Community Organization and Rural Development: A Learning Process Approach

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Through a grant made available by The Ford Foundation, *PAR* is pleased to present to its readers a comprehensively documented, in-depth research study on "Community Organization and Rural Development: A Learning Process Approach," by David C. Korten. This study combines both extensive and intensive analysis of development assistance programs in Asia, and focuses specifically on five case studies which provide the basis for the author's strong conviction that Third World development assistance programs must be part of a holistically perceived learning process as opposed to a bureaucratically mandated blueprint design. Stated in the abstract, this proposition, in and of itself, should cause no surprise. The real value of Korten's efforts, however, may be found in his case studies which provide rich insights into just what can be accomplished in the way of social development if the development process itself can be viewed as a learning experience for all participants involved.

Korten's study focuses on international development assistance programs in the Third World, and development specialists in this area of interest—academicians as well as practitioners—should certainly benefit from the extensive documentation incorporated in the footnotes of the study. Many of Korten's notes are extensively annotated; virtually all are current and timely. As such, they represent a rich resource which enhances the value of this study even further.

Development assistance programs are, of course, no longer the monopoly of comparative-international public administration specialists. Community development assistance programs have long since become an integral part of the urban policy process in America. For this reason, Korten's study should also provide urban policy specialists with some fertile thoughts for further pilferage.

The World Bank estimates that nearly 800 million people, or roughly 40 percent of the population of the developing nations, still live in absolute poverty;[1] studies indicate that in many instances the poor have not benefited—indeed, they may have suffered absolute loss—during early stages of national development.[2] In response there has been growing interest in new approaches to national development intended to bring the poor more rapidly into full participation in development decisions, implementation, and benefits.[3] Many observers have looked to effective community controlled social organizations as important if not essential instruments if the rural poor are to give meaningful expression to their views, mobilize their own resources in self-help action, and enforce their demands on the broader national political and economic systems.[4]

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■ Though many national and international agencies claim commitment to participative approaches to helping the rural poor, little progress has been made in translating ambitious plans into effective action. The record of earlier community development and cooperatives efforts is largely a history of failure, resulting more often in strengthening the position of traditional elites than in integrating poorer elements into the national development process. Many current calls for involvement of the rural poor are little more than wishful thinking, inadequately informed by past experience as to the investments in institutional innovation required to give reality to an important idea. The prevailing blueprint approach to development programming with its emphasis on detailed pre-planning and time bounded projects is itself cited as an important impediment.

Examination of a number of Asian programs suggests that the more successful grew out of village experience. Consequently they were able to achieve an unusual degree of fit between beneficiary needs, program outputs, and the competence of the assisting organizaiton. The key was not preplanning, but an organization with a capacity for embracing error, learning with the people, and building new knowledge and institutional capacity through action. A model of the learning process approach to building program strategies and appropriate organizational competence suggests a new program should progress through three developmental stages in which the focal concern is successively on learning to be *effective*, learning to be *efficient*, and learning to *expand*. Implications for the role of the social scientist and for action by funding agencies are discussed.

Given this interest we might expect that the difficult problems of *how* to involve the rural poor in their own development, through local organizations and otherwise, would be receiving major attention in development journals and current policy documents. Yet this is not the case. Such widely read development journals as *World Development, Economic Development and Cultural Change,* and the *International Development Review* seldom mention the subject. The recent 489-page Asian Development Bank review of Asian development gives the topic four pages.[5] The 440-page presentation by Worthman and Cummings of a strategy for meeting the world food crisis based on small family farm production devotes two brief paragraphs to farmer associations and cooperatives with barely a mention of the impediments posed by village social structures to the implementation of their recommendations.[6] The World Bank's 1975 *Rural Development Sector Policy Paper* gives five paragraphs to the importance of local participation and briefly acknowledges some impediments, but says little about how they might be overcome. The 76-page "A Strategy for a More Effective Bilateral Development Assistance Program: An A.I.D. Policy Paper," distributed to all USAID missions as an attachment to its "Program Guidance for FY 1980," stresses that the USAID strategy:

> . . . involves effective popular participation by the poor . . . in decision making so that their needs, desires, capacities and indigenous institutions are recognized, understood, and given major weight.

. . . projects currently in vogue present difficult problems which remain to be solved and their solution is inhibited by programming procedures better suited to large capital development projects than to people-centered development.

But means and impediments are hardly mentioned.

Unfortunately more than three decades of modern development experience provide substantial evidence that this paucity of attention to how development efforts can effectively elicit the participation of the rural poor cannot be explained either in terms of the problem being too new to be recognized or having long since been solved.

Failures of the Past

In particular, experiences over the past three decades with cooperatives and community development movements in the Third World provide some sobering lessons.

Coperatives

The member controlled cooperative has long been an idea with almost universal appeal, being widely promoted in much of the developing world as an integral instrument of national rural development policy. But the typical outcome can be summarized briefly.

> [R]ural cooperatives in developing areas today bring little benefit to the masses of poorer inhabitants of those areas and cannot be generally regarded as agents of change and development for such groups. It is the better-off rural inhabitants who mainly take advantage of the cooperative services and facilities such as government supported credit and technical assistance channelled through cooperatives.[7]

Often the services offered by cooperatives, such as production loans and marketing services are of little use to the landless laborer or the subsistence farmer. In cooperatives with community wide membership the distribution of control over their activities tends to parallel the structure of control in the broader community. In relatively stratified communities its poorer members seldom have a voice and commonly find themselves ineligible for certain services such as loans. Moreover, too often the co-op leaders are corrupt and abusive of their power. Where the poor have organized their own co-ops to challenge established community interests they have commonly faced retaliatory actions they were ill-equipped to resist.[8] Women may be excluded, except when there is no male head of household, even where women are the chief agricultural producers.[9]

One reason suggested for the failures is that these cooperatives too often have been creations of government, intended to promote government policies and provide government control over markets, rather than voluntary creations of individuals to increase their collective market power.[10] In most Asian countries they enjoy so little popular support and so little market power that if government pressures and inducements such as access to special services and subsidies were withdrawn most would soon become inactive.[11]

One study of 14 cooperatives in Asia included four that were comparatively successful. These had four characteristics in common: (1) they were located in communities with relatively unstratified and cohesive social structures; (2) their internal structures allowed members to hold leaders accountable and enforced member discipline; (3) a relatively homogeneous membership of small and medium landholders saw the co-op as an instrument for capital formation and the introduction of technical innovations rather than simply a means for obtaining government facilities; and (4) they had strong external linkages with relatively effective government agencies which not only regulated their functioning but also provided training, services, facilities, and assistance in resolving conflicts between members.[12] Such preconditions are of course demanding and not always replicable.

Community Development

Though the roots of the community development movement can be traced back to the 1920s[13] it was a Ford Foundation funded pilot project introduced in the Etawah District of Uttar Pradesh, India in October 1948 which initiated the chain of events that brought it into prominence in the post-colonial era. Using multi-purpose village level workers in the Etawah project achieved impressive results in self-help approaches to increasing agricultural production and strengthening rural infrastructure. In 1952, the In-

dian government adopted the concept as the basis of a major national rural development effort. However, it failed to adopt the painstaking approach to developing a participative administrative structure able to respond to bottom-up initiatives which had been the key to the Etawah project's success.[14]

The attention attracted by India's launching of a national community development effort led to the initiation of similar programs in over 60 nations of Asia, Africa, and Latin America during the 1950s, labeled by Holdcroft as Community Development's "Decade of Prominence." But by 1960 some programs were already faltering and by 1965 most had been terminated or drastically reduced. Community development had promised much, yet delivered little.[15]

With changes in national governments came the desire of new leaders to establish their commitment to new and, presumably, more powerful development concepts. Central economic planning was embraced, with an emphasis on programs promoting immediate economic growth.[16] Community development offices were abolished or integrated into other organizations.[17]

The decline may have reflected impatience as much as anything; perhaps it was unrealistic to expect any program to achieve significant results in the reduction of poverty and food shortages in so short a period.[18] But a number of characteristic weaknesses have been identified in the concept and its implementation.[19]

(1) Existing power structures were accepted as a given and no attempt was made to change them. Village level workers aligned themselves with the traditional village elites who captured such benefits as the programs offered. Recognizing this, the poor majority did not respond. The conflicts of interest inherent in stratified village social structures were not recognized in program designs.

(2) Responsibility for implementation of community development was placed in administratively separate ministries or agencies which paralleled the established line agencies of government. Attempts were made at local levels to bring these parallel agencies under the control of the community development agency in the interests of improved coordination, but this resulted in bureaucratic conflict that was often a key element in the movement's demise.

(3) Greater emphasis tended to be placed on the expansion of social services than on increasing rural incomes, and many of the social services offered seemed of doubtful value. This was not so much a function of the community development concept—the Etawah pilot project had stressed promoting agricultural production—as an outcome of bureaucratic territoriality.[20]

(4) Implementation was done through conventional bureaucratic structures in which programs and targets were formulated centrally with little regard to the willingness or capability of the people to respond; often little real participation was involved. Demands that field workers report on the implementation of dozens of centrally mandated activities seriously cut into the time available for actual work with the community. When working with the community, the field worker easily fell into the pattern of actually directing local level programs. Again, these patterns were in sharp contrast to the Etawah pilot project which had stressed the development of organizational processes that placed a premium on being responsive to community identified needs.[21]

(5) Little was done to build independent member controlled local organizations able to solve local problems and make demands on the broader system. Furthermore, the village itself tended to be treated as a self-contained development unit with little attention given to the need to link self-governing villages into larger, more economically viable regional units.

Current Donor Experience

The current concern for the rural poor and their participation in the development process has had an important impact on national agency and donor funding priorities, but experience indicates that the reallocation of funds is not enough. The types of projects currently in vogue present difficult problems which remain to be solved and their solution is inhibited by programming procedures better suited to large capital development projects than to people-centered rural development.

In the discussion that follows the focus is on large donors because the information is accessible and their numbers are comparatively small. It is more difficult to generalize about the diverse national experiences, however. National and even sub-national development programmers are in general working with priorities and programming methods similar to those of the major donors—in part as a result of donor influence—and face corresponding pressures.

Experience with Poverty Focused Programming

The World Bank has responded to the new emphasis on poverty by realigning its loan portfolio to increase the proportion of loans going to countries with an annual per capita income below $280. It has also substantially increased the percentage of its portfolio devoted to agriculture and rural development projects, and since FY73 over half of these projects have been chosen and designed specifically to benefit the rural poor.[22] Its rural development sector policy paper calls explicitly for:

> Participation by the rural poor in the planning and implementation processes through local government, project advisory committees, cooperatives and other forms of group organization.

Under the 1973 foreign assistance legislation passed by the United States Congress, commonly referred to as "The New Directions Mandate," not only have the priorities of USAID been reoriented, it is largely restricted to assistance targeted directly to the poor majority—with participation a major theme. It is publicly committed to the concept that the economic benefits of its development projects should be "widely and significantly shared by the poor"; and that the

poor, including women, should be actively engaged in decision making and implementation in ways which increase "their technical skills and/or their capacity to organize for common purposes and for greater access to the benefits of development."[23]

Unfortunately, good intentions seldom suffice and the difficulties have surfaced fairly quickly. A discussion of "new-style" rural development projects in the World Bank's 1978 Annual Report observed that:

> . . . with hindsight, project design and the pace of implementation have been too ambitious, resulting in delays and shortfalls from original expectation. . . . Among the more difficult aspects is the establishment of systems within which small farmers can themselves have a say in how programs are designed and implemented, and how their skills, expert knowledge of the local farming environment, and their capacity to help themselves can be fully integrated into an overall effort.

Awareness of the need for change in approach at the Bank is growing,[24] but the magnitude of the changes in procedures and staff composition called for is great. An unpublished 1977 review of 164 World Bank rural development project appraisal reports concluded that the majority contained only the most minimal data on the social, demographic, and economic characteristics of the project area and made no attempt to analyze such data as it might bear on project design.[25] Similarly, it was concluded that little had been done in Bank assisted projects to utilize the potential of indigenous social organizations.[26]

The Bank's PIDER Project in Mexico has received special attention because its plan incorporated many advanced concepts for integrated area development. An important design feature was to be extensive popular participation in project decision making and implementation. A recent Bank staff paper concluded that the early commitments of the Mexican implementing agencies to a participatory approach were little more than wishful thinking since no local mechanisms had been developed to give reality to the ideal.[27]

Some "New Directions" USAID projects earlier looked to as prototypes of the agency's new emphasis on popular participation have revealed similar gaps between the planning concepts and the realities of implementation.[28] There is, as yet, little evidence to suggest that such experiences are isolated phenomena or that others have the answer.[29]

It is frequently suggested that what is needed is more private initiative in attacking the problems which government bureaucracies cannot manage. Though this view is an attractive one, there is little evidence to suggest that, when undertaken on anything approaching the scale required, private voluntary efforts are consistently more effective than those of government.[30]

Some fairly substantial amounts of money are presently being channelled to the Third World through private voluntary organizations (PVOs), many of which have been going through a sometimes painful re-examination of their roles. Organizations such as Catholic Relief Services, Save the Children Foundation, World Vision, CARE, and Church World Service have built major international programs based on relief and welfare activities. Recognizing that the answer to poverty lies not in relief, but in increasing the capacity of the poor to meet their own needs, they are in varying stages of creating more developmentally oriented programs. Relief activities tend by their nature to be top down, carrying a presumption that the recipients are for one reason or another unable to meet their own needs. The reorientation required for them to become effective in truly bottom-up development is no small undertaking.

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Viewed in historical perspective the current "new directions" are perhaps less a new thrust in development assistance than a return swing of the pendulum as the results produced by the economic planners during their period of ascendance come into question much as did the work of the community developers before them. Holdcroft suggests that too little attention was given to building a coherent body of knowledge out of the theory and empirical experience of the community development era with the result that many of its lessons remain unlearned.[31] The result is a new generation of planners, trained primarily in the tools of economic analysis, responding to an appealing concept that promised to overcome some failures of what, for them, were more familiar approaches, but which was not so new as it seemed.

Fortunately, not all of the lessons have gone unobserved. More emphasis is now placed on making participation a concern of all agencies engaged in rural development, on economic benefits, and on regional integration. Yet, others seem to have gone largely unrecognized. Thus, we continue to see: (a) reliance for the planning and implementation of "participative" development on centralized bureaucratic organizations which have little capacity to respond to diverse community-defined needs or to build from community skills and values; (b) inadequate investment in the difficult process of building community problem solving capacity; (c) inadequate attention to dealing with social diversity, and especially with highly stratified social structures, and (d) insufficient integration of the technical and social components of development action. These are areas in which the barriers to appropriate action have proven most formidable and it is important to stress the fact that the lack of money is *not* the central problem.

Constraints on Public Donors

If a lesson emerges out of this accumulated experience, it is that in dealing with the poor, redirection of funds to new categories of projects is only part of the need. Another part is building the capacity of donor organizations—whether

4

public or private, foreign or national, planner or implementor—to provide assistance in ways which respond to local needs while building local social and technical capacity. Unfortunately, most large donors seem to be under substantial pressure not to follow this latter course—the rhetoric of current project documents notwithstanding.[31]

Excessive pressures for immediate results, as measured by goods and services delivered, drive out attention to institution building and make it difficult to move beyond a relief and welfare approach to poverty; the distribution of food is a lot faster than teaching people how to grow it. A substantial bias toward *project* as contrasted to *program* funding compounds the problems. Projects by nature deal with time bounded start-up costs and emphasize facilities and equipment to the neglect of the development and funding of capacities for their sustained operation and maintenance. Their demands for detailed, up-front planning, coupled with rigorous adherence to fast-paced implementation schedules and pre-planned specifications, assumes task requirements are well understood when, in fact, even the nature of the problem is ill defined. Furthermore it virtually ensures that the real decisions will remain with professional technicians and government bureaucrats neither of whom are rewarded for being responsive to local conditions nor contributing toward the development of local institutional capacities.

Emphasis on meeting project disbursement schedules and on terminal project outcomes leads to an insistence on the creation of special project units, using special incentives to buy people away from more permanent organizations and, thus, undermining their potential for sustained long-term action. Pressures to move ever-larger amounts of money quickly without commensurate staff increases place a premium on large capital and technology intensive projects. As a consequence, heavy import components are best able to absorb such large sums of money on schedule, whereas effective work with the rural poor requires a high ratio of people to financial input; and it almost always takes longer than anticipated. When a large donor such as the World Bank operates with a few field offices, relying instead on the supervision of itinerant groups of experts with divergent views making quick judgments during short visits, there is little prospect of providing the consistent, informed, and sympathetic support required for effective institution building.

In general the need is for a flexible, sustained, experimental, action based capacity building style of assistance which most major donors are ill equipped to provide. The result is a substantial gap between what donors espouse as policy and what they actually find themselves pressured to do by their own political and bureaucratic imperatives.[33] (See Figure 1.)

As an example, the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) stated policy in irrigation development is to emphasize: (a) low cost per hectare, (b) many small farmer beneficiaries, and (c) production gains within a short time, such as two to five years. These criteria should lead it to emphasize rehabilitation of small irrigation systems, but, in fact, the costs are so low and spread among so many individual systems that it is difficult to build a substantial project loan around such work. Thus, the average ADB irrigation loan was for $40 million in 1978, with the pressures in the direction of increasing this average so the ADB sought further expansion of its total lending.[34]

A partial answer is greater emphasis on program as contrasted to project funding and both the World Bank and the ADB are currently experimenting with program style loans less tied to schedules and blueprint style plans.[35] However, unless institutional capacity building is included as an integral part of the loan package, the approach assumes the prior existence of strong administering organizations able to take a responsible, flexible, and locally responsive approach in the commitment of its funds. Generally such an assumption is unwarranted.

