

"Bridging the gap between planners and farmers."

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THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT

ASIP

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## THE PROBLEM ...

In the past 20 years, agricultural production in the developing world has not kept pace with the demand for food. Nor has it met the need for jobs and economic growth, both of which depend largely on agriculture in poor countries.

The World Bank has observed, in its World Development Report 1978, that "while the developing countries as a group were virtually self-sufficient in food in the 1950s, they were already importing 15 million to 20 million tons of major staple food by 1970, half of which was in the form of food aid" (p. 22).

The Report further points out: "Unless the domestic production of food is stepped up very rapidly ... (the developing countries') capacity to import capital goods will be affected adversely, reducing economic growth" (Ibid).

### The Technology Exists

The technical know-how for increasing agricultural production has existed for decades. Indeed, when this technology has been applied in developing countries, usually on large farms, it has produced startling results, increasing crop yields as much as 300 to 400 percent.

But most farms in developing countries are small, containing less than 10 acres on the average, and until the small farmer begins to benefit from improved agricultural practices, production will not increase appreciably and may in fact fall farther and farther behind demand.

The need, then, is to provide the small farmer with the information, skills, agricultural inputs, and social and economic supports (such as credit) that will lead to increased productivity. Such services, however, depend upon the effective operation and coordination of numerous agencies, whose policies and practices, especially in extension activities, must be attuned to the real needs of farmers and must be carried out in ways that make sense in traditional societies.

### The Need for Managerial Skills

In short, the real need is to develop effective organizations that can deliver the knowledge and techniques that already exist. Or as one USAID document puts it, ". . . the major constraint to the 'success' of development projects is managerial and not technical."<sup>1/</sup>

But what makes a good agricultural manager? What are the most effective means of communicating with farmers? How should agricultural organizations operate? What should their policies be? How should their plans be made? And finally, assuming there are answers to these questions and others, how can the answers be passed on to agricultural managers who face the real work of implementation? Or better yet, how can the managers themselves find their own answers?

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<sup>1/</sup> Report of the A.I.D. Work Group on Management Improvement and Development Administration, Annexes A-C, U.S. Department of State, Agency for International Development, Washington, D. C., August 11, 1975, p. 16.

The Agricultural Sector Implementation Project (ASIP) began with these questions in 1972. The rest of this document explains how it tried to answer them and how it fared when it applied its approach in the field.

(For a more detailed analysis of ASIP field experiences, see the publication Going to the Field: The ASIP Experience in Egypt and Nepal).

## The ASIP Approach

### LEARNING FROM TRIAL AND SUCCESS

The "ASIP Approach" consists of three related processes: research, training, and organizational development. The host-country institutionalization of these processes constitutes the final step of the ASIP cycle.

From the outset, the ASIP staff realized that attempts to improve agricultural management would have to be based on the accumulated experience of more than 20 years of research and project activities in the developing world. Without a clear understanding of the organizational and management practices that had been most effective in the past -- and why -- there would be no knowledge base on which to plan subsequent activities.

Thus, in 1972, ASIP began a four-year research process that included interviews with more than 200 agricultural, planning, and management specialists from around the world and the examination of more than 1,700 books, articles, reports and other documents. The results of the research -- a compilation of successful practices -- were published in 1976 in a reference book entitled Managing Planned Agricultural Development.

To transfer these research findings to developing countries, and more importantly, to translate them into actual program practices, the ASIP staff designed and tested a management training course that combined substantive agricultural management information with practical management skills training.

In 1977, when ASIP began its field implementation phase in Egypt and Nepal, the organizational development dimension was added to the training program, as originally planned, to reinforce participants' skills

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back-at-work and to help bring about the organizational changes needed to support effective management practices.

A further goal of ASIP -- beyond the institutionalization of the research, training and organizational development approaches in country -- is to learn from each application of ASIP, to make each project a new source of research information on the most effective means to bring about management improvement. In effect the "ASIP Approach" is going through a continuous renewal process in which its methods, while being used to help managers implement their programs more effectively, are themselves being refined.

ASIP

ACTION  
RESEARCH

MANAGEMENT  
TRAINING

ORGANIZATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT

INSTITUTIONALIZATION

## ACTION RESEARCH

The ASIP approach to management research is inductive and success oriented. That is, it examines actual management practices, identifies successes, and when sufficient evidence has been accumulated, offers principles that can be applied, with modifications, to a variety of settings.

