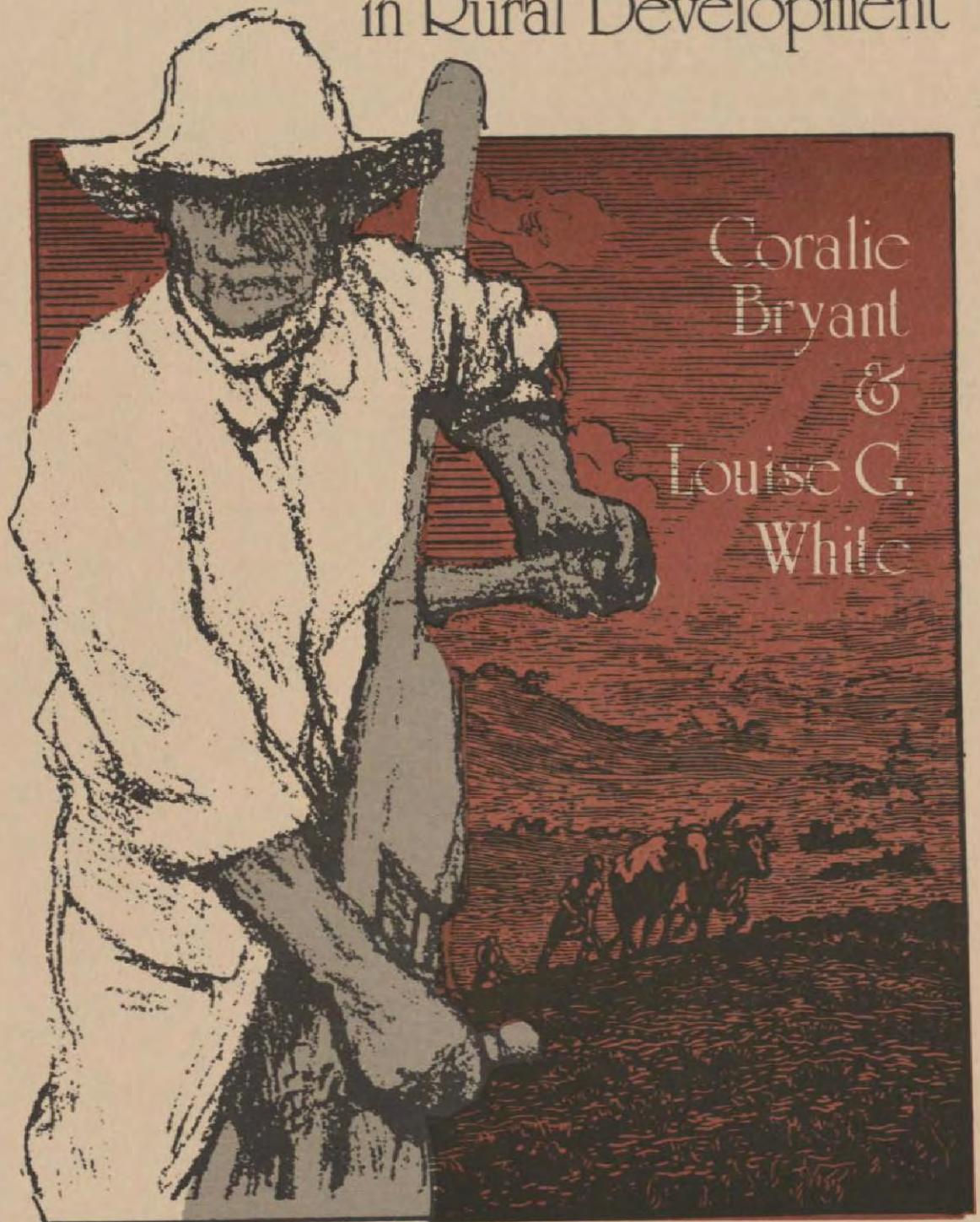


# Managing Rural Development:

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Peasant Participation  
in Rural Development



Coralie  
Bryant  
&  
Louise G.  
White



KUMARIAN PRESS DEVELOPMENT MONOGRAPH

MANAGING RURAL DEVELOPMENT:  
PEASANT PARTICIPATION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

by  
Coralie Bryant  
and  
Louise G. White

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Kumarian Press  
29 Bishop Road  
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Connecticut 06119

## THE AUTHORS

CORALIE BRYANT is the Director of the International Development Program at American University in Washington, D.C., and teaches in the area of international and development administration. She has written on rural to urban migration, low income housing policies, and on organizing participatory development projects. While teaching at the University of Zambia, she did research on the site and service project in Lusaka. She also directed a mid-career program for the Swaziland Ministry of Housing, assisted with a migration study in Botswana, and has worked in Uganda, Malawi and India. Her current interest is in mid-career management training programs concerned with rural development.

LOUISE WHITE is on the faculty of the Department of Public Affairs at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia, and teaches in the area of urban studies and policy analysis. She has written several studies on citizen participation and on the part that citizens play in administrative processes.

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Coralie Bryant  
International Development  
Program  
The American University

Louise G. White  
Department of Public  
Affairs  
George Mason University

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## I. Introduction: People in Rural Areas

The vast majority of the world's poorest people live in rural areas and are engaged in subsistence agriculture. In the 1970s, there were over two billion people in rural areas in the Third World.<sup>1/</sup> Over one and a half billion of these people were poor, both relatively and absolutely. It comes as no surprise that rural development--the effort to improve the living standards of these people and make that process self-sustaining--is a major goal of foreign assistance programs.<sup>2/</sup> And yet it is only relatively recently that rural development came to be perceived as the major goal of national development by development planners. The analysis and research that led to this consensus deserves our attention. Much of this research formed the underpinning of the Congressional Mandate to the Agency for International Development in the 1973 Foreign Assistance Act.<sup>3/</sup>

<sup>1/</sup> Michael P. Todaro, Economic Development in the Third World (1977) London: Longman Ltd. See p. 204. See also the World Bank, Sector Policy Paper, Rural Development (February, 1975). The annex to this sector paper contains data on per capita income in rural areas of all major regions of the world.

<sup>2/</sup> Uma Lele, The Design of Rural Development (1975) Baltimore: published for the World Bank by the Johns Hopkins Univ. Press Cf. her definition p. 20.

<sup>3/</sup> Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, 1973. 93rd Congress, 1st Session, 1973. The background book which led to this legislation is Edgar Owens and Robert Shaw, Development Reconsidered (Lexington, D.C. Heath, 1972). See the forward by Congressman Donald M. Fraser to the third printing of the book in which he refers to the legislative change as introducing a "participatory strategy" for U.S. foreign aid policy.

A major aspect of the legislative change was the renewed and expanded concept of rural development. Rural development is a far more encompassing and inclusive concept than its predecessor--agricultural development. The rural development focus includes all those components of the economy and society which impact on life in rural areas and contribute to the income of residents.<sup>4/</sup> They range from access to resources (land, water, capital, credit, better seeds), access to technology (agricultural extension, public research institutions), choice of strategies (crop mix and choice), as well as a wide range of non-farm activities (health, education, nutrition, even small business development).<sup>5/</sup> The crucial issue has shifted from merely expanding agricultural production to increasing the income of rural residents.

Throughout these shifts the continuing query is

<sup>4/</sup> One of the most researched of these components, for example, is that of access to land and land reform. For one of the best works on this issue see David Lehmann (Ed.) Peasants, Landlords and Governments New York: Holmes and Meier, 1974. Access to land is central to rural development; the distribution of, or control over, agricultural land determines the distribution of the benefits of agricultural development. For a US AID perspective see Donald G. McClelland, "Asset Distribution and Agricultural Development," Policy Background Paper, PPC, AID, October, 1977. Directly germane is the growing problem of landlessness. See Milton J. Esman, Landlessness and Near-Landlessness in Developing Countries. Center for International Studies, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 1978.

