



**United States
Department of
Agriculture**

Office of
International
Cooperation and
Development

Washington, D.C.
20250

Development Program Management Center



SOME LESSONS FROM THE TANZANIA
TRAINING FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (TRD)

by

J. Polcy

February 1985

AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
PPC/CDIE/DI REPORT PROCESSING FORM

ENTER INFORMATION ONLY IF NOT INCLUDED ON COVER OR TITLE PAGE OF DOCUMENT

1. Report Number

[Empty box]

2. Contract/Grant Number

PPSA

3. Publication Date

Feb. 1985

4. Document Title/Translated Title

Some lessons from the Tanzania Training for Rural Development Project (TRD)

5. Author(s)

1. Foley, J.
2.
3.

6. Contributing Organization(s)

USAID - OICD

7. Pagination

6 p.

8. Project/Subproject No.

621-0161
631-0149

9. Sponsoring AID Office

SIT/RD

10. Abstract (optional - 250 word limit)

5 936-5317

11. Subject Keywords (optional)

1.
2.
3.

12. Supplementary Notes

[Empty box]

13. Submitting Official

Countryman, Pierrette

Telephone No.

653 7400

14. Today's Date

5/3/85

15. DOCID

[Empty box]

16. Document Disposition

DO NOT write below this line
DOCRD () INV () DUPLICATE ()

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. Introduction
- II. Project Design
- III. Project Implementation
- IV. Conclusion

FOREWORD

Janet Poley, on assignment from USDA's Office of International Cooperation and Development (OICD), was the advisor of the Tanzania Training for Rural Development Project (TRD) from its inception in 1979 until the end of the project in 1986. The six years, two phase TRD Project was designed to develop a rural development training system focused on increasing agricultural production and income levels in regions with high potential for agricultural production.

A systems approach to the project design from Phase I with training provided at multiple levels: villager, trainers of villagers, district and regional managers, and national level policy makers. The project has trained approximately 5,000 villagers, 100 village trainers and 500 managers. All training is based on needs assessment and uses adult education and experiential learning methods. Content areas include management, planning, agriculture, livestock, material resources, home economics, community development and cooperators. At present, effort is directed toward institutionalizing the project and enhancing capabilities of Tanzania trainers.

A quotation from the mid-term evaluation report on TRD gives a good indication of the nature of the TRD project and its kinship with the approaches of OICD:

The TRD management training is based on the premise that training can lead to changes in attitudes and behaviors when teams of colleagues receive the same training and that training is phased and punctuated with follow-ups. This overcomes the often encountered problem of trained individuals not being able to utilize newly acquired skills and knowledge because of inflexibility in their working environment.

Also, TRD demonstrates the power of adult education methods centered on experiential, problem-solving techniques to evoke change. It shows that these methods are applicable to working with highly educated people as well as illiterate villagers. The strength of this educational approach is using the trainee as the focal point. The trainee is actively involved in the learning process.

This paper is a succinct presentation of management lessons which OICD's Development Program Management Center (DPMC) recommends as applicable to people working in development. OICD is pleased to make it available. All of us in OICD applauded when Janet Poley received the Excalibur Award for excellence in service in 1983.

JOAN S. WALLACE
Administrator
Office of International
Cooperation and Development

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to describe some successful aspects of Tanzania's Education and Human Resources (EHR) funded Training for Rural Development Project (TRD), highlighting some simple things that have contributed as much to the project's success as the things we usually talk about at official conferences like policy, strategy, institutionalization and replication.

TRD is fortunate because the project had an impeccable design, was based soundly on strategy considerations, was guided daily by the log frame, applied state-of-the-art knowledge and was fiscally pure and responsible. The more than 3000 project implementors and participants were all perfect, highly trained and never without a smile.

Seriously, field reality (at least the way I perceive it) and the way we talk about it often seem pretty far apart. Sometimes the most important dimensions of what we are doing get overlooked and very important contributors to project success and failure don't get written down or discussed. Some learnings that have come from TRD seem worth passing on, if only as a reminder that they can make a big difference. Most of the following is not theoretically new and many of these are easy to say and often not so easy to do.

Learnings (or ideas) applying to program or project design are presented in one section; and those applying to program/project implementation in a second section. All the ideas are being (or were) used with TRD. A number of them constitute the TRD philosophy and belief system. As was pointed out in the best selling In Search of Excellence, having a philosophy and belief system that is articulated and known is an important characteristic of productive American businesses. We have found it to be important to managing a successful development project.

