PN-AEA-665

A TEAM APPROACH TO IMPROVING IMPLEMENTATION: EXPERIENCE IN A KENYAN AGRICULTURE PROJECT

By

Marcus D. Ingle
International Management Specialist
DPMC/OICD/USDA

Paper Presented at the Panel on
"Development Management Practice in Africa:
Where is the Cutting Edge?"

American Society for Public Administration
National Conference
New York, New York

April 1983

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Development Project Management Center (DPMC) was established within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to promote the review, operational testing, and dissemination of more appropriate approaches and techniques for improving public sector performance in developing countries, with an emphasis on program and project effectiveness. Supported by the Office of Multisectoral Development in the Agency for International Development's (AID) Bureau of Science and Technology, the DPMC has, since its inception, been actively concerned with the issue of mobilizing operational work teams and groups in organizational settings. This paper relies on prior development management conceptual and field work by the Center in various countries including Jamaica, Portugal, Mali, Haiti, Thailand, Barbados, and the Sahel.

The paper draws heavily on the ideas and writing of Morris Solomon and Dr. Merlyn Kettering, both of DPMC. Major segments of the paper are adapted from joint papers prepared by DPMC and the Policy and Program Planning Office (PROPLAM) in the Interamerican Institute of Agriculture in Costa Rica during 1982 and 1983. Others in DPMC including Pat Isman, Junko Olson and Gwen Salters assisted in editing and preparing the final manuscript. This manuscript was processed by Science and Management Resources, Inc. (SMR, Inc.-Oasis Division), located in Arlington, Virginia.

Marcus D. Ingle, Ph.D, has been associated with the Agriculture Systems Support Project (ASSP) reviewed in this paper since 1979. He served as an implementation consultant for the Project and directed the DPMC evaluation of ASSP in 1982. On the staff of DPMC since 1981, Dr. Ingle is currently responsible for management assistance efforts in Portugal and the Eastern Caribbean. His R&D assignments include program implementation, management development, microcomputers and management, and the DPMC's evolving "Performance Improvement Approach". The views expressed in this paper are the sole responsibility of the author and do not necessarily represent the position of the US Department of Agriculture.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

I. DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT IN AFRICA: SETTING AND KEY ISSUES

II. AN AFRICAN ILLUSTRATION OF THE "TEAM APPROACH TO IMPLEMENTATION": THE KENYAN AGRICULTURE SYSTEMS SUPPORT PROJECT (ASSP)

A. The Kenya Development Setting

B. The ASSP: Rationale and Scope

C. The Management Improvement Effort: A Team Approach to Implementation

D. Results of the Team Approach

III. ANALYSIS AND REFLECTION: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

REFERENCES

"Inadequate or unintelligent attention to structural problems in the Ministry of Agriculture is the root cause of much of its inefficiency. The types of structural issues that we have in mind are not matters of the organization chart--who will report to whom and which ministry or marketing board will be responsible for what program. Reorganizations in this area are greatly overrated and have little impact on the way in which an extension service actually does its work. Instead we are concerned with the day-to-day structures of incentives, authority, communications and planning... The Ministry clearly needs increased and ongoing attention to organizational planning. Improvements in feedback are required and much greater collegiality in decision making and consultations would be desirable. However, we also have argued that a carefully thought out increase in the procedures and formality governing the field administration of extension activities is needed. At this stage of development, a partially bureaucratic structure that was intelligently constructed and periodically reexamined would dramatically increase the productivity of Kenya's extension services."

- D. Leonard, Reaching the Peasant Farmer: Organization Theory and Practice in Kenya, University of Chicago Press, 1971

"Semi-autonomous or functional authorities, and 'tasks groups' or field teams of professionals and technicians were needed to assist local organizations with performing the functions transferred from the central government to localities in East Africa, for example, if decentralization policies were to be implemented more successfully. Because the central ministries were reluctant to support decentralization, there was the need in all three East African countries for mobile teams of planning, finance and technical experts who were not tied to the civil service system to help build up the capacities of local governments to assume the functions transferred to them... Clearly, provisions must be made in implementation strategies for 'engaged planning' to bring development programmes through the initial stages of dissemination and execution and to institutionalize them in organizations that can carry them on when special implementation arrangements end."

- D. Rondinelli and M. Ingle in Institutional Dimensions of Regional Development, Maruzen Press, 1981

I. DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT IN AFRICA: SETTING AND KEY ISSUES

The challenge of promoting progress in agriculture and improving rural life is an urgent one in the developing world. Tangible evidence of improvement is sought in the areas of production, productivity, employment, income generation and distribution, stability, financial security and self-reliance. Political and economic pressures frequently demand that specific outcomes be achieved within limited time horizons. Such requirements strain the capacity of existing institutions to respond effectively to the political, technical and administrative requisites of development.