USAID provides its own examples of contradictions between purpose and procedure. While its mandate and rhetoric stress participation of the poor in decision making, exactly where the poor are to be involved in the sequence of its project development process is unclear. The fact is that USAID is accountable to the U.S. Congress and to agencies such as the Office of Management and Budget, not to the poor villagers to whose needs it is supposed to be responding. Not surprisingly, the USAID programmer is more likely to be proccupied with the needs and involvement of the groups that arbitrate his program than with those of the

FIGURE 1
Contradictions in Foreign Assistance Programming

Poverty-focused rural development involves projects which are:	Donors remain impelled to prefer projects which are:
Small	Large
Administrative and personnel-intensive	Capital- and import-intensive
Difficult to monitor and inspect	Easy to monitor and inspect
Slow to implement	Quick to implement
Not suitable for complex techniques of project appraisal	Suitable for social cost-benefit analysis

5

poor beneficiaries; indeed the agency's procedures all but ensure it. In preparing a Project Paper for approval in Washington the USAID program officer must comply with detailed specifications spelled out in a guidance document of more than 100 pages. One result of such requirements is that even host government counterparts tend to exclude themselves from the USAID planning process, having neither the time nor the patience to involve themselves in the form filling exercise. Moreover, in the process of avoiding the more pointless routine, they are also excluded from participation in the feasibility analysis, implementation planning, and budgeting.[36] The result is that whatever learning emerges from these exercises accrues to the USAID programmers and consultants, not to the local agencies who ultimately will have the responsibility for implementation.

Nonetheless, USAID is on the whole making the most serious effort of any large donor to come to grips with the problems of improving on its past performance in dealing with rural poverty.[37] The number, competence, and commitment of the people working on this problem throughout the agency is impressive. Just how successful they can be, given the constraints imposed by agency's political environment and its own procedures, remains to be seen.

The Positive Side: Five Asian Success Stories

As discouraging as the general picture is, not all efforts at participative approaches to rural development have failed. This section presents a series of cases from Asia on experiences that share three characteristics in common: each involves a rural development effort which seeks to engage rural people in their own advancement; each is generally recognized as more successful than the average; and each is dependent on effective program action more than on a uniquely favorable setting. Beyond that, the cases were chosen for their diversity in objectives, setting, and approach. These five cases on individual programs cover the Indian National Dairy Development Board, the Sri Lankan Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement, the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, the Thailand Community Based Family Planning Services, and the Philippine National Irrigation Administration Communal Irrigation Program. At the end of the section a brief discussion of some of the politically motivated peasant movements which have been a significant factor in modern Asian history provides additional perspective.

Indian National Dairy Development Board

One form of village action that has enjoyed more than typical success in the Third World is the vertically integrated single industry cooperative. Among the various examples, which include the Colombian coffee and the Malaysian rubber growers association, the system of dairy cooperatives promoted by the Indian National Dairy Development Board has attracted particular international interest. By the end of 1976 a total of 4,530 village cooperatives with a combined membership of 2 million farmers had been organized, and efforts were underway to develop a system of similar small milk producer cooperatives throughout India.[38]

Members of the village level cooperative society normally own one or two cows and deposit milk twice each day at the collection point maintained by the society. Special trucks collect the milk from the village storage vats and deliver it to processing centers operated by a cooperative union comprised of some 80 village societies. Processed dairy products are sold in major urban centers through the facilities of a federation of the dairy unions.

Studies indicate that the program operates with a high level of efficiency and lack of corruption, and provides major social and economic benefits to the poorest members of the member villages[39] while assuring urban consumers of a regular supply of quality milk products at fair prices. It has also contributed to a weakening of caste and sexual barriers as all castes of both sexes have learned to wait their turn in a single line to deliver their milk. This represents a substantial social advance in rural India.[40]

Several features of the program contribute to the success of the program:

- The benefits are accessible to the poorest members of the community as even a poor landless family can maintain a cow, a practice well established by tradition in India.
- The village co-ops are backed by a strong and highly disciplined support system which provides at a fair price the entire range of services required for profitable production, from veterinary care and feed to an assured market.
- All technologies and methods employed have been proven under local conditions.
- Everything is done according to carefully developed systems in which those responsible are thoroughly trained.
- A combination of strong, externally-audited management systems, daily payments to members, and public transactions (including tests for quality of the milk) leaves little room for dishonesty on the part of co-op officials. With little opportunity for corruption, only the more responsible individuals are attracted to leadership positions.
- The basic functions of the village milk cooperatives are so simple that few demands are placed on their leaders and members either for communal labor or for complex decisions that might favor one group over another.

The strong and sustained leadership of Verghese Kurien, the founder and head of the NDDB, is also important. However, another critical factor is more easily overlooked: the process by which the NDDB came into being contrasts sharply with that of the more typical, centrally organized, government sponsored, co-op movements in Asia in which the members usually have little interest beyond collecting government handouts.

The NDDB, which traces its history back to the mid-1940s, is a creation of farmers responding to a felt need. India's colonial government had contracted with a private

6

dairy to purchase and process milk from villages in Kaira District of Gujarat State for sale in Bombay, and the farmers who supplied the dairy grew resentful of the low and fluctuating prices being offered. Eventually, a boycott of the government scheme was organized which led, in 1946, to the formatin of the Anand Milk Producers' Union Limited under the chairmanship of Tribhuvandas Patel, one of the farmer members. By 1947, eight village cooperatives with 432 members were operating under the cooperative union. The basic outlines of the program began to emerge early as the farmers worked out a scheme responsive to their own needs. In 1949, a young man named Verghese Kurien, fresh from a U.S. university education, was assigned by the government to a low level position in the Indian Research Creamery in Anand. Bored with his unchallenging assignment, he began advising the union on the purchase of dairy machinery. He was later asked by its members to help them with its installation and the training of their workers. He stayed on to become manager of the cooperative.

Excessive pressures for immediate results, as measured by goods and services delivered, drive out attention to institution building and make it difficult to move beyond a relief and welfare approach to poverty; the distribution of food is a lot faster than teaching people how to grow it.

Kurien learned along with the farmers in a village setting. Once a successful prototype program had been worked out, largely by the farmers, it was not passed to some established organization for boader replication. Rather, a new organization grew around the prototype—from the bottom up—gradually building and testing its own capacity to provide effective support to federations of primary cooperatives and adding additional layers at its top as the program expanded. Appropriate management systems were worked out through experience to meet the demands of the program. The values of integrity, service, and commitment to the poorest member-producers were deeply imbedded in its emerging structures. Management staff were hired fresh from school, trained through experience on the job, indoctrinated in the values of the program, and advanced rapidly as it grew.

The process of bottom-up learning and growth from within continued for 10 years before the effort extended beyond Gujarat state, and when the National Dairy Development Board was created in 1965 it was with the village trained Kurien as its head. We may assume as well that most of the personnel and systems of the NDDB were absorbed directly from the cooperatives it was to serve and replicate. Much experience with the village people and the dairy industry had been accumulated and assimilated into the organization by that time.

The NDDB is currently planning a major expansion program to be funded by a $150 million loan from the World Bank and sales of dairy commodities donated by foreign governments. It will also move simultaneously into a new program of vegetable oil cooperatives. To the current professional staff of 600, the new programs will require the addition of 400 new managers per year for the next several years to be trained in a new NDDB established management school. The combination of rapid expansion into states which present different institutional settings, a basic shift in its approach to management development, and a move into a new type of program—possibly foregoing the long process of bottom-up program design and organization building that characterized the milk program—will no doubt place substantial pressures on the NDDB. It will be instructive to see whether it can replicate its own success under such conditions.

Sarvodaya Sharamadana Movement of Sri Lanka

The Sarvodaya Sharamadana Movement (SSM)[41] of Sri Lanka is both private and national in scope, has a strong religious orientation, operates without formal ties to government, and, like the Indian National Dairy Development Board, was built from a modest village experience by a bold and charismatic leader. Yet, while the NDDB was built on a structure of carefully designed management systems and emphasized economic outcomes, the SSM has given more of its attention to the articulation of its philosophy than to building appropriate management systems and has emphasized changes in the heart of man over changes in village economies and social structures.[42] It represents a search for a development model consonant with the unique cultural and spiritual heritage of the Sri Lankan people.

The SSM operates through an unusually complex organizational structure, encompassing a variety of voluntary membership groups loosely linked by formalized, professionally staffed administrative structures. The preferred village level organization includes individual groups for youth, mothers, farmers, children, preschool, elders, and for persons with special education and skills. At the national level there is a large executive council comprised of officers of the movement, directors elected by the general membership, and 35 persons invited for their particular expertise. Six regional Development Education Centers which provide the primary support facilities are linked to the village through 74 extension centers. Activities are diverse and generally loosely structured on the philosophy that individual community programs should emerge as an expression of the needs of the people.[43]

The origins of SSM trace back to 1958 when a government rural development officer proposed to the principal and teachers of Nalanda College, a small Buddhist secondary school, that they seek to acquaint their students with the problems of rural life through participation in a work-study camp in a poor rural village. The idea appealed to them as a unique educational experience. One of these teachers was the young A. T. Ariyaratne, around whose philosophy and personality the SSM was later build.[44]

The first camp was held in December 1958. The village selected consisted of 35 Rodiya families, members of a despised caste that lived by begging. Routinely suffering the most extreme forms of discrimination, they were barred

from attending school or even receiving religious rites as no member of a higher caste, not even the monks, would have any association with them. To enter a Rodiya home or drink from a cup which a Rodiya had touched was nearly unthinkable for a non-Rodiya. It was, thus, a notable event when a group of 80 students, teachers, boy scouts, and government officials from middle-class families set off to share their labor with the people of Kanatholuwa village in digging wells and latrines, constructing a small road, and performing other services. Each participant contributed even the money for his own food and shared in the tasks of pitching tents and food preparation.

The camp lasted only 10 days. The actual participation of the village people except as recipients was minimal; and follow-up action was left to the government. But the significance of the camp was not found in the wells and latrines constructed, so much as in the fact that 80 members of the middle class had engaged for 10 days in manual labor in the service of an outcaste class.

The timing of the camp was right as Sri Lanka was in the midst of a social awakening to the plight of rural peoples and the inequities of the caste system. The camp was well publicized in the Colombo press and its participants quickly won broad recognition, including a letter of commendation from the Prime Minister. Soon other camps, known as Shramadanas, were being organized, each bringing more urban middle and upper class volunteers into contact with the realities of rural poverty and caste discrimination.

In the early 1960s a major reorientation of the basic program occurred: its philosophy, based on Buddhist teachings, took explicit shape and a concern for sustained village level development action led to recruiting the village monk as a community development worker. The village temple emerged as the center of Sarvodaya development activity. In 1968, a plan was launched for the comprehensive development efforts in 100 villages based on the new concept.

Foreign funding was introduced in the early 1970s leading to the establishment of a permanent headquarters and bureaucracy. A wide range of new, centrally planned and funded activities emerged, including the operation of cooperative farms. In 1975, the 100-village program was expanded to 1,000 villages. Training centers were established to train women who would manage preschool child care and mother-child feeding centers, to prepare youth for community development work, and to develop skills in agriculture and technical fields. All educational programs were to instill a commitment to serving the poorest of Sri Lanka's poor.

In 1978, a case study by Nandasena Ratnapala, a local university professor, noted that the breadth of Sarvodaya's membership involvement and the strength of its spiritual commitment had not always been translated into program accomplishment.[45] Though activities had been undertaken in 2,000 villages, the programs were more or less permanently established in only about 300. Only a fraction of those eligible participated directly in SSM activities, mainly as passive beneficiaries of services provided by SSM staff and the local monks. The leadership training and designated patterns of village organization had not, in most villages, resulted in a self-reliant development process. In the training courses, weaknesses were noted in course content, competence of instructors, and teaching methods. Evidence of abuse in the handling of funds had resulted in the centralization of control over individual village program actions, turning the regional and extension centers into little more than "channels for transmitting and carrying out directives from the central level."[46]

With the introduction of major foreign funding, SSM had introduced radically new program activities and organization forms while simultaneously undertaking rapid expansion before either were tested. While it remained an important moral force and continued to enlist Sri Lankans from all social strata in the cause of the poor, its developmental impact was limited to a small minority of the villages in which it worked.

When Ratnapala's study appeared, Ariyaratne responded by inviting him to join the SSM as head of its newly established Research Institute. While seeking to demonstrate a continuing commitment to the basic philosophies of the movement, the studies of the institute sought to stimulate sober reflection on the gaps between the philosophy and the realities of its performance.[47] One of its first studies noted that:[48]

- Candidates for layman's training programs were supposed to be selected by the people, yet some were selected by local influentials even in direct contravention of decisions by local groups. Also, community development trainees were being selected by the local member of parliament.
- The villages chosen to receive SSM assistance were supposed to be isolated, inhabited by under-privileged classes, lacking essential public services, and having unique social, economic, or cultural problems; yet any village in which a few enthusiastic individuals expressed interest was being admitted.
- Whenever financial resources were provided centrally, equal contributions of finance or labor were to be provided by the community; yet the salaries of key village volunteers and most other expenses were being met entirely by the center, including the salaries of the preschool teachers which originally were to be raised by the village.

The study went on to note that while the leaders of SSM were once in direct daily contact with the village programs, thus ensuring effective upward communication, they had since become separated from the village volunteers by elaborate bureaucratic structures populated by salaried " 'officials' who consider communication between participants and the center as of very little value."[49]

Though some Sarvodaya staff were not pleased by the study, a number of constructive actions resulted. Sarvodaya's training programs were substantially revamped with emphasis on preparing villagers to make more of the programming decisions for themselves. The screening of trainees was tightened. More training was done within the village, with each training center acting as the area coordi-

nator. Of the 2,400 villages which had some form of SSM activity as of January 1980, the estimated 10 percent which had developed effective Sarvodayan organizations, generally the very poorest, were to be given substantial autonomy in the planning of their own development activities.[50]

Subsequently, the Research Institute's style was reoriented to place itself in less of an adversary role. SSM field workers were trained to engage villagers in gathering and interpreting data on their own villages and programs as a consciousness-raising experience. Findings were discussed with operating staff in the search for solutions to identified weaknesses in program design and staff performance prior to their publication.[51]

Sarvodaya's problems are not yet solved. Development of capacities for decentralized decision making in an organization accustomed to centralized control is not an easy process. But a new learning mechanism has been introduced and serious attention is being given to making it an effective tool for program improvement.

Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee

One of the most attractive of the smaller private voluntary agencies working in rural development is the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) headed by Mr. F. H. Abed, a former accountant turned development manager. The reason is BRAC's unusual capacity for rapid learning—through the constant identification, acknowledgement, and correction of its own errors. Its history may be divided roughly into three phases, each of which has involved a major reorientation in its program and produced significant lessons of broader interest.[52]

Phase I: The Relief Approach. The BRAC was formed in early 1972 to resettle refugees in the Sulla area of Northeast Bangladesh following the war of partition from Pakistan. Four medical teams provided daily outpatient care in the four camps where the BRAC workers lived. Resettled refugees were assisted in reconstructing homes and fishing boats. Emergency food supplies sustained them until their fields began producing. Yet BRAC workers were impressed that the living conditions for the typical resettled Sulla resident were little better than they had been in the refugee camps. This was BRAC's first major learning and even by November 1972 its energies were being redirected to a more development oriented program of assistance.

Phase II: The Sectorial Approach. BRAC's early development activities consisted of a number of relatively discrete sectorial program activities: construction of community centers, functional education, agriculture, fisheries, cooperatives, health and family planning, and vocational training for women—each of which eventually produced its own new learning.

For administrative purposes the project area of some 200 villages was divided into 11 sections, each with a field camp supervised by an area manager to whom four to five multipurpose development workers reported. A field coordinator supervised two zonal program coordinators who, in turn, supervised the 11 sections.

One of the first actions was to open 255 literacy centers staffed by 300 villagers trained as literacy instructors. The goal was to eliminate the project area's 90 percent illiteracy within three years. Enthusiasm was high when 5,000 villagers enrolled in the first course. But when only 5 percent completed the course, a review by BRAC staff concluded that the materials and methods used were not relevant to villager interests or needs. Consequently, a materials development unit was established in early 1974 which interviewed villagers to determine their substantial interests, and developed lessons around these topics. Adult learning methods were stressed—mainly group discussions organized around key words, sentences, and arithmetic exercises in which the instructor took an unconventional facilitator role. Materials were tested and teachers retrained in courses designed to develop facilitation skills. When the new literacy courses were introduced to the villages, completion rates for the first two were 41 and 46 percent, respectively.

In health, a modification of BRAC's methods began even during the relief phase when the threat of a cholera epidemic convinced BRAC's four medical doctors they could not do the job alone. They quickly trained villagers in the techniques of treating cholera and severe diarrhea cases. Thus began a pattern which all subsequent BRAC health programs have followed: the physician's role would be, first, as a trainer, second, as a planner, and only lastly as a curer. The Phase II health system was designed around paramedics trained to treat 18 to 20 common illnesses, provide innoculations, and educate villagers in preventive health measures. A cadre of female workers recruited family planning acceptors and distributed supplies. The area managers supervised these health workers while the physicians provided continuing training and handled referrals.

In agriculture, the BRAC workers cultivated their own demonstratin plots at their camp sites, which usually consisted of two acres of rice and a half acre of vegetables. As was duly noted by the farmers of the area, this was an unusual activity for college graduates. The stature of the BRAC workers as agricultural advisors was substantially enhanced when their fields produced some of the best crops seen in the area. Farmers in selected project areas received technical assistance through group meetings, as well as assistance in obtaining new seeds and other inputs. Several groups totalling 300 landless laborers were assisted in obtaining leases on 500 acres of fallow government and privately owned land.[53] Irrigation and flood control projects were constructed under "food for work" projects. Other efforts included providing fishermen with boats and with twine for nets. Special women's programs provided training in vocational skills such as sewing.

A number of cooperatives already existed in the project area when BRAC arrived, though most were ineffective in serving the broader population, having been taken over by the larger landowners who monopolized the benefits government channeled through them. BRAC was able to rejuvenate many through member training, encouragement of regular meetings, introduction of improved accounting practices, and initiation of government audits. A number of new societies were formed, including second and third tiered structures at union and thana levels.

9

As experience was gained in each of these undertakings, further insights began to emerge.

