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Tracking Down and Digging Up the Documents: Guidance for Research Within AID/W From a Low-Cost Health Delivery Project Documentation Search

by

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INTRODUCTION

Herein lies the tale of a frustrated search for knowledge--or at least for information.

That AID lacks an institutional memory has long been alleged. This paper will do little to dissuade the reader of the allegation's truth. Nevertheless, it does point to AID's fledgling and rather painfully slow attempt to create such a memory. One part of this attempt has been the creation of the Office of Development Information and Utilization in the Bureau for Development Support (DSB/DIU) which is described in the text below.

Another part of the attempt has been the creation of the Studies Division in the Office of Evaluation of the Bureau for Program and Policy Coordination (PPC/E/S). The Studies Division mandate has not been to amass historical documentation *per se*, but rather to utilize such documents in tandem with other investigatory sources and methods in order to assess the impact of AID projects and programs. Obviously, information cannot be assessed until it is gathered--and for this the Studies Division has relied on the services available from DSB/DIU in addition to its own staff's efforts. A basic premise of the Division is that new Studies or fieldwork should not be undertaken until existing information on a given subject has first been brought together and analyzed to determine what is already known and what critical gaps remain. A large amount of time, therefore, has been spent in searching for documents and the patience of the DSB/DIU staff has often been tried to the limits.

The particular quest which led to the writing of this paper was for that background information available in Washington, D.C., on low-cost health delivery or primary health care projects in the Latin America region. Originally the plan was to obtain project papers and evaluations. With time, the search was expanded to include a variety of other documents.

The overall goal was to lay the goundwork for a major cross-national study of factors that explain the effectiveness, or lack thereof, in low-cost health delivery programs--programs alternately referred to as primary health care, rural health delivery, and integrated health, family planning and nutrition projects. This functional area had earlier been designated by AID's Program Evaluation Committee as one of the five areas in which the newly-created Studies Division should initially concentrate. The Program Evaluation Committee is a coordinating body consisting of evaluation officers from each of the four regional bureaus, the Development Support Bureau, the Private and Development Cooperation Bureau, and the Central Office of Evaluation in the Program and Policy Coordination Bureau. It quickly became apparent that collection and preliminary analysis of project and evaluation documents for health delivery system projects in all four geographic regions would require a gargantuan effort of many months' duration. This is so because AID now has some 45 ongoing and planned projects identified as "integrated low-cost delivery projects" as well as a minimum of 115 health delivery projects and about 125 population and family planning projects that are not categorized as "integrated". In addition, it is clear that there are still other projects which should be included in this universe.

Having decided to limit the initial investigation to one region, Latin America was chosen for several reasons. First, by far the greatest number of the integrated health delivery system projects are in Latin America and Africa.[1] Second, of the four regional bureaus, the Latin America Bureau has developed the most effective system for project documentation retrieval and utilization. It should be noted that operationally, at this time, document storage is very decentralized. Finally, but also very importantly, Latin America is the region in which this particular researcher has had professional training.

In reading this paper, the following caveat should be kept in mind. One might assume that regardless what the functional or geographic areas for research might be, the process of document collection is fundamentally the same. However, although the process be the same or highly similar, from Bureau to Bureau, the places in which a particular type of document might be found are not. Each AID Bureau is structurally quite independent, and thus distinct, in matters of cataloging and storing project documents. Thus, while what follows describing the documents themselves (and the frustrations of the researcher) should be applicable throughout the Agency, it must be kept in mind that such document sources as the Capital Assistance Files are seemingly unique to the Latin America Bureau.

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[1] Of the 45 projects, 17 are in Sub-Saharan Africa, 16 are in Latin America, 7 are in Asia and 5 are in the Near East.

A final note of introduction concerns how a simple collection exercise became a working paper. Accomplishing the "simple" collection task proved so slow and nettlesome and soaked up so much time; rather than simply going on to work with the collected documents, it was decided to also describe and analyze the process of collection itself.

This paper, thus, is written in full awareness that there is nothing new here for the researcher who has painfully learned the system by trial and error but with great hopes that it might save new researchers much time and frustration--or at least prepare them for the muddy path ahead. It is also hoped that this paper might provide office managers with some idea of the amount of time document collection tasks involve in AID--and, therefore, provide them with a better sense of the costs versus the benefits of such use of scarce human resources. Last, the paper has been undertaken with the conviction that such efforts are indeed essential for developing and maintaining an institutional memory.

I. COLLECTION OF PROJECT PAPERS

Project papers ("PPs") are the basic documents of description in AID. There are sketches in the annual budget submissions, and the logical framework described later is a skeletal plan that tries to lay out the thinking behind the project design; but it is only in the project paper that a mission fleshes out and colors in its specific hopes for what a project will be and the problems it hopes to resolve.

The project paper (in the Latin America Bureau at least sometimes called a technical assistance or a capital assistance paper) never tells what in fact happened in a project. For that, one must rely on letters of implementation (which sculpture the project to fit changed or misestimated realities as the project progresses) and on evaluations, audits, and human memory which record the results more or less faithfully. Nonetheless, even the researcher interested only in what finally occurred will want to see the project paper as much AID documentation is written assuming prior familiarity with the project and makes no sense at all without the backdrop of the project paper.

The chief problem in collecting relatively current project papers is not getting to see a copy of the paper; in most cases, five or six different offices maintain file copies.[1] The problem is finding an extra copy to keep. There is in the Development Resource Office of the Latin America Bureau a small unit that files capital assistance papers. However, when this office does not have extra copies--and there are cases where it does not even have a file copy remaining--there is at the moment no place else to turn.