Several decades of experience with the planning and implementation of development programs indicates that the public sector, especially in Africa, is extremely limited in its ability to influence the guidance of productive, equitable and sustained development. (Management Development Working Group: 1981) There are, in brief, substantial inadequacies in these countries' development management processes. By development management, we refer to the guidance instrumentalities by which available resources are mobilized and integrated to accomplish objectives in an uncertain and changing context.

This paper's point of departure is looking for strategic areas of management improvement opportunity that are both feasible and viable within the African context. Operationally, is there promising management improvement experience in Africa that may give a clue to how the development record can be reversed? More specifically,

* Does some management approach exist that demonstrates, through actual experience, the potential to bring about a significant improvement in the implementation of a specific program?
* And, if so, what is the likelihood that the approach can be adapted and sustained in one or more of the development contexts characteristic of Africa?

This paper examines the three year implementation process of an agricultural sector development effort in Kenya in search of some initial insights on these issues.

The USAID-supported Agriculture Systems Support Project (ASSP) is a suitable experience base from which to address these management improvement issues for several reasons. (Balogun:ND) First, the ASSP is a composite of several agriculture sector development activities including adaptive pastoralist research, smallholder extension, extension education, grain marketing/storage, and agricultural credit, and more. The project thus encompasses the development management process from a variety of institutional and technical perspectives. Second, ASSP's organizational coverage makes it representative of a broader set of African development efforts. The project spans the local, provincial, and central levels. This dimension is typical of complex development efforts throughout Africa. (Rondinelli and Ingle: 1981) Additionally, the project involves three key sets of actors frequently associated with development programs: Kenyan public and private sector personnel, USAID donor agency officials, and various types and kinds of local and expatriate contractors/consultants.

Finally, ASSP represents a good learning laboratory in that a significant management improvement attempt--referred to here as the team approach to implementation--was made early in the project's implementation in 1979. Enough time has elapsed since then to gain a historical perspective on the improvement process and its results.* In summary, the ASSP appears to provide a fairly representative base upon which to reflect on a team approach to implementation as a possible strategy for improving development management throughout Africa.

Although the ASSP team approach experience has many attributes of a "natural experiment", there are several limitations of the case study methodology applied here. First, and most importantly, this is only one case in the context of one African country; the representativeness of this case is extremely limited. The most a review such as this can provide is some possible operational hypotheses for further research. Secondly, when the team approach to implementation was initiated in 1979, the improvement was not conceived exactly as it is presented here. Reporting bias likely has found its way into the analysis so that the historical perspective is not completely accurate. To the extent possible, the analysis will attempt to rely on actual documentation of the improvement effort in order to overcome this potential bias.

---

*The team approach to implementation is similar to several approaches now being developed and systematically reviewed in Third World contexts. See Solomon et al: 1981; Kettering: 1981; Ingle et al; 1981; and Cooley: 1982.

The paper is organized to take the reader through the ASSP project implementation experience. Therefore, we begin with a description of the case illustration including a brief description of the setting, the project's characteristics, the team approach improvement process, and the results as evident in 1982. Based on that experience, an analysis is made of the two key development management issues raised earlier. Finally, several development management implications will be presented for discussion and further consideration.

II. AN AFRICAN ILLUSTRATION OF THE "TEAM APPROACH TO IMPLEMENTATION": THE KENYA AGRICULTURE SYSTEMS SUPPORT PROJECT (ASSP)

In August 1978 the USAID Mission to Kenya (USAID/Kenya) signed an agreement with the Government of Kenya (GOK) to initiate a multi-component, six and one-half year Agriculture Systems Support Project (ASSP). The Project, with a total funding of $61 million (USAID - $49 million and GOK - $12 million), at that time represented the largest single AID supported project in Africa. The ASSP was designed to support Kenya's development strategy aimed at alleviating rural poverty and meeting basic human needs by: (1) upgrading agricultural manpower; (2) improving smallholder/pastoralist access to institutional services such as individual or cooperative credit and storage; and (3) creating a viable system of adaptive smallholder/pastoralist research.

A. The Kenyan Development Setting

Kenya is often described as one of the success stories of Africa. While Kenya shares many of the characteristics of other low income countries, its economy has grown remarkably in the years since independence in 1963. Although it has one of the world's highest rates of population growth, Kenya still managed to increase per capita income at an average rate of 2.5 percent per year from the mid 1960's to present.

