

## BIBLIOGRAPHIC DATA SHEET

1. CONTROL NUMBER

PN-AAJ-016

2. SUBJECT CLASSIFICATION (695)

AC00-0000-0000

## 3. TITLE AND SUBTITLE (240)

Going to the field: the ASIP experience in Egypt and Nepal

## 4. PERSONAL AUTHORS (100)

## 5. CORPORATE AUTHORS (101)

Public Administration Service

## 6. DOCUMENT DATE (110)

1980

## 7. NUMBER OF PAGES (120)

16p.

## 8. ARC NUMBER (170)

630.7.P9763

## 9. REFERENCE ORGANIZATION (130)

PAS

## 10. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES (500)

## 11. ABSTRACT (950)

## 12. DESCRIPTORS (920)

Nepal  
 Project implementation  
 Participation  
 Agriculture  
 Organization development  
 ASIP project

Agricultural training  
 Management training  
 Egypt

## 13. PROJECT NUMBER (150)

931020900

## 14. CONTRACT NO. (140)

AID/ta-C-1350

## 15. CONTRACT TYPE (140)

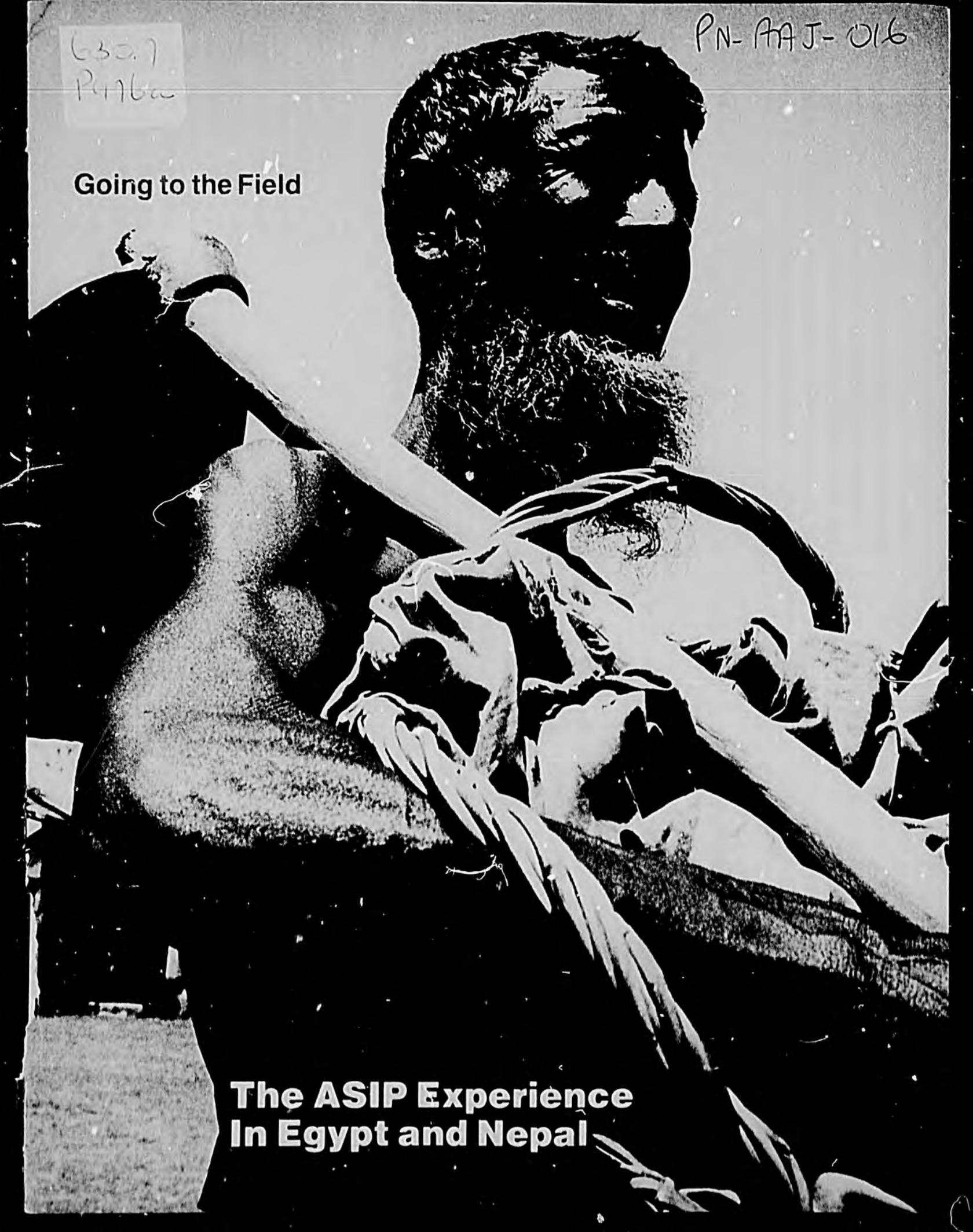
## 16. TYPE OF DOCUMENT (160)

630.7  
P476a

PN-AAJ-016

Going to the Field

**The ASIP Experience  
In Egypt and Nepal**



This document has been prepared for the United States Agency for International Development under Contract AID/ta C-1350. Its purpose is to describe and disseminate the findings of the Agricultural Sector Implementation Project.

The opinions and conclusions expressed in this document are those of the author, and do not necessarily reflect official AID or U.S. policy. The person responsible for the preparation of this document is Dr. Leon E. Clark, Deputy Director, Training Division, Public Administration Service.

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# Introduction

**T**he Agricultural Sector Implementation Project (ASIP) came into existence in 1972. Its initial activity was a research program to identify management practices in developing countries that had led to success in the field of agricultural and rural development.

After interviewing more than 200 specialists from around the world and examining more than 1,700 books, articles, reports and other documents, ASIP published the results of its research in 1976 in a reference book entitled *Managing Planned Agricultural Development*.

A year later the project shifted its focus to field implementation, establishing two pilot sites, one in Egypt and one in Nepal, to test the possibility of improving agricultural management through the transfer of successful practices.

Specifically, the implementation process was designed to: (1) test the possibility of passing on the lessons of research through management training (which in effect became a test of the ASIP training process itself); (2) initiate in-country research to de-

velop country-specific supplements to the reference book for use in the training; (3) conduct organizational development (OD) activities as a follow-up to the training; and (4) institutionalize the full range of ASIP activities, including research, training and OD activities.

