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EXTRA

Innovative Methods In FY 1984 AID Evaluation Reports

Submitted to Ms. Nena Vreeland, PPC/CDIE  
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## INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this report is to present a list and analysis of those FY 1984 AID evaluations found to exhibit some type of innovative evaluation methodology, analysis or findings presentation. This is the third and final product of a Purchase Order contract funded by PPC/CDIE, supervised by Ms. Nena Vreeland. This report will assist PPC/CDIE by providing examples of current cost-effective, innovative approaches that can be further studied for possible replication elsewhere. Not all instances cited in these evaluations deal with methodology exclusively, many being recommendations for change and innovation or commentary on the present state of evaluation research. In general, the contractor has "flagged" anything he thought would be of use to PPC/CDIE or that represent a clear departure from current practices. The main body of this report consists of a list of those evaluation reports exhibiting innovation, the nature of the innovation (s) and where in the report the innovation (s) can be found. Preceding this, he has attempted to synthesize the trends seen, to categorize the types of innovations, and to analyze which Bureaus are being innovative, and in what types of projects.

## METHODOLOGY

Before beginning this task, the contractor reviewed recent literature; a working list of illustrative innovations to be cognizant of was drawn up by Ms. Vreeland and the contractor over several meetings. (See section entitled "Distinguishing Characteristics of Innovative Reports".) The contractor then read and/or skimmed all FY 1984 evaluations, 276 reports received in PPC/CDIE between 10/1/83 and 9/30/84), keeping in mind, and specifically looking for, instances of "innovation" in evaluation research designs, primary and secondary data collection and analysis, proxy measures and other indirect indicators, economic (cost/benefit and cost-effectiveness) analysis, institutional development, beneficiary impact and graphics in the display of findings.

A "first cut" was made based on the aforementioned criteria. After obtaining an idea of the extent of innovative work in the entire universe under study, a second cut was made which resulted in 50 reports being selected out for further analysis. The innovations in these 50 reports were studied in greater depth and characteristics of the reports themselves (bureau, sector, etc.) were noted. Many reports contained several innovations or types of innovations and therefore the total number of innovations observed (n=71) is greater than the number of reports selected. The reader should be mindful of this in the following analysis by distinguishing innovations from innovative reports. No reports were received from the PRE Bureau and Ms. Vreeland excluded PPC

Impact evaluations from this analysis as she was already aware of the nature of innovations in this series.

## GENERAL IMPRESSIONS OF ALL REPORTS

The first thing one notices about AID's evaluation methodologies is that they are rarely spelled out. To find a comprehensive description of the approach used is rare indeed, even if it is non-innovative.

Most evaluations seem to be conducted to meet administrative requirements and not to contribute to the overall body of development knowledge from which lessons learned can be derived. AID's evaluation research is also characterized by rigid dependence on the logical framework (logframe) matrix and approach. There is much narration with relatively little analysis. For example, one is always told the number of people trained, but rarely is there an analysis of the quality or utility of that training. Inputs, outputs, purpose and goal are discussed with little process or systems analysis in the causes and effects of development aid intervention.

Reports display a strict adherence to logframe indicators and when adequate baseline data are not available with which to measure change, few attempts are made to assess impact otherwise. Sometimes a large in-depth survey is recommended to begin data collection. This bias for "data-hungry" quantitative, survey approaches usually comes at the exclusion of more qualitative, cost-effective approaches, and at the expense of timely information to meet the needs of managers and designers. Some instances of large-scale survey research (notably PL-480 Title II) were encountered and dismissed. Such methods may be rigorous, but are not usually innovative. The in-depth surveys which were considered were those in which the approach was laid out more clearly than the norm, specifying generalizability of findings and limitations of results.

## DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS OF INNOVATIVE REPORTS

When conducting this analysis the contractor sought out those evaluations that:

- use specific non-traditional methodologies, eg. Rapid Rural Appraisal
- use modified "quasi-experiments" and statistical estimation where experimental/control groups are not feasible
- make a concerted effort to purge confounding elements from statements of cause and effect
- triangulate several different methods to increase generalization and minimize bias
- cross-check findings and get feedback from informants and evaluation actors
- deal with project purpose and goal well

- look in-depth at beneficiary impact
- look in-depth at institutional change
- use innovative, cost-effective sample surveys or purposive samples
- use unusual proxy measures and indirect indicators
- use pre-existing data in an interesting way
- deal with the lack of baseline data well
- creatively use monitoring data generated from a management information system
- use micro-computers to analyze data in the field
- try to "harden" (increase the reliability and validity of) qualitative data
- analyze and present qualitative data in matrices
- use anthropological community or case studies
- attempt cost/benefit, cost-effectiveness and other types of economic analysis
- present findings with through especially clear graphics or other formats

## FINDINGS

Most of the innovations found dealt with evaluation research design in general (n=18), with almost as many relating specifically to data gathering (n=15) and indicators (n=14). There were 12 instances of relatively sophisticated economic analysis being conducted, 7 reports dealt especially well with institutional change and there were 5 that presented findings with clear and original graphics. For some categories of innovations (eg. beneficiary impact, purging confounding elements) no explicit instances of outstanding innovation were found. However, such innovations can be found implicitly within the context of other methods. For example, a high quality research design should deal with confounding effects and a cost benefit analysis assumes some kind of data being collected on beneficiary impact. For specific examples of these innovations the reader can examine the listing in the final section of this report.

The Asia, Near East and FVA Bureaus did the most innovative evaluation work. This may be because these bureaus are organized and funded to do so, are staffed by people especially committed to evaluation, or have strong practical research experience. These bureaus' reports contained the most innovations in both absolute and relative terms, as the table on the next page shows. Especially noteworthy are the FVA Bureau, where almost half their work displays some methodological innovations, and the Asia Bureau which has the highest percent of innovations relative to all Agency evaluations.

Bureau	Reports Examined		Innovative Reports		Innovations as % of All Reports	
	Number	Percent	Number	Bureau %		
Africa	69	25%	8	12%	approx. 2.9%	
Asia	59	21%	15	25%	approx. 5.4%	
LAC	79	29%	8	10%	approx. 2.9%	
Near East	36	13%	10	28%	approx. 3.6%	
S&T	16	6%	1	6%	approx. .4%	
FVA	17	6%	8	47%	approx. 2.9%	
-----		276	100%	50	n/a	-----
					18%	

There appears to be a wide distribution across technical sectors of these innovations, as the below table shows. There do, however, seem to be fewer agricultural projects represented here than the overall distribution of AID projects into sectors would suggest. Conversely, PL 480 projects show a disproportionate number of innovations, maybe due to the fact that FVA Bureau evaluation staff have a direct role in these evaluations.

Sector	# Innovative Reports
Agriculture	8
PL 480	8
Infrastructure	7
Health	6
Institutional Development	5
Water	4
Population	3
Natural Resources, Conservation	3
Small Business Development	2
Management Studies	2
Refugees	1
Education	1
Women in Development	1

Regarding the evaluators or evaluation teams which conducted those evaluations deemed innovative, the contractor found that consultants working alone came up with the most innovations (n=21 reports). Noteworthy are Development Alternatives Inc. which worked on 4 of these reports and the Institute For Development Anthropology which worked on 2. Seventeen innovative reports were conducted using a mix of consultants, AID staff, host country nationals, etc., while AID staff working alone only

accounted for 6 reports and grantees working alone for 2 reports. This in-house vs. external pattern has come up before in the context of AID program administration and may suggest that consultants have more knowledge, resources and incentives to apply innovative techniques than AID staff.

