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THE LOGICAL FRAMEWORK APPROACH TO
PROJECT DESIGN, REVIEW AND EVALUATION IN A.I.D.:
GENESIS, IMPACT, PROBLEMS, AND OPPORTUNITIES

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INTRODUCTION

A.I.D. installed the logical framework system in 1971 as a response to a long-felt need for more effective evaluation of substantive project impacts. Over the succeeding years, the logical framework (logframe) methodology has had a profound impact on A.I.D.'s project design system, and an important though lesser impact on A.I.D.'s approach to project review and evaluation.

Today, fifteen years after the logframe was formerly adopted by A.I.D., the system has been thoroughly institutionalized. It provides a practical framework for project design, review and evaluation that, used properly, can greatly increase the likelihood of success in these tasks. Further evidence of the logframe's usefulness is apparent in its adoption by most of the major Western donor agencies in one form or another. Impacts differ in all agencies, however, depending on the emphasis given to technical verses capital assistance.

Despite this generally positive scenario, serious problems with logframe applications continue to plague A.I.D. Depending upon one's role in the organization (designer, reviewer or evaluator) and upon one's portfolio (e.g. bilateral direct investment, matching grants to PVO intermediaries or centrally funded research), the usefulness of the logframe varies dramatically.

At the same time, the opportunities for achieving greater effectiveness in pursuit of A.I.D.'s mandate by applying the logframe approach in new areas begs to be addressed.

Applicability of the logframe approach in design of capital transfer projects, country development strategy statements, even in Agency-wide policy-making, should be assessed.

In this paper the genesis, impact, problems and opportunities of the logframe approach are explored with a view toward achieving greater appreciation of (1) what has transpired, and (2) work still to be done if the logframe approach is to realize full potential for facilitating the business of economic development.

I GENESIS OF THE LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

In reviewing the origins of the logical framework two individuals stand out as key players; (1) Herb Turner, the A.I.D. man who sensed the need for a better system for conceptualizing and structuring projects and thus promoted the study which led to the logframe, and (2) Leon Rosenberg, the contract employee who served as principal author of the logical framework in the course of reviewing A.I.D.'s project evaluation system for Fry Consultants, Inc.

Herb Turner, a career A.I.D. man since Marshal Plan days, traces the following key events as paving the way to transforming A.I.D.'s approach to project design and evaluation:

The Kennedy Task Force's "Research, Evaluation and Planning Assistance Report" of 1961, which led to the creation of a special unit in A.I.D. for research into economic development.

The "Lincoln Report" of 1964, which increased awareness of the need for internal evaluation in A.I.D.

Appointment of Joel Bernstein, a long-time advocate of project evaluation, to be head of the Technical Assistance Bureau. Bernstein was a constant advocate of evaluation, and author of the 1968 "Report to the Administrator on Improving A.I.D.'s Program Evaluation" in which A.I.D.'s system of (1) A.I.D./W and Mission Evaluation Officers, (2) "Spring Reviews" of policy issues, and (3) the PROP, PIP and PAR system were proposed.

These events are viewed as important, though they are not related to the specific concept of the logical framework, because they helped A.I.D. come to terms with the need for a unified system for project evaluation, thus preparing a receptive environment for the changes that were to occur.

In 1969, as a follow-up to Bernstein's report, specifically with regard to the PAR installation, A.I.D.'s Office of Evaluation contracted with Fry Associates, a D.C. consulting firm, to review A.I.D.'s experience with its then new project evaluation system. Fry's instructions were to look at problems with A.I.D.'s recently installed Project Appraisal Report (PAR) to determine why it didn't work better.

In Fry's July, 1970 report to A.I.D., it was concluded that A.I.D.'s problem with accomplishing an effective evaluation system wasn't with the PAR so much as with the project design process. To arrive at one's target destination, one needs to plot a course that leads there. A.I.D. was failing to plot a course that could lead to its target objectives. In this report the essential first elements of the logical framework dialectic, linking project design and evaluation, were laid out.

Turner, as the "inside man" who saw the need for improvement in A.I.D.'s system, recognized the truth and simplicity of Rosenberg's hypothesis, and paved the way for a follow-up contract to develop the concept further. This follow-up contract was with Practical Concepts, Inc. (PCI), to which Fry's key logframe team moved.

The fruits of the first PCI report on the logical framework were delivered in 1970, and they created enough of a stir among

A.I.D.'s small cadre of project evaluators and evaluation supporters to enable a decision to go forward with a thoroughgoing overhaul of the Agency's approach to evaluation along the lines of the logical framework dialectic. Another contract was signed with PCI to design and carry-out a large-scale training effort focussing on the principal USA.I.D.s world-wide.