"Institutionalization" implies that these activities are carried out by local staff members without external assistance and are integrated into the normal functions of the host organization.

This document describes the ASIP experience with project implementation in Egypt and Nepal; it concludes with a list of recommendations based on this experience which might be applied to similar projects elsewhere.

For an overall view of the ASIP approach to research, training and OD, including an analysis of the theoretical basis for these activities as well as a chronology of the project, see the publication *Bridging the Gap Between Planners and Farmers: The Agricultural Sector Implementation Project*.



*The ultimate test of a successful management practice is the effect it has on the farmers of the world.*

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# ASIP in Nepal: Project Achieves Early Success

Advisers cite local initiative  
as determining factor

In September, 1977, two PAS staff members arrived in Nepal to open one of two ASIP field implementation sites. Less than two years later the project had become fully institutionalized, recognized within Nepalese development circles, and run completely by local staff.

When the American director left Nepal in June, 1979, four months ahead of

schedule, ASIP was a self-sustaining program that included two teams of trainers (eight in all), a group of highly-skilled researchers, a Nepalese reference book 150 pages long and growing, a communications network that reached every major development agency in the country (largely through its newsletter), and a reputation throughout Nepal that brought more re-

quests for training than the ASIP staff could handle.

In the June-July, 1979 ASIP Newsletter from Nepal, the Nepalese editor wrote: "ASIP was completely managed by foreign advisors in the beginning, but is now, after 21 months' time, run completely by Nepalese Training Division staff members."

There are several reasons for the rapid institutionalization of ASIP in Nepal, according to Julian Orr, the American project director, "but the most important one is the initiative taken by the Nepalese themselves."

ASIP is attached to the Agricultural Projects Services Center (APROSC), a quasi-independent support agency of the Nepal Ministry of Agriculture. Historically, APROSC had conducted studies in project planning and analysis for the Nepalese Government and international agencies working in Nepal. With the arrival of ASIP, it added a management training and research dimension to its activities.

"In our very first meeting at APROSC," Orr recalls, "Dr. Dhital, the director, made the point that the expatriate ASIP staff was there in an advisory role. He said, 'ASIP is an APROSC project, not an American project.'"

The practical effects of this attitude could be seen immediately in the initiatives taken by APROSC. "Even before we arrived in Nepal," Orr said, "APROSC had recognized the need for suitable space for this new activity and had identified several available buildings. Ten days after we arrived, a building was selected, and three weeks later we moved in."



*Nepali women plant rice, a major food staple and target of agricultural development.*

At the same time, APROSC assigned nine fulltime staff members — three senior officials and six trainers — to ASIP within three weeks of the arrival of the expatriate staff. Four more trainers were added to the staff later.

“Initially, we were a bit concerned,” Orr said, speaking for himself and Richard Nishihara, the other PAS advisor. “We had certain criteria in mind for ASIP trainers and researchers, and we thought potential staff members should be selected on the basis of their performance in ASIP courses.

“As it turned out, we had no need for concern. All of the people selected by Dr. Dhital, except three, have become fulltime staff members of ASIP and have made excellent trainers.

“In retrospect,” Orr points out, “Dr. Dhital’s knowledge of the people and his awareness of what it takes to make a project such as ASIP succeed in Nepal were the keys to the success of the recruitment process.

“We might have felt better if we had been consulted beforehand, but it’s not likely that we could have made better choices. The advantages of having staff members assigned early far outweigh any possible advantages from a more lengthy recruitment process.

“Based on our experience here, I would say that one successful management practice is to have host-country officials select project staff, at least initially, until a project develops a life of its own.”

The initiatives taken by APROSC, although largely outside the influence of the American ASIP staff, can be replicated or at least encouraged in other situations by the stance taken by outside advisors. If expatriate managers desist from major decision-making and convey to the host organization that the project is theirs and not the funding agency’s, they can create the conditions that lead to local initiatives. Taking a facilitating rather than a directing role, in fact, is widely considered an appropriate management practice for expatriate advisors.

Aside from the initiatives taken by APROSC, the very nature of that organization facilitated the implementation of ASIP in Nepal. As a semi-independent

agency, APROSC was free to experiment in a relatively low-risk environment, both for itself and its client ministries.

## Taking a facilitating rather than a directing role

At the same time, because APROSC had close ties with several line ministries, it was able to test the “ASIP approach”

with managers working in the field. In effect, ASIP was ideally placed for a pilot project; it was free to experiment on a small scale under realistic conditions.

ASIP research had previously identified such an arrangement as optimally suited for pilot projects. The success of ASIP in Nepal tends to reinforce those findings.

Yet another explanation for the smooth institutionalization of ASIP in Nepal might be found in the initial approach taken by the expatriate staff. Instead of plunging directly into project activities,



*The majority of Nepalis work in agriculture. Above, Nepali women thresh rice.*

Orr and Nishihara, once they were settled in the office, left Kathmandu for a field trip to the Eastern Region of Nepal. Accompanied by one of the senior officers assigned to the project, they visited several district agricultural offices, research stations, government farms, and a number of agricultural and irrigation projects.

After a week back in the office, they left again, this time to the Western Region, and, after a brief return to Kathmandu, flew off to the Far Western Region. On all of these trips they conducted interviews with officials concerned with agriculture and rural development, gathering as much information as possible and explaining the goals of the new ASIP project.

Prior to this assignment, Orr had never been to Nepal, although he had worked in development for more than 20 years and had lived in Afghanistan for eight years. Nishihara, on the other hand, had spent two years in Nepal with the first Peace Corps contingent there and spoke fluent Nepalese.

Upon their return to Kathmandu, Orr and Nishihara focussed their attention on staff development, employing inductive, learning-by-doing methods of training as a way of introducing the Nepalese to the "ASIP approach." They did not run an ASIP management course until February,

## ASIP Enjoys Popularity and Success, According to USAID Nepal Director

*The following excerpts are taken from a September, 1979 statement by Samuel Butterfield, USAID Director in Nepal, describing the impact of ASIP on agricultural and rural development organizations in Nepal.*

**T**he ASIP has enjoyed popularity and success in reaching organizations like the Agricultural Development Bank, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, the Agriculture Inputs Corporations, the Marketing Department, commercial banks and other rural-focused institutions which actively seek to develop the skills of their personnel in implementing projects.

