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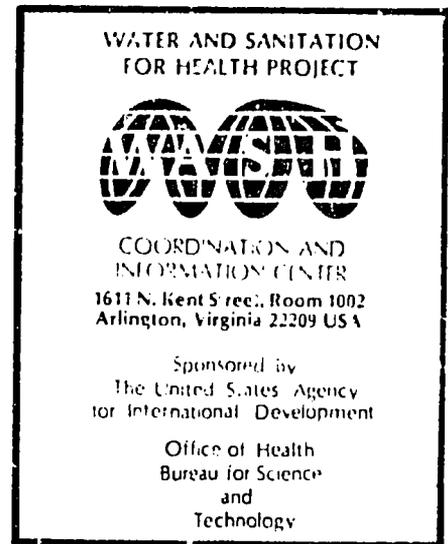
THE ROLE OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
IN A TECHNICAL PROJECT PROVIDING
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

by

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and

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ABSTRACT

In the past few years, increasing attention has been paid to the role of human resource development (HRD) in international development. This paper describes a USAID-financed technical project in water and sanitation and discusses the role of HRD in that project. Lessons learned in establishing the HRD function are discussed in terms of their application to other technical projects in developing countries. Finally, some thoughts are provided on the roles of HRD professionals in international development work.

International foreign assistance has played a significant part in the foreign policies of developed countries in relation to Third World countries for over thirty years. The emphasis of United States foreign assistance has alternatively stressed a combination of commodities, technologies, and the transfer of knowledge and skills. The latter has included participant training, college and university affiliations between countries, and a wide variety of educational training and human resource development (HRD) approaches. This paper discusses an approach to these vital elements of technical assistance and reviews some of the experiences and lessons learned about the role of human resource development in a USAID-financed technical project.

The Project

Of the many critical problems in the Third World today, those of safe drinking water and adequate sanitation affect nearly a billion people. The United Nations, in recognition of this problem, declared 1981-1990 the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade. The result has been a worldwide effort to provide safe drinking water and sanitation to all by 1990.

As one response to the the "Water Decade", the U.S. Agency for International Development in 1980 established the Water and Sanitation for Health (WASH) Project as a way of helping developing countries deal with the broad ranging problems related to water supply and sanitation. Because AID does not have enough in-house water supply and sanitation specialists to address these problems, the WASH Project was created to provide inter-disciplinary technical assistance and information services.

Since the fall of 1980, the WASH Project has provided short term technical assistance to 49 countries. Its rapid response mechanism has made it possible to field consultants within days, but on average, within weeks from the receipt of a request from an AID Mission. WASH brings expertise in planning and management, economics, engineering, anthropology, sociology, public health, and training to bear on the problems of developing low cost water supplies and sanitation systems for developing countries.

WASH services are available not only to AID Missions overseas and AID/Washington offices but also to other international agencies, host country government agencies, non-governmental organizations, Peace Corps, and other U.S. agencies in developing countries if WASH services are sponsored by the AID Mission in the country.

The WASH Project is managed by Camp Dresser and McKee, Inc., the largest environmental engineering consulting firm in the U.S., and by its coordination and information staff made up of 21 individuals. There are also four subcontractors: International Science and Technology Institute; Research Triangle Institute; the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (School of Public Health); and the Georgia Institute of Technology - Engineering Experiment Station. In addition to utilizing personnel from the above organizations, WASH also draws heavily from a large pool of independent consultants.

WASH provides services in four major areas related to rural and urban-fringe water and sanitation:

1. General Technical Assistance

WASH helps conceive and plan water and sanitation projects as well as trouble shooting problems and evaluating results on on-going projects.

2. Technology Transfer

WASH provides technical expertise in conceiving, manufacturing, adopting, marketing, and evaluating water supply and sanitation technologies such as handpumps and other appropriate low cost devices.

3. Human Resource Development

WASH provides a wide range of services in institutional development and human resource development including planning, curriculum development, training materials development, and design and delivery of workshops and conferences.

4. Information Support

WASH provides accurate and current information on technical, socio-economic, and health aspects of rural and urban fringe water supply and sanitation programs.

