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**BUREAUCRATIC REORIENTATION  
FOR PARTICIPATORY RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

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## **BUREAUCRATIC REORIENTATION FOR PARTICIPATORY RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

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The 1970s saw an important shift in international development priorities toward a direct attack on the problems of rural poverty. The results, however, have been disappointing. The reasons are many, but one which has been largely overlooked is the disparity between the way government bureaucracies operate and the requirements of rural development programs which can mobilize the rural poor for sustained, effective self-development.

Public policy generally has treated bureaucratic structures and modes of operation as given, while public administration searched for general models of organization that could implement whatever programs and directions were forthcoming from central policy-making bodies. Accordingly, little more than passing mention is given in development programming documents to the interaction between the requirements of poverty-oriented rural development action and the bureaucratic structures through which such action is taken.

The relationships involved and their implications for rural development performance have only recently begun to get notice in the development literature.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Important contributions include Robert Chambers, Managing Rural Development: Ideas and Experience from East Africa (Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1974); Uma Lele, The Design of Rural Development: Lessons from East Africa (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975); David K. Leonard, Reaching the Peasant Farmer: Organization Theory and Practice in Kenya (Chicago: University Press, 1977); John C. Ickis, "Structural Responses to New Rural Development Strategies," in David C. Korten and Felipe B. Alfonso (eds), Bureaucracy and the Poor: Closing the Gap (Singapore: McGraw-Hill, 1981); Milton J. Esman and John D.

Major development donors have yet to come to terms with the extent to which the requirements imposed by their own programming systems stand as barriers to effective action by recipient agencies.<sup>2</sup> So far, too, little attention has been given to dealing with bureaucratic structures as variables to be modified and managed in support of particular kinds of policy outcomes, such as poverty alleviation. Yet it has become evident that assisting disadvantaged groups requires procedures and approaches on the part of the assisting agencies which differ considerably from the usual norms of the typical public agency.

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Montgomery, "The Administration of Human Resource Development," in Peter T. Knight (ed), Implementing Programs of Human Development, World Bank Staff Working Paper No. 403, July 1980, pp. 183-234; George Honadle and Rudi Klauss (eds), International Development Administration: Implementation Analysis for Development Projects (New York: Praeger, 1979); and Bruce F. Johnston and William C. Clark, On Designing Strategies for Rural Development: A Policy Analysis Perspective (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, in press). An important series of unpublished studies is presently being carried out by Samuel Paul under the auspices of the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad and the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

<sup>2</sup>Judith Tendler, Inside Foreign Aid (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1975); Harry W. Strachan, "Side Effects of Planning in the Aid Control System," World Development, Vol. 6, No. 2, February 1978, pp. 209-219; and Coralie Bryant, "Organizational Impediments to Making Participation A Reality: 'Swimming Upstream' in AID," Rural Development Participation Review, Vol. 1, No. 3, Spring 1980, pp. 8-10.

## I. THE PROBLEM

In the search for more effective approaches to involving the rural poor in their own development, attention has been focused almost exclusively on the intended beneficiaries/participants. There is a familiar tendency to "blame the victim."<sup>3</sup> Failures to establish or maintain local organizations and to get individuals' cooperation are usually attributed to the people the program should assist — their attitudes, their poverty, their cultures, their illiteracy, etc. Too often overlooked is the reality that the reponse of the poor to government programs is shaped by the way the services are administered—how accommodating or inflexible the services are, how satisfying or how humiliating their treatment is, how readily the poor get access to services or how much more readily the rich can utilize them, whether government staff adopt a problem-solving stance or a conventionally bureaucratic one, how attuned staff are to the actual conditions and needs of the poor, whether these staff deal with the poor as responsible adults or as basically ignorant and irresponsible.<sup>4</sup> It has, for example, been shown that many U.S. poverty programs have fostered "dependency" relations on the part of beneficiaries because this simplified the administration of the program or increased the short-run political profitability of the program for its sponsors. The same phenomenon is widely observed throughout the Third World.

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<sup>3</sup>In the U.S., it has been found that law enforcement officers often "blame the victim" for crimes against him or her. While there can be some validity to this in certain cases, it does not reduce the responsibility of the offender. A similar phenomenon has been observed in some studies of anti-poverty programs in the U.S. where program administrators and critics are inclined to attribute program failures to the non-cooperation of intended beneficiaries rather than scrutinize the program itself in terms of its appropriateness and the environment it creates for beneficiaries.