It is heartening and satisfying to note that the ASIP and APROSC have jointly put together a skills development program for managers that is not only workable, but effectively addresses the training needs of locally-based organizations.

ASIP's utilization of experimental learning principles and techniques and its focus on successful agriculture management practices have been the keys to the early success of the project.

The AID mission in Nepal plans to continue its support to APROSC's efforts further to institutionalize the ASIP and to help make the program achieve its full potential.

1978, almost five months after they arrived in Nepal.

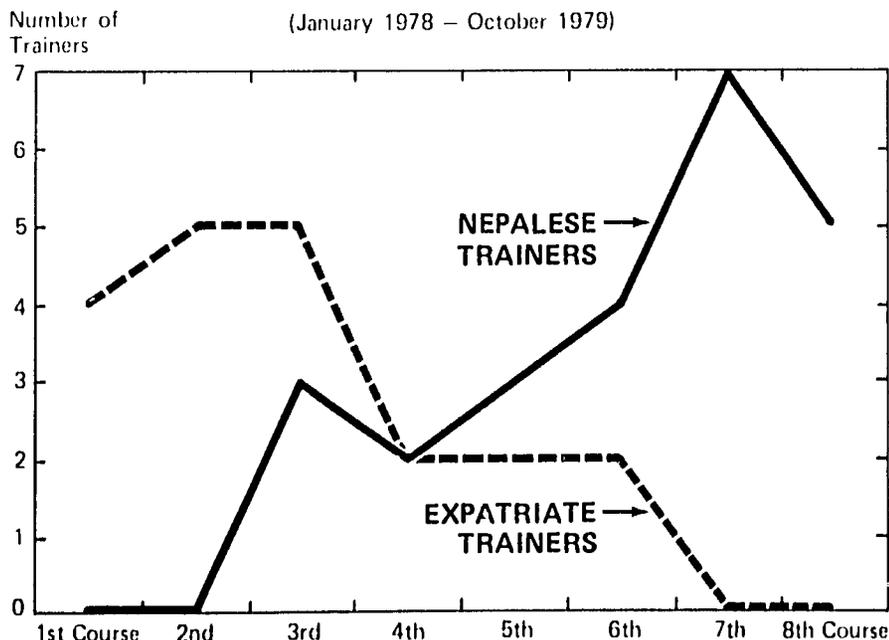
"Our goal was not to impose an alien system on the Nepalese," Orr said, "but to draw on their experiences. We felt we could lead the staff into the 'ASIP approach' by using it rather than preaching about it."

To introduce the notion of inductive learning from experience, the American team spent more than two months helping the Nepalese staff develop ASIP management and research techniques. As a first step, the team members were asked to write brief descriptions of successful management practices they had used personally. These descriptions were reviewed by the advisors and returned with only positive comments.

After writing several more descriptions, they were asked to identify successful practices they thought could be applied in different situations, i.e., different from the settings where they had been used originally. This exercise was repeated several times with increasing emphasis on specificity. After five days they began to relate these successful Nepalese experiences to particular sections or themes in the ASIP reference book.

For the next two weeks, the team members reviewed all of the personal experience papers they had written and extracted from them a set of principles that should be followed in writing such descriptions. They then selected the best of the personal experiences and rewrote them according to the principles they had established.

## Composition of ASIP Trainers in Nepal



At this point the Nepalese were ready to focus exclusively on management practices in the field of agriculture, and for the next two weeks they collected successful Nepalese experiences based either on their own experience or derived from other sources, and wrote them up for possible inclusion in a Nepalese reference book. By the end of this period, the team members felt secure in their ability to identify and describe successful management practices and were beginning to identify practices that could be repeated in other situations.

Although all of these descriptions were written individually, they were reviewed by the entire team. Not only did this practice provide mutual stimulation and reinforcement, but it also helped the members gain confidence in each other and become comfortable with submitting their work for review and revision.

As a next step in developing research skills, the team was given the task of designing a plan for locating information about Nepalese experiences in agricultural development. Each member was then given the task of finding one case related to the introduction of new or improved varieties of crops or livestock. These cases

were then written up and presented to the group for review.

To move the process one step closer to actually producing a Nepalese reference book, the team began translating sections of the PAS reference book to "get a feel" for the final product and to gather new

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## Control over project activities helped to bolster staff self-confidence

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ideas about successful practices they might identify in Nepal.

This search for successful practices, aside from developing the staff's research skills, had a positive carry-over effect on the day-to-day operations of the project. One of the first tasks given to the group, for example, was to work out a plan for transportation to and from the office. Another was to prepare a statement of objectives and success criteria for the project.

Likewise, this control over project ac-

tivities bolstered the self-confidence of the team, which in turn stimulated further activity on the reference book research.

Thus, by the time of the first training program in February, the Nepalese staff had developed a high degree of self-reliance. They had internalized an inductive approach to research, and they had become accustomed to learning by doing and learning from each other, all skills that ASIP training emphasizes and relies on.

After the two-week training experience, the team returned to its work of identifying successful practices in Nepalese agricultural management. These practices were to be used in preparing a Nepalese supplement to the reference book for use in the next training program. In pursuing this work, they were given full responsibility for planning, carrying out and evaluating the final product, in effect applying skills they had just developed in the training program.

By the time of the next course in June, 1978, a 26-page Nepalese supplement to the reference book was ready for use; by the time of the third course in August, the supplement had grown to 50 pages and had been indexed. All of the material for the

## Prospects for Project Look Bright—APROSC

*Dr. Ram Prakash Yadav, the Director of the Agricultural Projects Services Center (APROSC), the host organization for ASIP in Nepal, gave his assessment in September, 1979, of the APROSC-ASIP collaboration. In the following excerpts, he focuses primarily on the training component of ASIP, appropriately called the Management Skills Development Program (MSDP) in Nepal.*

**A** PROSC and PAS have been concurrently training trainers and running courses. Thus far, a core staff from APROSC has been trained and is now able to plan and conduct management skills development programs by themselves.

The response of various institutions and organizations to the ASIP/MSDP

has been such that we are convinced that the MSDP has had some impact upon those institutions. Recent requests from the Agriculture Development Bank for a special course for their senior officers and from the Department of Agriculture for an integrated course to train extension officers indicate the degree to which the ASIP has progressed. Those special programs will be designed to meet the special needs of the organizations.