Whenever possible, theory is compared with practice, partially to test theory but largely to gain a better understanding of the principles underlying success. The intention of the research is to identify what has worked, not what should work according to theory.

The original ASIP reference book was global in nature, drawing from experiences throughout the developing world in order to identify practices that worked best under a variety of conditions. At that time, then, it was not desirable to concentrate on any one country.

However, it was planned that when ASIP teams began research in the field, they would produce country-specific reference books that would directly address local needs. These books, which in effect will become supplements to the original reference book, are now being produced in Egypt and Nepal.

Initially, host-country staff members of ASIP conduct the research, but as ASIP training reaches more and more field managers, these practitioners themselves become the source of new successful practices to be added to the country reference book, thus providing a continuous flow of new information into the management training program and organizational development efforts.

## MANAGEMENT TRAINING

ASIP training employs a participative, team-building approach to personal development. It places prime emphasis on the development of practical skills that participants can apply back-at-work.

A special feature of ASIP management training is the use of actual tasks--not simulations or structured experiences or role plays--that participants, working in small groups, must complete throughout the course.

At the end of each task, participants identify the successful practices that enabled them to accomplish the task and then make plans to repeat and refine these practices, along with others, on the next task. Learning by doing and learning from success, then, become the method as well as the message of ASIP.

The basic ASIP course lasts two weeks and accommodates from 21 to 32 participants. In the first week, participants focus on basic management skills such as clarifying goals, designing plans, gathering data, and evaluating results, all in the context of completing actual tasks. At the same time, they identify and practice a number of process or human relations skills such as active listening, giving and receiving feedback, positive reinforcement, and methods of motivation and leadership.

During the second week, participants concentrate on the application of these management skills to actual job needs, including the use of ASIP research findings, the design of back-at-work plans and field activities.

(For a more complete description of ASIP training, see "ASIP TRAINING: BACKGROUND AND ASSESSMENT," p. 14.)

## ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A series of ASIP activities, some growing out of the training program, some going beyond it, combine to form an organizational development effort that has become an integral part of the total "ASIP Approach."

These activities include:

- Pre-course interviews with potential participants and their supervisors to determine job requirements and organizational needs.
- In-course back-at-work planning designed to improve organizational effectiveness.
- Post-course follow-up consultancies conducted by ASIP staff members with past participants and their supervisors.
- Follow-up seminars conducted on a regional or local basis or within a single organization.
- The publication of an ASIP newsletter containing management and agricultural information that goes to past participants and other individuals and organizations involved in development efforts.

As ASIP teams grow in size and experience, more direct organizational development consulting will take place. At the same time, as more managers go through ASIP training, the more likely it will be that organizational development activities will develop spontaneously, especially when several managers are from the same organization. Moreover, the existence of such a "critical mass" in an organization will enable the organization to profit more fully from ASIP consultancies.

## INSTITUTIONALIZATION

Consistent with the methods used in ASIP training, the process of institutionalizing the "ASIP Approach" is largely a learning-by-doing experience for host-country staff members. From the outset, they become involved in all project activities and share in decisions affecting the program.

After going through the management training course as participants, staff members receive advanced training as trainers, begin serving as training assistants, and eventually assume full responsibility for running the training program. At the same time, they build organizational development skills by conducting pre-course interviews, post-course consulting sessions and follow-up seminars.

To develop proficiency in the ASIP research method, staff members begin by recording their own successful practices as agricultural managers, compare them to other staff members' practices, and gradually learn to elicit such information from field workers and farmers. Concurrently, they learn to extrapolate from past successes to new situations by analyzing the global reference book and using it as a resource in ASIP management courses.

The responsibility for managing the day-to-day administrative and support activities of ASIP field projects, while resting with the expatriate staff initially, shifts in time to the host-country director and his staff. Complete institutionalization is achieved when all project activities are controlled by the local staff and fully integrated within the normal functions of the host organization.

ASIP CHRONOLOGY1972 - 1977 RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

1972 GAI begins research project to identify successful management practices in agricultural and rural development in LDCs. Over a three-year period more than 200 specialists from around the world are consulted, and more than 1,700 books, articles, reports, and other documents are examined in detail.

1975 GAI staff develops a training program that combines management skills with the substantive findings of the research project.

A six-week pilot training course is conducted in Washington for 21 agricultural managers from six developing countries.

