

**Using Organization
Development in
Integrated Rural
Development**

IRD Working Paper No. 6

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Prepared under the Organization and Administration of
Integrated Rural Development Project (936-5300) of the
Office of Rural Development and Development Administration,
Agency for International Development.

May 1981



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PREFACE

This short paper has been prepared to share the experiences of the Organization and Administration of Integrated Rural Development Project in using organizational development (OD) methods in its field work. The paper is addressed to managers of rural development projects and is intended to introduce them to the methods and principles of organization development. The paper neither seeks to explain the history or theoretical underpinnings of OD nor to evaluate the success or shortcomings of this approach in any detail. These are topics for future papers, when more of a history of the use of OD approaches in the management of integrated rural development projects has been developed.

I wish to thank my colleagues at DAI for thoughtful review comments. I especially want to thank the various managers, staff, and project participants that were involved in the case examples described in this paper. I feel I learned more from them than they learned from me.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION	1
FOUR EXAMPLES FROM FIELD PROJECTS	7
Jamaica	7
Intervention Design	7
Results and Follow-up	8
Zaire	8
Intervention Design	8
Results and Follow-up	11
Liberia	12
Intervention Design	12
Results and Follow-up	13
Philippines	16
Intervention Design	16
Results and Follow-up	16
ISSUES IN APPLYING ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT TO	
IRD	19
Entry	19
Planning the OD Intervention	20
Use of Data	21
Continuity	21
OD AND PROJECT DESIGN	22
CONCLUSION	23
NOTES	25
REFERENCES	27

LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Page</u>
1	An Intermediate Point in Development Committee Evolution	9
2	Project Staff and Development Committee Committee Mutual Support Issues	10
3	Manager's Analysis of Time Allocations	13
4	Managers' Criteria for a Good Performance Evaluation System	15
5	Typical Perceptions of Other Groups	17
6	Examples of Action Committee Resulting From Division Pairs Meetings	18

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figure</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Page</u>
1	Independence of Development Committees, A Force Field Analysis	6

USING ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT IN INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

Management is a major determinant of success in development projects--good designs alone do not produce desired results. For integrated rural development (IRD) projects, the difficulties of implementation tend to multiply, simply because IRD projects call for a greater amount of coordination, cooperation, and careful orchestration of diverse efforts than single sector projects.

This paper seeks to illustrate how one approach to improving management, termed organization development, can assist IRD project implementation. Some methods are discussed, and four actual project applications are described. These are then used to illustrate some of the important issues guiding the organization development process. Finally, some consequences for project designs are suggested.

A well-designed project is, of course, easier to implement than a poorly designed one. The quality of the design depends upon the underlying development strategy and its compatibility with the national and local situation in which it is to be applied. Even so, well-designed projects often face such nagging organizational problems as:

- Cumbersome rules and regulations;
- Poor staffing patterns;
- Inappropriate organizational structures;
- Lack of administrative expertise;
- Delays due to procurement bottlenecks;
- Lack of cooperation among implementing agencies;
- Poor allocation of resources;
- Breakdowns in information flow; and
- Problems in encouraging local participation.

While many of these problems are inescapable and must be accepted as part of the challenge of implementation, technical assistance teams have experimented with managerial, administrative, and organizational techniques in attempts to solve or reduce them. For example, increased emphasis may be given to planning functions within projects. Similarly, sophisticated scheduling methods have been adapted to development project needs; modern financial planning and control methods are often seen as a way of assuring more reliable resource delivery; and participatory management techniques may be used to reduce coordination problems and increase beneficiary involvement in project decision making.

As important as these approaches and skills are proving to be, they are typically not sufficient to overcome some of the most intractable difficulties of implementation. Repeatedly, project implementation is hindered by the behavior of individuals and organizations which appear to be beyond the influence of improvements in managerial techniques. Interpersonal relations, attitudes, and cultural traditions are often cited by frustrated project implementers as the crux of their difficulties. Even when obvious changes in structure or procedure might minimize these sources of difficulty, the same organizational dynamics frequently prevent such changes from being carried out.

Organization development (OD) is a potentially useful tool to implementers of IRD projects in addressing such problems of organizational dynamics. OD is best defined as the application of social science theory to the process of managing change in organizational behavior. It is an approach to management that can be incorporated and applied at all levels by competent managers, with or without the help of outside consultants.

The purpose of OD is to increase an organization's effectiveness in accomplishing its objectives. OD seeks to help an organization identify and understand those aspects of its own behavior which are limiting its effectiveness. Armed with this knowledge, the individuals that make up the organization are better equipped to understand their own contribution to the collective behavior of the organization--both positive and negative. The organization and its members can then collaboratively plan changes toward more effective behavior.

