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APPROACHES TO EVALUATION

Conference On

EVALUATION - ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR
VOLUNTARY AGENCY PROGRAM POLICY

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WINGSPREAD
THE JOHNSON FOUNDATION
Racine, Wisconsin
March 21-23, 1982

American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Services, Inc.
200 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10003

* Approaches to Evaluation *

Conference on Evaluation - its
Implications for Voluntary Agency
Program Policy

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APPROACHES TO EVALUATION

CONFERENCE ON "EVALUATION -
ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR
VOLUNTARY AGENCY
PROGRAM POLICY"

DATES: Begin 6 p.m. Sunday, March 21
Conclude 3 p.m. Tuesday, March 23

PLACE: Wingspread Meeting Center
Racine, Wisconsin

ORGANIZER: American Council of Voluntary Agencies
for Foreign Service, Inc.

OBJECTIVES: The objectives of the conference are:

1. To establish a framework for determining how evaluation can best benefit program policy decision makers.
2. To develop interchange among participants concerning concrete program policy challenges and possible solutions.
3. To consider an agenda for the voluntary agency community toward a strategy to strengthen our capability to do and use evaluation.

AGENDA: In pursuit of these objectives, the conference will develop activities around these themes:

- The management of evaluation: its role in strategic planning and the formulation of program policy.
- The community as a partner in evaluation: a perspective from the developing world.
- An analysis of the needs and expectation of voluntary agency policy makers concerning the use of evaluation in making decisions.
- An analysis of the "Approaches to Evaluation" workshops - evaluation as a link between community and policy.
- Concrete cases presented by participants concerning program policy decisions they confront and how evaluation contributes to a solution.
- An agenda for evaluation activities within the voluntary agency community: toward a strategy for strengthening capability.

The first two themes will be developed by speakers with special expertise in these areas from outside our own community. The other themes the conference participants, including invited resource persons and guests, will develop through panel and small group discussions.

CASE STUDIES: In our other events, we have found that case studies were an effective way to address issues. Therefore, we are asking each participating agency to consider presenting a specific case involving a program policy decision, preferably a current concern, that you are willing and interested to discuss with a small group. The purpose of this discussion is to exchange ideas concerning means of arriving at a decision with a particular emphasis on the role of evaluation in the process. Those agencies willing to present a case should indicate their interest on the reply form letter attached.

We will confirm your presentation before the conference. You should bring a one-page handout to the conference summarizing the following points: 1) description of policy concern, 2) efforts being made to arrive at a decision and 3) issues or specific questions you would like to discuss in the group. We plan to discuss several cases simultaneously in small groups which should allow us time for 10-15 cases.

COST: The contributions of various voluntary agencies and AID to this project and the generous support received from the Johnson Foundation allows us to offer this opportunity without charging a registration fee. In order to continue to build up our fund for follow-up activities to this project, we are asking each agency to contribute \$25.00 per person, payable at any time, to the ACVAFS. The assistance received from the Johnson Foundation includes the use of Wingspread, local transportation between Wingspread and the Milwaukee airport and lodgings, major meals, amenities and support services. Each person will pay their own lodging costs in a nearby Holiday Inn at \$31.00 a night for a single and \$16.00 for a double.

OTHER INFORMATION: The conference will bring together both executive policy-makers, including board members who have a particular responsibility for program policy, and managers responsible for organizing program evaluation. The conference is the culmination of an eighteen month effort to strengthen the methodology and build skills necessary for voluntary agencies to evaluate their international development activities. Using the findings of this conference and our other activities, "Approaches to Evaluation" will prepare a guidebook to evaluation appropriate for voluntary agency personnel in headquarters and the field.

Please return the attached form letter as soon as possible. We should have an attendance list in the hands of the Johnson Foundation by March 1. The Johnson Foundation will mail each of you information concerning Wingspread and request directly from you arrival and departure information to coordinate local transportation. Those traveling by plane should reserve flights arriving by 5 p.m. Sunday and departing after 5 p.m. on Tuesday. The conference will begin with a reception and dinner followed by an evening session.

In early March we will send everyone a pre-conference packet with further details concerning the conference. If you require further information, please do not hesitate to call Dao Spencer, Assistant Executive Director, ACVAFS (212) 777-8210 or Daniel Santo Pietro, Project Coordinator at (212) 674-6844.

PREFACE

The original plan for the "Approaches to Evaluation" project proposed a three step process for bringing voluntary agency staff together to sharpen their understanding of evaluation. Workshops on monitoring and impact evaluation provided an appropriate background for the third step, which centered on the relationship between evaluation and policy-making.

In planning this conference, our immediate concern was the composition of the participants. In our other workshops we involved primarily staff who manage evaluation within their respective agencies. Any discussion probing policy could easily become detached from reality without the participation of key policy-makers. For that reason we made a special effort to encourage executive directors to become part of this process.

All of us associated with the project were most gratified with the response of the community. Eleven executive directors and two board members made time in their hectic schedules to participate. Another eight executive policy-makers also came, who, together with fifteen other participants representing staff responsible for managing programs and evaluation, created an ideal mix for the conference. In all, twenty-five agencies brought their experience and points of view to the conference. We feel confident in asserting that not only did we have an excellent sample of voluntary agencies involved, but in many respects the conference participants brought the cream of the community's thinking on this subject together. Enriched by ideal resource people and the challenging presence of an Assistant Administrator from AID at the start, the conference achieved its objectives admirably.

The significance of the conference lies not only in bringing about a unique opportunity for thinking through an issue of common concern, but also in looking to the future. The commitment articulated by executive policy-makers to "quality evaluation" at the end of the conference is an inspiration to all of us. The support engendered by all the participants for the agenda of future evaluation activities is not lost on the organizers of this project, and has already enhanced our planning of future activities.

In acknowledging appreciation for those who worked to make the conference a success, special thanks must go to the staff of the Johnson Foundation, who run Wingspread - one of the finest facilities anywhere for a conference of this type. Their support and hospitality is warmly remembered by all. Once again, we must thank CARE, Catholic Relief Services, Christian Children's Fund, Church World Service, Foster Parents Plan International, Heifer Project International, Lutheran World Relief, Meals for Millions/Freedom from Hunger Foundation, PACT, Save the Children, United Israel Appeal, World Relief Corporation and the Agency for International Development for their contributions to the financing of the project.

Daniel Santo Pietro
Project Coordinator

I. Conference Summary

A. Introduction

This conference culminated the series of meetings originally planned in the "Approaches to Evaluation" project. The conference, focusing on the inter-relationship of policy and evaluation, followed logically from the preceding workshops on Monitoring and Impact Evaluation in May and October 1981, respectively. This building of a shared vision of evaluation among voluntary agency staff provided the main premise for a discussion of the program policy implications of evaluation.

In introducing the topic of this conference two members of the steering committee of the project, Armin Schmidt of Heifer Project International and Peter Van Brunt of Save the Children synthesized the findings of the project so far. Although a central theme of the project has been that there is no one model approach for evaluation among voluntary agencies, the workshops brought out salient characteristics worth reinforcing among voluntary agencies as they develop their own evaluation systems.

In brief, the three characteristics that form the foundation for such an evaluation system are participation, systematic information flow and a simple but pervasive methodology directed to collective learning.

Looking more closely at each of these characteristics one can see important ramifications for policy. Participation is our "sacred cow" in the sense that we seek approaches to evaluation that involve everyone in the process from donors, agency staff and particularly that most essential group - our "ultimate constituents" we assist among the poor. If there is one unique contribution we as a group of agencies can make to the entire field of evaluation, it is in this area of making the people we work with the leading actors rather than objects of our evaluation.

Systematizing our efforts is one of the clearest failings of voluntary agencies. Until we as agencies are committed to internal systems that produce a flow of evaluative information from field to board, our learning will be limited. Relying on sporadic evaluation for answers will likely frustrate us all the more.

The discussion on methodology that our workshops generated points to uncomplicated methods. As private agencies, few have the desire or the resources to use controlled experimental designs. Our values push us toward qualitative techniques that engage us and our collaborating agencies in a constructive dialogue with the people we assist. Part of our methodology is encouraging others, and training, if necessary, the people we work with as well as ourselves to think evaluatively. The area of evaluation methodology is an experimental one, where we can benefit from collective analysis of our experience. Also, even though our individual evaluation efforts may not involve sufficient scientific rigor to

"prove" cause and effect, a comparison of findings among various agencies will allow us to assert with credibility our own arguments about the development process.

After each workshop, synthesis papers were prepared by a small group of participants. In preparation for this conference, each participant received the paper prepared after the last workshop in October: "Impact Evaluation in Perspective" which is included in Appendix A.

B. Policy and Evaluation

- Process -

Three resource people from diverse experiences provided the initial points of reference. Mary Anderson, whose career combines field and administrative experience in a voluntary agency with academic pursuits as an economist and evaluation consultant, delivered the main presentation. She was followed by two respondents, each offering a different perspective. First, Sara Steele, a professor and evaluator from the University of Wisconsin-Extension, and then Richard Johnson, an evaluation specialist for the Exxon Education Foundation and organizer of workshops on evaluations for the Council of Foundations. In response to various requests from participants, Appendix B consists of edited transcripts of these talks.

The process used to elucidate this theme followed the talks with a free and open discussion in plenary, reacting to the ideas presented in order to identify themes of common interest. After lunch, the conference broke into four groups each to examine two cases of how different agencies are using evaluation to interact with program policy formulation. At the end of the afternoon each group synthesized the day's learning by articulating lessons learned for the plenary. For reference, summaries prepared by presenters of six of the cases as well as background material on the other two are included in Appendix C.

- Lessons Learned -

For the purpose of synthesis, the four group reports at the end of the day represented the most important product. Fueled by the morning's discussion and tempered by the comparison to real cases, the conference participants forged a number of statements that together, shaped a framework for understanding how evaluation benefits policy decisions.

The statements divide into three categories: overriding issues of common concern, methodological considerations (evaluation, design, data gathering and assessment) and the utilization of evaluation findings in policy making.

Issues of Common Concern

There was universal recognition that policy is influenced by many factors other than program evaluations. Participants identified three common factors that often lead to changes in voluntary agency program policies: institutional crises often stemming from a perceived failure to grow, change in executive leadership, and changes in funding organizations' priorities. As a counterpoint, it was pointed out that inertia ("we have always done it this way") is another powerful factor that makes agencies resistant to policy changes. Realistically, program evaluations must compete among these factors as an influence in policy making.

It is important to recognize that policies and a "style of operation" are closely intertwined. As suggested by Mary Anderson, the more policies reflect deeply held values, the less amenable they are to standard evaluation approaches. Admitting that most voluntary agencies have strong ties to a set of values, often derived from religious beliefs, the more important it is that evaluation respect this reality. An interesting lesson in this regard is to keep separate evaluations of policies and the consequence of policy or actual programs.

Another clear common issue is the concern to negotiate with donors concerning evaluation. An evident lesson is the importance of carrying out these negotiations before funding is accepted. It is in the interest of voluntary agencies to broaden communications with donors through evaluation, especially where a participatory approach is emphasized. Where there is participation of the three major actors common to development efforts: donor, agency and community in the evaluation process, there is a greater likelihood of satisfying the needs of each. Further, a reality affecting voluntary agencies is the reluctance of allocating resources to systematic evaluation efforts unless there is some outside financial incentive. The attraction of extending programs will often outweigh using resources to evaluate, which points out the vital role donors can play in encouraging evaluation practices.

Methodological Considerations

An area of agreement among participants is that voluntary agencies need to establish evaluation first and foremost as a management tool. This tool can take many forms. One extreme is strategic self evaluation (see IIDI case example in Appendix C) where all policies are systematically questioned. More commonly, voluntary agency evaluation efforts will concentrate on limited management objectives first and, only through accumulated evidence, influence policy.

In this sense, an important lesson for voluntary agencies is to regard

evaluation as a collation of appropriate evidence that helps decision-makers define policies. The evidence gathered can come not only from "hard" scientific means but also other equally valid means of gaining knowledge. An idolatry of quantification will skew program content. On the other hand, we constantly need to look back at our history of program pursuits and ask the question "what would we do differently?". Evaluation, in this sense, is using all the evidence we can realistically gather as part of a process of reflection and rational change.

It is an accepted axiom that evaluation should be part of the initial planning efforts of a program. In a participatory approach, this truth is doubly important. Participation has to be consistent throughout a program or it will not realize its potential. An interesting lesson brought out in discussion is the potential of systematic participatory evaluation as a tool to aid in deciding when to terminate a program, especially where a counterpart agency is involved.

One lesson applicable to whatever methodology agencies use emphasizes the sound interpretation of data of any form. Interpretation of data should include an articulation of changes in the broader context and a clear rationale which links the data to conclusions.

Utilization

The experience of voluntary agencies points to some fundamental factors that condition the use of evaluation findings:

1. The extent to which they answer the crucial questions of decision-makers.
2. The openness of key decision-makers to critical information.
3. The ability of the evaluator to make information available effectively.
4. The packaging of information in a form appropriate to the audience.

Underlying these factors is the importance of a shared commitment as organizations to bring as much information to bear on decisions as possible.

If one thinks of evaluation as requiring a constant flow of information, in order to influence policy, the key is to aggregate the findings of various independent evaluation efforts. Interestingly, one lesson forwarded indicated that greater community participation in evaluation made aggregation more possible. By using the criteria of success established by people involved in the project, outcomes can be compared more confidently. Also in

at least one agency's experience, where participation has been successful, more comparable data or evidence is gathered than by traditional research approaches.

