truman's Point Four Program in his inaugural address of January 1949. The author also considers SUNFED (the long-discussed but never created Special UN Fund for Economic Development) to be the direct predecessor of the UN Special Fund. This is not only misleading—SUNFED was more the predecessor of the International Development Association than of the UN Special Fund—but also a pity because the real history of SUNFED and the unwillingness of donor countries to entrust "real money" to the UN with its system of one country, one vote could provide a valid basis for "reducing illusions."

One wishes that the book was not entirely based on reports, resolutions, and statistical tabulations, and that it included field research and review of specific programmes or projects. The absence of such concrete analysis gives a certain impression of artificial distance; it is like looking at the UN programme through inverted binoculars. A really telling criticism could only be made on the basis of field research; who requested the project? why? who benefited? There are minor inaccuracies such as the composition of the Consultative Board of the Special Fund. The reader should be warned that the period covered is 1950-1964 even though the book is dated 1972.

The value of the book lies in its statistical analysis, once allowance is made for doubtful criteria, and in the important criticisms of both UN programmes and the aid policies of western donors. One may add that most or all of these criticisms have already been made by people within the UN and within the western countries.

It will come as news to people involved in the UN programmes that countries compete to contribute more than their share in the UN budget—I wish it were so!

H. W. Singer
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Note from the Field

One of the purposes of Focus: Technical Cooperation *is to provide a means of communication for men and women actually working in technical assistance projects. Therefore this section of* Focus *will be devoted to short articles written by people in the field, dealing with specific problems encountered in the execution of projects. In this way, it is hoped, project personnel all over the world can exchange ideas and benefit from each other's practical experience.*

Expert-Counterpart Responsibilities in a UNDP Fund Project

S. Krishnamurthi
Mosul University, Iraq

□ This note is intended to share my experiences in an important area of project responsibility with others who are involved in project management in developing countries. My observations are drawn from my experience as Project Manager for a FAO Special Fund Project on Agricultural Education in Iraq. The success or failure of such an institution-building project may be determined by how effectively staff management and training are handled. The success of such training, in turn, depends a great deal on the understanding between an expert and a counterpart about their joint and individual responsibilities.

In order to bring a sense of coordination and cooperation among the experts in the team, and between this team on the one hand and the team of counterparts and heads of departments on the other, a Project Review Committee was formed, to be convened periodically with the agreement of the head of the institution, who is also a project co-manager. Generally the committee meets at least twice a month. Such a committee brings out difficulties and problems faced by the individual expert, counterpart, head of department, the dean, and the project manager in discharging their special responsbilities or in making their contribution to the strengthening of the institution. In such periodical reviews the experts and counterparts also have an opportunity to work together, in consultation with the rest of the team, in furthering the progress of their work. The frank discussions and exchanges of ideas in our project have resulted not only in removing many bottlenecks but also in bringing out recommendations that have been beneficial to the institution and to the project.

An expert's role in training a counterpart is vital to the project. To encourage the experts in my project to remember the importance of such training, I issued a directive, parts of which are given below.

Counterpart Training: In all teaching and research work, the active involvement of counter-

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parts and understudies must be ensured. In the course in which you are taking direct responsibility for teaching, you must ensure that either the counterpart is present at the time of your lectures and practical classes, or an Iraqi understudy is present. In the same way, in research programmes, while as an expert you may take responsibility of initiating and supervising some of the programmes, most of the rest of the initiative and supervision must come from the Iraqi counterpart and other staff. It must be remembered that the counterpart and other Iraqi personnel have to assume full responsibility for improved teaching and research programmes and other duties upon the termination of the Special Fund assistance. Very often this aspect is likely to be ignored and adequate training of enough members of Iraqi staff is not done.

Teaching Programmes and their Improvement: As far as your own subject is concerned, it would be desirable that you attend as many classes as possible relating to your subject, as well as allied subjects, to understand how the teaching is at present being handled at this institution, and how you could make improvements. It is not adequate if you undertake some direct teaching of certain classes yourself, but it is necessary that your influence in improving the contents and methods of teaching spreads over other courses in your subject. An attempt may also be made to train as many Iraqi understudies as possible in your subject in consultation with your counterpart.