Although most uses of OD in western business firms begin with attempts to solve a particular management problem, the most successful applications have occurred when OD efforts have evolved into programmatic efforts touching on almost all levels and functions in the organization. A wide variety of approaches are utilized, depending upon the circumstances, including such measures as revised wage and salary policies to reward cooperation and creativity, planning methods based on increased participation throughout the organization, and continuing efforts to assure timely and accurate two-way communication for more effective decision making.

The experience with OD in the management of IRD projects in developing countries is more limited. Most interventions have not progressed far beyond the stage of helping to solve particular management problems. As greater experience is gained, more comprehensive OD involvement is likely to grow out of such initial activities, as has been the case in western corporate settings.

Initial concerns about cultural resistance to OD seem to stem more from a misunderstanding of OD values and methods than real experience. The nonprescriptive nature of OD interventions and emphasis on the process of change more than the substance of that change are essentially compatible with a range of different cultures. In addition, there is a growing body of experience in both the private and public sectors of developing countries that demonstrates that the application and adaptation of OD approaches improves management and administration.

One guiding principle of the OD approach to problem solving is that the most effective solutions are generated by those experiencing the problems. Thus, OD methods concentrate on facilitating an organization's own problem-solving capacity. No solutions are prescribed by management or "expert" consultants. Rather, their role is catalytic--helping those with problems to understand their causes, devise solutions, and then establish and carry out plans to implement the changes. The interventions listed below illustrate some specific activities that might be undertaken after a collaborative diagnosis.

- Team building. This activity focuses on identification and solution of a working group's problems, particularly the interpersonal and organizational roadblocks which stand in the way of a team's collaborative and competent functioning. Often these roadblocks can be reduced significantly by working on such things as communication skills, conflict management, and problems of hierarchy, trust, and respect.
- Intergroup problem solving. Two or more groups are brought together for the purpose of reducing unhealthy competitiveness between them or to resolve intergroup conflicts due to such things as overlapping responsibilities or confused lines of authority, and to enhance interdependence when it exists and is appropriate.
- Goal setting. Superior/subordinate pairs or teams engage in systematic and periodic target setting and performance evaluation. With mutual commitment to this procedure joint goal setting becomes ingrained in the organization's approach to planning.

- Role negotiation. Through a systematic process, members of an organization can realign their mutual expectations and commitments to avoid duplication and conflicts. This can involve redefining the role relations between organizational units as well as those between individuals.
- Survey feedback. Through qualitative or quantitative data collection by questionnaire, an organization can involve a large number of people in a diagnostic process.
- Process observation and feedback. Through observation of the group and interpersonal relations that characterize management behavior and through insightful analysis and feedback based on those observations, a third party can help groups or individuals in an organization to work more effectively together.
- Coaching and counseling. Often a manager can benefit from a close and continuing relationship with someone inside or outside the organization with whom the manager can share concerns. Such a person can help the manager identify possible causes and solutions of problems in an effort to improve the manager's effectiveness.

This illustrative list indicates the extent to which OD is strongly rooted in the theories underlying group dynamics and their effect on the behavior of individuals. The application of social psychology to management in the form of organizational behavior theory and organization development practice may be fairly recent, but these have become established aspects of modern management.

In sum, OD focuses on the process of problem identification, analysis, and collaboratively planned changes, rather than on the nature of the changes themselves. To be sure, significant changes in organizational structure often are the result of organization development initiatives. But, as these changes are generated through methods that encourage introspection and problem solving, and are not imposed from outside, OD is far less prescriptive than many other management techniques.