- Those who were benefiting most from the BRAC programs were those with relatively larger landholdings as too few of its programs addressed the needs of the landless or near landless.
- While BRAC had been attempting to form all members of a village into a single organization, the interests of landed and landless were so opposed that it was nearly impossible for a single community based organization to serve them both simultaneously.
- Each BRAC program was operating more or less independently of the others. The overall effort was not providing each recipient simultaneously with reinforcing benefits in a way that would achieve real developmental impact.
- The program remained heavily dependent on BRAC staff and leadership. The organizational mechanisms by which the community might independently sustain program activities were not emerging.
- Paramedics had become primarily absorbed in providing curative services, neglecting health education responsibilities, yet their once a week visits to individual villages did not provide adequate access to even their curative services. Furthermore, women were reluctant to use the services of the male paramedics.
- The impact of the literacy program was still limited. The materials were not keyed to direct support of other BRAC activities in the village and those who completed the course had no material available to read at their level of reading proficiency, while their writing proficiency was not adequate to write an informative letter to a friend or relative.
- Development of women's programs was being inhibited by the fact that, with the exception of family planning workers, all BRAC personnel working at the village level were men.
- In several instances there was no market for the vocational skills developed in BRAC courses. For example, women who received three-month training courses in sewing using UNICEF-donated sewing machines found no markets for their products and could not afford to purchase machines only for family use. The need was for integrated income earning projects.
- Even with boats available the fishermen continued to be exploited by those who controlled fishing rights, credit, and markets.
- Widespread use of the high yielding rice varieties was blocked by the limited output of government seed programs.
- Of some 15,000 farm and landless farmer families in the project area, only 300 landless benefited from the land program and only 600 farmers benefited from the production improvement efforts. The idea of constructing a *Gonokendro* (people's center) in each village to serve as a focal point for community life and development activities proved unrealistic given the seemingly irreconcilable factionalism which divided most villages.

Overall the predominantly centrally planned sectoral programs had consistently gravitated toward patterns of operation that mainly benefited the more easily reachable and the relatively better-off to the neglect of the more disadvantaged.

Phase III: The People Approach. Numerous actions were taken to correct the deficiencies identified in Phase II. Some were fairly specific such as the decisions to train full-time female village health workers to serve the preventive and simple curative health needs of mothers and young children, and to hire females as paramedics and multipurpose development workers.

More basic was the shift during 1975 and 1976 toward a more people centered approach targeted entirely to the poorest 50 percent of the village population—defined operationally as those families whose livelihoods depended in part on selling labor to third parties—with program initiatives coming largely from the beneficiaries. Groups of 20 to 30 were organized around similar economic interests such as landless laborers, destitute women, and fishermen. The functional literacy training was used to build an organization, raise consciousness, and lead into joint activities responsive to identified needs. For example, landless laborers organized to lease land, destitute women to undertake paddy processing, and fishermen to purchasse a boat. As projects were identified by each group, BRAC provided resources such as credit or "food for work" grains. Once a few such groups were established in a village it had been anticipated that they would assist in forming other groups through a building block process until all the poor of the village were organized. Experimentation with these methods continues in certain BRAC project areas. There has been a concern that the smaller groups might develop fairly exclusive interests, making the process of building toward a village-wide organization of the poor more difficult than anticipated. Consequently BRAC was experimenting in its Rural Credit and Training Project and its Outreach Program with a new approach which featured:

- An initial survey done by outreach staff provides a point of entry to the village and identifies members of the target group—i.e., those households in which labor is sold to third parties.
- Informal discussions are initiated at traditional gathering places to identify the major concerns of the poor and potential leaders. The discussion groups tend to grow until a village assembly is held and an organization of the poor formed to address the issues of immediate and mutual concern to them.
- As leaders are identified they are sent to the BRAC training center at Savar to learn organizing and consciousness raising methods. The contact here with leaders from similar villages builds awareness that others throughout Bangladesh share a similar plight.

10

- As group cohesiveness is built, joint activities are developed based on locally available resources. Supplemental BRAC resources are offered only after the group has proven its resourcefulness in utilizing resources already locally available.
- Functional education is introduced only as the people demand it. The curriculum continues to address literacy and numerical skills, but raising consciousness of various forms of exploitation and building commitment to group action are the primary objectives.
- Collective action is taken on such concerns as demands for a rightful share in government programs, bargaining for improved wages, share cropping and land lease terms, and schemes to gain control over productive assets.[54]
- "Food for work" schemes such as the clearing of land collectively leased for farming are planned and implemented under the supervision of their own leaders.
- Women's activities emphasize productive employment, including cultivation and earthmoving projects, rather than conventional women's activities such as sewing which would attract women of relatively more well-to-do families.
- Under the Outreach Program, BRAC workers are not based in the village, thus minimizing the presence of the BRAC establishment.

The approach of the Outreach Program generates some helpful process dynamics. First the financially more secure villagers normally exclude themselves from participation as soon as they learn that BRAC is not providing handouts and that many of the activities involve manual labor. Second, as the organized poor of a village set about to negotiate for higher wage rates they quickly learn that they can be effective only if neighboring villages are also organized; consequently, they set about on their own to organize them. As word spreads, people come from villages miles away asking the organized villages for assistance in organizing. As the process builds a momentum of its own there is a significant decline in the BRAC staff input required per village organized.

Phase III also brought the introduction of a research unit to analyze fundamental socioeconomic problems. BRAC staff see research as a powerful tool for program improvement, using it to address program relevant questions relating to the dynamics of rural poverty, seeking insights into questions such as: Who controls that assets in the rural village and why?[55] How are some families able to advance themselves, while others become increasingly impoverished? How do peasants perceive famine? Credit? Such studies have documented how population pressures have combined with crop failures to break down traditionally protective social structures, leading to the conclusion that access to consumption credit in time of crisis is more important to most poor families than access to production credit.[56] BRAC is re-examining its credit programs accordingly.

With the change in orientation "participatory research" techniques were introduced, such as asking a peasant panel to discuss a designated topic and then recording their observations. A staff facilitator keeps the discussion within a prearranged framework, but allows the participants maximum scope in exploring the subject.

Villagers concerned about the misappropriation of "food for work" grains by corrupt officials inspired a study on corruption. When they asked BRAC's help it was decided nothing could be done without more information. BRAC staff members started recording reports from villagers. This stimulated still more reports. Adding data gathered from official records, BRAC workers and the villagers determined exactly how much each individual was taking and how. When Union Councils and Thama officials were presented with these facts, "food for work" grains suddenly became available to the poor for their projects. One observation which emerges from these undertakings is that as research has become integral to program operations, the line between researcher, field worker, and even the people themselves is no longer well defined—each participates in agenda setting, data collection, and interpretation.

[What is needed for success is]... a high degree of fit between program design, beneficiary needs, and the capacities of the assisting organization.

BRAC's responsive style of programming has emerged within the framework of well developed management systems designed to facilitate decentralized operation within a strong but evolving policy framework. Abed's leadership style encourages open discussion of difficult issues and acceptance of apparent errors, yet provides firm decisions when they are needed. BRAC's organization conforms to the Likert model of overlapping teams. Each team meets on a regular basis for discussion of current problems, and each member of the staff is assisted in developing skills as a discussion leader.[57] Continually investing in development of new skills and methodologies, BRAC sends its personnel into the village armed with a good deal more than high ideals.[58]

The spontaneous replication BRAC is observing is probably the strongest available indicator that its program is truly meeting felt needs, yet BRAC faces some important challenges. Powerful social forces toward positive changes have been set in motion by the BRAC approach, and maintaining the momentum of those forces without incurring a major backlash poses a difficult challenge. BRAC is also preparing to launch a nation-wide single purpose program to train rural mothers in oral rehydration techniques for treating diarrhea. Two thousand new workers will be added to its staff of 378 (January 1980 figures),[59] working under a separate supervisory structure. Thus, BRAC will be simultaneously running two programs based on quite different operating requirements. What strains this may place on its organization remain to be seen.

Thailand's Community Based Family Planning Services (CBFPS)

Reaching the rural poor need not always involve community organizations, as demonstrated by Thailand's Community Based Family Planning Services (CBFPS), headed by the colorful and controversial Mechai Veravaidya.[4] As of 1979 it was distributing birth control pills through community volunteers in 16,200 Thai villages.

From 1965-72, Mechai, then chief of the Development Evaluation Division of the National Economic Development Board, traveled extensively throughout Thailand to observe government development programs in action. Two fundamental conclusions emerged: (1) nearly all development programs were failing because they were designed from the top down, involved no participation of the people, and seldom provided effective follow-up on completed projects; and (2) such gains as were being made were rapidly cancelled out by population growth. He decided to devote himself to action on both problems.

In 1971, Mechai became a part-time consultant to the Planned Parenthood Association of Thailand (PPAT), and was appointed its Executive Director in 1973. At that time family planning was available in Thailand only through government medical facilities which villagers seldom used. Mechai wanted to bring it closer to the people. So in 1972 he sent a man to walk through a village and talk to people about family planning, telling those who were interested that there would be a doctor at the local school the following Sunday. More than 100 women came, three-fourths of whom had never visited the government hospital only two kilometers away. A second experiment, using students to recruit villagers to go to a nearby government health facility was relatively unsuccessful. He concluded that: (1) the doctor had to come to the people; and (2) the setting must be familiar.

Beneficiary needs . . . are a function of the political, economic, and social context in which the beneficiaries live and cannot be adequately defined for purposes of determining program input requirements independently of that context.

A third experiment established that in Thailand family planning promotion could be public and fun. At a local fair he hired entertainers to dress up in family planning T-shirts and to blow up condoms as balloons for the children. At a family planning booth contestants knocked over cans with a ball to win condoms. Condoms served as tickets of admission to a folk dance exhibition. Attracting attention with stimulating bad reactions, such unconventional promotional methods subsequently became a Mechai trademark.

Such ad hoc experimentation continued until January 1974. By that time he realized that if family planning were going to be brought to the people, someone with greater interest than the physicians would have to do it, but he still needed one unconventional physician to help him test his latest idea. Dr. Kom Pongkun, the Medical Officer for Banglamung District, proved to be the man. Together they recruited five shopkeepers known to Dr. Kom in each of five villages in Banglamung District. Ignoring the legal requirement that birth control pills could be dispensed only on a physician's prescription, they provided each with a supply of pills and an explanation of their use. The distributor could charge six bahts for each cycle of pills and keep one as a commission. As week later the distributors reported good sales. So by mid-February 1974, Mechai and Dr. Kom trained 70 new distributors in a one-day course to serve the rest of the district.

Though some difficult political battles ensued as opposition to the scheme mounted, on May 17, 1974 the National Family Planning Coordinating Committee removed the legal restriction on pill dispensing by non-physicians and authorized extension of the scheme to 23 additional districts. Having already obtained funding from the International Planned Parenthood Federation, Mechai completed this initial expansion by December. Since the strongest opposition had come from within his own organization, the PPAT, he subsequently operated the Community-Based Family Planning Services (CBFPS) largely independently of the parent organization.

Testing and revision continued during the early expansion. Various types of distributors were tried—including village headmen and farmers—and the methods of selection were refined. Alternative supervision and resupply systems were tested: a "G Model" relied on government medical officers to select and train distributors, provide logistical support, and collect the funds; in a "P Model" these functions were all performed by CBFPS personnel. Two lessons were learned: the medical officers, whose primary responsibility was for clinic operations, could not simultaneously manage a village-based system, but their cooperation was very important. Thus, CBFPS subsequently handled all operations but paid the medical officers a fixed honorarium to act as "medical supervisors." Later, when the government created a new post of district public health officer to supervise village-based midwives, responsibility for medical supervision was transferred to them. Lessons were learned in promotion as well: family planning movies were popular, but had little impact on acceptance rates; colored condoms made colorful promotions but the pill was the preferred method among the villagers.

Learning was also involved in developing effective management systems. Complaints from distributors established that resupply of contraceptive pills and condoms by mail was unreliable. Finally a system was devised whereby supervisors received supplies at their monthly meeting for delivery to the village distributors who also received prepaid, pre-addressed post cards to mail to Bangkok whenever supplies failed to arrive. At the same meeting statistical reports were collected, results reviewed and new targets set. A commission system for supervisors was introduced in 1978.

As the program grew, new layers of management were added at the top, but to ensure continued contact with actual field operations, all staff were scheduled to make

periodic visits to the villages with local supervisors. New personnel were introduced into established districts to gain initial experience, releasing more experienced people to open new districts.

In general the learning process which maintained continuing program improvement came not from formal studies, but from the immediate experience of the program leadership who were in direct contact with villagers and program operations. Mechai observed that:

> In the early days I did everything—talking to the doctors, selecting and training distributors, follow-up, blowing up condoms for the children. The only thing I didn't do myself was the resupply. That's the way I learned my business. And I think it is a good way to learn.

At the same time substantial attention was given to making more formal information an effective management tool, resulting in substantial deviation from conventional, donor-mandated evaluation procedures. Distributor reporting requirements were gradually, but drastically, simplified to provide only data essential to program monitoring. Carefully planned and constantly updated visual displays drew attention at each program level to trends and highlighted problem areas. Conventional impact surveys were found to be largely useless since the results took too long to process and they did not relate to specific administrative units. Thus, a "mini-survey" technique was introduced in 1978. Each month the supervisor did a house-to-house survey in a given number of villages, finding out who was practicing birth control, by what methods, and who was using supplies obtained from what source. Not only did it provide an up-to-date overview of each village, but the results were put to immediate use. Women who were not practicing birth control were urged on the spot to make use of their village pill supplier. Older women with several children relying on the pill were advised about sterilization. Interest in potential new products, such as injectables, was assessed. By continuously moving from village to village, a given district could be completely surveyed in 12 to 18 months. Research and operations were totally integrated.

These experiences . . . illuminate why effective fit is so seldom achieved in rural development efforts through the prevailing* blueprint *approach to developing programming. Their comparative success was based on a rather different process of bottom-up program and organizational development, a* learning process *approach.

By 1980, between the efforts of various public and private agencies, the need for easy access to contraceptive supply had been largely met in most Thai villages. Anticipating this development, the Population and Community Development Association, which incorporated the CBFPS as a bureau, was formed in 1977 to undertake a widely diversified range of family planning and community development activities building on the infrastructure of the CBFPS. Experiments were underway in everything from pig raising and the financing of latrine construction to relief services for refugees and the marketing of pumpkins. Many of these undertakings posed rather different technical and organizational requirements. As of January 1980 most were still at the small pilot stage, with the problems of building the management systems required to support larger scale replication still to be faced.

Philippine National Irrigation Administration Communal Irrigation Program

Line agencies of governments throughout Asia are making new efforts to reach the rural poor and to encourage formation of local organizations in support of program activities. Yet, seldom do these centrally designed efforts give more than lip service to relating in a meaningful way to locally identified needs or to examining the management systems which dominate the agency's programs to see whether they are consistent with a participative approach. Examples which constitute welcome exceptions from the more general pattern are emerging in Asia, one example being the efforts of the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) of the Philippines to strengthen its work in support of communal irrigators' associations.

Government assistance to small farmer-owned and operated gravity irrigation systems in the Philippines traces back to the early 1900s, but it was generally limited to the construction of physical facilities. Especially during the 1950s and 60s it was dominated by "pork barrel" politics which spread available funds over so many different projects that planning and construction were often inadequate. In the early 1970s efforts were made to correct the deficiencies of the past, but even with more rational allocation of funds many completed systems fell rapidly into disuse or served substantially fewer farmers than intended. One theory argued that attention was needed to helping the farmers form effective associations able to perform the operations and maintenance tasks once construction was completed.

Consequently, two actions were taken in 1976 by the NIA, which was responsible for overall irrigation development in the Philippines. One was to conclude an agreement with the Farm Systems Development Corporation (FSDC), a public corporation with experience in developing small pump fed irrigation systems, under which FSDC would organize farmers to operate and maintain many of the physical systems which the NIA was constructing.[61] Coordination was to be managed by a central committee composed of representatives of each of the two agencies. There was an assumption implicit in this agreement that the technical and the social sub-systems could be created separately and then merged.

The second action was to initiate a pilot project at Laur in Central Luzon to experiment with a more integrated approach in which the capacity of the water user association would be developed through active involvement in the planning and construction activities: planning system layout, obtaining water rights and rights of way, organizing volunteer labor inputs to system construction, and exerting control over project expenditures.[62]

Integrating social and technical development proved extremely difficult. In one community it was learned how difficult dealing with local power struggles can be—leading to the abandonment of construction plans until the local association reorganized itself some two years later. In a second community it was learned that high level of commitment from a cohesive farmer group does not necessarily make things easier for the engineers: scheduling and system design issues resulted in numerous delays and changes; organization of volunteer labor presented unfamiliar problems worked out only through lengthy meetings; and farmer insistence on monitoring purchases and limiting personal use of vehicles using gasoline charged to the farmers' loan accounts was not always welcomed by project engineers. The farmers even questioned the engineers on basic technical judgments, such as the type of material chosen for dam construction, insisting that the proposed structure would not withstand the force of local floods. Finally, however, the new dam was completed using the design favored by NIA's design engineers—only to be washed out a few months later.

The experience was sobering in the difficulties which it suggested the NIA must face if it were to work effectively in support of community managed irrigation; its capabilities on both the technical and the institutional side would need to be upgraded and integrated. Numerous changes in operating procedures were implied. Yet, it established in the minds of NIA's leadership that there were major benefits to be gained in return. Not only could farmer participation in system planning and construction result in a stronger water user association better equipped to operate and maintain the finished system, but it could also result in a better designed and constructed irrigation system more likely to meet farmer needs. The result was a strengthened commitment by one of the largest public agencies in the Philippines (43,000 employees) to build a new capacity for community level action.

Though still unfolding, the NIA experience is off special interest in providing a model of organizational change by which a large, established, bureaucratic, technology-based, public organization may be able to redesign its programs and structures through a bottom-up, field based, learning process analogous to that by which the successful programs of organizations such as the National Dairy Development Board, the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, and the Community Based Family Planning Services emerged. The NIA model has the following key elements:[63]

- *A Series of Time-Phased Learning Laboratories.*[64] Initially two NIA communals assistance projects were designated as learning laboratories in which teams of NIA personnel: (a) worked out methods for integrating the social and technical aspects of system rehabilitation through full involvement of farmers in planning and construction; (b) built an understanding of the special problems posed by these methods and of the capacities NIA would require to use them effectively; (c) built a cadre of engineers, organizers, and managers skilled in their application to facilitate dissemination to the rest of the organization; and (d) identified conflicts between the new methods and the broader policies and procedures of the NIA. Assessment of the initial pilots was used to refine methods subsequently employed in two additional pilot systems, also designated as learning laboratories. These refinements made it possible to shorten lead times, reduce the number of organizers required, improve project site selection, and avoid many of the conflicts between farmers, engineers, and organizers encountered in the earlier pilots.