Considering the magnitude of innovation the logframe approach represented for A.I.D., the rapidity of acceptance was remarkable. This quick acceptance by A.I.D. employees was due to a combination of top-level support, thorough planning and follow-through by the staff of A.I.D.'s Office of Evaluation, and assignment of unusually capable contract staff to carry-out training in the field Missions.

A large scale field training/installation exercise was undertaken in 1970, with the support of the A.I.D. Administrator. During a six month period, teams composed of A.I.D. and PCI employees were sent into USA.I.D. Missions world-wide to carry-out one-week, highly intensive training exercises. The focus of the field visits was on being helpful. The USA.I.D.s, always suspicious of A.I.D./W initiatives, were invited to select two of their on-going projects for review from the logical framework perspective to see how they might be better understood or redesigned. The theory was that a helpful approach, dealing with the USA.I.D.'s

own problems, would make the exercise easier to relate to while giving the training exercise a higher priority for Mission staff.

The classic drill was Sunday arrival of the training team, a Monday morning meeting with the Mission Director to discuss plans, then formation of two Mission teams, each working with a trainer, to analyze an on-going Mission project from a logframe perspective. By Thursday the teams had done their separate analyses and were united in plenary to compare notes. Wrap-up was Friday, with the trainers en-route to their next destination Saturday morning.

Following this six month long training initiative, A.I.D. formally pronounced the logical framework approach the official system for design and evaluation.

Subsequent to the field visits, classes for training in the logical framework were made a part of the A.I.D./W program management curriculum with a view toward training as many of A.I.D.'s direct hire personnel as possible. These were popular, and were soon opened to selected other-donor, developing country, PVO and university representatives. A.I.D.'s Program Development and Evaluation seminar was one week in length and covered the entire program documentation cycle from voting of the Foreign Assistance Act at the beginning to writing of PIO/Ts and evaluation reports at the

end. Actual time on the logical framework itself, therefore, represented only a portion of that week's training - perhaps two of the five days.

Training in the logical framework was also provided for all incoming classes of International Development Interns. In this instance, however, such training went well beyond the one-week course to include substantial parts of their entire three- to four-week preparation in project design.

An important final boost to acceptance of the logical framework in A.I.D. came from the joining together of loan and grant documentation in the early 1970s. Until that point, there were many A.I.D. staff, particularly representatives of the development loan portfolio, who viewed the innovation with skepticism. There had long been a division between loan and grant professionals, and the loan and grant systems tended to operate parallel to one another, with few intersections.

Whereas A.I.D.'s development grant documentation system had minimal formal structure prior to 1970, the loan documentation system was highly structured with checklists and special requirements imposed by a variety of regulators. The logframe, therefore, was initially seen by capital projects professionals as just another troublesome checklist.

As the basic documentation requirements were merged, however, the logframe methodology entered the loan officer's mindset, and soon proved to have a good effect on the loan development process as well.

II IMPACT OF THE LOGFRAME

The impact of the logical framework within A.I.D., and the international donor community in general, has been profound. In Part II this phenomenon is traced through a close look at A.I.D. itself, and then through a more cursory review of the logframe's replication among other donors.

A. Impact Within AID

The impact of the logical framework within A.I.D. has been profound, particularly within the realm of project design and evaluation. It has become so much a part of A.I.D.'s design and evaluation process that the logframe vocabulary is now A.I.D.'s vocabulary. One really cannot talk about design and evaluation issues in A.I.D. without doing so in the terms of the logframe's Goal-Purpose-Output-Input dialectic.

At the same time that the logframe approach has changed the language of development, in certain other respects. the use and prestige of the logframe matrix as a formal tool for design and evaluation appears to be eroding . It is less likely that the logframe matrix per se will be the focus of conversation at a project review, for example. This diminution of interest in the formal instrument has a way of rippling through the entire

design and review process. The effect is essentially to send the message "Don't spend undue time on the logframe because it won't receive serious attention at the approval meeting." Inevitably, with such a message being sent, the people involved in the design process only turn to the logframe if they view it as useful to them; designers as a tool to create a well integrated project, and reviewers as a tool to quickly understand a proposal. In other words, the logframe is increasingly used only because it is useful rather than because it is a requirement. This is good in most respects, but given the importance of formal requirements in a large, corporate structure such as A.I.D., it also is threatening to the long-term survival of the logframe approach.

Following are summaries of interviewee comments on the logframe:

1. Before and After. The A.I.D. project design system prior to introduction of the logical framework consisted primarily of a description of project inputs and outputs, without much attention to broader program goals and the relationship of the project to them. As a result of introduction of the logical framework, there is considerably more analytical rigor applied to the design task than was customary earlier.

2. As a Tool for Project Review. Project reviewers say that the logframe is very useful in facilitating their task because it gives them a short summary to turn to, presented in a format with which they are familiar. When it is not possible to read an entire paper, and it normally is not, the logframe enables the reviewer to understand a proposal with minimal time investment.