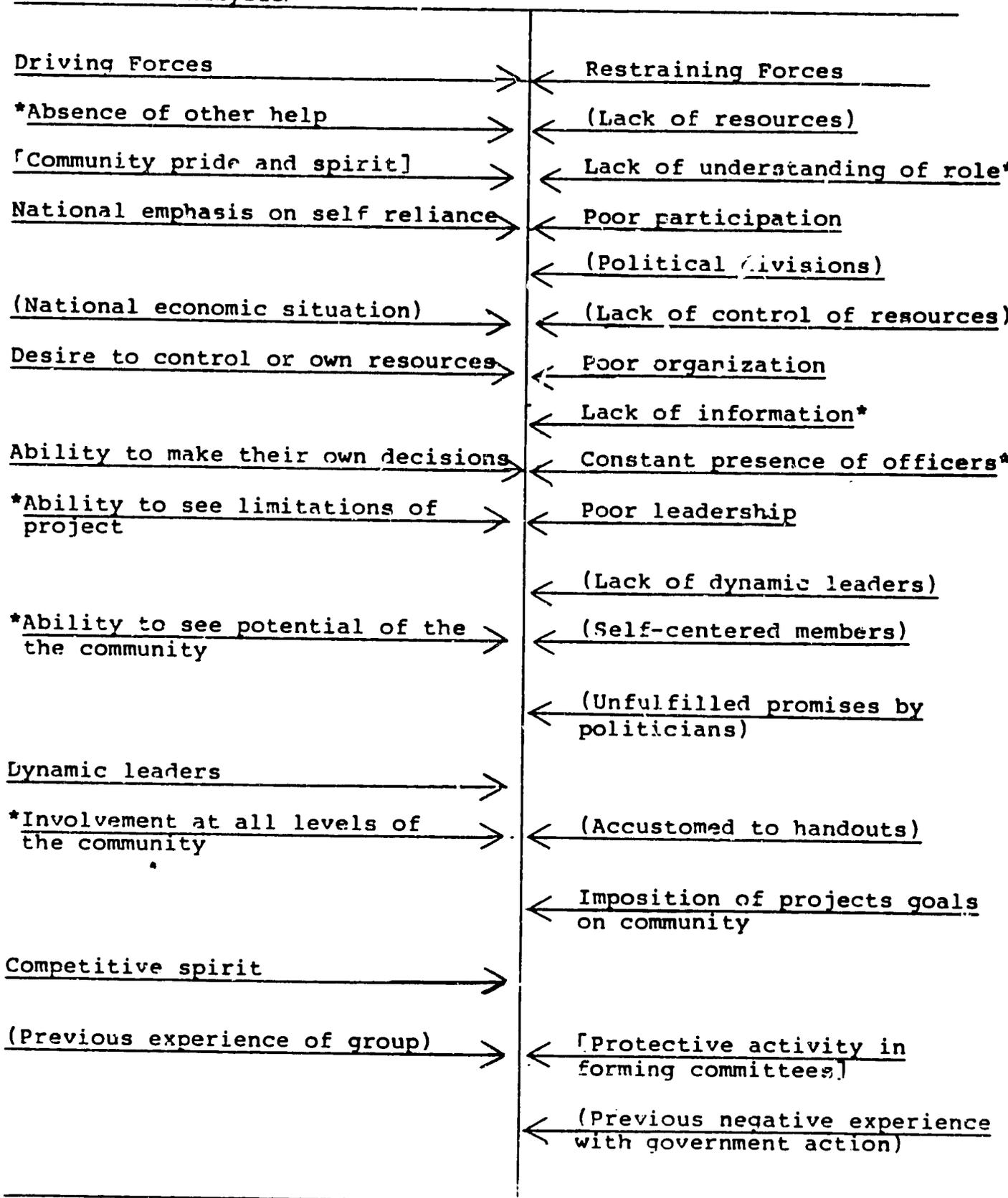
Since organization development does not prescribe particular solutions to management problems a priori, and is adaptable to a wide range of organizational structures, it is of particular use to IRD project managers. IRD projects more often than not require the coordination and cooperation of numerous actors: donor agencies, technical assistance teams, host country and expatriate field staff, and any number of local line ministry representatives. The involvement of disparate groups with disparate objectives places a premium on a management approach such as organizational development that is flexible, adaptive, and able to develop shared goals and common efforts to achieve those goals.

Organization development has demonstrated its utility as a resource for IRD project implementers in the following situations:

- Often the indigenous staff of development projects draw their administrative experience from line ministries that incorporate the traditional bureaucratic values of orderly and perfunctory activities. OD methods can help such a project staff develop a working style and approach more appropriate to the needs of a new project; an approach that emphasizes joint problem solving, active information sharing, and a common understanding of project goals.
- Within IRD projects, the opportunity for the participation and involvement of those who will ultimately implement the project, review goals, and establish operational objectives often exists. These opportunities are seldom realized because project managers often feel constrained by the project design. Moreover, they may be uncomfortable with broad staff participation in the management of the project. Organization development presents a method for assisting project management to realistically and responsibly increase active staff participation.
- Beneficiary participation is another key factor in the success and sustainability of an IRD project. Nevertheless, truly effective local participation is often difficult to achieve, regardless of the attention it receives in the project design. It may be hypothesized that the degree of such local participation will be directly related to staff participation in the management of the project. That is to say, a highly centralized, authoritarianly managed project will achieve less local beneficiary participation than one managed in a more participatory and decentralized manner. Those OD methods which facilitate internal participation can be used to improve local beneficiary participation as well.
- When considering technical assistance teams, family and personal issues often cannot be separated from the daily management of a project. A team-building approach that integrates personal, social, and project needs can often provide the support so necessary in difficult living conditions.

While the use of OD in these instances provides some indication of its potential utility to IRD projects, a much fuller understanding can be gained from the four examples of the application of OD in actual project situations presented here. These four examples are drawn from field experience acquired under DAI's ongoing project, "Organization and Administration of Integrated Rural Development."³ Only three of the four interventions can be considered successful, but they provide a reasonable cross-section of IRD settings and the types of OD approaches used under field conditions.