Eventually the Development Support Bureau's Office of Development Information and Utilization (DSB/DIU) should be a source of "extra" copies, but the emphasis here is on the word "eventually". And so, researchers must be prepared to xerox or get xeroxed their own personal copy of each desired document unless they are prepared to sit and read and perhaps memorize the documents within range of their guardians' view. The alternative is to leave a few pints of blood as collateral and take the document directly to a machine and xerox it oneself. This is no overwhelming task for one document. When the goal

[1]"Relatively current" is generally understood to mean projects begun in the very late 60s or the 70s.

is gathering evidence for a number of projects, however, the task becomes so cumbersome that collection of data becomes an uneconomic use of time. Why? First of all a great amount of time is required to go from office to office. Additionally, there is the requisite investment of time spent cultivating contacts which "using" many different offices implies and necessitates. Clearly, an office staff lends its only file copy more readily and for longer periods of time (overnight versus twenty minutes, for example) to someone better known and viewed as being more pleasant, personable, cooperative, and trustworthy.

Then there is the operational problem of time spent. This does not just include the xeroxing per se. Frequently as much (or even more) time is required for "preparation and repair". Documents must be torn apart and reassembled for example, and files must be reconstituted with some attention to their original order of contents. When heavy documents have been stapled, one must wrestle to get industrial-weight staples out without mangling the document; furthermore, when the documents have been punched and held together with brads they cannot be run through an automatic feeder, but must instead be xeroxed one page at a time. This is doubly irritating and time-consuming when the pages are printed on both sides--especially when signs at the xerox machine limit an individual's time to ten minutes and a long line of others are impatiently shuffling their papers.

Few offices can spare a secretary to xerox standard documents for hours on end, much less to trail after someone from office to office collecting the originals one by one. That is a clearly impractical use of secretarial time.

It is a fairly impractical use of a researcher's time too. But a secretary normally has work to do for a number of people, as well as responsibilities which tie her or him to the office physically, while a researcher more likely has only one project. Hence, of the two it is clearly more logical that the researcher do the toting and copying. Unfortunately, many hours elapse in this activity before the researcher has the documents needed to sit down and do the research--i.e., to read and analyze the contents.

A. Older Documents

It is AID policy that documents over five years old should be removed from office files. This seems at times to resemble a ritual cleansing in which documents that would be better left easily available are removed. Such documents are either discarded, destroyed, or retired to a warehouse "somewhere" out in Maryland. "Somewhere", in fact, is Suitland, but irrespective of the fact its address can be pinpointed, the warehouse seems to have taken on many characteristics of a myth. People speak of it as if they are not quite sure it exists. Tales abound of requests for a document on a particular project resulting in the delivery of entire crates of material in unamalgamated and generally unsorted form. All this might be very well if the researcher were doing a Ph.D. on history and had allotted years to it with the intention of leaving no stone unturned. However, in an agency which puts a premium on timeliness and quick response, the researcher must decide if requesting crates of unsorted documents is worth the sorting time.

There is material for a separate paper in the whole subject of what may lie buried in Maryland warehouses and how this wealth might best be tapped. In this paper, however, the topic remains the search for those newer materials which should still be available in office files. That topic is quite discouraging enough.

Documents are generally kept around while the project to which they relate remains active. However, once the project terminates project documents grow increasingly scarce. Although the Office of Development Information and Utilization is supposed to have documentation for all projects active in 1974 or after, coverage is still spotty. For projects terminated before 1974, the researcher will most likely be referred to the Suitland, Maryland, warehouse unless he or she is lucky enough to stumble onto personal files of an AID staffer that go back further in time. This should not be counted on, however. At the rate AID moves personnel from office to office not to mention post to post, few people are willing to make the necessary effort to continually box, move, and refile such papers.

B. Major Sources of Project Papers

1. The Latin America Bureau's Development Resources Office's Records and Reports Division

The L.A. Records and Reports Division has existed for years as a central storage and filing site for project documents. There are two sections to the division--the capital assistance files (Room 2252 NS) and the official file room (2249A NS).

a. The Capital Assistance Files

This office maintains a stock of capital assistance papers, grant papers from the last transitional quarter, and sector assessments (the first two forms of the project papers). The office gladly provides a copy of those papers for which it still has extra copies although it rarely, if ever, does a second printing of a document. The office staff was most generous in lending the remaining file copy for reproduction and was in general a great help in obtaining the documents sought on L.A. health projects.[1] The researcher should keep in mind that cataloging in the capital assistance files is by loan number rather than by project number; thus knowing the former number before requesting a document can save all involved considerable time.

Here again in dealing with this office the xeroxing problem arose. The generosity of the LA/DR Records and Reports Division staff could not be reciprocated with the timeliness and courtesy it deserved. At the time of borrowing the originals, it was assumed that the set could be sent to AID's printing office for reproduction. However, it turned out that the printing office refuses a job unless a minimum of ten copies of each original is requested. Thus, not only did this researcher have to xerox them personally, but as many of these working file copies have been punched, page-by-page xeroxing was required. It,

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[1]My particular thanks go to Jane Mohan and her staff for their help and, most of all, patience.

therefore, became quite difficult to have the originals returned to LA/DR in any civil amount of time. In the end, time was found to reproduce one of the project papers and the others were "noted" and returned. This was possible as the projects involved were only peripherally of interest to the main study at hand. Had they been projects of more immediate interest to the present study, significant time would have had to have been devoted to xeroxing each of these documents of one hundred or more pages, page by page.

b. <u>Latin America Bureau's Official File Room</u>

Almost directly across the hall from the Technical File Room is the Official File Room for the Latin America Bureau. There are files here for every active loan project and for grant projects begun in or after 1976. Before that time grant project files were maintained by the country desk officer.

The files contain project papers, PARs and PESs, letters of implementation and other more general correspondence. There are often separate files for contracts and for financing. There are also shelves of bulk folders with some old contracts, geographic studies and other relevant, unclassified documents. Documents are retired to Suitland as soon as dispersments are closed out unless there are litigation problems or some other on-going concern with the project. This office, however, keeps careful lists of what goes in every box sent to Suitland. Thus, there is some hope with some diligent research in the lists of a researcher being able to request precisely the boxes needed from Suitland. The staff claims that they can request document retrieval from Suitland and get results within three days which is encouraging.

The staff does maintain a library of project papers for all Latin America Bureau projects. One copy is not retired but kept as a reference regardless of the age and status of the project.