Project Design

1. Real collaborative planning between USAID designers and the host government is critical to implementation. People have long given lip service to this, yet frequently it is not done because it requires time and designers who know how to be collaborative and use those skills. It also requires USAID Project Officers who know their way around the host country and can bring U.S. TDY designers and the right host country officials together. Time lost in slowing down design to do collaborative planning will be gained in implementation commitment.
2. Continuity of capable personnel, both American and host country, from design through implementation helps a great deal.
3. Flexibility and mechanisms for continual redesign of approaches, methods and other elements to reach the goals are important. (This is sometimes called a "rolling design," which does not mean "loose design.")
4. A "moving with" strategy for program/project development is usually more successful than a "moving against," bargaining, or confrontation approach. Hostility breeds hostility, not a very effective environment in which to attempt development and change. If you can start the design around an area where there is already host country energy, commitment and desire to change (in Tanzania, grassroots rural development was such an area), and supplement this with the rolling design approach, you lay groundwork which facilitates expansion from the base area all parties agree needs to be worked on, into other improvement areas. (For TRD this has meant starting with village/farmer training, then training rural development managers at all levels of the system, then training policy makers, moving to substantive discussions with policy makers, then to planning work on cooperative and local government development in the country.)
5. Analyze the broad system early in the design process and cultivate a sense of interaction patterns. This can be critically important to avoid making political or administrative mistakes that could kill implementation. (Locating TRD's Coordination Office in a small neutral ministry rather than in the Ministry of Agriculture or the Prime Ministers's Office was a strategy based on systems analysis in the design process to support our task of developing interministerial cooperation.)
6. Learn from others' mistakes. Look for patterns in past failures and attempt a design to overcome real elements of the system right from the start.
7. Design teams should write well, quickly and briefly to allow rapid sharing of materials while in country. This alone can increase dialogue and communication. Too many design teams stay in country only long enough to gather data then take the data home for analysis, thus disallowing a forum for discussion. Small, technically competent teams with good writing and human relations skills can greatly assist in achieving collaborative planning (No.1 above).

Project Implementation

1. People make projects work. Selecting the right people (U.S. and host country) to design and implement the program or project is the most important project decision. Criteria for selection should include more than technical skills and experience. Both U.S. and host country personnel should demonstrate enthusiasm for development work; the host country personnel as well as the U.S. technicians should have a genuine concern for the well being of the country and of its people; U.S. technicians should look forward to going to a specific country, to exploring it, to meeting with its people and learning about their culture. Too often we have not applied these criteria in selecting project personnel particularly U.S. technicians.
2. Human relation skills are important, but sincerity and a genuine dedication to development that can be perceived by colleagues can sometimes compensate for less than perfect human relation skills.
3. People who know themselves, their values, their strengths and weaknesses, and can admit them non-defensively and who respect others', generally are better development workers.
4. People who have a bias for action, for getting on with it, backed by sound intellectual reasoning, are critical. U.S. technicians with this bias coupled with good transfer skills can help move a seemingly paralyzed system. Many programs suffer from too much talk and not enough action.
5. Development people need to be willing to do whatever needs to be done (drive a Landrover, collate papers, type, pay bills, help someone's sick child, deliver messages, hitch a ride in the field). These characteristics are important for both U.S. and host country people and are particularly critical if the technician is supposed to be transferring this development sense to host country colleagues. In fragile environments, such as we find in Africa (left in many cases with rigid colonial organization systems), often it is the U.S. technician who must make the first move in the direction of the practical doing.
6. U.S. technicians are to transfer skills, not solve other peoples problems for them. The job of an expatriate technician is to help people become independent, i.e. help them build their skills, learn problem solving and policy development processes, rather than completing tasks for them or giving solutions for their problems or the "correct" policy. This requires the capability to experience satisfaction through the accomplishments of others and support the public recognition of these achievements.
7. Team building and paying attention to personal chemistry are important. Too often good people (host country and American) get locked into relationships that have to be close to perform their work even though they just don't like each other and never will. To succeed, a project has to pay attention to this and have available ways to move people around and -- in some cases -- out, in order to stay on track to achieve goals.

On the issue of team building (which is related to No.3), much can be done to assist team members to know themselves and each other. TRD has found the Myers Briggs Type Indicator to be an excellent tool for fostering team understanding and for forming work groups around strengths. It can reveal insights to cultural tendencies; information necessary for anyone trying to function as a change agent.