Usually, when projects fail to reach the targets that are set by planners, people are quick to look for excuses and reasons for failure. The ASIP Approach is different and is one that looks for successes rather than failures.

There is a process used by the ASIP Approach that helps people learn from experience, and from that learning and

new knowledge makes it possible to improve the performance of jobs. The training techniques developed to train managers in this process seem to be the reason for the MSDP being so popular with local institutions and those participants who have taken the course.

The emphasis on practical things and the focus on doing, rather than using lectures and theory, makes it possible for participants to learn new ideas and easily begin to apply the things learned from the course back at their jobs.

APROSC hopes to continue the ASIP/MSDP. Prospects for the program so far look bright. The sound base of training know-how developed through the ASIP will make the job in management, design, and evaluation of projects much easier.

supplement was collected by the Nepalese staff, most of it through direct interviews in the field

Concurrent with the development of the reference book, the process to train Nepalese trainers was begun. Seven staff members who had been identified in the February course as potential trainers participated in the June course as a special advanced group, observing and recording successful training techniques, analyzing the training methodology, and leading small group activities.

As the chart on the previous page shows, after the first two courses, when the Nepalese were either participants or observers, there was a steady increase in the number of Nepalese serving as trainers.

By the fourth course there were as many Nepalese as expatriate trainers. Thereafter there were more Nepalese and fewer expatriates conducting each successive course, until by the sixth course no advisors were used at all.

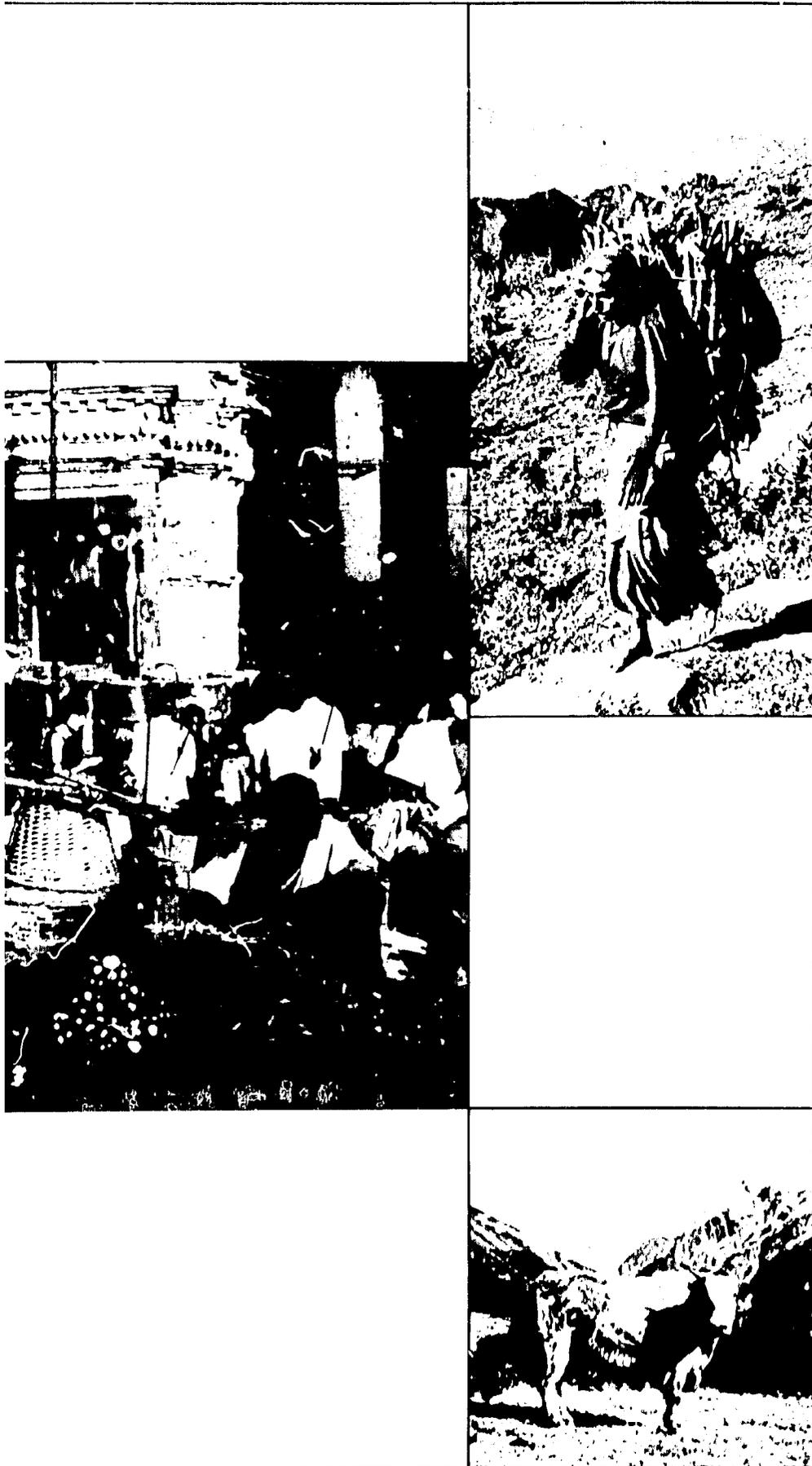
(The decline in the number of trainers in the eighth course indicates a realistic trainer-trainee ratio, made possible by the development of the Nepalese staff. The higher ratio in earlier courses reflects the number of "extra" trainers used for the purpose of training trainers.)

"The early emphasis on the research made an enormous difference when it came to the training of trainers," Orr observed. "The staff were so familiar with the inductive process and with identifying successes, they were able to transfer these skills almost immediately to the courses. They found it quite natural, for example, to allow the trainees to arrive at their own conclusions inductively and to identify their own successful methods of completing tasks.

"We spent a lot of time on the research before getting into the training," Orr added, "but it was worth it, I think. It set the stage for everything else that followed."

Another lesson from the Nepal experiment, then — another management practice that might be applied elsewhere — is that focussing initially on local practices and needs (such as the fact-finding trips that Orr and Nishihara took) and drawing





on the personal experiences of the local staff (such as the two-month process of working on the reference book, which in this case also led the staff to analyze other Nepalese experiences) has the effect of laying a firm foundation on which the project can rest. It also ensures that subsequent activities will be relevant because they have evolved naturally from local conditions and have not been imposed from the outside.