Also a survey of adequate facts from the field would be suitable material for reference for teaching. No teaching manual could be effective unless the expert concerned has made a proper survey of the facts in the field and has also gone through the various reports, bulletins and literature relating to the country available in the College library as well as in the Ministries and Departments of the Government and in the reports of the several FAO projects and other projects which have been in operation in this country. In all these matters, effective participation of your counterparts and understudies could be obtained to collect as much information as possible in your subject. All this can only be done if proper organised thinking is given to these aspects.

The intention of a directive like the one above is to emphasize the fact that, while the expert undertakes some amount of direct work himself in teaching and research so as to demonstrate better methodology, it is even more important that he exert his leadership and influence over all the staff involved in his subject area. He should not limit himself to direct teaching, but should also make sure that his counterpart and other understudies attend his lectures and observe his handling of practical classes. He should hold seminars and discussions with his counterpart and the junior staff to discuss and solve problems of introducing better teaching methods, putting together syllabuses for courses handled by the counterpart and other staff, and preparing well-organized notes for lectures.

An expert in these circumstances is a friend, guide, and philosopher, especially to the junior members of the staff, on whom lies the responsibility for the future of the institution itself. In the fluid and changing situation of a developing country, it would not be adequate for an expert to concentrate on training of a single counterpart, thereby neglecting the staff-building aspect of the project. Rather all the staff must be trained, so that the institution will have a team of trained men in almost every important subject field and in its general administration.

I do not claim complete success in the achievement of an action programme on the above lines, but this is what I have attempted to do with the experts in the project with which I have been concerned. Largely there has been a positive response from the experts and counterparts, but the situation relating to the counterparts is not often entirely under control of either the experts or the project manager. Often the counterpart personnel have the notion that once an expert is recruited to a project for strengthening an institution, he is almost a regular member of the staff of the institution and therefore comes under the control of the head of the institute, the head of the department, and even the counterpart himself. Such a situation must be handled tactfully. This side of the picture requires some attention and could best be remedied by the action of the host government, which could perhaps issue to the head of the institute (who is also the project co-manager) and the counterparts specific orders about their functions and responsibilities in relation to the project manager and experts, as well as to the project as a whole. This seems necessary because the project manager or the experts should not be placed in an unpopular position of pointing out either to the project co-manager or to the counterparts their functions and responsibilities as laid down in the project's plan of operations. From my experience, I believe that such a procedure would ensure disciplined and organised cooperation from the counterparts as a whole.

It should also be noted that training of local staff is dependent on having at least a minimum strength of local staff available for the project. The availability of such staff should be examined before a project is put into operation: otherwise most of the purpose of the project is likely to be lost, and little of permanence is likely to remain of the work done by the experts in the project.

Others involved in project management may have ideas about this subject, and it would be useful to hear them. □ □ □

. . . Beginning with the next issue, professional news of interest to those in technical assistance will be included in FOCUS: reports of conferences, news of training programs, descriptions of new publications, etc.

. . . Your letters to the editor will also be a regular feature.

The Society for International Development

THE SOCIETY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT is an international, non-profit, educational and scientific organization founded in 1957.

Its purpose: to provide means for and stimulate exchange of ideas, facts, and experience in the pioneering field of international development.

The membership of the Society consists in the main of persons engaged in or associated with programs of international development — administrators, economists, engineers, educators, health officers, lawyers, technicians, and others. They include many nationalities and professions and work in many kinds of organizations, public and private, national and international, in 134 countries and territories. The membership likewise includes persons who are seriously interested, though not currently participating, in development programs. Organizations also may join SID as institutional members, with all membership privileges except the right to vote.

Currently SID uses four principal means to advance and circulate knowledge and generate ideas in its very diverse fields of interest: the publication of a professional journal, the *International Development Review*, and a monthly newsletter appearing in an English, a French, and a Spanish edition, respectively the *Survey of International Development*, *l'Aperçu sur le Développement International*, and *Comentarios sobre el Desarrollo Internacional*; world conferences, each an international forum dealing with a particular cluster of important problems; regional conferences, in which discussion and analysis are focused on problems common to several countries within a geographical area; and chapter activities, developed by local groups of members to suit their own professional bent and the special situation and needs in the area or country where they work.