There is also a collection of "quarterly loan status reports" which are written by the project manager four times each year. These are filed by country, not project, and, interestingly enough, they are not retired to Suitland but destroyed.

Both project papers and files may be checked out. There is no "due" date but it is hoped people will be prompt in returning documents. Those planning to borrow files should be fully aware that these files must be locked up at night and the researcher must have clearances.

2. The Office of Development Information and Utilization (DIU)

The Office of Development Information and Utilization (DIU) and the AID Reference Center (ARC) should be considered in tandem. Although they have separate staffs and are located in entirely different places, operationally they are very related.

The Reference Center is the older of the two institutions. It is located in the Main State building and operates as a traditional lending library.

DIU is meant to become a computerized information system for AID. At the moment that office is collecting and microfiching documents. In addition to microfiche there is a technical library at Rosslyn Plaza. Eventually, a researcher should be able to ask DIU for either microfiche or hard copies of documents on projects active in 1974 or thereafter. How that office will react if someone asks for a copy of each of 50 different project papers, however, remains a question for the future. Still, the potential exists for a solution to the researcher's quest for documents. In the meantime it seems that DIU is tying up all the documents in the Agency. ARC has given DIU all its standard document holdings for microfiching. The LA/DR records and reports staff observe, with a great sigh, that one reason that office does not have extra copies of project papers is that DIU personnel keep calling and asking for the same documents several times. DIU's collection itself is (1) incomplete, (2) being sent out in batches for microfiching, and (3) closely guarded in order not to disrupt the microfiching process.

The librarians at ARC and the personnel in the DIU office go out of their way to be helpful, but the very process of automating the data system produces numerous inconveniences for the researcher. At this point in time those inconveniences are major and it is probable that the situation will not improve much for a year or more. This is not to slight the goodwill and efforts of the DIU staff nor to suggest that the eventual system will not be worth the inconveniences of the moment; it is merely to state what the situation in fact is for the moment--and that is, simply put, in chaos. Therefore, for the moment, one turns to other sources for help.

II. COLLECTION OF EVALUATIONS

Much of what has been said about project papers applies also to evaluations. Those evaluations which reach the LA evaluation office are distributed to several offices and presumably retained in numerous files. The LA evaluation office retains the action copy. Reference copies go to the country desk officer, to both the technical officer and the country loan officer in LA/DR, to the program analyst in the program office, and to the office which handles private voluntary organizations and, when appropriate, to operating grants (PVO/OPG). Additional copies go to DSB/DIU and designated offices in the Central Bureaus.

A. Major AID/Washington Sources

1. The Office of Development Information and Utilization (DIU) and the AID Reference Center (ARC)

Eventually DIU will have evaluations accessible on microfiche and categorized under several headings (regular, special, and so on). It will have xeroxed copies of special evaluations in its library in Rosslyn for lending. There will also be copies available in the AID Reference Center in the Main State Department building. DIU should also have copies of project papers.

In the meantime, as previously noted, ARC has turned its holdings over to DIU for microfiching and so momentarily both of these are poor sources.

2. The Evaluation Division--The Development Planning Office of the Latin America Bureau (LA/DP/E) and an Overview of Evaluation Documents

In the case of LA, the bureau evaluation office has maintained a log of evaluations due and evaluations received since 1974. The files are well-organized and up to date, and the officer is most accommodating. However, it appears that what the office receives from the field is limited. An evaluation scheduled is not an evaluation completed. And an evaluation completed may produce nothing more than a one-page item stating the the project is progressing. It should also be kept in mind that regional bureau evaluation offices generally maintain files only on projects their missions fund. Thus documents on centrally funded projects are kept in central bureau offices (i.e., usually meaning DSB) rather than in the regional bureaus' files for the given country. For example, no document on the major Primops health project in Colombia can be found in the LA evaluation office. Rather the documents all lie in the DSB/Health office, which funded that project.

B. Other Washington Sources of Evaluations and Other Documents

In fact, what is officially required in Washington (apparently with strictly managerial purposes in mind) is not the evaluation at all, but an evaluation summary (as is discussed elsewhere). And summarial most of them are. If there is extensive information behind the Project Evaluation Summary, in many cases it is not available in AID/Washington. Only when the evaluation is labeled "special" can a lengthier discussion paper or report be expected to arrive in Washington. Even reports for special evaluations do not always arrive or else arrive and disappear. For example, special evaluations or reports done by the American Public Health Association's consultants seem more easily obtainable from APHA than from AID's own Washington offices.

One of the best sources for such non-standard papers in the health field is the file system of Ms. Jean Pease in the Office of Health of the Development Support Bureau (DSB/HEA). Because of years of involvement with AID health projects and a personal inclination to thorough documentation, Ms. Pease has wonderful source files, not only on projects that the Office of Health manages, but on other health projects as well. This, however, is a personal collection in many respects. This researcher is most grateful for access to it, and the Agency should make maximum use of it to retrieve documents that have otherwise permanently "slipped between the cracks." Nevertheless, it is unreasonable to expect one single employee to be the source of documentation for all the Agency's projects in an entire sector (health). In fact, it seems tragic to have to report that such an individual is the single best source. This individual, however, does not have any standard evaluations in her files because she was never on distribution for them.

C. What Remains in the Missions

Furthermore, in the case of regular evaluations, not only do raw data and personal notes remain in the respective mission, but they do so in informal form. The present Chief of the Program Design and Evaluation Systems Division of AID's Office of Evaluation (PPC/E/PDES), Mr. Herbert Turner, was asked if it was worthwhile to try to obtain background material for Project Evaluation Summaries from the field. He reiterated the idea that such material was indeed very informal--scribbled on scraps of paper and the backs of envelopes or stored in people's heads. He stated flatly that, rather than attempt to request such information be sent to AID/W, it would be better to go directly to the field where one could not only see the raw data but also talk to the people involved and visit the projects.