To summarize the above findings by Bureaus, the contractor found that:

Of those innovative Africa Bureau Reports:

- more are in Natural Resource projects (Forestry, Renewable Energy) than other sectors
- substantially more deal with data gathering specifically
- the innovations are spread accross many countries

Of those innovative Asia Bureau Reports:

- relatively more innovations occurred in PL480 projects
- there were many in Institution Building and Infrastructure projects also
- general evaluation methodology innovations accounted for 7 of the total number of innovations, indicators accounted for 4 and data gathering and institutional development each for 3. The contractor saw no instances of innovative economic analysis or graphic display
- the innovations were spread accross countries, but Nepal and the Philippines had the most, of 3 each

Of those innovative LAC Bureau Reports:

- 3 dealt with small business as a part of an agriculture or infrastructure project
- general evaluation methodology accounted for 4 innovations, indicators for 3
- Peru and Jamaica each had 2 innovative reports

Of those innovative Near East Bureau Reports:

- Irrigation projects displayed a great deal of innovation
- there was a great deal more economic analysis than other bureaus (n=5 reports)
- there were a mix of evaluation entities but 2 reports done by the Institute For Development Anthropology and Development Alternatives Inc. stand out
- 5 reports were from Egypt, 3 from Tunisia, 2 from Morocco

Of those innovative FVA Bureau Reports:

- most were of PL 480 projects and dealt with nutrition, as would be expected in this bureau
- there were alot of interesting graphics and economic analysis
- a favored data collection device in this bureau seems to be the big, expensive survey. The surveys appear to be of a high quality and are accompanied by complete methodological descriptions.

- several reports weren't project evaluations but studies on PVO management and capacity building and therefore address issues different from those addressed in other bureau reports (ie. institutional development would be covered more completely in an institutional development project).

#### PPC Impact Reports:

This group of reports are also designed to address issues different from those of other reports. For this reason and because Ms. Vreeland is aware of Impact Evaluation strategies, they were excluded from in-depth analysis. Nevertheless, the contractor did study the FY 1984 reports in this series and found that:

- #'s 48 (Tunisia: The Wheat Development Program), 50 (On-Farm Water Management In Aegean Turkey, 1968-1974) and 51 (Jamaica: The Impact And Effectiveness Of The PL 480 Title I Program) all contain complex economic analysis found to be more rigorous than innovative.
- # 52 (Korean Agricultural Services: The Invisible Hand In The Iron Glove. Market And Nonmarket Forces In Korean Rural Development) features the rigorous use of existing data, backed up and supplemented by qualitative impressions through travel.

#### CONCLUSIONS

- most evaluation reports do not sufficiently discuss methodology
- there is an overly-rigid dependence on the logical framework approach which does not adequately allow for methodological innovation or the analysis of the actual processes of development, its impact on people and institutions
- two specific aspects of evaluation methodology where some innovative work is taking place is in data collection and use of indicators
- the Near East, but especially the Asia and FVA Bureaus strive to apply innovative methods to evaluation and to include a description of methods in their reports.
- more innovative reports came from Egypt (5) than any other country
- outside consultants innovate more than in-house AID staff

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

This report shows that innovative research work is being done in some parts of the Agency. What is needed are strategies

to disseminate information about new methods. The completion of an updated Evaluation Handbook is a valuable first step towards that end. Additional training in innovative, cost-effective methodologies should be provided to AID personnel involved in evaluative activities. Even though it was found outside consultants are more innovative in their work this is not to mean that they should do all AID evaluations, as that would not build up in-house capacity. Specifically, this contractor recommends that AID project evaluators:

- state evaluation methodologies more explicitly
- look at a broader range of study options apart from the confines of the logical framework matrix
- keeping in mind that information costs money, an optimum level of confidence might be achieved through the greater use of proxy and indirect indicators to validate both primary and secondary data

#### LIST OF INNOVATIVE FEATURES:

##### Africa Bureau

682-0202 Rural Medical Assistance Project/Mauritania

- p. 117, use of pictures in data gathering device to avoid illiteracy problems

698-0388.15 Women in Development/Kenya

- p. 16, proposed data gathering meth on non-market contribution to subsistence production

631-0013 National Cereals Research & Extension/Cameroon

- p. 36, proposed data gathering meth. Use to verify interviews.