Despite a continued high level of commitment to development, Kenya has faced increasing difficulty in matching the rapid progress experienced during the first ten years of independence. From 1964 to 1973 real

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew on the average of 6.6% per year and per capita income increased at an average rate of nearly 3% despite one of the world's highest population growth rates of nearly 4 percent. Overall growth has slowed in recent years despite increases in domestic and external investments in development. The pattern of growth has benefited some groups, particularly wage earners and farmers in the high potential areas, far more than the urban and rural poor including inhabitants of the arid and semi-arid areas.

Agriculture still dominates the Kenyan economy, both in providing employment and as a source of foreign exchange. Of the 6 million persons in the labor force in 1978, almost half were small scale farmers (2.8 million) and pastoralists (0.4 million). Rural nonformal employment accounted for another 1.1 million. In terms of monetary GDP, the role of agriculture has diminished, although it is still the most important sector. Commercial agriculture combined with small scale agriculture provides roughly one-third of GDP. In the 1980's, agriculture is expected to continue contributing the largest share of the nation's GDP.

B. The ASSP: Rationale and Scope

ASSP, originally called Agriculture Sector Loan II, grew out of a series of technical studies which investigated agricultural manpower, research, credit and services. The findings and recommendations of these studies formed the basis of the multi-faceted ASSP. USAID's experience with other projects, such as Agriculture Sector Loan I and the Agriculture Credit Project, also served as an impetus. In addition, USAID's emphasis on targeting assistance to the poor was a factor in designing a project whose ultimate beneficiaries were small scale farmers and pastoralists. (Ingle et al: 1981)

While ASSP was being designed, the GOK was drafting its Fourth Development Plan (1979-1984) around the single goal of alleviating poverty with considerable emphasis being given to increasing smallholder agricultural production and income. At that time, four major constraints were identified as inhibiting the achievement of Kenya's agricultural development goal: insufficiently trained agricultural manpower; limited smallholder/pastoralist access to credit institutions, services, and infrastructure; lack of adaptive research; and, inappropriate macroeconomic policies. The intent of ASSP, as stated in the AID Project Paper (PP), "... is the substantial alleviation or reduction of, the first three of, these constraints."

In attempting to address each of these three constraints, the ASSP was designed to focus on several related agriculture subsystems. The basic rationale of the project can be summarized as follows:

Agriculture Development Constraint	ASSP Components
(1) Insufficiently trained agri-manpower	Egerton College expansion; Studies of the Faculty of Agriculture (University of Nairobi), the Cooperative College and the Coastal Agricultural Institute; Agriculture and Cooperative Training Funds.
(2) Limited smallholder access to credit, services, infrastructure	Assistance to the Agricultural Finance Corporation and to cooperative institutions; Studies of storage needs and training.
(3) Lack of adaptive research	Kiboko Range Research Component; MOA Training Fund

ASSP was conceived of as a broad-based institution building effort. In contrast to prior Kenyan projects which attempted to administratively integrate the various sectors into one package, ASSP concentrated on strengthening various services to producers primarily through promoting more and better trained staff to provide these services.

In general, the GOK and USAID viewed ASSP as one project as described in the PP:

> "ASSP is a broad approach toward meeting the sector-wide constraints of manpower, smallholder access and adaptive research. It supports directly the GOK decision to reorient various agriculture service systems essential to reaching and serving smallholders and to extend the systems' outreach so that they can reach the large proportion of smallholders not now being served. While the project has five components, these are complementary, interdependent and mutually reinforcing. ASSP training institutions produce extension personnel who serve cooperatives members; they also train staff for research facilities. The cooperatives and credit systems serve different segments of smallholders with credit, and cooperatives provide other services as well, including storage. For smallholders to raise their production they will need improved technologies (generated by research and transmitted by the extension system), inputs (some financed by credit and/or provided by cooperatives) and a better economic return on their produce (cooperatives marketing services and storage)...The programmatic and implementational interactions between various components of this project argue for their inclusion into one overall project package. Component interrelationships can be strengthened through specific implementation steps over which AID has control or has a significant input." (Emphases added)

The specific goal of the ASSP is to increase the real income of Kenyan smallholders and pastoralists. This is to be accomplished through production increase facilitated by support to five agricultural systems: (1) agricultural manpower; (2) range research; (3) credit; (4) cooperatives; and (5) storage and marketing.

ASSP funding included both development loan and grant elements. The GOK executing agency for the loan portion was the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) and Egerton College. The grant funded activities were the responsibility of the Ministries of Agriculture (MOA), Cooperative Development (MOCD) and Education (MOE), as well as the Agricultural Finance Corporation (AFC). In addition to multiple executing agencies, the Project was set up to be carried out under a wide variety of USAID/Kenya, AID/Washington, and GOK Host Country Contract (HCC) arrangements. The Project Agreement for ASSP was signed in late 1978.