Clearly, this approach, combined with the initiatives taken by APROSC, especially in the early assignment of capable staff members, contributed to the successful institutionalization of ASIP in Nepal.

## USAID Evaluation Finds Training Useful in Field

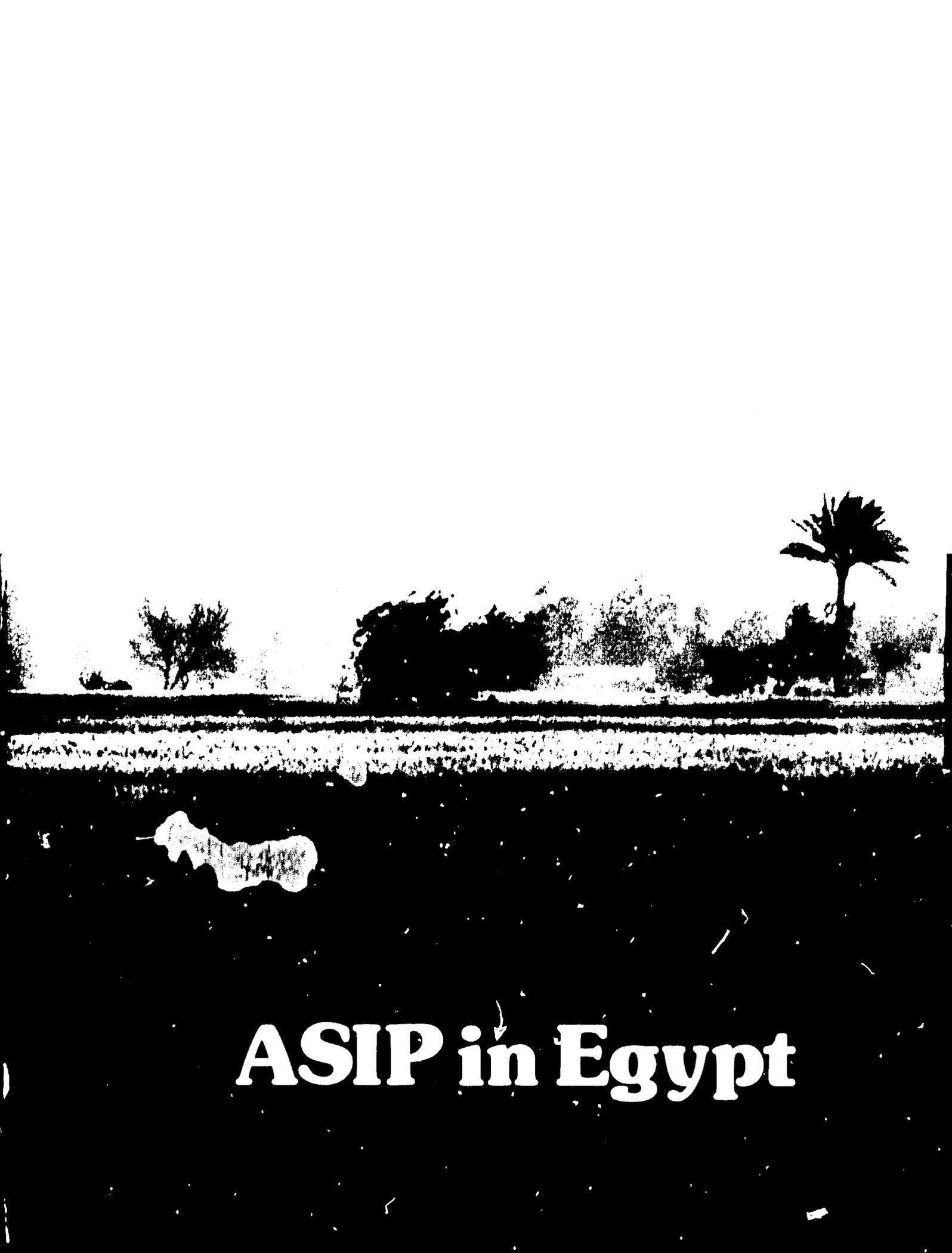
*In January, 1979, 16 months after the start of ASIP in Nepal, USAID/Washington conducted an interim evaluation of the project. Below is an excerpt from the evaluation report, describing the general findings of the evaluation team.*

In general, this evaluation has found that significant progress has been made in fulfilling the requirements of the contract to develop an integrated training and field research approach specific to the needs in Nepal, in training a Nepali staff, and in beginning to institutionalize the capability of a Nepali organization and staff to continue and further develop the activities begun by ASIP.

Most importantly, the evaluation has found indications that the project has the potential for making a major contribution to improved agricultural management in Nepal, particularly in ways that would directly benefit small farmers.

The project has been established in such a way that it provides a means for a transition from developing problem-solving process skills to in-the-field applications of successful agricultural practices.





# ASIP in Egypt

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# ASIP in Egypt: Breaking New Ground in Training

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Egyptians see project as support  
for priority issues

**A**SIP has followed a somewhat different path in Egypt than it has in Nepal, and for understandable reasons. Indeed, these two countries were chosen to test the ASIP approach because of their contrasting characteristics.

Egypt, with a population of 40 million, is more than three times the size of Nepal (13 million) and has almost four times the land mass, 96 percent of which is rocky desert. In contrast, Nepal is largely mountainous.

The number of employees working in the Egyptian Ministry of Agriculture alone totals 250,000, and when employees from other organizations are included, the number working in the agricultural sector rises to 550,000.

Aside from cultural, linguistic and economic differences, the sheer size of Egypt and its human resources development requirements made project implementation significantly more complicated than in Nepal.

This was especially true of ASIP where project inputs were of approximately equal magnitude in Egypt and Nepal, making the Egyptian effort dramatically smaller in relation to potential clients.