No # Sudan PL 480 Title III Program Evaluation/Sudan

- p. 29, how to deal with unreliable base line data
- p. 31, market analysis of factors affecting food grain imports

No # Renewable Energy Technologies in Africa: An Assessment of Field Experience and Future Directions/Afr Regional

- p. 2 of summary, app. D & E summarizes eval meth
- sec 2.3 of summary discusses need for what types of data
- cost effectiveness of energy systems, user needs/acceptability of technologies
- field data collection guide/check list, app. E
- indicators innovatively laid out, end app. D

683-0230 Forestry & Land Use Planning/Niger

- p. 17-20, natural resources survey meth
- p. 28-34, social survey meth
- p. 50-54, recommendations for survey modification

621-0160 Village Environment Improvement/Tanzania  
-app 2 & 3 on data gathering check lists

612-0207 Self-Help Rural Water Supply/Malawi  
-p. 5... of main report on meth  
-well laid out indicators, concise  
-emphasis on institutional development  
-unstructured interviews, field visits with guide  
questionnaire

#### Asia Bureau

No # PL 480 Title II - CLUSA/NDDDB Oilseed Grower's Cooperative  
Project; and CLUSA OPG 386-2144 for TA to NDDDB/OGCP/India  
-p. 47-54, 199-201 on management info system problems and  
recommendations

367-0119 Trail Suspension Bridge Project/Nepal  
-annex 2, very clear discussion on components, sources of  
info, nature of indicators, limitations of a primarily  
qualitative meth

493-0325 Thailand Population Planning Project II  
-p. 73-77, need and recommendations for computer MIS discussed

492-0275/0310/0289 Introducing Irrigated Production to Small  
Farmers: A Comparative Evaluation of Three Small Farmer  
Irrigation Projects in the Bicol Region/Philippines  
-app. E, draws data from many sources and tries to make  
comparable  
-discusses data requirements/availability  
-see sections on sustainability

No # Evaluation of ASEAN Regional Program/Asia Regional  
-see table of contents for interesting coverage of topics  
-eval meth p 4... unclear, assumed to be primarily qualitative

367-0138 Final Report: Landslide & Soil Stabilization, Far  
Western Hills Road/Nepal  
-p. 8 of first section for eval meth  
-three independent reports from each team member's  
perspective (engineering, soil science/environment,  
economics) brought together in an executive summary  
-saw nothing innovative in each report however

492-0334 Small Farmer Systems II/Philippines  
-see especially p. 24-49 for discussion of inst devel  
-indicators of inst devel clear and pretty thorough

No # PL 480 Title II School Feeding Program in India

- p. 16-25, eval meth and its limitations
- mission stepped in, salvaged what collected secondary data it could and ran its own modified analysis

No # School Feeding: Effects on Enrollment, Attendance & Drop-Out in Sri Lanka

- see especially p. 3-33 for eval meth
- ways of dealing with pre-existing data
- data from different sources provide cross checks
- quasi-experimental design, hypothesis presented formalistically, schools in program compared to those not in program

367-0138 Evaluation of the Socio-Economic Impact of the Western Hills Road/Nepal

- app. A, B for purposive, qualitative survey/interviews backed up with some government data. Seems innovative and easy to implement.

No # The Development Impact of Title II Food For Work Roads/Bangladesh

- p. 1-18 for expensive, intensive eval meth. Laid out clearly though

No # Yayasan Indonesia Sejahtera (YIS): Assessment of an Institution Building Project

- p. 19-22, indicators of inst devel

No # Title III Food For Development/Bangladesh

- see first page for innovations on data gathering - based on host country fiscal year to improve "firmness"

No # Evaluation of the Provincial Water Project/Philippines

- p. ix, app. A-C for eval meth, not really innovative but well described, quantitative survey based