<sup>5/</sup> Earl M. Kulp, Designing and Managing Basic Agricultural Programs, Bloomington, PASITAM, 1977. Also see Walter Schaeffer-Kehnert, Approaches to the Design of Agricultural Development Projects, Bloomington, PASITAM, 1977.

what must happen and why, if rural development is to become a self-sustaining process of increased productivity and income expansion. There is in fact a more basic issue: what motivates the small peasant farmer as he chooses among strategies in his daily endeavors? While it is clear that there are strong differences related to the contextual circumstances of the farmer, are there any commonalities? Todaro argues that "in spite of the very obvious difference between agricultural systems in Asia, Latin America and Africa and among the individual nations within each region, certain broad similarities enable us to make some generalizations and comparisons."<sup>6/</sup> Among those similarities he cites the comparability of economic behavior among subsistence farmers in different regions. For most farm families, devoted to their (usually inadequate) land, life is an arduous and difficult struggle against serious odds with high risks. Survival is the prime concern and threats to that survival are abundant, and hence every decision has to be weighed against its effect on the struggle for survival. At the mercy of weather, market, money lender and merchant, uncertainty is pervasive in the environment.<sup>7/</sup> Choice, when observed from outside this system, may appear less than rational because of the complexity of the calculation and the blind spots of the observer.

Planners of the 1950s were most heavily influenced by the dominance of economists in the development field. And, interestingly enough, the econo-

<sup>6/</sup> Todaro, op. cit. p. 211.

<sup>7/</sup> See Raanan Weitz, From Peasant to Farmer (1971) NY: Col. Univ. Press.

mists of the 1950s frequently did not apply much of their own rational actor model to their assumptions about peasant behavior.<sup>8/</sup> It was assumed that the incompleteness of his information and the inadequacies of his institutions could only be addressed from without--and, more importantly, that persuasiveness and authority must be brought to bear on his choices. It was only after much research, and the criticisms of the Green Revolution, that serious revisions of these assumptions were included in the development field.<sup>9/</sup> Other disciplines also have literature which addresses the importance of understanding the cognitive map of the rural person and the pattern of factors that affect human behavior in

<sup>8/</sup> Two of many possible examples are J. H. Boeke's Economics and Economic Policy of Dual Societies (1953) New York, which propounded explicitly irrational behavior (with absolutely no empirical evidence!) in the backward bending supply curve. This idea was also propounded by B. Higgins in Economic Development (1959) New York: Constable Pub. Co. p. 286-7, 504. For a good critique of this work, and others of the same sort, see Keith Griffin's Underdevelopment in Spanish America (1969) London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd.

<sup>9/</sup> See Jim Weaver and Kenneth Jameson, Economic Development: Competing Paradigms--Competing Paradigms (1977) DSP Occasional Paper No. 3, USAID.

widely different environments.<sup>10/</sup> One of the most seminal of such works in political science is that of James Scott, The Moral Economy of the Peasant, in which the logic of the peasant as a rational actor dealing with risk in the choice of crop strategies is dealt with at length.<sup>11/</sup> This assumption--the peasant farmer as rational actor--has many implications; those pertaining to his role in a participatory rural development strategy are the major focus of this paper.

## II. The Concept of Rural Development

In the 1950s, much of the concern with development, when it was not focused on industrialization,

<sup>10/</sup> Bronislaw Malinowski, often cited as one of the pioneers in economic anthropology, was so frequently critical of conventional economic theories that some readers, and even some students, were misled. Yet he did point out much economic activity and how complex as well as socially motivated that behavior was. His point was often that economic activity was integrally related to other aspects of the culture. See his paper and that of Herskovitz, in Edward LeClair and Harold Schneider (Eds.) Economic Anthropology (1968) New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc. See also Cyril Belshaw, The Sorcerer's Apprentice (1976) New York: Pergamon Press, Inc. The counterpart literature in political science is ample; for example, see Robert E. Gamer, The Developing Nations (1976) Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc.

<sup>11/</sup> James C. Scott, The Moral Economy of the Peasant (1976) New Haven: Yale University Press.

concentrated quite narrowly on agriculture.<sup>12/</sup> Concern with the agricultural sector led in part to the search for improved seed varieties. Research in this area led in turn to many of the technological breakthroughs which triggered the Green Revolution. While it is the case that the Green Revolution indicated that seed varieties could be developed which would improve crop yields, it also indicated that social technologies were not equally adequate for delivering on the promise of the Revolution. Much of the income improvement generated by the Revolution was siphoned off by the wealthier and larger farmers while the small farmer was only further impoverished. Thus it was that the 1970s began on a somber note; considerably more reflection on the apparently intractable social problems of agricultural development was in order.

The realization that a direct focus on the agricultural sector alone was part of the problem, rather than part of the solution, led to the concept of

<sup>12/</sup> See the review of the literature by Bruce F. Johnston and Peter Kilby Agriculture and Structural Transformation: Economic Strategies in Late Developing Countries (1975) London: Oxford Univ. Press. One of the forerunners of the changes which were to sweep agricultural economics in the 1960s was Theodore W. Schultz, Transforming Traditional Agriculture (1964 first edition; 1976 reprint edition). Later Yujiro Hayami and Vernon W. Ruttan criticize, amend and improve on Schultz's work in their book, Agricultural Development: An International Perspective (1971) Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press. They argue that technical and institutional changes must be treated as endogenous factors in a more accurate model of agricultural development. For an excellent review of the current state of the field, see Michael Todaro's book, op. cit. (1977).

*rural development*. If rural poverty results from the cumulative impact of multiple problems, then a cumulative attack on all of these factors is essential. Integral to the problem, furthermore, are the social institutions which exacerbate landlessness, and limit access to technology and resources. The distributional consequences of introducing, for example, improved seed varieties without attention to "who gets what" does not mean improvement in the position of the small farmer. A rural development strategy also places the small farmer at the center of attention and takes cognizance of the problems of the landless poor. Since empirical research indicates that the farmer is a highly efficient user of resources, the improvement of his position is the best place to begin if one is to attack the enormous problem of declining food production in the third world.

The idea of *integrated* rural development grew naturally and generically from this concept of rural development. Since the causes of rural poverty are multiple, and interdependent, it was quickly recognized that they must be addressed simultaneously in many sectors. In part, the idea of integrated rural development was a natural evolution from the criticism of the Green Revolution. If the Green Revolution had such disturbing, unintended social consequences because of its narrow focus on seed varieties, integrated rural development, in contrast, was to be multisectoral. That is to say, integrated rural development projects were to be designed for integrated, simultaneous attack on many, if not all, causes of rural poverty. As one observer has noted,

integrated rural development coordinates various components which include a range of resources and services from a number of different sectors. These components are focused on the interrelationships between the constraints and limitations which constitute rural poverty.<sup>13/</sup>

This approach means that integrated rural development projects have the following characteristics:

. . . they are located in rural areas, with a local focus (and, to varying degrees, local participation and control): they are multi-sectoral in concept (although the projects often begin by concentrating on the agricultural sector and plan to add social service components over time); they are potentially self-sustaining and there is an element of coordination among the implementing agents for the project.<sup>14/</sup>

Integrating rural development is above all an administrative and political process. To integrate the activities of diverse ministries--for example, health, education, agriculture--is first and foremost an administrative problem. But then many agree that most past failures in rural development were rooted in administrative and political problems at least as much as in economic problems. While there are many ways to reform administrative systems so that they respond more effectively to the needs and demands of clientele groups, the most direct way to bring about change is to improve the relative power position of the small farmer. If and when the small

<sup>13/</sup> Cynthia Clapp, "Significant Cases in Integrated Rural Development Experience." Paper prepared for the Development Studies Program, U. S. AID, December 1978.

<sup>14/</sup> "Development Information on Integrated Rural Development." Office of Development Information and Utilization, Development Support Bureau, AID, May 1978, p. 4.

farmer has more clout, then delivery of services to him will improve. Realization of this relationship captured the stage for the idea of "bottom-up" planning. But it is not enough that one consider the relative influence shares of the small farmer; his collective action with other small farmers is an integral part of the process that must take place if improvement in his situation is to be self-sustaining.

### III. The Centrality of Peasant Participation

The issue of how a society allocates resources to this sector and how the resources are allocated among different activities within the sector is fundamental to the agricultural development process.<sup>15/</sup>

Since development, either rural or urban, is a process, its institutional, administrative, and political implications permeate every strategy pro-pounded by decision makers. The problem resides in a paradox: the small farmer is the most efficient but the least powerful producer.<sup>16/</sup> The information that he has about crop choice and strategy is of

<sup>15/</sup> Hayami and Ruttan, op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>16/</sup> See Joel S. Migdal Peasants, Politics, and Revolution (1974) Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press says ". . . exploitative institutions precipitated a withdrawal by peasants from as much outside contact as possible." Charles Elliott, Patterns of Poverty in the Third World (1975) New York: Praeger Publishers documents at length peasant powerlessness in his chapters on the "Rural Excluded." While those sources point frequently to the Latin American and Asian contexts, the African situation is presented by *inter alia* Robin Palmer and Neil Parsons (Eds.), The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa (1977) Berkeley: Univ. of Calif. Press.

central importance, but is disregarded. He most needs, and deserves, government services available to his sector, but is least able to demand them. He could best improve his relative power situation through collective action, yet this is the form of political behavior he is least likely to initiate. And so the political system continues to make crucial and determining allocative decisions which frequently result in a pattern of cumulative exclusion for the small farmer.

