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IMPLEMENTING DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS: a state-of-the-art review

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
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FOREWORD

Since the U.S. Congress in 1973 issued its mandate for "New Directions" in foreign economic assistance, out of concern that the benefits of development be more equitably distributed, the attention of scholars and of officials in aid-giving agencies has increasingly focused on the implications of this new policy for existing models of administrative organization, process and technique. Those in developing countries who were best served by structures of development administration in the 1960's were not part of the poor majority, particularly those in rural areas, for whom the new equity-focused economic assistance policies have been intended. How, then, do we go about revising the norms of development administration in order to serve the needs of this previously forgotten constituency?

The quest for answers to this question has led to the emergence of a new body of literature concerned less with development administration than with development implementation. The new term reflects new sets of priorities: concern with getting actual results rather more than establishing formal structures assumed to lead naturally to those results; emphasis upon what happens at the interface between real people and the administrative institution rather than upon structuring the hierarchy within which those officials function; and greater emphasis on the active participation of the intended beneficiaries themselves in shaping public development policies and processes. The result has been to look more at the local and micro-level than before and to address the "human factor" as the central and most important element in the "administrative" process.

Marcus Ingle's state-of-the-art review of the implementation of development programs well summarizes the changing emphasis from administration to implementation. His report articulates the unfinished agenda that lies before development scholars and practitioners and challenges us to get on with the job.

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A STATE-OF-THE-ART REVIEW

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I. INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

In recent years the international development community has shifted its attention from planning toward implementation--transforming development policies and resources into tangible benefits for the poor majority, and attempting to close what has become popularly called "the implementation gap". Concerned policy makers and practicioners are actively searching for explanations of why development programs frequently fail and for practical guidance that can be followed to improve performance.

There is a burgeoning literature, both academic and official, which addresses various facets of the implementation process in developing country contexts. Little attention, however, has been given to a systematic review of existing strategies, especially as they relate to the implementation of "New Directions" or "Basic Human Needs" development policies. To date the program implementation literature has lacked coherence, focus, and operational relevance. Therefore, the Office of Rural Development and Development Administration (Development Support Bureau, U.S. Agency for International Development) commissioned this review of the scholarly literature and official policy documents to explore what is currently known on the subject of understanding and dealing with the implementation of development programs. Their scope included: (1) an initial inventory of the state of the art for "New Directions" integrated rural development type programs and (2) an identification of key policy and operational implications.

This review adopts a practical definition of program implementation:

> Program implementation is the management of specified development resources to directly and indirectly influence the behavior and status of target group populations in beneficial ways.

Implementation encompasses management of: (1) internal resources over which an implementing organization has direct authority, and (2) their external resources or factors which are keys to program success but over which the organization has little or no direct control. In essence, implementation is the management of desired development impact in a situation of partial control.

II. CLASSIFICATION OF PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION APPROACHES AND STRATEGIES

The review represents an initial and tentative exploration of a multifaceted literature. It involved the assembly and synopsis of scholarly publications (articles, books and reports) and official policy and procedural documents. In the relatively limited time available for completing the review, over 300 information sources were tapped. Approximately 50 of these sources are abstracted in the Final Report. A complete list of bibliographic references is included.

An important element of this review was the discovery of an "organizing mechanism" to classify and compare program implementation approaches and strategies. The organizing mechanism, presented below, serves two purposes. First, it facilitates drawing operationally relevant conclusions and their corresponding action implications. Second, it lays out an agenda for follow-on work by summarizing emergent implementation issues and by demonstrating knowledge gaps in the program implementation state of the art.

BEST AVAILABLE DOCUMENT

The program implementation literature divides into two major categories:

- General Administration--aimed at the processes and procedures by which LDC institutions undertake their activities.

- Development Projects--aimed at more specific, generally time-limited outputs and direct benefits to target populations.

The General Administration implementation category encompasses public sector development activities that have a functional or sector focus, such as local administration, health, or rural works. These are typically the responsibility of single bureaucratic units. The Development Projects category includes sets of interrelated activities aimed at achieving direct target group benefits within specified time and resource constraints.

