

AN-1145829

EVALUATOR AS CHANGE AGENT:
THE CASE OF A FOREIGN ASSISTANCE PROJECT IN MOROCCO

by

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Presented at "Evaluation 88"
Meeting of the American Evaluation Association
New Orleans, Louisiana
October 27-29, 1988

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The Case of a Foreign Assistance Project in Morocco

"Change Agent" is defined, in the widest sense, as "anyone who plays an important part in designing, redesigning, running, renewing, or improving any system, subsystem, or program."¹ Good change agents are said to have the ability "to conceive, construct, and convert into behavior a new view of organizational reality."² Divided into several types and armed with a variety of tactics, change agents have long played an essential role in theories of change, and, in particular, in the theory and practice of organizational change and development.³ Change agents are the required catalysts in the unfreezing-change-refreezing process which characterizes the transformation of an organization from one state to another.

In technical assistance projects, although rarely identified as such, change agents in the guise of technical advisers, donor officials, and host country counterparts, hold the key to stimulating pro-development changes through the framework of a "project." Using the case study approach, I will show in this paper how evaluators, too, play a critical role as change agents, along with those typically identified in the foreign assistance milieu. I will argue further that evaluators play a role, by virtue of the nature of evaluation, which cannot be played by other change agents. Without them, the chances of a successful project are greatly reduced.

In constructing a story or a reality about the project's past, evaluators help to make possible and to design the future of the project based on the shared visions of stakeholders. Evaluators facilitate change by "retrospective rationality," by making sense of and forming into strategies the "accidents, uncertainties, and muddle-headed confusions"⁴ of the past, and by so doing build commitment of stakeholders to project direction. By providing professional judgments of project accomplishments, evaluators reduce the uncertainty of action. Positive judgments can increase confidence, enhance other change agents' positions, and muster support and resources. Evaluators in this way help "root" the legitimacy of change and facilitate its future direction. By hearing and voicing the issues and concerns of stakeholders, evaluators can change the balance of power by increasing or decreasing the influence of stakeholders in the decision making process. Through focusing on the processes which are taking place between key stakeholders, evaluators can build teams and consensus. Guiding stakeholders through a period of adjustment to change, a time of reflection, acceptance, or redirection, can help "freeze" the change or facilitate its redefinition. In the project under study, I will attempt to show that the shortcomings of the evaluators qua change agents arose when they provided judgments about

issues which they should have mediated. Indeed, there is a delicate balance between instances when evaluators can best foster change by judging and those when evaluators should rather arbitrate. The unique nature of the "evaluation contract," in which stakeholders invest in the evaluator roles which they do not allow each other to assume, facilitates the above change agent activities.

The Agency for International Development has assisted Morocco develop its agricultural sector since the Marshall Plan years, when funds were channeled through France. Recent drought and rapid population growth, which has forced Morocco to import a growing percentage of its food, has made the development of this sector even more vital, especially given Morocco's debt crisis which limits the availability of foreign exchange. Working in the sector a number of years made the Government of Morocco and the AID Mission realize that Morocco needed accurate, reliable, and timely information about agriculture to formulate and implement economic policies which would encourage increased agricultural production. AID took the first steps toward helping Morocco obtain such information in 1979 when the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) signed a memorandum of understanding to provide technical and material assistance to the Government of Morocco (GOM) to establish an area sampling frame (ASF) for the country with money from a centrally-funded project which carried out similar activities in nearly twenty countries throughout the world. Working with the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform, the project succeeded in implementing the area sampling frame. This success led AID to consider a project to capitalize on the progress made toward establishing the area sampling frame. If the area sampling frame could serve to establish an accurate stratified sample of the agricultural population and if the personnel of the Ministry of Agriculture could be trained to collect accurate, timely agricultural statistics based on that sample, then Moroccan policy makers could contribute to increased agricultural production. Accepting this logic, in 1983, AID approved the Planning, Economics, and Statistics for Agriculture Project.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) implements the ten-year project within the Directorate of Planning and Economic Affairs (DPAE) in Morocco's Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform. The project works to improve the Ministry's ability to collect data, publish timely agricultural statistics, undertake economic policy analyses, and plan, monitor, and evaluate agricultural projects. With a U.S. contribution of \$12.5 million, the project finances long and short term technical assistance provided by USDA, training, and commodities, especially computers. In 1987, AID amended the project to place increased emphasis on policy analysis and on planning.

Categorized as "institutional development," the project's theory of action argues that better statistics will facilitate better economic analysis, which will then lead to better planning and policy making in the agriculture sector, which will increase production, the ultimate

development goal. On the operational level, however, the project can best be conceived as one of "organizational change," a construct not often explicitly used in AID-funded projects, where the macro-economic, production-oriented rationale dominates.

As a project to engender organization change, using Rosabeth Kanter's definition of "change," the project is attempting to "crystallize new action possibilities (i.e. new policies, new behaviors, new patterns, new methodologies, new products, or new market ideas) based on reconceptualized patterns in the organization."⁵ In this case, new behaviors, patterns, and methodologies of statistics, economic analysis, planning, and policy making vis-a-vis the agricultural sector are being introduced through project-defined inputs of technical assistance, training, and commodities.