1976 Research results are published in a 616-page reference book titled Managing Planned Agricultural Development.

1977 GAI director and deputy director conduct reconnaissance trip to 11 countries to select field implementation sites. Egypt and Nepal are selected.

Four staff members are selected for overseas assignments and undergo 4½ months of training in the ASIP approach to research and training.

1977 - 1979 FIELD TESTING/IMPLEMENTATION

1977 Implementation begins in Nepal in September and in Egypt in October with the arrival of GAI teams. Two-year experiment scheduled to finish on October 31, 1979.

Interviews held with middle and senior agricultural and rural development managers in provinces of Egypt and Nepal to gather base line data for project preparation and to select course participants.

1978 First ASIP course for middle-level agricultural managers conducted in January in Egypt and February in Nepal.

On-site evaluation of ASIP held by USAID in November-December in Egypt and January, 1979, in Nepal.

1979 Nepal project becomes fully institutionalized by September and GAI team departs ahead of schedule.

Egypt project completed by October but extended until July 31, 1980, to further develop Egyptian staff and to lay foundation for expanded agricultural management programs in Egypt.

#### 1979 - 1980 DISSEMINATION

1979 GAI staff analyzes findings of implementation phase and prepares dissemination document. The document is sent to all USAID missions and selected U.S. and overseas organizations.

The reference book is redesigned, translated into French and Spanish, and reissued in five volumes.

1980 USAID conducts final evaluation of ASIP in Nepal.

GAI staff conducts reconnaissance trips to Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America to discuss with USAID missions

and host country organizations where and how lessons of ASIP can best be applied.

Three follow-up seminars are held in Asia, Africa, and Latin America to lay plans for implementation of ASIP in selected countries.

ASIP TRAINING: BACKGROUND AND ASSESSMENT

ASIP training is a natural outgrowth of the Organization Development (OD) movement, a facilitative process that has become almost synonymous with management improvement in the past 20 years.

Reviewing the history of OD, Robert Blake and Jane Mouton, pioneers in the field, have written: "Behavioral-science theory and research across 22 human disciplines has been sufficient to allow the identification of a number of principles which, when brought into use, result in more productive and creative behavior."<sup>1/</sup>

Some of these principles, which ASIP endorses, include:<sup>2/</sup>

- Fulfillment through contribution is the key motivation that gives character to human interaction and supports productivity.
- Being responsible for one's own actions is the highest level of maturity and only possible through widespread delegation of power and authority.
- Open communication is essential for the exercise of self-responsibility.
- Shared participation in problem-solving and decision-making stimulates active involvement in productivity and creative thinking.
- Conflicts are solved by direct problem-solving confrontation with understanding and agreement the basis of cooperative effort.
- Management should be based on objectives.
- People learn from experience and improve through critique.

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<sup>1/</sup> Blake, Robert R. and Jane Srygley Mouton, "Principles of Behavior for Sound Management," Training and Development Journal, October 1979, p. 26.

<sup>2/</sup> Adapted from Blake and Mouton, Ibid. :

## ASIP Training Methods

To translate these principles into training activities, ASIP relies heavily on Team Building, a facilitative-tactical mode that is central to OD activities. Basically, Team Building attempts to mold a group into a cohesive, efficient working unit by developing both the task and human relations skills of the group members.

The section on Team Building in the Training and Development Handbook of the American Society for Training and Development gives a description of a well-working team that perfectly portrays the objectives ASIP sets for its training groups:

"A good group is one in which the atmosphere tends to be informal, comfortable, and relaxed; there is considerable discussion, in which virtually everyone participates; the tasks or objectives of the group are well understood and accepted by the members; the group members actively listen to one another; there is disagreement, but it is worked through to a consensus (with no formal voting as a cop-out); there is frequent, frank, and relatively comfortable criticism; people are free in expressing their feelings as well as their ideas and have no hidden agenda; clear work assignments are made and accepted; leadership in the group shifts as needed to draw forth and utilize all the human resources in the group; there is little or no struggle for power and control because the main concern is to get the job done consistent with cultural values in the organization; and, finally, the group self-consciously stops periodically to examine how well it is doing as a group in accomplishing its tasks and how the feelings and behaviors of members are contributing to the group and its work.

"In a word, team building as an OD technique attempts to move a group forward in all the aforementioned directions. It is based on the clear realization that the highest commitment to organizational objectives and the most successful collaboration in achieving them require unique kinds of interaction which can occur only in a highly effective group setting."