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Focus

1972/4

Technical Cooperation

Focus: Technical Cooperation is published quarterly, as a section of the *International Development Review*, and is devoted to the theory and practice of those international activities known as "technical assistance" and "technical cooperation."

Introducing Ourselves

Why a new journal?

Although many journals, the *International Development Review* among them, from time to time publish articles dealing with technical cooperation, there has never been a regularly issued international journal focusing on that topic. Grants from the United Nations Development Programme and the Technical Assistance Bureau of the United States Agency for International Development have now made it possible for SID to inaugurate *Focus: Technical Cooperation,* which, it is hoped, will fill that gap.

What is its purpose?

Focus will deal with concepts, issues, and experiences relating to the theory and practice—but not to the technical content—of international technical cooperation. It is meant to serve as a vehicle of communication for those active in the planning, execution, and assessment of international technical cooperation programs and projects. Through it, those so involved can exchange ideas and insights, thus leading to better understanding of the technical cooperation process and better performance by those engaged in it.

What is its editorial policy?

Although full editorial responsibility for selecting and editing materials for publication rests with the Society for International Development, an international Editorial Advisory Board has been constituted; it will provide counsel on overall policy and assist in securing contributions. The present members of the Board are listed on page 2; additional members will be added shortly. We are deeply indebted to these skilled advisers for their guidance in launching *Focus*.

As the articles in this first issue show, there are many facets of our subject to be explored. Indeed, we have deliberately selected the phrase "technical cooperation" for our title because it embraces not only the traditional concept of "technical assistance" but also a broad range of other methods of transferring technical skills. We intend to present a wide variety of opinions, as well as providing factual information of value to both scholars and practitioners.

Several features distinguish *Focus* from its parent magazine, the *International Development Review*. Although it will appear quarterly as a part of *IDR*—a "journal within a journal"—it will also be issued as a separate publication. Moreover, its pages are perforated and have holes punched in them to allow easy removal and filing of articles. In this way the reader can detach and keep articles of special interest to him without having to wrestle with staples or pull the entire magazine apart. Summaries in English, French, and Spanish follow each article, so that there is a summary of the article in the language in which it is printed as well as a summary translation. As part of our objective of making *Focus* a useful reference tool, we are also actively exploring a regular article classification system.

Where can it be obtained?

All members of SID and all library subscribers to *IDR* will receive *Focus* regularly at no extra cost. Separate copies of *Focus* will also be available, in quantity orders only (although a free sample copy will be sent to anyone on request). Rates for such bulk orders are available from the editorial offices at SID International Headquarters.

We invite your reactions to this first issue, as well as suggestions for items you would like to see included in future issues of *Focus*. We welcome your ideas—as well as your manuscripts (in English, French, or Spanish)—because only with participation from all of you engaged in technical cooperation work can *Focus* achieve its objectives. We look forward to hearing from you often.

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Objectif: la coopération technique

Le rôle de l'assistance technique a été exagéré au cours des dix dernières années, mais la crise actuelle n'est qu'une étape dans une évolution à un véritable coopération a l'échelle mondiale.

Paul-Marc Henry
Président, SID

☐ Coopération signifie une opération entreprise en commun, sur un pied d'égalité, en vue d'un objectif accepté par les deux parties. Ce n'est pas un accident qui a amené les organismes internationaux, ainsi que les organismes d'aide bilatérale, à substituer progressivement dans leur propre terminologie le mot de coopération à celui d'assistance. Il est maintenant généralement reconnu par toutes les parties intéressées que les modalités de la coopération internationale sont au moins aussi importantes — sinon plus — que son contenu et, pourrait-on dire, son volume.