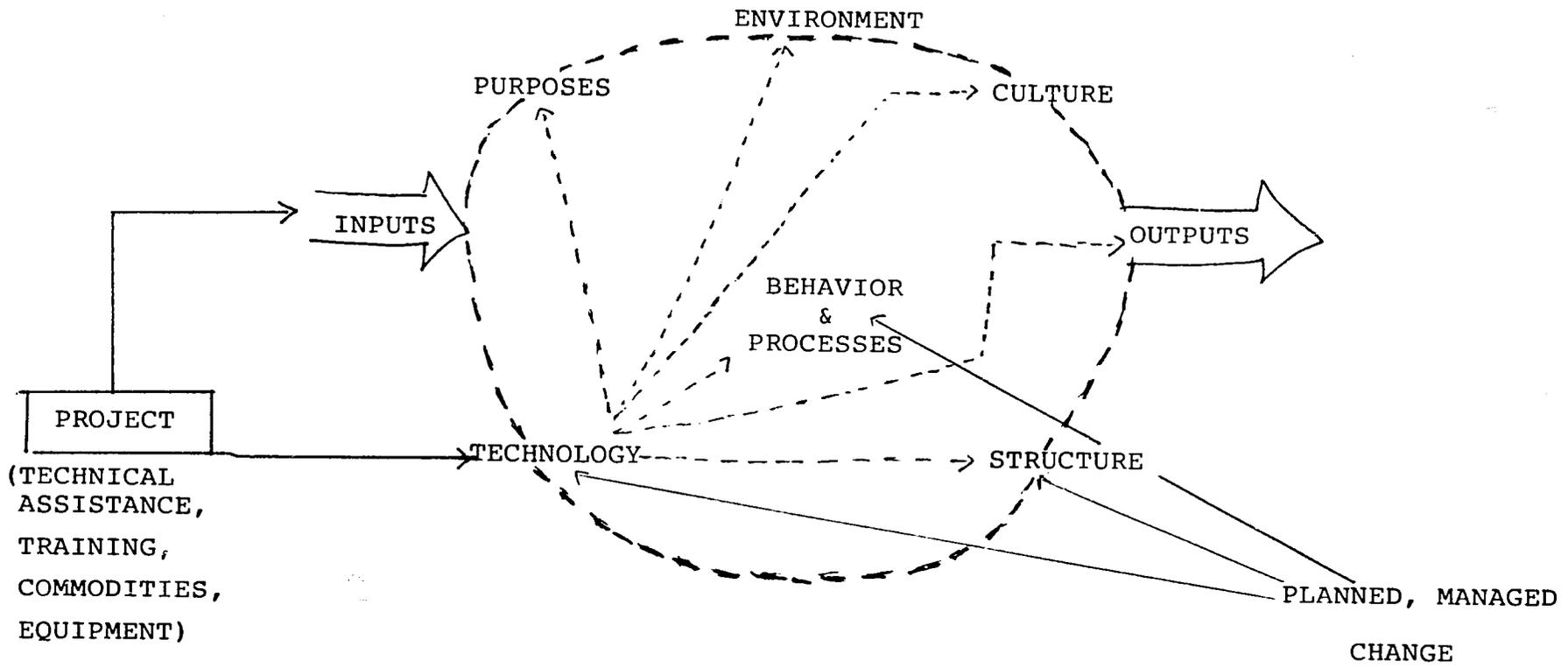
Reviewing the organization change literature will help place the project in a framework where the actions of change agents become more transparent. The "open systems model" describes an organization as consisting of eight elements: inputs (or resources), outputs, technology, environment, purposes, behavior and processes, culture, and structure.⁶ Change can occur in all of these elements, of course, but "basic, planned or managed, internal change," is generally targeted at: organizational structure, behavior and processes, and technology. ← AID paragraph on how

According to Edgar F. Huse, in his standard text on organization development and change,⁷ change itself can be typed into four categories: Change by "outside pressure" directed toward the total organization, and consisting of tactics such as mass demonstrations and civil disobedience, "organization development," including team building confrontation meetings, work redesign, goal setting, and so on, "people change," directed toward the individual within the organization, and "analysis for the top," which emphasizes achieving technological and structural change by persuading the top managers to accept and implement a proposal. AID projects

How to cause change, the actual change process, has been described in several models, including "intervention theory and method," "planned change," and "action research." Intervention theory and method assists a client system generate valid information about itself, develop alternative solutions, make decisions and develop shared commitment to the decisions. Developed by Argyris, the theory casts the change agent as an "interventionist" who alters the "basic processes of information flow, data gathering, and decision making within the client organization"⁸ rather than making specific suggestions for improvement, as a change agent does. The change force is thus internal, not external. Planned change goes beyond intervention theory by arguing that "all information must be freely and openly shared between the client and the change agent and that information is helpful only when and if it can be directly translated into action."⁹ This model follows a seven-step

DEVELOPMENT PROJECT
AS
ORGANIZATION CHANGE

"...the crystallization of new action possibilities...based on reconceptualized patterns in the organization."



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DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS INITIATE CHANGES IN
TECHNOLOGY

THESE CHANGES PERMEATE THE ORGANIZATION
AND CAUSE CHANGES IN OTHER
ELEMENTS

process: scouting, entry, diagnosis, planning, action, evaluation, and termination. Action research focuses more on joint "collaboration between client and change agent, heavy emphasis on data gathering and preliminary diagnosis prior to action planning and implementation, careful evaluation of results before action is taken, and the development of new behavioral science knowledge which can be applied in other organizational settings."¹⁰ The seven steps of action research include: problem identification, consultation with a behavioral scientist expert, data gathering and preliminary diagnosis, feedback to key client or group, joint diagnosis of problem, action, and data-gathering after action.