8. Spend time in the field; stay overnight in a village home. Successful rural development efforts in most African countries means difficult traveling and lots of it. But family issues and attitudes often deter both U.S. and host government officials from spending enough time in the field. Rural development rarely happens in the capital city. However, policy and money decisions often get made in the capital by people who rarely see a farmer or know what problems village women face.
9. Keep long-term in-country technical assistance teams as small as possible and don't locate all of them in the same place. Large TA teams living close together form groups that take on a life of their own which interferes with communication and development of real relationships with host country colleagues. Administrative support requirements go up exponentially with large in-country teams. Often a well qualified chief of party can't get to the technical work because he/she spends full time on administration. In cases where large teams are necessary, don't make best technical advisor chief of party; or, if you must, give him/her an administrative coordinator.
10. Rules and norms for cooperative work should be clear, specific, direct and frequently renegotiated (particularly with the inevitability of personnel changes). In many cases, perceptions of "The Rules" are strikingly different along the project implementation chain of actors: USAID Director, USAID Project Officer, U.S. Chief of Party, Host Country Policy Makers and Host Country Implementors. All American personnel in the system should know USAID policies and procedures and, over time, host country colleagues also should develop a good working knowledge of them. Damage to programs and projects can often be done (sometimes intentionally, sometimes unintentionally) as people stand behind the rule book.
11. Don't assume that something can't be done just because everybody tells you it can't. TRD has worked consistently on the premise that things can be done (related to No.4, A Bias for Action). A TRD example: people said, "You can't mix principal secretaries, high level regional officials and district officials in the same management course." Lots of reasons were given, but the project said, "Let's try it. Without vertical communication, managerial problems here just can't be solved." It worked and has been one of the major contributing factors in on-the-job implementation of the project managerial skills training.
12. Get policy makers involved (not just courtesy or pro forma) early. The training environment provides a good place to build relationships, learn to understand each other's point of view, discuss sensitive issues and lay the foundation for future problem solving. TRD's Executive Management Training Seminar built such a base.

13. Don't let experience go by without examining and analyzing it. In TRD the Experiential Learning Model formed the basis for nearly everything we did. The model embodies a cycle for learning. Simply stated, using a training session as an example, the model says an experience happens or is created; people are given an opportunity to reflect on it, discuss it, investigate implications; people are then helped to generalize and draw principles to guide future action from the event; and, finally the principles are applied and tested in real life. This approach can help a great deal in turning mistakes and managerial problems into opportunities for learning. Redirecting time and energy to learning of this type rather than blaming is productive.
14. Planning, replanning and replanning again is critical. Planning should be collaborative and participatory. TRD's experience has been that with each replanning cycle the job gets easier; participants learn the process of planning.
15. Keep things as simple as possible, build in redundancies and repeat activity series. Systematic processes applied, reapplied and "shown to work" will usually get adopted. In training, this means don't expect "one shot" courses to do much. Bring people together, let them practice, follow-up, examine what happens, come together again, etc. Too many training programs are artificial, unrelated to the environment and carry exaggerated expectations of what really will be applied.
16. Help build common language around concepts you are introducing among people who need to work together (related to No.7, Team Building). Training personnel from vertical slices of organizations and developing common language among them, foster and reinforce behavioral change. TRD found this to be very important to the adoption of managerial behavior change. TRD provided an example where subordinates' time was wasted because a boss would continually interrupt meetings to accept phone calls. After TRD managerial training, it became legitimate for subordinates to kid the boss about "time wasters" and usually a stop was put to the phone calls.

While doing field follow-up after management training, the new words or jargon you hear being used can be a guide as to what stuck, and what images or training techniques seemed to be particularly appealing. A favorite in Tanzania came from a humorous, but serious American article on delegation titled "Who Has the Monkey". (Incidentally, American training staff almost didn't use it, because they weren't sure it was culturally appropriate). It worked, and also guided project staff to a deeper understanding of how ideas might be presented in the future.

17. Expect everything to go wrong, but tell others you think it will work. This view of the world and this type of separation is far preferable to cynicism. Cynics can hinder rather than help development processes. Publicly stating you think something will work and generating that belief in others can be a partial cause of it working. By keeping personal expectations low, you save yourself from frustration, anger and despair and are in a better position to guide what learning can come out of the "disaster". Humor and developing inside jokes save many a situation.

18. Don't collect information for the sake of collecting information. Everybody wants to know everything. Donors want data, host countries want data, you want data. TRD started collecting too much data, couldn't rapidly analyze it and found much was outdated before it could be fed back into the system. We worked toward improving the system: we tried to reduce the amount of data collected and to simplify the process; we defined the use of the data before collecting it. To facilitate and speed up these tasks we introduced the use of computers. During the development of this information system, we lowered our expectations in order to achieve realistic outcomes.
19. Keep building toward a "critical mass" but not in random scattered fashion, such as "shot gunning" long-term academic participants all over the United States. While participants do come back with useful education and some common experience with our system, most likely they will also be scattered back into their system. When scattered, they are less effective. A critical mass is developed as people who work together come to common agreements and understandings about how things can and will be done. Building a critical mass requires long time frames and clarity among the participants about what they are a "mass" to do.

Conclusion

In short, development takes patience, love, hard work, willingness to go the extra mile, flexibility and openness to change and new experiences.

In the area of Education and Human Resource Development I argue for: practical approaches (well grounded in research from a variety of fields); more flexibility in design; treating methods such as participant training and third country training as tools, not ends in themselves; better selection of both Americans and host country officials to do the job of development; and an approach to policy dialogue (based on what we currently know about human beings) that has a real chance of working.