With the exception of reading project papers and talking to people involved, the whole idea of first doing one's homework for evaluation in Washington becomes more and more frustrating as one discovers how few really special studies are done, how few can be found, and how little the regular evaluations can tell a researcher--all of which is documented below.

Last of all with regard to collection of evaluations, it should be noted that although the LA evaluation office has had PPC's Office of Evaluation on its distribution list (for evaluations) for years, PPC/E has not retained the evaluations received until very recently. Only since January, 1979, has the office begun a file and catalogue of incoming evaluations. This file should be of great utility for PPC/E and others, but obviously this net has captured only evaluations arriving in Washington since approximately December of 1978.

III. THE EVALUATION SYSTEM: STANDARD EVALUATIONS

The standard evaluation system involves two subcategories of evaluations. These are regular standard evaluations and special standard evaluations. The term "special evaluation" still refers within AID to a process and involves formal documents that fall within the standard system. Anything truly outside the system will be called something else such as a review or a special study.

A. Regular Standard Evaluations

The regular evaluations are generally scheduled every year or two of a project's active life. They are meant primarily for the use of the host government and mission staff. Basically, they serve to let managers know how they are doing. Although meant to be judged against all the logframe, they tend to be quite operational in tone and intent and restrict themselves to input and output questions neglecting the purpose and goal.

B. Special Evaluations

This part of the standard evaluation system offers more hope. These special evaluations are not frequent, and they certainly are not "standard" if by standard one means of a kind. Even when several special evaluations are done on a large project--as happens--they may not bear much generic resemblance to one another. They are always worth tracing down, though some will prove more worth the time than others. Beyond that, it is impossible to generalize about them due to the small sample found.

C. Timing of Standard Evaluations

The timing of an evaluation is indefinite but meant to be "linked to the key decisional requirements of the project." This flexibility is real. Although regular evaluations generally take place every year or two during the implementation of a project, there is no fixed point at which they must take place. A special evaluation can be done at anytime the mission or AID/W feel it is appropriate and worth funding. Washington asks that an evaluation plan (including a schedule) be built into the project paper and that the Annual Budget Submission contain a calendar of those evaluations scheduled for mission projects that year.

Missions are not held to these dates, however, nor should they be. Frequently, the dates "slip." This is ofeen due to the fact that implementation itself is considerably behind schedule. In most cases there are perfectly logical reasons for the scheduled evaluation being postponed. But the researcher should be prepared to discover that it has been delayed.

Each Regional Bureau Evaluation Officer sends cables to the field at least twice a year requesting an update of each mission's evaluation schedule and then attempts to follow up evaluations that have not arrived on time. The researcher should be aware that probably more evaluations are postponed than are carried out on schedule, and that more arrive late than on time--for whatever the final adjusted date is. This postponement process can go on for years. There is evidence, for example, that the initial evaluation for certain projects in Jamaica has been postponed from 7/77 to 8/78 to 1/79 and now to 7/79. This does not necessarily say anything about the mission's commitment to evaluation; it probably says a great deal more about difficulties in getting the project off the ground. Whatever the reasons, the researcher will often feel as if he or she is pursuing a phantom fish through turgid waters.

A further problem is time elapsed between completion of the evaluation and its appearance in Washington files. Evaluations in the LA Evaluation Office bear receival stamps dated as long as a year after the completion date on the document. Lengthy gaps are more frequent in the case of special evaluations done by host country contractors. However, even with the most standard evaluation, it usually takes a month or more for the evaluation documents to be pouched, repreduced, and distributed.

D. The Project Evaluation Summary (PES)

The Project Evaluation Summary (PES) exists to record information of use to (a) implementors and to (b) "back-stopping" and other concerned AID/Washington offices. According to the PES instructions, the PES is to serve four purposes:

(1) to record decisions reached by responsible officials, so they are clear about the conclusions, and so that headquarters is aware of the next steps;

(2) to give notice that a scheduled evaluation has been completed, with a brief record of the method and participation for future reference;

(3) to summarize progress and current status for use in answering queries; and

(4) to suggest lessons learned for use in planning and reviewing other projects of a similar nature. The PES and other project documentation are retained in DS/DIU/DI and are available to project planners.

There is a standard form of 23 parts--11 of which are designed to be covered in narrative form.[1] In short, the evaluator could conceivably write a detailed 50-page report, although the instructions suggest that each topic be covered in about 200 words or half a page. The evaluation is supposed to correspond to the logframe design. Question 22 asks the evaluators to discuss lessons learned in the course of implementation, but this is rarely done, nor is question 21 on unplanned effects frequently addressed.

The summaries of standard evaluations take a number of forms. They have in common a tendency to be so succinct as to be virtually meaningless to the researcher not already well acquainted with the project. The PES was clearly designed to be used in conjunction with other project documentation, especially the logframe and the project paper, and the researcher must know this.

The regular evaluation summary describes the project breifly, if at all. Thus, the researcher cannot expect to start with the evaluation summary and glean any idea of what is going on. Furthermore, the evaluation summary corresponds not so much to the narrative analysis in the project paper but to the logframe analysis of the project. And how well a logframe has been prepared for a project does not necessarily correlate to how well the project is functioning.

[1] See Appendix 1.

The sort of information a researcher can find will generally indicate how close the project is to producing a quantifiable product--for example, village health workers, 400 planned and 250 trained. It will be less clear as to why the other 150 planned were not trained. Was the target inappropriate to the scale of resources for training or is there a fundamental operational problem--e.g., someone is trying to sabotage the program at the central government level, or, in the eyes of the intended recipients, the training is not worth pursuing. It is unlikely that a regular evaluation summary will even suggest that these sorts of situations exist. It almost certainly will not attempt to answer why the program is being undercut or why the local level participants view it with a jaded eye.

The PES was really not designed to do this. It may adequately serve the purposes for which it was designed, but it does not offer much material for the researcher interested in deeper, underlying reasons and understandings.

IV. VARIETIES OF STANDARD EVALUATIONS: WHAT TO EXPECT

Almost anything can appear in the guise of an evaluation. Below are described three major categories of Standard Evaluations found in Washington files.