<sup>4</sup>See Frances F. Korten, "Community Participation: A Management Perspective on Obstacles and Options," in D. Korten and Alfonso, *op. cit.* for a discussion of why participation is crucial to effective rural development, what are the obstacles to its achievement—including bureaucratic ones—and approaches to overcoming those obstacles. A shorter version of this study appears in the Rural Development Participation Review, Vol. II, No. 3, Spring 1981.

To expect beneficiaries' participation is quite unrealistic where the style of program administration stifles their initiative, problem-solving behavior, and development of increased capacity for resource mobilization and management at the local level—all essential elements of an authentic development process. Where programs are viewed by program professionals as "solutions" to presumed beneficiary problems, any effort on the part of beneficiaries to engage in independent problem solving may even be construed as uncooperative or obstructionist behavior.

Though government staff may have benign intentions, too often a program in which there is no real participation by beneficiaries leads to delays, to inappropriate services, and to apparently arbitrary demands made upon them by the program if they enter it. Beneficiaries are likely to be treated in patronizing ways by program staff and the program itself may be misconceived and harmful to poor households struggling to survive in economic, social and physical environments that are complex and fragile.

Recognizing that development programs can benefit from ideas and resource inputs from the intended beneficiaries/participants, development program proposals commonly call for some form of local organization—a multi-purpose cooperative society, a credit union, a water users' association, a mother's club, etc.<sup>5</sup> Yet these are usually creations of the project designers and managers rather than of the intended beneficiaries themselves, and we seldom find the process of participation taking root, spreading and thriving. A minority, most likely the better endowed local residents, may be responsive to the project, but the poor themselves usually remain uninvolved.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Norman T. Uphoff, John M. Cohen, and Arthur A. Goldsmith, Feasibility and Application of Rural Development Participation: A State-of-the-Art Paper (Ithaca, New York: Rural Development Committee, Cornell University, January 1979).

<sup>6</sup>Milton Esman and Norman Uphoff are currently heading a working group at Cornell examining experience with over one hundred fifty local organizations in a variety of settings, to assess how and under what conditions such organizations involve and assist disadvantaged groups, to result in a state-of-the-art paper by the end of 1981.

If we look at the bureaucracies working with the poor, we can find many reasons why the process of participation remains stunted. There is a large educational and status gap between government staff and the poor—something which Robert Chambers has usefully discussed in terms of "cognitive distance."<sup>7</sup> Often there are ethnic or linguistic differences complicating communication and mutual regard. There is a common attitude of superiority which exalts "expert" knowledge and deprecates what the poor know and are capable of doing. Even well-intentioned staff tend to fall into paternalistic postures which depreciate the capabilities of the poor or perpetuate the dependency syndrome. These problems of inter-personal relations between government staff and the rural and urban poor have been identified and need no elaboration here. What have not been clearly recognized are the structural and institutional impedances that are more than a matter of individual attitudes and preferences.

Our experience and observations in development efforts we have worked with lead us to conclude that the poor cannot be expected to change their behaviors and attitudes in response to government programs unless and until government staff change their activities and attitudes vis-a-vis the poor. But these problems are not simply due to personal predispositions of government staff. Here too we should be careful not to "blame the victim." In part, and sometimes in large part, the observed behavior and manifest attitudes of government staff grow out of the bureaucratic context in which they find themselves—the role expectations communicated through training programs and contacts with their superiors, the performance measures against which they are assessed, the structure of rewards and the kinds of sanctions focused on them. If the behaviors and attitudes of service providers are to change, attention must be given to changing the work situation which shapes their behaviors and attitudes. Consequently we propose that donor agencies and LDC governments seriously concerned with

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<sup>7</sup>Rural Poverty Unperceived: Problems and Remedies, World Bank Staff Working Paper No. 400, July 1980.

improving rural development performance engage in and provide support for experimentation leading toward the bureaucratic reorientation (BRO) of those agencies responsible for poverty-focused development action.

While BRO will to some extent involve individual attitude and value changes, the more important part involves changes in job definitions, performance criteria, career incentives, bureaucratic procedures, organizational responsibilities and the like. Indeed, it is likely to require that decision-making within government become more participatory, as organizations tend to replicate in their external relations those styles of operation prevailing internally.<sup>8</sup>

This is to say that BRO must itself be to some extent a participatory process, not simply "decreed" from above without explanation or discussion. With BRO, "the medium is the message," and an autocratic introduction of "participatory" efforts is likely to fail. One should expect that the staff themselves will have ideas about how to improve working relationships with beneficiary populations, though they may need considerable encouragement to come forward with such suggestions. Yet, perhaps paradoxically, one of the things of which we can be quite certain, even with the limited experience so far, is that BRO will not occur without strong, consistent and "committed" leadership from top bureaucratic and political echelons. As so often occurs, some "top-down" effort is needed to elicit and sustain "bottom-up" activities.