The review isolates six separate and distinct implementation approaches. Three of these are clustered within the "General Administration" category and three are subsumed under the "Development Projects" heading. Each approach is listed along with a description of its underlying operational premise in the first column of Table 1, "Organizing Mechanism for Program Implementation". The remaining columns of Table 1 display the prescriptive implementation strategies corresponding to each approach. For each strategy, the table arrays the substantive positions expressed in scholarly publications, developing country policy documents, and donor assistance agency documents. The analysis segment of the review examines the congruence or fit between the strategic positions elaborated in the scholarly literature and the positions articulated by developing countries and assistance donors. The degree of congruence between the scholarly prescriptions and the official implementation positions, also presented in Table 1, provides the basis for drawing conclusions and formulating policy and programmatic implications.

TABLE 1

ORGANIZING MECHANISM FOR PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

A COMPARATIVE INVENTORY OF APPROACHES AND STRATEGIES

	ACADEMIC AND SCHOLARLY IMPLEMENTATION LITERATURE		OFFICIAL IMPLEMENTATION POLICY DOCUMENTS		Congruence Between "Prescribed" and "Actual" Implementation Strategies	Conclusions/Implications
	Program Implementation Categories & Determinants	Prescribed Implementation Strategies	Developing Country Implementation Strategies	Assistance Donor Implementation Strategies		
I. GENERAL ADMINISTRATION	A. THE ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY APPROACH		THE INSTITUTION BUILDING STRATEGY			
	Implementation performance depends on administrative capacity at the national and the local level.	Increase administrative capacity by building viable development institutions with clear doctrines, committed leaders, proper incentives, trained personnel, and external linkages.	Emphasis on building single institutions has decreased. Current priority given to developing capable leadership and efficient administrative procedures.	Although priority has decreased, donors still support some Institution Building activity in single ministries. Stress on committed leaders and efficient administrative systems.	Actual policies do not precisely follow the Institution Building Strategy. However, major Institution Building theme of capacity development is widely supported.	The basic premises and themes of the Institution Building Strategy are difficult to comprehend and to readily apply. Additional work, e.g. linking I.B. and program management concerns, is required.
	B. THE BUREAUCRATIC VALUES APPROACH		THE ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM STRATEGY			
	Implementation performance is directly related to a shared value system between administrative staff and clients.	Increase the compatibility between development services and client needs by pursuing administrative reform at the national and local levels.	Need for administrative reform is widely accepted. Integrated strategies not viewed as suitable or feasible. Devolutionary strategies receive lip-service but usually fail for political reasons.	Accept need for administrative reform. Considerable support for integrated strategies. Increased attention on problems associated with carrying out devolutionary strategies.	Policy statements support need for administrative reform, but there is little evidence that integrated or devolutionary approach is feasible in most countries.	The Administrative Reform Strategy is not extensively executed by developing countries. There is a need for applied research aimed at making the reform strategy more suitable and feasible in LDC contexts.
	C. THE WESTERN TECHNOLOGY APPROACH		THE FOLK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY			
	Implementation performance is negatively influenced by the transfer of inappropriate western managerial technology.	Increase the appropriate application of management techniques by harnessing indigenous resources and skills.	There is a growing, but minimal recognition of this issue. Indigenous solutions are not being considered in most areas.	Considerable awareness in regard to "hard" technology. Minimal concern with possibility that western management styles and procedures may be detrimental to development performances.	Actual policies only beginning to reflect the issue, and are silent with respect to Folk Management Strategy solutions.	The Folk Management Strategy is not widely discussed or followed by assistance recipients and donors. Additional consideration is required to determine whether this strategy is valid, and if so, how it can be articulated more effectively.