3. Logframe Training. Most of the design officers interviewed had received formal logframe training, largely through A.I.D.'s IDI program. Those who had not seemed no less enthusiastic about the tool. The typical comment was "I use the logframe because it is useful, not because anyone is asking for it."

4. Effect of Portfolio Changes. Many of the people spoken to indicated that the logframe is less used today because of the growth of program loans documented with the PADF, which instrument does not require any specific analytical processes. Some shrugged their shoulders, suggesting that if you're just trying to transfer funds one needn't bother with the rigor demanded by log frame analysis. Others said that the logframe system would help us to do a better job of designing the program loans, particularly where systematic policy reform is an expected result of the assistance.

Virtually all indicated, however, that people involved in the review and approval process do not care much about the logframe anymore. It isn't asked for at many review meetings, and is even less frequently discussed. The consensus seems to be that unless A.I.D. personnel are taught the value of the tool, it will fade in importance and use.

5. Broader Applicability. Several of those interviewed expressed a need to use the logical framework tool to make a linkage between the CDSSs and Mission portfolios. It was felt that often coordination is lacking.

6. Importance of Missions. Most agreed that if there is to be any effective reinvigoration of the logical framework as a tool for design, review or evaluation, the action will have to be in the field missions given that under current rules over 90 percent of portfolio decisions are made there.

As indicated in 3 and 6 above, though the logframe has had a profound and salutary effect on A.I.D.'s project design, review and evaluation processes, that impact threatens to fade. While still regarded as useful to those who work with it, and still a formal project design requirement, the logframe matrix is less called-for and focussed-on in the review process. Inevitably, in a highly structured system such as A.I.D.'s, if the boss

stops paying attention to something, sooner or later the employee will follow suit.

What is the cause of this diminution of interest in the logical framework by A.I.D. managers? It seems to have two causes:

1. The large-scale switch from well defined projects to capital transfers. These capital transfers have developed their own system of documentation, emphasizing description verses analysis, and there is no logframe requirement.
2. A six year hiatus of logframe training (from 1980 till 1986), leaving a generation of recently employed professionals uninformed as to the power of the logical framework approach to portfolio design, review and evaluation.

B. Impact Among Other Donors

Other donor agencies were exposed to the logical framework soon after A.I.D. began its own assimilation process. This exposure happened spontaneously in the field as A.I.D. and other donor colleagues collaborated on project design tasks. It also took place in a formal, directed fashion as selected other-donor professionals were invited to participate in the periodic A.I.D./W logframe training programs.

The reactions of other-donor personnel were generally positive from the outset, with some eager to try it out, and others electing to wait and see.

In the former category is the German technical cooperation agency, the GTZ. In 197_ the German government contracted Practical Concepts, Inc., developer of the logframe, to install such a system in their technical assistance program. Over the course of a __ year contract, the GTZ carried out extensive development and training efforts, devolving a system in some ways more sophisticated than A.I.D.'s own, the principal difference being use of some corresponding "decision tree" concepts.

Another early acceptor was the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), however it was not long before the logframe spread to most of the U. N. Development system, with the United Kingdom Office of Development Assistance being the last to employ the logframe in its programming.

The form that the logframe took, and how it is used, varies somewhat from agency to agency. Moderate changes in the matrix labels, and differences in emphasis (e.g. from use as a design, implementation or evaluation tool), cause some appearance of distinction. At bottom, however, the basic power of the logframe remains intact in all applications; that is its ability to show causality in the Project Structure Column, and dependency on exogenous variables in the Assumptions Column.

C. The Capital Assistance Hold-Out

Curiously, the significant hold-outs against acceptance of the logical framework approach have come from that group of economic development practitioners which theretofore had been doing the best project design and monitorship work - the capital projects people.

In A.I.D. the reluctance of the capital projects (lending) people to accept the logframe was finally overcome through merging of the loan and grant documentation requirements in 1975. A similar phenomenon occurred in Germany where the technical assistance (GTC) and capital assistance (KfW) agencies operate separately, however since both operate under a common ministry (Economic Cooperation), it appears that the capital assistance people will soon be prevailed upon.

The most notable hold-out, however, is the World Bank. Though Bank personnel are generally familiar with the logframe approach, and many use it on an informal basis, there is as yet no serious effort to formally adopt the system.

How can one explain the general reluctance of capital projects people to adopt the powerful and seemingly generic logframe dialectic. The answer, it seems, lies not in the logframe itself, but rather in the approaches to ascertaining project viability for capital projects.

Lender personnel, it seems, have a very well defined set of practices developed over decades of investment banking practices. A good project is seen as one which generates sufficient resources to repay the loan, and a little more to ensure economic growth. The focus is on repayment, and the economic growth test (generally given through some sort of benefit/cost analysis) is viewed as a valid test of feasibility by itself. If benefits exceed costs, the project can be assumed to be good. The question which segment of the recipient population ultimately received the benefits tends to be a secondary consideration in such analysis.