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<sup>8</sup>See Bryant, op. cit.; and Derick W. Brinkerhoff, "Inside Public Bureaucracy: Empowering Managers to Empower Clients," Rural Development Participation Review, Vol. I, No. 1, Summer 1979, pp. 7-9.

## II. RESEARCH NEGLECT

There are a number of reasons why little has been done to address the problems of BRO. First, the poor performance of bureaucratic organizations in rural development has usually been seen as a consequence of weak management, but this is quite an inadequate explanation. To be sure, the poor performance is largely a result of a disparity between organizations' internal structures and operating systems, on the one hand, and the requirements, on the other, for alleviating poverty and creating self-sustaining, self-reliant development efforts. But strong management would not be successful unless there is a better fit between ends and means. One precondition for effective action is a recognition that given organizational structures are not equally effective, or even effective at all, for every kind of program objective. Certain economic and social changes can be achieved only by introducing appropriate, directed changes in organizational structures and systems along with making policy and resource investments. In other words, available administrative means strongly affect the possibility for achievement of policy ends and not every administrative structure can be effective for supporting sustainable poverty reduction.

Second, even where there is a recognition of the need for BRO, there is substantial skepticism about the possibility of achieving it. There are some ongoing experiments with BRO, but these are relatively few in number. This is partly because the task looks so immense, especially if whole bureaucracies must be "reoriented." In fact, what experience there is on the subject suggests that it is best — and perhaps only — approached on an agency-by-agency basis, beginning where there is some combination of need and receptivity, at least somewhere in the upper echelons. While some changes need to be for the whole bureaucracy, such as certain civil service rules, the task need not and should not be defined as requiring wholesale changes from the start. Rather, more targeted efforts are in order. They are not widely known and their lessons have

not been fully assessed and disseminated. So there is a need to build a supportive body of theory and methodology, as well as to encourage well-documented, analyzed, and publicized experimentation, within certain agencies if not the whole bureaucracy.

Third, while there is a substantial body of theory and methodology that deals with the design and change of large-scale organizations generally, few development professionals have more than a passing acquaintance with it. This means that even those who accept the need for achieving BRO seldom have training or experience relevant to bringing it about. While some courses in development management deal with issues of community organization and the problems of the poor and with certain aspects of project organization design, few attempt to develop skills for analyzing how well the structures and operations of organizations being called upon to implement proposed development programs "fit" the task requirements. Fewer still attempt to provide the skills needed for guiding a BRO process that would promote such a fit. There is a need to incorporate into existing training for development professionals certain modules which develop such skills and to train instructors in their presentation.

Fourth, since there has been so little attention to the possibility of achieving BRO, no demand has been established for the types of research and consulting services involved. Consequently few centers of such expertise have developed to which interested agencies can turn for assistance. There is a need to develop a number of such resource centers in various parts of the world. But perhaps the more intractable barriers are those posed by implicit values which reinforce the existing systems and structures of development agencies. We discuss these to identify certain normative and conceptual reorientations which would need to accompany BRO efforts.

### III. INERTIAL VALUES

Three value equations, reflecting deeply held assumptions regarding the nature of the development process, tend to reinforce prevailing bureaucratic practices and the procedures and reward systems that support them. Since these values rationalize bureaucratic convenience and advantage, they are seldom questioned by administrators and constitute rather stable views of the world. These presumptions are deeply institutionalized in bureaucratic operations and routines. Yet introducing alternative views will be important, even essential, to the process of BRO.

Expenditure = Results. For years, prevailing economic theory has equated development with growth of GNP, and has attributed such growth to increases in the level and rate of capital investment, assuming that labor and natural resources are freely available with no opportunity cost. This view has come under increasing attack, and few would advance it now, at least in its earlier pristine form. But bureaucratic practice has reflected a parallel way of thinking which has received less critical attention: expenditure = results. This is an even more mistaken and misleading formulation than that which equated capital investment with development.