TABLE 1

(CONTINUED)

	ACADEMIC AND SCHOLARLY IMPLEMENTATION LITERATURE		OFFICIAL IMPLEMENTATION POLICY DOCUMENTS		Congruence Between "Prescribed" and "Actual" Implementation Strategies	Conclusions/Implications
	Program Implementation Categories & Determinants	Prescribed Implementation Strategies	Developing Country Implementation Strategies	Assistance Donor Implementation Strategies		
2. DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS	A. THE UNCERTAINTIES/ LATITUDE APPROACH		THE ANALYSIS AND ASSESSMENT STRATEGY			
	Implementation performance is jointly determined by unforeseen environmental occurrences (uncertainties) and internal structural opportunities for management flexibility (latitudes).	Increase project latitude (potential management flexibility) by developing a high quality implementation plan.	Increased emphasis on need for better implementation planning. Impetus for change largely related to assistance donor project document requirements. Most country planning still macro-economic in nature.	This strategy is now given high priority by all donors, especially AID. Suitable techniques for completing assessments and analysis are still being developed.	The gap between prescribed and actual is narrowing, primarily as a result of assistance donor insistence. Developing countries lack expertise in this area.	The Analysis and Assessment Strategy is being stressed by assistance donors and actily accepted by recipients. Additional measures are needed to refine this strategy and integrate it with developing country methods and procedures.
	B. THE NATURE OF THE PROJECT APPROACH		THE TARGET GROUP INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY			
	Implementation performance is related to the extent of behavioral change required for project success.	Increase likelihood of achieving sustained behavior change by ensuring target group participation in project planning and implementation.	Acceptance of strategy varies largely as a result of political orientation. Many countries stress participation; but lack commitment and procedures for involving poor majority in project activity.	AID, the World Bank, and to a lesser extent, the U.N. officially support this strategy. However, no official procedures or guidelines exist for carrying this out. The strategy is "experimental".	Project statements stress the need for participation in project decisionmaking. Readily applicable methods for ensuring participation are being developed and tested.	The rationale of the Target Group Involvement Strategy is widely accepted, but unevenly executed. Practical ways to increase commitment and demonstrate feasibility are required.
	C. THE IMPLEMENTATION CYCLE APPROACH		THE ORGANIZING AND OPERATIONS STRATEGY			
	Implementation performance is determined by the appropriate execution of management functions at critical stages of the implementation process.	Increase ability of project personnel to execute management functions by establishing appropriate project organization and responding to changes as they occur.	There is a high level of concern and interest in the improvement of project administrative and financial systems. Limited attention is given to creative problem solving and project feedback/impact evaluation.	Policies and procedures stress importance of project management systems. Emphasis on "compliance" with implementation plan. There is little concern for flexible management during implementation. There is limited, but expanding, attention to project evaluation and experimental learning.	Policy documents reflect consensus voiced in academic literature. However, donor agency procedures take a compliance rather than an evolutionary approach to implementation. Donors and recipients appear to be applying little of what has been learned from implementation experience.	The Organizing and Operations Strategy is inaccurately interpreted by major donors. Donors need to accept a more experimental and flexible implementation posture in lieu of the compliance strategy which is now prevalent.

The several implementation "approaches" and corresponding "strategies," used throughout the review, were developed to impose a structured ordering of the literature. As presented they may give the appearance of being more or less exclusive and easily arranged in parallel. In fact, the categories only represent ideal types which are implied by the literature. Caution should be taken in viewing them as fixed or exclusionary.

III. CONCLUSIONS AND OPERATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The conclusions and operational implications emerging from the review are separately discussed below for each approach in both the General Administration and the Development Projects categories. The nature of the relationship between the two categories is discussed first.

The application of General Administration strategies for improving the implementation of "New Directions" programs is somewhat in disfavor at this time, partially due to considerable previous expenditures with limited observable rural development success. The emphasis in the current literature is clearly on Development Project strategies as the most feasible means to narrowing the "implementation gap."

There is a growing body of scholarly and official literature which points to an essential link between the two categories. This point ov view stresses that improvements in general administrative operations should not be viewed as an alternative to improvements in development projects. Rather, one should determine from successful implementation efforts the appropriate mix of the several strategies required to establish, support, and sustain effective rural and urban development. In this sense, the General Administration strategies should be viewed as complementary to the Development Project strategies, and vice versa.

A. The General Administration Category

1. The Organizational Capacity Approach

The distinguishing feature of the Organizational Capacity Approach is the premise that development program implementation performance can be directly attributed to administrative capacity at the national and local levels. Capacity shortcomings frequently cited in the literature include: lack of trained personnel, indadequate incentive and reward systems, poor public servant attitudes, lack of coordination and integration mechanisms, and inappropriate authority and control structures.