Once data is gathered, selectivity in what is passed on is crucial. A prime requirement of an evaluation system is to determine what information is essential to pass on to each level: community, field and headquarters. It may be that representative case studies are sufficient for headquarters to aggregate information it needs while anecdotal information is sufficient for boards. A useful lesson advanced is to stress non formal means of conveying evaluation information to board members.

C. Future Agenda

Having analyzed the principal theme of the conference to create a framework for understanding how evaluation can benefit policy, the next logical step was to look ahead. The second day of the conference focused attention on a proposed agenda of activities revolving around evaluation (see Appendix A) that individually and collectively voluntary agencies can undertake. The purpose of the activities is to strengthen as a community our ability to do and use evaluation.

A panel introduced this portion of the conference, consisting of an outside resource person, Richard Johnson, an executive director of one agency, James MacCracken of Christian Children's Fund, and a member of the "Approaches to Evaluation" steering committee, Joseph Sprunger of Lutheran World Relief. Each panelist offered his distinctive perspective on the agenda.

This introduction was followed by small group discussions. At the request of participants, they formed three groups: executive policy makers, staff responsible for evaluation, and the steering committee and resource people. Each group had the task of critiquing the agenda and offering their own ideas about how voluntary agencies can address the challenges of the first day.

The morning's discussion painted a vivid background consisting of certain givens and possible areas of action for evaluation to have effect in the voluntary agency milieu. Certain givens, outlined in striking fashion by Dr. MacCracken, pose specific challenges to developing systematic evaluation:

1. Heterogeneity of American voluntarism strongly argues against uniformity in approaches to evaluation.
2. Voluntary agencies find precision of measurement of their

goals difficult, which emphasizes the need to explore alternatives to strict quantifiable methods of evaluation.

3. Often successes and failures are cloaked in emotionalism which evaluation can lessen, assuming it respects basic values that inspire voluntarism.

As an executive director with prior experience in several agencies, Dr. MacCracken pointed out the constant pressure on most voluntary agency leaders to raise funds "to pay the light bills". In this context, evaluation will gain its place on a director's agenda inasmuch as it presents a coherent system for problem solving.

The options for voluntary agencies are evident. The ability to make evaluation a more effective tool must come out of their own experience, and collectively, hone it as an instrument to carve out policy. The means to accomplish this feat lie in these major areas for further action:

Training - the mobilization of our own human resources, supplemented by outside expertise as needed, to provide essential training to a broad cross-section of staff and, indirectly, to people in communities where we work, is a primary consideration.

Networking - lays the basis for working arrangements among agencies to use to best advantage skills needed for evaluation. Staff with experience in evaluation among the agencies and other consultants with compatible experience constitute an invaluable network of people who can work together in benefit of the community.

Collective Analysis - as a body of evaluative information is gathered, offers a vital opportunity to compare methodologies and results. Such analysis not only serves the purpose of feeding back into individual agency decision, but also to relate findings to donors and other interested parties.

The agenda of specific activities addressed all three of these major areas. In analyzing the results of the small groups' study of the agenda, the following points stand out as guidance for the future:

1. The executive policy-makers made a strong point of their commitment, individually and as a community, to undertaking quality evaluation appropriate to their agency's resources.
2. All groups found the objectives of the agenda worthy to pursue. The executive group particularly gave priority to a dialogue with donors and a consultative service. They also picked joint field evaluations as an important objective for the future.

3. The evaluation staff gave training for practitioners highest priority, with the proviso that the trainers be thoroughly familiar with voluntary agency context. A question is whether the expertise within the community can be harnessed for this purpose.
4. The different levels of agency interest and performance of evaluation is a reality. As individual agencies we have to assess our needs and those of our "ultimate constituency". Simplifying, not professionalizing, evaluation should be our goal, backed by a collective learning from our experience.

The challenge to "Approaches to Evaluation" is to mobilize the obvious support that has emerged in the voluntary agency community for the objectives of the project. Next steps include the convening of a task force to develop the lessons learned from the workshop series into a sourcebook for use by practitioners and trainers, as well as a supplementary short feedback session for executive directors not attending this conference. The future of the project, then, will grow from the evaluation of these activities and the interest of all the agencies involved.

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DISCUSSION PAPER: IMPACT EVALUATION IN
PERSPECTIVE

I. INTRODUCTION

The second workshop, sponsored under the Approaches to Evaluation Project of the American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Service, focussed on the topic "Impact Evaluation". In the three day meeting, which took place from October 20-23, 1981 at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, participants explored the elements of an analytical framework for impact evaluation, examined case studies and problems presented by private and voluntary organizations (PVO's) participating in the project, and considered the relationship of evaluation to learning and policy formation.

On January 13, a small working group of seven participants met at the ACVAFS office in New York to reflect upon the wealth of material which had emanated from the workshop and to synthesize their perspective on the subject. The discussions took as a point of departure a definition of impact evaluation, and then considered a number of key issues for the community.

Central to these issues is the concern that participation by community level participants in the conduct of impact evaluations be a hallmark of the PVO style. We see project participants as the primary evaluators of our efforts and the most important clients for the results of any project-related studies. This conviction must permeate not only the thinking of our staff, but also the methods we employ. Previous discussion papers, most notably "Monitoring - A Synthesis", and "Some Thoughts on Participatory Evaluation" developed a rationale for this approach, emphasizing the benefits which both the communities and PVO's derive when participation is fostered not only in project planning and implementation, but also in monitoring progress and the assesement of results. In brief,

these include greater project efficiency and effectiveness, the possibility for learning, the growth of analytic and organizational skills, and greater control over development processes through better information control. Characteristics and challenges for participatory evaluation were also highlighted in these papers, which can be found in the final report of the Workshop on Impact Evaluation. This paper complements them, and stresses considerations relevant to participation more directly applicable to our work in impact evaluation.

II. DEFINITION

Impact evaluation is, first and foremost, a tool for learning and an integral part of the program management process. To that end, it should be undertaken systematically, at the level of an agency's general capability, and serve as an essential element in decision-making.

It involves a judgement on the project by the participants and by the PVO itself which addresses not only the accomplishment of project objectives, but other questions which are often more important than whether the project's purpose has been achieved or not. These include (1) an understanding of the social, economic and political context in which the project takes place and whether the objectives and project design make sense in terms of this reality; (2) an analysis of the unplanned results as well as the planned ones; and (3) an assessment of the more qualitative, social process occurring with the assistance of project support. Unlike monitoring, which is a system to provide regular information for improved project effectiveness, impact evaluation is undertaken on a longer-term, more periodic basis, and seeks to determine the ultimate value of the agency endeavor in terms of the participants' viewpoint and achievements.

III. ISSUES IN IMPACT EVALUATION FOR PVO PRACTITIONERS

- A. PVO's should seek to involve all interested parties in an evaluation process, both the design and implementation.

One of the first challenges PVO's face in undertaking a project evaluation is to acknowledge all the parties interested in the outcome, determine their particular information needs, and to involve them, to the extent possible, in the design and implementation of the evaluation process. These potential users include the project participants, agency field and management staff, private counterparts, local governments, and donors, all of whom have their own perspectives and specific questions to be answered. Often, conflicts can emerge over the amount of data to be gathered and where it should be maintained, the methodology to be employed, and the evaluators themselves. To the extent possible, PVO staff must seek to reconcile these conflicts while holding fast to the principle of participants as the main audience of the evaluation. This may mean sacrificing precision in some eyes, or using a less sophisticated methodology than might otherwise be possible, but too often, past evaluations have served the external actors exclusively, and this bias must be corrected if true participatory development is to be fostered.

Related to this challenge is the question of who should conduct and participate in impact evaluations. Often the need for objectivity is raised as a justification for the use of outside evaluators. At the same time, however, if evaluation is a learning process, and is to serve the cause of human development, then clearly agency personnel and project participants must be central to the activity.

Several points need to be made here. The first is that insiders can achieve a satisfactory level of objectivity if agency management supports and rewards that attitude. Secondly, internal evaluation processes that are part of the management cycle are more likely to result in action. This does not mean that there is no role for outsiders. They are most successful as consultants

to or coordinators of an evaluation process, and periodic outside studies can be very enlightening and healthy checks to an internal system. Objectivity, in fact, requires different perspectives being brought to bear upon the same reality, and this can be achieved when agency staff, participants, and other parties, are involved in gathering and/or assessing the data.

Finally, it should be noted that outside evaluators do not necessarily mean Americans. Local experts can provide new and useful insights into a project under study.

(B). A systematic approach to impact evaluation is essential for learning to occur.

While all agencies have had some experience with impact evaluation, what has often eluded us has been a systematic approach which would assure that real learning from field experience will regularly be incorporated into the decision-making process. To achieve this end, a number of points must be taken into account:

1. The success of any approach depends upon a deep understanding of and appreciation for evaluation on the part of all staff. The subject needs to be "demystified" as Philip Coombs put it, and thinking evaluatively must be pervasive throughout the organization. The process can not be handed over to an evaluation office and considered taken care of; rather, it must be seen as an integral part of the responsibility of all involved with programming. Evaluation offices best function as coordinators of and technical advisors to an internal agency system.

2. Evaluation must be tied into the management cycle of programming, budgeting and policy making. For each project, this means that initial discussions with community members should consider not only how it is to be planned and implemented, but also evaluated as well. Whatever is agreed to with them and other parties to the project, must be followed through in implementation.

3. This does not mean that a very sophisticated or all-encompassing system is essential. It is more important to avoid methodological overkill, and start small and experimentally, testing what works best for project participants and agency staff alike.

4. Participation at all levels should be included to the extent possible, keeping in mind the practical difficulties and the delicate nature of relationships sometimes involved.

5. Try to overcome the "project concept" or compartmentalization when thinking evaluatively. Remember that an understanding of the socio-economic context is a key first step in both project design and evaluation; and that a project is only one intervention in the on-going life of the community. Evaluations should recognize our limited role in the development process by striving to see the complete picture to which we make our contributions.

(C). Resources need to be invested consistent with the goals and expectations of a systematic approach.

PVO's pride themselves on their low operating costs and effective use of contributions on behalf of the Third World poor. For this reason, there has often been a reluctance to expend administrative finances on evaluation efforts. However, it is clear that there must be an investment of resources, both in dollars and staff time consistent with the goals and expectations of a systematic approach if they are to be achieved. This does not necessarily imply unreasonable costs, but it does mean that evaluation must be given a certain priority at an executive level to make it happen.

To keep costs reasonable, PVO's need to practice selectivity in determining the intensiveness of evaluation. They must also use staff time creatively, incorporating this function into regular travel and other ongoing activities. One of the best cost-effective measures is to ensure that evaluation is part of the regular programming cycle, as anything handled on an exceptional basis is always more expensive. Finally,

it helps if field people find ways to encourage the naturally occurring evaluation of projects which is undertaken by community people. In this way, PVO's obtain the participants viewpoint at low cost. Not only does this make good sense for PVO's, it is respectful of the value of the community's time as well. It is essential that no excessive demands be made on community people for information they do not need or use, and that they see results for any investment of time they make.

- (D). Impact evaluations must be scheduled in accordance with specific project cycles and needs.

The key here is flexibility. Impact evaluations cannot be scheduled administratively across the board, but need to relate to schedules inherent in each project. These can include agricultural or educational cycles, as well as community work or migratory schedules. Often, the indicator to be measured will determine the appropriate time. And, of course, the regular review of monitoring data may suggest that it is time for a more indepth look at a particular project.

While, at first glance, this might seem contradictory, to the creation of a systematic approach and to the incorporation of evaluation into regular agency programming, in fact, it is not. It must be kept in mind that evaluations serve different purposes for different audiences. Timing a field-level evaluation to the proper moment in a project's life will assure the best use of the information gained thereby for operational improvements. At the agency level, the same material will be reviewed for different purposes, and hence, an overall system can accept data gathered at various times and still achieve the desired learning. What must be remembered is that agency semiannual and annual reviews are looking at snapshots of a dynamic reality, with enough accuracy to enable sound decision-making to take place.

- (E). Methodologies are best kept simple and appropriate to beneficiary participation. Within this constraint, PVO's are especially challenged to develop approaches to evaluate social impact.

As indicated above, the key here is to avoid methodological overkill. Several reasons underscore why. Cost is one of these. Another is the fact that PVO's are not doing social science research, and what is needed is not the most precise data, but just sufficiently accurate information upon which to make judgments and decisions. Most importantly, sophisticated methodologies can be a hinderance to participation by the project beneficiaries in the conduct of the evaluation, or to understanding the results.

Choosing less scientific approaches implies that we sacrifice, to some extent, the ability to prove cause and effect relationships between our interventions and results which occur in communities. But the problem of attribution should not become such a preoccupation for PVO practitioners that it causes us to become bogged down in complex methodologies. For us, it is more important to see the general patterns which emerge from a number of small projects. This could be facilitated by sharing findings from similar projects among PVO's to more accurately draw conclusions.

We must share the logic of whatever approach we use in order to compensate for any deficiencies in our data base, any inadequacies in our method, or any gaps in the participation of the parties concerned. Showing the relevance of the information gathered, and its credibility, should satisfy all users.