The preoccupation of government bureaus and donor agencies with "moving money" and their predisposition to take as the primary measure of development performance the rates at which their staff are able to spend development funds necessarily treats such expenditures as a proxy for development progress. Indeed even donor countries now find their development contribution being assessed in international forums in terms of development resources transferred as a percentage of GNP, when the amount accomplished with foreign aid is not necessarily proportioned to the amount of funds provided. Those who move the most money are the heroes, whether at the level of international assemblies or among the lowest-level bureaucratic functionaries. Those who do not move increasing quantities of money at ever faster rates are

dismissed as laggards, without looking at the comparative results of expenditure—how much, for whom, and lasting for how long?

Thus even though experience suggests there is little association in the social realm between the size of government expenditure and the results achieved from that expenditure, administrators and technicians throughout the system are under inexorable pressures to act as if there were such an equivalence—to design programs and implement them with all possible speed so that they and their superiors can report X amount of progress in terms of X amount of money spent. Such pressures are detrimental to poverty-focused rural development as the participation and the development of new bureaucratic capabilities on which effective action so often depends necessarily take time, and any activity likely to introduce "delays" in project approval and implementation is not viewed kindly.

The incipient movement within the development profession to institutionalize evaluation in connection with programs and projects is a well-intentioned effort to create a countervailing accountability for real results. But generally it identifies problems only after the fact and has little influence on decisions or on careers. Too often evaluation, if done, is done with reference to the initial conception of the problem—how well and timely did the organization do what it set out to do—rather than deal with the effectiveness of solving priority problems as they became more evident from the accumulating experience.

We are not optimistic that a more participatory approach to development can be promoted, or that economic resources devoted to development will be more efficiently used, until the implicit equation of expenditure with development progress is removed from our thinking and practices, from our evaluation criteria and from our budgeting and authorization systems. This will require a major effort and take time, but a strategy of BRO needs to have both long-term as well as short-term elements.

Education = Superiority. Perhaps even more deeply ingrained is the idea that advanced formal education, symbolized by higher degrees, makes the possessor generally superior to those persons with less education. Too often the presumption is made, by expert and non-expert alike, that the judgment and even the values of the educated person should prevail. This truncates participatory processes.<sup>9</sup>

The formal knowledge of well-educated persons is usually necessary but not sufficient for program planning and implementation. There is much local knowledge which the expert is unlikely, and sometimes even unable to know, and which local people can and should contribute to decision-making processes. Local knowledge itself is unlikely to be sufficient, but it is almost always necessary for efficient and effective use of development resources, especially when the objective is to assist the poor majority.

One of the purposes of getting more popular participation in development is to achieve a fruitful combination of expert and indigenous knowledge. No useful purpose is served by humiliating experts (this will not make them more receptive to local inputs). But it is necessary for them to become more cooperative with less educated people and this may require their becoming more humble. There are cases we know of in the Philippines and Nepal, for example, where local people told engineers planning to construct dams across rivers in certain ways that the dams would not be strong enough to contain the force of the rivers at flood tide. The engineers insisted they were correct, demonstrating the efficacy of their designs and materials with mathematical formulas and references to successful structures elsewhere. Still, once the dams were built, they were washed out some months later, demonstrating that persons knowing local conditions, however lacking in formal education, could be more correct even in

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<sup>9</sup>See the case study from Peru by Sean Conlin, "Participation versus Expertise," International Journal of Comparative Sociology, 1974, pp. 151-166; a shorter version appears in the Rural Development Participation Review, Vol. II, No. 3, Spring 1981; see also IDS Bulletin, Vol. 10, No. 2, January 1979, edited by Robert Chambers.

technical matters.<sup>10</sup> The myth of omniscient expertise needs debunking wherever it is found—whether the belief is held by the educated or by the uneducated. The purpose would be to get both of these groups to accept more collaborative approaches that draw on what knowledge each can provide to the other.

Projects = Development. It has been the practice in development management to draw a sharp distinction between operating programs and development projects, the latter commonly touted as representing the cutting edge of development. Within this framework, development is approached through a series of finite, discontinuous actions with discrete time-bounded outcomes and which depend on special temporary injections of external funds. Following Western theory, planning is presumed to be separate from and preparatory to action. The planner does the thinking and draws up the scheme for action. The implementer then follows this blueprint in the best tradition of policy-neutral administration. Institutional structures are regarded as largely fixed and are given little attention, as projects preoccupy both planners and implementers. If suitable organizations are not available for implementation, the problem is solved by creating temporary project management units.