493-0315 Decentralized Development Management Project/Thailand

- see especially section on learning process approach, p. 31-41

#### LAC Bureau

538-0019 Basic Health Management Training/RDO-C

- p. 1 of PES summary, app. B, C, N, and tables beginning p. 11 as unique, clear way of illustrating achievement of objectives
- use of checklists in site visits
- use of trainee action plans as bench marks

527-0 78 Integrated Regional Development Project/Peru

- see especially sec IV on cost effectiveness of various

projects

532-0060 Agricultural Marketing Development/Jamaica  
-p. 47... for econ analysis, graphics

527-0139 Rural Development Agribusiness Fund/Peru  
-good report throughout but see especially p. 41-55 of first  
report and annex B of second report  
-part of larger DAI small business study  
-good financial analysis

518-0002 Rural Community Health Project/Ecuador  
-read, or follow highlighted parts throughout, but  
especially p. 44, p. 52... of second report  
-qualitative indicators specified

No # Educational Sector Programs in Guatemala  
-see into p. 3-5  
-see meths described under project impact sections

532-0069 Population & Family Planning Services/Jamaica  
-see meth sec 1.5 and app 1 on p. 71  
-data gathering using more informal interview check list

No # Displaced Persons in El Salvador  
-p. 9-11 on indicators, use of "vulnerable groups" to infer  
health and social well-being of larger society

664-0318/0312.4 Siliana Rural Centers Water Systems/Rural Water  
Systems/Tunisia  
-p. 14 of main report on indicators  
-kind of deals with cost-effectiveness throughout

Near East Bureau

608-0155 Population Family Planning Support/Morocco  
-notations critically acclaim this evaluation throughout  
-see also p. 14 on feedback incorporation  
-note graphics on measure attainment throughout

608-0145 Range Management Improvement/Morocco  
-see p. 48 and annex 2 (p. 70) for qualitative  
recommendations

263-K-605.2 Basic Village Services/Egypt  
-see tables, charts at end  
-interesting graphic presentations  
-appendix missing, may need to obtain

263-0035 Canal Maintenance/Egypt

-p. 8... on qualitative indicators

263-0127 Provincial Cities Development/Egypt

-p. 32... and especially p. 35 on inst devel, capacity building

-innovative rating scale p. 35

263-K-605.1 Development Decentralization I/Egypt

-p. 51-71 on inst devel

664-0307 SCF Community Based IRD OPG Phase II/Tunisia

-p. 8 informal interviews

664-0312.7 Interim Evaluation: Rural Potable Water Subproject/Tunisia

-cost-effectiveness throughout (especially app B)

-survey meth in app A

263-0070 Major Cereals/Egypt

-p. 51 for cost-effectiveness of technology being extended to farmers

S&T Bureau

931-1254 CRSP-Sorghum

-econ analysis p. 50...

FVA Bureau

No # Mid-term Evaluation of CODEL Inc.

-cost effectiveness, cost/benefit analysis throughout

-interesting matrices, charts eg. p. 67

No # Targeting: A Means to Better Intervention

-deals with alternative nutrition indicators,

cost-effectiveness of different targeting strategies

-good graphs, tables, charts

No # Impact of Supplementation Schemes and Analysis of the Determinants of Pre-Schooler Nutritional Status

-puts existing data to good use accross different LDCs

-good discussion of nutritional indicators

No # Report on the Small Enterprise Development Workshop

-deals with inst devel, cost-effectiveness, cost/benefit throughout

-indicators of benefit

No # Management Needs of PVOs

-good inst/mgmt analysis

- No # Outreach Grant Project Assessment: Togo & Benin  
-see financial analysis throughout and especially in app 2
- No # Evaluation Study of a Pilot Project in Community Based  
Growth Monitoring and Nutrition Education in South Kordofan  
Province  
-see especially p. 7...., eval meth uses experimental/control  
groups
- No # Working Document: Evaluation of PL 480 Title II and PPNS  
Program, Senegal  
-good, rigorous quantitative meth throughout  
good use of existing data