- *A National Communal Irrigation Committee.* A top level working committee, headed by NIA Assistant Administrator Benjamin Bagadion who is the moving force behind the communals effort, coordinates the learning process. Committee membership includes central level NIA officials and an FSDC representative, as well as academically based members representing the disciplines of social science, management, and agricultural engineering. Most committee members have day-to-day responsibility for one or another aspect of the learning process activity. Meetings are held monthly to evaluate progress, interpret the experience from the learning laboratory sites and other committee sponsored research, initiate new studies as needed, commission preparation of training materials, and plan strategies for phased dissemination of new methods.

- *Process Oriented Research.* Research is an integral part of the learning process. The focal concern is with building into the NIA the new skills, methods, and systems appropriate to its new participative approach. The outside researchers are full participants, their roles distinguished from those of NIA personnel by their special expertise rather than by any presumption of special objectivity.[65]

  a. *Social Sciences.* Social scientists involved from the Institute of Philippine Culture have had three main concerns: (1) development and operational testing of guidelines for rapid collection and assessment by NIA field staff of social-institutional data ("institutional profiles") critical to project selection and planning; (2) *process documentation* based on participant observation in learning laboratory sites to provide monthly non-evaluative narrative feedback on key process events to operating personnel, provincial and regional managers, and members of the Communal Irrigation Committee; (3) study of the organization, maintenance, and water management methods worked out by farmers in functioning associations as a basis for NIA assistance to other communals in working out methods suited to their own circumstances;[66] and (4) training of NIA personnel in use of the new tools being developed.

  b. *Management.* Management experts from the Asian Institute of Management: (1) assess the fit between requirements of the new methods for assisting communals and existing NIA management systems;[67] (2) advise on new management roles and procedures; (3)

assist in planning the organizational change process; and (4) coordinate workshops for NIA managers and engineers on the new methods.

c. *Water Management.* An agricultural engineering team from the International Rice Research Institute and the University of the Philippines at Los Baños is developing: (1) simplified methods for diagnosis and correction of common water management problems to be used by farmers and NIA engineers; and (2) simplified water management systems suited to needs of small water user associations. These will be operationally tested and refined in the pilot sites and then will serve as the basis for training programs directed to farmers, engineers, and organizers throughout the country.

- *Seeding Pilots.* Once the Communal Irrigation Committee hass concluded that a reasonably satisfactory program model and supporting methods had been produced in the learning laboratory systems, a workshop was held in December 1979 for the directors of each of the NIA's 12 regions at which an orientation to the new approach was provided. Each was called on to designate one upcoming system rehabilitation in his region as a pilot. Each region, thus, would be "seeded" with its own learning laboratory through which regional personnel could gain experience with the new methods and adopt them to their needs. Additional training would be held for the engineer of each province in which such a pilot was to be located, as well as the institutional organizers to be assigned to them. Regular follow-up meetings would be held for further training and to share experience in dealing with uncommon problems. The personnel involved in these pilots would then be in a position to assist in spreading understanding of the method further within their respective regions.

While awareness is becoming widespread that the blueprint approach is an inadequate response to rural development problems, its assumptions and procedures continue to dominate most rural development programming and . . . most development management training.

Work on the first NIA pilot systems had begun in 1976. Three and a half years later the first steps were being taken to seed the larger organization. At least three and a half more years would be required before the new methods would be understood throughout the organization.[68] That seven years may be required for such a change process had important implications, as it extends well beyond the programming cycles of most donors and planning agencies. It requires commitment, patience, and substantial continuity of leadership to confront the difficulties which are encountered on an almost daily basis. Even though these have been present in the NIA, there still is no assurance the effort will succeed. All the pilot systems in which the new approach is being developed received intensive attention from all levels of management and numerous outside experts. The intensity of input per system is gradually being reduced and the details of a phased dissemination process are being worked out with the usual care. Yet it remains to be seen whether the new styles of working with farmers can be sustained on a larger scale and whether certain management system problems, some of which fall beyond the control of NIA's management, can be resolved.[69]

Peasant Movements

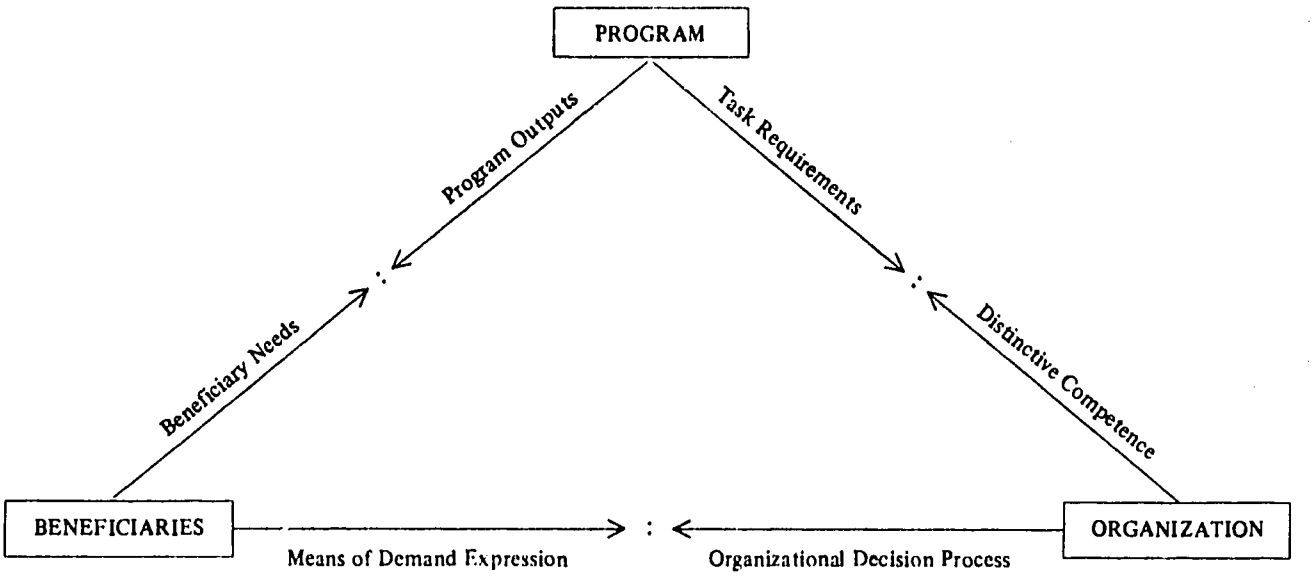
That the rural poor can be mobilized for significant action on felt needs is most dramatically illustrated by the experience of successful peasant movements.[70] These are best known for their efforts to seek relief from the oppressive practices of government officials, landlords, and other powerful elites in matters relating to rights to land, the tenants' right to security of tenure and a fair share of the harvest, and the laborers' right to a fair income. The peasant movements have backed their demands with strikes, civil disobedience, demonstrations, assassinations, and armed rebellion as suits their purposes.

The stakes have, at times, been high and the numbers of participants large as demonstrated by the massacre of half a million leftist peasants after the abortive 1965 coup in Indonesia,[71] and the overthrow of established regimes in China and Vietnam by peasant based liberation movements. In the Philippines the Huk Movement, built on a history of peasant uprisings extending back to the 1800s, led the resistance against Japanese occupation of the Philippines during World War II.[72] The Japanese Tenant Unions played a prominent role in the protection of Japanese peasant rights in the 1920s.[73] A variety of tenant and farm labor organizations have been influential in Indian politics since the 1950s.[74]

Until the end of the last century nearly all such rebellions failed miserably.[75] Migdal sees a combination of forces of fairly recent origin as creating the preconditions for more recent successes: (a) severe population growth increases pressures on the resource base on which the peasant's livelihood depends; (b) withdrawal of the patron removes both a source of support and a source of control based on a reciprocal face-to-face relationship; (c) demands of central government for new taxes force the peasant's entry into the market economy to achieve a cash income; while (d) traditional sources of craft income are lost to competition from modern wage production.[76] As traditional support and control structures break down, inequities in land tenure and social structure become more pronounced in their impact. Finally, the dependence of the rural poor on the traditional patron is replaced by dependence on the imperfect often corrupt economic and political institutions of a modernizing state.[77] This new dependence is less tolerable than the old as the peasant has even fewer means of pressing his claims than he did within the traditional institutional frameworks. His loyalty to the new system is understandably limited.[78]

Competition between the alternative priorities of the

FIGURE 2
Schematic Representation of Fit Requirements



modern and traditional economies for use of the natural resource base—one for the expansion of economic output and export earnings, the other for personal survival—is also a critical factor. Historically, efforts to push peasants off their land to make way for estate agriculture, and more recently the competition between upland peoples and logging interests, have been important in stimulating organized resistance.[79] The consistent lack of response to peasant appeals by elite dominated legal systems further contributes to the alienation process.[80]

The data on peasant movements suggest [that] . . . if the success of any such movement was an outcome of project papers, social benefit-cost analyses, environmental impact statements, or PERT charts, the source documents examined made no mention of it.

Yet, it is significant that the stronger peasant movements have not been violent explosions of peasant discontent. Rather, they have bedgun with patient grass roots organizing work, building slowly on the most strongly felt peasant grievances. Gradually they have created alternative social, economic, and political structures within the rural community with a demonstrated capacity to meet the needs of the rural poor more effectively and to provide more opportunities for advancement than has the "legitimate" order.[81] According to Migdal, in the more successful peasant movements the actual use of violence has been secondary to the process of power building. Moreover, while the power building process may include forcing the large merchants to relinquish their monopoly control over local markets, it may also involve more mundane activities such as providing education, medical care, and transportation facilities—even the implementation of rent ceiling and interest reduction policies announced by a government too weak to enforce them. "The major task of the movement is not to outfight but to outadminister the government."[82]

During the course of this power building process a variety of demands are made on the old order. Initially they may be relatively minor, but as rural elites respond in ways not consistent with law and custom, the new organizations become increasingly radicalized, with an escalation in demands and the use of confrontation tactics.[83]

Important to the process is a strong, generally charismatic leader who can articulate his followers' feelings about their repressed conditions and with whom they can build a personal identification. Among people traditionally more oriented to vertical than to horizontal relationships, the leader first serves as a psychological replacement for the patron whose image is shifting from that of father figure to tyrant. As this displacement takes place the process of consciousness raising can proceed toward development of a sense of horizontal class solidarity.[84]

Examination of the history and dynamics of successful peasant movements provides unsettling insights into what constitute the most deeply felt of peasant needs and a powerful reminder that participation in decision making and resource control involves potentially volatile political issues. Implicit is the question of whether the "real" needs of the rural poor can be addressed by working from within established societal frameworks. The cases of successful Asian rural development experiences examined in this section suggest that, though difficult, the possibility may exist if action is taken on the lessons they offer.

Social Intervention as a Learning Process

These cases of relatively promising experience reflect a remarkable diversity. In some of the initiative came from government; in others it was private or mixed. Some origi-

16

nated in national policy while others emerged from the bottom-up as a local effort was built into a program with international visibility. Some dealt with a relatively narrow concern such as milk production, irrigation, or contraceptive distribution, while others took a comprehensive approach to the needs of given village communities. Some involved specific commitment to the poor while others made no distinction between the rural classes.

Achieving Fit: Blueprint versus Learning Process

Apparently the determinants of success cannot be found in an easily replicable program variable—whether private or public, multi-purpose or single-purpose, broadly or narrowly defined target group. Each project was successful because it had worked out a program model responsive to the beneficiary needs at a particular time and place and each had built a strong organization capable of making the program work. Put another way, they had achieved a high degree of *fit* between program design, beneficiary needs, and the capacities of the assisting organization. (See Figure 2.)

The concept of fit has assumed a central importance in the fields of business policy and organizational design as research has illuminated the important relationships between task, context, and organizational variables, concluding that the performance of an organization is a function of the fit achieved between those variables.[45] Although the concept is simple, the elements that go into achieving fit are varied and complex, especially when the concept is applied to participative rural development.

Between the intended *beneficiaries* and the *program*, the critical fit to be achieved is between beneficiary needs and the particular resources, and services made available to the community as program outputs. Beneficiary needs, of course, are a function of the political, economic, and social context in which the beneficiaries live and cannot be adequately defined for purposes of determining program input requirements independently of that context.

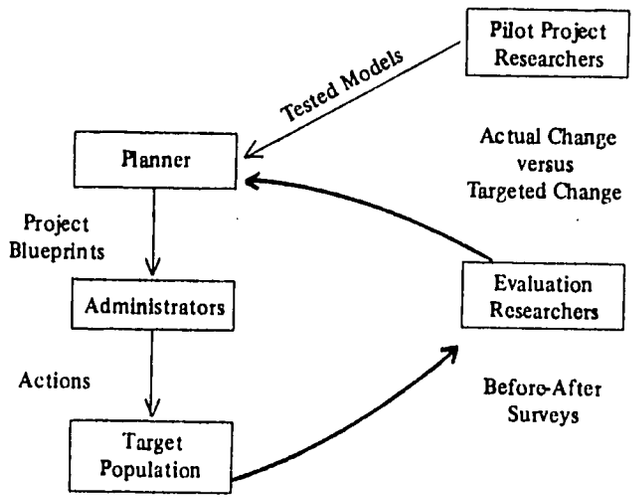
Between *beneficiaries* and the assisting *organization*, the critical fit is between the means by which beneficiaries are able to define and communicate their needs and the processes by which the organization makes decisions. This may require changes both at the community level—developing a way for the poor to express their needs—and the assisting organization's level—developing ways for the organization to respond to such information.[46] The way in which this fit is achieved will largely determine whether the intervention builds or diminishes the community's capacity for local problem solving.

Between the *program* and the *organization*, the critical fit is between the task requirements of the program and the distinctive competence of the organization. The task requirements consist of whatever the organization's members must do to produce the inputs and make them available to the beneficiaries. The distinctive competence of the organization relates to the structures, routines, and norms which govern the organization's functioning and the technical and social capabilities it brings to bear in providing the program.[47]

The specific solutions which the various programs examined had found to the requirement for fit varied substantially, and each was probably unique to a particular time and set of circumstances. Thus, the commonalities that may be looked to as providing important lessons are not found in their final program or organizational blueprints, but rather in the process by which both program and organization were developed concurrently. These experiences help to illuminate why effective fit is so seldom achieved in rural development efforts through the prevailing *blueprint* approach to development programming. Their comparative success was based on a rather different process of bottom-up program and organizational development, a *learning process* approach.[48]

The Blueprint Approach. The textbook version of how development programming is supposed to work is labelled the blueprint approach in recognition of its emphasis on careful pre-planning. Its key elements are shown in Figure 3. Researchers are supposed to provide data from pilot projects and other studies which will allow the planners to choose the most cost effective project design for achieving a given development outcome and to reduce it to a blueprint for implementation. Administrators of the implementing organization are supposed to execute the project plan faithfully, much as a contractor would follow construction blueprints, specifications, and schedules. An evaluation researcher is supposed to measure actual changes in the target population and report actual versus planned changes to the planners at the end of the project cycle so that the blueprints can be revised.

FIGURE 3
The Blueprint Approach to Development Programming



The project—its identification, formulation, design, appraisal, selection, organization, implementation, supervision, termination, and evaluation—is treated as the basic unit of development action.[49] It becomes the instrument by which planned developmental changes are introduced in what otherwise would be the normal course of events.[50] Its distinguishing characteristics have been summarized as follows:

A *project* . . . has *definite goals*, a *definite time-frame*, and a *careful specification of resource requirements*. . . . Project goals take many forms, but they all have one common feature: they are terminal. Reaching the goal concludes the project."[11] (Emphasis in original.)

The blueprint approach has an appealing sense of order, specialization, and recognition of the superordinate role of the intellectual which makes it easily defensible in budget presentations. Indeed, its emphasis on well-planned and clearly defined projects with discrete and visible outcomes is well suited to the construction of a large-scale, physical infrastructure where the task *is* defined, the outcomes terminal, the environment stable, and the costs predictable. However, in rural development objectives are more often multiple, ill-defined and subject to negotiated change, task requirements unclear, outcomes unbounded by time, environments unstable, and costs unpredictable."[12]

Where knowledge is nearly non-existent, the blueprint approach calls for behaving as if knowledge were nearly perfect. Where the need is to build capacity for sustained development action, it assumes that development actions are terminal and that temporary organizations will suffice."[13] Where the need is for a close integration of knowledge building, decision making, and action taking roles, it sharply differentiates the functions and even the institutional locations of the researcher, the planner, and the administrator.

While awareness is becoming widespread that the blueprint approach is an inadequate response to the rural development problem,"[14] its assumptions and procedures continue to dominate most rural development programming and to provide the core content of most development managment training. This situation probably will continue until greater attention is given to the explication of viable options.

The Learning Process Approach. Examination of the Asian success cases suggests that the blueprint approach never played more than an incidental role in their development. These five programs were not designed and implemented—rather they emerged out of a learning process in which villagers and program personnel shared their knowledge and resources to create a program which achieved a fit between needs and capacities of the beneficiaries and those of the outsiders who were providing the assistance. Leadership and teamwork, rather than blueprints, were the key elements. Often the individuals who emerged as the central figures were involved at the very initial stage in this village experience, learning at first hand the nature of beneficiary needs and what was required to address them effectively. As progress was made in dealing with the problem of fit between beneficiary and program, attention was given either to building a supporting organization around the requirements of the program, or to adapting the capabilities of an existing orgamization to fit those requirements. Both program and organization emerged out of a learning process in which research and action were integrally linked.

The National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) is perhaps a prototype of this bottom-up program and organization building process. The outlines of the model were worked out largely by a group of small village dairy producers to meet their own needs. The young Kurien brought technical and marketing skills, and out of their collective knowledge and commitment a strong supporting infrastructure was fashioned, eventually resulting in an official program of national scope.