Within these models, change agents play a variety of roles and employ many different tactics. Change agents are typically categorized in parallel fashion to types of change, namely the "outside pressure type" (OP), the "people-change-technology type" (PCT); the "analysis-for-the-top-type" (AFT), and the "organization development type" (OD).¹¹ The "outside pressure type" (OP) works outside the system, generally by political means. The "people-change technology" type (PCT) works for management "to change the way in which organizational members behave."¹² The "analysis-for-the-top" type (AFT) employs a rational approach and wants to change the organizational structure or technology "so as to improve output and efficiency."¹³ The "organization development" type (OD) wants to improve the organizational problem solving ability. OD change agents tend to emphasize team collaboration and increased participation. PCTs narrow in on individual change projects. AFTs attempt more impersonal technical and structural change efforts.¹⁴

Various styles assumed by change agents traversing the spectrum from directive to non-directive include "advocate," "technical specialist," "collaborator/problem solver," "alternative identifier," "process specialist," and "reflector." Change agent tactics are almost endless. Some commonly listed ones are technological innovation, role clarification, change in the authority structure, change in the decision making structure, change in the reward structure, team development, survey feedback, and sensitivity training. These techniques are used by each of the change agents listed above, although with differing priorities.

AID-financed projects generally blend elements of the action research and planned change models of change. An analysis of the constraints to development within a country, together with a prioritization of sectors will lead to a possible range of projects. The final project is selected based on its importance to the country, AID's own development priorities established by AID policy, project analysis, and AID's comparative advantage in implementing and getting results from the activity. Key change agents who form an essential part of the project package are technical advisors who are the main "implementors" of the project's change strategy. Other critical change agents include

→ AID projects attempt to Δ technology

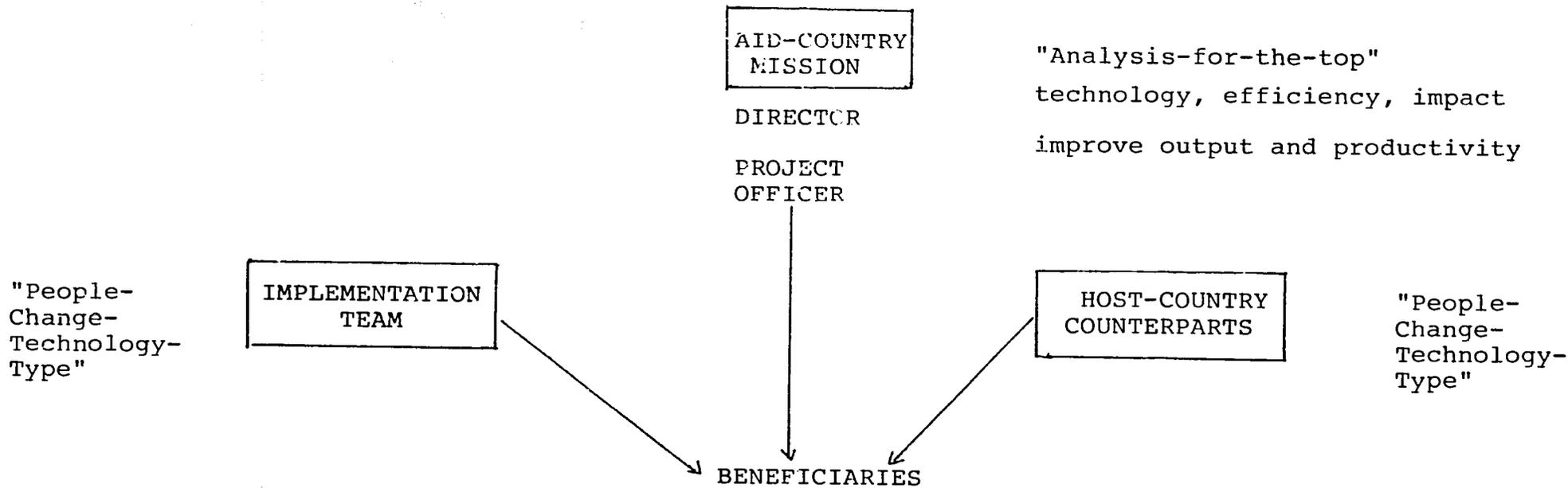
staff from the AID field Mission and the host country counterpart organization. The project implementation team, AID, and the host country form a tripartite structure of change whose various styles and objectives often differ dramatically. AID, as the donor, most often plays the "analysis-for-the-top" change agent who expects the adoption of modern technology and the adjustment of organizational structure and processes to increase efficiency and stimulate pro-development behavior. AID looks for results and sometimes has little understanding, by virtue of its vantage, of the internal factors which are affecting project progress. Within AID, the project officer serves to manage the project and to assure that AID rules and regulations are followed and that implementors follow the project outline. He or she serves as a key change agent, although somewhat distanced from the project core. A good project officer will assure that AID itself pays adequate attention to the project and provides adequate support and resources, so that success can be forthcoming. Others within the AID Mission provide guidance also. The Mission Director is also a key change agent from within the AID structure. Because of his or her stature within the country, he or she has the power to exert pressure on high level officials within the country for policy changes conducive to a positive environment for the project and for additional resources to support project activities. He or she can also leverage other AID resources for changes supportive of the project or even leverage the project itself. A threat to withdraw funds if the recipient does not make required changes is the ultimate move of the donor.