It is this combination of factors that sometimes leads people to assume that revolutionary activities are unavoidable. Hirschman, among others pointed out more than a decade ago that it is our lack of imagination about the process of change which traps us into thinking the choice can only be reform or revolution.<sup>17/</sup> Sequential steps in the steady process of reform mongering can begin the generative process of significant change.<sup>18/</sup> One of the most important factors in such a process is steady acquisition of influence by the small peasant farmer in decision making. Including him in a process of participatory rural development is therefore essential.

One of the most significant changes in development theory and practice in the past decade is new thinking about the role and function of participation.<sup>19/</sup> This change came about because of the cumu-

<sup>17/</sup> Albert O. Hirschman, Journeys Towards Progress (1963) New York: Twentieth Century Fund.

<sup>18/</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19/</sup> Coralie Bryant, Planning, Participation and Urban Administrative Development, USAID monograph, 1976.

lative impact of empirical work by anthropologists, political scientists, and economists. Their studies of development planning as conceived and practiced in the 1950s indicated that it was grounded on two faulty premises--one about the possibility of participation, and the second about its impact. The major assumption had been that most peasants did not know enough about essential technology, or were too committed to traditional values, to make the adjustments necessary to bring about development. Subsequent research in many disciplines indicated the shortcomings and pitfalls of this assumption. First of all peasants operate out of calculus which is highly rational from their perspective.<sup>20/</sup> A second assumption was that participation would slow down a project and inject needless complications. Research, however, indicated that development without participation was often unsuccessful in implementing projects as planned, and that even when successful in material terms, it only increased the dependence of groups on external aid and authority.

By contrast the "growth with equity" approach assumes that participation of the poor is essential to overcoming the powerlessness of those who live in poverty. It is apparent that the small farmer's knowledge and input may well determine the project's success. This new emphasis has been reinforced by

<sup>20/</sup> John Mellor, The New Economics of Growth, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976. Robert L. Ayres, "Development Policy and the Possibility of a Livable Future for Latin America." American Political Science Review, XIX, June 1975. Uma Lele, The Design of Rural Development, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975. Edgar Owens and Robert Shaw, Development Reconsidered, NY: D.C. Heath and Co., 1972.

policy positions taken in the international arena. Common Market countries, as well as the United States, passed legislation in the 1970s requiring that development projects be designed and implemented with the participation of the poor.<sup>21/</sup> Participation in these contexts includes administrative, political and consumer aspects.<sup>22/</sup>

1. As consumers, participants
  - (a) share in economic benefits
  - (b) provide indirect feedback
  - (c) contribute resources
2. As administrators, they
  - (a) choose among programs
  - (b) increase organizational capacities
3. As political actors, they
  - (a) exert political pressure
  - (b) redefine the political agenda.

This stress on participation has clear implications for the role of the planner or local administrator. No longer is he or she involved in persuading, cajoling, or forcing the changes mandated by national planners; instead the task is to consider how the farmer might be involved in defining, developing, administering and evaluating programs. In short, the professional's role is to *bring about participation*. Political powers and administrative units frequently resist participation because it is a challenge to them. Some however, argue against partici-

<sup>21/</sup> Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 as amended 1973. 93rd Congress, First Session. Section 102(b) (5).

<sup>22/</sup> House Committee on International Relations, Implementation of New Directions in Development Assistance, 94th Congress, 1st Session, 1975.

patory projects, not because of a lack of conviction, but because they cannot conceive of *how* they might go about organizing such a project. This analysis is directed towards this latter group, and will consider the actual problems and strategies involved in organizing participatory projects.

### **Managing Bottom-Up Planning**

"Bottom-Up" planning grows out of an emphasis on social development and the cybernetic model of bureaucratic organizations which is widely discussed in management circles. The emphasis is on ways to increase the flows of information throughout an organization. Insofar as development means an effort to increase the capacity of citizens to determine their futures, it is essential to involve them in the planning process. Similarly, insofar as an organization requires a capacity to process information from its environment, bottom-up planning is a way to learn of public preferences and possibilities. Both of these emphases were neglected in earlier studies of development planning. The older tradition of the rational model of planning involved a sequence of orderly steps to be followed by the administrator. That approach frequently made two fatal errors: it assumed that the planner had all the essential information, and that a meritorious plan would invite its own implementation. As a result, elaborate, and sometimes elegant, plans gathered dust in the offices of the national or local planning commission. Once one becomes more interested in implementation than elegance of design, the cybernetic approach becomes more useful and important.

Meanwhile, Third world countries have experi-

mented with self-help projects, and now have experiences with a variety of alternative approaches. The rationale in self-help projects is strikingly similar to the assumptions made by the cybernetic model. While by no means the first, perhaps one of the best known of the current theorists and practitioners of self-help is Julius Nyerere, the President of Tanzania. In the following excerpt from The Arusha Declaration, Ten Years After, he uses vivid and concrete terms to suggest the value of local initiative and "bottom-up" planning.

At the root of the whole problem is our failure to understand and apply to our own activities the concept of 'self-reliance.' We are still thinking that big schemes, and orthodox methods will solve our problems. We do not approach a people by asking how we can solve it by our own efforts with the resources we have in front of us. . . . Indeed, local initiatives are often scorned, as not being 'modern' enough. . . . Whenever any problem is being tackled or any new development is being proposed, our first question must be: what can we in this village or district or region or nation do to solve this problem ourselves.<sup>23/</sup>

It is implicit in Nyerere's statement that such planning does not mean that planning and managers have no role to play; rather the role of the planner or manager becomes more complex and varied. He or she has to establish ways in which small farmers are involved in the direction of the project, decide on design and materials and assume responsibility for implementation.

One observer lists the variety of roles and skills which an administrator or planner engaging in

<sup>23/</sup> The Arusha Declaration: Ten Years After, Julius Nyerere, 1976.

social-development must play:<sup>24/</sup>

1. Interpreter of community aspirations. Mobilizing the community, setting priorities, getting needed inputs from the government, making programs and bureaucratic structures more responsive to community inputs.
2. Strategist. Planning as creative rather than mechanistic.
3. Infuser of Values. Developing and transmitting values and ideas to guide the organization.
4. Decision-maker. Solving problems; organizing ideas.
5. Negotiator. Negotiating with a broad range of interests.
6. Organization Architect. Designing a network or system.
7. Ambassador. Establishing linkages between institutions.
8. Public Spokesman or Advocate. Defending the program to the outside world.

Specific management skills and perceptions are crucial to such complex roles. And organizational structure, while it cannot be discussed at length here, is vitally important for the ways in which it structures incentives for these roles. But more than commitment to participation is necessary; grounding in some explicit theories about the role of participation in decision making is essential.

<sup>24/</sup> Adapted from a discussion by John Ickis, in David Korten (p. 120), Population and Social Development Management: A Challenge for Management Schools (IESA, Caracas 101, Venezuela, 1979).

Knowledge about the conditions under which people will choose to become involved is of fundamental importance. This monograph will explore the implications of theories of participation, and then discuss various rural development strategies which grow generically out of them.

### **The Dilemmas of Participation**

Effective rural development requires a careful understanding of why people behave as they do, what motivates their behavior, and what elicits their enthusiasm and interest. One must also consider the incentives necessary for peasant farmers to be interested in participation.

Decisions as to whether or not to become involved in a project depend on how readily such activity will accomplish one's goals. More specifically, farmers must assess the relative costs and benefits of being part of a given project. People maximize their utilities. Their goals are diverse, and may include income, status, prestige, security, influence, and ideals. The order and strength with which these goals are pursued vary from peasant to peasant. Some maximize income above all else, sacrificing lower order goals such as leisure time. Others maximize status or security in preference to income. A peasant will decide whether to participate in a project, depending on how much it contributes to these goals. Estimated benefits are compared to the costs which have to be incurred; the relative balance controls the decision to participate or not.

One other factor enters into the calculus. This factor is the estimate of the probability that par-

ticipation will make a difference in the result, or that the desired goal will actually come about. The formula that expresses these factors is:

$$P = (B \times Pr) - C$$

This simply says that participation (P) depends on the benefits (B) which one hopes to gain, multiplied by the probability (Pr) that they will actually be achieved, minus the costs (C) of working for them. Evidence indicates that people participate in an activity when they sense that their benefits will outweigh the time and effort they expect to expend.