A. The Narrative

Older evaluations--particularly of capital projects that did not fall under the aegis of Project Appraisal Report (PAR) requirements--often took a narrative form. Their quality varies with the author. Those done by persons who organize logically, analyze carefully, and write clearly are quite excellent. The narrative is not easily subjected to standard quality control, however. To improve such products would require intervention at the eighth-grade English class level. Thus one should treasure lucid essays when they are encountered, but hardly expect, or recommend, this form as a standard. The narrative should definitely not be dismissed as "journalistic" or "merely anecdotal." The question is, "Is there substantive analysis behind it?" If the analysis is there, then the narrative is still among the best forms of communication and means of recording lessons learned.

Two examples of evaluations in narrative form follow. The first is from a regular evaluation on a Dominican Republic health project. It is difficult to determine the methodology used for the evaluation. However, the points the evaluator makes are clear, orderly, and give the reader a good sense of what is going on in the project. It should perhaps be noted that this particular evaluation was done before the PES requirement was instituted and was on a capital assistance project that did not require a PAR (project appraisal report--see Section V-a of this paper for description and history of the PAR).

> The Health Sector Loan for the Dominican Republic (AID 517-U-028) consists of three elements: nutrition, administrative reform of the Secretarial of Public Health, and the low-cost health care delivery system. As the USAID has informed AID/W in its monthly loan implementation reports, there have been repeated delays in implementing the nutrition and administrative

reform elements of the loan, and consequently, these elements will not be suitable for evaluation for some time to come. Meanwhile, the USAID and the GODR felt that an evaluation of the Basic Health Services (SBS) program was imperative, particularly with regard to the degree of progress in achieving intermediate objectives in Health Region IV where the program has been operative for the longest period of time.

Health Region IV is composed of the provinces of Barahona, Bahoruvo, Independencia and Pedernales, all in the southwestern area of the country. There are one or more promoters currently working in 165 villages in the region. The promoters are inhabitants of the villagers in which they serve. Most are women. They have received three weeks of training, and they provide a variety of simple health services with special emphasis on immunizations and the provision of contraceptives, pills and condoms, to those couples who request them.

And from another section of the same report:

It is difficult to assess the accuracy of the proportion of women currently using contraception in the villages included in the sample. On the one hand, some women reported as current users (which includes only those using pills or condoms supplied by the promoter) may have been prior acceptors in the national family planning program who have simply changed their source of supply. On the other hand, some women in these villages are known to be using IUDs, and they were not reported in order to avoid duplication in the national reporting system. In view of the finding of the National Fertility Survey of 1975 that 8.0% of all women between 15-49 regardless of marital status have undergone a sterilization procedure, it seems likely that some of the women in villages served by the SBS program have been sterilized. Considering all of these factors, the USAID feels the proportion of women reported as practicing contraception is underestimated.

The second example of a narrative form evaluation is from a special standard evaluation for a health project in Honduras.

Community Activities

Although supervision of the informal health system by the auxiliary is listed among the norms provided by the national committee, the Director of the training school described this section of the curriculum as relatively small. Field training presently consists of assigning groups of 9 students to spend a few weeks working with agents of the informal system associated with a given cesar. A single instructor supervises 4 students working in the cesar, as well as the 9 in the field, and the Director informed us that, unlike clinic-based work, the community activities of the students are not evaluated. Further, there are no trained parteras in the area where the students have their field experience.

We found that the community activities of graduate auxiliaries in the filed consist primarily of reviewing reports prepared by the informal system personnel and giving talks on technical areas during monthly meetings in the cesar and during field visits to the agents. The auxiliary nurses that we interviewed were generally unable to estimate the level of community coverage for basic health services that the casar provided. Similarly, they were unfamiliar with the extent of coverage provided by the informal system or its effectiveness in dealing with specific health problems.

The expanded rural health infrastructure created by the program makes an active, epidemiological approach to health problems possible, as distringuished from passively waiting for patients to enter the health care system. Similarly, the informal system can and should reduce the time spent by the auxiliary in dealing with health activities that could be performed by less highly trained personnel. However, the present supervisory activities of the auxiliary do not give adequate attention to health problems that are either not detected by the informal system personnel or are not handled effectively by them. To correct this situation will require that the auxiliary make occasional informal surveys in the agent's communities to estimate the agents' success in detecting health problems such as infant diarrhea, malnutrition, and lack of childhood vaccinations. Similarly, the effectiveness of the informal system agents' intervention should be followed up in the community on a sample basis to determine, for example, if unvaccinated children referred to the cesar actually go and, if not, what followup visits were made by the agent; or similarly, if the agents' treatment of diarrhea was effective and whether or not he revisited the patient to make certain that the outcome was satisfactory. The auxiliary also needs to know how to organize and use the data gathered by the informal system, informal community surveys, and the casar to facilitate these evaluations. For example, the auxiliary should know who the malnourished children in a given community are, whether or not the number of known cases is consistent with the results of her own community survey, who is improving, and who requires followup by a local agent. She should be able to determine which of the agents that relate to the cesar have been least effective and, therefore, require further training, and what kind of training. She should also allocate more of her supervisory time to assisting the agents with poor performance, relative to more successful agents. (Underscoring added.)

B. Skeletal Evaluation Presentations

One danger with the logframe is adapting it schematically for the presentation of information in such a way that the reader must flip constantly back and forth through pages of material to line narrative description and corresponding indicators up.

In one case an evaluation presented in columnar "logframe" form required the reader to flip back and forth among six pages to compare verifiable indicators with achievements and again with the corresponding comments. This seems a highly irritating and non-fruitful manner of presenting information.

It takes great patience to persist in extracting the information from such a document--and ironically this particular evaluation did contain a great deal of information. However, it was presented in a style so terse and broken apart as to appear barren on the surface. One would question how many managers would take time to ferret out the information. It even made one wonder if there was intentional obfuscation.