C. The Management Improvement Effort: A Team Approach to Implementation

Several months after the ASSP agreement was signed, the USAID Project Officer with implementation responsibility decided that external assistance was needed to improve the ASSP project management system. Several factors influenced this decision. First, by this time a gap was already apparent between the "programmatic and implementational interactions" espoused in the ASSP design documents and their lack of likely occurrence in actual practice. Second, there was a feeling that a development effort of ASSP's size and complex structure should receive more management attention than smaller, less complex projects. No provisions to this effect were designed into ASSP. Finally, the heavy weight of AID's internal documentation in starting up this project was being felt on the Mission's few staff, and there was a perceived need for some immediate action lest the entire effort collapse.

In August 1979, a Washington, D.C. based firm--Practical Concepts Incorporated (PCI)--was contracted to assist USAID/Kenya, the GOK, and contract personnel in developing and operating an Implementation System. USAID viewed the development of this system as serving two purposes:

(1) To assist in accomplishing agreed upon ASSP project objectives within the Mission's time, budget and personnel constraints; and

(2) To serve as a possible precursor to similar systems for other USAID funded projects.

Consultancy services were provided on two occasions, one month in August 1979 and a one-week follow-up in February 1980.

On the initial one-month trip, a 4 person expatriate team was asked to:

- Develop initial diagrams of ASSP objectives, assumptions, and key sub-project elements. Visit major ASSP sub-project locations with key GOK and USAID personnel;
- Refine ASSP objectives, diagram them and develop networks for the sub-projects;
- Develop operational bar charts for sub-project and project activites;
- Develop implementation responsibility diagrams for key actors and activities;
- Develop a monitoring and reporting system which integrates the objective diagram, the bar charts, and the implementation responsibility diagrams;
- Develop contingency plans for the projects and sub-projects;
- Prepare an ASSP management system manual incorporating formats and instructions for the various management system components; and
- Conduct the final team briefings on use of the management information system.

On the one-week follow-up installation trip by the Project Director, the consultancy tasks included:

- Relating comments and suggested revisions from PCI Senior Level staff;
- Reviewing the management system with the ASSP management team (USAID and GOK);
- Making refinements in the system as required; and
- Revising the management system manual as required.

Upon their arrival in Kenya in August 1979, the implementation planning consultancy team verified that the ASSP was off to a slow and difficult start. Many of the components originally scheduled to begin or be operational in the year following the Project Agreement were lagging. The review of project design documents and interviews with GOK and USAID personnel at that time revealed several reasons for the slow and problematic start of ASSP:

- Underestimates of the time and effort involved in properly staffing the USAID/Kenya Mission to handle the several ASSP components;
- Inability on the part of the GOK to quickly meet the Conditions Precedent in the project agreement and provide timely support to the various ASSP activities;
- Misunderstandings of the actual USAID personnel time involved in executing various contracting and start-up tasks;
- Misinformation with respect to the lead-time and difficulties involved in contracting procedures, especially for AID/Washington and host country contracts;
- Untenability of a few key assumptions made at the time the project agreement was signed; and
- Lack of sufficient management attention to the timely implementation of those ASSP components which were considered critical. (Ingle, et al: 1979)

The overall complexity of ASSP, combined with its numerous USAID implementation arrangements (e.g., various contracts, participant placements, monitoring actions, field visitations, reviews, and reports) and multiple actors, argued for the development of a comprehensive, yet immediately useful, management improvement approach. It was agreed--primarily due to limited resources--that the implementation system developed through the application of the team approach should emphasize USAID implementation roles and responsibilities, but that every attempt should be made to involve GOK and contract personnel where appropriate, and as time permitted.

The system jointly developed attempted to address several inadequacies that existed in the ASSP implementation process:

- Lack of consensus among key implementation actors on project objectives at multiple levels;
- Unclear specification of implementation roles and responsibiltiies; and
- Unrealistic schedules and budget estimates built into the project design.

The implementation consultancy team followed a dual approach in assisting USAID to resolve these implementation inadequacies:

- Engage key USAID and GOK ASSP personnel in an intensive implementation planning process, and
- Develop an Implementation Manual with back-up charts as a means to facilitate team consensus building and provide a realistic basis for meeting ASSP time, cost and performance specifications.

From the outset, priority was given to the team building aspect of installation effort. (PCI: 1979)

The implementation planning sessions held with key ASSP staff in August of 1979 relied on a variety of management tools and group process techniques. More specifically, ASSP objectives were clarified and targeted by having key actors work together to produce and critique an ASSP "Objective Tree" and component "Implementation Logical Frameworks." Roles and responsibilities were clarified with the assistance of "Responsibility Charts" and "Implementation Subroutines." Finally, schedules and budgets were revised with "Bar Charts" and a "Master ASSP Physical and Financial Implementation Schedule." Throughout, an attempt was made to develop a functioning ASSP team, and subteams, that could continue to function effectively and respond to implementation changes as they occurred. The February 1980 follow-up trip concentrated on working with the ASSP team to modify the implementation plan, and develop an internal review and reporting function.