The Community Based Family Planning Service (CBFPS) provides a parallel experience involving less complex technologies and support requirements. Another young man of strong personality and village experience, Mechai, engaged in collaboration with villagers to try out an idea for making contraceptives more available. Out of early experimentation a program model and a well-defined supporting organization emerged, growing and adapting with the expansion of the program.

The program of the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) moved rapidly through three distinct phases as it learned from its early errors. In the first stage it largely acted for the people, in the second the people were drawn into participation in BRAC defined programs, and in the third it organized the people and responded in support of their initiatives. Organizational strength built through the experience of the earlier phases made possible the third phase in which an unusually high degree of fit was achieved. Researcher, villager, and outreach worker all engaged directly in the process of building and using the knowledge base for improved program design. The result proved so powerful in its response to felt needs that a process of spontaneous replication was set in motion.

The Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement (SSM) offers a variation on the three stages of BRAC's development though growth was faster, and the fit was weaker. It began as an effort to (1) provide school boys with an experience which would raise their consciousness regarding the life of poor villagers and (2) help break down the social barriers which isolated Sri Lanka's most discriminated castes. This early experience, in which its leadership was shaped, consisted primarily of sponsoring short work-study camps. At this stage there was a fairly good fit between the needs of the school boys, the program, and the supporting organization. But as the Sarvodaya leaders became more sensitized to the needs of the rural poor, they realized the need for more sustained development action. A substantial shift was made in program focus, but with too little attention to implementational details prior to the creation of a substantially expanded organization to enlarge program coverage. The result was a highly centralized and ill-defined organizational structure which fit poorly with program requirements and had inadequate mechanisms for relating to beneficiary demands, while isolating its leadership from contact with operating realities. Recognizing these deficiencies after several years, a research mechanism was eventually introduced to facilitate feedback and corrective action through involving villagers and staff in collecting, assessing, and acting on program performance data.

The National Irrigation Administration's (NIA) new participative style communals program was still at an early stage of development, but it illustrates an explicit effort to simulate within a large established organization the type of

bottom-up program design and organization building process of the NDDB, BRAC, CBFPS experiences. NIA personnel first worked with village people to evolve a more suitable program model, and, then, they gradually worked to build into the larger NIA organization the capabilities needed to achieve a fit with the new program model's task requirements. This included a variety of training seminars, replication of the pilot project learning experiences, additions of new types of personnel such as community organizers, and changes in organizational structures and procedures.

The data on peasant movements suggest an almost remarkably parallel to the bottom-up, capacity building process which built on first-hand knowledge of the people and their needs. This has led to the creation of institutional capacities better able to address these needs using largely locally available resources. If the success of any such movement was an outcome of project papers, social benefit-cost analyses, environmental impact statements, or PERT charts, the source documents examined made no mention of it.

The Learning Organization

Achieving fit through the learning process approach calls for organizations that have little in common with the implementing organizations geared to reliable adherence to detailed plans and conditions precedent favored in the blueprint approach. Its requirement is for organizations with a well developed capacity for responsive and anticipatory adaptation—organizaitons that: (a) embrace error; (b) plan with the people; and (c) link knowledge building with action.

Embracing Error. Preplanned interventions into varied and constantly changing socio-technical systems will nearly always prove to be in error by some margin in terms of producing the effect intended. The response to this error is one of the best available indicators of the quality of an organization's leadership.

There are three characteristic responses to error: to deny it, to externalize it, or to embrace it. Every individual has some tendencies toward each, but organizations develop norms reinforcing one or another tendency until it becomes a dominant characteristic.

The dominant response in the *self-deceiving organization* is to deny error. If top management treats error as an indication of personal incompetence, the organization's members will rapidly become highly skilled in making sure that errors are hidden. This can be quite reassuring to those removed from operating reality as it confirms their self image as competent leaders. They can impress visitors with their polished briefings, fully confident that their centrally planned and administered program is achieving the intended impact on the beneficiaries. Such briefings sometimes impress the unwary, but the claim that a program is working exactly as originally planned is an almost sure sign to the alert observer that the organization suffers form a serious information blockage that is hiding errors and preventing learning. A trip to the field is likely to reveal a largely inoperative program able to accomplish little more than completion of the forms on which accomplishments are reported. Where exceptions are found they will normally involve an unusually strong individual with a good sense of his or her community who has taken the initiative in working out a new program which achieves a fit with beneficiary needs, but which looks rather different than the one prescribed by program norms, and is achieved in spite of, rather than because of the larger organizations.

The *defeated organization* typically portrays a rather different public image, although its operating reality may closely resemble that of the self-deceiving organization. Its members speak openly and in rich detail of their organization's errors by way of pointing out how impossible their task is given the perversity of an environment which does not respond according to their wishes—they externalize the source of the error. Thus, error becomes impotence. As individuals reinforce each others' perceptions, they may come to feel so totally overcome by circumstances beyond their control that they do nothing—except to report their problems to higher management in the hope that someone will do something. But each level feels similarly defeated and only passes the problem on for attention by still higher authority. The lack of action further contributes to impotence and demoralization.

The *learning organization* embraces error.[11] Aware of the limitations of their knowledge members of this type of organization look on error as a vital source of data for making adjustments to achieve a better fit with beneficiary needs. An organization in which such learning is valued is characterized by the candor and practical sophistication with which its members discuss their own errors, what they have learned from them, and the corrective actions they are attempting. Intellectual integrity is combined with a sense of vitality and purpose. Such a climate in an organization is an almost certain indication of effective leadership.

Planning with the People. Rural people have a great deal to contribute to program design.[14] They have a substantial capacity for learning and change,[17] but they also have good reason to be skeptical of the stranger bearing ideas for improving their lives untested in their setting. The history of rural development bears testament to the wisdom of their caution. One of numerous weaknesses of centrally designed programs is that planners proceed as if they were writing on a clean slate and possessing all the knowledge relevant to improving the villagers' life. In reality they are making interventions into well-established socio-technical systems within which the poor have, over many years, worked out appropriate methods to meet their basic survival needs—otherwise they would not still be around. Sometimes they have come to terms with harsh trade-offs, as in the case of Indian hill tribes that hae learned to plant low yielding, early maturing grains rather than face the increased risk of death from starvation while waiting for the higher yielding varieties to mature.[18] Such knowledge, crucial to any effort by outsiders to improve the well-being of the rural poor, is possessed by the people, but easily overlooked by planners who have not had—or do not seek—the opportunity to ask.

Building on what the people already know and the resources they already possess has numerous advantages. The

adjustments required from them are more easily made and the risks of imposing new methods unsuited to their needs are substantially reduced. Also, indigenous technologies are usually within the control of the community. Building on, rather than replacing those technologies reduces the likelihood that the program intervention will "de-skill" the villagers and, thus, increase their dependence on external experts and suppliers over whom they have no social control. The successful programs involved substantial planning with the people, especially in their early stages in which the basic program models were developed. Generally, they built from and enhanced community capabilities while opening new options. Where outside dependence was involved, as to some extent it almost inevitably was, efforts were made to reduce the attendant risks.[99]

Linking Knowledge to Action. The blueprint approach commonly assumes that the knowledge required for the preparation of program designs can be generated independently of the organizational capacity required for its utilization.[100] This is reflected in its sharp differentiation between the roles of researcher, planner, and administrator—often assumed to be from different organizations—which inevitably separates knowledge from decision from action. Those persons in day-to-day contact with the community reality and organizational function—the administrators, the field operations personnel, and the villagers—have no defined role in the definition of needs or the making of program design decisions. The decision making role is assigned, instead, to the individuals furthest removed from the relevant data—the professional planners.

Such separation is not found in the success cases examined. Especially in the early stages all three roles were combined in a single individual or a close knit team. Even as the organizations grew, the mode of operation stressed their integration. Researchers worked hand-in-hand with operating personnel, planning was done by those responsible for implementation, and top management spent substantial time in the field keeping in contact with operating reality. The process of rapid, creative adaptation essential to achieving and sustaining the fit on which effective performance depends nearly demands such integration.

It bears note that the same integration of roles is characteristic of the more successful pilot projects undertaken to provide design inputs to professional planners, although its significance is seldom noted. Unfortunately, their resemblance to the early field experiences on which major successful programs have been built ends there. Carried out as research studies, they are typically under the direction of a special research team, possibly from a university or research institute, and are carried out apart from the direct operational control of any operating agency that might apply their findings on a larger scale. After a predetermined time the project team is disbanded and its leaders return to the university to analyze and publish their data on the presumption that the final blueprint was the key to whatever results were obtained. What remains is an idea reduced to paper while the operating organization—the vibrant social organism which encompassed the skills, commitment, knowledge and systems required to give the idea life and adapt it to local circumstances as required—hass been discarded.

In fact, the effectiveness of a given program design is at least as dependent on the presence of an organization with a well developed capacity to make it work as it is on the specifics of the design itself. This is an important reason why pilot project results produced by one organization are seldom replicated by another. The blueprint approach implicitly assumes that any lack of fit between the task requirements of the program design and the capabilities of the organization eventually chosen to implement it can readily be corrected through short term training and possibly the introduction of new categories of personnel such as village level workers at the bottom of an existing structure. Seldom is attention given to the implications for higher organizational levels with the result that the new workers may find themselves required to conform to inappropriate procedures and dependent on unresponsive support systems which leave them unable to accomplish the tasks expected of them.[101]

By contrast, the NDDB, BRAC, CBFPS, and SSM were all organizations built up from the teams that created the original program. The functioning program *and* the organizational capacity to actuate it were both preserved in living form and both continued to evolve in response to further experience and the demands of expansion. In the NIA case, the field-based learning laboratories were sponsored by and under the operational control of the agency that intended to use the knowledge gained. These laboratories were designed not only to produce a program model, but also gradually to build the experience within the broader organization required to make it work. Where researchers were involved, they were in supporting rather than controlling roles.

In each instance the operating methods that were developed in the early stages were gradually translated into supportive management systems. The individuals who had created and sustained the fit were assigned to guide the learning experiences of others until they too gained the knowledge, commitment, and skills to make the program work. As the program moved into new communities, new lessons were learned, including lessons on how to maintain the fit between program and people as the organization expanded. New knowledge and the organizational capacity to put it to work were created simultaneously by one and the same process.

Three Stages of the Learning Process

In its idealized representation the learning process approach to program development proceeds through three stages. In each stage the emphasis is on a different learning task, successively on *effectiveness, efficiency,* and *expansion.* (See Figure 4.)

In Stage 1—*learning to be effective*—the major concern is with developing a working program model in the setting of a village level learning laboratory that has a high degree of fit with beneficiary needs. Normally this phase will be resource intensive, particularly rich in its requirements for intellectual input, and will require substantial freedom from

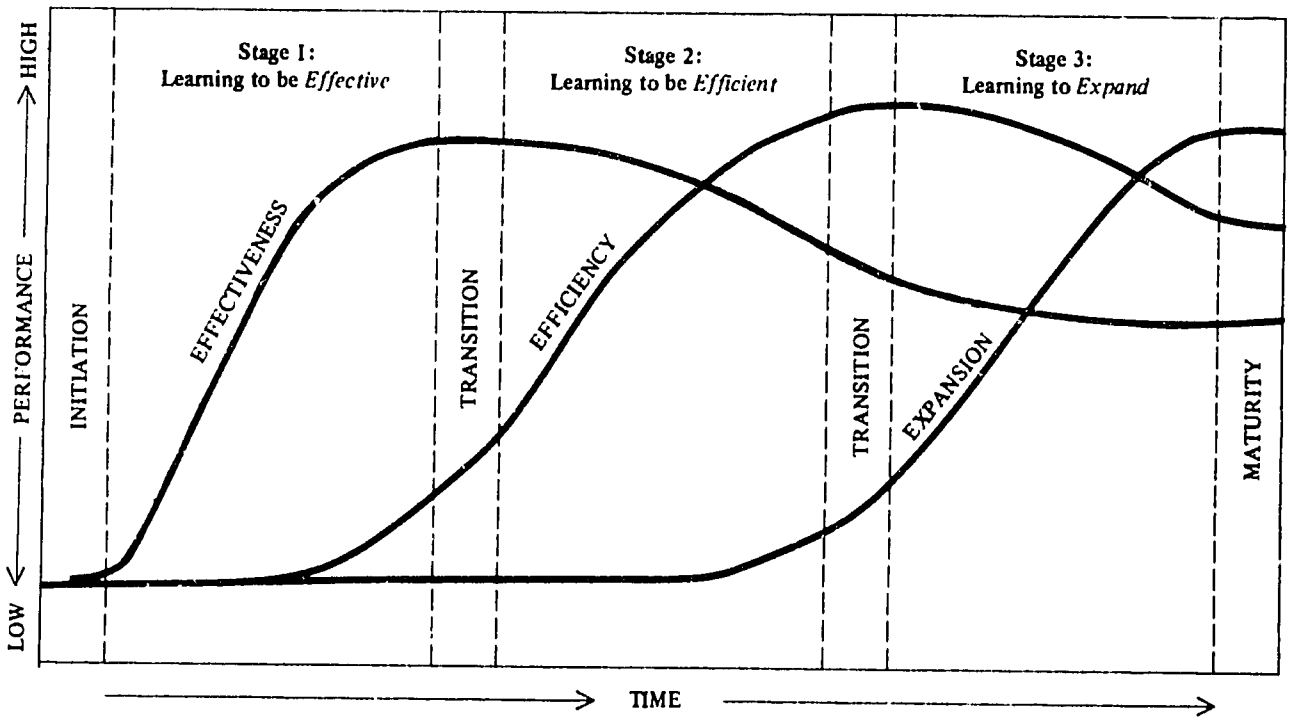
normal administrative constraints. It is a time of investment in knowledge and capacity building—learning what is required to achieve fit for a given time and setting. Not only does this stage involve basic learning about community dynamics, and even learning what are the relevant questions to be asked, but it also involves learning how to learn through an action research process. As in the beginning of any learning process it should be considered normal for error rates to be high, though on a downward trend, and efficiency low. The program begins to make the transition from Stage 1 to Stage 2 when it is found to be effective in responding to an identified need and it achieves an acceptable level of fit between beneficiaries, the working program model, and the capabilities of the action research team.

In Stage 2—*learning to be efficient*—the major concern shifts to reducing the input requirements per unit of output. Through careful analysis of Stage 1 experience, extraneous activities not essential to effectiveness are gradually eliminated and the important activities routinized. While there may also be some continued gains in effectiveness with further experience, it is more likely that some loss of effectiveness with further experience, it is more likely that some loss of effectiveness will be a necessary price of increasing efficiency. In Stage 2, there should also be serious attention paid to the problem of achieving fit between program requirements and realistically attainable organizational capacities, recognizing the organizational constraints that will have to be accepted in the course of program expansion. Modest program expansion during Stage 2 will increase the cadre of persons experienced in making the program work available to help build the expanded organizational capability required in Stage 3. Once acceptable levels of effectiveness and efficiency have been obtained, the program model reasonably stabilized, an expanded cadre trained, and basic management systems requirements worked out, then the way is prepared for transition to Stage 3.

In Stage 3—*learning to expand*—the central concern is with an orderly phased expansion of the program. The emphasis will be on expansion of organizational capacity, though continued refinements may also be required in the program to respond to the demands of larger scale operation. But constant attention must be given to ensuring that an acceptable level of fit is maintained even though expansion will mean some inevitable sacrifice in effectiveness and efficiency. The rate of expansion will be governed largely by how fast the necessary organizational capabilities can be developed to support it. By the end of Stage 3 the program should have matured to the point of a relatively stable, large-scale operation.

Once Stage 3 has been completed the organization may turn to the solution of new problems, as several of the organizations studied had started to do. Or, if by this time the beneficiary population has made such progress as to upset the fit previously attained, there may be need to repeat the

FIGURE 4
Program Learning Curves



Note: It should be expected that some effectiveness will be sacrificed in the interest of efficiency and expansion. With expansion efficiency will likely suffer due to trade-offs with the requirements of expansion.

learning cycle to redefine the program and realign organizational capabilities accordingly.

The specifics of how each stage is structured will differ substantially depending on whether a new organization is being built anew from the bottom-up or whether the task is to build an appropriate new capacity in an existing organization, as in the case of the NIA.

When the case study was prepared, the NIA was in Stage 2 in the development of its new communals program. The intensity of the research and organizer inputs was being reduced gradually in the pilot schemes, certain procedures that had proven effective were being routinized, and attention was being given to the eventual problems to be faced in achieving fit between the larger organization and the program task requirements. BRAC was also well into Stage 2 with its Phase III program, as the village level change processes it had initiated began to take on their own momentum, increasing program output per unit of BRAC staff input. The contraceptive delivery system of the CBFPS had increased efficiency to the point where it had become essentially self-financing and its expansion phase was already completed; it had completed Stage 3 and its leadership was looking for new challenges. The NDDB had moved well into Stage 3 expansion and was also beginning to venture into new fields.

The SSM offers a parallel to the BRAC in having introduced fundamental changes in program orientation during the course of its history, but without reinitiating the learning process sequence. Instead, it moved almost directly into rapid expansion. Consequently it found itself in a situation somewhat analogous to that of the NIA; i.e., a large established bureaucracy with an established program that was not producing the desired results. Finally, recognizing the nature of the problem, action was taken to initiate an internal learning process directed to achieving improved fit.

A look at the successful programs in relationship to their learning curves highlights an important feature of their success. They were not "designed and implemented." They, and the organizations that sustained them, "evolved and grew."

The Social Scientist as Capacity Builder

It would seem that the social scientist should have a central role to play in participative rural development given the substantial need for new capacity to address social variables; and, indeed, social scientists currently enjoy unprecedented demand for their services in the Third World. However, they, so far, seem to have had little influence on the design or performance of the typical rural development program. This is not surprising considering the types of activities they have most often been called upon to do.