The mid-term evaluation of the WASH project now in progress has not yet been finished. However, AID Mission officers and project field staff have expressed

their nearly uniform support for the quality of staff and quickness of the WASH response to their requests.

Establishing the HRD Component in the Project

As one of the major components in the WASH Project, human resource development (HRD) is clearly an area of emphasis. Although in the first year of operation, a number of HRD tasks had been completed, it was generally agreed that WASH was not fulfilling its potential in that area. Consequently, a full-time training officer was appointed with the expectation that this person would further integrate HRD into project activities and expand HRD efforts.

In order to establish firmly the HRD function, it was important first to determine what major issues had to be addressed. Below is a list of the principal issues, which relate not only to the WASH Project itself, but also to the water supply and sanitation sector as a whole.

1. Most technically trained individuals do not have a basic understanding of HRD. Most of the decision-makers in the water and sanitation sector are engineers that have not been trained in HRD.
2. The usual mode of consultation is one of providing expertise rather than placing equal emphasis on the process. Since training consultancies are most effective when carried out in a process mode, the tendency towards expert consultancies has to be addressed.

3. Although many engineers appreciate and recognize the human and social aspects of water supply and sanitation problems, the tendency remains to look for technical solutions a priori.
4. HRD is often looked at in terms of products such as guidelines or manuals, rather than in terms of an approach to human development in which products serve as tools.

These issues are, of course, written from the perspective of an HRD professional. The issues could be expressed differently, of course, if this paper were written by a professional in a technical area. However, for the HRD professionals appointed to this technical project, these issues had to be addressed so as to establish firmly the HRD function.

An Approach to the Major Issues

In order to address the four principal issues raised in the preceding section, a set of goals was established. These goals were never formalized but served as a guide for Project responses to AID/Washington and field requests. These goals were as follows:

1. Establish a working relationship with key water sector HRD managers in other organizations (World Bank, Pan American Health Organization, World Health Organization, International Labor Organization, and International Reference Centre in The Hague).

2. Work closely with WASH Project and AID staff to mutually develop a fuller understanding of HRD.
3. Identify projects and supportive efforts that could be initiated by the WASH office.
4. Demonstrate in a field project(s) the value of fully addressing HRD issues and concerns.
5. Expand the WASH HRD consultant pool, especially those consultants with French and Spanish.

In the second year of the project, five areas within HRD emerged as the principal foci of activity. An attempt was made to use the preceding goals as a framework in responding to requests from the field and in proposing new initiatives. Described below are these five areas of HRD activity as well as a few specific examples in each area and the role that HRD professionals played in the activities.

- Workshops

Two training of trainers (TOT) workshops were held for subcontractor personnel from the Georgia Institute of Technology. The first workshop was a six-day beginning TOT and the second a more advanced three-day TOT. There were 10 participants in each workshop, all engineers with extensive field experience in developing countries yet with limited background in the social and behavioral sciences. These workshops were conducted by qualified trainers.

In the Dominican Republic in March-April 1983 two two-week workshops were conducted for Dominican community educators and Peace Corps Volunteers on planning low cost sanitation projects. The training staff for these workshops consisted of a sanitary engineer and a professional trainer in order to give equal focus to both content and process. These workshops also allowed WASH to pilot test a draft training manual on latrine construction it is currently developing.

In September 1982, WASH assisted the Provincial Water Authority (PWA) in Thailand to design and deliver a team building workshop. This workshop aimed to identify problem areas and negotiate agreement on ways to deal with those problems. The participants were the top 30 officials from the PWA.

- Conferences

In Tunisia in November, 1982 WASH helped the Ministry of Health organize an international conference on rural water supply and sanitation. A trainer designed the working group part of the conference, which took about one third of the conference time. This involved training Tunisian group leaders in how to use the force field analysis method of problem analysis and in monitoring the working groups during the conference.

In January 1983 WASH assisted the Central African Republic (CAR) in formulating a decade strategy for water and sanitation. As part of the activity, WASH hired a professional trainer to help the Central Africans design and implement a national seminar, which took place in May 1983. At the seminar the strategy was presented and discussed with government officials from all over the country.