A number of methods suggest themselves as appropriate for PVO use. They include:

1. The systematic use of observation by field staff. This skill requires some training and the aid of guides or formats to highlight the key elements.
2. Collective and individual interviewing of project participants, using closed and open questionnaires.

Community people not involved in the project, local counterparts and governments, and others can also provide their views using this technique.

3. Analytics case studies can offer a more vivid understanding of a project process, along with an analysis of success and failures.

4. Local record keeping devices, such as diaries, can ensure that participants realities and perspectives are incorporated into the evaluation. They should be appropriate and kept simple.

Larger programs, often with several facets and covering large expanses of territory, can benefit from these techniques, coupled with a few others:

5. Sampling of project sites. When coupled with rotation, this can assure program coverage over an extended period of time.

6. Triage. Project sites are selected on the basis of need. Monitoring data can suggest which ones can benefit from an impact evaluation, leaving the more successful ones, or those evidently floundering aside.

7. Intentional selection of areas that are either successes or failures is another approach, as lessons can be derived from all projects. The choice is dependent upon what an agency wants to know.

8. Tiered. An information system can be structured so that each site has the detail it requires to make appropriate changes, while more generalized information would flow to other levels for coordination and learning.

9. Periodic case studies can be used to complement ongoing monitoring, and substitute for other forms of impact evaluation.

Most of these methods lend themselves to participatory evaluations, especially when coupled with training and with a working style which builds upon community interest.

One of the particularly gnawing issues facing PVO's is how to evaluate social impact the intangibles of a community's development process. Despite the difficulties involved, we must make special efforts in this area,

as the crux of our work is, indeed, human development. There are certain tools, such as proxies for operational indicators (see Robert L. Bruce's "Programming for Intangibles"), which can point to behaviors that are manifestations of attitudinal change. But our experience with these is limited. The challenge remains to develop this area of evaluation methodology so that we do not miss what is intrinsic to the projects we support.

Even when we opt for simplified methodologies, we still recognize weaknesses that exist in our abilities to design good evaluations. For this work, sensitive consultants can be most helpful. Among those, we should not forget other voluntary agencies who have confronted similar challenges in their own work. Cooperation among PVO's may be the best way to develop the skills most relevant to our operational style.

- (F). Training of project participants and PVO staff is essential preparation for systematic and participatory impact evaluation.

It seems clear from these considerations that training is an essential element in undertaking systematic and participatory impact evaluations. First of all, if evaluation is defined as a learning tool, then by its very nature, it is a training process for all concerned. Secondly, specific training exercises aimed at PVO staff and participants can be key to creating the attitude of thinking evaluatively which is the essence of a systematic approach.

Training of participants also facilitates their involvement in impact evaluations, and provides access to power and control over the project. This type of experience can be transferred to other endeavors; it's an investment in human development which can contribute to the empowerment of poor people.

Finally, at times PVO's are saddled with outside evaluations which appear to be more of a burden than a contribution to their work. A little creative planning and cooperation from the outside evaluator

could convert the exercise into something more meaningful by using the experience to train PVO staff. This can occur by having staff accompany the outside evaluator throughout the process, not only as guide, but as partner learning whatever skills the evaluator may have to share for future use within the agency.

(G) Evaluation is decision-making, both for the community and PVO involved.

Evaluations are only useful if they contribute to decision-making, and ways to facilitate that link deserve special consideration. Key decision-makers for PVO projects are the participants themselves, and special attention must be paid to ensure that they can utilize evaluation conclusions. Distilled learning must reach the management and board levels of PVO's and this can more easily occur if the following points are kept in mind:

1. Management must learn what evaluations can do for them, what questions it can answer. Since participation in evaluation leads to acceptance of the conclusions, their major issues should be included in specific studies, as appropriate.

2. When evaluation is institutionalized as part of the management process, policy-makers will find it easier to respond to its lessons.

3. Reporting styles affect use. Just as we seek simplicity in methodologies, we should seek clarity in the analyses that result from their application. This is especially pertinent for participants' usage of evaluation results.

4. Abstracts and interpretation are often required for different audiences. A simple grid for information sharing was proposed at the workshop in response to one agency's challenge, and could be adapted by others wrestling with this problem. (See page 130 of the final report).

5. Selectivity must be exercised in the number of evaluations sent to the executive level, and those that

are passed on should be made more alive, where possible, through the use of case studies and photographs.

6. It is important to aggregate conclusions from separate evaluations for policy-making, undertaking qualitative analysis of the results of many discrete activities. Also, impacts should be examined in terms of agency goals, as policy would build on that information.

Finally, in all of this, it is well to remember that while the results of evaluations are important to policy-making, they are not the only input. Other objectives and imperatives can override specific evaluation conclusions when decisions are made. What is essential however, is that the best data from all sources be available so that informed choices are the result.

- (H). The sharing of evaluation findings among PVO's creates a basis for greater learning and improved policy-making.

A final implication for policy-making which emerged from these discussions is the need to share experiences in evaluation among PVO's both in terms of conclusions reached and methodologies applied. The workshops on Monitoring and impact evaluation, at Stony Point and Harpers Ferry were useful fora for this purpose, but there is a need to build upon and expand this effort in the future.

In the past, a certain competitiveness among the agencies often prevented honest sharing of our problems, but PVO's have an ethical imperative to share both the positive and negative for the greater benefit of the poor we serve.

Selectively sharing evaluations can accelerate our learning about the community development process, and aid policy-making within each agency as a greater body of knowledge develops. How this sharing could take place deserves special attention, more than this working group could give it. It is hoped that the conference on policy-evaluation in March, 1982 can study this point further, and develop a plan to continue the exchange of experiences in the days to come.

In presenting this paper, we are confident the eight issues discussed here provide a valuable framework for PVO's to strengthen their approach to evaluation.

We will appreciate any comments or reactions, especially considering that "Approaches to Evaluation" will be compiling a sourcebook on evaluation for the PVO community, using these synthesis papers as a foundation. They may be sent to "Approaches to Evaluation" atn. Daniel Santo Pietro, AMERICAN COUNCIL OF VOLUNTARY AGENCIES FOR FOREIGN SERVICE, INC., 200 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10003

APPROACHES TO EVALUATION

CONFERENCE ON "EVALUATION -
ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR
VOLUNTARY AGENCY
PROGRAM POLICY"

Discussion Paper: AN AGENDA FOR EVALUATION ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE VOLUNTARY AGENCY COMMUNITY

The "Approaches to Evaluation" project has the stated goal of improving PVO's capability to design, conduct or assist programs of benefit to low-income groups in Third World nations. Through a series of activities focusing on evaluation, the project has promoted an interchange of ideas and experiences among PVO's in pursuit of this goal. The Evaluation Steering Committee, under the auspices of the American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Service, provides guidance to the project.

At this conference, we will be discussing the relationship of evaluation findings and the formulation of program policy. It is an ideal opportunity to raise for discussion means by which we, as a community of agencies, can continue to strengthen our capability to make evaluation as useful a tool as possible, especially for policy-makers.

Some of the ideas proposed for discussion stem from the original planning of the project. These ideas and others have achieved greater clarity from the workshops and discussion sessions the project has promoted. The seven evaluation activities proposed here are not intended to be all inclusive, and you may wish to add other ideas. The Evaluation Steering Committee is particularly interested in receiving reactions as to the priority and usefulness of the objectives of the proposed activities.

These reactions will provide guidance to the committee, both in implementing the final stages of this project and looking beyond to future possibilities.

1. Source Book on Evaluation:

Objective: To provide a practical source of information for PVO practitioners, both in headquarters and the field, on alternatives for planning, implementing and using evaluation.

An original objective of the project, the committee plans to convene a task force of PVO practitioners to assist it to plan and prepare the source book. Three basic sections are envisioned: methodological considerations, case studies and specific examples of PVO approaches, and a resource guide. It will be sold at cost to participating agencies.

2. Dialogue with AID and other donors:

Objective: To influence donors to make their evaluation demands more compatible to PVO approaches.

Using the product of this project's findings concerning PVO experience and ideas on evaluation, a dialogue with donors, especially AID, should take place. As an initial step the evaluation steering committee with the support of other agency staff proposes to hold a session with those responsible for evaluation in AID, and involve other donor organizations where possible.

3. Consultative Service:

Objective: To create a service to assist individual PVO's and continue to stimulate interchange among PVO's in evaluation.

One objective of the project is to explore possibilities of follow-up services. This service would react to specific requests from PVO's requiring assistance in evaluation on a consulting basis. One suggestion is to maintain an inventory of human resources within the PVO community that might be available on an exchange basis as well as outside consultants particularly oriented to voluntary agency programs. This service could also organize the means of exchanging information among PVO's about evaluation.

4. Retrieval and Exchange Service:

Objective: To create in a central point a service to collect documentation from PVO's and other relevant sources information pertaining to evaluation for reference and analysis.

The project has taken a step in this direction by asking agencies to provide papers, evaluation reports and specific tools or procedures they use. TAICH is willing to hold such a collection. Once sufficient material is compiled, it will be possible to undertake various analyses of PVO programs for our own purposes.

5. Training Courses for PVO Practitioners:

Objective: To organize a cooperative training program specifically for PVO practitioners on the basic skills of evaluation.

Considering the particular training needs of PVO practitioners, the project has experimented with offering a basic skills training session. By utilizing largely human resources available within the PVO community to implement this training, it should be possible to

provide tailor-made training opportunities at a reasonable cost. This concept can be implemented both in the United States and overseas to facilitate field staff involvement.

6. Symposia on Evaluation Findings:

Objective: To exchange specific evaluation findings among PVO's to identify effective development methodologies and lessons for program policy.

Since most PVO's are not conducting evaluations with scientific vigor, it is even more important to exchange findings to see if certain patterns emerge from our independent efforts. Such a symposium would be organized on sectoral lines, e.g. agricultural development, health, etc. or around a methodological theme such as developing community participation. If successful, such an event could be organized periodically.

7. Joint Field Evaluation:

Objective: To combine the efforts of several agencies with common program interests in evaluating the impact of their development programs.

Since there are clearly advantages, particularly in terms of cost, to evaluating impact jointly, we believe this alternative should be explored. Programs with similar goals, particularly in the same geographic region, can easily benefit from a common evaluation design. Evaluation teams consisting of staff from the various agencies as well as qualified external evaluators would conduct such efforts.

We look forward to our discussions at Wingspread.

Current Evaluation Steering Committee Members:

- Ms. Blanche Case, United Israel Appeal
- Patricia Hunt, American Friends Service Committee
- David Herrell, Christian Children's Fund
- Richard Redder, Meals for Millions/FFH
- Ray Rignall, CARE
- Joe Sprunger, Chairperson, Lutheran World Relief
- Peter Van Brunt, Save the Children

EVALUATION AND PROGRAM POLICY

by
Mary Anderson
Consultant

My grandmother was the kind of person who from the time of getting on an elevator at the first floor of a building until getting off on the 3rd or 4th floor was able to find out more about the people on the elevator than most of us could find out in three or four days. My grandmother was a natural "evaluator". She was a person who had a genuine interest in people and had a knack for making them talk about themselves. She could find out who they were, what they did and why they did it, what they thought about doing it -- and also who they were kin to -- from the first to the third floor on every elevator she ever rode. In addition she had the kind of common sense about how to make things happen. And, she was able to be non-judgmental.

As an economist, I have a hallmark of my approach to data analysis. My hallmark is the back of an envelope. You and I know many economists who collect vast amounts of data, put it through some computer program for analysis, and carry around large computer print-outs which show the importance and validity of their data and their analysis. The thicker the print-out, the more important the analysis. As I look at the results of many of these studies, I am impressed that the results frequently could have been attained by use of the back of an envelope.

One example of this is the Club of Rome Limits to Growth study. The people involved in this study spent many months and much money. They included some of the best brains in the world. What did they find out through their complicated data collection and analysis? Their stark and astonishing finding was that the world is going to run out of resources some day if we do not curtail our rates of consumption. Now this really is not terribly surprising. If there are finite resources on this earth there must be an upper limit to consumption. I could have figured that out on the back of an envelope.

But, there is a catch. Who is going to pay any attention to the back of my envelope? Not very many people. Yet, people paid a great deal of attention to the Club of Rome study. They paid attention because it had cost a lot of money, because it did rely on complicated models and elaborate assumptions, and because it took a great deal of time of a number of very smart people.

The models used in this study, however, were straightforward. They connected imaginary "ifs" and "thens". If we use x resource at y rate and if there is this much of x resource (and if x resource is renewable at a certain rate), then we shall run out of our x at a specific time in the future. There is little "hard" data here; there is a great deal of educated and thoughtful analysis of possible data alternatives.

What we illustrate here is an issue of credibility. What information, what data, do we believe and what information or data don't we believe? Why is simple information unbelievable while complicated and elaborately presented material impresses us? The question underlying our examination of evaluation and policy is why do we need to use a certain kind of approach to information in order to feel that the information is serious? Why are we interested, in sum, in a scientific approach to evaluation?

Let us look at history. In the year 1660, the Royal Society was established in London. The chartering of the Royal Society represents that point in history when science became a discipline, when science was acknowledged as a legitimate approach to knowledge and when groups of people called "scientists" were understood to be pursuing a way of knowing that was important. What did this science claim? Science claimed that knowledge comes from experience and observation. Everyone's experience is as valid as everyone else's, and everyone, therefore, has access to knowledge gained through experience. Up until that time, people had had to be born into power or prestige. The scientific way of knowing provided the first way in which all people had access to knowledge and, through that knowledge, access to power.