Projects implemented by temporary organizations to achieve limited, time-bounded results are commonly defended as having positive demonstration effects. The presumption is that the new concepts they demonstrate will be adopted by more permanent organizations once proven in the field. In our experience, such "spontaneous" replication by the "permanent" bureaucracy is rare, precisely because if the concepts represent real innovation, their application will require in-depth changes in the values, structures, and operating systems of the agencies which would apply

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<sup>10</sup>See Carlos Isles and M. Collado, "Farmer Participation in Communal Irrigation Development: Lessons from Laur," Philippines Agricultural Engineering Journal, Vol. I, No. 2, 1979; and Bihari K. Shrestha, "Nuwakot District (Nepal)" in The Practice of Local-Level Planning: Case Studies in Selected Rural Areas in India, Nepal and Malaysia (Bangkok: U.N. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific, 1980), p. 93.

them. The demonstration of a new program idea by itself is unlikely to lead to such changes. Indeed, it may arouse resistance. Yet such changes constitute the more difficult part of development innovation, though they receive little attention from donors or from recipient governments.<sup>11</sup>

Sustained and widespread rural advancement depends more on moving whole sections of the bureaucracy toward new modes of operation than on the (often temporary) "enclave" progress too often associated with projects. It calls for a strategic style of management which sets directions, creates new visions of the possible, and builds new organizational capabilities for appropriate response to changing conditions. This strategic perspective views development as a continuing process of changing relationships, defines development resources broadly (not just as capital), treats planning and implementation as a continuing, iterative effort to deal with changing obstacles and opportunities, and recognizes the essential role of creative operational personnel working at the point of contact between bureaucracy and the community. This creativity is fueled by close working relationships with intended beneficiaries.

Within the framework of a strategic management perspective, development projects become laboratories for mutual learning (to improve organizational systems within the bureaucracy and to strengthen problem-solving capabilities within the community) rather than merely circumscribed work units dedicated to producing predetermined outputs and outcomes. We understand that this poses problems for management, demanding a higher order of commitment and imagination than often found now. But the shortcomings of a "blueprint" approach to development projects are

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<sup>11</sup>For an excellent case study on this, see Gerald Sussman, "The Pilot Project and the Choice of an Implementing Strategy: Community Development in India," in Merilee S. Grindle (ed), Politics and Policy Implementation in the Third World (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp. 103-122; also David C. Korten, "Community Organization and Rural Development: A Learning Process Approach," Public Administration Review, Vol. XL, No. 5, September-October 1980, pp. 480-511.

many. They are due partly to the misleading definition of the nature of development and, in turn, of what is needed from the managers of development agencies—not the unthinking "implementation" of someone else's project design, but rather the creative mobilization of available resources, ideas, and human energies in a continuous ongoing problem-solving endeavor.<sup>12</sup> We also believe that the commonly observed lack of commitment and imagination among the personnel of development agencies is more a consequence of bureaucratic systems which treat creative behavior as dysfunctional than a reflection of any inherent qualities of their personnel.

The most difficult part of formulating a strategy for BRO is devising an effective program of structural change within the bureaucracy, introducing new procedures for project formulation, new criteria for allocating funds or making staff assignments, new personnel systems, more flexible and appropriate budget cycles, new financial and accounting methods, etc., which support the attitudes and behaviors appropriate to a participatory style of rural development action. Otherwise we must look to "charismatic inspiration" or "religious conversion" to get the job done.

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<sup>12</sup> Albert O. Hirschman, Development Process Observed (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1967).

#### IV. A LEARNING PROCESS APPROACH TO BRO

While there probably will be a variety of alternative paths for BRO suited to differing national and institutional contexts, one of the more promising approaches is the learning process approach<sup>13</sup> being pioneered in two efforts currently underway in the Philippines—one in the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) and the other in the Bureau of Forest Development (BFD).<sup>14</sup> Each agency seeks to strengthen its capacity to promote more productive and equitable development of land and water resources based on the concept of community-level resource management—one focused on irrigation, the other on upland agro-forestry systems. The processes involved are evolutionary, agency-specific, and involve a centrally-guided bottom-up process of building new approaches to field operations based on field experience.

In this model, responsibility for managing the learning process contributing to BRO is vested in a central working group chaired by a high-level official of the agency. True to its name, the working group is comprised of individuals from within the agency and from collaborating knowledge-resource institutions who devote major portions of their time to working on the problem at hand. The group meets at least monthly and has access to resources which can be used to contract for research, training and other inputs crucial to the learning process. It is able to finance supplemental staff not available through regular agency budgets.