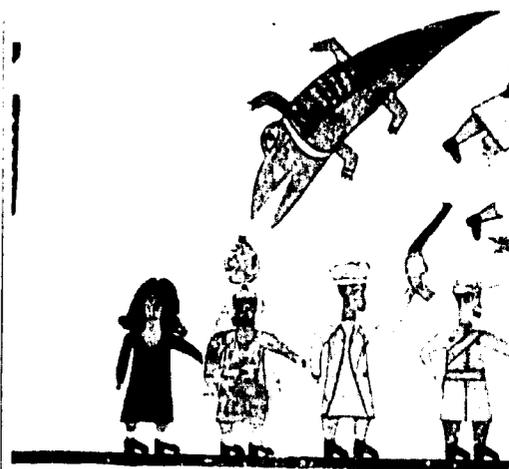
At the same time, USAID had not operated in Egypt in many years. ASIP in fact was the first AID development project to begin operating there since the 1960's—and therefore new lines of communication and operating procedures had to be established.

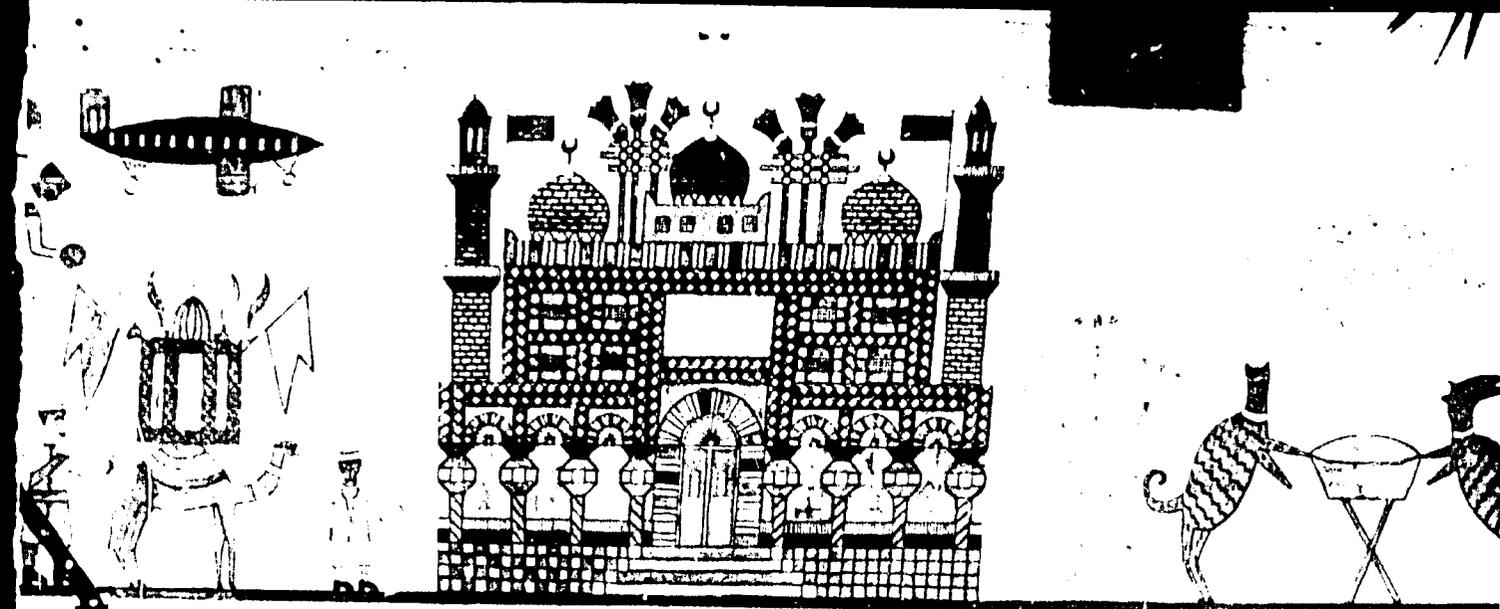
Despite these obstacles, especially in the first year, ASIP has been able to make significant progress in Egypt and is now on the way to becoming institutionalized.

## Egyptian Support

From the beginning, Egyptian officials at all levels showed interest in the ASIP Project not only as a means of improving agricultural management, which they saw as a pressing need, but also as an innovative approach to training.

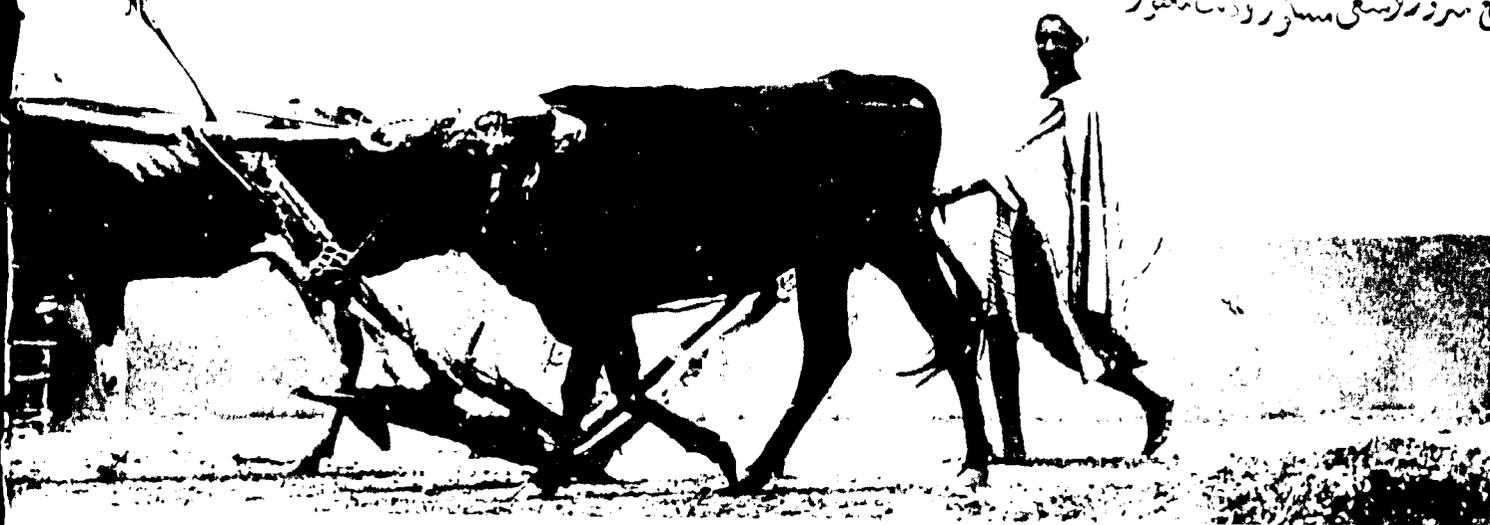
Traditionally, training in Egypt has focused on theory and relied on lectures and discussion methods of instruction, the process ended on the last day of the training course. Egyptian officials perceived a need for a more practical, learning by doing approach to training, coupled with a strong follow up program on the job to continue the training process and to make





من رار فری و حیدرہ سعادی

بق سہروزہ سعادی مسکن اور وادیہ سعادی



Going to the field, a young Egyptian farmer passes a farmhouse wall painting that depicts the owner's trip to Mecca. In addition to traditional motifs, such as the tomb of Mohammed, the artist has included, at left, a scene of modern warfare

it responsive to work needs

Moreover, senior Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) officials wanted to provide training to as many managers as possible during ASIP's planned two years of operations in Egypt. As a result, prime emphasis was placed on training during the first year of the project in Egypt, as opposed to research and staff development, as was the case in Nepal.