Contrarily, logframe practitioners, perhaps because of the political climate in the American aid program at the time of its inception, tend to be highly focussed first on who benefits, with the degree of benefit being of secondary interest. Thus was born the division between the two camps, and so it continues to some degree even in A.I.D., and to a far greater extent in the World Bank.

The logical solution, of course, is a merger of the two methodologies to the extent possible. This is what A.I.D. has attempted since 1975, and though the marriage has benefited both sides it has not been smooth for either. Classic casualties include farm credit projects (on the capital assistance side) rendered inoperable because of excessive

channeling of loans to borrowers generally unable to repay, or because of administrative costs (to force such channeling) that proved greater than the project could afford. An example of the opposite distortion, (e.g. efforts to quantify impacts of, say, a health project, into a benefit/cost analysis) have likewise somewhat discredited valid economic analysis techniques through misuse.

On reflection, what A.I.D. and its other donor colleagues are witnessing in the battle between capital and technical assistance personnel on the logframe arena is not unlike the conflict between policy and project personnel in general. The logframe has provided a common field on which players from the extremes of the economic development process can meet to discuss their common purpose. Given the variety of players in the process, it is perhaps fitting that the dialogue should be at times difficult.

III PROBLEMS WITH LOGICAL FRAMEWORK APPLICATION

In Part III we look first at general comments from Evaluation Officers from each of A.I.D.'s five project implementing bureaus, assessing such comments for points of agreement. Following this, direct analysis of the logframe is undertaken, looking at it on a component by component basis. This analysis, in turn, is wrapped-up with summary conclusions with respect to the overall logframe concept - the logframe as a blueprint for project design.

A. Comments From Bureau Evaluation Officers

In order to better assess the continued usefulness of the logical framework in A.I.D., additional interviews were made with an emphasis on application problems. Interviewees were the Evaluation Officers from each of the five A.I.D. Bureaus having program management responsibility; LAC, AFR, ANE, S&T and FVA. Following is a summary of these interviews, and an assessment of the implications for continued successful logframe application within A.I.D.

(1) Latin America & Caribbean

"Limitations in effectiveness of the Logical Framework arise more from improper use than from shortcomings with the instrument itself."

"LAC's current passion is Management by Objectives (MBO). In the MBO framework, a logframe Goal is synonymous with an MBO Objective. The MBO exercise in LAC is focussed on the Action Plan; a step above projects and a step below the CDSS. The MBO approach involves Indicators, Time Frame and Assumptions, as the logframe deals with Indicators, Means of Verification and Assumptions."

"Though the logframe is a good design tool, many LAC design officers miss the mark by treating it only as "another annex" to be dealt with. As a review tool it is effective when properly prepared - gives a good grasp quickly, like an Executive Summary. For evaluation it is also effective if properly prepared in the first place.

(2) Asia & Near East

"ANE's major problem with the logical framework is inability to apply it correctly. More training is needed. The training program given by Management Systems International (MSI) is excellent and should be funded more heavily."

"Tendency is to use only the left hand column of the Logframe."

"A good Logframe provides guidance to project implementers. This suggests that it needs to be continually rewritten, as circumstances change. Logframing is really a management by objectives exercise".

(3) Africa

"The great strength of the Logframe is that it helps people to think through the Input, Output, Purpose and Goal linkages."

"The great disappointment of the Logframe is that it is so often improperly used. People tend to dwell on how to fill in the boxes rather than on the linkages themselves."

"Logframes are also often improperly viewed as "blueprints" - something that once made cannot be changed. This is a serious misuse of the instrument that gives an unfairly bad reputation. Logframes should evolve even as project circumstances evolve. Logframe revisions should be tied to adjustments in a Mission's Action Plan. The CDSS provides Mission Goals, the Action Plan describes Objectives contributing to CDSS Goals, and project logframes are linked to the same Goals and Objectives."

"An interesting approach to training might be a course reviewing what A.I.D. has learned from use of the Logframe over the past 15 years - how we can do better in light of this experience. Case studies would provide a good teaching aid."

(4) Science & Technology

"The logframe is an excellent tool which is well adapted to A.I.D.'s bilateral assistance program. In the case of S&T's portfolio of mostly research projects, however, it is harder to apply. We tend to supply Outputs to many Mission efforts, with little clear linkage to specific Purposes and Goals. We also have trouble using the Assumptions column."

"For effective logframing of S&T projects the logframe may need some special treatment. As a minimum, special training is needed."

(5) Food & Voluntary Assistance

"The logframe approach to project design is important and useful, but we have had difficulty applying it to our portfolio in FVA for some very good reasons:

- PL-480 initiatives are approved by a government-wide committee (DCC) which has no tradition of thinking in project terms. They are influenced by (a) a desire to move the commodities and (b) stated humanitarian objectives of the legislation.