Au cours des dix dernières années, la mise en ouevre de programmes de coopération technique bilatéraux et multilatéraux a permis de faire face à des situations diverses, difficiles à ramener à de communs dénominateurs, marquées par les concepts politiques différents, eux-mêmes trouvant leur origine dans des contraintes historiques, linguistiques et culturelles spécifiques. On peut se poser la question de savoir si, même dans un cadre multilatéral, il est possible d'utiliser des concepts globaux ou régionaux pour rendre compte de situations particulières ou si, en sens inverse, il est possible ou utile de généraliser des expériences acquises à une échelle limitée dans des situations écologiques et sociologiques qui leur étaient propres.

Certes, les efforts de conceptualisation n'ont pas manqué. La poursuite incessante, toujours

PAUL-MARC HENRY, élu neuvième Président de la SID au début de cette année, est Président du Centre du Développement de l'Organisation de Coopération et de Développement économique. Il a rempli plusieurs fonctions internationales. Il fut, de 1961 à 1971, le Directeur adjoint du Bureau des Opérations et de la Programmation du Programme des Nations Unies pour le Développement. Immédiatement avant d'assumer ses fonctions actuelles il a été pendant huit mois Secrétaire Général adjoint des Nations Unies, chargé des opérations de secours de l'ONU à Dacca.

Objective: Technical Cooperation

Cooperation signifies an operation carried on jointly, between equals, toward an objective accepted by both parties. It is no accident that international organizations, as well as bilateral aid agencies, are gradually substituting the word "cooperation" for "assistance," since it is now generally recognized that methods of international cooperation are just as important as—if not more important than—substance or even volume.

During the past ten years, technical cooperation programs have been carried out under so many diverse conditions that one may well ask whether any generalizations about them are possible. Certainly there has been no lack of efforts toward such generalization; the repeated "evaluation" exercises of both multilateral and bilateral agencies suggest that these agencies have not been satisfied by their accomplishments, although they have defended them against legislative and budgetary scrutiny. Indeed they have attributed a catalytic effect to projects without adequate experimental proof and have endowed the concept of "preinvestment" with almost magical powers.

In effect the extremely rapid changes which have taken place in the industrialized countries have led the administrators of aid programs almost unconsciously to seek to impose the "rhythm" of Western life on societies still functioning on a very different rhythm. They have confused their dealings with the Western-trained technicians in the developing countries with a dialogue with the countries themselves.

And yet for those of us who have worked in the field of technical cooperation for at least the last two decades, the present crisis is but a stage in slow but sure evolution toward real world-wide cooperation. Channels have been established which grow steadily deeper. We have an obligation to seek to understand in complete objectivity what our experience to date has taught us and to suggest the new approaches that will give to the word "cooperation" its most profound, most human, and therefore truest, meaning.

Objectif: la coopération technique

Coopération signifie une opération entreprise en commun, sur un pied d'égalité, en vue d'un objectif accepté par les deux parties. Ce n'est pas un accident qui a amené les organismes internationaux, ainsi que les organismes d'aide bilatérale, à substituer progressivement dans leur propre terminologie le mot de coopération à celui d'assistance. Il est maintenant généralement reconnu que les modalités de la coopération internationale sont au moins aussi importantes — sinon plus — que son contenu et, pourrait-on dire, son volume.

Au cours des dix dernières années, les programmes de coopération technique ont été menés dans des conditions si diverses que l'on peut se demander s'il est possible d'en parler d'une manière générale. Certes, les efforts de conceptualisation n'ont pas manqué: la poursuite incessante, toujours recommencée, des "évaluations" des organismes multilatéraux et bilatéraux semble démontrer que ces institutions ne sont pas satisfaites de leurs réalisations, même quand elles les ont défendues devant les instances législatives et financières compétentes. En fait, elles ont attribué à nombre de projets un rôle de "catalyseur" qui n'a jamais pu être prouvé expérimentalement; elles ont en outre doté le concept de "préinvestissement" d'un effet magique.

En réalité, les changements extrêmement rapides qui ont eu lieu dans les pays industrialisés ont mené les administrateurs des programmes d'assistance à chercher, presque inconsciemment, à imposer le "rythme" de vie occidental à des sociétés qui fonctionnent à des rythmes très différents. Ils ont pris leurs rapports avec les techniciens formés à leur propre école qu'ils rencontrent dans les pays en voie de développement pour un dialogue avec ces pays eux-mêmes.