- *Summative Evaluation.* This generally consists of documenting failure after the time for corrective action has long past.
- *Pilot Projects.* Commonly located outside of the agency with program responsibility and designed to produce a program blueprint for application by others, the focus is on the wrong product—an idea which is not backed by the capacity to make it operational.
- *Baseline Surveys.* Substantial amounts of social science data may be gathered, presumably as a basis for planning decisions. But the data are often irrelevant to planning, and even if they were not, the organizations to which results are directed seldom have a capacity to use them for other than selective use in justifying decisions made on other grounds.[102]

Thus, the products which the social scientist is commonly called upon to produce are either untimely, or unusable by the consumers to whom they are supposedly targeted.

Rarely is the social scientist called on to help an organization build a capacity to actually *use* social science knowledge and data in ways that would contribute directly to improving performance. At least four exceptions are found among the success cases: BRAC, NIA, SSM, and CBFPS.

In each, there has been a healthy skepticism of the more conventional research methods and researcher role relationships. They have experimented with new methods and roles which put the researcher in the position of providing the action agency personnel with simple tools to facilitate their *rapid* collection and interpretation of social data directly *relevant to action.* To be effective in these roles the social scientists involved have led to become intimately familiar with agency operations, engaging themselves in a process of learning how they could become more relevant to their client's needs.

They have sought to demystify the social sciences, making it every person's tool, turning both agency personnel and in some instances the villagers themselves into more effective action researchers. They have stressed disciplined observation, guided interviews, and informant panels over formal surveys; timeliness over rigor; oral over written communication; informed interpretation over statistical analysis; narrative over numerical presentation; and attention to process and intermediate outcomes as a basis for rapid adaptation over detailed assessment of "final" outcomes. Rather than the static profiles provided by typical socioeconomic surveys, they have sought an understanding of the dynamics of the socio-technical systems that govern village life as a basis for improving predictions of the consequences of any given development intervention. They have sought specific identification of target group members and behavior in terms relevant to program action.[103]

It is not uncommon for the leaders of programs which have learned to make effective use of social science research to draw a sharp distinction between the more conventional baseline surveys and formal evaluation studies their organizations do "because the donors want them," and the research integral to action which drives their own program and organizational development processes. Their lack of enthusiasm for the former is not out of fear of exposure, but out of concern that these types of research contribute little to improving performance, while commanding attention and resources better used elsewhere.

That administrators and operating personnel can become

effective contributors to research when its methods and substances are appropriate to their needs is perhaps a discovery as fundamental as the realization that uneducated villagers know something useful about village social structures and the technological choices relevant to their own well-being. Some social scientists have too easily assumed that program personnel are congenitally unable and/or unwilling to assess their own performance and make creative adaptations in their own operations. Neither researcher, administrator, nor villager is likely to achieve his or her potential for contribution to development until they join as partners in a mutual learning process, committed not to the search for magical blueprints, but to the building of new capacities for action.

Conclusion: A Need for Action Based Capacity Building

The concepts and methods of the blueprint approach may be more of a hindrance than an aid in the programming of effective rural development action where the need is for an adaptive, bottom-up process of program and organizational development through which an adequate fit may be achieved between beneficiary needs, program outputs, and organizational competence. This calls not for more sophisticated skills in the preparation of detailed project plans, but rather for skills in building capacities for action through action.

Of course, just as very few centrally planned rural development programs achieve the three-way fit required for effective performance, few of the many village based development efforts which do achieve fit on a local basis ever develop into capacities for sustained action on a significant scale. Perhaps they lack a strategy for progressing successively through the three basic stages of learning to be effective, learning to be efficient, and learning to expand. Even if they have once been effective they may not have gone beyond this stage to articulate answers to such questions as: Why were we successful in this instance? To what extent was the outcome context-dependent? What lessons might have broader application? Under what circumstances? Or if they have addressed such questions perhaps they have not taken the next step of translating the answers to these questions into problem solving routines suited to more efficient application or of asking themselves what type of organization would be required to apply these routines on a larger scale. And, of course, even if they did progress through Stage 2 perhaps they could not or did not want to expand to Stage 3. Jut where the sequence most often stops and why is an important question deserving of careful examination. Perhaps a clearer vision of the learning process approach as a basis for formulating program and organizational development strategies would, in itself, facilitate removal of the blockage in organizations with potential for further development.

Greater understanding of the requirements of the learning process approach on the part of funding agencies may be of particular importance given their dominant influence on programming strategies and methods, though the changes they must make if they are to apply its lessons are substantial. For example, a portion of their funding portfolios might be programmed not around sectors, but around individuals with the leadership qualities, the ideas, and the commitment to advancing the cause of rural people from which substantial programs might be built. This would provide the recipient change agents with the flexible funding which might allow them over a period of five to ten years to carry their idea through the three developmental stages to the building of a major mature program.[104]

The details for both operating agency and funder would vary substantially depending on purpose, setting, whether government or private, whether a new or an established organization, whether locally or internationally funded, and the particular learning stage to which the program had advanced.[105] But the essential nature of the process would remain much the same. The constant elements would include the requirements for leadership, demanding intellectual discipline, freedom to deviate from the initial plan and budget, and continuing attention to staff development through action based learning.

Stage 1 investments would represent very high risks for the funding agency—i.e., they would represent a sort of venture capital commitment. Only 10 to 20 percent of programs funded for Stage 1 might be expected to merit Stage 2 support, especially as the funding agency is itself learning how to spot promising leads and support them in appropriate ways. But if as many as one out of 10 turned out eventually to be a BRAC, an NDDB, a CBFPS, or a national agency such as the NIA with a new nation-wide capacity to manage effectively a $100 million-a-year program in a way that worked in support of farmer organization and initiative, it would be a very favorable return on investment, and a substantial improvement over current funding agency performance.

A significant barrier to an appropriate response from funding agencies driven by the bureaucratic imperative to move large amounts of money is that a mature program would not be ready to put large blocks of funding to effective use on a sustained basis until the end of Stage 3.[106] A major funder might well have difficulty placing more than 5 percent of its funds in promising Stage 1 programs in a given year. But to provide the close monitoring required to ensure the availability of appropriate technical and financial support as needed and to make difficult judgments regarding whether a given effort no longer exhibited sufficient potential to merit continued support, the funding agency would probably have to commit from 10 to 15 percent of its staff to the effort. Thus, it would be for the funder a highly staff intensive undertaking.[107]

A second barrier is presented by established programming procedures. A demand for detailed preplanning and subsequent adherence to detailed line item budgets, project plans and implementation schedules would immediately pre-empt the learning process by imposing the demand that leadership of the incipient effort act as if it knew what it was doing before there was an opportunity for learning to occur.[108]

Given these and other barriers, including the lack of sup-

porting research and training capacity in management and the social sciences geared to its requirements, action on this proposal presents no small challenge. But the alternative is likely to be a continuing record of failure in the attack on rural poverty, no matter how much money is committed.

Notes

1. *World Development Report*, 1978 (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank), p. 7.
2. Irma Adelman, "Developing Economics—A Reassessment of Goals," *American Economic Review*, Vol. 65, No. 2, May 1975, pp. 302-309. Irma Adelman and Cynthia Taft Morris, *Economic Growth and Social Equity in Developing Countries* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1973); Hollis Chenery, *et al.*, *Redistribution with Growth* (London: Oxford Press, 1974); and *World Development Report, op. cit.*
3. United Nations Economic and Social Council, Commission for Social Development, Report of the Twenty-Fourth Session, 6-24 January 1975, ECOSOC Official Records: Fifty-Eighth Session, Supplement No. 3, E/CN.5/525; Committee on International Relations of the House of Representatives, *New Directions in Development AID, Excerpts from the Legislation* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976); *Rural Development: Sector Paper* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 1975); Edgar Owens and Robert Shaw, *Development Reconsidered: Bridging the Gap Between Government and People* (Lexington Books, 1972); Norman T. Uphoff, John M. Cohen, and Arthur A. Goldsmith, *Feasibility and Application of Rural Development Participation: A State-of-the-Art Paper*, Monograph Series, No. 3, Rural Development Committee, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, January 1979; Solon Barraclough, "Farmer's Organizations in Planning and Implementing Rural Development," in Ranaan Weitz (ed.), *Rural Development in a Changing World* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1972); Elliot R. Morss, et al., *Strategies for Small Farmer Development*, Vols. I and II (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, Inc., 1976); and John D. Montgomery and Milton J. Esman, "Popular Participation in Development Administration," *Journal of Comparative Administration*, Vol. 3, No. 3, November 1971, pp. 358-382.
4. In addition to references cited in footnote 3 above, see Milton J. Esman, "Development Administration and Constituency Organization," *Public Administration Review*, March-April 1978, pp. 166-172; Mary Racelis Hollnsteiner, "Mobilizing the Rural Poor Through Community Organization," *Philippine Studies*, Vol. 27, Third Quarter 1979, pp. 387-416; Milton J. Esman and John D. Montgomery, *The Administration of Human Resource Development*, draft background paper for the World Development Report 1980, December 1979; Norman Uphoff and Milton J. Esman, *Local Organization for Rural Development: Analysis of Asian Experience*, Rural Local Government Monograph No. 19, Rural Development Committee, Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y., 1974.
5. Asian Development Bank, *Rural Asia; Challenge and Opportunity* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1977). See pp. 227-230.
6. Sterling Wortman and Ralph W. Cummings, Jr., *To Feed This World: The Challenge and the Strategy* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978). See p. 278.
7. *Rural Cooperatives as Agents of Change: A Research Report and a Debate* (Geneva: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, 1975), p. ix. See also Nikolaus Newiger, "The Role of Rural Organizations in Promoting Participation: Review and Analysis of Past Experience," *Land Reform, Land Settlement and Cooperatives*, No. 2, 1978, pp. 58-63; and United Nations, *National Experience in Promoting the Cooperative Movement: Report of the Secretary General* (New York: Economic and Social Council Report No. E/1978/15,1978).
8. *Rural Cooperatives, op. cit.*, pp. ix-x.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5, 10; Newinger, *op. cit.*, and Inayatullah, *Cooperatives and Development in Asia: A Study of Cooperatives in Fourteen Rural Communities of Iran, Pakistan and Ceylon* (Geneva: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, 1972), p. 265.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 264. Though sometimes looked to as examples of more successful nationally sponsored cooperatives, the Taiwan Farmers' associations are less an exception than they might seem, owing their existence to their government enforced monopoly position in markets for fertilizer and basic commodities, and to an unusually strong governmental administrative infrastructure which ensures strict regulation. Benedict Stavis, *Rural Local Governance and Agricultural Development in Taiwan*, Rural Development Committee Special Series on Rural Local Government No. 15, Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y., November 1974, pp. 61-104.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 267-269. Two of the exceptions were part of the Comilla project in East Pakistan, an effort sufficiently unique that some critics argued it should not have been included in the study. Yet, apparently even the Comilla cooperatives were eventually captured by the relatively more affluent farmers in their service areas once the Comilla Rural Development Academy relaxed the external controls introduced earlier to prevent such an occurrence. Harry W. Blair, "Rural Development, Class Structure and Bureaucracy in Bangladesh," *World Development*, Vol. 6, No. 1, January 1978 pp. 65-82.
13. See Lane C. Holdcroft, "The Rise and Fall of Community Development in Developing Countries, 1950-65: A Critical Analysis and an Annotated Bibliography," MSU Rural Development Paper No. 2, Department of Agricultural Economics, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan 48824, 1978, pp. 5-8.
14. For a discussion of how the Etawah design and administrative structures differed from those of the Indian national program see Gerald Sussman, "The Pilot Project and the Design of Implementing Strategies: Community Development in India," Merille S. Grindle (ed.), *Politics and Policy Implementation in the Third World* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, forthcoming); and Stanley J. Heginbotham, *Cultures in Conflict: The Four Faces of Indian Bureaucracy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975).
15. Based on Holdcroft, *op. cit.*, p. 15.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
17. Uphoff, Cohen, and Goldsmith, *op. cit.*, p. 18.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
19. This list of weaknesses is based on *Idem.*; Holdcroft, *op. cit.*; Uphoff, Cohen, and Goldsmith, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-31; Owens and Shaw, *op. cit.*; and United Nations, *Popular Participation in Development: Emerging Trends in Community Development* (New York: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 1971). Experience with community action programs in the United States suggests that the difficult barriers to effective community level action to benefit the poor are not confined to the Third World. The idea of working through independent community action agencies which

would simultaneously serve as a coordinating mechanism and a link between government and the poor served as the basis for America's War on Poverty. Underfunded and lacking an organized political constituency, this federal program rapidly ran into serious opposition from established agencies and local governments that felt their power was being challenged. Efforts to organize the poor and promote local initiative were abandoned. The community action agencies became largely instruments for implementation of federally initiated programs through contracts with local school systems and voluntary welfare agencies. Involvement of the poor in program initiation and development was minimal, and the impact of most programs marginal. Peter Marris and Martin Rein, *Dilemmas of Social Reform: Poverty and Community Action in the United States,* Second Edition (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1973), pp. 224-269.

20. Sussman, *op. cit.*
21. *Idem.;* and Heginbotham, *op. cit.*
22. World Bank Annual Report 1978 (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 1978), pp. 9-20; and personal communication from Ted J. Davies, January 12, 1980. Actually, Bank lending for agriculture and rural development dropped from 39 percent of total loans in FY 1978 to only 25 percent in FY 1979, though it is claimed this was a temporary phenomena and not an indication of a new trend. *World Bank Annual Report 1979* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 1979), p. 9.
23. Agency for International Development, *Implementation of "New Directions" in Development Assistance,* Report to the Committee on International Relations on Implementation of Legislative Reforms in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1973 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975), pp. 7-8.
24. In contrast to the conventional macro-economic perspective of earlier reports, the Bank's third *World Development Report* highlights a range of social and institutional issues. Several Bank staff members are working to strengthen the social and institutional dimensions of its own programming.
25. Robert S. Saunders, "Social Analysis in Rural Development Projects: A Review of Bank Experience," August 29, 1977, unpublished.
26. Robert S. Saunders, "Traditional Cooperation, Indigenous Peasant's Groups and Rural Development: A Look at Possibilities and Experiences," August 29, 1977, unpublished.
27. Michael M. Cernea, *Measuring Project Impact: Monitoring and Evaluation in the PIDER Rural Development Project—Mexico,* World Bank Staff Working Paper No. 332 (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, June 1979). Wishful thinking on the participation dimension of Bank projects has not been limited to the PIDER project. A review of 164 Bank appraisal reports found that more than one-third suggested formation of some type of peasant group as a component of the project activity. In addition, one-sixth indicated that the community would contribute free labor for construction activities. Yet, discussion of traditional patterns of cooperation which might provide a basis for such action was rare, and the implementing strategies for gaining cooperation in either providing free labor or creating new organizations was generally left vague, if mentioned at all. Saunders, "Traditional Cooperation," *op. cit.*, pp. 13-17.
28. A rural development sector loan made to the Nicaraguan government conceived a comprehensive multi-sectoral development effort based on local farmer controlled associations linked to area marketing cooperatives. Under pressure to show fast results in the absence of adequate mechanisms either for farmer organization or intersectoral coordination, the actual program was largely limited to small farmer credit and subsidized farm inputs delivered by the implementing agency's own extension agents. A computer driven management information system decided who would be eligible for credit using criteria which were a carefully guarded secret, and calculated farm plans and computed credit requirements on the basis of a standard formula which took no account of local circumstances or farmer preferences. Farmer organizing activity never got off the ground. In several instances the technology package proved inappropriate to farmer's needs. Organizational imperatives dominated implementation to the virtual exclusion of plan concepts. John C. Ickis and David C. Korten, *Strategy and Structure in Rural Development* (forthcoming). A USAID funded project based at Cornell University seeks lessons from USAID projects which appear in their implementation to provide examples of effective people participation. Some difficulty has been encountered in finding such projects.

    Of course the failures have many causes beyond the limitation of donor procedures and programming skills. One is the lack of recipient government political commitment. See for example M. R. Redclift, "The Influence of the Agency for International Development (AID) on Ecuador's Agrarian Development Policy," *Latin American Studies,* Vol. II, No. 1, 1979, pp. 185-201.
29. The Inter-American Foundation was created by the U.S. Congress in 1969 specifically to fund small-scale projects designed and implemented by indigenous, non-governmental groups in Latin America. Their published self-evaluation reports claim substantial success. Inter-American Foundation, *They Know How* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1977). But judgment should perhaps be withheld until more critical independent external evaluations are available.
30. John C. Ickis and Cathrine Oberne kindly shared insights from their respective ongoing studies of PVO rural development efforts. One PVO that stands out from the rest in its developmental track record is OXFAM which provides financial assistance to a number of unusually effective and indigenous private voluntary development organizations in Asia, Latin America, and Africa.
37. For self-critical analyses by present and former USAID staff see Frank J. Young, "U.S. Foreign Assistance Strategy Reconsidered," *The Fletcher Forum,* Vol. 3, No. 2, Summer 1979, pp. 100-108; Coralie Bryant, "Organizational Impediments to Making Participating a Reality: 'Swimming Upstream' in AID," forthcoming in *Rural Development Participation Review,* and Alice L. Morton, "Briefing Paper on Local Action Guidance and Implementation," Office for Rural and Administrative Development, internal AID document.
38. Basic data on the Indian dairy cooperative experience has been drawn from a variety of sources including: A. H. Somjee and Geeta Somjee, "Cooperative Dairying and the Profiles of Social Change in India," *Economic Development and Cultural Change,* No. 3, Vol. 26, April 1978, pp. 577-590; Ruth B. Dixon, *Rural Women at Work: Strategies for Development in South Asia* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), pp. 50-56; George Dorsey, "Milk & Justice," *Ceres,* November-December 1978, pp. 31-38; D. S. Thakur, "Impact of Dairy Development Through Milk Cooperatives: A Case Study of Gujarat," *Indian Journal of Agricultural Economics,* No. 3, Vol. 30, July-September 1975; *Annual Report 1977-78 of the National Dairy Development Board;* Kamla Chowdhury, "Background Memorandum for

31. Holdcroft, *op. cit.*, p. 3.
32. See E. Philip Morgan, "Managing Development Assistance: Some Effects with Special Reference to Southern Africa," *SADEX*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (January/February 1980), African Bibliographic Center, Washington, D.C.; Judith Tendler, *Inside Foreign Aid* (Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975); Harry W. Strachan, "Side Effects of Planning in the Aid Control System," *World Development*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (April, 1978), pp. 467-478; and Robert Chambers, "Project Selection for Poverty-Focused Rural Development' Simple is Optimal," *World Development*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (February 1978), pp. 209-219. The ultimate bureaucratic imperative in the large donor organization is to move increasing sums of money. The amount of money moved at a given level of staffing is the most visible measure of donor accomplishment and that reality dominates decision processes.