Development planners may set out to affect any factor in the formula in order to increase the likelihood of participation. He or she can make sure that the participatory task is designed to accomplish a desired benefit, that it is organized to enhance the probability of success, and that costs are minimized.

In order to understand how this calculation can be done, it is necessary to look at the particular kinds of benefits in which development planners are interested. These benefits are ones which economists call "public goods" or "collective benefits", and they pose a particular challenge for mobilizing participation. These are benefits which people share, even if they have not contributed to them, or paid for them. Most public policies are of this nature; they are designed to affect the public at large, irrespective of who pays for them. One example is public water supplies. Whether or not one pays taxes, or actually uses the public water supply, one benefits from living in a community with the water supply to the same extent as neighbors who have paid more in taxes. Since one can gain the

benefits of "public goods" even if one does not pay the costs, one is unlikely to expend much effort or time on them. Another example is public security; everyone in the area benefits from it, and it is difficult to exclude non-contributors from the benefits of increased safety in the community.

Since all benefit, it seems fair that all should contribute to the provision of such goods. The dilemma, however, is that from the individual's perspective, it makes no sense to help pay for a project which would provide direct benefits to everyone with or without a contribution. This dilemma is known as the "free rider" problem.<sup>25/</sup> Briefly stated, the paradox is that where collective action is socially desirable, collective effort is seldom individually attractive, and hence will rarely occur.

For example, consider the situation where two regions of a country desire to clean up a river which runs through both of them.<sup>26/</sup> Suppose that for each district the *benefit* of the clean river would equal *four utility units*, while the total cost of producing this clean environment is *six units*. Each district has two choices: to cooperate or not to cooperate. The total situation can be summarized as follows:

<sup>25/</sup> Mancur Olson, The Logic of Collective Action (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1968).

<sup>26/</sup> Harvey Starr and Charles Ostrom, "A Collective Goods Approach to Understanding Transnational Action," (New York: Learning Resources in International Studies, 1976).

Figure 1

		B	
		b1	b2
		Cooperate	Not Cooperate
A	a1: Cooperate	1, 1	-2, 4
	a2 Not Cooperate	4, -2	0, 0

Note the benefit of cooperative action to each district. If both cooperate, they will each pay three units, and receive four units of benefit; they each come out with one net unit of gain. But, and this is the catch, to the extent that either one can get the other to undertake the cost alone, the non-participant gains four units for noncooperation. (See the two diagonal boxes.) Neither district, therefore, has much incentive to cooperate, in spite of the fact that if they do, they will both be better off.

A second example of the dilemma illustrates the way it is posed where many individuals are involved. Range management of open public grazing lands has always been a problem because of the frequency of overgrazing. The theory of the "free rider" explains why this problem occurs. Each farmer finds that he receives a net gain by putting one or more head of cattle onto the range to graze. This benefit occurs even though the result is to overgraze the land and deplete its resources. As public land is destroyed, everyone loses an important collective benefit. Still it is not in anyone's interest to agree voluntarily to remove his own individual ani-

mal unless everyone does the same.<sup>27/</sup>

Throughout this discussion, participation has been treated as an investment. People make the investment--participation--when it is rational to do so. It is "rational" when one perceives that selected goals or objectives are obtainable through participation. If it is possible to obtain the same goal without participation, especially at lower cost--that route will be taken. For example, if a farmer perceives that he might obtain more access to credit through bribing a local official, that route is more rational than organizing with his fellow farmers to obtain public assurance of their credit rights. Or, if a farmer sees that others are organizing, and he will gain if they win, it is rational to accept a "free ride;" possibly to give nominal participation, but to withdraw from real work whenever possible. A farmer will participate in collective action for the social good only up to that point where the gains from doing so are greater than the costs.

### **Organizing Principles to Deal with the Dilemmas of Participation**

The rational perspective on participation, and collective goods, poses an important planning issue--how can a planner avoid the "free rider" problem. Mancur Olson, who has studied various efforts within the United States, and the internation-

<sup>27/</sup> Garrett Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons," Science 162 (1968), 1234-1248.

al arena, found evidence of ways to overcome it.<sup>28/</sup> Unions in the United States, for example, have frequently resorted to such forms of coercion as the closed shop to force all workers to belong to the union. In addition, while higher wages are a benefit available to all workers, the unions have experimented with offering side benefits available only to members. At other times, collective goods are sought by small groups, so that the contribution of each member is readily visible. Or under some circumstances, a few members will be motivated to invest more than their share to insure that the good is provided.<sup>29/</sup> Other authors have extended this to note the role that effective leadership can play in mobilizing contributions.<sup>30/</sup>

Many development organizers and planners have discovered these principles intuitively through personal experience. To deal with the problem of "free riders" discussed above, for example, there have been many successful experiments in cooperatives and credit unions, both examples of relatively small groups, where only members receive benefits. Such cooperatives provide social benefits insofar as they are natural gathering places and hence sources of enjoyment. Such practices increase benefits to be gained from participation, without increasing costs.

<sup>28/</sup> Mancur Olson, op. cit.

<sup>29/</sup> Mancur Olson and Richard Zeckhauser, "An Economic Theory of Alliances," Review of Economics and Statistics, 48 (August 1966), 266-279.

<sup>30/</sup> Norman Frolich, Joe Oppenheimer, Oran Young, Political Leadership and Collective Goods (Princeton: Princeton University, 1971).

A second example is provided by a program in Kenya. "Those who refused to contribute to a Harambee Secondary School in Western Kenya had one sheep or goat per head of household confiscated and auctioned, the proceeds going towards the project. . . . [Such a practice changes] the view of self-help from a pure spontaneous voluntary movement to a semi-compulsory form of quasi-local government, in which contributions are exacted like any other tax. . . ." <sup>31/</sup> The local administrators knew intuitively about the free rider problem, and anticipated that few residents would voluntarily donate to the school, even though all would clearly benefit from it. They therefore developed a set of sanctions to prohibit "free riders."

These theories and examples suggest three specific principles for managers to use in planning participatory projects.

1. Project planners and managers need to improve their listening and communication skills.

They must know the preferences of the public, what they value, and what they perceive as costs. People trade off lower order preferences for higher ones. In addition, the greater the scarcities confronting the individual, the less likely he or she is to take risks. For example, the tenant farmer may be disinclined to increase production without a corresponding increase in his share of the crop.

Managers must also be skillful in communicating information about programs. Anthony Downs notes that people are likely to overestimate the immediate

<sup>31/</sup> Robert Chambers, Managing Rural Development (New York: Africana Publishing Co., 1974), p. 103.

costs of a project, and to underestimate its benefits, many of which will not accrue until the long run.<sup>32/</sup> These tendencies provide important opportunities for administrators to collect and disseminate useful information about the actual benefits and costs in any project.

Such communication is not always easy to organize. Chambers cites a report describing efforts to establish local meetings in Kenya: "The sub-chief's baraza has usually been a forum for earnest discussion of plans and rectification of complaints, but the chief's baraza is usually addressed only by recognized local leaders, and at the Division/District levels the only local participation is to sit in the hot sun and clap when visiting dignitaries have finished lecturing in a strange language." Chambers comments: "It is only at very low levels that the full and open meeting is effective; and higher up there has to be resort to representation or selection of leaders and discussion in committee. The moral would seem to be that government staff should try to penetrate down to the level at which such general meetings can be effective, and that above that level there should be a hierarchy of development committees including local opinion leaders and staff."<sup>33/</sup>

2. A second planning and management principle is to change the nature of the public good by turning it into a private one for those who participate.

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<sup>32/</sup> Anthony Downs, "Why the Government Budget in a Democracy is Too Small," World Politics 12 (2959-1960), 541-563.

<sup>33/</sup> Robert Chambers, op. cit., p. 105.

One way to accomplish this is to restrict the collective good to those who help generate it or pay for it. Under such an arrangement, only those who work are able to have a home in the village, or to share its economic development. A related approach is to exact a payment or contribution from everyone who uses the "public good." If a community center is built, for example, only those who helped build it can use it, or alternatively, nonparticipants may have to pay a small membership fee. Cooperatives and credit unions, for example, frequently have user fees.

A variation of this effort to "privatize" public goods is to retain the collective good as a benefit to the community, but include some additional, individual benefits which accrue only to the participants. A coop might be established for everyone, but participants would receive a discount, or extra dividends, or a special type of insurance.