In summary, the implementation consultancies were intended to be instrumental in developing an effectively functioning joint ASSP implementation team of USAID-GOK-contract personnel, given time and resource constraints.

D. Results of the Team Approach

From 1980 to 1982, several assessments including a formal evaluation and various informal reviews were made of the effects of the team approach to implementation effort. The discussion here relies on these sources. The first review of the implementation system development effort was built into PCI's original contract, and was made by the senior staff of PCI in October 1979.[1] The senior staff saw the overall effort as positive, but

[1] See "PCI Senior Level Comments and Suggestions: ASSP Implementation System and Manual," submitted to K. Eubanks, October 1979.

incomplete in several respects. First, the "system" was actually not yet a system because the focus of the effort was too USAID staff oriented. Second, the Manual of modules, diagrams and charts was not entirely self-explanatory. Only those closely involved in the planning process could be expected to understand the manual and use it. Third, the system was potentially versatile enough to extend to the other ASSP actors, but this would not be done automatically and without additional assistance.

Another assessment of the effort was made in April 1980 by PCI following the follow-up visit to the USAID mission to review implementation progress in February 1980. Reflecting on the system, the director of the installation effort stated,

> "Key to the success of the installation effort is the periodic clarification of objectives and a shared agreement among key actors on important objectives and activities. In the final analysis the system is probably most valuable to the individuals in AID who are most concerned both about development and being professionals. At minimium, therefore, this approach allows them to make professional judgements with respect to the use of their own time and it helps them in communicating and justifying their activities to others... Even in lieu of a (strong) commitment from Washington or from high levels in the Bureau or the Mission, the installation of a system such as this can still assist the project officer in AID to do the job that he is committed to doing in a more timely, efficient and effective manner.
>
> ...Given this perspective, one should not judge the success of the system based only upon an assessment of whether the charts are being used on a day to day basis or whether they are being updated regularly over a longer period of time. Rather, the ultimate success of the system should be viewed in terms of whether individuals working on the project more clearly understand their specific roles and responsibilities and have at their disposal a set of operational criteria based on time, cost, and performance for deciding what activities to emphasize and to de-emphasize on a day to day basis."[1] (Emphasis in original)

[1] Letter from M. Ingle of PCI to D. Christensen of USAID/Kenya dated April 3, 1980.

In 1982 a formal evaluation of ASSP was conducted (DPMC: 1982). This evaluation found that the ASSP implementation system improvement approach was valuable in several respects. First, the approach allowed USAID and GOK personnel, who were caught up in the day-to-day routines, to step back and reach a tentative consensus on project and subproject objectives, responsibilities, and preferred phasing of activities. Second, and possibly most importantly, the approach assisted implementation staff to learn about the lead times associated with different USAID procedures of contracting and participant training. Third, the approach pointed up major flaws in the initial design concerned with both the unrealistic project completion date at 6-1/2 years, and unrealistic internal USAID workload levels within the first two years of the project. As a result, more realistic expectations were forged and accepted by the Mission leadership. Finally, the team effort set out the boundaries of an implementation effort agreed to by the GOK, USAID, and key contract staff. As the USAID project officer reported to us, the system greatly facilitated internal reviews, and in essence has given the agriculture office what the system was intended to do—"provide a plan to deviate from."

On the other hand, again according to early predictions, the USAID implementation manual and numerous detailed charts and diagrams developed by the consultancy team did not--with the exception of one or two individuals involved in the original development process—find sustained use. This point is clearly made in a recent memorandum suggesting how the ASSP implementation system should be revised.[1] The report states that the

[1]Memo from J. Finnell to C. Hash, "Revised Management Information System (MIS)," dated Jan 20, 1982.

manual and charts were "...for the most part ignored by the Agriculture Division due to its complexity and seemingly irrelevant information." The report goes on to outline a simpler system "...which has been reduced to include only those components which are deemed relevant to day-to-day project implementation."

In summary, the assessments of the implementation improvement effort is mixed, but generally favorable. The evaluation also points out that the ASSP, since 1980, has had fewer implementation difficulties than other USAID efforts even though the ASSP is extremely complex and encompasses a myriad of time-consuming implementation arrangements. One plausible, though only partial, explanation for this success is that the project benefited from the team approach to implementation planning.

III. ANALYSIS AND REFLECTION: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

A. Findings and Conclusions

What insights are contained in this Kenyan experience that can assist us in answering the two salient development issues presented at the outset of this paper? That is, does an approach exist that demonstrates the potential for bringing about significant management improvements in the implementation of a specific development effort, and if so, is this approach promising from a broader African development management perspective? We now move to an analysis of these two issues, using the Kenyan case as a point of reference.