Less than three months after the U.S. advisors began work in Egypt in October, 1977, a high-level Project Committee within the MOA had been created by ministerial decree. Chaired by the most senior civil servant in the Ministry, the Committee was composed of the Under-Secretaries and Directors General responsible for the major work of the Ministry.

These officials were, for the most part, also members of the Agricultural Training Board (ATB), a training advisory body responsible to the Minister, and serving at his pleasure, not a statutory body with responsibilities for implementation.

For the first 14 months of the project, ASIP was attached to the ATB and was dependent upon its staff for the conduct of day to day business. However, because the ATB Secretariat

operated in an *ad hoc* fashion, it was found that the ATB was not the proper place for ASIP to be located.

It is axiomatic to the "ASIP approach" that U.S. advisors should serve primarily as catalysts to train local staff members, who can then carry out the research, training and organization development activities of the project. This requires qualified staff to be assigned full time to the project, which proved impossible while ASIP was dependent on the ATB Secretariat.

Despite these difficulties, a mid-term evaluation by USAID in November, 1978, one year after the start of the project, showed that ASIP had already made an impact on management training in Egypt. "USAID officers and leadership in GOE/MOE definitely want to see ASIP type training institutionalized in Egypt. From the Egyptian perspective the project has demonstrated management skills training success not achieved by any previous training program, and the emphasis on Egyptization is much appreciated."

One of the major recommendations of the evaluation was to shift ASIP from the ATB to the Department of Training and Extension within the MOA. This transfer took place in January,

1979. Since then office space has been provided, permanent staff members have been assigned to the project, and staff development, including research for an Egyptian reference book, has moved ahead rapidly.

One advantage of focusing on training during the first year was that ASIP was plunged directly into the field implementation problems as experienced by the trainees in their daily work. In fact, the MOA saw — and still sees — ASIP as an instrument for dealing with priority issues within the ministry, such as the development of new export crops, which requires effective communication between field workers and farmers.

From the outset, then, ASIP has been more than a generalized management development program; it has been a means for tackling real problems already identified by the government.

The early emphasis on training and the resultant involvement with day-to-day implementation problems led the ASIP staff to develop not only the training course itself but pre-course needs assessment and participant screening (to ensure that course activities were geared to real work needs) and post-course follow-up to assess and improve the practical effect of

the training. This sequence has become a standard, but always evolving, approach to training and improved organizational performance within ASIP.

### Pre-Course Activities

After candidates for ASIP training are nominated by their organizations (which in Egypt includes the MOA directorates, cooperatives, the Credit Bank, the Ministries of Irrigation, Agrarian Reform and Fisheries, and various governmental agricultural companies), ASIP staff members

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“... Success not achieved by any previous training program.”

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interview each nominee and his supervisors to:

- analyze the nominee's job requirements;
- assess the relevance of ASIP training to the current and future responsibilities of the nominee and his organization; and

- explain the nature of ASIP training and the preparations necessary for the nominee to complete prior to the course.

Such interviews, always conducted in the field at the nominee's work site, also help the ASIP staff learn about the needs and operating procedures of organizations responsible for agricultural implementation work. Conversely, they increase the awareness of officials in these organizations of what ASIP can do to assist them.

On the basis of these interviews, as well as pre-course questionnaires and other information gathered during the screening trips, nominees are selected and tentatively assigned to groups with which they will work during the training. A high priority is placed on having people with diverse skills and organizational affiliations in each work group.

Nominees whose English may be rusty take part in a two-week intensive English course prior to the training. Conducted by native speakers (usually Americans, to expose the Egyptians to the accents of the expatriate trainers), the courses have received uniformly high grades from the participants.

Although ASIP courses are initially given in English, largely to allow expatriate advisors to train local trainers, the language of the country is used as soon as local staff members assume responsibility for the training.

Thus, courses in Nepal and Egypt are now given in Nepali and Arabic.

Building on the pre-course activities, the training itself, especially during the second week, encourages the participants to find ways to apply on the job the management skills developed in the course. Each participant designs a back-at-work plan which serves as a bridge between the training and the follow-up activities conducted by ASIP.

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*Agriculture and antiquity are ubiquitous features of modern Egyptian life. Although Egypt is 96 percent desert, most Egyptians make their living from the arable land along the Nile. At left, a young girl prepares for harvest; at right, a farmer winnows grain not far from the desert and the 4,600-year-old Pyramid of Meidum.*





## Post-Course Activities

Within three to six months of each training program, ASIP staff members visit the course participants to discuss their progress in implementing their back-at-work plans and to provide them with further assistance, if necessary. Meetings are also held with the participants' supervisors (and subordinates) to help ensure support for the participants' plans and to maintain two-way communication with implementing organizations.



In addition, and sometimes in conjunction with the follow-up interviews, two- or three-day follow-up seminars are held with past participants. The seminars contain, among other things:

- Refresher training in management skills;
- Discussion of back-at-work plans and their adaptation;
- Exchange of successful management practices among participants and the recording of these practices for the reference book;
- Feedback for improving the ASIP training program; and
- Planning for future follow-up seminars.

Each seminar is specially designed to meet the particular needs of the group members. A large portion of each seminar, in fact, is designed by the participants themselves.

Aside from face-to-face contact, follow-up efforts are carried out through the bilingual Arabic and English ASIP newsletter, which publicizes successful management practices in Egypt as well as general project and management information, and other written materials which are sent to participants.