3. Turn participation into a benefit rather than purely a cost.

For example, if the channel of participation is a small cohesive community, rather than a large, hierarchical, impersonal organization, then participating with others might be seen as a benefit, rather than a costly time-consuming process. The assumption here is that individual self-interest can be oriented toward social incentives and goals. These enable people to interact, to respond to others, and to enjoy the participatory project. The point of interest to administrators is that local decisionmaking structures influence the preferences which are expressed, and the kind of behavior which results. Participation may be increased if these

structures encourage communal and interactive behavior.

This approach can be extended further. It assumes that individuals are always in the process of growing and changing. Instead of viewing people as having finite fixed objectives and capacities, they are seen as developing as they interact with others and respond to public events and problems.<sup>34/</sup> Nor are situations and problems fixed; as people respond to them, they change their environments. These new experiences can also alter their attitudes and enlarge their horizons. A participatory rural development project, therefore, can draw on social incentives, and has potential for opening up new possibilities for all its members.

### **Specific Management Strategies**

Given these general behavioral principles, it is possible to deduce specific strategies for managers to use to generate participation. The following strategies follow from the stated theories; they are also illustrated by specific instances where they have proven effective in the development process.

1. Build on the natural interests or primary goals of the peasants.

In an important study of farmer organizations in Ecuador and Honduras, Tendler reminds us that unfortunately an approach is adopted which is precisely opposite to the natural interests of local people. Developers "have often looked at the small

<sup>34/</sup> Mary Parker Follett, Creative Experience (New York: Longmans, Green, 1930).

farmer's keen interest in organizing to obtain land as a negative rather than a positive factor--because many lost interest in the group once the land is obtained." Instead, she continues, they should "take advantage of the desire by small farmers to organize for land, and the fact that land and land brokerage are things for which they are willing to pay." In addition, there is value in administrators "explicitly [siding] with the organized attempts of small farmers to get a greater share of income and resources--as it did in the Ecuadorean rice crop program and the . . . peasant unions in Honduras." As a final example, her analysis suggests that such efforts should take "advantage of the propensity of peasant farmers to organize around small infrastructure projects like access roads, irrigation pumps or canals, etc."<sup>35/</sup>

## 2. Think "small."

"There is real value in working through many small and unrelated groups," according to Tendler. "Such groups should not be pushed to become larger or to merge on the grounds of greater coverage of the population and scale economies. The importance of the scale *dis*economies for this type of organization should be recognized. . . . [Similarly, managers should] emphasize less the creation of small farmer organizations, and focus more on finding ways to build a nexus *between* existing organizational forms and existing service institutions."<sup>36/</sup>

<sup>35/</sup> Judith Tendler, Inter-Country Evaluation of Small Farmer Organizations: Ecuador, Honduras (Washington, D.C., A.I.D. Latin America Bureau, 1976), 8, 11, 15.

<sup>36/</sup> Ibid., 10.

### 3. Think "simply."

Administrators should "promote small farmer organizations in a region or country only after it learns about indigenous forms of organization that already exist. In many cases, his knowledge will show that there are simpler forms than coops and credit unions, which will make the task more workable--such as water-user associations of Ecuador."<sup>37/</sup>

As another example, Tendler notes that "credit unions and their Federations, in contrast to coop federations, have been more successful . . . [because] they concentrate on a single task, credit; the task is not as difficult as some of those undertaken by agricultural coops and their federations, like marketing; the task is not as dependent on cooperative behavior as are the activities of agricultural coops; the local credit union does not require farmer participation in decisionmaking to function properly."<sup>38/</sup>

### 4. Build an organization.

Instead of relying on spontaneous, voluntary action, an organization can structure incentives, and keep track of contributions. Developers, therefore, should "focus on certain organization-building *tasks*, rather than . . . organization *forms*. . . . First, tasks for such organizations should be chosen according to their organization-building potential and the ability of the group to carry them out--rather than according to whether they fit a program objective such as better prices or produc-

<sup>37/</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38/</sup> Ibid., 22.

tion technology."<sup>39/</sup>

In addition, according to Korten, organizations can increase the confidence of the poor that their contributions will make a difference. "An organization can provide a vehicle for collective participation in policy decisions and can help insure that the influence of the rural poor on decisionmaking is real and sustained."<sup>40/</sup>

5. Use local leadership.

It was noted above that sometimes individuals are motivated to contribute to collective goods out of a desire for leadership. Indigenous leadership can therefore be the crucial link in organizing the community. External leaders often have the very opposite effect. For example, Tendler notes the "contempt for the peasant that pervades the middle class and urban employees of service institutions. . . . One way to deal with the problem is to . . . encourage the use of peasant or other local paraprofessionals to implement small farmer programs. . . . The designation of such paraprofessionals could be entrusted to the small farmer group itself."<sup>41/</sup>

Chambers confirms the problems which result from the authoritarian stance of many administrators. He suggests that the solution can often be to delegate decisions. "Delays and difficulties can be reduced by giving more discretion lower down in the hierarchy. It should not be necessary, given competent staff and clear guidelines, for the pro-

<sup>39/</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>40/</sup> Korten, Population and Social Development Management, (26).

<sup>41/</sup> Judith Tendler, Inter-Country Evaluation, 32.

vincial/regional level to have to approve allocations of self-help funds; it merely increases work at both district and provincial level. In some cases, discretion might even be devolved to subdistrict level."<sup>42/</sup>

6. Build linkages between local groups and external sources of support.

" A study of successful efforts at community mobilization suggests that for the poor to develop effective organization within the context of an established social structure, they must have the support of an outside individual (or group) who can:

- establish credible communication links with community members,
- provide political protection when the incipient local organization begins to tread on traditional interests,
- provide access to outside funds, materials, and technical help not otherwise available to the community,
- sustain the members' interest and commitment, at least until the local organization develops sufficient credibility to sustain itself."<sup>43/</sup>

#### **IV. Innovative Approaches to Bottom-Up Planning: Old and New**

One of the older development models which warrants more attention than it receives in the United States is that of Denmark. Following Danish land reform of the nineteenth century, the Danes institu-

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<sup>42/</sup> Chambers, Rural Development (p. 17).

<sup>43/</sup> Korten, op. cit., p. 27.

tionalized a series of folk schools along frankly radical, bottom-up lines for their farmers. Tinbergen, among others, cites these schools as having had profound implications for the successful rural development which ensued.<sup>44/</sup> The path breaking work which had led to their establishment was provided by the inspirational leadership of Bishop Grundtvig. Grundtvig conceived of an institution which empowered the peasant farmer rather than made him feel inadequate, as much formal schooling is wont to do. Long before the education liberation proposals of Paulo Freire and Ivan Illich, Grundtvig institutionalized such an approach in Scandinavia.<sup>45/</sup> The concept and reality of the Scandinavian folk schools was readily grasped by Julius Nyerere who in turn experimented with a Tanzanian version of such schools. Jawaharlal Nehru was inspired to establish such centers in India.<sup>46/</sup>

The Danish success with such a frankly different approach to rural development can also be assessed by the productivity of Danish farms and the revealing fact that Danish agriculture remains today predominantly in small holdings, with the average farm between forty and seventy acres. The folk school movement remains alive and vital after

<sup>44/</sup> Jan Tinbergen, The Design of Development (1958).

<sup>45/</sup> Paulo Freire, Education for Critical Consciousness (1973) New York: Seabury Press.

<sup>46/</sup> Peter Manniche (Ed.) Rural Development in Denmark and the Changing Countries of the World (1970; Rev. Ed. 1978) Copenhagen: Borgen Publishers. This collection includes a preface by Jawaharlal Nehru and many papers on the founding and approach of folk schools, the Tanzanian experience, and in Mysore (now Karnataka), India.

more than a hundred years; information about its possible applicability to other parts of the world is disseminated from the International People's College (or Folk High School) in Elsinore, Denmark or the International Rural Institute (known as the Rural Development College) at Holte.