The project implementation team most likely displays "people-change-technology type" (PCT) characteristics by virtue of working at a people-to-people level on a daily basis. They want to change people and the organization's approaches to fulfilling its mandate. After establishing their initial credibility, they begin to affect the organization by helping its staff adapt to new technologies by upgrading their skills and knowledge and helping them adjust their attitudes and ways of doing business. These change agents work by a subtle combination of camaraderie and aggression. As the agricultural economist on the project under study said, "In order to affect change, one must be constantly pushing for new ways of doing things. One cannot accept and praise the status quo; rather, one must gently but persuasively insist on changing the way things are done if one hopes to succeed. Too many advisors, in my view, view their role as somewhat friendly co-existence rather than change agent."

Host country counterparts also serve as critical change agents within the organization by agreeing to translate the technical advisor external change agent directives into organizational reality. These counterparts legitimize and sustain the changes but also constantly push against the technical advisors to try to maintain control of the change process and define it on their own terms.

AID-FUNDED PROJECT

CHANGE AGENTS



The relationship between the three categories of change agents is very complex and changeable, especially given the fact that within each category co-exist different factions. By virtue of the positions each plays in the implementation drama, each provides a particular perspective and the power to effect changes in different areas and among different groups. Each will also appeal to another's special status. Thus, the project implementation team and the host country counterparts may request AID to impose political pressure when they have failed to induce the change. AID did this in Morocco to obtain more resources to support agricultural research, much to the relief of the Moroccan research entity who could not exert enough pressure alone. The implementation team may request AID to put pressure on certain project counterparts to provide resources to the project or make organizational changes more conducive to the realization of project objectives. And the counterparts may request AID to provide assistance in certain areas or to change the focus of the project or the technical assistance mix or personalities. AID may also directly affect change by approving or not funding levels, work plans, specific requests for equipment and commodities, training, technical assistance, and so on.

One can then re-look at the project in terms of organization change literature. The Directorate of Planning and Economic Affairs (DPAE) is one of ten directorates of the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform. The Directorate collects agricultural statistics, prepares and evaluates agricultural development plans, programs, and projects, assures relations between the ministry and bilateral and multilateral donors, maintains a permanent inventory of resources and production figures for crops and livestock, conducts economic and commercial studies of internal and external agricultural markets, factors of production, and costs of production, and makes policy and action recommendations based on these studies. As shown on the chart on the following page, the Directorate is divided into the Division of Economic Affairs and the Division of Planning. The Division of Economic Affairs is in turn divided into the Statistics and Documentation Service (SSD), the Economic Studies, Prices and Markets Service, (SEE) and the Production Incentives Service (SI). The Division of Planning is divided into the Planning, (SP) Project Monitoring and Evaluation, (SSEP) and International Cooperation Services (SCI). The project finances advisers and other resources for the Statistics and Documentation Service (SSD) and the Economic Studies, Prices and Markets Service (SEE). Two USDA statisticians work in the SSD Service and a USDA funded agricultural economist works in the SEE Service. The project-funded technical advisers work closely with the Chief of the Economic Affairs Division and the Chiefs of the SSD and SEE to improve data collection and analysis and to improve economic analysis. The agricultural economist has also worked with the Production Incentives Service, the Planning Service, and the Project Evaluation Service within the Planning Division. A fourth adviser, an agricultural economist, will arrive at a later date and work within the Planning Division. In addition to the long term advisers, the project funds seventy person-months of short-term technical assistance, including technical assistance to provide in-country training, in the

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

DPAE

ECONOMIC AFFAIRS DIVISION
(DAE)

PLANNING DIVISION
(DP)

STATISTICS &
DOCUMENTATION
(SSD)

ECONOMIC
STUDIES,
PRICES, &
MARKETS
(SEE)

PRODUCTION
INCENTIVES
(SI)

PLANNING
(SP)

PROJECT
MONITORING
AND
EVALUATION
(SSEP)

INTERNATIONAL
COOPERATION
(SCI)

SAMPLING

FORECASTS

VEGETABLE
PRODUCTION

PRICES

DATA PROCESSING

LIVESTOCK

INTEGRATED
PROJECTS

DOCUMENTATION
LIBRARY

TWO
RESIDENT
ADVISERS
(STATISTICIANS)

ONE
RESIDENT
ADVISER
(ECONOMIST)

ONE
RESIDENT
ADVISER
(ECONOMIST)

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technical areas of statistics, area frame sampling, data processing, computer systems training, project monitoring, planning, evaluation, and financial/economic analysis. Six DPAA staff will receive Ph.D.'s and twenty-three will receive M.S. Degrees in the United States under the project. An additional twenty individuals will attend non-degree training programs in the U.S. in fields such as project evaluation, remote sensing, and photo lab operation.

Hence, to summarize from the perspective of organizational change, the organization is being stimulated to new action possibilities by the addition of data processing equipment to modernize the handling of data, training of staff to allow them to apply the new methodologies of data collection and economic analysis and utilize the new technology. The project finances four change agents to help train the cadre, to push for organizational changes supportive of the new technology, and to help direct the organization in its new path.