- Training Materials

WASH is currently developing a set of four trainer manuals on the following technologies: latrine construction, handpump installation and maintenance, rainwater harvesting, and spring capping. Each manual contains all the information that a training team needs to plan and conduct a comprehensive, skill-building workshop including the workshop design, trainer guidelines, handouts, and instructional materials. Each manual has been developed by a team consisting of an engineer (as the technical expert) and a trainer (responsible for the instructional processes, workshop design, and overall presentation).

- HRD Planning

WASH has been developing guidelines for HRD planning in the water and sanitation sector. These guidelines, developed by an HRD planning specialist, detail all the steps necessary to estimate supply and demand and to formulate a plan to bridge the gap between available human resources and the needs.

A WASH team carried out an HRD planning assignment in Tanzania in March 1982. The team assessed the overall needs for personnel in environmental sanitation and made recommendations to meet the human resource needs.

- General Decade HRD

WASH has also been supporting overall Water Decade HRD efforts. For example, an HRD WASH consultant has written a proposal to train senior HRD managers in water and sanitation agencies in developing countries. The participants in the program would be those with overall responsible for HRD in their agencies. The purpose of the proposal is to stimulate interest and eventually serve as a basis for planning the training program suggested in the proposal.

Establishing the HRD Function in the Water Supply and Sanitation Sector in a Developing Country

Many of the lessons learned about establishing HRD activities in the WASH Project can be applied to the same problems throughout the water and sanitation sector or in general to most technical sectors in developing countries. What are these lessons?

1. It is important to have a key person with significant HRD expertise within an agency to coordinate and manage the HRD function.
2. The HRD manager must try to have a few early successes on which to build.
3. The HRD manager must have some personal and professional credibility. He/she should be seen as capable of carrying out many of the tasks he/she is managing.

4. Given the likelihood that many key decision-makers will be technically trained professionals, a patient but focused approach must be used to demonstrate the value of HRD.
5. A competent broadbased staff of HRD professionals must be developed to carry out the tasks. There is no substitute in training for competent trainers.
6. Over time a definition of HRD which covers all aspects including training should emerge so that the full potential of the HRD function can be realized. This definition, in addition to training, should include management, planning, and organizational development.

Conclusion: Role of HRD Professionals

What should HRD professionals do in order to become more involved in international development work? From our experience we would recommend the following:

1. Determine which organizations are supporting projects in developing countries.
2. Examine one's skills and experience in relation to what these organizations want.
3. Market ideas in needed areas.
4. Improve contacts.

Among the wide variety of agencies, organizations, and institutions working in international development, there are first the multilateral ones such as the United Nations Development Programme, the World Health Organization, the World Bank, and UNICEF. Most developed countries have foreign assistance organizations. Although USAID has for years been the largest foreign donor, the Germans, Japanese, Scandinavians, and the European Economic Community are rapidly enlarging their role in third world development. U.S. based private voluntary organizations such as CARE, Catholic Relief Service, Lutheran World Relief, and Save the Children, to name only a few, also have sizeable development projects around the world. The Peace Corps annually trains more than than 2,000 volunteers for work in the Third World. In addition, many consulting firms and universities have contracts with other U.S. agencies such as Agriculture and EPA. Many of these projects include training programs for third world participants.

The skills and experience of HRD consultants that are most needed by these organizations include foreign language competency, consulting skills, training design and delivery skills, training of trainers experience, HRD planning skills, cross-cultural sensitivity, and developing country work experience. The latter is strongly preferred but not required.

There is a tremendous need for more effective approaches to development projects and to third world government organizations. From our experience, some of the most important areas of need in which HRD professionals could contribute are organizational development, management training, supervisory training, planning and developing technical skill training, and developing models for training materials, trainer guides and job aids.

In order to increase marketability, it is recommended to develop contacts with development organizations and technical specialists. One strategy might be to team up with technical content specialists and with them prepare unsolicited proposals to donors or other funding organizations.

In conclusion, there is a growing recognition of the need for HRD professionals in international development work. In particular, managers of technical projects are becoming aware of this need. The WASH Project serves as an example of the opportunities that are available. In the future, we expect that the use of HRD professionals in technical projects in international development will continue to expand.