Figure 1. Independence of Development Committees, A Force Field Analysis.



Notes: () Things we can't control.

[] Things we may not be able to change.

* Things we could concentrate on changing.

FOUR EXAMPLES FROM FIELD PROJECTS

Jamaica

This IRD project in the central highlands is primarily concerned with soil conservation. The project is managed by Jamaican Ministry of Agriculture staff with the aid of an expatriate technical assistance team. A 1979 evaluation by the donor agency (AID) recommended strengthening the project's management by training existing project staff and adding a key administrative position. Acting on this recommendation, the donor agency arranged for a team of management development consultants to visit the project for several days to develop the design for a training and staff development intervention.

Intervention Design

The resulting scope of work called for three consultants to work for approximately three weeks with the project. The first week was spent interviewing project staff and local farmer leaders. Based on these interviews, two workshops were designed and carried out to strengthen management skills and improve working relations between staff of various project components. A third workshop was aimed at developing leadership skills of local farmer leaders. In order to improve the relations between the project and the local farmers' organizations, several key project staff were also involved in the third workshop.

The first two workshops were of the same design, carried out at the two geographically separate subproject sites. Issues identified during the first week's interviews were initially outlined to the participants. Based on these data, a series of exercises to develop relevant skills were carried out. In these exercises the participants analyzed problems facing their project and devised their own means of obtaining solutions.

One such exercise was a "force field" analysis of the factors influencing the independence of the local farmer organizations (Development Committees) vis-a-vis the project. It was agreed that the independence of these groups was essential to the project's eventual success, yet it was proving to be a difficult objective. The management staff listed those factors that they felt contributed to independence (driving forces) and those factors felt to limit independence (restraining forces). Then each of these forces was reviewed and the most readily influenced forces were targeted for action by the project staff (see figure 1).

Building on the force field analysis exercise, the staff next developed long-term and intermediate-term characteristics of successful development committees. Action steps for helping the development committees in the intermediate-term were then discussed and recorded (see table 1).

A further step was a meeting of the project staff and Development Committee leaders, designed to develop mutual support between these groups. In the first phase of this exercise, each group met by itself to construct a list of what it needed from, and could offer to, the other group (see table 2). The next phase was a series of heterogeneous groupings that allowed the project staff and committee leaders to discuss these items in detail and make commitments.

Results and Follow-up

The solutions developed in the workshops took several forms. In some cases the problems were 'solved' during the workshop itself as individuals worked together toward mutually acceptable resolutions. In other cases, concrete recommendations were developed and forwarded to the appropriate management units for implementation. Many of the issues required further work by the staff and thus several members of the project's training division undertook to convene future meetings of appropriate people to continue the processes begun during the workshops. A second visit by the consultants was requested approximately six months later.

Zaire

This IRD project is focused on maize production in a very remote and politically unstable area of Zaire. The project is managed by host government personnel with the help of an American technical assistance (TA) team. The TA team and their home office in the United States were experiencing difficulty in managing their joint effort to support implementation of the project. An OD consultant was asked to assist.

Intervention Design

Before going to the field site, the consultant interviewed most home office staff involved in supporting the field project. In addition to the logistical problems, the home office believed that the field unit was not functioning well as a team. Upon arrival at the project site in the company of two home office managers, the consultant interviewed all available members of the TA team and their families. Several issues became apparent from these confidential interviews:

Table 1. An Intermediate Point in Development Committee Evolution

<u>Dimension</u>	<u>Characteristics</u>	<u>How to get there</u>
Membership	Increase turnover in membership, meetings consider fewer individual problems and more community ones; balanced membership.	Monitor meetings, integrate local extension staff into formation of committees; develop rules for revolving membership and interest group; geographical area representation; increase numbers; farmers without farm plans.
Resource base	Fund raising activity beginning; begin to systematically identify their own resources; fewer demands on the project; non-project funded activity occurring; 60/40 farmer project participation in resources used.	Train/educate committees; NCLP committees to begin their activities.
Functions	Accomplish community tasks with little help from project; committee passes technical information to farmers not directly contacted by the project.	Training in carrying out the tasks.
Skills	Improve organization and leadership; ability to select new members, takes less time to do things; fund raising.	Give them experience with guidelines; let them develop their own proposals for solving problems and identifying community needs instead of just individual ones; training; demonstrations; field days; fund raising assistance.