-- Grants to PVOs don't lend themselves easily to logframing either because the whole idea of "matching grants" is that A.I.D. simply supports the work of institutions already proven worthy. Such institutions tend to work in many countries on many projects, and A.I.D. support is general in nature.

Despite these inherent difficulties of application in FVA, the Logframe is viewed as an important instrument of potential utility. The trick is to figure out how to apply it."

"Recently FVA developed guidance with a view toward better projectization of PL-480 activities. This should facilitate logframing somewhat."

"With respect to matching grants to PVOs, we've got them using "operating plans" now, which is a step in the right direction."

"The key to applying the Logframe to the FVA portfolio is training - perhaps a special course focussing just on PL-480 and "matching grant" programs."

Assessing these and other interviews from the perspective of problems with continued usefulness of the logical framework in A.I.D., the following points can be made:

- (1) The logframe tool itself is good; problems with it are from misapplication by its users.
- (2) Parts of the A.I.D. project portfolio lend themselves less readily to logframe application than the classic bi-lateral projects (e.g. S&T research and FVA matching grants and PL-480 programs). The logframe is also little used with bi-lateral capital transfers, not because this type of activity presents application problems so much as that the Agency simply hasn't required logframe use for such activities.
- (3) Agency, Bureau and Mission policy-making and programming exercises may also be carried-out more effectively if the logframe tool is employed to better ensure awareness of interconnectedness between projects, programs and policies.
- (4) Additional logframe research and training are needed to help Agency design, program and policy-making personnel learn how to apply the logframe to their activities more effectively.

B. Analysis of the Logical Framework Instrument

Looking, now, at the logical framework instrument itself, following is a brief assessment of perceived problems, element by element:

1. Project Structure Column

The genius of the logframe is its ability to help ordinary people not given to seeing far beyond their immediate actions a tool for projecting consequences well into the future. Employed properly, it enables its users to function like chessmasters, knowing with some degree of confidence the 2nd, 3rd and 4th generation consequences of each move. The input/output/purpose/goal statement of the logframe is really nothing more than a formula for projecting consequences of one's actions.

On a conceptual level this dialectic has not been too difficult for A.I.D. personnel to digest. However, problems of application have been considerable.

The first problem comes from argument over where to start.

The natural inclination of "hands-on" project designers and managers is to start from the bottom and work up, concerning themselves with input/output/purpose linkages in that order or

priority. If the project is rice culture, for example, the project manager is going to concern himself primarily with bringing together the appropriate measures of land, labor and capital (read farm land, farmers and a seed/equipment/technology package) in timely fashion so to produce a bountiful harvest.

The natural inclination of the policy-makers, on the other hand, is to start from the top and work down, focussing on goal/purpose/output linkages in that order of priority. The debate among policy-makers has an entirely different flavor, therefore, even where the same project is concerned. More than often it would treat issues such as equity and economic opportunity vis a vis higher farm income, paying only the slightest heed to rice culture itself.

This dichotomy of interests in the very same project highlights both the genius and failure of the logframe approach to project design, review and evaluation. The logframe is useful because it provides a common playing field, and language, for the players on both extremes of the overall economic development team (project managers and policy-makers), yet it generally fails to ensure a successful outcome. In the vast majority of circumstances project designs that appeared to have adequately addressed the goal/purpose/output/input linkages, or if you prefer, the input/output/purpose/goal linkages, have come up short. Some of the linkages are successfully made, but not

all. If you compare this shortfall with failing to complete the entire span in a bridge, you get an idea of the consequences of partial success. If the goal is only accomplished with a complete crossing of the river, and your project takes you 75% of the way, you may have constructed a very impressive span, as far as you went, yet done no good at all with regard to goal achievement.

Where does the breakdown occur, and why? This question takes us to another part of the logframe instrument - the column wherein the behavior of non-A.I.D. players is predicted.

2. Important Assumptions Column

The problem with systems for predicting outcomes is that they only work where all variables are under control. If Player B in a chess game, for example, could be relied upon to respond to every one of Player A's moves in a predetermined way, it would be relatively simple to develop a system by which Player A could win every time. Unfortunately, Player B cannot be relied upon in that way. His counter-moves might be influenced by factors as diverse as length of the game, how well he slept the night before, even how he feels about Player A personally. If it is difficult to predict behavior in one player in a game as well defined as chess, imagine the difficulty of predicting the behavior of large numbers of people and institutions in a game as complex and changing as life itself. Is it any wonder

that A.I.D. practitioners have problems with the logframe's Important Assumptions Column?