(Team Building as perceived by most OD practitioners involves on-site consulting as well as training. Consistent with this approach, ASIP pursues an active program of follow-up seminars, workshops and both individual and organizational consultancies.)

Aside from its grounding in OD principles and techniques, ASIP training also draws upon the research findings and methods of group dynamics and laboratory training, approaches often associated with human relations and human resource development efforts. Instead of relying on the traditional laboratory techniques of role plays, simulations and structured experiences, however, ASIP training uses actual tasks as the main vehicle for group development, attempting to reproduce as closely as possible real work conditions in a low-risk environment that allows for experimentation.

In completing tasks, participants go through the same sequence of activities they would follow in planning and implementing job assignments: clarifying and reaching agreement on task goals; setting standards or criteria of success; identifying the information, materials and skills needed to complete the job; designing a plan for carrying out the job; delegating task responsibilities to group members; actually doing the work; evaluating the results; and finally reviewing the entire process to detect those practices that moved the group forward.

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Plans are then made to repeat these successful practices on the next task, to improve upon them if necessary, and to avoid mistakes that may have hindered progress in the past.

Other skills developed in ASIP training include:

- Using a systematic approach to getting work done.
- Developing a common language for job analysis and performance.
- Setting criteria for judging progress and success.
- Listening more carefully to others, responding, and making presentations.
- Diagnosing group processes.
- Supporting the ideas and efforts of group members.
- Identifying and building on individuals' strengths.
- Managing time.
- Using a variety of management and leadership styles depending on task needs.
- Balancing thought and action.
- Reviewing work processes, and consciously and systematically learning from each experience.

In the context of completing real jobs, then, ASIP training participants develop the same task and human relations skills that are fostered in the best management and OD programs, but with an important difference: participants discover for themselves the skills they need by analyzing their own performance in completing tasks. Moreover, they improve these skills through repeated use in tasks which become more and more work-related as the training progresses, thus increasing the likelihood of transfer back on the job.

In effect, ASIP training attempts to draw on the strengths of both laboratory training and on-the-job training.

Assessment: Strengths

Perhaps the greatest single strength of ASIP training is the amount of personal control given to participants in shaping their own development. Instead of listening to lectures or following predetermined activities, trainees complete actual tasks in which their own behavior becomes the real content of the training program.

In this process, participants have the opportunity to see themselves in comparison to others in the group, to discover their strengths and to assess their needs. Because feedback and review are built into each task, trainees are able to monitor their own progress and make plans to "work on" specific skills in the next task.

At the same time, the review process allows trainees to discover and analyze group processes and to evaluate their team's needs. The net result is that trainees, aside from shaping their own behavior, develop skills in managing group functions, a key element in managerial competence.

Another strength of ASIP training is that participants develop a common language and a systematic approach for getting work done, both of which facilitate communication and help identify personal and group practices that lead to success.

Still another strength is that participants, by completing tasks, are able to develop skills through actual use...and then have the chance to refine them through repeated practice in subsequent tasks.

Moreover, the non-threatening environment of the training task makes it possible for participants to experiment with a variety of personal styles and roles within the group. Indeed, the group itself has the freedom to experiment with alternative approaches to leadership, coordination, delegation and intra- and inter-group relationships.

Finally, the use of real tasks as the main vehicle for ASIP training greatly increase the likelihood that participants will apply their new skills back on the job.

Assessment: Weaknesses

The weaknesses of ASIP training, as with any training, are a function of its strengths. Time spent on practicing skills is time not spent on studying theory; time spent on developing individual and group processes is time not spent on organizational analysis.

One of the weaknesses of ASIP training, then, is the limited amount of time spent on the more academic aspects of management theory. Although most of the activities of ASIP training are grounded on theory and supported by research, it is possible for participants to finish a course without a clear understanding of the conceptual framework in which the training exists.

A related weakness is that almost all learning that takes place in ASIP training is largely limited by the actual behavior of the participants, as generated by the training. In the absence of a fixed curriculum that "covers" the field, management issues that do not arise through group processes may be missed.

And psychologically, participants used to a didactic, lecture-centered approach to training and a theoretical orientation to management improvement may become somewhat disoriented in the early stages of the training.

Likewise, those expecting outside experts to give them answers to their problems may feel cheated when these answers are not forthcoming and they themselves are asked to find their own answers.

A weakness of the task itself as a vehicle for team-building is that many of the complex issues involved in trying to get a job done arise almost simultaneously and in combination. Until these issues are sorted out and selected for special emphasis, participants may feel overwhelmed by the multidimensional nature of the task.