Table 2. Project Staff and Development Committee Mutual Support Issues

Support offered to the Development Committees by Project Staff	Support offered to the project by the Development Committees	Support needed from the Development committees by Project Staff	Support needed from the project by the Development Committees
Organize more training	Identify training needs	Participate in the necessary programs	The sharing of the technical skills and expertise to develop the programs
Attend meetings, and be punctual	Attend meetings, and be punctual	Adhere to the advice of the project officers	The cooperation of the project officers to enlighten the farmers
Supply educational materials	Provide adequate notice of meetings days	Identify projects for development; (e.g., entombing of springs, markets for products profitable prices)	The implementation of plans and the location of springs, repairing farm roads, erecting farm houses, and collecting stations, etc.
Provide technical assistance	Identify problems and needs	Recommend to farmers to complete their farm plans, and	Relevant educational material increase production
Streamline the communication to expedite DC projects	Request special speaker process one month in advance	Accepting changes in farming techniques	Tools and equipment
Follow up on projects	Understand structure of the project	Cooperation	Financial assistance
Identify and provide at cost sources of planting material, livestock, etc.	Follow up on projects	Communication	Marketing and transportation
Provide transport for project training	Assist credit officer in identifying credit-worthy people		Rural sociology
Encourage and develop concept of self-reliance	Encourage and educate farmers in the project		Agro-industries
	Identify sources of planting material, livestock, etc.		
	Do more self-help		
	Assist in strengthening local branches of the agriculture service		

- Within the TA team, two groups were forming, one included the project's construction staff, the other included those staff whose background was in socioeconomic development (this distinction was reinforced by age differences).
- Logistical support from the home office (Washington, D.C.) was felt to be far short of expectations. This had occasioned lengthy and argumentative telex communications between the field and home office.
- The team leader and deputy team leader had different personal approaches to solving project problems. Ordinarily this was a complementary relationship; however, for a variety of reasons these two key people had not been at the project site simultaneously for any length of time since start-up. This created confusion regarding just what the project staff could expect in terms of guidance.
- In general, there were very real differences among the staff about how much social and team interaction was appropriate. Some looked to the team leadership for clear direction and coordination, others desired more participation and mutual responsibility for coordination of activities.

Based on these data and diagnoses, the consultant convened two meetings. The first included only field project staff, but several key members were unable to attend. The second meeting included all field staff that were available, as well as the two home office managers who were visiting. (These two managers had been deeply involved with the project through design, start-up, and previous visits).

Results and Follow-up

In the first meeting the issues previously described were presented for discussion. Some members acknowledged these issues as important and needing resolution. Others felt them to be more the opinion of the consultant, and in any event not amenable to resolution by mere discussion in a short meeting. The absence of several key members was a serious handicap. At best the meeting raised issues, but it was not felt to have been particularly helpful in and of itself for resolving them.

The second meeting proved to be more useful to all concerned. It not only allowed a constructive airing of the problems between the field and the home office, but was the occasion for describing a much more decentralized management model that the home office wanted to implement with its field teams.

On balance this intervention had only limited impact. Several reasons were:

- The consultant's failure to clearly establish his role with the home office before departure as well as with the team at the site. The usual model of study, analysis, and written recommendation was still in the minds of most.
- By traveling and arriving with home office managers, the consultant's 'third party' role was never fully accepted by some of the field team. This led to anxiety about openly dealing with some issues, since one function of the home office managers during this visit was to conduct performance reviews and personnel recommendations.
- Some of the issues were by their very nature not readily handled in a group context, yet time and availability of individuals left no better alternative.
- No follow-up mechanism existed and the remoteness and cost of getting to the site precluded regular involvement of a consultant.

Liberia

This case occurred at a regional development project that focuses on swamp rice production. The project is organized into seven functional divisions, each headed by an expatriate technical adviser at the time first contact was made. The scheduling of OD activities, as well as other management services, was done at the suggestion of the AID/Monrovia project monitor and agreed to by the World Bank technical assistance project manager (the project was jointly financed by AID and the World Bank). The major concern expressed was the lack of management experience among the project's Liberian middle managers. Thus, two consultants spent two weeks at the project site. The first week was spent interviewing senior management, middle management, and some of the junior staff. These interviews tried to identify issues that a management development effort for middle managers might effectively address.

Intervention Design

The resulting workshop dealt with a variety of managerial skills (such as time management, planning methods, motivation, and so forth) as well as problem-solving exercises focusing on the actual problems faced by the project staff. These exercises generated several lists of issues that were forwarded to senior management for reaction. At the end of the workshop there was a clear consensus that a similar activity was desired by the senior Liberian management, particularly since the expatriate staff were scheduled to leave within a few weeks. Thus, a second two-week workshop was scheduled and carried out six months later.