The idea of what some have come to call "the training approach" to rural development has spread far beyond rural Scandinavia to many other endeavors. Often, however, the important Grundtvigian aspect--farmer pride and power--gets lost, and the training approach becomes once more a transmission of information from the top down to the farmer. Yet Grundtvig had powerful insights into rural development long before bilateral and multilateral assistance organizations were in existence. The farm family, he pointed out, should feel a consciousness of their contribution and role in the national development. Their renewed sense of efficacy and pride should then be augmented by having their voices heard in national assemblies. And, of course, if they do so, they can also affect that crucial allocation of resources to this sector--a point rediscovered a hundred years later by Hayami and Ruttan.<sup>47/</sup>

Coombs and Ahmed summarize the wide variety of nonformal educational and training approaches which can affect the mobilization of farmers to support some innovations.<sup>48/</sup> Uma Lele in Design of Rural Development discusses this approach as well and concludes that it is among the most promising for

<sup>47/</sup> Hayami and Ruttan, op. cit.

<sup>48/</sup> Philip Coombs and Manzoor Ahmed, Attacking World Poverty (1974) Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press for the World Bank.

long run change.<sup>49/</sup> Albert Waterston's approach to rural development is clearly within this tradition, although his work is commonly perceived as very modern.<sup>50/</sup> Frustrated by all the alternatives, Waterston came to a commitment to bottom-up participatory rural development as one of the only truly effective approaches.

## V. Reforming Agricultural Extension Services

An alternative to bottom-up participatory approaches is that of reforming and reorienting agricultural extension services. In some aspects this endeavor does not need to be an alternative. It is conceivable that a country can reform, reorganize, and reorient an agricultural extension service so that it is more responsive to critical needs and views of the villagers. One very effective way to ensure that such a reorientation occurs is not to preach at the extension service, but rather to alter the influence ratio between the service and the small farmer. A reason for participatory rural development programs is that they are an integral part of the process by which farmers acquire influence which in turn can be used to obtain the other needed resources. Extension agents the world over are more responsive to those clients which they perceive to be influential.

<sup>49/</sup> Uma Lele, op. cit.

<sup>50/</sup> Albert Waterston, "A Viable Model for Rural Development," Finance and Development, Dec. 1974. Waterston was the Director of the Agricultural Sector Implementation Project, Government Affairs Institute, Washington, D.C. The project was funded by the Office of Rural Development, DSB, U.S.A.I.D.

Criticisms of agricultural extension services abound. There are far too many small farmers who rarely get access to the extension agent. Farms headed by females are most inadequately, if ever, reached by the agent.<sup>51/</sup> And the agent himself can feel deeply frustrated by his low status and relative powerlessness within the ministry.<sup>52/</sup>

Reorganizing an extension service is a relatively straightforward administrative reform, but it should involve far more than that if genuine problem solving is to proceed. The agent needs enough latitude and support to undertake meaningful assignments. For that to happen, serious commitment is required at the national level, not only to rural development, but to achieve sufficient devolution or decentralization for the agent's role to be meaningful. It is the *sine qua non* of agricultural extension service success that officials on the lowest tier communicate effectively with farm families, understand their perspectives, and can communicate in turn criticism up the line without fear of reprisal within the Ministry from which the service emanates. The most popular current reform strategy for agricultural extension service is that devised by Daniel Benor. The Benor method owes much of its success to clean lines of responsibility, a carefully selected group of village workers, and a high ratio of workers to farm households. The author points out that

<sup>51/</sup> Kathleen Staudt, "Agricultural Productivity Gaps: A Case Study of Male Preference in Government Policy Implementation" (1978) Development and Change, Vol. 9, No. 3, pp. 439-457.

<sup>52/</sup> David Leonard, Reaching the Peasant Farmer, (1977) Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press.

modifying the recipe results in unanticipated effects; not merely a dilution but a distortion.<sup>53/</sup> Management skills are often in short supply in third world countries; frequently the lack is greatest in the extension service. Many developing polities lack management skills for working creatively with decentralized administrative arrangements; typically the extension service is but one example among several.

## VI. Implementing Decentralized Projects

Reports by observers of rural development projects note the recurrence of some typical problems. Perhaps the most serious of these problems is that which can be called the "hijacking" of project benefits by the relatively wealthier farmers. This hijacking occurs for a variety of reasons: for example, in a particularly interesting study of the Comilla project, Blair noted that over time, project administrators tended to favor loan and credit for larger farmers because they thought, wrongly, that larger farmers' better credit would result in fewer loan defaults and hence better chances for promotion and career advancement for themselves.<sup>54/</sup> (In actuality Blair found that larger farmers had quite high default rates.) There are, however, many other problematical aspects of this kind of administrative behavior for project implementation.

<sup>53/</sup> Daniel K. Benor and James Q. Harrison, Agricultural Extension (1977) World Bank.

<sup>54/</sup> Blair, Harry W. "Rural Development, Class Structure and Bureaucracy in Bangladesh" World Development 1978, Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 65-82.

1. Unintended reinforcement of power of local elites.

Sometimes a decentralized rural development project increases the power of local elites at the expense of the rest of the community. Korten notes that such results usually occur when planners think of their task as limited to improving service delivery instead of organizing the powerless. As he says:

A basic question in development management. . . is whether desired social outcomes can be achieved through the central technocratic allocation of resources to provide services intended to benefit the poor, or whether the real problem of poverty is rooted in basic social structures which relegate the poor to conditions of dependency. If the former, then the central problem may be one of increasing the effectiveness of service delivery. If the latter, then the central problem may be to reduce dependency by measures which increase the potential of the poor to take independent and instrumental political action on their own behalf.<sup>55/</sup>

Moving directly to project level management problems, he describes the CADU (Chilalo Agricultural Development Unit) project in Ethiopia as an example of how, over time, local well-to-do farmers can siphon off the benefits of a project intended for the poor. The CADU project was an integrated rural development project designed to provide farmers in an area with improved access to resources such as seeds, credit, extension advice, and a number of related services (education and health). Improved marketing was also an aspect of the project. The results of the project by standard measures, such as cost benefit ratios and growth rates, make

<sup>55/</sup> Korten, *op. cit.*, p. 17; see also Clive Bell, Chapter 3 in Redistribution with Growth (Oxford University Press, 1974).

the project appear successful. But distribution of the benefits is less successful.

When broader social outcomes are examined, serious questions are raised. While it has been estimated that the project did benefit some 19 percent of the intended target population of small land holders and tenants, the majority of the intended population did not participate and in fact suffered actual loss as a result of the project. They fell victim to complex institutional forces which allowed more powerful interest groups to co-opt the project benefits for themselves.<sup>56/</sup>

Just how and why this unfortunate impact of the project took place has been explained in more detail by Cohen and Uphoff.

. . . the effect of better agricultural techniques and use of improved seeds and fertilizers were communicated to surrounding landowners. Major as well as middle-sized landowners came to realize that agriculture could be very lucrative. The result was that land prices nearly doubled, and tenants' rents were raised to half their production (up from one-third). There was pressure to convert pasture land into cultivated areas, and large scale mechanization arrived in force--the use of tractors stimulated by tax and credit incentives instituted by the central government. Outsiders moved to buy or contract land and take advantage of the infrastructural and production advantages created by more than five years of activity by CADU and its maximum package program. Other negative effects ranged from the absorption of real income gains through increased corruption by local government officials and administrators, to burgeoning market profits by grain buyers who still were able to direct wheat sales to themselves rather than to CADU trade centers because of credit and social obligations. . . . Up through 1974, the price of economic growth was paid most significantly by landless peasants who were evicted to make way for profitable mechanized production.<sup>57/</sup>

<sup>56/</sup> Korten, op. cit. p. 24

<sup>57/</sup> Cohen and Uphoff (1976) op. cit. p. 198.

Part of the problem is that project benefits could best be captured by those with control over land.<sup>58/</sup> In such cases the power of the landed grows--and often, as at CADU--at the expense of the landless. As Korten says,

Since the program made no attempt to organize the landless as a counter balancing force, power imbalances were accentuated and the benefits were distributed accordingly.<sup>59/</sup>

2. Ambiguity about the role of staff and local leaders

Projects which are to have a participatory component must be properly staffed. While that would appear to be only sound common sense, it is most frequently forgotten. Participation does not happen simply because someone wishes it to; organizations require nurturing. The community development staff must be a regular part of the personnel budget of a project. Their training is essential. And the structure of incentives for their behavior must also be in accord with project goals.

The staff is essential; it is equally important that they do not overwhelm the local participants. One should pursue a strategy of working with local leaders, bringing them into the decision making process, and giving them responsibility. Once this choice is made, the problem becomes one of avoiding the cooptation of local leaders. As local leaders assume responsibility, they are often lured into abandoning their role as advocates and watchdogs for their communities. This tension can never be removed, but it can at least be anticipated and con-

<sup>58/</sup> Ibid., p. 199.