This was an extraordinarily democratic notion about knowledge, about the way knowledge was gained and about the way other people's attention and respect could be gained.

At the time when the Royal Society was founded another important element in the definition of knowledge was determined. The founders of the Royal Society decided "to eschew" discussions of politics and religion in that body. They agreed to leave politics and religion out of science, to draw the boundaries of the definition of science and of scientific knowledge in such a way as to leave out issues and considerations of a political or metaphysical nature. They agreed to this not because they did not think about politics and religion along with science. They left these concerns out of science because they were making a bargain with the state and with the church in order to be allowed to exist as an organized group. The church would not have allowed the Royal Society to come into being if its members were going to dabble in religion, and the state would not have allowed it to come into being if its members had indicated that they were going to deal in politics. The decision the founders of the Royal Society made, for practical, expedient reasons, turns out in fact to have defined science and scientific knowledge. This definition is the one with which

we now live. Science is identified as knowledge based in "hard" facts where no value judgments are allowed to enter.

The scientists themselves, of 1660 dealt with alchemy, astrology, politics, religion and philosophy. Science was for them only one of their ways of knowing. They gained other sorts of knowledge, no less true than scientific knowledge, through religion; they knew other things from philosophy. They counted on these forms of knowledge as well as on scientific knowledge. But, because of the extraordinary power of science, and the application of science in the industrial revolution in technology, we have come to believe that the scientific way of knowing is the only valid way of knowing and we have forgotten or devalued other ways of gaining knowledge. We identify "real" knowledge as that based in material experience and we say knowledge based in intuition, belief, mystical or other experience is not "real".

This history poses a problem for private voluntary agencies because most of these agencies grow out of a political or religious commitment in the broadest sense. Yet the voluntary agencies turn to the use of a scientific tool, which measures knowledge gained from "hard" data to evaluate work that is done because of belief and ideology.

This brings me to the issue of this conference to which I shall address myself -- evaluation and voluntary agency program policy. As I tried to unravel the issues of evaluation and policy to get ready for today, I realized that there are really three topics in that one topic. I want to focus on only one of them. First is the evaluation of program policy per se. Second, is evaluation policy, the policy by which we do evaluations, the policies for evaluation. Third, and this is my focus, is evaluation and program policy, side by side, as they interact with each other.

There are two questions to ask. First is what are the implications of the successes and failures in the work that we do for our organization's program policy? And, second, turning this around, what are the implications of our program policy for the successes and failures of our work overseas? These questions are interactive and this is why evaluation is important to program policy. These are simple questions but they are also, in some ways, very threatening. Why is this so?

Program policy is more than something which is made, refined, changed or abandoned. Within program policy are the values and norms, the ideologies, purposes and beliefs of an organization. Embedded in policies are the defining belief systems of organizations. If this is true, and I am going to give examples to illustrate that it is, it means that some policies are simply not susceptible to information. You may evaluate to your heart's content, gain all sorts of knowledge and information and data and evidence, and some (perhaps most?) policies still will not change because they represent the belief systems by which the agency operates. If we can develop methods of identifying which policies are

susceptible to change as a result of evaluations and which are not, then we can save ourselves a great deal of grief in the use or misuse of evaluation in relation to program policy.

Let us look now at seven areas of program policy in voluntary agencies where the success or failure of projects and programs in the field and the evaluation of them may have some kind of interaction with policy.

I. Sources of Funding. The first policy area with potential for interaction with evaluation is the area of the agency's sources of funding. Every agency has some kind of policy about where it gets its money. For example, some agencies refuse to take funds from the U.S. Government to work overseas. Others will take up to but not more than 30 percent of funds from government sources. Others survive entirely on government support. These are examples of policy decisions concerning sources of funds. Agencies make similar policy decisions about non-governmental funding; they may choose to get the bulk of funding from foundations, but they must decide which types of foundations and which types of funds. Some organizations attract a large pool of private donors while others rely on a few benefactors. The thrust of fund raising is deeply tied to organizational values and, as such, embodies essential policy decisions.

Let me illustrate what I mean. The Mennonite Central Committee, by and large, raises its money from Mennonites. Oxfam America, on the other hand, raises its money from a larger and more general public. The sources of funding and the kind of policies each agency has about sources of funding affects the programs that organization runs. The MCC will attract funds from its constituency insofar as the programs reflect Mennonite concerns while Oxfam will have to appeal through its education program and through public relations to the general U.S. public on the basis of broad development and/or humanitarian issues. The sources one relies on for funding reflect something about the beliefs of the organization about the way it should or should not work.

Are these policies surrounding funding sources susceptible to change? Is there anything which can be learned in the field from evaluation of programs that would cause an agency to change its policy regarding funding sources? We can imagine negative examples. If work in the field seems to be distorted or controlled because of a funder's attempt to shape it or because of a particular reputation of a funder, then an agency may decide not to take those funds anymore but to seek other sources. Refusal of funds happens both with government and private donors.

It is more difficult to find examples which show the positive effects on funding policy of findings from the field, so I use a hypothetical one. Imagine that all evidence from the field showed that the best possible way to affect development was by working with traditional religious leaders. An agency has three choices in setting its funding policies if this

evidence seems compelling. One choice would be to try to convince the current donors that this is a good thing to support. Another choice would be to look for other donors for whom support of religious leaders would have natural appeal. The third choice is to reject the evidence and to look for counter evidence that the programs as now run and supported by donors are, in fact, better. There is interaction between evidence from evaluation and policies regarding the sources of funds.

11. Staffing. Different agencies have different staffing policies. Some use volunteers and some only use professionals. Some place only short-term staff overseas and others insist that overseas involvements must be a minimum of two years. Some use expatriot staff in development projects and others insist upon using indigenous staff. Some agencies have staff policies that reflect affirmative action goals in the U.S. Some religious denominations hire only people from those denominations.

Are these staffing policies susceptible to change as a result of evidence gathered in the field? Let's use a clear example. The American Friends Service Committee will only place staff overseas who are committed to non-violence. Even if the AFSC gathered a great deal of information showing that the best possible development projects could be done by staff who were willing to pick up guns and fight alongside their co-workers in whatever battles they fought, the AFSC would not change its policy. This policy is deeply embedded in belief, and the AFSC would reject the evidence cited above and counter with an alternative definition of development. Such a policy is not in any way susceptible to evidence.

On the other hand, there are certain kinds of staffing policies that are susceptible to change. Evidence has come in from project evaluations that agricultural projects in Africa have had less than successful results because, in that setting, women do eighty percent of the agricultural work and extension workers and other agency staff have been male. These male staff have not had full access to the women who are doing the majority of the work. Project results suffer. Evidence of this sort may lead to a clear decision to alter staffing patterns. Recruitment of and reliance on male agricultural extension workers may give way to policies of active recruitment of women to run agriculture projects. Evaluation in this case would alter a policy which was one that had developed over time with habit, tradition, or availability but which was not a policy based deeply in a belief system. (Of course, decisions to hire or not to hire women have sometimes been based on ideology or belief. In this case I am assuming that the issue is not one of social equity or justice or proper roles, but rather one of access to project groups and effective project implementation.) Thus, it is possible to see that some staffing policies are susceptible to change if evaluations indicate that change is in order and others are not. Those which reflect the ideology or profile of an agency are not subject to change; those which have grown up over time out of habit, convenience or tradition are often changeable.

III. Operational Mode. An agency's mode of operation is deeply entwined with its belief system, with what it means to be, how it means to function, what its vision of development is.

Development agencies claim: "It is our policy only to do development work and not to do relief." Or, "It is our policy to work only in areas where we have been invited by local people, it is our policy to work with people at the grass roots, it is our policy to work only with local leaders, it is our policy to work in a participatory mode, it is our policy to build local institutions, etc." All of these policies reflect an agency's belief about development and how one goes about working for it. Each of these policies defines the agencies which follow it. Thus, these policies are often not subject to change even if evidence from the field would suggest it. Policy area #4 is closely linked with this one.

IV. Project Constituents. There are a variety of program policies which determine with whom an agency will work. Some organizations insist on establishing long term, stable, supportive partnership relationships with project recipients whereas others have the opposite policy. These insist that their input be brief, one-shot efforts in order to foster independence on the part of the constituents. Some agencies work to empower their project participants; even as they begin a project, they are thinking ahead to devolvement onto local groups. Some organizations will work only with members of a given group, such as a church or international voluntary agency. Some insist on working through existing local institutions while others try to build alternative local institutions. Some agencies supply only funding and rely on local constituents to define projects, plan and implement them while others want to identify deeply with local people and "become one of them".

As in the operational mode which an agency adopts, the approach to project constituents reflects the agency's definitions of and approaches to development. Because of this, evidence gained through evaluation may or may not actually have any impact on policies regarding relationships with local people.

For example, if Oxfam American with its ideology of development began to note that evidence from the field suggested that participatory development does not work and that simply buying factories and placing them in cities around the world increases people's incomes what would Oxfam do? It would not, I think, take this as convincing information which should change its operational mode or relationship to constituents. Rather, Oxfam would discount this evidence, saying that it reflects another notion or concept of development -- one which is not Oxfam's -- and the staff would seek ways to do better at the participatory mode they have chosen.

On the other hand, if evidence accumulated from project experience indicated that there are greater results in social and economic change when a project builds new institutions rather than working with existing ones, then, I

suspect, a number of development agencies would find it easy to shift their modes of operation and their approach to constituents to take advantage of this finding.

V. Special Values or Attributes. The fifth area of program policy which affects or is affected by evidence gained through evaluation of field projects is what I call, for want of a better term, the special values or attributes of an organization.

The Overseas Education Fund of the League of Women Votes provides an example. OEF works with women. If all the evidence in the world came in to the OEF offices showing that development occurs more rapidly when one focuses work on men, the organization would not change its approach. Rather, it would respond with an alternative concept of development and it would challenge the evidence as faulty and based on erroneous premises. The OEF would work harder at its initial thrust in order to demonstrate that the evidence was incomplete; it would work to find new and better ways to work with women. The field evidence would, then, have had some impact on OEF's programs, but not on its essential, defining value which results in a direct program policy.

Save the Children provides an alternative example. For years, the focus of the work of Save the Children was, explicitly, on children. Over the years, this has shifted to recognize the context in which children suffer, and now the work is based on helping families and communities in a way to aid the children who live in them. Evidence about the causes of suffering among children caused the organization to change its policy of where it focuses its work, while the fundamental defining concern -- children -- remained constant.

Special values of organizations may, as in the two examples given, focus on the groups to be worked with. Special values may also be reflected in the services offered, as, for example, in Heifer Project International which provides livestock to communities which can use them. Other agencies may, because of special values, work in only one organizational mode, such as cooperatives or credit unions. The underlying approach embodied in a special value will seldom change in response to evaluative evidence though the mode of working for that value may, as in the case of Save the Children, be responsive to new insights.

VI. External Considerations. The sixth area of program policy to be noted is in the relationship of development work to the external or broader world. Some organizations have a policy to use the information from their field projects to educate the public, and the thrust of this public education can vary from organization to organization. Others will have policies to use their project information to influence government policy or international aid agency policy. Some will assert political pressure in areas where their projects have informed them. Many voluntary agencies have explicit

policies regarding the ways in which they will connect the information they gain in their overseas work with another constituency whom they intend to affect by their evidence.

The susceptibility to evidence seems to be very strong in this area. A number of agencies have education departments which are designed to take the evidence as it comes back from projects and translate it into information for someone else or some other purpose. However, one must be a little skeptical. Are these education departments really designed to gather and note the evidence as it comes in, no matter what, or are they looking for stories and examples which support some other educative goal they have already established? Are the fact-finding efforts, the evaluation processes, openly designed or are they designed to gather particular evidence to support particular points of view? In this area, more than any other, the biases of information and data gathering are apt to be clearest.

VII. Management Style. The seventh policy area is one that interests many of you. Management style policies can also embody ideologies in some ways. As I reviewed the reports from the past two sessions in this series of workshops on evaluation, I was intrigued, but not surprised, to find comments about the inconsistency between the operational modes of many agencies overseas and their management styles at home. People ask how it is possible that the very agencies which work in a particular mode overseas and which insist on democratic and inclusive decision-making processes in their projects, nonetheless function in hierarchical ways at home. Staff note that agencies which work to close the income gap in developing countries nonetheless continue a policy of wage scales and raises which increase the gap among salaries for their own employees. There is a connection between ideology and management style policies but we, in many cases, ignore it. The point here is that internal management styles are not immune to project evidence whether they like it or not and, in some ways, the very process of undertaking evaluation of project activities may open up a Pandora's box for internal agency issues.

There are several issues which come out of the preceding examination of the interaction between program evaluation and program policies.

First is the issue I have belabored above. There are some areas of program policy which are susceptible to change and there are some which are not. I have identified some criteria for knowing the difference. When a policy is deeply embedded in belief, then it will not change; when it arises from habit, tradition or convenience, it may easily change. As I prepared for today, however, I tried to think of clearer generalizations and guidelines which could apply to all agencies to assess which policies are which in these terms. I quite frankly have been unable to do so in a way which fits every voluntary agency with which I am familiar. My suggestion is that each organization make this assessment for itself. Take a hard look

at yourself and ask, "Where are we using impartial evidence to make our decisions about how we function and where are these based in beliefs and values? What factors really determine our policies about funding, staffing, etc.?" If you undertake this exercise as an organization, you may save yourselves grief in terms of false expectations and misuse of field evaluations.