Conversely, participants trying to focus on issues that relate to personal behavior and small-group processes may fail to see the larger organizational implications of the training.

In this connection, ASIP training does not focus special attention on policy issues or overall organizational planning, except as they relate to group performance. Nor does it "teach" specialized techniques like project sequencing, critical incident scheduling (PERT and CPM) or other established procedures.

Finally, ASIP training does not attempt to deal with the more technical aspects of organizational activities such as accounting, budgeting, and office procedures.

Overcoming the Weaknesses

Many of the weaknesses of ASIP training can be avoided by explaining to participants at the outset exactly what the training will and will not do. This is a practice followed in all ASIP courses. When false expectations are eliminated, disappointment generally declines.

But explanations alone are not always sufficient to reorient people who are accustomed to lectures and ready-made answers. Only time will solve this problem.

However, the ASIP experience has shown that by the second or third day of training participants no longer look for guidance and are satisfied (indeed, highly stimulated) by the self-reliance engendered by the small-group activities.

It is also useful to hold periodic general sessions in which the small groups come together to discuss their activities and share their experiences. Such sessions, an integral part of ASIP courses, create an atmosphere of mutual support and allow the trainers to "tie things together" and prepare the participants for subsequent activities.

The desire for management theory can be satisfied in at least three ways: (1) handing out written material periodically throughout the course at appropriate times, i.e., when specific issues arise; (2) conducting task reviews in the small groups to tie theory to the practices used during the tasks; and (3) giving short presentations and holding discussions during the general sessions that further relate theory to practice.

In a similar way, the microcosm of the small group can be expanded to the macrocosm of the whole organization by asking participants to extrapolate from their personal experiences in the group. ASIP experience has showed that this inductive approach is much more effective than the more traditional method of beginning with organizational theory and then deducing individual and group practices.

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People seldom develop commitment to theory without having arrived at it through direct experience; they likewise do not change their behavior on the basis of theory alone.

Limiting the "content" of ASIP courses, then, to the issues that arise from participant behavior is a deliberate tactical decision. The weakness of this approach exists more in theory than in practice, for in fact most crucial management issues do arise from the process of completing tasks.

If they do not -- and the group is able to complete the task successfully then we should wonder how important these issues were to begin with.

Specialized techniques such as long-range planning and PERT, of course, may not arise in the context of task completion. If these techniques are deemed important by certain participants, then separate training modules or courses can be conducted.

In Egypt, this problem is being met by introducing techniques such as PERT in a series of two-day workshops held for those who have completed the basic course. Each technique is used and taught in a way that is compatible with the ASIP approach.

In any event, such courses will be much more meaningful if given after a more behavioristic course such as ASIP's, for the technical symbols will then have human content.

In the end, no single training program can do everything, nor should it. It is the conviction of ASIP, however, that helping participants develop skills that they can use individually and as part of a working group is the most effective way to improve management practices. Moreover, it lays the foundation for anything else that might follow.

## SUMMARY

## Assessment of ASIP Training

Strengths

Encourages participants to:

1. Shape their own development
2. Learn by doing
3. Compare themselves to others, discover their strengths, assess their needs
4. Analyze group processes
5. Develop team-building and team-managing skills
6. Learn a common language and a systematic approach to getting work done
7. Refine their skills through repeated practice
8. Experiment with different personal styles and team roles
9. Use skills on real tasks that can be directly applied back at work

Weaknesses

1. Plays down management theory
2. Limits issues to those generated by group processes
3. Can be initially disorienting and discouraging
4. Bypasses large organizational issues and specialized procedures
5. Ignores technical training

Avoiding the Weaknesses

1. Clarify at the outset what the training will and will not do.
2. Hold periodic general sessions for sharing experiences and preparing for subsequent activities.
3. Relate practice to theory by using (a) written handouts, (b) task reviews in small groups, and (c) presentations and discussions in general sessions.
4. Help participants extrapolate from their personal experience in the training to larger organizational issues by using the same techniques as in #3 above.
5. Build on the basic ASIP course by offering training modules dealing with specialized management techniques.

## ASIP TRAINING: A TRANSATLANTIC MARRIAGE

When ASIP first set out to develop its management training program, it examined a number of existing approaches and systems, seeking an inductive, learning-by-doing approach that was compatible with ASIP research findings.