From the signature of the Project Agreement until the first evaluation in October, 1987, the project had completed a number of activities. From May to October, 1986, the project had installed four megabyte IBM 4361 mini-computers, eighteen terminals, thirty-eight mini-computers, and related peripheral equipment. By October, 1987, the project had completed 24 million hectares of aerial photography to be used as a basis for stratification and construction of the area frame and sample, built an aerial photography laboratory, upgraded an objective yield laboratory, constructed the area frame for 30 of 56 zones of the country, established a functioning program of regularly scheduled agricultural statistics based on the area frame, expanded data processing capabilities, completed an agricultural pricing and incentives study, supported an analysis of the options and problems of foreign trade liberalization and domestic price support, and sent seven candidates to the United States for long-term training. The agricultural economist and short-term consultants had also taught several courses to Ministry cadre to transfer more quantitative, analytical approaches to economics. These included micro-computers, econometrics, data base management, linear programming, and computer maintenance. The agricultural economist had also completed on-the-job training in quantitative model building, spreadsheets, and comparative advantage methodology.

In spite of the progress made, serious institutional issues plagued the project which the technical advisors said threatened its continuation. The two statisticians claimed that the Statistics and Documentation Service refused to adapt their recommendations regarding required data and an appropriate data collection system which would be responsive to decision maker needs. Their morale was low. They claimed that the DPAA had not come to grips with what statistical information was needed by Morocco's agricultural policy makers. They stated also that this service did not adopt a reliable system for conducting statistical surveys based on procedural standards, basically because "certain individuals (namely the chief of SSD) failed to see the seriousness of

these concerns." SSD wanted to adopt word processing equipment and other technologies but not make procedural changes to accommodate them to the USDA model. Specifically, the USDA advisers stated that shortcomings existed in the following areas: survey design, enumerator training, data collection, data editing and processing, and publication. Problems in survey design included sample sizes and the volume of data collection that were too large given the relative size of the country. Surveys gathered data of such low reliability that it served virtually no function. Moreover, large sample sizes reduced sampling error but exacerbated non-sampling error, especially given the lack of vehicles and fuel. Questionnaires were of low quality also, according to the American statisticians. In addition, enumerators received inadequate training, they said. No one followed up or controlled the quality of enumerator work, the advisers contended. As a consequence, mistakes were made which undermined the value of the data collected. Regional services barely communicated with the Central Office and regional staff had little help in answering questions. SSD scheduled data collection efforts during February to April, overwhelming respondents and interviewers, exacerbating analysis problems and leading to major lags between data collection and publication of results. Computerization had increased the quality of the data editing, but some problems still existed in controlling the editing carried out in the regions. Only the head of SSD reviewed survey estimates prior to publication. No one had undertaken an independent audit of the data summary and set estimates procedures. SSD did not distribute published results to the long list of potential outside clientele.

In addition to the more technical statistical issues outlined above, the USDA team and the AID project officer pointed to critical organizational problems impeding the transfer of the new technology. As the project officer wrote on the eve of the evaluation in a lengthy memo, "with the responsibilities and duties of the various bureaus within SSD poorly defined, the organization could not function smoothly." Duties varied depending upon the immediate needs of the Service and the chief of SSD did not allocate responsibilities on a consistent basis. The chief made unilateral decisions without consulting bureau chiefs, thus weakening lines of authority. Bureaus did not communicate adequately to be effective, nor were staff meetings often held. Conflicts existed between bureaus with disproportionate work loads. Each bureau carried out its own survey rather than coordinating the activities by function. The cadre or bureau chiefs had low morale. They felt that no one welcomed their ideas or rewarded their excellence.

The division of responsibility between SSD and SE needed clearer definition, the American team and AID project officer advised. They thought that the statistics unit should gather a basic set of farm-related data and make timely publication of these results at the national and provincial level. A procedure should be set up to allow the statistics unit to obtain these data and plan additional surveys of

particular interest to them. The statistics unit would act in this way as a service agency with special skills in survey design and data collection. Analysis would be performed by the requesting agency which would have direct access to the base-level data. SSD insisted on defining all surveys and questionnaires and on having the final say over content, sampling plans, data collection procedures, and quality control. SSD also stated that once the data was collected, it would remain under its exclusive control, essentially denying economists access to farm level data. SSD provided desired output tables, but refused to share the data itself. As a consequence, SSD and SE had no regular contact. USDA advisers worried that if SSD pulled further and further away from data collection and publication and took a greater role in economic and farm analysis, they would lose sight of basic statistical standards.

The USDA advisers claimed that the computer facilities were being underutilized due to personnel and organizational constraints. Due to a lack of data entry clerks and programmers, there had been delays in the timely release of agricultural data. The six qualified programmers in SSD had other responsibilities which limited the amount of time they actually spent programming. Three of the programmers also served as bureau chiefs with significant administrative responsibilities; one ran the computer, actually executing the jobs; others were directly involved in questionnaire editing.

The Chief of SSD disagreed with the criticisms. He stated repeatedly that the advisers did not understand the way things were done in Morocco and furthermore that change would have to occur at a slower rate than that demanded by the advisers and AID. He argued further that all change would have to be coordinated through him. The advisers felt that they were not mustering the authority and influence they needed to effect the change process. They felt the chief of SSD did not really want them in the picture and was fighting to restrict their power. He wanted the new technology and adapt it according to the way he perceived was necessary.