Et pourtant, pour ceux d'entre nous qui ont oeuvré dans la coopération technique depuis au moins deux décennies, la crise actuelle n'est qu'une étape dans une évolution qui, lentement mais sûrement, jette les bases d'une véritable coopération à l'échelle mondiale. Des communications ont été établies qui ne feront que croître. Nous devons absolument chercher à comprendre en toute objectivité ce que notre expérience, jusqu'à ce jour nous à appris et de formuler des suggestions nouvelles pour donner au mot de coopération son sens le plus profond et le plus humain, c'est-à-dire le plus réaliste.

Objetivo: Cooperación técnica

La cooperación se define como una operación llevada a cabo en forma conjunta, entre iguales, con una meta final acordada por las dos partes. No es accidental que tanto las organizaciones internacionales como las agencias de ayuda bilateral gradualmente han sido sustituyendo la palabra "cooperación" en lugar de "asistencia" ya que, actualmente se reconoce ampliamente que los métodos de cooperación internacional son tan importantes — si no más importantes — que la sustancia o el volumen de tal cooperación.

Durante los ultimos diez años, los programas de cooperación se han llevado a cabo bajo condiciones tan diversas que uno puede muy bien preguntarse si es posible hacer generalizaciones de tipo alguno. Por cierto no han faltado esfuerzos por hacer tales generalizaciones. Los repetidos ejercicios de "evaluación" de las agencias bilaterales y multilaterales sugieren que estas no se han visto satisfechas con sus esfuerzos, aún cuando los han defendido frente a escrutinios legislativos y presupuestales. Aún más, han atribuido efectos catalíticos a proyectos, sin poseer pruebas experimentales adecuadas y han investido al concepto de pre-inversión con poderes casi mágicos.

En verdad, los cambios extremadamente rápidos que han tenido lugar en los paises industrializados han llevado a los administradores de programas de asistencia a querer imponer, casi inconscientemente —, el ritmo de vida occidental a sociedades que aun funcionan a un ritmo muy diferente. Han confundido su asociación con técnicos locales entrenados a la manera occidental con un diálogo con los paises subdesarrollados mismos.

Y sin embargo, para aquellos de nosotros que hemos trabajado en el campo de la cooperación técnica durante casi las dos ultimas décadas, la crisis actual no es mas que una etapa en la evolución lenta pero segura hacia un mundo de real cooperación en escala mundial. Se han establecido canales que se hacen cada vez más profundos. Tenemos la obligación de tratar de comprender en forma totalmente objetiva lo que nuestra experiencia nos ha enseñado y de sugerir nuevos enfoques que pudieran a la palabra cooperación su significado más profundo, más humano y por lo tanto más verídico.

recommencé, et généralement décevante des "évaluations" bilatérales ou multilatérales post facto de politiques ou de projets (et le coût considérable de ces efforts) semble démontrer que les institutions intéressées ont été conscientes à la fois d'une certaine incapacité de répondre efficacement et rapidement à des défis particuliers et aussi d'une même incapacité à atteindre les objectifs qu'elles s'étaient elles-mêmes fixées, dans un cadre chronologique probablement trop étroit.

Bertrand Russell, dans ses Mémoires, fait remarquer que le sens aigu du péché qui semble prévaloir dan les pays protestants tient au fait que les individus se fixent des objectifs de rigueur morale parfaitement inatteignables et qu'ils souffrent de manière constante du manque de rapport pratique entre leur propre capacité et l'idée qu'ils se font d'une perfection éventuelle. On pourrait certes dire que les administrateurs des programmes de coopération technique sont, à bien des égards, dans la même situation que ces puritains idéalistes. Afin de défendre leur programme devant les instances législatives et financières compétentes, ils se sont fixés des délais, en général beaucoup trop courts. Ils ont prétendu en outre qu'il était possible, par des moyens externes, de mobiliser, de manière plus ou moins automatique, des ressources internes, ce qui impliquait à la fois une transformation accélérée des mentalités et des pratiques administratives traditionnelles, ce en quoi ils manquaient certainement de réalisme.