    An Airgram from AID/Washington dated 3/29/78 on the subject of "Program Guidance for FY 1980" estimated that the amounts of development assistance available for Regional Bureau Programs would increase from $628 million in 1977 to $3,160 million in 1983. At the same time it noted that "We do not expect personnel levels to increase as rapidly as program levels. In fact, the President is currently committed to holding personnel levels down. . . . Missions should consider effective ways of providing assistance that do not require large numbers of U.S. personnel." Thus, in UNAID the term cost effectiveness sometimes comes to take on a new meaning as in: "We cannot afford to take on small projects *no matter how important the results may be*—it just isn't 'cost-effective.' " (Emphasis added.)
33. Based on Chambers, *op. cit.*, pp. 210-211.
34. Officials of recipient governments desperately in need of foreign exchange face a corresponding dilemma. Any shift in donor policies which would reduce or delay foreign assistance flows is not likely to be received warmly by them.
35. An Asian Development Bank policy permitting use of the program loan vehicle was approved in 1977. A recent staff paper suggests that assistance on a program basis may be more appropriate than conventional project approaches where "Administrative flexibility is needed so that appropriate adjustments to changing circumstances can be made rapidly at the local level without costly delay." The paper goes on to suggest that the current policy may still be overly restrictive and that expanded and liberalized use of program lending would be appropriate. Martin C. Evans, *et al.*, *Sector Paper on Agriculture and Rural Development* (Manila: Asian Development Bank, 1979), pp. 62-65. See also Asian Development Bank, *op. cit.*, pp. 310-311.
36. The following is not atypical of the observations made by USAID mission personnel:

    Probably 80 percent of our staff time goes into completing agency paperwork. Actually the more sophisticated the analysis required the more likely it will be left to the last minute and be carried out only to justify decisions already made. We had a full-time sociologist in one mission where I was assigned whose biggest frustration was always being called in at the last minute to complete the social analysis statement required before the project plan could go forward to Washington.

    Many of the problems can be traced to the complex and often skeptical political climate within which USAID must broker demands of many bureaucratic and political constituencies relating to such things as contracting procedures, human rights considerations, affirmative action policies, and environmental protection reporting requirements—all administered by people far removed from field realities. In addition, it must be responsive to congressional oversight committees which keep close watch over its operation and demand evidence of short-term results. Even so, there is a sense in the agency that many of the procedural burdens are self-inflicted, resulting from a dysfunctional and unnecessary overreaction to congressional criticism. The Agency's current leaderhsip is committed to simplifying procedures *and* to cutting back personnel on the theory that needless paperwork can be reduced to such an extent that a smaller staff will have ample time to address the more creative requirements of USAID's development programming.

    a Proposed Grant to National Dairy Development Board for Establishing a Centre for Management and Consultancy in Rural Development," Ford Foundation Office in New Delhi, May 20, 1977; Ford Foundation, "Recommendation for Grant Action to National Dairy Development," July 6, 1979; and Devaki Jain, *Women's Quest for Power: Five Case Studies* (Ghaziabad, U.P. India: Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd., 1980), pp. 77-120.
39. The fact that it accomplishes this while remaining open to participation by all classes in a highly stratified social setting with strong class conflicts makes this case of special interest. See Somjee and Somjee, *op. cit.*, and Kamla Chowdhury, "Non-formal Education and Development," paper presented at the Symposium on Agricultural Research and Education Systems for Development of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, September 5, 1979. How it is accomplished needs further examination.
40. Reportedly this was not true in the earlier years when *harijans* ("untouchables") were forced to deliver their milk separately. David Moller and Shok Mahadevan, "The Miracle Worker of Kaira," *Indian Reader's Digest*, October 1977. The dynamics by which this change occurred are not elaborated in the reports I have seen. It should also be noted that in spite of its high marks as a contributor to important social advances, the NDDB has been criticized for inadequate attention to the anomaly that, although cattle care and milk production are almost entirely women's activities in India, the membership of most of the unions is dominatd by men who are even more substantially over-represented in leadership positions. Furthermore, women receive little training under NDDB programs and are not hired for staff positions.
41. Sarvodaya Shramadana translates literally "the awakening of all in society by the mutual sharing of one's time, thought and energy."
42. For an articulation of Sarvodaya philosophy see A. T. Aryaratne, *Collected Works*, Volume I, edited by Nandasena Ratnapala (Colombo: Sarvodaya Research Institute, undated). The theme that Sarvodaya's accomplishments are more often reflected in the growth of the spirit of the people rather than in more conventional indicators of village level change is brought out in Nandasena Ratnapala, *Community Participation in Rural Development: Study of Seven Selected Villages in Sri Lanka* (Colombo: Sarvodaya Research Institute, 1978); and Nandasena Ratnapala, *Village Farms: Community Participation and the Role of Rural Credit* (Colombo: Sarvodaya Research Institute, undated). The various Sarvodaya publications cited may be obtained from the Sarvodaya Research Institute, 148 Galle Road, Dehiwala, Colombo, Sri Lanka.
43. The intended procedure is that Sarvodaya workers and the leaders of newly formed village associations jointly carry out and analyze a socio-economic survey and use this as the basis

for the planning of activities specifically addressed to the needs of the village. Often, however, the data collection is inadequate and those involved are not well versed in how to use the data for planning purposes. As a result they tend, instead, to copy ideas obtained from other villages. Nandasena Ratnapala, *The Sarvodaya Movement: Self-Help in Sri Lanka* (Essex, Conn.: International Council for Educational Development, 1978).

44. For the detailed account of the early camps on which this summary is based see Nandasena Ratnapala, *Sarvodaya and the Rodiyas: Birth of Sarvodaya* (Colombo: Sarvodaya Research, undated).
45. *The Sarvodaya Movement, op. cit.*
46. Summarized from *Idem.*
47. Based on interviews with Nandasena Ratnapala in Colombo, January 1980.
48. Summarized from Nandasena Ratnapala, *Study Service in Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement,* Sri Lanka, 1958-1976 (Colombo: Sarvodaya Research Centre, undated), pp. 25-35.
49. *Ibid.,* pp. 32-33.
50. Interviews with Ratnapala, *op. cit.*
51. *Idem.*
52. In this brief treatment, I do not distinguish between BRAC's Sulla, Manikgang, and Jamalpur Projects, each of which has its own special characteristics. While BRAC has formally divided the Sulla project into three phases, the concept of three phases as used here refers more broadly to BRAC's overall program development. The discussion of Phases I and II is based on Manzoor Ahmed, "BRAC: Building Human Infrastructure to Serve the Rural Poor," Case Study No. 2, International Council for Educational Development, P.O. Box 217, Essex, Connecticut 06426, USA, 1977. Discussion of Phase III is based largely on interviews with BRAC staff in Dacca on January 26, 1980, supplemented by data from Ahmed, *Idem.,* and earlier interviews with BRAC staff in January 1977.
53. 1977 data.
54. Landowners prefer day labor because depressed wage levels mean increased returns to land relative to share cropping arrangements. By exerting upward pressure on wage rates the intention is to make share cropping and lease arrangements more attractive to landowners. BRAC is experimenting with schemes that give the poor control over factors of production other than land and labor. For example, groups of poor have been organized to purchase pumps with which they sell irrigation services to the landed.
55. An asset is defined by BRAC as anything which generates new income or reduces expenditure. See Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, *Research Manual* (Dacca: BRAC, June 1979). BRAC publications may be ordered from Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, 211 Outer Circular Road, Maghbazar, Dacca-17, Bangladesh.
56. Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, *Peasant Perceptions: Famine* (Dacca: BRAC, July 1979). See also Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, *Who Gets What and Why: Resource Allocation in a Bangladesh Village* (Dacca: BRAC, March 1979); and Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, *Ashram Village: An Analysis of Resource Flows* (Dacca: BRAC, undated).
57. The use of the team meeting to facilitate open, upward flow of communication, a downward flow of support, and continuing in-service training was basic to the management systems of the Etawah Pilot Project, shows up as a feature of most pilot health schemes in India, and was probably more crucial than the highly touted integrated service concept in the accomplishments of the Narangwal health project. See Heginbotham, *op. cit.,* pp. 44-48; David F. Pyle, "Voluntary Agency-Managed Projects Delivering an Integrated Package of Health, Nutrition and Population Services: The Maharastra Experience," The Ford Foundation, New Delhi, India, March 1979, pp. 22-23; M. N. Murthi and David C. Korten, "An Experiment in Participation," in Steven H. Appelbaum (ed.), *Stress Management for Health Care Professionals* (Aspen Systems Corporation, forthcoming); Allen D. Jedlicka, *Organization for Rural Development: Risk Taking and Appropriate Technology* (New York: Praeger, 1977); Frances F. Korten and David C. Korten, *Casebook for Family Planning Management: Motivating Effective Clinic Performance* (Chestnut Hill, Mass.: The Pathfinder Fund, 1977).
58. BRAC's intelligent attention to program details is reflected in many aspects of its operation. For example, its paramedic program is based on analysis of the major health conditions faced in the project areas. A training manual written to be intelligible to its paramedic staff spells out simplified procedures for identifying symptoms, and prescribing treatment. A rigorous six-month training program is keyed to the manual which the trainee retains for future reference. See Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, *Ten Diseases: A Treatment Guide for Medical Paraprofessionals* (Dacca: BRAC, December 1979).

    The careful attention given to development of management systems is reflected in a procedure introduced in 1976 for selection of new staff. Candidates who pass preliminary screening spend two days in a "selection course" in which they engage in a number of exercises from BRAC training modules which provide an opportunity to exhibit communication, planning, and analytic skills. During these sessions BRAC staff assess not only the candidate's skills, but also his or her personality, perception of development problems, and leadership qualities, Ahmed, *op. cit.,* p. 64.
59. Abed estimated that as of January 1980 this staff was working with approximately 800 villages, but stressed this was only a guess. The spontaneous process of replication of village organizations now in process makes difficult, and possibly even inappropriate any effort to maintain an accurate quantitative record of program accomplishments. Normally the lack of such data would be considered a sign of weak management. But we still have a lot to learn about the kinds of management systems appropriate to particular types of social development efforts. As BRAC has shifted from the sectoral approach of Phase II to the people approach of Phase III, BRAC staff have felt it appropriate to de-emphasize quantitative performance indicators, which inevitably place pressure on field staff to usurp initiative from the community leadership.

    The emphasis now is on the "strength" of the village organization and the "feeling" within the group. The assessments are explicitly subjective and BRAC leaders discourage natural tendencies on the part of field staff fo compare accomplishments in their respective villages, stressing that each village is unique in its particular potentials and that specific accomplishments are the responsibility of village leadership, not of the BRAC worker. According to Abed, as BRAC's methods have become more responsive to real village needs and performance targets have been de-emphasized, staff motivation and program accomplishments have both improved commensurately—though this is also a subjective assessment. Caution must be exercised in generalizing from this experience as it is a function of BRAC's particular history and the

staff commitment, expertise, and task definition which that history has produced.

60. This report is based largely on an interview with Mechai Viravaidya conducted on January 28, 1980 with supplemental information drawn from S. Burintratikul and M. C. Samaniego, "CBFPS in Thailand: A Community-based Approach to Family Planning," Case Study No. 6, International Council for Educational Development, P.O. Box 217, Essex, Connecticut 06426, U.S.A.; and Mechai Viravaidya, "Distribution and Logistics Aspects of Rural Community-based Contraceptive Distribution," Asian Centre for Population and Community Development, undated, unpublished.
61. Benjamin U. Bagadion and Frances F. Korten, "Government Assistance to Communal Irrigation in the Philippines: Facts, History and Current Issues," *Philippine Agricultural Engineering Journal,* Vol. X, No. 2, Second Quarter, 1979, pp. 5-9.
62. For details see Carlos D. Isles and Manual L. Collado, "Farmer Participation in Communal Irrigation Development: Lessons from Laur," *Philippine Agricultural Engineering Journal,* Vol. X, No. 2, Second Quarter, 1979, pp. 3-4; and Felipe Alfonso, "Farmer Participation in the Development of Communal Systems: Skills and Structural Implications," *Philippine Agricultural Engineering Journal,* Vol. X, No. 2, Second Quarter, 1979, pp. 28-31.
63. For further discussion see Benjamin U. Bagadion and Frances F. Korten, "Developing Viable Irrigators' Associations: Lessons from Small Scale Irrigation in the Philippines," *Agricultural Administration* (in press).
64. The term *learning laboratory* is used to refer to a pilot effort in which the emphasis is on learning about and refining process. It is geared to rapid assessment and refinement of methods; as soon as it is evident that a method or approach is not producing the intended intermediate outcomes it is revised based on the additional insight generated by the experience. The concept and its application are elaborated in David C. Korten, "The Pilot Project: Formal Experiment or Learning Laboratory?" The Ford Foundation, Manila, Philippines, April 10, 1979, unpublished.
65. Rather than reports, the research products are new methods, procedures, and training courses. The researchers are members, along with management, of the committees that review research products to determine how they will be used and they regularly serve as instructors and resource persons in NIA workshops and training programs.
66. See Romana P. de los Reyes, *Managing Communal Gravity Systems: Farmers' Approaches and Implications for Program Planning* (Quezon City, Philippines: Institute of Philippine Culture, Ateneo de Manila University, 1980); and Romana P. de los Reyes and Ma. Francisca P. Viado, "Profiles of Two Communal Gravity Systems," *Philippine Agricultural Engineering Journal,* Vol. X, No. 2, Second Quarter, February 1979, pp. 14-18.
67. For preliminary analyses see Bagadion and F. Korten, *op. cit.;* Alfonso, *op. cit.;* and Felipe B. Alfonso, "Assisting Farmer Controlled Development of Communal Irrigation Systems," in David C. Korten and Felipe B. Alofnso (eds.), *Bureaucracy and the Poor: Closing the Gap* (Singapore: McGraw-Hill, forthcoming).
68. Communals (farmer owned and operated systems) account for approximately one-half of all irrigated areas in the Philippines. The other half is serviced by larger government owned and operated "national" systems. Bagadion and F. Korten, *op. cit.* The methods being developed under the communals program may also have relevance for the NIA's work on national systems, but as of early 1980 this had not been pursued.
69. One such problem, finally resolved in early 1980, resulted from a conflict between the monsoon season and the Philippine government's budgeting cycle. The Philippine's monsoon season begins roughly in the middle of the fiscal year. Funds for communals rehabilitation were budgeted annually by the government's Budget Commission for each individual system to be assisted, although actual releases commonly were not approved until two or three months into the year, leaving only about two months for construction before the rains—which often washed-out incompleted structures. Funds for a project not expended in the year approved did not carry over to the next year. The solution was to obtain a higher priority for communals work which allowed more timely funds releases, and to redefine communal irrigation work as a program rather than a collection of individual construction projects. This would allow long term planning, a more flexible approach to preparatory work, and the provision of other kinds of needed assistance not necessarily tied to a specific construction project.
70. The conclusions that follow do not apply to the more moderate peasant organizations created by members of the rural elite in an attempt to create a counterforce to the more radical movements, as for example the Philippine Federation of Free Farmers described by Blondi Po, *Rural Organization and Rural Development in the Philippines: A Documentary Study* (Quezon City: Institute of Philippine Culture, Ateneo de Manila University, 1977), pp. 56-79.
71. Gerit Huizer, "The Strategy of Peasant Mobilization: Some Cases from Latin America and Southeast Asia," in June Nash, Jorge Dangler, and Nicholas S. Hopkins (eds.), *Popular Participation in Social Change* (The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1976), p. 332.
72. Po, *op. cit.,* p. 34. For a treatment of early peasant rebellions throughout Southeast Asia see Harry J. Benda, "Peasant Movements in Colonial Southeast Asia," in Mary Racelis Hollnsteiner (ed.), *Society, Culture and the Filipino* (Quezon City, Philippines: The Institute of Philippine Culture, Ateneo de Manila University, 1979), pp. 227-234.
73. Huizer, *op. cit.,* pp. 314-322.
74. K. C. Alexander, "Some Aspects of Peasant Organizations in South India," *Rural Development Participation Review,* Summer 1979, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 4-7; and Gail Ombedt, "Women and Rural Revolt in India," *Journal of Peasant Studies,* Vol. 5, No. 3, April 1978, pp. 370-403.
75. Huizer, *op. cit.,* p. 307.
76. Joel S. Migdal, *Peasants, Politics, and Revolution: Pressures Toward Political and Social Change in the Third World* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1974), pp. 87-111.
77. *Ibid.,* pp. 193-225; Huizer, *op. cit.,* pp. 309, 324-25.
78. Migdal, *op. cit.,* p. 230.
79. Huizer, *op. cit.,* p. 309. Rapidly increasing alienation of the rural poor from the resource bsae on which their livelihoods depend is one of the most important development problems currently facing Asian nations. This problem is characterized by a rapid population growth and a conflict between modern and traditional concepts of property rights, as well as the conflict between subsistence and "development" oriented uses of a finite land and water resource base. See John C. Cool, "Authoritarianism and Development: The Search for Alternatives," to appear in *The Resources and Development of the Indian Ocean Region,* University of Western Australia Press (forthcoming).