Over a period of several months, the USDA advisers and the AID project officer distributed memoranda outlining the politics of DPAAE and the above-described issues and held meetings with DPAAE officials to wrestle with the disagreement. They reached no resolution, however. The USDA adviser's morale reached an all-time low and the project virtually halted. The USDA team felt that they had exhausted their tactics to resolve the issues and turned to AID. They lobbied and convinced the AID project officer of their point of view. AID then together with the USDA team "ganged-up" to put pressure on DPAAE to make the desired changes, to no avail. The AID Director could have used a standard tactic of leveraging. He could have gone to the Minister of Agriculture and threatened to pull out if the Chief of SSD did not mend his ways. However, this strategy risks defeat, because recipient nations, knowing the political importance of aid to donor nations, can always "call their

bluff," forcing the donor, who needs the project, to back down. In addition, both AID and the USDA team were so certain of their position that they thought it a sure victory to couch it in technical, structural, and philosophical terms, rather than the personal terms which really defined it, and to contract outside "objective" experts, who would have the authority to drive the point home. These experts would be evaluators. So on the eve of the evaluation, the advisers were sure that the evaluators held the key to their victory and could resolve the critical issues so the project could move on.

Shortly before the evaluation, the AID project officer laid out, in a lengthy memo, his and the advisors recommendations for remedying the above problems. They attempted to couch and to solve in structural terms problems which they really felt emanated from one person, the Chief of SSD. They recommended that SSD plan quarterly surveys in lieu of the massive data collection effort during February to April. They advised that the Service derive guidelines to govern the type and quantity of data collected. To keep the volume of data at a manageable level, enumerators should not collect any more data in a quarter than could be processed. They should develop an annual data collection calendar with firm due dates for all phases of survey activities, including design, testing, training, data collection, and quality control. They also argued that SSD needed to clearly define lines of authority as well as to decentralize decision making to promote the capabilities of the mid-level (bureau) managers and avoid overloading top managers. Top managers should concentrate only on making the most important decisions, while using the rest of their time to set guidelines for, and help train, the lower level managers. The SSD Chief should organize bureaus according to functions, in order to permit an even distribution of work flow and to capture the benefits of specialization. The advisers and the AID project officer recommended that SSD be structured based on the lines of specialized needs of the service and skills available to meet those needs. They could establish a Bureau of Data Processing to be responsible for all aspects of work on the computer system. A Bureau for Data Collection could interface with the exterior services, on the one hand, and with the data processing unit, on the other. This bureau could be responsible for activities from questionnaire design to questionnaire review after data collection. A Sampling Frame Development Bureau could carry on the work of developing the area sampling frame. An Estimates Bureau would allow SSD to monitor agricultural conditions throughout the season and to interpret the survey results and set the estimates. A Research Bureau could be named to conduct research projects, do consulting, provide analysis and evaluation reports, and advise on policy and standards.

The project officer called for more attention to be given to "explicitly specifying the role of SSD and SE with respect to farm budget and other economic studies." He laid out three alternatives: (1) accept the SSD definition of the division of labor and develop within SSD a unit capable of doing microeconomic research; (2) develop a data collection

USDA ADVISERS' RECOMMENDED

REORGANIZATION OF SSD

MARA

DAE

SSD

BUREAU OF
DATA PROCESSING

BUREAU OF
DATA COLLECTION

BUREAU OF
SAMPLING FRAME DEV.

BUREAU OF
ESTIMATES

BUREAU OF
RESEARCH

RESPONSIBLE
FOR ALL WORK
ON COMPUTER

ALL ACTIVITIES
FROM QUESTION-
NAIRE DESIGN
TO QUESTION-
NAIRE REVIEW

INTERFACE WITH
EXTERIOR SER-
VICES

DPA'S

DEVELOP
AREA
FRAME

MONITOR
AGRICULTURAL
CONDITIONS
AND
INTERPRET
SURVEY RESULTS
AND
SET ESTIMATES

CONDUCT
RESEARCH

CONSULTING

ANALYSIS AND
EVALUATION
REPORTS

ADVISE ON
POLICY
AND
STANDARDS

100

capacity within SE; or (3) encourage a division of labor which permits a larger role for SE in survey design and greater access to data and develop guidelines to ensure coordination between these two services. The advisers recommended that an operational program or calendar for the system be identified, taking into account personnel and time constraints, the total number of surveys and questionnaires to be processed, and Ministry due dates that need to be met. The AID project officer recommended that consideration be given to a complete systems approach to data collection and processing, including a redistribution of the survey schedule.

As is customary in AID, the AID project officer drafted the scope-of-work and sent it to the USDA team and the DPAE counterparts for review and redrafting. As is also typical in AID, the statement-of-work listed the purpose of the evaluation as to "assess the progress made by the project in achieving its goal, purpose, and output objectives, as expressed in the project's logical framework...as well as to assess the continued validity and coherence of the logical framework." Specifically, AID asked the evaluation team, consisting of a Statistician, Agricultural Economist, and Institutional Development Specialist, to determine if the following outputs had been achieved: area sampling frame for agricultural surveys, functioning program of regularly scheduled agricultural statistics based on the use of the ASF, expansion of the data processing capability of the DPAE, completion of an aerial photography laboratory and aerial photographs taken of the primary crop production areas of Morocco, strengthened capacity of DPAE to carry out objective yield analyses, procurement and use of satellite data for improving crop area and land-use estimates and for ASF maintenance, increased policy analysis capacity of the DPAE, a strengthened DPAE planning capability, increased project monitoring and evaluation capacity, development of a computerized agricultural data bank for the DPAE, and development of a documentation center for the DPAE. AID also asked them to evaluate the project's progress in achieving its purpose of improving the GOM's ability to collect data and publish timely agricultural statistics, undertake economic policy analyses, and plan, monitor and evaluate agricultural projects and its goal of providing accurate and timely information and sound economic analyses to Government of Morocco policy makers. The scope-of-work also requested the team to examine the relationships among and responsibilities of DPAE's various services and determine what impact the current organization of the DPAE had on the achievement of project objectives. In addition, the team was asked to review the technical assistance needs of the project, the use of unprogrammed project funds, the effectiveness of the training component, the dissemination of information, the adequacy of USDA and USAID backstopping, the data collection efforts, the surveys, remote sensing, the optimal usage of the computer system and aerial photography lab, the economic analysis efforts, and the recurrent costs of the project.