Le rôle même de la coopération technique, dans la perspective des politiques de développement économique, a été également exagéré. Par une analogie qui supporte mal l'examen, on a attribué à un nombre de projets un rôle de "catalyseur" ou "d'effet détente" (triggering effect) qui n'a jamais pu être prouvé expérimentalement. Il n'est pas jusqu'au concept de "préinvestissement" qui n'ait été extrait hors du contexte extrêmement complexe du phénomène d'investissement pour être doté d'un effet magique. Nous savons bien que le magicien est trop souvent accusé de ne pouvoir sortir, le moment venu, le lapin d'un chapeau devant des spectateurs d'autant plus déçus que les promesses avaient été plus grandes.

Est-ce à dire que la coopération technique représente un aspect parmi d'autres de cet échec fondamental que représenterait l'aide internationale dans le domaine du développement économique conçu sous l'angle de l'atténuation des inégalités croissantes dans les domaines économique et technologique, que l'on peut observer entre les nations industrielles avancées et le reste du monde? La réponse à cette question tient évidemment à la conception que l'on a du cadre chronologique dans lequel opèrent les sociétés humaines. L'accélération brutale de la révolution technologique qui trouve son origine dans l'Europe de l'Ouest et dans l'Amérique du Nord, soutenues et relayées maintenant par la Russie Soviétique et le Japon, semble avoir frappé de myopie et d'amnésie tout à la fois la pensée occidentale.

Les changements foudroyants indéniables qui ont pris place dans les sociétés industrialisées, aussi bien dans leurs rapports sociaux internes que dans leurs niveaux de consommation, et dans les structures d'emploi, expliquent que plus ou moins consciemment, les opérateurs et administrateurs de l'aide occidentale ont voulu imposer leur propre rythme (d'ailleurs plutôt subi que délibéré) à d'autres sociétés infiniment plus nombreuses, beaucoup plus proches du rythme naturel et saisonnier de l'économie de quasi subsistance. Ils ont cru, parce qu'ils conversaient avec leur propre image, sous la forme de techniciens formés à leur propre école, qu'ils dialoguaient avec les pays eux-mêmes, soumis à des exigences internes, affectés par des contraintes, quasi permanentes, nées du sol et de l'histoire.

Et pourtant ! Il a déjà été dit dans un raccourci célèbre que la coopération technique ne plantait pas l'arbre mais semait la graine. Cette graine, nous la voyons déjà encore fragile mais souvent vigoureuse, préparer les véritables floraisons. Pourquoi demander à la génération présente ce que seule la génération suivante peut donner à moins, bien entendu, qu'un nouveau cataclysme déclenché par l'homme vienne à nouveau détruire ces fragiles semailles.

Pour ceux d'entre nous qui avons oeuvré dans la coopération technique, depuis au moins deux décades, la crise actuelle n'est qu'une étape dans une évolution qui, lentement mais sûrement, jette les bases d'une véritable coopération à l'échelle mondiale. Les hommes communiqueront inévitablement, de manière universelle, afin d'échanger une expérience acquise dans la dignité par le grand effort de confrontation entre l'homme et sa société et entre la société humaine et la nature elle-même. Il faut se dégager des jugements hâtifs et impatients, souvent basés sur l'ignorance des multiples réalisations pratiques, souvent à une échelle significative, qui sont le résultat d'un effort continu entrepris aussi bien par les organisations internationales que par les actions bilatérales. Il faut reconnaître avec satisfaction le cheminement en profondeur et irréversible d'un effort qui ne sera jamais terminé pas plus que l'effort humain lui-même. Il est donc essentiel que des esprits libres fassent part, dans un souci d'objectivité absolu, de l'expérience qu'ils ont acquise dans les multiples domaines qui ont été couverts par l'effort de coopération au cours des deux dernières décades. Ils doivent aussi formuler des suggestions nouvelles pour donner au mot de coopération son sens le plus profond et le plus humain, c'est-à-dire le plus réaliste. □ □ □