In short, this researcher would comment that a logframe can be very useful for organizing information and unraveling thoughts. But is is a frame. And a deftly strung loom is worth little if one does not finally see the interaction of the warp and weft. Thus excellent critical use of the logframe to sharper one person's thinking may go wholly ununderstood by others if some descriptive analysis of the project's development and context is not included in the presentation.

C. <u>The Minimal Project Evaluation Summary</u>

The minimal PES is the most frequently encountered. Within this group the PES form is filled out as briefly as possible without eliminating the project number and signatures. There are two subgroups.

The first group means the PES as a cover sheet. The PES is filled out very briefly and the reader is referred to the actual evaluation report attached. There would be nothing wrong with this if the actual report were produced anywhere near as frequently as the covering PES. Unfortunately, usually what one finds in a file is the PES sans report. Sometimes with much calling around the attachment can be found. More often, it cannot.

The other subgroup simply ignores the whole purpose of the PES or for that matter, evaluation. The amazing extreme to which this can be carried is illustrated by the PES which stated, "This project was evaluated on

10/2/78 and there are no major issues or problems...." End PES, sign off. The reader is left to wonder if an archangel is guiding that particular project, if nothing at all is occurring, or if the project manager is simply lying through his or her teeth. If there are, in fact, no problems or issues, one would hope for some discussion of benefits and/or lessons learned. And if there are not benefits or lessons learned either then one might assume that the project should be cancelled immediately.

D. PESs from Private Voluntary Organizations Receiving Operational Program Grants from AID

The Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs) working with AID seem to be making a more serious attempt to both employ the logframe and to say something in evaluations than does the Agency itself. This may mean simply that the PVOs simply perceive a greater risk that their funding will be slashed if they do not comply than do AID's field missions. However, the fact they do seem to be making an effort is worth thinking about.

There are at least some occasions when PVOs use host country expertise for evaluations. This is true of the San Gil project in Colombia, for example. A local university did the evaluation--a thick document in Spanish. As AID employs both more PVOs and more host country expertise, the researcher should expect to find more and more reports in a language other than English. In the long run this may provide some practical problems for cross-country studies.

As an example of a PVO employing the logical framework for evaluation is the following page from the Gros Morne project in Haiti.

> The literacy program which the Center had planned in cooperation with the Office d' Alphabetisation et d'Action Communautaire (ONAAC) did not materialize; ONAAC fund requirements were above the amounts specified in the project budget. The literacy program has not been delayed, however, as the Center has developed its own program and there are no further plans to involve ONAAC.

Goal

"To improve the quality of life for the rural inhabitants of Gros Morne district."

The quantitative indicators which appear in the Project Logical Framework are based on data collected in August 1976 by a team organized under the auspices of the Gros Morne hospital. To collect the agricultural data, 175 farmers were interviewed. In general, for a population of 100,000, a random sample of 175 is inadequate; however, a degree of control exists in that achievement in the agricultural sector will be measured by accomplishments of farmers participating in the project. Data for the health component of the project were collected at Gros Morne hospital and in a study of the nutritional situation in Gros Morne district. The problem of choosing indicators which adequately measure "quality of life" is apparent in the project design:

> A 100% increase in agricultural production by 1980 is unlikely even among the farmers participating in the project. The agricultural groups are at present concentrating on motivation and instruction; fertilizer, insecticides, and seeds are to become available under a revolving fund which has been established but which is not yet active. The revolving fund which is provided by CRS totals $15,000. Initially, credit will be extended only to groupement projects. Applications for loans are now being received and are expected to reach $6,000 to $7,000 by June 1979.

The reduction in malnutrition, infant and child mortality was predicted upon the existence of 11 clinics by 1980. These clinics are not yet in operation.

Indicators which require quantitative measurement have proved unreliable in Haiti. It was the consensus of the evaluation committee that the indicators at the goal level should be revised; however, the problem remains of choosing indicators appropriate to measuring the quality of life in rural Haiti.

V. OTHER DOCUMENTS YIELDING EVALUATORY INFORMATION AND INSIGHTS

A. Project Appraisal Reports (PARs)

The Project Appraisal Report was AID's first institutionalized evaluation document. Initiated in 1969, it was used only for non-capital projects--i.e., essentially grants.

The PAR itself as an instrument was evaluated by outside consultants who recommended that projects be better designed so that the PAR could be employed more effectively. Out of this recommendation grew the logical framework system--the so-called "log-frame".

Post-logframe PARs (those done after 1971-72) have the reputation of being much better than the earlier ones. However, this is rather difficult to judge as there are few projects which were both active before 1970 and are still ongoing. Therefore, not that many PARs will show up in research on predominately current projects.

Theoretically, PARs gave more autonomy to the mission and required less reporting of evaluation results to Washington than do the PESs with which they were replaced in 1978. The few PARs found by this researcher certainly contain more information than do the majority of PESs found.

B. Personal Correspondence

Much of the information most useful for building an institutional memory appears only in the semi-official personal correspondence that shows up in office files. Letters written between evaluation or project officers in the field and Washington personnel in either technical or evaluation positions often contain invaluable evaluatory information and observations. This is also true of "Notes to the File" and random scraps of paper clipped to more formal documents. The advice of this researcher is to read--or at least skim--anything that has gotten stuck in a file; often the more unlikely it appears the more interesting or enlightening is the information it contains.

Included below is a page from such a personal letter. It contains remarks on evaluation as concise and to the point as any found in this research effort.