<sup>59/</sup> Korten, op. cit. pp. 24-25.

sidered in choosing administrative staff and monitoring the incentive structure for administrators.

### 3. Lack of coordination among projects

Chambers describes how local self-help groups often find themselves competing with one another for scarce resources. Often they construct a building to show their abilities and thus gain government resources. The results are, however, often unfortunate. Examples are legion and well known:

. . . two dips built by rival clans within a few yards of one another; two secondary schools, one empty, the other with only a few pupils, a mile or two apart;

. . . The outcomes have been not only unsystematic development, heavy strains on government resources and often disillusion at the local level, but also more positively the expression of popular wants which political parties, local authorities and civil servants were unable or unwilling to carry.<sup>60/</sup>

### 4. Lack of clarity about specific responsibilities

Sometimes when local groups are not consulted about work targets and completion dates, they balk and administrators are then forced to impose sanctions to get participants to meet their deadlines. One observer concludes that this problem could be overcome for any one project through a meeting of self-help leaders, community development staff, a contractor if there is one, and any technical staff involved, to decide and agree who is going to do what, when and how.

The procedure could be a discussion with a written record, or a blackboard could be used depending on the literacy of the group. In the case of Botswana a system of monthly checks on

<sup>60/</sup> Chambers, op. cit., p. 102.

progress and a district level meeting to decide any remedial action was recommended.<sup>61/</sup>

5. Preventing outside aid from undermining self-reliance

Make certain that aid is applied to projects which the local residents are least able to provide for themselves, and not to goods which they can easily provide.

## VII. Evaluating Participatory Projects

Evaluation has recently received widespread attention as a crucial aspect of development projects.<sup>62/</sup> In more highly technological settings evaluation frequently suggests a rather formal process of developing research hypotheses, establishing a control group for comparison, specifying the data to be collected, and then measuring these against the goals. Such a model may be the ideal, but it is not necessarily appropriate to the kind of projects being analyzed here.<sup>63/</sup> First, we briefly describe their characteristics, and then consider the impli-

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<sup>61/</sup> Ibid., p. 105.

<sup>62/</sup> John M. Cohen and Norman T. Uphoff, Concepts for Measuring Participation for Project Design, Implementation and Evaluation, Prepared for Office of Rural Development, Technical Assistance Bureau, US AID, Washington, D.C., December 1976. A seven-nation, cross national empirical study which develops many indicators is that of Sidney Verba, Norman Nie and Jae-on Kim, Participation and Political Equality, London: Cambridge University Press, (1978).

<sup>63/</sup> See Evaluation Handbook (2nd ed.) Office of Program Evaluation, US AID, Washington, D.C. 4th printing, (1976) and The Logical Framework-- Modifications Based on Experience, PPC, US AID, Washington, D.C. (1973).

cations these have for the evaluation process.

### EXPERIMENTAL PROCESSES AND EVALUATION

Rural development projects which take participation seriously will probably share most of the following characteristics:

1. Uncertainty. Project designers can never be sure of the kinds of resources they can rely on, the responses of the local community and political leaders, the course of nature. For these and a myriad of other reasons, they operate under extreme uncertainty.<sup>64/</sup>

2. Change. Such projects are usually designed to bring about change in how people do things, and the priorities they pursue. Because people can respond in so many ways, both positively and negatively, the actual course of that change can only be guessed at.<sup>65/</sup>

3. Risks. Both managers and participants share considerable risks. The more time, resources, and energy they contribute the greater the risks.

4. Opportunity costs. There is always a question if the resources could be used better elsewhere. If so they are *costly* because they could be better used on other *opportunities*.

5. Interaction with participants. Participants often get involved in a project with minimal awareness of what it entails. If their role is ta-

<sup>64/</sup> Daniel Katz and Robert Kahn, The Social Psychology of Organizations, 2nd edition, John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1978.

<sup>65/</sup> Hirschman, op. cit. offers a discussion of uncertainties as both an occasion for new problems and new opportunities. Ch. 1-3.

ken seriously there has to be repeated attention to their perceptions and needs.

For all these reasons participatory projects can be thought of as *experimental processes*. They are *processes* rather than carefully designed blueprints for action. Much of the information about goals and preferences will only emerge during the course of the project. What is needed therefore is a process for involving the community in a task, in goal setting and in reacting to events.<sup>66/</sup> Similarly they are *experimental* in nature. Various tasks and decisions are based on hunches and estimates about what people want, and how they will invest themselves. As a result "the thrust of the process approach is to structure the design and implementation of a project to encourage changes that will help an outside intervention to adapt to the local environment, culture and economy."<sup>67/</sup> The successful Indonesian Family Planning Project for example stresses the extensive use of field experiments rather than large scale pilot projects. These allow for a quicker response, for trying high risk programs, and for repeated fine tuning.<sup>68/</sup>

In this context evaluation becomes part of an ongoing implementation process. It involves joint goal setting, the frequent collection of information

<sup>66/</sup>Chambers, Managing Rural Development, op. cit., pp. 74, 129.

<sup>67/</sup> Donald Mickelwait, Charles Sweet, Elliott Morss, New Directions in Development: A Study of US AID. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1979.

<sup>68/</sup> James Heiby, Gayl Ness and Barbara Pillsbury, AID's role in Indonesian Family Planning, Washington, D.C.: US AID, July 1979.

about the course of the project, attitudes of participants, analyses of problems and indications of possible changes. It is part of the built-in flexibility of the project design, rather than a capstone activity.

### MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Evaluation actually includes two different tasks: monitoring and evaluation itself. Most simply monitoring refers to what is happening while evaluation analyzes why the intended results were or were not achieved. Monitoring is a process of recording and analyzing information about project performance while it is being implemented for feedback into that implementation process. Evaluation is an analysis of the goals, objectives and impact of a project, including the effects of the project on the target population both during and after project execution. Where an external funding group is involved this form of evaluation can be called "interactive evaluation." It means having a team undertake on-going evaluation among the participating group with periodic interaction with both the executing agency and the parent funding agency. Interactive evaluation can be a useful device for identifying and responding to unintended consequences of the program before those consequences have the opportunity to multiply.

### CONSTRAINTS ON MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Problems which occur during the evaluation process have been clustered under four different

types:<sup>60/</sup>

1. Psychological. Information is often seen as a threat to participants, to local authorities or to other groups in the area. It is important therefore to stress its use in the management process. Stressing the experimental nature of projects should also help ease threatening feelings and reactions.

2. Economic. Information is an economic good which may be more or less valuable. How valuable is the information? Is it useful to the farmers? If not, to whom? Like all economic goods, there is a point when the marginal benefit of more information won't be worth the added cost. Robert Chambers notes that "It requires experience and imagination to know what is not worth knowing, and self-discipline and courage to abstain from trying to find it out."<sup>70/</sup> The Indonesian Family Planning Project provides an example of a design which consciously estimated the amount and kind of information it needed. Planners decided at the outset not to collect a lot of social information which is mainly of use to demographers. Instead they limited the data they collected to program outputs and performance, and amounts which can be quickly and easily reported to all levels of personnel.<sup>71/</sup>

3. Technical. Evaluation information is affected by the quality of the staff, the existence of

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<sup>69/</sup> These four constraints were based on a discussion on monitoring and evaluation at a course organized by RORSU, World Bank.

<sup>70/</sup> Chambers, op. cit., p. 153.

<sup>71/</sup> Heiby, op. cit., pp. 18-19.

data handling capacities, whether or not it is timely to the decisions that have to be made, and whether it is relevant to the project managers. The lesson here is to design evaluation procedures which are appropriate to the capacities of the local area. Where results are self-reported problems of verification and equity arise; these are compounded in field situations where staff are dispersed. The only recourse is to collect data which are verifiable such as agricultural output.<sup>72/</sup> Another conclusion is that the evaluation process should be kept as simple as possible. One analysis cited projects in both Chile and Columbia which were both simple and took advantage of the existing capacities in these communities. One result is that they have created a capacity in these areas to do research on their own.<sup>73/</sup>

4. Political. Political leaders are often very sensitive to the implications of any evaluation information for their role in the community. "In Afghanistan, for example, the prospect of changing the distribution of water among small farmers poses a threat to the leadership that currently decide who gets how much water."<sup>74/</sup> Development projects which take the local community seriously will often be especially vulnerable to such political issues. They need to be very specific about the eventual uses of any information which is collected, and sensitive to the possibilities of its misuse.

<sup>72/</sup> Chambers, op. cit., p. 75.

<sup>73/</sup> Mickelwait, op. cit., p. 164.