In a follow-up workshop in Ismailia in September, 1979, for example, the partic-

ipants selected a number of topics which they wanted to discuss in future workshops. The ASIP office in Cairo then sent articles on these topics to the participants before the next workshop.

After reading the articles and discussing them in the workshop, the participants will extract ideas or practices which they would like to try in their own work, and then report back to the group on their experiences during the next workshop.

It is intended that the workshops will become "self-organizing" one or two-day sessions conducted by a past participant of ASIP training (not a staff person) with colleagues who have not been through the training.

The purpose of such workshops is to facilitate communication among fellow workers by sharing ideas, experiences and goals, and developing a common language and systematic approach to analyzing problems, planning activities, and evaluating results.

The "self-organizing workshops" will be run independently of the major activities of ASIP but will receive support, by way of materials, ideas and coordination, from ASIP staff members.

The development of "self-organizing workshops" constitutes an important multiplier effect of ASIP training. It also represents a natural outgrowth of the management skills fostered in ASIP courses. After all, facilitating the development of a group as a workshop leader is not substantially different from coordinating the activities of a group as a manager.



*Irrigation is an indispensable part of agriculture in Egypt, a land that receives only 6 inches of rainfall each year. At top left, an Egyptian carpenter builds an Archimedes' screw, an age-old device for transporting water. Below, a farmer irrigates his bean field with a similar device. By using labor-intensive techniques, Egyptian farmers are able to produce relatively high yields; its cotton yield, for example, is one and a half times as much per acre as in the U.S. But the scarcity of land, especially in relation to the large and rapidly-growing population, makes it necessary for Egypt to import food.*

## Looking Ahead

During the past year, much of the work of ASIP has been taken over by the Egyptian staff. There are now five full-time headquarters staff members, including a full-time Egyptian Project Chief.

Moreover, a number of line project managers who have taken basic and advanced ASIP training have been designated as part-time ASIP staff. These adjunct staff members, who are stationed in the governorates (provinces) will have responsibility for identifying potential ASIP trainees, for follow-up work in their organizations or regions, and for identifying and disseminating successful management practices.

This *de facto* decentralization of the ASIP is consistent with Egyptian policy to place major responsibility for implementation in the governorates. Further, it has the benefit of keeping ASIP training firmly linked with and responsive to field needs through the line managers who serve as ASIP staff.

The success of ASIP activities in Egypt to date has led the Ministry of Agriculture to request assistance from USAID to ex-

## Egyptian Official Finds ASIP Training Uniquely Effective and Job-Related

*The following excerpts are taken from a March, 1980 statement by Engineer Mohamed M. El Salyh, First Undersecretary of State, Egyptian Ministry of Agriculture, and chairman of the ASIP Project Management Committee.*

Since October, 1977, the Agricultural Sector Management Development Project [The Egyptian name for ASIP] has been working with the Egyptian Ministry of Agriculture. During that time, it has worked with (roughly) 500 persons, from undersecretaries to assistant inspectors.

The Project's approach to management develops a wide variety of management skills . . . The link be-

tween learning activities and (participants') jobs is established in the training courses and strengthened in follow-up activities.

All activities are conducted to develop, improve, and maintain management skills. The learning has proven to be successful. The focus has been on the practical aspects of improving management, resulting in unique and significant improvements.

Participants have reported that they have developed their skills in setting clear objectives, clear standards to measure progress, and identifying and testing successful practices that can be used back at work.

pand ASIP training to selected major agricultural governorates. USAID is considering a follow-on project that, among other things, would establish a number of regional training centers.

The present project will continue

through July, 1980, during which time additional trainers will be trained; research on the Egyptian reference book will continue; and all training materials will be translated into Arabic.

## Organizations Represented in ASIP Courses (January, 1978-October, 1979)

### Nepal

Courses: 8  
Organizations: 27  
Participants: 150

#### Sample of Organizations and Participants:

Twenty-two staff members of APROSC  
Director General of the Department of Agriculture  
District Officers of 17 Districts  
General Manager of the Agricultural Development Bank  
Registrar of the Department of Cooperatives  
Deputy General Manager, Agricultural Inputs Corp.  
Joint Secretary, Dept. of Food and Agricultural Marketing Services  
Deputy General Manager, Nepal Food Corp.  
Regional Director, Western Region  
Joint Secretary, Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Irrigation

### Egypt

Courses: 10  
Participants: 207  
Organizations: over 20

#### Sample of Organizations and Participants:

Officers of the Ministry of Agriculture  
Director General, Agrarian Reform Organization, Menfia Governorate  
Officers of Agricultural Training Board  
General Director, Veterinary Affairs, Beni Suez Govt.  
Senior Researcher, Plant Disease Institute  
Director, Field Crops Institute  
General Director, Cooperative Affairs  
General Director, Cairo Branch, Agricultural Credit Bank

## Recommendations

Based on an analysis of the ASIP experience in Egypt and Nepal, the following management practices and conditions are offered as recommendations for the implementation of similar projects.

1. In the early stages, projects such as ASIP should be attached to independent or semi-independent agencies to allow for flexibility and experimentation in a relatively low-risk environment.
2. As the project progresses, however, it becomes increasingly important for the project to establish close contacts with line ministries to allow for implementation under real-work conditions.
3. Qualified staff should be assigned at the outset of the project. If this is not done, the contribution of outside advisers is greatly diminished and the process of institutionalization is delayed, if not lost entirely.
4. Initial project activities should be primarily investigative, rather than strongly initiative, allowing outside advisers to become acquainted with local conditions, needs and operational practices.
5. Based on the fact-finding process in #4 above, early project activities should strive to be responsive to local needs by identifying and emphasizing those elements of the project that offer the most useful benefits.
6. Initial efforts at staff development should draw on the strengths and past experience of the local staff. In other words, the project should recognize past accomplishments (for the sake of building rapport and staff confidence) while attempting to introduce improved management practices.
7. The local staff should not be *given* answers or *told* what to do; rather, they should be allowed to discover and then adopt improved methods by actually carrying out the project.
8. Expatriate staff should have previous in-country experience and local language competence, if at all possible.
9. Documentary research skills are significantly different from project implementation skills and should therefore be seen as a separate activity. However, the ASIP experience in Egypt and Nepal indicates that staff members *can* be taught action research methods for gathering successful field experiences for use in country-oriented reference and training materials.

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