The strategy prescribed in the literature for dealing with capacity shortages is labeled Institution Building. This strategy involves the planning, structuring and guidance of new or reconstituted organizations in order to increase their viability, i.e., their ability to exist and develop as independent units.

Conclusion: The basic premises and themes of the Institution Building Strategy are held to be valid by assistance donors and recipients, but in practice they are difficult to comprehend and readily apply.

Assistance donors and recipients, along with the academic community, recognize that a shortage of administrative capacity is a major impediment to the development implementation performance of large-scale administrative and bureaucratic units, especially in the least developed countries. However, the policies of donors and recipients take a broader and more diffuse approach to administrative improvement than that suggested in the Institution Building literature. They are currently stressing some of the major tenets of Institution Building, such as developing committed leadership and valid environmental linkages, but this work focuses on specific programs, e.g., credit or health services, rather than single ministries or institutions.

a. Policy Implications

- If the Institution Building Strategy is to be widely understood and applied, additional attention will need to be given to simplifying its operational features and demonstrating its practical utility. Specifically, additional action research is required to develop readily usable Institution Building guidelines. It would also be helpful to produce a manager oriented inventory of the substantial successes which Institutional Building efforts have yielded to date.

- The Institution Building Strategy tends to emphasize capacity building for its own sake. There is need to give increased priority to the sustained development performance or viability of public organizations as they relate to program outcomes, especially those which have direct or supportive roles in the implementation of "New Directions" type programs. Additional research is required on the measurement and determinants of institutional viability and the multiple institution contributions to systems of development action.

b. Program Implications

- Development managers dealing with institution capacity shortcomings can gain useful insights and methods from the Institution Building experience. A large number of publications are available which document Institution Building methods and applications.

- The Institution Building Strategy is most applicable when a discrete organization unit such as a government department, a university, or a public enterprise is involved. Institution Building Strategies need to be combined with other approaches to help assure development impact.

- In addition to the development of institutional capacity, managers need to assure that conventional administrative functions--planning, personnel, budgeting, logistics, etc.--are in place to support bureaucratic operations. Managers can rely on public administration specialists to provide assistance in these conventional areas. Developing country personnel and institutions can be effective partners.

2. The Bureaucratic Values Approach

This approach holds that program implementation performance is directly related to the degree of value congruence between bureaucratic officials and program recipients. This approach views bureaucracy, as it currently operates in many countries, as having a separating and alienating influence on intended beneficiaries who neither fully understand nor share its operational values and prescriptions. Value discrepancies are manifested in program-related conflicts and in the frequent erosion of commitment for rural oriented programs.

The Administrative Reform Strategy is the prescribed method for increasing the compatibility between bureaucratic operations and client needs. Two distinct administrative reform measures are outlined in the literature: the integrated sectoral management tactic which seeks to make the bureaucracy more responsive in specific functional areas such as agriculture or health and the devolution of authority tactic which facilitates value congruence by delegating program responsibility and authority to local government units which share clientele values.

Conclusion: Developing Country and Assistance Donor Policy statements reflect considerable support for the Administrative Reform Strategy; however, neither the integrated management nor the delegation of authority tactic is being widely adopted in Third World settings.

Although there is a growing recognition in developing countries that prevailing bureaucratic values severely constrain development implementation performance, most administrative reform efforts have failed due to a lack of sustained political support. The assistance donors, especially AID, are giving high priority to devolutionary approaches, and are supporting considerable applied research intended to make this approach more feasible. To date, less attention has been given to integrated sectoral management applications.

a. Policy Implications

- There is an immediate need for applied research aimed at demonstrating the development benefits associated with the successful adoption of administrative reform measures. Specifically, current empirical evidence which links improved bureaucratic integration and increased devolution to successful rural based programs needs to be codified and widely disseminated.