At the AID meeting to approve the SOW, debate ensued as to the right of AID to hire an evaluator who would assess the internal workings

of DPAE's bureaucracy. Many people felt that this was an intrusion upon the internal politics of a sovereign nation and was not the right of AID to do. They considered it too politically sensitive. Others felt that in this particular case, such an "intrusion" was justified because organizational issues impeded the progress of the project. Still others felt, that while this was true, the problems should be handled internally by a collaborative group of AID, DPAE, and USDA stakeholders. They thought that bringing in an outsider was too sensitive. Finally, however, Mission management decided to go ahead as proposed.

The evaluation team spent six weeks in Morocco. After an initial briefing at AID, they conducted the evaluation by holding individual interviews and relying on extensive project files. They did not conduct the evaluation collaboratively in the sense of meeting with stakeholders several times in Patton's sense of "task force" to focus issues, discuss findings, and propose conclusions. Instead, they discussed preliminary findings and recommendations with the persons most directly concerned so that they could get feedback and so that there would be no surprises. At the completion of the evaluation, they held separate meetings with AID, the DPAE, and the USDA team, in which they presented their "final" findings and conclusions. They did not convene the various stakeholders together for a final meeting to discuss and agree on recommendations. Having stakeholders meet together during this evaluation would no doubt have been easy, since the level of interest and stakes in the results were very high.

The evaluation team found that the area sampling frame construction was of extremely high quality. The frame had been completed in 30 of 56 zones of the country and would be completed by December, 1988. The evaluators found that the quality of work produced by the aerial photo laboratory was of a high quality and making a major contribution to the quality of the area frame construction, as well as to field enumeration. The team stated that the photo lab should support on a fee basis more than just the statistical activities and that other clients could be easily found. This would help defray costs of operation. The team did not evaluate the data collection system from questionnaire design through published report nor identify all its strong and weak elements, due to a lack of time.

The evaluators concluded that surveys and special studies had taken precedence and survey methodology and data management had been neglected. They said that the time had come to tighten up on the system and pay attention to survey methods and non-sampling errors. Data quality must become central. The evaluators set out the next step in organizational change:¹⁵

Two things should happen as proficiency in conducting surveys increase. First, improvement in the basic surveys should lead to inclusion of much of the data required for economic analysis in regular on-going surveys. Second, design of additions to regular

surveys and design of special surveys will be done with more speed and efficiency to meet user needs...Survey and data management systems need time to catch up to capacities of SSD's new technologies.

The evaluation team supported SSD's action to place primary emphasis on determining final yield and to eliminate research on forecasting. They opposed, however, even the USDA advisors' compromise position on remote sensing which offered a reduced package to SSD, who wanted to go with the most modern, expensive system. The evaluation team "judged" that any remote sensing activities would threaten the project's ability to accomplish its other goals in statistics.

Recognizing that although much progress had been made toward institutionalization of new statistical methods, but that much still remained to be done, the evaluation recommended that the USDA resident statistician stay an additional two years.

The evaluators supported almost all of the issues and points of view of the USDA advisers and AID project officer in the statistics component of the project. They recommended the adoption of the recommendations which the AID project officer laid out prior to the evaluation, but they did not hold discussions about the possibility of implementing these recommendations with stakeholders, nor did they work through the pros-and-cons of the recommendation given the organizational and political reality of DPAE.

The evaluators of the economic analysis component of the project found that this component had gone very far to increase the economic analysis capacity of the DPAE. However, the impact of the project had been limited to the Division of Economic Affairs. Little impact had taken place in the Planning Division. The evaluators noted that much of the work of the Division of Economic Affairs was now analytical, whereas before it was purely descriptive. Specifically, the External Trade Bureau now prepared the entirely computerized monthly situation and outlook report, with explanations of trends and short-term fluctuations. This bureau also prepared the annual report on agricultural foreign trade, analytical and issues-oriented; it set up a monthly data base on foreign trade on the mini-computer, determined the level and type of protection for all imported agricultural commodities to meet the conditions of the World Bank Agricultural Sectoral Adjustment loan, and was ready to participate in a study of the impact of exchange rate devaluation on agriculture. The Studies Bureau developed representative farm models for the rainfed and irrigated regions of the country, assisted in the design of the proposed cost of production survey to be carried out by SSD, and analyzed farm-level responses to price changes and new technologies using linear programming methodology. The Prices Bureau represented the Ministry in the weekly meetings of the Interministerial Committee on Prices, responsible for setting all prices which are controlled.

The evaluators found that the courses and on-the-job training for the economic staff had quite successfully transferred considerable knowledge in basic economics. They determined that the Agricultural Pricing and Incentives Study had a significant impact on many of the

policy reforms being carried out by the World Bank and had significantly increased the credibility and influence of DPAE in the agricultural policymaking arena.

The evaluators also found that the long-term agricultural economist had done a commendable job in helping the Economic Studies Service develop its capacity to conduct agriculture economic studies. He helped them develop methodologies, apply the methodologies to policy issues, and successfully trained DPAE staff in economic analysis. He had also helped staff successfully design and develop computerized data bases for economic analysis useful to policy makers.