In this second workshop, half of each day was spent in general sessions with all 24 senior management staff, with the remainder of the day available for the consultants to work directly with individual participants or divisions on specific issues of importance to them. In addition, the consultants reviewed a questionnaire that had been distributed to the participants just prior to the consultants' arrival. This questionnaire asked (anonymously) several questions about the management issues currently facing the project. This information was distributed at the outset of the two-week activity to individual participants and divisions and provided the basis for the topics and design of the general workshop sessions, as well as background for the more specific consulting. These divisional activities included such OD interventions as: personal coaching, staff interviews and feedback sessions, role negotiations between managers and deputy managers, interdivisional problem-solving meetings, planning for divisional reorganization, and action planning for increased participation of beneficiaries.

Several activities were sequentially carried out during the second workshop that led to a systematic redrafting of senior manager's job descriptions. The first activity in this sequence was an exercise that had the managers develop a common list of their most productive and least productive use of time (see table 3).

By a similar use of group consensus methods, characteristics of a good performance evaluation system were identified (see table 4). With these two lists as background, a job analysis format was developed. This format allowed each manager to review his current job activities in such terms as: decision-making authority, relation to project goals, mix of substantive and administrative responsibilities, interdependency with other divisions, and performance evaluation criteria. Each manager then met with the project manager to review his job description based on this job analysis format.

Results and Follow-up

Action plans were developed by each division during the second workshop to implement the recommendations. In the case of the training division, ambitious plans were made to develop participatory methods for farmer and extension agent training based, in part, on the methodology of the workshop itself. A questionnaire evaluating the perceived impact of the workshop was to be distributed 12 weeks later. The results of the questionnaire are still pending and will provide the basis for any further work. Political events in Liberia soon after the second workshop have delayed follow-up.

Table 3. Managers' Analysis of Time Allocations

<u>Least productive use of time</u>	<u>Most productive use of time</u>
Accident cases	Review assigned jobs
Settling subordinate's disputes	Field inspections
Follow-up with other division's activities	Weekend work, uninterrupted
Interruptions by superior	Technical discussions
Reexplaining standard procedures	Staffing
Writing monthly reports and other people's reports	Design/analyze work programs
Lengthy meetings	Solving unforeseen problems
Explaining job duties to subordinates	Disburse petty cash
	Innovation--new, exciting ways to do job

Table 4. Managers' Criteria for a Good Performance Evaluation System

Individuals are aware of the criteria upon which they will be evaluated;

Performance criteria are measured in a manner that recognizes the cyclical nature of the project's work;

Rate of achievement is recognized as well as absolute achievement;

Performance information is available and readily fed back to individuals;

Exceptional circumstances are recognized when appropriate;

Performance evaluations are done independently of an individual's previous evaluation(s);

Performance evaluations are carried out by someone clearly qualified and familiar with the situation.

Philippines

This IRD project focuses on irrigation and land consolidation. It is managed by a host government staff drawn from several ministries with temporary assignment to this project. The AID project monitor, having had experience with organization development activities, arranged for two OD consultants to visit the project. The consultants subsequently designed and carried out a team-building workshop for project staff with an additional focus on improving relations with the supporting agencies and ministries.

Intervention Design

Prior to the workshop, the consultants spent two days interviewing project staff. The information obtained was used to design a four-day team-building workshop. The design for the first two days involved a session combining team building and problem solving to classify participant expectations, identify issues, and translate those issues into concrete recommendations in a collaborative fashion.

Since there were several divisions within the project that were not working well together, an intergroup activity was carried out. In this exercise, each division meets separately and develops a list of good and poor characteristics for each of the other divisions (see table 5). Then, all possible pairings of division are made and each pair meets and shares their lists regarding each other. The paired meeting has as its objective the development of a list of behavioral changes that can improve the working relations between those two divisions (see table 6).

Higher level ministry and agency officials attended one of the later sessions and were grouped with those project people with whom they typically interacted. Specific issues were raised, particularly as they affected the overall project, a view seldom available to these "outside" people. Action plans were formulated by these groups and later shared with the other groups for their information and comment.

Results and Follow-up

Three months after the workshop one of the consultants returned to the project for a two-day follow-up visit. Data on the impact of the workshop was collected and discussed with the project staff. They reported concrete improvement in operational working relations. They also described a recently completed budget exercise as the smoothest ever done and credited the OD activities directly. The consultant and project manager agreed that the next step would be made by the project manager based on a staff meeting to discuss the follow-up data. In addition, a joint activity is being planned to transfer experience gained by the original client project to a sister project in the area.