- The execution of administrative reform tactics is fraught with political dangers and liabilities. Thus, special attention is required to determine the most feasible methods for pursuing integrated management and devolutionary applications.

b. Program Implications

- Although difficult to execute, the administrative reform tactics have considerable intital appeal and can yield substantial benefits for the rural poor. Program managers should consider these reforms as potential program interventions when value incongruence is diagnosed as a major implementation impediment.

- Managers can currently access--and with some effort readily use--an expanding base of experts and literature in this area. For integrated management, considerable experience is available in the agriculture and health sectors along with generic management training and matrix management applications. Several relevant articles and bibliographies are available on devolutionary efforts. These sources should be used in designing and implementing administrative reform programs.

3. The Western Technology Approach

Many authors attribute implementation failures to inappropriate transfer of western managerial technology. Two themes characterize this approach. First, it is felt that the value orientations of western management methods are unsuited to the administrative culture of many Third World institutions. Second, it is argued that the managerial tools and techniques which western nations urge developing countries to adopt are overly complex, excessively planning or design oriented, and generally inadequate to deal with Third World implementation resource requirements.

In response, various authors have urged the acceptance of a Folk Management Strategy, i.e., the optimum employment of indigenous management approaches and techniques. Folk Management represents an application of appropriate technology principles to the area of development management--thus it has been labeled "appropriate managerial technology". For example, Folk Management stresses low overhead, compatibility with local social conditions, comparatively light capital investment, optimum use of available resources, and easy operation and maintenance without intensive support requirements.

Conclusion: The Folk Management Strategy is gaining support in the academic community, but is neither emphasized by assistance donors nor widely applied in Third World countries.

Assistance donors, and to a lesser degree assistance recipients, are becoming aware of potential implementation dangers associated with the wholesale adoption of western managerial technology. As of now, neither donors nor recipients are supporting the Folk Management strategy.

a. Policy Implications

- Joint research efforts by assistance donors and recipients are needed to determine whether, and to what extent, the Folk Management Strategy premises are valid. One way to accomplish this is to analyze successful development programs which have been planned and administered without extensive external assistance. Priority should be given to exploring what works and why.

- Successful Folk Management applications are available which could be assembled and disseminated. There is a need to ensure this is done. In selecting cases it is important to use those which clearly describe the administrative culture or setting.

b. Program Implications

- Managers who wish to proceed with Folk Management methods need to be aware of the fact that most applications will be labor and management intensive. Thus, additional attention will probably need to be given to the structuring of appropriate interpersonal networks and reward systems.

- Managers who face personnel constraints may find this strategy appealing. To a large degree, the Folk Management Strategy attempts to make productive use (often incremental improvements) of available management capacity, both within the public sector and among targeted groups and individuals.

B. The Development Project Category

1. The Uncertainties and Latitudes Approach

This approach, articulated by A. Hirschman in his excellent study of development projects, highlights that implementation is set off from planning. Implementation performance is jointly determined by unforeseen environmental occurrences (uncertainties) and internal project opportunities for flexible and effective management responses (latitudes). Project implementation is frequently unsuccessful, this approach holds, because inadequate attention is given to anticipating likely uncertainties and structuring the project organization to permit maximum implementation latitudes.

The corresponding strategy for improving implementation, labeled "Analysis and Assessment", is to develop a high quality implementation plan. Such a plan will verify that assumptions related implementation uncertainties are realistic. More importantly, based on an "implementation analysis" or "organization design analysis", the plan will indicate how maximum potential management flexibility or latitudes are designed into the project activity.

Conclusion: The Analysis and Assessment Strategy is being emphasized by assistance donors and has been partially accepted by the developing countries.

The acceptance of implementation as a distinct and unique phase in the development project life cycle has broad support in donor agency and developing country documents. As a result, increased planning attention is being given to the assessment of project implementation feasibility. Assistance donors are in the process of refining their analysis and assessment techniques. Developing countries are following suit, partially as a result of donor agency documentation requirements.