Though managed from above to insure necessary support of the experimentation, the learning itself takes place in a series of field-based "learning laboratories". In these, agency personnel are encouraged to work in creative new ways with prospective beneficiaries to shape a program of action responsive to their needs. The field

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<sup>13</sup>See David C. Korten, op. cit.

<sup>14</sup>The NIA effort is now moving from what is described below as Stage 2 into a Stage 3 expansion. The BFD effort was recently initiated and is at an early Stage 1.

activities are documented by trained observers who attempt to view the experience from both agency and beneficiary perspectives. Monthly reports are provided by these "process documentors" to relevant operating personnel and working group members to facilitate reflection on the problems encountered and the successes achieved, as a basis for drawing out more generalized lessons from the experience. While the learning laboratory is devoted to dealing with a specific need germane to the agency's mandate, i.e., water or forestry in the two cases cited, its staff works flexibly with the community in dealing with this need and is not constrained from supporting ancillary problem-solving.<sup>15</sup>

Plans and methods are revised as an understanding of needs and opportunities grows out of on-the-ground experience. The purpose in the initial learning laboratories is to understand more fully the problem and the type of intervention most suited to building community capacity to manage a particular resource productively for the equitable benefit of its members. This is Stage 1 of the learning process: learning to be effective. It is taken for granted that no matter how carefully planned the effort is, there will be mistakes and the effort will be relatively costly in terms of the time of top-level personnel committed to the work. This is accepted as an investment in the learning which is needed for success in Stage 2: learning to be efficient.

The learning process moves into Stage 2 when the working group concludes that a reasonable understanding of basic task requirements has been achieved. Attention is then redirected to simplifying problem-solving routines to make them suitable for large-scale application at an acceptable cost. As the more formalized methodologies are worked out they are tested and further refined in learning laboratory settings. Assessment begins of conflicts between task requirements and existing agency

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<sup>15</sup>The value of this is demonstrated in the experience of the IDRC-supported Caqueza agricultural improvement project in Colombia, as documented in Caqueza: Living Rural Development by Hubert Zandstra, Kenneth Swanberg, Carlos Zurberti and Barry Nestel (Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 1979).

structures and procedures. Larger numbers of agency personnel are involved in a growing number of learning laboratories to build their skills in the new mode of working. Finally the working group turns its attention to Stage 3: learning to expand.

During this third stage, the concern of the working group is to institutionalize the new methods and style of operation throughout the agency—gradually reorienting structures and procedures as needed. A carefully phased dissemination process gradually builds new centers of expertise in each region of the country to facilitate further dissemination. All the while the working group monitors progress to see whether further changes in structure, systems, procedures, training, etc. are required to support broader application of the new methodologies.

In a major agency, such a process may require six to eight years to complete and it is not to be undertaken lightly. As the experience in the Philippines reveals, the issues to be resolved at field level are many and difficult, and few if any can safely be ignored. For each class of problem, the agency must come to understand how the situation looks from the perspective of participants. It must find acceptable ways to deal with each class of problem, and institutionalize whatever competence this calls for from the agency. Not every major development agency has leadership prepared to make the necessary commitment to such a learning process. But our experience suggests that such leadership is not so rare as might be assumed.

## V. ELEMENTS FOR BUREAUCRATIC REORIENTATION

While the characteristics of bureaucracies which have engaged in such reorientation will depend on the specifics of the task and setting, we anticipate that they are likely to share a number of general features. Here we note some of the probable elements suggested both by existing theory and emerging experience.

A. Strategic Management: Top management which views the role of the agency from a strategic perspective, continuously reassessing objectives in relation to the aspects of human well-being for which it has responsibility, and initiating new learning processes toward further BRO as circumstances dictate.

B. Reward Structure: Reward systems relating to promotion, posting, increments, recognition, and opportunities that stress effectiveness in serving beneficiaries in ways that strengthen their competence to address their own needs.