Table 5. Typical Perceptions of Other Groups

Good characteristics	Poor characteristics
Task orientation	Absenteeism
Full knowledge of work to be done	Individual approach
Good human relationships	Ineffective communications
Adequate resources provided	Resources not properly used
Enthusiasm and interest	No follow-up of activities
Proper delegation of authority	Reluctant attitude
Proper communication with recipients and other agencies	Favoritism
Recognition for work done	Uncoordinated work plan
Conducive working conditions	Professional jealousy

Table 6. Examples of Action Commitments Resulting From Division Pairs Meetings

Increase response on papers submitted to the project management Office within to 3 working-days turnaround. (Administration Division);

Revive weekly staff conference and have constant dialogue among line agency personnel (Institutional Development Division);

Anticipate needs at least five months ahead of the scheduled program (Physical Development Division);

Start recruiting personnel in preparation for more construction work (Physical Development Division); and

Punctual monitoring of monthly performance reports (Institutional Development Division).

ISSUES IN APPLYING ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT TO IRD

The description of OD and its applications as a management resource in IRD projects raises certain issues. To begin with, no short paper such as this can fully relate the subtle dynamics at work under the surface of case examples. As much as anything else, nuances of personality, interpersonal history, and institutional values and traditions are the critical elements guiding the choice and application of OD activities. However, several key points can be made about how the organization development process is used.

Entry

Perhaps the most critical aspect of an OD approach to improving a project's performance is the circumstances of entry. Do project managers seek out OD resources, or is OD imposed by an influential donor agency staff on the project? In the Zaire case, the TA team's home office was the most significant force in the entry process, while in the Jamaica case it was the direct recommendation of a donor agency evaluation team that led to the involvement of OD consultants. In the Philippines, the project manager had a clear idea of his project's needs as well as a familiarity with OD methods. In each case, the circumstances of entry had a unique effect on what followed.

The sharing of expectations and clarifying those expectations are important parts of the entry process. In the Philippine case, this was done most easily and little clarification was necessary between the consultants and the project staff. The consultant's failure to complete this process in the Zaire case had much to do with the problems encountered there.

OD's nonprescriptive approach is typically the most difficult aspect to clarify for most project staff. They have usually been conditioned to expect consultants to come up with answers for them, and when that expectation is not met, there is often initial resistance. In Liberia and Jamaica there was initial consternation when it was realized that the management training and development activities were not of the typical packaged format complete with printed lists of principles. This anxiety soon faded as the usefulness of the OD approach became apparent. Indeed, its nonprescriptive quality was seen to be most valuable.

The entry process is successful when a consensus is reached on diagnosing the project's critical management problems. The active participation of key project staff is crucial to provide legitimacy to the OD process. Such a diagnosis may result from discussions with top project management, or may be based on some preliminary data collection about critical issues as perceived by

wider sample of the staff. In any case, this preliminary diagnosis must be open to continual review as more information becomes available.

Planning the OD Intervention

After the joint diagnosis is agreed upon, the design of the intervention is developed. Among the many factors are considered are:

- . The initial issues or problems as perceived by project management;
- . The level of the organization where OD intervention is initially targeted;
- . The familiarity of the organization with OD approaches;
- . The size and scope of project, resource, and time constraints; and
- . The level of acceptable risk or openness to change within the project staff.

These considerations are apparent, either explicitly or implicitly, in the examples. For instance, in the two Liberia workshops different management levels were targeted. This fact alone meant that the intervention exercises concentrated on developing different skills for middle managers (time management, motivation) than those for senior managers (divisional reorganization, interdivisional problem solving).

As the design of an intervention is developed, the limitations of OD must be kept in mind. In many developing countries, an emphasis on participation and shared decision making is rather recent, and may even be considered suspect by many. This produces real limitations on the pace of change pursued by an OD intervention. Many issues do not prove amenable to OD methods, at least in the short run. In addition, political and economic decisions are often central determinants of IRD project success, yet these spheres are usually the least open to OD intervention.

The design of an OD intervention must also recognize that host government staff of IRD projects tend to be underpaid and insecure in their jobs. This necessarily reduces the amount of controversy that subordinates are willing to generate during OD activities.

All in all, the design of an OD intervention is perhaps most dependent on the experience and professional judgment of the consultant or project staff member who is leading the OD initiative. This means that no clear and universal criteria can be put forward. However, one characteristic does carry through almost all intervention designs: data or information collection about the behavior of the organization is crucial.

Use of Data

The basis of OD interventions is information about behavior within the particular project organization. Information is collected either through interviews, responses to questionnaires, or through information-generating exercises. At least one technique was used in each of the case studies. In the Liberia example, all of these techniques were used.

In contrast to the data collected for evaluation of project performance, the information generated in the OD process is not used to form judgments. Rather, the information is used to determine if managerial processes are impeding project output. As such, the information is made available to the project staff in a form that allows the staff to better understand their own behavior. By sharing such information through feedback methods, the essential process of change is initiated.