1. Issue #1: Did the team approach to implementation demonstrate potential for improving management in the context of the ASSP development effort?

Reflecting on the ASSP experience discussed above, the conclusion to this question is "a cautious yes". The voiced caution stems from the evidence relating to the actual use of the team approach, most of which is but some of which is not, supportive. An analysis of the findings supporting this conclusion are presented below.

The evidence supporting a 'yes' conclusion on the demonstrated management improvements associated with the team approach is substantial. This evidence falls into four categories: (1) the team approach was feasible in the Kenyan context; (2) the key actors in the process—Kenyans, USAID Officers,

and contractors—viewed the effort as both necessary and worthwhile; (3) USAID officials improved the ASSP implementation arrangements during and following the implementation planning sessions; and (4) there is some indication that the longer term implementation performance of the ASSP project is better than other USAID projects that did not adopt the team approach. An analysis of these points is presented below.

The evidence strongly supports the finding that the team approach to implementation was feasible or doable in the ASSP context. The consultant team, working closely with key actors of the project, was able to quickly and professionally clarify the complex hierarchy of ASSP objectives, develop a more realistic time schedule for implementation than was presented in the Project Agreement, facilitate a consensus on implementation roles and responsibilities, and devise a system of monitoring and evaluation. A main factor contributing to the approach's feasibility was that the methodology, and supporting documentation for such implementation planning interventions, had already been partially developed and refined in other project contexts. (Practical Concepts Incorporated: 1978) What made the ASSP effort unique was the large number of components designed into the project, each with its own procedural and contractional implementation arrangements. Still, using a simple and refined implementation planning methodology, the consultants were able to quickly identify key actors in each project area, involve them in the implementation planning process, and work with them to modify initial plans and agree on detailed execution actions as needed.

A second indicator that the team effort had a positive impact on the ASSP management is the support and judgement given by a wide cast of key ASSP actors at the time of the effort. As the implementation log of the 1979 effort documents, not only did a host of USAID, Kenyan and contractor ASSP-related personnel become actively involved in the team planning sessions, but they also participated actively and gave their strong support for this type of effort. Throughout the initial consultancy, participation in the planning process was both frequent and engaged. (Rondinelli and Ingle: 1982) The final briefing of the consultancy was well attended by a broad cross section of USAID and host country personnel, and major consultancy recommendations were supported as being in the best interest of the ASSP implementation effort.

During and immediately following the initial consultancy period, the USAID project staff working with their Kenyan counterparts and contractors, effectively replanned the implementation of the ASSP along more realistic lines and began to act on the basis of the new arrangements. These changes were evident in almost every component of the ASSP. The revisions began with developing 17 "sub-routines" based on the operational procedures followed by the key actors in carrying out the technical assistance, training, procurement actions of the effort. They extended to gaining a new consensus on the central ASSP Purpose. The modifications also resulted in an internal USAID reshuffling of implementation roles and responsibilities, and the installation of a pilot project monitoring system devised during the follow-up consultancy in early 1980.

Finally, on close inspection, there is substantial indication that the team approach strengthening action, although limited in its scope and time-frame, has contributed to an overall improvement in the long term implementation performance of the ASSP project, and to several other improvements in the USAID Mission to Kenya. The 1982 evaluation team found, for instance, that on balance this complex development effort had moved through its start-up phase with fewer problems and delays than other smaller projects in the Mission. This performance record is in marked contrast to the situation, and most future predicitions, found by the consultancy team in late 1979. Supportive evidence of the positive long-term impact of the team approach includes: (a) the Mission has adopted and is using a variant of the project monitoring system piloted in conjunction with the ASSP implementation strengthening action; (b) USAID officials who were actually involved in the 1979 effort still judge it to have been useful; and (c) there is some indication that time estimates associated with project sub-routines, initially developed in the ASSP effort, have improved on a Mission-wide basis. This is confirmed by looking at the estimates made in connection with a rural health project that was recently designed. (Ingle and Brinkerhoff: 1982)

On the non-supportive evidence, several points can be made. As has been pointed out on several occasions—first in early 1980 and again in 1982—the charts and manuals developed in conjunction with the implementation consultancy have not been widely used. To the ASSP evaluators, this fact is not as negative as it first may appear. For one thing, it was not the initial intent of the consultancy team to have the charts and diagrams

widely used. The major reason for the charts instead, was to facilitate learning, build team consensus, and serve as a record and benchmark for later project modifications and revisions. In fact the consultants urged from the outset to not follow the charts as if they were blueprints, but rather to use them as something to deviate from in the replanning that should occur at least on a quarterly basis.