C. Planning Systems: Planning systems redesigned to provide flexibility and to use simplified analytical techniques with the specific intent of facilitating beneficiary input. Project activities would be more often small-scale and planned at local levels in collaboration with beneficiaries—perhaps as sub-projects of "larger" projects.<sup>16</sup>

D. Monitoring and Evaluation: Monitoring and evaluation oriented to measuring and assessing the benefits accruing to beneficiary groups rather than the funds expended or activities completed, with continuous rather than intermittent effort. Presumably beneficiaries would themselves have an active role in this process. Self-evaluation at all program levels would be stressed over external evaluations. Attention would be given to the extent of beneficiary participation in monitoring and evaluation,

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<sup>16</sup>In fact, larger projects that support many smaller sub-projects may be a reasonable compromise between the needs of "participatory" development and the administrative imperative to keep overhead costs down. A very promising project, which incidentally has been "moving money" faster than other AID projects in Egypt, is the Development Decentralization Project with a Local Development Fund providing money to local councils for income- and employment-generating investments.

and their successful contribution to building self-sustaining community capacities to plan and implement further development improvements.

E. Applied Social Science: Internal agency capacity to gather and utilize on a routine basis, data crucial to improving its own operational decision processes. While the agency would probably also make use of external inputs from social science researchers and consultants, it would call on them for supplemental inputs rather than as its primary source of social data and analysis.

F. Personnel Procedures: More stable, long-term postings of staff, who would have substantial expertise in social-organizational analysis as well as technical specialties, and who particularly at field levels would work in multi-disciplinary teams; where there are language differences between staff and the local population, rewards and even requirements for staff to become conversant if not fluent in the local language or dialect.

G. Financial Management: Budget processes and cycles substantially revised to allow for more flexibility in making expenditures not only to meet priority needs as they are identified, but also to elicit matching contributions of effort and resources from communities. There would need to be fairly predictable and stable funding levels, flexibility in retaining funds earmarked for particular purposes but not expended or obligated due to unexpected delays, and an opportunity to accumulate reasonable operating surpluses for future use. Each level of the organization would need some discretionary funds subject only to post-expenditure audits to facilitate innovative activity. Public access to records and community-level accountability would serve as checks on corruption.

H. Differentiated Structure: Specialized units and services are likely to be established to relate to distinct client groups, at least in instances where the agency served two or more groups with distinctly different or even competing needs.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Ickis, op. cit.; and Honadle, Integrated Development: Making It Work, op. cit.

Specialization for tasks that serve rural development needs may also be important. The National Irrigation Administration in the Philippines, to which we have referred previously, has done this for assisting in improving "communal" irrigation schemes, and a special agency has been set up in Mexico to support labor-intensive rural roads construction.<sup>18</sup>

I. Training: Training for government personnel using case studies, role playing, and other participatory training methods to develop problem-solving and interaction skills, with particular emphasis on joint problem-solving with intended beneficiaries and/or their representatives. Attention would be given to both cognitive and affective aspects of learning. Persons working respectively as organizers and technicians would each receive some basic training in the other's specialties. It would be understood that the actions and attitudes of government staff could not be changed simply through training efforts no matter how strenuous. Rather, the training would be supportive of structural change being introduced into the organization.

J. Doctrine: Clear and widely shared understandings throughout the organization about its mission, how it can and should assist the poor majority, and how staff can and should be involved in this process. The literature on institution building gives substantial importance to the concept of institutional doctrine, and we find the concept key to the process of BRO. For example, with BRO, a forestry department or ministry would see its role more as assisting local people in the development of local forest resources as a sustained source of livelihood than as "protecting" trees from people. Agricultural departments would define their role as facilitating farmer choices

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<sup>18</sup>This latter case is discussed in Uphoff, "Farmer Participation in Project Formulation, Design and Operation," Promoting Increased Food Production in the 1980s: Proceedings of Second Agricultural Sector Symposia (Washington: World Bank, 1981), pp. 231-279. The Dirección de Caminos de Mano de Obra has operated with support from PIDER, an integrated rural development program funded by the government and World Bank. The success of engineers in that department depends on establishing and maintaining constructive relations with the rural communities whose cooperation is required to meet DCMO program goals.

among alternative technologies according to their individual circumstances rather than as maximizing sectoral output through gaining farmer acceptance for standard technology packages. An irrigation department would define its role as a service agency assisting small farmers in managing available water resources more effectively for their benefit rather than as that of constructing and controlling irrigation systems and gaining farmer compliance for agency-determined cropping and water release schedules. Such doctrine gives guidance to staff as to what their responsibilities are and shapes the repertoire of responses which staff rely on in their work with clientele. It establishes common purposes within a cadre and maintains its confidence in being able to define and solve a particular class of problems.