The information produced remains with the project. Reports are secondary and not seen as part of the change process. When reports are made to outside agencies, data generated by the project staff are included only with their explicit agreement (such as this paper). These safeguards are intended to encourage unencumbered dialogue and focus attention on the process as well as the substance. Confusion over the use of data often dampens discussion and jeopardizes the success of OD, as it did in Zaire.

Continuity

OD is not simply a series of activities or exercises. While the exercises are the most visible product of the OD process, they are only the initiation of a commitment to effective project management. Action plans and commitments are often built into OD exercises. In the second Liberia workshop each participant developed a list of action steps and copies were collected, to be sent back to each participant as a reminder three months later. Similarly, provision is often made to assess the impact of the intervention itself at a later date. The examples indicate the stress placed on follow-up.

But even more important to the continued success of the OD process than outside assessment is the identification of a person within, or very close to, the project organization who will be responsible for continuity of the effort. Such a person may be line manager or a designated staff member. The crucial factor is that the person be vested with the legitimacy as well as the responsibility to continue the process over time.

In the Liberia case, the project manager had been through a course on OD and took this role upon himself with the help of the training division manager. In the Jamaica case, this role was

assumed by a new staff member with special responsibility for the local farmer organizations. The commitment of highly placed personnel by these projects speaks well for the success of continued organization development. On the other hand, in Zaïre (where there was no such role in the TA team or in the home office) or in the Philippine case (where the responsibility was too widely spread) organization development will be that much harder to continue.

One of the most effective ways OD can be institutionalized in management is to tie OD approaches into periodic management activities. For instance, team building can become a part of regular planning or budgeting exercises, or role negotiation can become a part of performance reviews. Another way to enhance continuity is to establish interunit meetings to assess working relations. Such a device was put into practice in Jamaica.

OD AND PROJECT DESIGN

While this paper is primarily aimed at discussing OD in project implementation and management, there is no reason why OD cannot be built into IRD project designs or why the process for developing those designs cannot benefit from an OD approach itself. Some issues of potential interest to project designers are presented here.

The use of organization development can be either supported or hindered by the design of an IRD project (Sweet and Weisel, 1979). Clearly, one way the design can support organization development during implementation is through the allocation of budgetary resources in support of OD activities. This would include items such as consultant fees, staff training funds, and specialized overseas training for key staff.⁴

Another way project designs can utilize OD is to explicitly include team-building activities among expatriate project staff prior to their departure for a remote site. Home office support, logistics, and management personnel should be included. Team building should also involve family members in order to strengthen interpersonal relations among the staff and families. This team-building effort should continue with provision for an organization development consultant to work with the staff in the field on a regular basis.

For historical, legal, and institutional reasons, project design efforts and implementation efforts are typically quite separate. The design is often prepared by technical experts formed into a temporary team that may spend only a small amount of time together, either in the field or in preparing the project document. What often results is an attempt to ensure integration of the project by fiat. Only when project designers of different

disciplines can review and understand each others' sections is there likely to be a coherent document reflecting a truly integrated approach. Several planning/implementation simulation exercises are available to promote such integration among the design team (Hildebrand, 1979).

If a separate implementation team is selected, it makes a great deal of sense to have the two teams meet and, through a series of meetings, transfer the experience of the designers to the implementers. The design team must see these meetings as part of their job, just as much as preparing the project document. Relevant host government officials and other interested nationals might also attend some of these meetings. The purpose of the meetings would be to review the operational implications of the design with those most familiar with its preparation. Redesign, changes in the assumptions, new information and ideas, limitations on the resources actually available, and other matters could be discussed. The overall desired effect of such meetings is to transfer some "ownership" of the design to the implementers. The meetings would also help to build ties between the supporting institutions and the implementation team.

CONCLUSION

Organization development is proving to be a useful approach to solving some of the problems of IRD implementation. By focusing on the processes of change in organizational behavior, this approach provides managers with new ways of solving the problems of coordination and cooperation that are so critical in IRD projects. The organization development process is based on dealing with human behavior as data for analysis and feedback. Based on these data the organization develops its own planned change strategies. OD alone does not guarantee success, but without this approach implementation teams may be needlessly handicapping themselves in their efforts to improve the quality of life of the rural poor.

NOTES

- 1 IRD projects are characterized by a strategy of simultaneously increasing the delivery of several services and resources to rural areas, in an effort to promote a self-sustaining improvement in the welfare of the beneficiaries. Although the definitions of IRD may vary, this central concept of influencing several sectors in such a way as to gain a "critical mass" for economic development is essential.
- 2 Adapted from Sherwood (1972).
- 3 For further documentation on the project see Honadle and others. (1980b); for documentation on the cases cited see Honadle and others (1980a), Armor (1979), Honadle and Armor (1980), and Carney, Honadle, and Armor (1980).
- 4 For example, the U.S. Department of Agriculture conducts a course on organization development skills for agriculture project managers.

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