> Each of the 48 village health workers were interviewed at the time the data was collected, and I later divided the health workers into two groups: the more effective and the less effective (according to their performance in delivering immunizations and family planning services). Upon comparing the characteristics of the more effective and the less effective village health workers, it was apparent that there was no significant difference in mean age, marital status, mean parity, or mean level of educational attainment.
>
> Contrary to what I had expected, I found no differences in efficiency in delivering family planning services between men and women village health workers. Men workers had 9.8% of the women of fertile age using family planning, and women workers had 10.8% using family planning (chi square = .707, df = 1, p = n.s.). Men, however, were more effective in immunizing children with D.P.T. The men workers had immunized 71.7% of the children 0-4 years with two doses of D.P.T. and the women workers had immunized 64.1% (chi square = 16.6, df = 1, p - 0.001).
>
> I could detect no difference in the attitudes (favorable vs. unfavorable) of the more effective workers and those of the less effective workers with regard to their supervisors. The mean number of visits by supervisors of the more effective workers did not differ from the mean number of visits (per month) by supervisors of the less effective workers. Similarly, there was no difference in the mean length of each supervisory visit for more and less effective workers. There was however a striking and significant difference in job satisfaction between the more and less effective workers as reflected in indices developed on the responses to Likert scale questions regarding satisfaction with pay, community support, etc. Job satisfaction was much higher among the more effective workers.

This personal letter is in fact far more informative than more formal documents found in the same project file.

C. Letters of Implementation

The Letter of Implementation is used by a mission to communicate formally with a host country ministry or other cooperating agency concerning a project. Such letters can cover any number of topics--among them evaluation, most commonly in the guise of evaluation design. They may also bring to light problems or issues involving the project that would be important to address in an evaluation. They often are used to negotiate or formalize important changes in an active project. They are far more important than the title makes them sound and they should not be overlooked.

D. Audit Reports

Apparently the Auditor General's Office views auditing a great deal more broadly than a simple accounting function. The scope of one report states that the audit "was made for the primary purpose of evaluating:

(i) effectiveness and efficiency,

(ii) progress and achievements, and

(iii) compliance with the terms of the loan and grant agreement."

The first two items listed are clearly evaluatory functions. The researcher should thus be alerted to the fact that that Office does interpret its mandate broadly and realize that audit reports, therefore, are well worth reviewing for evaluatory information. The following exerpt gives some indication of the evaluatory breadth such reports can contain.

E. Operation of Health Posts

1. Equipment and Supplies

Health care equipment, supplies and training aids were inadequate at the four health posts we visited. This was caused by procurement delay with the Ministry of Health, and an inadequate operating plan to determine needs of health posts. Inadequate supplies and equipment will hamper Health Technicians in gaining confidence of communities to accept the health post programs.

2. Assignment of Medical Interns

We interviewed Health Technicians at several health posts. The Health Technicians stated that medical interns would also be permanently assigned at health posts and, upon their arrival, health posts would be designated as health centers with expanded medical care capabilities. The assignment of Health Technicians to health centers was not anticipated in the Health Technician Program; consequently, their roles at the health centers have not been defined. This situation may result in possible conflict between the medical interns and the Health Technicians because (1) medical interns have not had the benefit of specialized training in rural public health techniques whereas the Health Technicians were trained for such purposes, and (2) medical interns will be the senior leaders at the health posts. We believe the potential impact of the rural health program can best be realized by placing only personnel specially trained in the necessary rural health techniques into these environments lacking essential health care, and allowing them to exercise their skills within the framework of the planned program.

An additional problem that may result from assignments of medical interns to health posts is the cost of their salaries and support costs which were not budgeted for by the Ministry of Health, nor were funds provided for in the AID loan.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING FORM AID 1330-15 & 15A, PROJECT EVALUATION SUMMARY (PES)—PART I & II

EVALUATION PROCESS - Officials of the Host Government and AID Mission should collaborate in periodic evaluation of the progress of each project. (For AID/W projects, participation of grantees is appropriate.) Timing of such regular evaluations should be linked to the key decisional requirements of the project, as listed in the Evaluation Plan included in the Project Paper and as confirmed in the Evaluation Schedule of the Annual Budget Submission; otherwise annually. A description of the evaluation process is found in Handbook 3, Part II, Chapter 8.

PURPOSES OF SUMMARY - The Project Evaluation Summary (PES) is prepared after each review to record information which is useful both to the implementors (including the Host Government and contractors) and to concerned AID/W units. It serves four purposes:

(1) Record of decisions reached by responsible officials, so that those who participated in the evaluation process are clear about the conclusions, and so that headquarters is aware of the next steps.

(2) Notice that a scheduled evaluation has been completed, with a brief record of the method and participation for future reference.

(3) Summary of progress and current status for use in answering queries.

(4) Suggestions about lessons learned for use in planning and reviewing other projects of a similar nature. The PES and other project documentation are retained in DS/DIU/DI and are available to project planners.

CONTENTS OF SUMMARY - A PES submittal has two parts, plus relevant attachments if any.
PART I REQUIRED: Form AID 1330-15 contains identifying information about the project and evaluation (Items 1-7), action decisions about the projects future (Items 8-10), and signatures (Items 11-12). Since the PES reports decisions, it is signed by the Director of the Mission or AID/W Office responsible for the project. Space is also provided for signatures of the project officer, host country and other ranking participants in the evaluation, to the extent appropriate.

PART II, OPTION 1: For regular evaluations, use continuation sheets to respond to Items 13-23 as outlined in the attached Form AID 1330-15A.

PART II, OPTION 2: For a special evaluation, the reporting unit may opt for a somewhat varied format, with a different sequence or greater detail in some areas, however, Items 13-23 should all be addressed.

ATTACHMENTS: As appropriate, reports of host governments, contractors, and others, utilized in the preparation of the evaluation summary, should be labeled A, B, C, etc., attached to the PES submittal (Missions are to submit 7 copies and AID/W Offices 7 copies) and listed under Item 23. Where it is necessary to transmit these source documents separately from the PES, Block 23 of the PES should note how this material was transmitted, when, number of copies and to whom.

SUBMITTAL PROCEDURE: Missions will submit the PES Facesheet, continuation sheets, and attachments under cover of an airgram which will be received by the Cable Room. AID/W Offices will submit the PES Facesheet, continuation sheets, and attachments to MO/PAV, Room B-930, NS under cover of a memorandum which cites any distribution instructions beyond the standard distribution. All AID/W Offices and most Missions will use the blank cut PES Facesheet and plain bond for continuation sheets, which can be reproduced on copiers. Those Missions preferring to use hecto, may order the form in hecto sets from AID/W, Distribution Branch. There will be a standard distribution made in AID/W of all field-originated PES's. Copies will be sent to the corresponding bureau's DP, DR, the country desk and Evaluation Office. Other copies will be sent to PPC, SER, PDC and DS (including DI and ARC). For AID/W-generated PES's, copies will be distributed to all bureaus.