The recommended methodology at the outset, upon preparation of the logframe by a project design team and its reviewers on the policy-making side, is valid in practice and works reasonably well. At each level of the project structure (inputs/outputs/purpose/goal) the assumptions critical to realizing predicted linkages are defined. On one end the assumptions might be (1) that the land, labor and capital for successful rice production can be assembled in timely fashion, and (2) that nature will provide wind, rain and sunshine at the appropriate times.

Note: Inputs is the easy part, and already we are dependent upon a variable totally outside A.I.D.'s control - the whims of nature.

On the other end some enormously speculative assumptions are made; e.g. that rice buyers will appear on the scene in timely fashion, that rice prices will be sufficient to ensure profit to farmers, that the farmers benefiting will be those intended to benefit, etc. In between the input and goal assumptions are many more equally heroic predictions.

What do these problems with the Important Assumptions Column tell us? Does our failure here mean that we should abandon efforts to define such variables altogether and give up on efforts to predict input/output/purpose/goal linkages? Alternatively, perhaps it means that A.I.D. should only operate in controlled environments where there are no exogenous variables - much like a scientific laboratory.

The answer, it seems, is a compromise. To be effective, development agencies must adapt themselves to the environments in which they operate. At the same time, complete abandonment of scientific method would be unwise. Just as a successful chess player must know many strategies, and constantly adjust between them depending upon how his opponent reacts (changes the game's assumptions), so too must A.I.D.'s development practitioners constantly adapt to the changing environment in which the A.I.D. project is being played out.

In short, A.I.D. must continually review the assumptions upon which the input/output/purpose/goal linkages are dependant, and adjust its game plan accordingly. Logical? Yes! Common practice? No!

3. The Logical Framework As A Blueprint

The problem A.I.D. practitioners are up against here is that project designs, and the logical frameworks through which they are framed, are treated like blueprints which cannot be changed. This, of course, makes no more sense in an economic development context than it does in more traditional applications for blueprints. Let's look at this misuse of the logframe blueprint from the perspective of an architect. Imagine, if you will, a home built from a blueprint providing utility and structural integrity for five rooms on one level.

Now let's assume that the circumstances surrounding the home's occupants change, and they elect to, say, add a floor above and a garage at one end. Since the occupants don't want to be bothered with the hassle of reviewing the basic house plans, they just begin to add-on, in the process changing load factors for electricity, hot water, heat and air conditioning, weight on frame, outside drainage, etc.

Is there anything wrong with adapting the home to changing circumstances? No! Are the changes likely to cause problems if made without making corresponding adjustments in basic design features? Yes!

This example illustrates the problem frequently encountered with the logical framework. Project circumstances change, so on a day-to-day basis adjustments are made. Rarely, however, are these adjustments assessed in light of the basic project blueprint, the logframe.

The why of this curious behavior also seems to bear some resemblance to the illustration of architectural and engineering plans for a home. To formally change a home's design specifications there is a necessity of involving certain public officials - electrical, water and fire inspectors, to name a few. This is often viewed as an unnecessary bother for just one more piecemeal adjustment.

The perspective of the A.I.D. project manager is similar. With the day-to-day circumstances surrounding the project in constant turmoil, the manager is tempted to view basic design reassessment as a time-consuming distraction involving folks from the Program Office, and the Director's Office, who really are not sufficiently "in touch" to be of genuine assistance. So the project manager innovates by instinct, "flying by the seat of his pants."

What is the remedy?

The first step is to communicate clearly to all logical framework users some obvious truths:

-- Is the logical framework like a blueprint? Yes!

-- Can/should it be changed as project circumstances change?
Yes!

If these two messages are clearly understood, then execution of the policy is simply a matter of mechanics. Needed is a way to encourage project managers to review the blueprints on a continuing basis.

Indicated, it would seem, is to build logframe review into the regular reporting process - those monthly or quarterly reviews by which managers keep their Mission Directors informed of important events. Such a review would give greatest emphasis to the Important Assumptions Column, because it is there that changing circumstances have their most direct impact. It would, however, look likewise to the Input/Output/Purpose/Goal linkages, to Achievement Indicators, and to Means of Verification.

Does this sound like a heavy burden to put on A.I.D.'s hard working project managers? Yes! Is it reasonable? Yes! Even in the home rehabilitation business it is unpleasant, and often intimidating, to have to review the compliance of one's residence with basic building code requirements, but only in so doing can one avoid large-scale non-compliance as one adjustment is added to another over the years.

IV OPPORTUNITIES

In Part I we traced the birth of the logframe and its initial application within A.I.D. In Part II we discussed the logframe's impact on A.I.D., and on the international donor community in general, affecting both the form of project documentation and the language of the discourse. Then in Part III, having acknowledged these successes, we proceeded to reveal grave inadequacies which, left uncorrected, threaten to discredit the logframe approach altogether.

Now, in Part IV, we will focus once again on what the logframe can do, leaving aside a lot of real world application shortcomings. With this positive perspective, we will explore other opportunities within A.I.D. wherein thoughtful application of the logical framework methodology might lead to better results.