The progress made to date in simplifying implementation analysis methods and techniques, although encouraging, is clearly inadequate when viewed from the perspective of the uncertainties and complexities which pervade the implementation of rural development projects. Most of the techniques are not sensitive to the key role which political and cultural factors play in generating implementation latitudes. This is a serious issue since Third World country political support for rural development projects is typically less substantial and more diffuse than it is for more conventional capital projects. In addition, implementation analysis techniques generally focus only on internal project organization operations. Most fail to consider the important implementation linkages within and among the implementing unit, the project environment, and the target group members.

a. Policy Implications

- Additional donor agency support is needed to improve project implementation analysis and design methods. What appears to be required are simple techniques which can be readily understood and applied by project level personnel. Several encouraging approaches which can be expanded and adapted for this purpose are detailed in the literature.

- Additional information on the usefulness and appropriateness of implementation analysis is needed before developing countries will actively follow the lead of donor agencies. Rural development project case study materials which demonstrate the relationship between quality implementation analysis and project success need to be assembled and disseminated with this objective in mind.

b. Program Implications

- Project personnel can presently upgrade the quality of their implementation plans by using one of several implementation analysis approaches documented in the literature. These can be adapted for determining project organization capacity, for assessing potential implementation support, and for anticipating organizational "mutations" which are likely to occur over the life of a project.

- Project personnel in the donor agencies and the developing countries who are responsible for "New Directions" type projects need to recognize that the nature of their job is incredibly complex and uncertain. Compared to other more conventional development project activities, implementation planning for rural development efforts typically consumes a greater amount of resources and creative energy.

2. The Nature of the Project Approach

The premise of this approach is that the success of "New Directions" type projects depends on extensive behavioral change among targeted populations. Several features of rural development projects which constrain the change process, and thus contribute to implementation problems, include: dispersed target group members, size variations, cultural heterogeneity, their devolved nature, and their management intensive characteristics.

The Target Group Involvement Strategy prescribes that behavioral change can be facilitated, thus diminishing implementation problems, by allowing target group members to fully participate in making key project planning and implementation decisions.

Conclusion: The Target Group Involvement Strategy is generally supported by developing countries and assistance donors; however, it is unevenly applied in "New Directions" type projects.

"New Directions" projects that attempt to improve the well-being of the poor majority require sustained behavioral change to be successful. These kinds of projects, although difficult to implement, are now given highest priority by assistance donors and an increasing number of developing countries.

The accepted implementation policy in regard to "New Directions" projects is one that ensures full target group participation in the planning and execution stages. However, actual commitment to this policy, along with officially sanctioned guidelines for carrying it out, are not yet evident within donor agency procedures or developing country development plans. In short, there is substantial rhetoric on participatory strategies, but little sustained action. The Target Group Involvement Strategy thus remains in an "experimental mode".

a. Policy Implications

- The lack of practical action guidelines for securing participation is hindering the successful implementation of many projects. Available experience on successful participatory efforts needs to be codified into a set of useful how-to-do-it procedures. These procedures should be sensitive to changing participation requirements of different types, sizes, kinds, and locations of projects.

- Donor agency policies and procurements need to reflect the fact that "New Directions" projects involve complicated administrative arrangements, multiple actors, and the need for new and sustained behavioral relationships. For these reasons, it is reasonable to expect that implementation of these types of projects will be difficult and require a high level of commitment and support.

b. Program Implications

- Project personnel involved in design and implementation need to adopt a broader definition of "target group" than is conventionally used. Specifically, target group members who typically need to adapt their behavior in "New Directions" efforts include, in addition to intended rural and urban beneficiaries, both Third World administrators and assistance agency program and project staff. Each of these actors are in a position to slow down, or sabotage, the implementation effort. Implementation plans which outline specific steps for involving all of these key actors are essential for minimizing execution difficulties.

- Many novel approaches for securing target group involvement are beginning to appear in the literature. A few that are explained in detail include the use of small work groups, the conduct of periodic workshops, and the selection of rural infrastructure sites based on local participation criteria.

3. The Implementation Cycle Approach

The assumption which underlies this approach is that projects pass through a series of stages from the point of their conception to the point

where their goals are accomplished. The implementation success of a project thus depends on the performance of key "project management" functions at each stage of the process. The key stages include: Implementation Analysis, Planning and Redesign, Initiation and Start-up, Operations, Phase-out, and Impact Assessment.