<sup>74/</sup> Ibid., p. 166.

## THE MONITORING AND EVALUATION PROCESS

The actual evaluation process which is designed should be appropriate to the goals of the project, should allow for continual redesign of the goals of the project, and should be as simple as possible. The following series of steps are suggested. These will have to be adjusted to the particular project and community in each case in order to deal as fully as possible with the psychological, economic, technical and political constraints described above.

The first step is to lay out the large goals of the project or program and the lower level objectives leading up to these goals. Evaluations based on the wrong goals, or on limited perceptions of the stated goals, can hinder an administrator from carrying out the full intent of the program or project.

1. Has the project met the goals as specified initially?
2. Has the project met the expectations of those involved? Of those administering the program? Of those impacted by the program?
3. Has the program been able to develop a process which is meeting the ongoing needs of all involved groups?
4. Could comparable alternative processes have achieved the same goals at less cost?
5. Do involved groups wish to continue with the present program as implemented, or are they demanding a change in the plan or project?
6. Does the project contain sufficient flexibility to allow it to respond to new information?

The second step is to include the participatory

and equity aspects of a project in the evaluation. Here it is useful to think of both participation in benefits, as well as participation in decision-making. The first requires that one measures who gets what; the latter requires that one measures who decides what.

1. What has been the pattern of distribution of benefits as a result of the project?
2. How successful has the program been in reaching the intended population rather than elites in the area?
3. Where appropriate has the project generated an ongoing organization to assure that the benefits will not be hijacked?
4. Who has been active?
5. Have participants achieved their own goals?
6. Has the project been able to build on existing organizations and develop their capacities?
7. Are the participants taken seriously as sources of new ideas?
8. Is the monitoring information useful to participants and is it given to them regularly?
9. Has the project been consistent with the capacities of the local community?
10. Have lower level officials gained efficacy?
11. Are the participants planning to continue their involvement?

A third set of questions concerns the implementation of the project, and the surrounding political environment. Relevant factors include intergovernmental administrative coordination, the advantages of decentralization versus centralization, and the

national government's political will to delegate control over certain functions to local administrators and ordinary citizens.

1. To what extent has decentralization led to some local control over decision making?
2. Have goals been shifted in response to other administrative agencies?
3. Have other agencies and levels of government been used as resources and sources of support?
4. How have political agendas affected the program? Are there potential allies whose support could be tapped?

## **VIII. The Calculus of the Decision-maker in Bottom-Up Planning**

Given the cited benefits of involving residents of rural areas in planning and participatory projects, why are they not used more frequently? When bureaucrats make choices, they balance immediate payoffs against long range ones. They are naturally tempted to choose those where the benefits appear immediate and certain, while the costs are long range and remote. Such a calculus would appear to be relevant to most of the development efforts described in this paper. Costs, in terms of resources, loss of control, and generation of political opposition, all appear real and immediate to the administrator. At the same time, benefits in terms of increased capacity of the rural poor to assume control over their lives, in generating additional resources, in promoting self respect, must appear to be very uncertain and remote in time. As Figure 2 suggests, administrators will be least likely to pursue proj-

ects which have this combination of benefits and costs.

Figure 2 Calculus of Costs and Penefits

		<u>Benefits</u>	
		Immediate	Remote
<u>Costs</u>	Immediate	Forced Choices	Choices least likely to be pursued
	Remote	Choices most likely to be pursued	Choices not likely to be considered

From the perspective of the local administrator, the lowest costs, both political and administrative, are achieved by turning to the central government. This strategy is almost always easier than developing ones own program, or choosing to disperse planning and implementation decisions to local communities. The more scattered and remote the small farmers are, the greater these costs and the stronger the push to centralization. By centralizing local governments minimize uncertainties, avert risks and conserve their resources.

But if this observation is accurate, why are participatory arrangements advocated at all? Some might argue that they have little future. But this conclusion is not entirely accurate; there are also clear gains from participation for the local official. The quality of information about the project, and its requirements is better when the recipients are involved in planning and monitoring it. Mobilizing participation is also a way to lower costs and to maximize scarce resources. A broader range

of participation frequently gives more people an investment in a project. If there are gains to be realized, however, it is essential to include the calculus of the local government, as well as that of the central ministry, since their support will be necessary. Those working on rural development must understand all relevant viewpoints and proceed to build the necessary coalition on the preferences of these officials and residents. A useful first step comes in showing them what they have to gain in influence and legitimacy by considering participation as part of administrative and political development.

## IX. Conclusion

This monograph began by pointing out significant changes in thinking about rural development and participation which have occurred in development thinking and practice. Administrators working on development projects and programs are having to reassess their practices in this area and confront the difficult problem of *how to increase* participation in the planning and implementation of a full range of rural development projects. These include agricultural projects and extension services to farmers. They include the full range of activities often described as "human resource development" which are designed to increase the abilities and skills of rural residents. Health, family planning, nutrition, and education are common examples. They also include a variety of economic development projects which can increase the income of the residents outside of the traditional agricultural sector. The roles and skills which those working in development must adopt and the strategies which accompany these

roles were reviewed and discussed.

One of the complex set of issues in the area of participatory projects is that of collective action. Farmer organizations, cooperatives, credit unions, self-help and associations are *collective* endeavors. Often, however, the development administrator confronts the situation where there is no organization and one will have to be generated for the project to have sustainability over time. The insights of many different studies were summarized on this problem and laid out in a systematic way for those committed to more effective management of development projects.

One of the issues frequently raised is that national governments are not sufficiently committed to rural development in the first instance. While the idea of rural development may be paid lip service in the national development plans, altogether too little is done in reality--in resources committed or management allocated--to rural development. This fact is all the more reason why whatever projects there are should have a participatory component. Only through participation, the building of collective action, and the mobilization of the few resources at hand, will the necessary pressure to bring about commitment to rural development begin to mount. Small, discreet, successful projects can have more of a long-lasting, generative effect if they come to be owned by the participants.

We all need examples of innovative projects, especially successful ones, if we are to venture into new kinds of projects. Thus this monograph included some examples of successful farmer participatory projects and programs. the Danish agricultural success grew generically out of its folk movement;

the rural folk school was the cornerstone on which small and middle sized Danish farmers built their influence and mobilized it to be what it is today. This experience is reviewed not only because it worked throughout all of Scandinavia but because it provides some real insight into a small farmer participatory approach.

Evaluation is integral to management of every project. Since participation is eminently measurable, its measurement for evaluation purposes also deserves attention. Many current studies have illustrated the way in which empirical work, and hence evaluation, can be undertaken. To do so, one needs to adopt an open-minded experimental viewpoint. This perspective is difficult when a project manager has invested much of himself in the project; to stand back, and question goals afresh is asking for more objectivity than many can muster. In light of this problem, one method that has often worked best is to attach an evaluation unit to the project's management *early* in the life of the program. Evaluation then takes place at intervals with a final evaluation after the project is completed. With this approach, a monitoring unit can also be part of that same evaluation office and can have regular interaction with the project managers for conveying feedback informally and regularly. Evaluation done by experts who are "parachuted in" at the end of the project's life is the least useful and possibly most damaging. It is that sort of evaluation which is most often resisted by project managers, precisely because there is a significant risk that those evaluators have more incentive to be highly critical than responsive to project needs. On-going evalua-

tion can contribute much to effective management. It is the diagnostic and knowledge base on which modern management is built.

Participatory projects in rural development deserve our fullest attention and commitment. The productivity of rural areas, and the influence of the people who live in them, are essential to one another and to the future of developing countries. In an increasingly interdependent world beset with mounting resource scarcities, it is also the case that rural development is essential for the future of mankind. Designing participatory rural development projects requires imagination, commitment and skill. Yet it is also an investment in people with potential benefits which far exceed either costs or risks.

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The vast majority of the world's poorest people live in rural areas and are engaged in subsistence agriculture. Rural development is a major goal of foreign assistance programs; yet it is only relatively recently that development planners came to perceive rural development as the major goal of national development. **Coralie Bryant and Louise White** point out specific steps which can be taken to encourage peasant participation in the process and projects of rural development.

**Paul P. Streeten** of the World Bank comments:

“‘Participation’ is all too often used as a slogan and substitute for thought. **Coralie Bryant and Louise White’s** monograph has the great and rare merit of thinking through in detail what peasant participation means and how precisely it can be implemented. In a lucid and vivid exposition they show that participation is twice blessed: it is desirable in itself and it raises the productivity of rural development efforts.”

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