80. *Ibid.*, pp. 331-338. See Po, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-77 for a case study.
81. Migdal, *op. cit.*, pp. 237-252.
82. Eqbal Ahmad, "Revolutionary Warfare and Counterinsurgency," in Norman Miller and Roderick Aya (eds.), *National Liberation, Revolution in the Third World* (New York: The Free Press, 1971), p. 157 as cited by Migdal, *op. cit.*, p. 262. Too often the government's best efforts at development end up being captured by elites to supplement their traditional sources of power by establishing apparent control over government funds for roads, schools, and health facilities. This weakness of many community development and local government programs was noted earlier. Huizer, *op. cit.*, pp. 324-328. For discussion of this phenomenon in relation to government efforts to build local political participation in the Philippines see Po, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-56.
83. Huizer, *op. cit.*, pp. 328-329; and Migdal, *op. cit.*, pp. 226-256. In contemporary Philippines experience the stimulus to this radicalization process frequently involves legal actions to alienate the poor from the land on which they have traditionally depended for their livelihood to make way for its exploitation by government or large corporations in the cause of "national development." See Francisco Suling, "The Cellophil Story: Is a Giant Stomping Out the Hill-Tribes?" *Who*, Vol. II, No. 24, September 15, 1979, pp. 8-13; and Benjamin Bagadion, Jr., Jose Fernandez, Richard Fernandez, *et al.*, *Law in the Mobilization and Participatory Organization of the Rural Poor: The Kagawasan Case* (Quezon City: Institute of Philippine Culture, Ateneo de Manila University, 1979). Other examples of the use of confrontation techniques to mobilize rural poor in the Philippines in defense of their rights against rural elites and unresponsive local officials are presented in Mary Racelis Hollnsteiner, "Mobilizing the Rural Poor Through Community Organization," *Philippine Studies*, Vol. 27, Third Quarter 1979, pp. 387-417.
84. Huizer, *op. cit.*, pp. 328-331. Huizer observes that such leaders almost always come from among the relatively better off peasants who are less dependent on landowners or rich farmers and who may have had an urban background. Migdal argues that the peasants lack the necessary organizational ability and have to depend in the early stages on outsiders to provide it. *Op. cit.*, p. 2[illegible] There is evidence that the effective leaders tend to be from more advantaged classese than the led even in more moderate types of community organization. Cristina Montiel, *Rural Organizations and Rural Development in the Philippines: A Field Study* (Quezon City: Institute of Philippine Culture: Ateneo de Manila University, 1977), p. 117.
85. For a discussion of the concept of fit and a review of the supporting research see Jay R. Galbraith and Daniel A. Nathanson, *Strategy Implementation: The Role of Structure and Process* (St. Paul, Minn.: West Publishing Company, 1978), especially pp. 90-97. The research of John C. Ickis has been instrumental in demonstrating the utility of the concept in rural development. See John C. Ickis, "Strategy and Structure in Rural Development," Harvard Business School doctoral dissertation, Boston, Mass., 1978; and John C. Ickis, "Rural Development Management: Strategy, Structure, and Managerial Roles," in David C. Korten (ed.), *Population and Social Development Management: A Challenge for Management Schools* (Caracas: Instituto de Estudios Superiores de Administracion, 1979), pp. 113-126. See also Sussman, *op. cit.*; Korten and Alfonso, *op. cit.*; and Ickis and Korten, *op. cit.*
86. See Montgomery and Esman, "Popular Participation," *op. cit.* for discussion of different means for achieving this fit appropriate to particular circumstances. Simply basing planning on well-developed knowledge of the people of the program area, and of the strategies they employ for survival and advancement would be a major advance for most programs. See Jay K. Satia, "Developmental Tasks and Middle Management Roles in Rural Development," and David C. Korten, "Social Development: Putting People First," both in Korten and Alfonso, *op. cit.*
87. Frances F. Korten, "Community Participation: A Management Perspective on Obstacles and Options," in Alfonso and Korten, *op. cit.* reviews the obstacles in the typical bureaucratic organization to a participative style of rural development action. See also Derick W. Brinkerhoff, "Inside Public Bureaucracy: Empowering Managers to Empower Clients," *Rural Development Participation Review*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Summer 1979, pp. 7-9.
88. The blueprint and the learning process approaches reflect two fundamentally different decision making paradigms: the rational and the cybernetic, which have been articulated in detail by John D. Steinbruner, *The Cybernetic Theory of Decisions: New Dimensions of Political Analysis* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1974). The implications of these paradigm differences have been extensively examined in the literature. See James G. March and Herbert A. Simon, *Organizations* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.); Richard Cyert and James March, *A Behavioral Theory of the Firm* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1963); David Braybrooke and Charles E. Lindblom, *A Strategy of Decision: Policy Evaluation as a Social Process* (New York: The Free Press, 1963); Aaron Wildavsky, *The Politics of Budgetary Process* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1964); Graham T. Allison, *The Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1971); and Naomi Caiden and Aaron Wildavsky, *Planning and Budgeting in Poor Countries* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1974). The blueprint approach to development programming is derivative of the rational paradigm, which addresses how decisions *should* be made where a single actor is involved. The learning process model is derivative of the cybernetic paradigm which provides a more accurate description of how decisions are *actually* made and is more useful in the analysis and improvement of complex decision making systems. Although not in itself normative, the cybernetic paradigm serves as the basic for a number of important normative models of learning process, organizational design, and policy analysis. For example, see Donald N. Michael, *On Learning to Plan—and Planning to Learn* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1973); Stafford Beer, *Platform for Change* (London: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1974); Raymond A. Bauer and Rikk Larsen, "The Convergence of What Is and What Should Be," Working Paper HBS 74-7, Division of Research, Graduate School of Business Administration, Harvard University, Boston, Mass., March 20, 1974; Jay R. Galbraith, *Organization Design* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1977); Russell L. Ackoff, "National Development Planning Revisited," *Operations Research*, Vol. 25, No. 2, March-April 1977, pp. 207-218; Aaron Wildavsky, *Speaking Truth to Power: The Art and Craft of Policy Analysis* (Boston: Little Brown, 1979); David C. Korten, "Toward a Technology for Managing Social Development," in Korten, *Population, op. cit.*, pp. 20-50; James W. Botkin, Mahdi Elmandjra, Mircea Malitza, *No Limits to Learning: Bridging the Human Gap* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1979); and Bruce F. Johnston and William C.

29

Clark, *On Designing Strategies for Rural Development: A Policy Analysis Perspective* (in preparation).

89. Abbreviated versions of the project cycle described by Dennis A. Rondinelli, "Planning and Implementing Development Projects: An Introduction," in Dennis A. Rondinelli (ed.), *Planning Development Projects* (Stroudsburg, Pa.: Dowden, Hutchinson & Ross, Inc., 1977), p. 5. Rondinelli stresses that the formal model of the project cycle describes how it is *supposed* to work, but that reality often departs substantially from the prescription. *Ibid.*, pp. 4-17. Rondinelli correctly challenges project management's imperious rationality but fails to question the basic concept of the project as the central focus of development programming. Staff members of Development Alternatives, Inc. have given substantial attention to the limitations of rural development projects designed by the blueprint model and have pioneered the development of a process model of project management. Morss *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 208-222, and Charles F. Sweet and Peter F. Weisel, "Process Versus Blueprint Models for Designing Rural Development Projects," in George Honadle and Rudi Klauss (eds.), *International Development Administration: Implementation Analysis for Development Projects* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1979), pp. 127-145. Many of their arguments parallel those of the present study; however, they join Rondinelli in failing to suggest that the project concept itself and its emphasis on breaking development up into discrete, time-bounded pieces may be the real heart of the problem. Chambers, however, made the point a number of years ago. Robert Chambers, *Managing Rural Development: Ideas and Experience from East Africa* (New York: Africana Publishing Co., 1974), pp. 29-31.
90. National Economic and Development Authority, *A Guide to Project Development* (Manila: NEDA, 1978), p. 6.
91. "On Projects," *Pasitam Newsletter: The Design Process in Development*, No. 15, Summer 1977, p. 1. It should be noted that project organization *per se* is not anti-developmental, if carried out within a larger more permanent institutional setting specifically geared to the project mode of operation. However, this is seldom the setting into which project organizations are introduced in the Third World.
92. Morgan, *op. cit.*, pp.1-6; and Bruce F. Johnston and William C. Clark, "Food, Health and Population: Policy Analysis and Development Priorities in Low-Income Countries," Working Paper 79-52, International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, A-2361 Laxenburg, Austria, pp. 66-74.
93. Bruce F. Johnston, " 'Integration' and 'Basic Needs' in Strategies for Rural Development," in "Rural Development Strategies: A Survey of Policy Options and the Concepts of Integration and Basic Needs," a report to the Office of Rural and Administrative Development, U.S. Agency for International Development, October 15, 1979, pp. 1-11. The World Bank, the primary offender, is gradually moving away from insisting on creation of such project management units, partly due to the rebellion of its borrowers. In rural development few important outcomes are terminal. Building a clinic is terminal. Improving and maintaining the health of a rural population is not. Constructing an irrigation system is terminal. Improving and sustaining efficient, reliable, and equitable access to water is not. Much of the Third World countryside is already over supplied with underutilized clinics and irrigation facilities which serve only a fraction of their designed service area which serves as sober testimony to the limitations of a terminal approach to development.
94. Chambers, *Managing Rural, op. cit.;* Chambers, "Project Selection," *op. cit.;* Morgan, *op. cit.;* Ackoff, *op. cit.;* Caiden and Wildavsky, *op. cit.;* Morss, *et al.*, *op. cit.;* Sweet and Weisel, *op. cit.;* and Korten, "Toward a Technology," *op. cit.* For a comprehensive review see Marcus D. Ingle, "Implementing Development Programs: A State-of-the-Art Review," final report prepared for the Office of Rural Development and Development Administration, Development Support Bureau, U.S. Agency for International Development, January 1979.
95. This discussion was substantially influenced by Michael, *op. cit.*
96. In the Puebla Project in Mexico, agricultural technicians learned from local farmers the advantages of intercropping, an experience which led the Mexican government in early 1975 to establish a center for training agricultural researchers and extensionists in a new participatory R&D model. Reported by William F. Whyte and Lynn Gostyla, "Toward New Models of Agricultural Research and Development" to be included as a chapter in a forthcoming book by White on new approaches to the generation of appropriate knowledge for rural development.

    The idea that the experts might learn from rural peoples is not new, but has only recently attracted more than curious interest. See Lowell S. Hardin, "Emerging Roles of Agricultural Economists Working in International Research Institutions such as IRRI and CIMMYT" and Michael Collison, "Agrarian Change, the Challenge for Agricultural Economists," both are papers presented at the 17th Conference of the International Association of Agricultural Economists, Banff, Canada, September 1979. See also the *IDS Bulletin*, Vol. 10, No. 2, January 1979, edited by Robert Chambers, devoted entirely to the theme "Rural Development: Whose Knowledge Counts?" In addition to an excellent review of the importance of indigenous technical knowledge, various authors discuss appropriate methodologies for eliciting and applying such knowledge in rural development programs.
97. Michael Redclift, "Production Programs for Small Farmers: Plan Puebla as Myth and Reality," The Ford Foundation, Office for Mexico and Central America, January 1980 provides a useful perspective on the ways in which Mexican corn farmers adapted rather than adopted the technologies of Plan Puebla, resulting in substantial increases in production but using varied technology packages which often differed substantially from that offered by the program. Redclift argues that increasing the effectiveness of agricultural extension may be dependent on a better understanding of this adaptation process, and urges that "New approaches to working with small farmers begin by asking why farmers choose to act as they do." *Ibid.*, p. 31. Peter Hildebrand has described a methodology used in Guatemala to do just this. A multidisciplinary team goes to the field to learn the methods being used by farmers and their social, economic, and technical rational. Only once such understanding is assimilated do the experts attempt to make recommendations to the farmers which they believe the farmers would find to be improvements consistent with their situation. Various ideas are field tested and those which seem to have merit are passed on to farmers for consideration and implementation on their own fields with assistance from the team. The second year the farmers are on their own, with the researchers observing to see which practices they find sufficiently attractive to continue. Only thse practices are considered to have potential for broader dissemination. Personal interview and "Motivating Small Farmers to Accept Change," paper presented at the conference on Integrated Crop and Animal Production to Optimize Resource Utilization on Small Farms in Developing Coun-

tries," The Rockefeller Foundation Conference Center, Bellagio, Italy, October 18-23, 1978, Instituto de Ciencia y Technologia Agricolas, Guatemala, C.A., October 1978.

98. Ranjit Gupta, "The Poverty Trap: Lessons from Dharampur," in Korten and Alfonso, *op. cit.*

99. The CBFPS involved delivery of an externally delivered contraceptive technology, but reduced dependence on the clinic and regular commercial sources by introducing a redundant outlet under village control. In the case of the NDDB, the member controlled cooperatives structure increased villager market power and access to sources of necessary technical assistance. Well developed internal control systems and audits limited opportunities for corruption. In its communal irrigation program the NIA was emphasizing the development of irrigation systems operated under direct community control as an alternative to dependence on the larger government operated systems.

100. This is inherent in the idea that blueprints can be generated and tested by one organization for subsequent application by another. Johnston and Clark suggest that ". . . the notion of pilot projects as 'tests' of development policy 'hypotheses' retains a flavor of inappropriate 'physics envy' when applied in the development context. . ." *On Designing Strategies, op. cit.*

101. As an example see Rushikesh Maru, "Organization for Rural Health: The Indian Experience," in Korten and Alfonso, *op. cit.*

102. Robert Chambers calls rural surveys,

> . . . one of the most inefficient industries in the world . . . and yet these huge operations persist, often in the name of the science of evaluation, preempting scarce national research resources, and generating mounds of data and papers which are likely to be an embarrassment to all until white ants or paper-shredders clean things up.

"Shortcut Methods in Information Gathering for Rural Development Projectss," paper for the World Bank Agricultural Sector Symposia. January 1980.

103. The rural poor usually are the least visible members of the rural community. There is little hope of programs assisting them unless specific steps are taken to make them more visible—i.e., determine who and where they are, illuminate their survival and advancement strategies and their vulnerability to seasonality. The significance of such information is brought out very effectively by Robert Chambers, Richard Longhurst, David Bradley and Richard Feachem, "Seasonal Dimensions to Rural Poverty: Analysis and Practical Implications," Discussion Paper 142, Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex, Brighton, England, February 1979; and Robert Chambers, "Rural Health Planning: Why Seasons Matter," IDS Working Paper, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton, England, June 19, 1979. BRAC provides one of the best examples of the effective development and use of such information at the operating level. Gupta, *op. cit.* demonstrates the use of people based diagnosis as the basis for regional planning. An important demonstration that people based diagnosis can serve as the guiding framework in macro-planning is found in the *Country Development Strategy Statement FY 1982: Philippines,* USAID Mission to the Republic of Philippines, January 1980. This methodology is discussed in more detail in Korten, "Social Development," *op. cit.* See Young, *op. cit.*

104. Such individuals might be found working within a larger established organization, or heading a small voluntary agency. Funding would support an initial plan of action intended to take the idea through Stage 1 development, but with the understanding that there would be maximum freedom to revise both strategy and budget as emerging experience dictated. The time required will vary substantially with the complexity of the activity, but will seldom be less than two to three years.

105. Unless progress indicated earlier action, at the end of an agreed period an assessment would determine whether the undertaking should terminate, proceed with further Stage 1 testing, or move into Stage 2. The next budget would support the testing and refinement of the program in additional sites, refinement and routinization of proven methods, initial development of supporting management systems, and gradual expansion of core staff involved with the experimental program. Once ready to move into Stage 3 a more detailed plan and budget would be developed for phased program expansion, building on the capacities developed during Stages 1 and 2.

106. At least some of these funds are likely to be used for small local level projects of the type identified by Robert Chambers, "Project Selection," *op. cit.* It is neither appropriate nor necessary, however, that the funds going to the agency carrying out these projects be project tied or administered in a project mode.

107. In a properly conceived poverty-focused rural development program, the start-up costs, to which development project funding is normally addressed, are likely to be quite modest relative to the maintenance costs of a mature program. Indeed, too much money, too early will kill the learning process. The implications for the basic structure of development assistance funding—built around the exactly opposite requirements of large-scale infrastructure development—are substantial.

This framework might be useful to funding agencies in shaping their own roles consistent with their particular strengths and constraints. For example working with programs through Stages 1 and 2 should probably be limited to relatively smaller donors with highly qualified field staff, substantial programming flexibility, and no qualms about taking on high risk, staff-intensive activities. Taking programs through Stage 3 expansion involves somewhat less risk and requires greater funding than Stages 1 and 2. It may also be slightly less staff intensive, but still requires highly qualified staff on the ground. Intermediate donors such as USAID might find themselves most effective here. While not impossible for a donor such as USAID to be effective in Stages 1 and 2 it would take very special commitment to changing programming procedures and orientations in ways consistent with the requirements of those stages.

But even Stage 3 demands a degree of flexibility and sustained on-the-ground staff attention to movement of comparatively smaller sums of money, which the largest donors such as the World Bank may find it particularly difficult to provide. The latter might more appropriately concentrate on picking up the funding of programs which have moved beyond Stage 3 to maturity. By such time the program should have developed the capacity to absorb substantial blocks of funding for well delineated activities. Moreover, since the learning phase for the program in question has largely been completed it is less likely that the amounts and forms in which assistance are provided will prematurely inhibit essential learning. On the other hand, it might be a useful experience for the Bank to create a special unit to specialize in program development through the earlier Stages working with small amounts of funds, highly flexible programming procedures, and staff intensive, on-the-ground support. For all

31

donors greater sensitivity to implications of the learning process model might help avoid doing harm to a promising organization by imposing on it types of assistance and programming methodologies inappropriate to the stage of development of the program being assisted.

108. Once an organization has achieved the development of one mature program, a significant danger is that it may launch a second new program without sufficient recognition of the role the learning process played in its original program success. Indeed, the earlier success is likely to bring a rush of donors to the door eager to share in the glory of an attractive success by supporting new programs within a proven organization, but bringing money tied to inappropriate blueprint programming methods and in quantities too large to allow for the bottom-up learning process through which it may be necessary for each new program to progress. Sarvodaya is a case in point. It was moving well through the learning sequence until it suddenly branched into a variety of new programs with new requirements while simultaneously undertaking rapid expansion. At the time of this writing the BRAC, NDDB, and CBFPS were all moving rapidly into new program areas with donor prodding. It is not clear to me to what extent the leaders of these organizations fully appreciated the implications of these new undertakings and the extent to which they will require new learning and sometimes quite different types of organizational competence. I would hypothesize a high probability of failure unless each new program is taken through the learning process sequence.