A. Cash Transfers

Based upon trends in funds obligated, the "hottest" segment of A.I.D.'s overall portfolio is that characterized by nonproject assistance, i.e. cash transfers of one form or another. This category of project has grown with the increasing importance of A.I.D.'s "Economic Support Fund (ESF) portfolio - funds tied closely to U.S. political interests abroad. In FY 1986 some 68 percent (\$4.91 billion) of the A.I.D. portfolio

overall was allocated to SSA with 71 percent of that amount (\$3.49 billion) being obligated through cash transfer mechanisms - roughly 49 percent of A.I.D.'s total \$7.18 billion budget.

A critical difference between nonproject assistance and A.I.D.'s project assistance portfolio is the required methodology for documentation. Conventional A.I.D. projects (largely the Development Assistance portfolio) are prepared per Handbook 3 guidance for preparation of the Project Paper (PP), the core of which is the logical framework. Nonproject assistance (largely the ESF portfolio), on the other hand, is governed by Handbook 4 guidance for preparation of the Program Assistance Authorization Document (PAAD).

PAAD guidance in Handbook 4 does not lack detail. Indeed, it is in many respects more detailed than Handbook 3 guidance for preparation of Project Papers. Direct information requirements for, for example, economic policy analysis, pipeline analysis, balance of payments analysis and financial analysis provide the writer with opportunities to present volumes of "learned" information.

Such presentations may, indeed, deal with the proper issues and thus assist sound investment decisions. It is often difficult to tell, however, what with all the information. Missing from

the PAAD presentation is a requirement for rigorous analysis - for a clear demonstration of the relationship between what is proposed and overall Agency and Host Country goals, and likewise for identification of the many exogenous variables (assumptions) that could render the proposed nonproject assistance ineffective.

It is quite possible with PAAD analysis to "write around" the difficult issues, merely presenting descriptive material in response to "checklist type" questions. The result is often impressive appearing documents that (1) are hard for reviewers to "get a handle on" and (2) fail to deal with the issue of genuine usefulness of the proposed assistance.

It is possible, in a word, to "write around" the difficult issues, and to focus on that part of the analysis that is convenient to treat -- the sort of selective focussing that was rendered impossible through imposition of the logical framework on project assistance documentation.

There is a persuasive school of thought, however, that argues: "So what? If it has been determined by Congress to provide funds for political purposes, why should A.I.D. impede the process with complicated analysis and documentation requirements? Why not just send the money and use staff time on jobs where they can better influence the outcome?"

The answer, it seems, lies in a compromise. There are ESF capital transfers that are genuinely, 100 percent pre-determined, from which it is not appropriate to attempt to squeeze additional influence. Examples would be "base rights" concessions where the capital transfer is really nothing more than rent. These, however, are the minority of such projects.

In many cases the capital transfer is tied to certain adjustments in economic policy; program loans, for example. Where this is the case, analytical rigor in document preparation is absolutely essential. There should be no "writing around" the issues; no substitution of descriptive material for analytical rigor. In these instances, the logframe is ideally designed to force recognition of the causal linkages (Project Structure Column), on one hand, and critical exogenous variables (Important Assumptions Column) on the other.

Another potentially useful application of logframe techniques to nonproject assistance (capital transfers), is where there are provisions for generation of local currency to be jointly programmed - e.g., many commodity import projects. In such instances, establishment of project selection, analysis and documentation standards based upon use of logframe techniques could have very positive effect by (1) improving the quality of secondary projects funded and (2) training host country personnel in use of the logframe.

B. The CDSS Process

Programming in A.I.D. takes place on several levels. At the base level we have projects, each of which is a discrete, often highly complex development program. Up till this point, our discussion of logframe techniques has dealt entirely at this level.

At the next level, missions prepare an Annual Budget Submission (ABS), which serves as a memorandum to the U.S. Congress outlining what is being done in each Mission and Bureau and what is proposed. The format for the ABS is largely descriptive, and advocative in approach. The ABS process is not viewed by A.I.D. as a process for deciding what should be done, but rather as a process for communicating to the Congress what A.I.D. wishes to do. It is fitting, therefore, that the format for the ABS should be determined largely by what Congress is looking for, and that the style is advocative.

At the next level, however, there is a programming process in which analytical rigor is of critical importance -- that is the CDSS process.

Each year a handful of A.I.D. missions are asked to prepare an overall review of their portfolios, current and planned projects alike, and review them in A.I.D./W with Bureau and Agency leadership. This exercise is intended as an opportunity

for Missions to step back and take a thoughtful look at what they are doing, and for A.I.D./W's policy people to have an opportunity to aid in the process by sharing insights from their broader, regional and world-wide perspectives on development. The CDSS process is potentially a very valuable planning exercise.