Second, there is the issue of continuity and fadishness. In response to what, does one really want to change policy anyway? What kind of evidence is worth taking seriously and which is skewed by biased collection or mistaken intentions? An attendant question is how often can one afford to change program policies? How flexible should an agency be? When does apparent rigidity really reflect deep commitment and when does flexibility reflect indecision? If you change policy too often, constituencies, staff, donors and others connected with your program will be utterly confused. So the real question becomes what evidence is valid and how do you know the difference between valid evidence which must be considered and fads or whims?

To ignore facts is irresponsible. Where there are facts we must gather them and analyze them. Where there is impressionistic evidence, we must also gather that. We, in development, work with data and anecdotes. Each is important in giving a whole picture of what is happening and what is not happening. If we have data, it is very important to know what it tells us and what it does not tell. For example, if someone gathers evidence showing that "income has increased by a factor of three" whereas someone else gathers evidence showing that women are saying that their children are happier because they eat better, which evidence tells us more? To know that income has increased tells us very little unless we know what level income was to begin with, what has been the distribution of the increase in income, and over what time period this increase occurred. It is also important to try to understand why the increase has occurred. To be told that children are happier and eating better, in this case, tells us more.

In evaluation, it is also important to spread a wide rather than a narrow net to gather and assess information. If one is relying solely on evidence gained in one's own agency's projects to recommend a change in policy, one is more liable to make mistakes than if one checks this evidence against the findings of other voluntary agencies which have similar programs. Information sharing among agencies with varied perspectives provides one good check on the validity of information which is gained.

Third is the issue of cost of evaluation. Agencies ask, "can we afford the time and money for evaluation?" One response is to ask whether the agency can afford not to evaluate its programs? It is a mistake to believe that it is free not to evaluate. Not evaluating costs time and money because mistakes are not corrected, and it costs in the lost resource of learning. The costs of doing evaluation must be compared to the costs of not doing it.

The fourth issue raised by the above discussion is that of communication. How can one take evidence from evaluation and bring it to some group where it can be fed into policy decisions? The material developed for the two earlier workshops stressed the importance of getting staffs and committees to "think evaluatively", to build the systems which cause evaluation to go on in all program designs and implementation. It is my own impression that most people do think evaluatively. Everyone is looking at his or her own performance and trying to do better. Most organizations, through annual reports and other interim reviews, are in fact doing some kind of evaluation. The piece of evaluation which does not get stressed is that aspect which looks for what else could or should an agency be doing to accomplish the same goals. Most agencies evaluate what they are doing; few evaluate what else they might have done or should do.

Monitoring poses questions about the effectiveness of a project on its own internal terms. Impact evaluation also reflects that, but also raises the possibility of finding about unintended outcomes. These two kinds of evaluation when fed back into the agency's system pose the fundamental question, "What should we do in the future in projects?" This is the root question for policy for, if the answers to that question fall into that range where change would undermine and alter policies which are rooted in belief, then one is threatened.

This leads to the final issue which must be discussed. When evidence is clear that some change is required in project procedures, and that these have policy implications, is an agency which cannot change policy necessarily stuck? The answer is no, not usually. This is because there are always policy options. One bit of evidence does not dictate single policy implication. There are a variety of possible responses to each lesson which is learned. For example, if we find that it is always a mistake in development to ignore the roles which women play in their societies, then what does one do? One could add a women's component to every program, one could hire more women staff, one could plan some projects explicitly focussed on women's roles or one could do some of all of these. The point is that the lessons learned from evaluation do force us to think about and, yes, evaluate our program policies but they do not force a single response. In some cases the latitude for change may be limited, while in others it is open.

The whole point of evaluation after all, is to help us do what we do better. The point of evaluation, as the point of development, itself, is to help us work ourselves as quickly as possible out of the jobs we now hold.

Thank you.

First Respondent:

Sara M. Steele
Professor, University
of Wisconsin - Extension

Last night it was absolutely fascinating to hear your introduction and to see the people behind the labels because I do not know your agencies except as a public service announcement on television. It was fascinating to see the people behind the announcements. I was also delighted for another reason. As an evaluation adviser this is the first time that I have had an opportunity to watch and work with a group who is relatively free - free of two things.

Relatively free of having to fit into the U.S. government's bureaucratic view of evaluation and relatively free of the American academic evaluation industry. If you have watched in the last 15 years evaluation has become a major industry in the United States. You appear to be in a position to pick and chose what you need, but at the same time I see that you have fallen into some traps. I am reacting more to last night than I am to Mary Anderson's presentation this morning, because in terms of Mary's presentation primarily I am saying Amen. Let me talk on about just a couple of traps that I am concerned that you might be getting into.

One of them is the trap of "an evaluation". The trap is the thesis model: research design, data collection and conclusions. You do it as a big project - you do it as a formalized project. Thats fine, you need some of those, but you also need Mary's grandmother's attitude in every one of your staff members. You need the evaluative approach as well as the evaluations. So you may trap yourself if you begin to concentrate and think only of a type, or an evaluation.

Another trap that I feel you may be getting into is the use of highly scientific models. It is an extremely important tool and I am in no way going to put it down, but if you look around you, particularly at the word evidence, what other models do you see that could be useful to you? Judicial models? The court system? The investigative reporting model? There are a variety of ways of processing information in addition to the scientific model. Some will be useful to you in some ways and places, others in others. Just don't trap yourself into thinking there is only one model - one way to get information.

And remember too there are quality standards in each of the different fields. A lot of difference exists between a really good investigative reporter and a reporter, as between a crackerjack research scientist and a mediocre scientist. In each area there are standards and qualities. The question is what is the quality within the quantitative field and what are the quality standards for the qualitative field.

The thing I really want to focus on is the trap of "now we have this

evaluation, what in the world do we do with it?" I am getting the feeling evaluation is wonderful but it is not being used that much. I am not feeling this as much from your group as I am from watching the total field of evaluation. For the last two or three years evaluators have been scurrying around talking about utilization. They seem to suggest we have this approach - now how do we use it? The ultimate approach is to say what do we need and how do we get it. You start with the people who are involved in making policy, then say what are the questions, what are the kinds of things on which we need back up information, and then begin to go out and get that information. Some of these questions deal with product which you call impact. Many of the questions deal with process as an input or in your framework, monitoring.

It surprises me that I only heard incidental mention of another form and that is context. In many of Mary's examples we are really dealing with context, either the culture of the country we are working with or the culture of your donors, their belief systems, how they relate to things and see the world.

Quite often when policy is involved the questions surprise you. I myself am most interested in direct field level evaluation that improves action. However, in Wisconsin for years reporting and evaluation have been synonymous. Therefore, as an extension agent I got the impression that the only reason you evaluate is to report to the boss so he can report to someone else. I decided that to make any headway in what I wanted I had to get somebody to get the bosses straightened out so we could get on with the work. So I began watching the accountability of a federal agency at this particular point. Our agency is county, state and federally funded, so we have three levels of agencies to watch, which is somewhat like your agencies because you have multiple levels. In watching I had two interesting experiences. One was to attend a workshop in Iowa where they had a panel of state legislators, county legislators, saying what is the information they need. Another was watching the federally conducted evaluation of our extension program where they had issue questions from OMB and a lot of people in Washington. I had been trained originally on the measurement of objectives which I broadened to look at a total project. It seemed to me their questions were not evaluation. There was maybe one question in each list which dealt with results of the project. It included what was the value of the project, whether there was duplication of effort, and a whole lot of related contextual issues relative to the project. It gave me time to think a bit. As an evaluation watcher I have watched the definition of evaluation change from the measurement of an objective to that proposed at ERS meetings, which said evaluation is to answer any questions the government wants to ask us about a federally funded program.

Those of you who espouse making evaluation an important tool to policy and making it really useful to top executives may have to take a new look at the concept of evaluation. You find yourself in an information service role,

helping executives clarify issues and helping them use as solid evidence as possible in viewing particular issues. I did not know what policy was, I thought, policy, what do I know about that. That's when you back an administrator into a corner with a new idea and he says "but our policy is" and that's where somebody comes at you and says "Oh, but you're getting into policy". I looked it up in the dictionary, which says, "a definite course of method of action, selected from alternatives and in light of given conditions to guide and determine present and future decisions." It's the "granddaddy" that underlies all the every day decisions, the big foundation decision that affects all other interactive kinds of decisions. I began to think more about that because in the evaluation field a few years ago we went through evaluation for decision making. There is an excellent book on it and some excellent thinking about it. So I trotted around to the administrators of our extension service, and asked what are the decisions you need to make that I can help you evaluate the data. From that I learned that decision making is not necessarily thought-out in advance.

I am guessing that in many instances policy making is not as rational a process as we would like to think it is. The idealist can stand back and say we asked the administrator and we get these questions. Some of you can as a policy maker say what kind of information you need. But it may be a two or three-sided thing. You have something over here that is agency policy and some activities over there which are evaluative. Sometimes you can see a clearly recognized gap, which is the instant where if you can get some analytical thinking going, you know what questions to ask. For some reason or another people may begin to raise questions about policy, either understood or not understood. Somebody says we have got to do something about it. We have either got to solidify our position or change our policies. At this point you have something to analyze to determine what information you need in that situation.

Sometimes your evaluation activity begins to raise questions or give strong reinforcement to policies. If you are finding things in evaluations which do in fact apply directly to policies, then the task is interpreting and communicating it to the people who need to know.

Peter used an example last night, project impact evaluation, being a snapshot of that point in time of a project. I think there are instances where one snapshot can and should have a good deal of impact on policy, but I am a little reluctant to think of just one snapshot. There may need to be multiple kinds of information reinforcing or challenging each other coming in from a variety of evaluations, whether within the same agency or comparing with information from other agencies. I get a little uneasy about people expecting one project impact to have an effect on anything, even the project itself. I think they can be very useful, but it's the inter-relating of information from a variety of evaluative sources that helps to build your understanding and move you forward.

Let me draw another picture. The different levels within an organization need to resolve growth policy questions as they arise. The headquarters staff are certainly going to have growth policy issues to deal with and the local project people are going to have needs as well as others in the middle. As I watched our cooperative extension agency, I concluded it is inefficient to expect one evaluation to cover the needs of all parties. Our administrators have not invested in evaluation but have expected each extension agent to do it in order to report to them. But it did not give us the kind of information that our agency needed to supply to OMB. At the same time the local person did not use what we were getting to influence policies and procedure and programs at that level. Now I think we have listened to enough good quality ideas, and we will be able to work with the local people on some of the more exciting things I hear you talking about, like participatory evaluation.

The point I want to make is consider where policy is made in your organization, how much freedom each level has in terms of its policy formation, and as you deal with policy recognize the importance of the role that all levels have in policy formation. Cooperative extension has always, at least in words, been locally oriented and with a great deal of freedom to the individual agent. So I am used to policy questions, issues and decisions involving local people. Just as a parting puzzle to think about evaluation policy, think of the needs, think of the relationship, think of your local communities' projects as well as your own needs at the higher level.

Second Respondent:

Richard Johnson
Research Director
Exxon Education Foundation

The issue that Mary has taken up and I want to go after is evaluation and policy specifically, not evaluation, not policy, but evaluation and policy. It leads back to what is a basic human problem, mainly the relationship between information and action. All of us are forced to take actions day by day - we are walking down the hall and picking up information and using it in relation to action, which raises the question, what kinds of information are necessary to determine action. Very often we take action in the absence of full information. I will report to you that I made it up the stairs without measuring each step. I could have had a harder data base on that I will admit, but we are always using information. Even a person in the field who thinks the project is going well, probably has some reason

for believing that. We always have information coming in, and we are always forced to take actions.

I reacted to some of the comments made last night, wondering if there was a time that no policies existed because there was no evaluation coming in? I think not. I have been extremely interested in the recent shifts in government policy related to evaluation. We have noted from our evaluators at the higher levels that armaments make peace. The point I want to make here is that very often policy is made on very tenuous information, and we should not oversell to ourselves the link between evaluation and decisions. I am not arguing against evaluation - I want to put it in the proper context.

One of the best evaluation studies you may bring to AID may not gain you other funding if policy decisions have been made internally that are coming to different conclusions.

The second point I want to make is one that has largely been ignored although Sara talked about it a little bit. When we talk about linkage of evaluation to policy, we have to ask, what level? And the emphasis last night was heavily on top level, that is the donors' need for information. I am not gainsaying their need for that information. I often find myself in a situation of needing information to feed back to a board of trustees in relation to a project we have funded and we are beginning to ask questions about it. When you ask about the relationship of evaluation data to policy, ask yourself the question - at what level? The donor hierarchy level is very different than when you want policy information to benefit your field offices. Finally you talk about beneficiaries and what they mean in terms of policy. I don't like the word beneficiary. I know the word client is out of favor at the present time, so I would rather talk about "ultimate constituencies". If you ask the question is there a case where we ever have policy decisions at the ultimate constituency level, it seems to me that some of us must in some way be talking about policies that are going to be made by ultimate constituents sometime in the future. This leads to some basic points.

One, when you are talking about the relationship between evaluation and policy, ask whose policy and at what level. The way that evaluation comes in, the way the design links with that, is going to be very important.