Fred Rosensweig
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WASH Project
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CASE STUDY

Establishing the HRD Function in a Technical Project

Background

Almost a billion people in the world do not have access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation. The United Nations, in recognition of this urgent need, declared 1981-1990 as the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, which has resulted in a worldwide effort to provide safe drinking water and sanitation for all by 1990.

As one response to the Water Decade, the U.S. Agency for International Development established the WASH (Water & Sanitation for Health) Project as a way of helping developing countries deal with their water and sanitation problems. Because AID does not have enough in-house water and sanitation specialists needed to address this problem, the WASH Project was created to provide interdisciplinary technical assistance and information services to AID field offices, projects and host government ministries.

The WASH Project provides short term technical assistance from one week to three months or more in duration. It is a rapid response mechanism that can field a consultant within weeks from the receipt of a request. WASH brings expertise in planning and management, economics, engineering, sociology, anthropology, public health, and training to bear on the problems of developing low cost water supply and sanitation for developing countries.

WASH services are available not only to AID missions overseas and AID/Washington offices, but also to other international agencies, host country government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and Peace Corps and other U.S. agencies in developing countries. WASH has worked in over 30 countries to date, and on additional developmental activities initiated by the WASH office.

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Provides technical expertise in conceiving, manufacturing, adopting, marketing, and evaluating water supply and sanitation technologies such as handpumps and other appropriate low cost devices.

3. Human Resource Development

Provides a wide range of services in institutional development and human resource development including HRD planning, curriculum development, training materials development, and design and operation of workshops, conferences, and other delivery mechanisms.

4. Information Support

Provides accurate and current information on technical, socio-economic, and health aspects of rural and urban fringe water supply and sanitation programs.

Project Personnel

The 21 full time staff of the WASH Coordination and Information Center include the following:

<u>Position</u>	<u>Qualification</u>
Project Director	Ph.D. Engineer
Associate Director	M.S. Engineer
Associate Director	M.D., Master in Public Health
Senior Project Officer	M.S. Geography
Senior Training Officer	M.A. Teaching English as a Second Language
Project Officer	M.S. Engineer
Information Director	B.A. Government and Economics
Librarian	M.S. Librarian
Administrative Officer	A.S. Engineer
Office Manager	B.S. Education
11 Support Staff	

The project is managed by the Division of Community Water Supply and Sanitation of the Office of Health in the Bureau of Science and Technology of AID. The Water Supply and Sanitation Division is a four person office consisting of three environmental engineers and a registered sanitarian. One of the engineers is the WASH Project Manager and another is very experienced and skilled in the area of HRD as applied to the water sector.

Human Resource Development

After one year of operation, despite a number of HRD tasks undertaken, it was generally agreed that WASH was not fulfilling its potential in the area of human resource development. Although a few major HRD tasks had been initiated some had met with only limited success. One task had been to work with the regional bureaus of AID to use a competency-based training approach in their water supply and sanitation projects. This task would entail a series of short workshops and follow-up activities. Another task was to develop a human resource development plan for the water sector in Jordan. A few creative initiatives were also started. One involved preparing a proposal to train developers of materials in a target country; the other was the design and delivery of a one day workshop to identify and assess skills of potential consultants.

In addition it had become increasingly clear to the staff that in order to respond to the growing number of training requests and deal more effectively with the human resource problems associated with introducing improved water and sanitation approaches in developing countries, a full-time training person was needed. A training officer was consequently hired. This person unlike the remainder of the WASH professional staff did not have a technical background in water and sanitation. He was hired for his training background and was expected to expand the HRD activities of the project.

The training officer was told informally that several months after he began work at WASH a significant increase in activities in the area of HRD was expected. His challenge was to integrate HRD approaches into what was essentially a technical project, but with an interdisciplinary emphasis and an appreciation for the importance of "software". It was the training officer's job to build on this appreciation in order to develop a solid program of activities in response to field HRD requests.

Questions

1. What would you expect the major difficulties of establishing the HRD function in a project run by technically trained individuals to be?
2. Put yourself in the place of the training officer. What would your two or three goals have been for your first three months on the job?
3. What areas of HRD would you have concentrated on (i.e. HRD planning, training of trainers, etc.)? Why?
4. What goals for the first 18 months would you have established?