The reality of the CDSS process, however, is different. Despite concerted efforts by A.I.D./W management staff to provide guidelines that will result in genuinely analytical CDSS submissions, the results are often disappointing.

Too frequently the Missions respond to CDSS guidelines with documents describing each sector of the host country economy and providing "bullet-like" narratives of what is being done, or will be done, to address the problems. What is generally lacking is the argumentation to show linkage between the problems posed and solutions offered.

A.I.D./W managers have attempted to resolve this by writing detailed CDSS guidance cables asking Missions to provide an analysis of the sector problems, and a discussion of why one approach is favored over another. Although this instruction is clearly stated in paragraph 4 of the 1987 CDSS guidance cable, the paragraph tends to be lost among a variety of additional, more specific instructions.

Needed, it would seem, is a proposed analytical framework that cannot be ignored because it itself is an outline for the analysis. The logical framework matrix seems ideally suited for structure of CDSS presentations. Because it is all inclusive, one cannot "write around" the logframe. Employed as a CDSS structure it would force analysis of the causal relationships between problems identified and projects proposed, and it would force identification of critical exogenous variables. Because A.I.D./W and mission staff are already familiar with the logframe in the project design context, it would simplify the CDSS review and discussion process by providing a common frame of reference, both in the Missions and in A.I.D./W. Less time would be spent on discussing "what A.I.D./W wants" and how to respond fully to the CDSS guidelines.

C. Agency-wide Policies

The final A.I.D. activity in which potential for application of logframe techniques is discussed is Agency-wide policymaking. By policy-making is meant that general process of discussing and resolving future directions and emphases for the Agency. An important recent example of policy-making is the evolving emphasis on "privatization" in A.I.D.'s development initiatives. Another even broader example would be evaluation of the Agency's "four pillars" emphasis.

If policy-making is, indeed, such a broad term in A.I.D., how can one organize to apply logframe techniques to it? Indeed, is it even a good idea? Since policy-making in A.I.D. involves close coordination with Congress, and the State Department, both of whom are often in a position to dominate the dialogue, is it realistic that logframe rigor can be applied to the process.

These are valid reservations, of course. It is difficult to define the terms for a dialogue with one's boss. Yet perhaps in this very problem lies the rationale for attempting to do so.

No one in the A.I.D. policy-making process opposes use of logic. Given this, why are there disagreements about what policies should be? The answer is that different parties to the dialogue often have different base assumptions about priorities, host country context, and the like. These differences may never come to light because they go unstated. The potential usefulness of the logframe approach to this policy dialogue is that it urges analysis of all critical linkages and assumptions.

Is it realistic to think that A.I.D. could get its counterparts to deal with development policy issues in such an analytical context? This can probably only be determined over time. Needed first, however, is for A.I.D.'s policy-making personnel

to take such a focus themselves. Has anyone ever analyzed the concept of privatization in the logframe format, attempting to reconcile it with stated A.I.D. objectives? Would this be a useful exercise in helping A.I.D. personnel to understand the policy, and how it might be applied? Would our colleagues in the department of state benefit from, say, a workshop built around analyzing this policy in a logframe context?

The question of logframe applications to general policy-making is difficult, indeed. If serious thought is to be given to exploring this possibility, an experimental workshop might be a good first step.

CONCLUSIONS

The logical framework approach in A.I.D. has been very successful, so far as it has been utilized. Quality of A.I.D.'s Development Assistance project designs has improved markedly, and the review and evaluation processes have been facilitated as a result of the better designs.

For the logframe to "hold its own," however, continued logframe training for A.I.D. employees is a must. The hiatus in such training from 1980 till 1986 has taken a toll by introducing an entire generation of middle and senior managers to A.I.D. without logframe familiarization. Such employees, often in positions to participate in project review meetings, have shown little interest in the logframe approach, and thus have lowered the importance of logframe analysis in the design and review process.

For the logframe to realize its potential for serving A.I.D.'s changing portfolio requirements and policies, additional investments should be made in two areas:

- (1) A contract, and perhaps several workshops, to study the potential effectiveness of logframe techniques to (a) aid in analysis and design of certain capital transfer projects currently exempted from Handbook 3 documentation guidelines, (b) preparation and review of CDSS submissions and (c) development and review of broad new Agency policy initiatives.
- (2) Revision of the logical framework training module to accomodate broader applications to such new activities.

A critical difference between so-called capital transfer projects and A.I.D.'s project assistance portfolio is the required methodology for project documentation. Conventional A.I.D. projects (largely the Development Assistance portfolio) are prepared per Handbook 3 guidance, the core of that guidance being the logical framework. Nonproject assistance (largely the Security and Supporting Assistance portfolio), on the other hand, is governed by Handbook 4 guidance for preparation of the Program Assistance Authorization Document (PAAD).

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