Two, as a battered, old evaluation worker, I want to confess to you that I have discovered that the linkages are terrific. Those of you that studied scientific method are quite aware of the type one and type two error. Type one error is when you go out and say this occurred, and you are dead wrong. Type two error is when you went out and did your measurement and you said nothing went right, and you were wrong. Something was really happening there, but was buried.

There are some other kinds of error that are made very often in evaluating information.' This is type three error which is called the elegant solution to the wrong problem. Some people have been arguing recently that perhaps the "Green Revolution" fits into this mode. You can get some marvelous monitoring showing that people did exactly what they were supposed to do but it did not have much to do with what we hoped ultimately to happen. So one can produce elegant solutions to the wrong problem, come up with many happy reports and be wrong.

Finally, there is the getting of negative results for no reason. Let's suppose just for a minute that you were working in your various agencies, what you were doing was risky, and that a good policy did not work out always perfectly. You are recognizing that things can go wrong for other reasons even though the strategy is right.

The point to make of all this is that we should not oversell ourselves in being right, in the necessity of information determining action. That is both a positive and negative thing - no matter what information you receive there is still going to be a number of different policies you can enact because the information does not tell you exactly what you must do. This means there also is freedom. All of us in carrying out policies, are guided by information, nevertheless we have a great deal of sway and leeway in making actual decisions.

I think probably what has brought this point home to me was reading Thomas Coomb's The Building of Scientific Knowledge. Much of evaluative research has come out of that framework, thinking we are doing science in a little different way. Among the important points that Coomb makes here is that science did not grow by attrition, but ideas really changed as we developed knowledge by collecting more information. For instance, for a period of time we were particularly good at sloughing off new data concerning the environment, but after a while it gets too tough to do it and we had to move ahead with a new theory of knowledge - a new policy.

Policies are basically our actions and our statements built on the best information at the present time, and we are going to continue to use them until we have better information. Little pieces of better information are not going to get us off on a new track - because they may be anomalies. If we get enough of these we may get off on a new track, and develop a new program policy. This is the kind of reflecting on what Mary was talking about in terms of your thinking about what to evaluate in relation to those things which are changeable and those which are not. I don't see bifurcation here. I think if I were setting up an evaluation, I would aim for the ones that seem to be changeable. But it might be extremely interesting to collect anomalies that might make me change my ultimate policy down the road.

Three, costs compete. In business one talks about opportunity costs. If

you spend money on evaluation you are not spending money on your programs. The more certain it is that you want to make sure you are doing the right thing the less certain it is that you are going to do anything. So costs compete and it is not the case that evaluations are free. You ought to ask the question what they are competing with. This point Mary made very well, namely if I was spending my evaluation dollars I would try to spend it where it would have the most leverage and I would pick the places where this input is going to help us solve the management problem we have right now or where this input is going to go to that ultimate constituency and help us develop the project in a different way.

Second issue in relation to cost is that very often we have squishy costs. Mary made the point can you afford not to do evaluation. The problem is that the cost of whatever new is coming out of evaluation is hard to estimate. I know what the evaluation is going to cost. Got very nice dollar figures here, and when I am asked the cost/benefit ratio what's the benefit? I don't know!

Now I want to leave you with the principle here that I learned just in this last speech - that I think it is an extremely intriguing one that I will follow up. I have always been taught garbage in - garbage out, in terms of computers. I have learned a new principle, namely that you can put garbage in and sometimes you can generate a hypothesis. You may have something solid to work with and that gives me this extremely intriguing idea. I am not putting it down, because one of the statements that has been made in terms of producing knowledge is that knowledge comes better through error than from conclusions. And so if we can err in the right direction, critique ourselves, we may get out of this confusion.

* * *

APPENDIX C

CASE ILLUSTRATION

AFSC Policy Issue: Priority of community development work overseas

Background: The American Friends Service Committee is an organization rooted in American Quakerism which "attempts to understand and address the underlying causes of violence, deprivation and inhumanity, as well as aid the victims." Its work can be roughly classified, for this study, into four thrusts:

- I community development, self help work, and advocacy in the United States, working with underprivileged groups
- II community development and self help work in other countries
- III working toward a peaceful world through facilitating communication in international disputes, international seminars involving leaders and opinion makers, and efforts to increase understanding of international issues in the United States
- IV education for peace in the United States, focusing on current and longer range policy issues and understanding.

Policy decisions regarding international work are made by the Board of Directors, informed by the analysis and recommendations of an executive committee charge with the oversight of all international work. The Board consists of 40 Quakers, many of whom have had experience as staff in AFSC projects at home and abroad. 10 of the 40 are chairpersons of the ten relatively autonomous U.S. regional program executive committees. The International Division Executive Committee (IDEC) consists of 25 persons, a few of whom are Board members, some are chairs of subcommittees, and most of them have knowledge of some other countries and some previous experience overseas.

Unrestricted funds are divided among the categories of work listed above by a process based largely on the precedents of previous years. Restricted funds are sought for selected programs. At present less than 20% of the international budget (categories II and III above) comes from unrestricted funds. While such giving has increased in recent years, the effect of inflation has been to reduce the capacity of the AFSC to carry on programs with unrestricted funds.

Policy Issues:

Issue A: It has been possible to find restricted funds for almost all international development programs of primary interest. In many cases, however, home office expenses for recruiting, training, supervision and evaluation have not been covered by the donors. Unrestricted funds from the allocation to all international work have been used, seriously reducing AFSC capacity to do work of Category III.

What is the most desirable balance between work of the two categories, II and III, and should some restricted grants for development projects not be accepted in order to free unrestricted funds for category III work?

Issue B: IDEC in 1980, aware of the shrinking unrestricted funds, posed a question to the Board of Directors about the long term desirable balance among the various work categories. A small Board committee has recently recommended, among other things, that international work in categories II and III be restricted to those areas of the world where the influence of the United States is strong. The Board reaction to this report, and to this recommendation, was inconclusive at the last Board meeting, and the issue remains open.

Evaluation Challenge: "EVALUATING APPROPRIATE SUPPORT TO NATIONAL COUNTERPARTS AS AN AMERICAN PVO PHASES OUT"

Presented by: Christian Children's Fund, Inc.
David J. Herrell, Dir. of Child & Family Services

I. Brief Statement of the Challenge: Since 1974 CCF has phased down and terminated its assistance to children in three countries (Japan, Argentina, and Hong Kong) in each of which previously between one and two million dollars of assistance was being rendered every year. Similarly, phase-out in Taiwan and South Korea are scheduled for 1985 and 1986, respectively. The agency is in the beginning stages of making long-range plans for Brazil which could include a termination schedule. One of our central purposes has been to leave behind a national capacity in voluntary child welfare efforts. Different approaches have been taken toward that end in the different countries, but there has been major reliance on bequeathing real estate as CCF's primary legacy to the counterpart national juridical person. Here, we wish to:

- A. Confirm the validity of our purpose, (as underlined above);
- B. Evaluate five aspects of our policy (as stated in II, below) which have molded our experience, success and failure; and
- C. Identify an appropriate methodology (or methodologies) to make such an evaluation more participatory (especially at the field level) and reliable.

II. Aspects of CCF phase-down policy to be evaluated:

- A. Until recently our goal has been to leave behind an enhanced national capacity, especially in the voluntary sector but not limited to it, for the country to meet its own child welfare needs. As an after-thought we have rejoiced when, in addition, a national board has shown interest in recruiting support from within its country for child welfare efforts in less developed countries in partnership with CCF's international structure.
- B. As a country's development begins to take hold, and its overall economy enters the middle-income level, CCF attempts to negotiate a definite phase-out schedule.
- C. In each country there should be left behind a national board and national staff; the organization and program that remains should have national character, not necessarily comparable to CCF.
- D. Other than donating real and movable property acquired over the years for functional purposes, CCF does not ordinarily make financial grants or offer technical assistance after "independence". (But we do make an advance commitment to donate the property).
- E. CCF funds for field office "overhead" are available as a limited percentage of program contributions. Any costs of organizational development, property management, and local fund raising must be included in this overhead.

III. Country Case Illustrations:

- A. Japan: CCF terminated its assistance to Japan in 1974. Until the last minute of phase-out, CCF had really given no thought to the possibility of local continuation. The office property was given over to the Japanese counterpart organization, which continued to employ the former CCF field supervisor and a skeleton staff. They now have 800 Japanese sponsors assisting some projects in the Philippines (none in Japan itself). Thus it is barely surviving, and its continued independent existence is problematic. It is the only program in Japan wherein Japanese citizens, through PVO (rather than through government) are assisting Third-World children. The director's professional background is in the program area, rather than organizational or fund raising. The organization retains a "Christian" name and ethos in a primarily non-Christian country.
- B. Hong Kong: Phase-out was over a two-year period ending in 1977. Today, "Hong Kong Children and Youth Services," (formerly CCF) provides a professionally well-respected set of casework and group-work services to children in public school settings. Contrary to CCF's usual practice, we provided a sizeable cash grant to H.K.C.Y.S. at its launching, because of an endowment restricted to use in Hong Kong. We also donated valuable property used by them as an office. The balance of their funding (now over 80%) is Hong Kong Government subvention. CCF's prior record of service in Hong Kong in this kind of specialized service, and the recognized professional standing of its staff and prestige of its board there, contributed heavily to its independent survivability.
- C. Taiwan: A nine-year phase-out schedule was imposed in 1976 by CCF-Richmond. One year prior to that, a Board decision to "divest" all CCF property in field offices had resulted in an (in retrospect) unfortunate decision to give away valuable property (child care institutions) to another Taiwanese child welfare organization of unproven merit - a transfer which was later contested by CCF-Taiwan. There was also a change in CCF-Taiwan's (now to be called "Chinese Children's Fund's) board membership and national director about the time the phase-out schedule was adopted; and at about that time, CCF-USA began, by policy, to associate property transfer with preparation for ultimate self-sufficiency by national bodies. Since 1976, Chinese Children's Fund has proven to be exceptionally successful in local fund raising. However, their fear of losing the litigation over the former property seems to have caused them to be pre-occupied with investing the funds they raise in properties all over Taiwan - some of them not very well suited to program needs. The international program staff of CCF, meanwhile, seems to have less rapport on, concensus over, and effect upon the Taiwan program goals and standards than in any other country. Where elsewhere, national programs have been effectively guided into participatory community development activity, the Taiwan CCF counterpart holds essentially to a casework approach.
- D. South Korea: A ten-year phase-out schedule was imposed in 1976 by CCF-Richmond. In this country, properties which had appreciated in value from an original pittance to over US\$ 8 million were

successfully liquidized to produce an income-generating office building for Korean Children's Fund, our counterpart juridical person. However, in the process there have been some tight squeezes in terms of cash flow, and a staff preoccupation with property management concerns, at the expense of energy that could have been expended on creative program development. The national director and board tend to be persons nearing the end of upwardly-mobile professional and business careers affected in earlier times by the trauma of the partition of the country and the Korean War, and later, by political events that have kept program parameters close to government conceptualizations. Meanwhile, extremely high costs have put a heavy strain on staff size and professional capacity.

- E. Argentina: Here, high costs and an artificially controlled exchange rate very unfavorable to the dollar gave CCF's involvement a tentative holding-pattern quality almost from the beginning in 1972. At its peak, CCF's program size was less than one third the optimum for program countries. Attempts to form a viable advisory board never succeeded. The latter years of CCF's existence in Argentina were characterized by less-than-cordial relations between the U. S. and Argentina, politically. When a decision was made in mid-1981 to phase out CCF's involvement completely over a two-year period, there was no property to transfer. It seemed unlikely that CCF could locate sizable private grant funds outside its own constituency for development of a counterpart organization in Argentina at this late stage - especially with little local initiative there. Therefore, we have written off hope of leaving behind a legacy of work in Argentina.
- F. Brazil: CCF intends to continue working in Brazil, in cooperation with its local counterpart, Fundo Cristão Para Crianças, for the indefinite future. This is because of the peculiar character of Brazilian development, with the uncertain future of social welfare there. Property ownership of CCF in Brazil is minimal: two urban office facilities. There are two field offices in Brazil, technically of equal rank, competition between which has hampered the smooth development of the juridical person and national fund-raising efforts; despite this, results so far have clearly shown that the potential for private Brazilian support of programs serving Brazilian children is strong. CCF-USA feels it is only at the initial stages of "development of national capacity in voluntary child welfare efforts" in Brazil, and would like to apply learnings from our experience elsewhere to avoid making the same mistakes in Brazil.
- G. Others: Similar organizational beginnings have been made and fund-raising attempts are underway in India, the Philippines, and Thailand. In these, too, the results of this evaluation should be helpful.

Observations:

- A. In each country other than Argentina and Hong Kong the basic CCF idea of child sponsorship has taken hold and is becoming institutionalized, although at different paces. (Although "sponsorship" is not a sine qua non of our goal of "leaving behind a national capacity...etc.," it is apparently what we know and teach best. Is

it the best that we can/should leave behind?

- B. Other characteristics and features of our legacy, however, vary greatly. For instance, Japan's program has little internal relevance in Japan itself (except as evidence that voluntary fund raising is possible); but it is making a contribution overseas. Another example has been mentioned: Taiwan's exclusively casework focus.
- C. Preoccupation with property acquisition and/or property management has handicapped creative program development in Korea and Taiwan.
- D. Continuity of a program without overseas support after phase-out seems better assured, however, in Korea and Taiwan than in Japan or Argentina; and property is a significant factor in that.