The organization that came closest to providing what ASIP was looking for was the Coverdale Organization of England. Coverdale combines learning-by-doing, skills development, and building on success in its training -- all important elements in the "ASIP Approach."

In 1975, Coverdale joined GAI in conducting a pilot training course for 21 agricultural managers from six developing countries. Later, in 1977, Coverdale counseled GAI in running two more courses for GAI staff members and representatives from USAID, the Peace Corps, the World Bank and other organizations. Thereafter, a collaborative effort developed in which Coverdale training methods and ASIP research findings were combined to bring process and substance together in an integrated training approach.

The basic ASIP course has evolved since that time, but many of its training methods, especially those used during the first week of its course, are derived from the techniques developed by Coverdale, to which ASIP owes a debt of gratitude.

Q. How is ASIP any different from other management training programs that are available?

A. To begin with, ASIP is not a management training program -- only. It is a broad approach to management improvement. That point should be emphasized and reemphasized.

There are four distinct components in the "ASIP Approach": research, training, organizational development and institutionalization. The overall effect of these components working together is vastly different from, say, a management training program alone, or O.D. efforts alone.

Q. Could you give me an example?

A. Well, if you conducted management training without prior research, you could only deal with general management issues; you wouldn't have any substantive or specific information to feed into the training program. Programs lacking this information are given all the time, incidentally, and it leads people in developing countries to say, "The training was very interesting, I enjoyed it very much, but I'm not quite sure how I can apply it to my particular job." The research puts the flesh on the skeleton, so to speak.

Q. How about the O.D. component? How does that fit in?

A. If you conducted training but did not follow up by working with the participants in their organizations, you would not really know how the trainees were able to apply the training back at work, and you would have no way of using the training program as a wedge for getting into the organization itself. Changing human behavior, after all, involves

changing both the person and the context in which that person functions. Changing the person alone has usually had very little effect on the day-to-day operations of an organization.

Q. So these four components follow each other in sequence? First the research, then the training, the O.D. work, and finally institutionalization?

A. Yes, there is a sequence from component to component, but there is also a cycle whereby one component, say, O.D., influences the kind of training that is conducted in the future, or even the kind of research you do.

But more important than any sequence or influence, there is an internal or methodological relationship that ties all of the components together. The kind of research that ASIP does, for example, using an inductive approach, focussing primarily on success, leads naturally into the kind of training we do, which also emphasizes induction (learning by doing) and success. In a way, the ASIP training approach is a type of research in which participants experiment with their own behavior in order to determine management practices that work effectively for them.

Likewise, the follow-up O.D. work is a continuation of this process, building on the research and training and reinforcing the methodology that by this point has begun to take hold with the trainees.

The final component, institutionalization, is a composite of all these activities, a synthesis of what the local staff has been learning inductively, by doing the research, the training, and the O.D. work.

Q. This seems a bit complicated.

A. It does if you look at it from the top down, deductively, so to speak.

But if you go through the process inductively, day after day, the learning becomes cumulative, and each part adds to and strengthens the whole system of management practices.

Q. How has ASIP worked in the field?

A. Extremely well. In fact the results have exceeded our expectations.

In Nepal, the project has become completely self-sustaining in less than two years. In Egypt, where permanent staff were not assigned until a year ago, the project is moving ahead very well. In fact, the Egyptian Government has requested a major expansion of ASIP so training centers can be established in five agricultural states to provide services to the major areas of the country.

Q. How do you think ASIP would do in other countries? In other words, do you think the experiments in Egypt and Nepal have given you enough evidence to say ASIP is universally applicable?

A. The universe is a big place, and of course each country is unique, but there is evidence that ASIP could succeed anywhere. To begin with, Egypt and Nepal are quite different countries -- geographically, culturally, demographically, politically, agriculturally -- but ASIP has taken hold in both places. Moreover, the very nature of the "ASIP Approach"--with its emphasis on learning from local experiences, not imposing pre-determined solutions on people but rather allowing solutions to emerge through the people--makes ASIP very adaptable. It has a built-in flexibility.

Q. What kind of future do you see for ASIP?

A. A very bright one. In Egypt and Nepal the project has taken on a life of its own. It will be interesting to see how the people in these two countries adapt it to keep it effective, responding to different needs at different times with different personnel.

As for the application of ASIP elsewhere, a number of countries have already shown considerable interest. It seems to us that as long as there are management development needs in agriculture and other sectors, there will be a need for ASIP.