CLASSIFICATION

PROJECT EVALUATION SUMMARY (PES) — PART I

Report Symbol U-447

1. PROJECT TITLE

2. PROJECT NUMBER

3. MISSION/AID/W OFFICE

4. EVALUATION NUMBER (Enter the number maintained by the reporting unit e.g., Country or AID/W Administrative Code, Fiscal Year, Serial No. beginning with No. 1 each FY)

☐ REGULAR EVALUATION ☐ SPECIAL EVALUATION

5. KEY PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION DATES

A. First PRO-AG or Equivalent FY____

B. Final Obligation Expected FY____

C. Final Input Delivery FY____

6. ESTIMATED PROJECT FUNDING

A. Total $______

B. U.S. $______

7. PERIOD COVERED BY EVALUATION

From (month/yr.) ______

To (month/yr.) ______

Date of Evaluation Review

8. ACTION DECISIONS APPROVED BY MISSION OR AID/W OFFICE DIRECTOR

A. List decisions and/or unresolved issues; cite those items needing further study. (NOTE: Mission decisions which anticipate AID/W or regional office action should specify type of document, e.g., airgram, SPAR, PIO, which will present detailed request.)	B. NAME OF OFFICER RESPONSIBLE FOR ACTION	C. DATE ACTION TO BE COMPLETED

9. INVENTORY OF DOCUMENTS TO BE REVISED PER ABOVE DECISIONS

- ☐ Project Paper
- ☐ Financial Plan
- ☐ Logical Framework
- ☐ Project Agreement
- ☐ Implementation Plan e.g., CPI Network
- ☐ PIO/T
- ☐ PIO/C
- ☐ PIO/P
- ☐ Other (Specify) ______
- ☐ Other (Specify) ______

10. ALTERNATIVE DECISIONS ON FUTURE OF PROJECT

A. ☐ Continue Project Without Change

B. ☐ Change Project Design and/or ☐ Change Implementation Plan

C. ☐ Discontinue Project

11. PROJECT OFFICER AND HOST COUNTRY OR OTHER RANKING PARTICIPANTS AS APPROPRIATE (Names and Titles)

12. Mission/AID/W Office Director Approval

Signature

Typed Name

Date

AID 1330-15 (3-78)

PROJECT EVALUATION SUMMARY (PES) — PART II

The following topics are to be covered in a brief narrative statement (averaging about 200 words or half a page per item) and attached to the printed PES facesheet. Each topic should have an underlined heading. If a topic is not pertinent to a particular evaluation, list the topic and state: "Not pertinent at this time". The Summary (Item 13) should always be included, and should not exceed 200 words.

13. SUMMARY - Summarize the current project situation, mentioning progress in relation to design, prospects of achieving the purpose and goal, major problems encountered, etc.

14. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY - What was the reason for the evaluation, e.g., clarify project design, measure progress, verify program/project hypotheses, improve implementation, assess a pilot phase, prepare budget, etc? Where appropriate, refer to the Evaluation Plan in the Project Paper. Describe the methods used for this evaluation, including the study design, scope, cost, techniques of data collection, analysis and data sources. Identify agencies and key individuals (host, other donor, public, AID) participating and contributing.

15. EXTERNAL FACTORS - Identify and discuss major changes in project setting, including socio-economic conditions and host government priorities, which have an impact on the project. Examine continuing validity of assumptions.

16. INPUTS - Are there any problems with commodities, technical services, training or other inputs as to quality, quantity, timeliness, etc? Any changes needed in the type or amount of inputs to produce outputs?

17. OUTPUTS - Measure actual progress against projected output targets in current project design or implementation plan. Use tabular format if desired. Comment on significant management experiences. If outputs are not on target, discuss causes (e.g., problems with inputs, implementation assumptions). Are any changes needed in the outputs to achieve purpose?

18. PURPOSE - Quote approved project purpose. Cite progress toward each End of Project Status (EOPS) condition. When can achievement be expected? Is the set of EOPS conditions still considered a good description of what will exist when the purpose is achieved? Discuss the causes of any shortfalls in terms of the causal linkage between outputs and purpose or external factors.

19. GOAL/SUBGOAL - Quote approved goal, and subgoal, where relevant, to which the project contributes. Describe status by citing evidence available to date from specified indicators, and by mentioning the progress of other contributory projects. To what extent can progress toward goal/subgoal be attributed to purpose achievement, to other projects, to other causal factors? If progress is less than satisfactory, explore the reasons, e.g., purpose inadequate for hypothesized impact, new external factors affect purpose-subgoal/goal linkage.

20. BENEFICIARIES - Identify the direct and indirect beneficiaries of this project in terms of criteria in Sec. 102(d) of the FAA (e.g., a. increase small-farm, labor-intensive agricultural productivity; b. reduce infant mortality; c. control population growth; d. promote greater equality in income; e. reduce rates of unemployment and underemployment). Summarize data on the nature of benefits and the identity and number of those benefitting, even if some aspects were reported in preceding questions on output, purpose, or subgoal/goal. For AID/W projects, assess likelihood that results of projects will be used in LDC's.

21. UNPLANNED EFFECTS - Has the project had any unexpected results or impact, such as changes in social structure, environment, health, technical or economic situation? Are these effects advantageous or not? Do they require any change in project design or execution?

22. LESSONS LEARNED - What advice can you give a colleague about development strategy, e.g., how to tackle a similar development problem or to manage a similar project in another country? What can be suggested for follow-on in this country? Similarly, do you have any suggestions about evaluation methodology?

23. SPECIAL COMMENTS OR REMARKS - Include any significant policy or program management implications. Also list titles of attachments and number of pages.