V. Learnings With Implications for Policy. (Note: These refer to the lettered policy segments in Section II, above.)

- A. This CCF policy goal seems valid and obtainable.
- B. This policy is valid, but a more realistic appraisal must be made of obstacles and tasks to be accomplished and the length of time that will be required.
- C. CCF has some ambivalence about this policy. We are perhaps not as ready to accept "whatever that culture wants" as we say we are. To be true to our professional principles, perhaps we should state, up front, just what the minimum acceptable turn-over conditions are, program-wise, and keep a hand in it until attained.
- D. This is inadequate, although the easiest path for us; (whereas we could not repatriate the property even if we wished to, it is difficult at best for us to raise additional funds for organizational development/institution building for other countries). The consequence has been too-early a preoccupation with property on the developing country's part. Both cash and technical assistance from us are needed for those aspects of development.
- E. As a corollary of the above, we might consider separate American (private) funds and/or technical assistance for the O.D./I.B. task as a clear "program" expense, since it is our program goal "to develop national capacity ..." etc. It could be budgeted as a separate item from the beginning.

VI. Questions for Discussion

1. Is our purpose valid? To what extent are we unconsciously manipulating our counterparts either in buying into the purpose, or in their conceptualization of the form its realization should take? Would our mutual interests be more straightforwardly served, if we defined our purpose more narrowly - for instance, in aiming for a partnership in child sponsorship support of children first on a national basis and then beyond that country's boundaries?

2. In evaluating the specified policy segments what are we overlooking? What is necessary for a program to become economically and culturally viable within a country on an independent basis?
3. Can an appropriate methodology (or methodologies) be formulated to make such an evaluation more participatory at the field level, and therefore more reliable?

CASE ILLUSTRATION

HEIFER PROJECT INTERNATIONAL

EVALUATION AND POLICY

BACKGROUND

Heifer Project International began its evaluation effort in 1978 with the help of a USAID Development Grant. The purpose of the project was to establish an appropriate project design and evaluation system.

Evaluation activity and policy formation have influenced each other in various ways throughout the life of the project.

1. The act of embarking on evaluation system development program entailed a commitment by the Board of Directors and the staff.
2. Selections of projects for summative test studies focused on four separate models of program involvement.
3. The process of designing the field studies and of developing specific recommendations led to the awareness that a clearly articulated set of policies, project priorities and project selection criteria were needed. Without these, the necessary framework for evaluating programs from a broader perspective was meaningless.

In response to this need a policy paper was developed. This process involved a process in which staff prepared a working document which was then received and revised by the appropriate committees of the Board of Directors. This was finalized by vote of the full Board of Directors. This process of policy articulation took place from March, 1979 to April, 1980.

4. Upon completion of the "policy paper" one task remained. The general statements then had to be translated into a practical tool for screening project proposals. The review sheet which was developed enables staff to score project proposals according to certain priorities and project selection criteria. Also taken into consideration are such matters as perceived feasibility, supportive infrastructure, budget, the overall objective and the specific goals.

CONCLUSIONS

During a three-year design/evaluation development project, H.P.I.'s policy formation and evaluation efforts were mutually influential. H.P.I. recognizes two types of "policy evaluation": the evaluation of program according to institutional policy and the evaluation of policy on the basis of knowledge gained from the field through monitoring and individual evaluation studies.

INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, INC.

CASE BACKGROUND

Over the past few months, with the help of a consulting firm familiar with PVOs and expert in Strategic Evaluation, we have been examining both the mission of our agency and its operations since obtaining the current AID Matching Grant. Through intensive 'question-and-answer sessions' in which our consultant has challenged us on such key strategic issues as the qualities which make IIDI distinctive, through a detailed questionnaire for field staffers to use in describing our projects, through interviews in North America and the Third World, etc., we have learned much about ourselves.

Strategically, we have recognized and defined the evolutionary change through which IIDI has been progressing: we have moved from an organization directly focused on Third World smallbusiness and job creation to one concerned with developing host country agencies whose purpose is to generate employment opportunities among the poor (using enterprises as the means). We have recognized a unique strength in the utilization of a Christian network which yields potential clients abroad and contributors at home.

This new understanding of our mission, a fuller realization of the environment within which IIDI operates, and an objective view of our operations have enabled us to determine the key areas in which IIDI must produce results to be successful in the future. These areas are fundraising, management and information systems, phase-out methods, start-up methods, and more effective involvement of our board of directors. In each, we have set verifiable long-range goals and derivative short-term ones.

The most important insight we have had, after revision of our mission, is the sense that a different approach to the management of IIDI will be called for in the future--an approach which puts the emphasis on deliberate planning and documentation rather than on informal and intuitive leadership. Such a new management style will require us to ask a range of critical questions. For instance:

- o Have we accurately and adequately defined our clientele--beneficiary, affiliate,* supporter?
- o Are the services we provide appropriate, given our target population(s)?
- o Do we know what information we need in order to evaluate progress toward accomplishing our mission? And do we collect the required data?

*'Affiliate' means the IIDI field operation in a Third World country. This organization is the "host country agency" just mentioned, an operation which is to become autonomous.

Operationally, we have found IIDI on the right track, largely doing what we thought important when the Matching Grant was signed: as intended, our emphasis has been on creating employment opportunities for poor people through fostering small businesses; the majority of our projects have been agricultural or food-related; we have developed numerous 'small industry' enterprises which, on average, create several jobs each at their outset; our formal training efforts have received favorable comment from client entrepreneurs; the search for private investors has had a degree of success and may have laid the base for a far larger return in the future; we have been active in the field of Appropriate Technology but, frankly, unable to integrate it with our employment-through-enterprise-development thrust; some women have become entrepreneurs with our help; our projects promise to endure, not fade, when loans are repaid.

Nevertheless, a number of points require decision or action. For example:

- o Should/can we increase the numbers of previously under-, un-, or never-before-employed in our projects (enterprises)?
- o Should our efforts be more community-oriented than is now the case?
- o Are we sufficiently concerned with the effects of formal and the provision of on-the-job training?
- o What should we be doing about profit- and equity-sharing?
- o Where should we be heading with regard to Appropriate Technology?
- o Can we increase the involvement of women in IIDI-backed enterprises?
- o How can we facilitate the 'multiplication' of our efforts?

CHANGE: WHY DO IT?

Answering the preceding questions and others presented in this report has been and is hard work. Even tougher is adopting a new management style. If we are being responsive to the 'mandate' agreed upon for the Matching Grant, why should we undertake the substantial effort suggested by the issues raised here?

There are at least four reasons for doing so

our moral commitment to helping poor people
help themselves

- . the obligation we recognize to grantors and investors to use their funds effectively and efficiently
- . our goal of doing work of professional quality
- . the understanding that resources are limited and that opportunity cost must be a consideration for those who support us.

Yet these factors have always been operative, so why act now? The major reason is the mission to which we believe IIDI's evolution has brought it, a mission which requires written knowledge of our employment-through-enterprise-development methods, criteria for spinning off mature field operations, standards for beginning new ones, etc. (Another factor is a change in the environment which may well mean greater scrutiny of our work by various institutions, e.g., COERADO's accrediting process.)

THE CHAPTERS WHICH FOLLOW

In the brief chapter which follows, we explain a primary reason for conducting a Strategic Evaluation. Then, in "A Strategic View of the Organization," we define the 'business' of IIDI and consider the key areas in which a PVO so defined must produce results. We next turn to "The Objectives of IIDI," looking at both long- and short-run measurable goals in each key area.

The elements which we considered in shaping our strategic view are sketched in "The Building Blocks of Strategy." Operations with the AID Matching Grant" provides further information of relevance to strategy but, more specifically, compares our 1979/80 performance with our commitments of 1978/79. Other performance data appear in the final chapter, "Operations: Additional Data." An appendix outlines the "Methodology" used in this Strategic Evaluation. Some background information appears in the second and last appendices.

LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

CASE ILLUSTRATION

ISSUES ARISING FROM PROGRAM IMPACT EVALUATION

Since 1975 the agency has supported 15 projects in Niger whose total value, including administration and personnel support, has been about \$2,500,000. Projects have focused on water resource development primarily for small-scale dry season agriculture and secondarily for human and livestock consumption. Water resources development have been either low cost but permanent cement-lined wells or water from seasonal and receding lakes around which gardens are cultivated. Projects have also included promoting adult literacy, cooperatives, forestation and public health. The findings of the evaluation confirmed a considerable potential for dry season food production in selected areas of generally low rainfall around which activities promoting other concerns can be organized. Though the findings with respect to specific projects were generally positive, the evaluation helped to raise a number of policy issues which are outlined below:

1. Relationships with National Structures. The agency normally supports projects through national indigenous voluntary agencies which in turn have oversight and management responsibility for implementing projects. In Niger projects are implemented by the agriculture service of the Ministry of rural Development.
2. Funding Cycle. Partially because of earlier staff shortages, staff in Niger felt a need for the authority to make some short-term limited funding decisions. The agency's normal response time can be as little as 3 to 4 months for a substantial project but even this can be long enough to require that one season's experience in dry season gardening be foregone.
3. Sustainability of Project benefits. While considerable economic potential has been realized, the increased technical service support required to engender this development has not in any way received any long-term support as a result of the project, thus additional demands are made of local institutions without any provision for additional institutional support.
4. Well construction entrepreneurs. Though the technology being used for constructing low-cost permanent wells is simple and easily understood by local artisans, no examples of such artisans constructing wells as a private small-scale business were found. While this was not an explicit goal of any of the projects, it is logical to ask why this has not happened, particularly when evidence of additional demand including a willingness to purchase wells outright was found.
5. Management Policy issues.
 - a. Planning worldwide use of resources: The agency concentrated slightly more than 16% of its cash support to development projects in this country during 1981.

5. Management Policy issues (continued)

- b. Comparability of several evaluations: Evaluation of the Niger program was the first in a series to be conducted in several countries. Although situations vary from country to country and project to project, it is important that evaluation methodologies and findings inform policy-decision makers as they determine how best to allocate the agency's resources in light of the issues raised in a. above.



CASE ILLUSTRATION

THE OEF PARTICIPATORY EVALUATION SYSTEM:

A PVO EVALUATION POLICY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR OTHER ASPECTS OF ORGANIZATIONAL POLICY

THE OVERSEAS
EDUCATION FUND

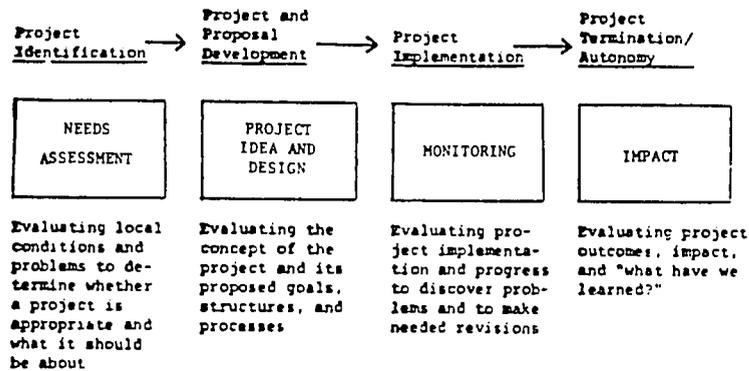
Introduction

In two years of trial and error with a participatory evaluation system, OEF has been learning about effective ways to involve local people in evaluation, problems and challenges that typically arise, and the broader consequences of adopting a participatory evaluation policy.

This brief gives a short description of OEF's participatory evaluation system and outlines certain policy implications. The small group presentation will go into more detail on how the system works, on what has been learned so far concerning participation and evaluation, and on organizational policy issues.

OEF's Evaluation Policy: A Participatory Approach

OEF's way of working as a PVO basically involves establishing a partnership with a Third World organization and cooperatively implementing a two- or three-year project related to income generation and family welfare for low-income women. OEF has been working to create an approach to project evaluation that emphasizes local participation as well as generates sufficient data for determining needed modifications in a project plan and for assessing project outcomes. In OEF-assisted projects, evaluation activities occur at four distinct points:



OEF has always strived for local participation in project identification and development. Adopting a "participatory evaluation system" formalizes local involvement and decision making throughout project implementation.

When a project begins, a local "project steering committee" is formed. The OEF on-site Technical Advisor facilitates a workshop with the committee (including project staff and some participants) to review the project objectives, workplan, and evaluation activities. Monthly, throughout the project, the steering committee continues to meet and discusses "how the project's going" in relation to the workplan. These discussions generally focus on solving problems and on task assignments.

At mid-point, an outside "evaluation facilitator" works with a local evaluation team (the steering committee plus others) to assess progress toward project objectives. The mid-point evaluation takes two to three weeks and has three major phases: a design workshop, data collection, and a data analysis/recommendations workshop. The mid-point evaluation is action-oriented and results in lists of accomplishments and of ways to strengthen project activities, possibly even a revised implementation plan. These findings are discussed in a group meeting with project participants and further modified according to their input.

At the end of a project, when OEF's technical assistance is phased out, the end-of-project impact evaluation basically follows the same procedure as the mid-point evaluation. However, this evaluation concentrates on both progress toward purposes and ultimate goal. Quantitative data, such as changes in income or savings, and qualitative data, including changes in attitude or organizational capability, are considered.