The other non-supportive fact is that the "team process" initiated during the intensive implementation planning consultancies were neither formally institutionalized in the USAID Mission or effectively extended beyond the USAID project personnel to other key actors in the Kenyan government or the contractor's organizations. Although a 'formal' team process was not evident in 1982, there were several indicators of improved informal interpersonal relationships. For example, the communication channels between the ASSP officers and other USAID personnel in training and financial management remained much improved over what was found in late 1979.

2. <u>Issue #2: Is the team approach to implementation promising from a broader African development management perspective?</u>

This second issue is more difficult to assess. On balance, the judgement on the promise of the team approach for making improvements in a wide range of development situations is "a cautious maybe". The caution should be modified with "it's worth a try, especially give the available options!" Again, there is both supportive and non-supportive evidence for this conclusion.

In support of the position that a team approach is promising as a management improvement approach in the African context, several points can be made. First is the obvious fact that while most development efforts, i.e., programs, projects, and institutional operations, require the integrated action of various groups and actors, prevailing public sector management improvement approaches, including training and consulting efforts, are primarily focused on individual managers. By design, the team approach starts with the type of integrated action that will be required for development efforts to perform successfully.

A second attribute in favor of the team approach is that it fuses mobilization and full utilization of existing capacity with the building of new, task oriented and purposive institutional capacity. A common feature in many prevalent institutional strengthening approaches is that they favor development of new capacity while overlooking the proper and full use of existing resources. The team approach differs by beginning with the current situation and building on what works in that context. In this institutional strengthening process two interdependent activities are evident. Local capacity is fully mobilized in accomplishing purposive development related tasks. Concurrently, team members learn new management competencies and gain confidence in their ability to use these skills in future work situations. This process is what is being referred to as the "performance approach to institutional strengthening" (Management Development Working Group: 1981). The importance of this approach for the African context, where both available human capacity and resources to develop additional capacity are extremely limited, should be immediately evident. Notably, African

countries cannot afford any approach other than one that is fused in a way similar to the one explained here.

A third supportive reason for the maybe conclusion is the initial experience with approximations of the team approach in other African and non-African contexts. Variants of the team approach discussed here are now being introduced and experimented with in a number of other locations, and the initial results are quite promising. (Korten: 1982; Kettering: 1980; Cooley: 1981; Ingle et al: 1983) In almost unanimous fashion, the evidence emerging from these other experiences in Africa and other continents strongly supports the conclusion that a team approach, if introduced systematically and under appropriate conditions, can be both a feasible and effective means for improving development management.

The final supportive evidence for the potential of the team approach in the African context is the fact that substantial research and development attention is continuing to be given to documenting the specific attributes of this approach and the conditions under which it appears to be cost-effective. (Blake and Mouton: 1981; DPMC: 1983) The main sponsor of this research is the Agency for International Development's Office of Multisectoral Development in the Science and Technology Bureau. The mechanism for this support is AID's Performance Management Project being carried out by DPMC and the National Association for Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA). It is expected that several technical reports will be prepared on the team approach--also referred to as the Performance or Guidance System Improvement Approach--over the next couple of years.

However, several factors argue against the team approach finding widespread use throughout Africa. First, in much of Africa a strong preference for management approaches that are less integrative and innovative than the team approach appears to continue (Balogun: N.d.). The prevalent approaches differ from the team approach in that they are more individualistic, formal, static, narrow, and rational in their orientation. These approaches underlie the current technical assistance programs of many international and bilteral foreign aid programs.

Another, more insidious, condition that argues against the widespread use of a team approach in Africa is the almost ubiquitous attitude one finds about management improvement--of any sort! In the last thirty years many improvement efforts have been tried with seemingly little beneficial impact. Thus, there is a conditioned perspective operative among country and donor agency personnel alike that poor management is something that just has to be accepted. This makes it extremely difficult for an innovative approach to be accepted, even in a pilot mode, and strongly argues for both a wider dissemination of successful efforts and the need to build early cycles of 'pay-as-you-go by demonstrable success' into new efforts.

B. Development Management Implications

For those who argue that management is a major constraint to developmental progress in Africa, but that there is little that can be done about it, there is some cautious optimism in the Kenya ASSP team approach to implementation experience. On the basis of existing evaluative research data, it appears that the implementation system consultancy resulted in both short- and long-run management improvements.

On balance, it is likely that the approach would have had even more substantial impact if several additional activities--now entirely feasible as demonstrated by their inclusion into applications of the team approach in other countries--could have been designed into the ASSP effort. These additional attributes of the team effort include:

- Building in mechanisms from the outset to assure that the formal team process would be sustained;
- Developing from the beginning, the competencies of additional local facilitators to continue the iterative implementation planning process;
- Building in better feedback mechanisms on the efficacy of the approach so that good management would not be taken as a given and begin once again to be neglected; and,
- Assuring that the amount of specific management attention varies with the needs of the actual tasks to be performed.