The Organizing and Operations Strategy emphasizes the improvement in management performance at each stage of the implementation cycle by establishing an appropriate project organization and making timely responses to project changes as they occur.

Conclusion: Donor agencies, including AID, are inaccurately interpreting and executing the Organizing and Operations Strategy. Policy documents of Third World countries give minimal attention to problem-solving during implementation and project feedback or impact evaluation issues.

Donor agencies, including AID, are only beginning to address the dynamic and unpredictable nature of development implementation. As yet, neither their policy documents, or internal management procedures adequately reflect this fact. Thus, the Organizing and Operations Strategy is being inaccurately interpreted and executed. This is a serious issue, and may be the most important finding of the review.

Evidence from numerous studies indicates that implementation is an evolutionary process, characterized by uncertainty. To be successful, projects must frequently deviate from their original plans. Yet, the policies and procedures of the donor agencies are clearly "compliance" biased. Mention is made of "redesign during implementation" and "incorporation of evaluation results" into future planning, but internal donor agency procedures do not stress these activities. In

addition, the internal rewards go to managers who plan and obligate projects, not to those who implement and evaluate. Indicative of this in AID is that no set of internal project implementation guidelines currently exists.

a. Policy Implications

- Donor agencies and Third World countries need to adopt a more experimental and flexible project implementation posture, especially with respect to "New Directions" type projects. An awareness that implementation is an uncertain process should first be evident in the project plan. Agency planning procedures can facilitate this by specifying that detailed implementation arrangements have a short time span (no more than one calendar year) and that they allow for periodic upgrading. Plans should also include considerable resources for handling unexpected occurences and events. Thus, what is needed is a new project implementation mode--one that provides ample rewards for creative implementation responses and makes full use of performance monitoring and impact evaluation mechanisms. This mode will emphasize timely monitoring and target group impact evaluation, and pay proportionately less attention (given a relatively fixed amount of resources) to comprehensive project design. It will also stress timely responses to potential or anticipated implementation changes, rather than relying on more conventional crisis management and problem-solving techniques.

- There is a need for focused research which clearly identifies the key management functions at each stage of the implementation cycle, and determines whether specific types of implementation issues are peculiar to each of these stages. If so, this perspective may facilitate our understanding of and ability to deal with project implementation issues.

b. Program Implications

- In managing a project, every redesign decision has its own implementation support requirements. These requirments will be similar in nature to those addressed during the planning stage of a project. Each key redesign decision needs to be reviewed to assure that it can be implemented given the political and bureaucratic environment.

- Since implementation is a complex, multifaceted process, it needs to be managed in a multidisciplinary mode. The implementor(s) should be sensitive to and able to deal with a broad range of interacting forces. Implementation needs to be viewed as a collaborative venture that simultaneously draws on the talent of a number of disciplines and experiences.

- Project managers who wish to follow a specific implementation strategy can now rely on a wide range of methods and techniques which are readily available in the academic literature and through project implementation training programs.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The state-of-the-art review suggests several recommendations and future directions. These include:

1. Policy and programming priorities should be given to finding out how development efforts succeed. From successful projects we can determine the type of administrative and contextual environments required to support implementation. Thus, models of general administrative improvement can be oriented to maximizing the operational benefits of development projects.

2. Institution building and organizational viability remain key factors in the development literature and development programming. Yet, the available models and approaches still lack sufficient relevance and utility to development personnel. Hence, concerted attention should be given to simplifying and adapting existing approaches. LDC personnel and institutions can be effective partners in such efforts.

3. Experimental and operational emphasis should be placed on "Folk Management" Strategies--providing an environment in which LDC management innovation will prosper, and analyzing both the nature of those innovations and the context required to support them.

4. Effective implementation is an evolutionary process requiring changes in approaches and targets over the life of a project activity. Yet, bureaucratic structures still reward project planners and obligators rather than implementators--those who are tasked with assuring that expenditures achieve their ultimate impacts. Concerted attention should be given to developing administrative and project structures which reward creative responses to implementation opportunities and problems. Within donor agencies it appears that there is a mechanism which is available but not currently being used for doing this--emphasize episodic reporting and reward the effective conduct and use of impact evaluation results.