The end-of-project evaluation also involves planning for on-going activities. In addition to end-of-project evaluations, OEF attempts to build in six-month or one-year post-project impact evaluations, though lack of funding is a major constraint for these longer-range evaluation activities.

Examples of experiences in using the system described above--what happened and what was learned--will be included in the small-group presentation.

Policy Implications

OEF's commitment to a participatory evaluation system has had repercussions for both programmatic and broader organizational policies. The major policy issues encountered up to this point are enumerated below.

Programmatic Policy

1. Project methodology and design: The participatory evaluation procedures have generated rich and comprehensive data on effective and ineffective project approaches. These learnings have been one of the key benefits of the participatory evaluation system.
2. Evaluation as a programmatic tool: OEF's evaluation system is designed to generate data for assessing project effectiveness and to strengthen local capabilities for carrying out development activities. Thus, an evaluation needs to consider not only project activities but the evaluation process itself.
3. Building in training activities: Participating in evaluation activities requires basic skills in planning and analysis. Local participants and staff have different levels of skills and typically need training in areas, including setting goals and objectives, collecting data, and creating workplans. This training is becoming a part of OEF-assisted projects, and OEF has developed needed training resources such as worksheets and workshop designs.
4. Indicators and instruments: Simple indicators and data collection instruments are needed for both quantitative and qualitative data. For example, OEF is working on ways participants themselves can measure changes in income or savings, and on group-oriented data collection methods.

Other Areas of Organizational Policy

1. Control and accountability: Participatory evaluation implies a high degree of local control and decision making over project activities. In projects funded by outside donors, conflicting views on project directions can arise. However, OEF has not encountered this problem so far, possibly because of the stress on consensus about project objectives and activities during project planning.
2. Allocation of staff time: Participatory evaluation is a relatively new venture, and there are few "how to" materials to draw upon. Staff need time for developing new evaluation tools and for training evaluation consultants. This time requirement sometimes competes with other organizational priorities.
3. Project planning/availability of resources: Generally, participatory evaluation is more time-consuming and expensive than more standard evaluation approaches. For example, time and funds must be available for evaluation committee meetings, for evaluation consultants, for three-week mid-point and end-of-project evaluations, and for report review and distribution. Planning projects with a tight time frame or funding situation poses a challenge for OEF's participatory evaluation approach.
4. Third World partner organizations: Some Third World organizations are clearly more receptive to participatory approaches than others. This has implications for selecting organizations with which to work, for the extent of participation possible in a project, for the need to develop contractual relationships, and for variations in the participatory evaluation procedures.
5. Relationship with donors: For most donors, a participatory approach to evaluation is relatively new. It is important to discuss the rationale and processes of participatory evaluation with funders during project planning. Also, project reports generally take longer to prepare because of the number of people involved in review. Initial expectations for reporting need to be realistic and any delays need to be discussed with donors. In terms of direct donor involvement in evaluation activities, roles and procedures that satisfy both donors and local organizations need to be negotiated.

CASE ILLUSTRATION



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Approaches to Evaluation- Conference III.
The Uses of Evaluation for Policy Formulation

Case Study: Using Project Selection Criteria to Evaluate
Oxfam-America's Performance and to Determine Policy

Introduction:

Oxfam America is currently in the first stages of designing a monitoring and evaluation system for its overseas program. However to date little comprehensive or formal evaluation has been systematically undertaken. Consequently this brief case study addresses an internal evaluation we conducted to analyze our own performance regarding project selection.

Evaluation:

The Overseas Programs department at Oxfam America decided to assess whether or not the projects it had funded over the past four years fulfilled the agency's given project selection criteria (refer to Criteria A. How We Pick Projects: Nine Questions, attached). This amounted to an evaluation of the agency's performance in fulfilling its own criteria for project selection. Staff proceeded to collect data on funded (and rejected) projects indicating which of the project selection criteria-Criteria A.- they actually met.

An outside consultant analyzed Criteria A. and the data on projects. She found the data indicated that:

- only 25% of funded projects fulfilled all of the Criteria A.,
 - many of the projects which had been rejected for funding fulfilled all of Criteria A.
- This lead her to the observation that other criteria were determining project selection. She reviewed the agency's literature and interviewed the staff to determine what criteria were being applied. From this information she added two lists to supplement the first (see attachments): Criteria B.- indicated by the agency's literature and Criteria C. - indicated by the staff.

Her evaluation showed that the agency's criteria for project selection were not clearly defined and articulated, and that adherence to the given Criteria A. was inconsistent. She noted however that the agency appeared to operate within a broad consensus concerning project selection. She recommended that Oxfam 1) clarify and restate its criteria and 2) find ways by which criteria can be applied that avoid turning precision into rigidity.

Use of Evaluation for Policy Formulation: - How can this evaluation of a donor agency's performance be used for policy formulation?

The actions Oxfam America takes in response to this evaluation will determine policy for the agency. Four possible strategies and courses of action are outlined below:

1. Using evaluation to confirm present belief systems:

Given that a broad consensus is generally recognized, the agency could go on using the original Criteria A. It may or may not choose to apply the criteria more accurately.

2. Using evaluation as lessons for change:

This approach would involve examining performance in terms of program objectives and making adjustments for achieving stated goals. Oxfam would look at the conformity or contradictions between practice and guidelines and take action to bring these two closer together. This could be achieved by writing project selection criteria which conform to the criteria expressed through general consensus and applying those criteria uniformly.

3. Using evaluation to lead to different questions:

In this case, reflecting on the results of this evaluation Oxfam might ask itself: Is it valuable for us to be consistent?, Is accountability a high priority for us? Is flexibility more important?

4. Using evaluation to develop a different kind of evaluation:

Finally the evaluation conducted leads the agency to another form of evaluation- a new survey, a new set of things to analyze. For Oxfam this would mean deciding to establish a monitoring and evaluation system for all our overseas projects.

Each of these strategies has policy implications for the agency. Having recognized these options; Are there others you can suggest? Which would you choose? How does this process compare to your agency?



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Criteria A:

1. Does the project grow out of local initiative? Is the project rooted in the community?
 2. Will the grant encourage innovative and/or repeatable activity on the part of the local people?
 3. Is the project part of an integrated or coordinated effort towards long-term economic, physical and social change?
 4. Will rural, low-income people benefit most from this grant, and will it lead to increased income or income potential for them?
 5. Does the grant promote the involvement of the local people in the decision-making processes which affect their lives and well-being?
 6. Will this grant result in unintended negative effects on existing social, cultural or environmental patterns?
 7. In what ways will this project improve the lives of lower status groups generally, and women in particular?
 8. Does the project application indicate that clear and specific objectives for the project have been set?
 9. In what ways and by whom will this project be managed?
- Only after these questions have been carefully researched will a project be granted money by Oxfam America.

CRITERIA B.- Indicated by the agency's literature:

Internal to project-

i. goals:

- to increase income
- to achieve equitable income distribution
- to increase participation

ii. qualities:

- innovate
- replicable
- model
- catalytic

iii. agents or actors

- low-income
- women
- rural
- non-elite

iv. functional or sectoral area :

- agriculture
- health
- education and training
- social development

v. timing:

- is feasible
- goals can be accomplished in planned time
- leads to something else

vi. likelihood of being effective:

- clarity of goals
- their reasonableness
- capacity for adjustment or alteration
in process
- responsiveness to change in given circumstances

Matters external-

i. geography

- balance

ii.functions:

- balance

iii. previous relation to Oxfam (s)

iv. relation to other sources of funding

v. demonstrative value

vi. educational value re issues of development

vii. political value

viii. timing

ix. external effects

CRITERIA C.- Indicated by interviews with staff:(not prioritized)

1. geographical distribution
2. functional distribution
3. income generating
- 4.uses Oxfam's technical competence/staff strengths
5. true outgrowth of people's work/desires
6. links with educational or other institutions or local governments
7. fits in locally so generates further development/self-generating
8. influences international political scene
9. outside educational value
10. collaborative with other expatriate organizations
- 11.shows solidarity with peasant movements
12. people oriented
13. rural
14. focused on women
15. brings social change, not just relief
 - changes attitudes too
 - brings social change in U.S. too
16. is a model/replicable
17. part of an integrated approach
18. uses innovative technology
19. meets a real need
20. high risk so that others won't help
21. increase capacity of people to help themselves, empowers them
 - increases self-reliance/ self-reliance in food
- 22.promotes social justice
23. promotes institutional/structural change
24. works with genuine leaders
25. works with poor
26. strengthens local organization
27. provides opportunity for Oxfam to build long term relationships
28. helps some people live better

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION: THE UNICEF APPROACH (excerpts)

CASE BACKGROUND

GOALS OF UNICEF AND ROLE OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The overall goal of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is to contribute in significant ways to improvements in the situation of children living in unsatisfactory conditions in developing countries. We recognize poverty and inequitable distribution of resources and services as the underlying causes for these conditions which are most dramatically demonstrated in high infant and child mortality and morbidity rates.

A majority of UNICEF's assistance and cooperation is focused on problems of social development (health, education, nutrition, non-formal education, water supply) in poor rural and urban areas. Attention is concentrated on increasing accessibility to and utilization of basic services by poor children and their families in isolated and underserved areas.

Participation is central to the search for ways to attack the problems of poverty and inequitable distribution of resources and services. The process may include, but is not limited to, contributions of labour and materials by poor people in the implementation of projects. However, genuine participation leading to self reliance and continuity in community based social services grows most often out of people's involvement from the first phases of problem identification and data collection; through programme and project design; to ultimate implementation, management and evaluation.

UNICEF policy is set by the international Executive Board which generally meets annually in the spring of the year. Interpretation and implementation of policy thus established is in the hands of the Executive Director and the UNICEF staff, both national and international, around the world. While UNICEF programmes commonly share general goals and concerns, programme cooperation is negotiated on a country by country basis and the country programme reflects the specific objectives, methods, subject matter, programme emphases and time frame appropriate to that country.

LESSONS LEARNED THROUGH UNICEF EXPERIENCE

Based on observation and evaluation of many UNICEF supported activities, the following are some of the main lessons learned:

1. While compulsory participation of community members in activities can often have an impressive short-term result as measured by attendance at specific functions or number of babies immunized, it usually does not contribute to the longer term goal of building a sense of responsibility, independence and self-reliance.

2. Introducing participatory methods in a programme usually requires considerable attention to training and orientation of both community members and the national and local bureaucracy. This is often most effectively done in combined training and cooperative project related work. It cannot be done by working either just with government or just with the community.
3. Starting participatory activities in an area with no previous similar experience is labor intensive and time consuming. Two things are taking place at once -- people are organizing and they are beginning the process of cooperative problem solving. In the long run the cost effectiveness of such activities usually proves itself through high acceptability and utilization rates and a self-sustaining life for the project.
4. Participatory planning is often the best entry point for people or agencies seriously interested in stimulating community participation at later stages of a project. Programmes in which community residents participate only in implementation activities -- where all major decisions of design, location, schedule, etc. have been taken by other people, -- often outsiders -- encounter difficulty in evoking the desired response and seldom survive for long. Unrepaired pumps and unused latrines around the world are witness to this problem.
5. It is very difficult for sector-specific extension workers to do organizing of poor village and urban people except in connection with their own particular sectoral programmes. Usually both their training and bureaucratic responsibilities and accountability upward through the system instead of to the community militate against the broader view. Organizing of communities around their own issues (not those of external programmes) can often be done by a properly trained multi-sectoral "development team". Sometimes the most successful organizing is done by non-governmental organizations.
6. The process and structure of participation must be carefully monitored to ensure that they are accessible to, understood by and utilized by the poor. If the poor are not included they and their children may become further by-passed or oppressed, all in the name of participation.
7. While effective community participation may bring some programme costs down it should not be interpreted to mean there is no role for outsiders. Particularly communities which are new to the process of handling their own affairs may urgently need cooperation, advice, support -- moral and material from outside. In the absence of such support a community based project which starts off well may collapse. What is needed is cooperation but of a sort which protects community control of activity not the sort which overwhelms it.
8. Participation is often easier to stimulate and support in the urban

setting than the rural. People are physically closer together, facilitating communication; there are a multitude of small issues around which people can rally; there is a rich variety of outside resources on which communities can try to capitalize.

9. The area development approach to planning, by moving the planning process closer to the community, can be very supportive of participation and integration at the community level. Another aspect of the area development approach which is favorable to participation is its focus on a geographic unit and problem solving as needed within that unit. This is much more conducive to participation and recognition of local differences -- an important factor in the success or failure of a programme -- than the more traditional, centrally planned package programmes of a sectoral department.
10. Participation that is based on groups performing some economically productive activity generally has a better chance of long term survival and effectiveness than participation which is based on arbitrarily organized groups or groups concerned exclusively with social matters.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, one can summarize by saying: UNICEF concern with participation stems from a conviction growing out of 35 years experience, that much is known about the technical side of improving the situation of children; in this sense it is relatively easy to address. And yet, it is clear that without focusing on and resolving the human-social problems no really sustained progress can be made. As James P. Grant, Executive Director, states in his 1981-82 report on the State of the World's Children, these problems, unlike the technical ones, "are not susceptible to the imposition of centralized solutions worked out by the few and applied to the many. They depended on a decentralized diversity of approaches..." These approaches can be developed only through community participation.

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