This last point is especially important. Management--a function--is a variable which depends on the nature of the management task. In program implementation, therefore, there are two apsects of management to be considered. First, there is an overall required level of management or guidance function which is "predetermined" by the complexity (needs for integration and coordination among key actors in an environmental context) built into the initial design. Second, the Kenya ASSP project also suggests that management tasks vary throughout implementation, and must be constantly reassessed. Like other aspects of implementation, management should <u>not</u> be considered as a one time, or continuous, function.

If cautious optimism is suggested for the team approach, then several implications are immediately evident. What we have now to base our conclusions on is a combination of strong ordinary knowledge compiled by a number of development professionals, and several initial case studies

including the current one. We now need a more rigorous research and development effort to carefully document the attributes of the approach, and to begin systematically exploring the institutional and societal conditions under which this approach does and does not appear to be feasible and cost-effective. At the outset, the main objective of this research effort should be to learn efficient ways for supporting variants of the team approach in different settings. This can probably occur best by using one country experience to educate the judgement and intuition of consultants working in other locations. Eventually, our goal should be to develop a broader based theory of management improvement.

REFERENCES

1. AID. Kenya: Agricultural Systems Project Paper (615-0169). Vol. I & II. June 1978

2. Balogun, M.J., "Typologies of Management Improvement", UDC 35.075.5:651.01

3. Blake, W. and J. Mouton, Productivity: The Human Dimension, AMACOM, 1981

4. Cooley, L., "A Collaborative System for Planning and Monitoring the Implementation of Donor Assisted Projects", Management Systems International, Inc., Wash. DC, 1982

5. Development Project Management Center, "FY 1983 Workplan for Performance Management Research", Mimeographed, OICD/USDA, Jan. 1983

6. Development Project Management Center, "Evaluation of the Kenya Agriculture Systems Support Project (ASSP): Final Report", OICD/USDA, July 1982

7. Ingle, M.D. and D. Brinkerhoff, "Kitui Rural Health Project: Implementation Start-up Consultancy", DPMC/OICD/USDA, 1982

8. Ingle, M.D., L. Cooley, S. Watts, and N. Leifer, "Agricultural Systems Support Project (ASSP): USAID Implementation Manual", Vol. I and II, Practical Concepts Incorporated, Dec. 1979

9. Ingle, M., W. Owen and D. Spears, "Management Development in Agriculture: Program Review and Workshop", Development Project Management Center, OICD/USDA, April 1983

10. Ingle, M., T. Riley, and C. Wheatley, "Improving Performance of the Tanzania Rural Development Bank: Training of Trainers in Management", Prepared for the USDA Workshop on "Evolving Technologies for Project Management Improvement", Wash. DC, Jan. 1981

11. Ingle, M., D. Rondinelli, and T. Riley, Managing Benefits for the Poor: Approaches, Strategies and Recommendations for Improvement. S&T/RAD/AID, April 1981

12. Kettering, M. "Action-Training in Project Planning and Management: The Jamaica Experience, DPMC/OICD/USDA, 1980

13. Korten, D.C., "The Working Group as a Mechanism for Managing Bureaucratic Reorientation: Experience from the Philippines", Mimeographed, March 1982

14. Leonard, David K. Reaching the Peasant Farmers; Organization Theory and Practice in Kenya. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971

15. Management Development Working Group, Management Development Strategy Paper: AID's Response to the Implementation Needs of the 1980's. S&T/RAD/AID, June 1981

16. Moris, J. Managing Induced Rural Development, International Development Institute, Indiana Univ., 1981

17. Practical Concepts Incorporated, Kenya ASSP: Log of USAID Implementation System Installation. December 1979

18. Practical Concepts Incorporated, "Training of Trainers in Managrment Materials and Applications", Washington, D.C., 1978

19. Rondinelli, D. and M. Ingle, "Improving the Implementation of Development Programmes: Beyond Administrative Reform" in Cheema, G.S., Ed., Institutional Dimensions of Regional Development, Maruzen Press, Vol. 8, 1981

20. Solomon, M.J., M. Kettering, P. Countryman, and M. Ingle, "Promising Approaches to Project Management Improvement", Development Project Management Center, OICD/USDA, May 1981

21. Stamp, G., "Levels and Types of Managerial Capability", Journal of Management Studies, 18, 3, 1981

22. Vaill, P.B., "The Purposing of High-Performing Systems", Organizational Dynamics, Autumn, 1982