While not a complete or final listing, these are some of the features which we anticipate in an organization which has undergone BRO.

## VI. FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

There are a number of incipient efforts emerging around the world to deal with the problem of BRO as awareness of the need emerges independently in a variety of quarters. Several initiatives are found in the Philippines where, as mentioned earlier, both the National Irrigation Administration and the Bureau of Forest Development are engaged in explicit efforts built around many of the concepts outlined here. USAID/Philippines is making the provision of support for BRO part of its strategy for development work in the Philippines. The Asian Institute of Management (AIM) in Manila is developing as a leading center of expertise in BRO facilitation.

Important expressions of interest are emerging within AID/Washington and the World Bank.<sup>19</sup> The United Nations University is exploring how it might play a supportive role in mobilizing capacities of Third World institutions to support BRO. It has been identified as a priority concern by the Overseas Development Institute in London and the Rural Development Committee (RDC) of Cornell University's Center for International Studies. Interest in having some cooperative assistance in BRO has been previously indicated to the RDC by senior government staff in Costa Rica, Peru and Sri Lanka. An informal network known as the Management Institutes Working Group on Social Development, supported by the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations, facilitates exchange among four major Third World management institutes in India, Philippines, Venezuela and Nicaragua with commitments to action research programs that increasingly involve elements of BRO.

There are no doubt other initiatives and emerging centers of activity which we have not as yet identified. Yet those efforts of which we are aware are incipient and

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<sup>19</sup>See Jim Lowenthal, "Concept Paper: Management Training and Development," ST/RAD, Agency for International Development, Washington, February 19, 1981 (draft); and Project Advisory Staff, "The World Bank and Institutional Development: Experience and Directions for Future Work," World Bank, Washington, May 1980 (draft).

function with minimal and uncertain funding support. Some have little awareness of the work and interests of the others. The issues involved receive little if any attention in major international forums on development—not even those with a particular concern for participatory development. As yet the work has no clearly identified source of support prepared to make sustained commitments even marginally commensurate with the significance and scope of the problem being addressed.

Expanded exploration of the issues and opportunities posed by BRO is now warranted—especially the facilitation of rapidly expanded experimentation along the lines of the efforts currently ongoing in the Philippines. While such experimentation must be centered in and under the direct control of top management of the agencies involved, it can be greatly facilitated by the creative collaboration with supportive knowledge-building institutions (institutions specializing in training, research, and consultancy in the managerial, social, and technical sciences) and by the support of sympathetic donors willing to commit the relatively small amounts of flexible funding required. It is only through such experimentation, carefully documented and analyzed, that an expanded body of theory, methodology, and institutional competence to address the identified needs for BRO can be developed.

A four-fold effort is suggested toward this end:

- Theory and Method Development. Documentation and analysis of emerging experience and existing theory in an effort to build a body of theory and methodology of specific relevance to BRO.
- Dissemination. Publications, conference presentations, and training to focus attention on the need for BRO and to provide initial orientation to donors, operating agencies, and knowledge-resource institutions on how to address needs.
- Experimentation. Formation of collaborative linkages between operating agencies interested in undertaking BRO and knowledge-resource institutions interested in assisting them to carry out well-documented experimental BRO efforts.
- Skill Building. Training of interested professionals in the particular skills required to manage and facilitate BRO efforts.

While these four elements are substantially interdependent, each merits special attention in its own right. We are not suggesting a tightly coordinated, centrally-directed effort. This would be inconsistent with the very intent of the participatory processes which BRO is intended to facilitate. What we envision is a broadly-based effort involving many centers of initiative which are loosely linked through a variety of networking mechanisms supported by a number of influential donor organizations. The specific forms which such initiatives might take should be worked out in consultation with the sponsoring organizations.

The development enterprise has been noted for passing fancies and for belated learning. A concern with BRO reflects, we hope, the latter and not the former. Given the experience of the past 25 years, BRO seems like an idea whose time should have come some years earlier but which is only now starting to attract attention. Because it is an element of development effort which is likely to require several decades for major impact, it is an undertaking only for agencies prepared to adopt a time horizon and a scope of involvement well beyond those of the more typical "project" frameworks. We should be well aware by now that there are no simple, "quick fix" solutions to poverty. If indeed a central purpose of development is to achieve equitable, self-sustaining improvements in the conditions and capacities of the poor majority, then we must find ways to make the long-term commitments necessary to achieve the institutional changes in bureaucracies which are basic to that outcome.