The evaluation team pointed out that the priorities of SE should next be to carry out the analysis needed for trade liberalization of agricultural products and develop the skills, analytical tools, and data bases needed to carry out sound economic analysis. They emphasized that in order to accomplish these objectives, the project team should set out more concrete, intermediate and end-point targets than those currently reflected in the project paper. The evaluation team recommended that SE identify specific policy issues for each of its bureaus to work on, so that economic analysis could be specifically taught to address these urgent issues.

The evaluation team told the project agricultural economist to "slow down" a bit on the quantitative work, and to address these specific issues in a broader context where more qualitative factors would be taken into account:¹⁶

Thus, at the same time that mathematical models are being developed and refined, SE staff would be applying, in less quantitative ways, economic principles to issues that are of current concern to policy makers in the Ministry. The analysis would lack the rigor that comes from model building but it would be based on the same data and, assuming that the economic analysis is sound, the findings and recommendations would accurately reflect the economic factors that need to be taken into account in policy formulation...Concentrating on model building to the exclusion of less quantitative analyses of available data tends to reduce policy relevance of much of the work being carried out by the SE staff.

The evaluation also pointed out that the lack of trained economists was the major constraint facing the Division. Staffing-up and training non-economist staff in the principles should be the major priority for the next year. They also sketched out in detail how the new economist adviser would be able to fill in the gaps in economic thinking among cadre and in bureaus not to date aided by the project. Exactly whether to have such an adviser, and if so, what he would do, was of major concern to all stakeholders.

The evaluation confirmed that SSD had not been forthcoming with critical information and appealed to SSD to do so. During the evaluation, the team also negotiated closely with the chief of SSD to obtain his promise to work closely with SE in the future. However, the team also cautioned SE not to expect SSD to collect more information than it should, given its function to collect rigorous information. The evaluation team said that much of the information which SE needed was more qualitative and that they should be the ones to collect it as required and keep it as part of their own data base.

The institutional specialist on the evaluation team assessed the "structure and functioning of the DPAE" and concluded that the project had a significant impact on developing and establishing the credibility of the DPAE. As they stated:¹⁷

Five years ago, the GOM considered the MARA a technical ministry, good only to implement policies and programs conceived elsewhere. The DPAE contributed little to policy dialogue within the government beyond the provision of relatively unreliable annual statistics on production and yields of major crops and on livestock populations, and contributions of budget estimates to the annual and five-year plans. Today, the DPAE is one of the most important directorates of the MARA. The Minister depends heavily on the two Division Chiefs and on the Head of the Statistics Service to provide him with data and policy options. This assistance is crucial during negotiations with the World Bank, the IMF and other multilateral and bilateral donors, as well as in inter-ministerial discussions within the GOM. Much of this change in status of the MARA as a whole can be laid to the success of the project which has helped the DPAE become the premier policy advice organ within the MARA.

Contrary to the opinion of the USDA advisers, the evaluators concluded that the Chief of SSD had supported enormously and was largely responsible for its success among the Ministry's higher management. However, the evaluators supported the contention of the USDA advisers that the Chief of SSD exercised ineffective management and recommended that he "rationalize" his practices and formalize the organizational structure, processes, and responsibilities. However, in spite of his management practices, they recommended that the SSD be made a Division and that the Chief of SSD be promoted to a Division Chief. They argued that since the SSD consumed about 70% of the Directorate Budget and controlled nearly 90% of its personnel, SSD was already a de facto Division, and that to raise the Chief of SSD to the Division level may in fact improve the project because he may no longer feel the need to hoard information to reinforce his power. "SSD is too big, too powerful, too well managed, too well-equipped to remain a Service. The DPAE would

function far more effectively and personal relationships within the Directorate would be much eased if SSD were to become a Division of Surveys and Statistics (DES).¹⁸

Once SSD had the status of a Division, the USDA statistician would no longer work with the Chief, but would work directly with the technical experts. This way he could train them directly.

The evaluators also cautioned the USDA advisers to "back-off a bit" when attempting to implement their own vision of an efficient and effective organization. The evaluators reminded the advisers that a strictly "American model" may not be completely appropriate for the Moroccan milieu, and the the Moroccans should be guided to find their own model.

As is commonly done in AID, the evaluation team left a draft report at the AID Mission and left the country. After receiving comments from AID, the DPAAE, and the USDA advisers, the evaluators submitted a final report several weeks later. This evaluation final report created quite a stir in DPAAE because the evaluator wrote in a very personal fashion, using names and including very frank statements about people's performance. DPAAE balked and refused to submit the report to the government. The AID project officer drafted a more impersonal evaluation summary which he sent, several months later to the Minister of Agriculture. The AID project officer negotiated recommendations with DPAAE and the USDA advisers. The Chief of SSD agreed to accept the extension of the USDA statistician by two years if AID would fund a minimal level remote sensing program. The negotiations made little headway with the organizational issues. The Chief of SSD gave lip service to all the organizational reorganization but made no immediate changes.

As soon as the USDA team heard about the recommendation to raise the SSD to the level of a division, they began lobbying in AID not to support it. Interestingly, the AID project officer was ready to accept the recommendation. The USDA team went to the AID evaluation officer and the Mission Director to convince them not to support it, and AID eventually stated that they did not support the recommendation; it was an internal decision of DPAAE, and they alone should decide.

The USDA team felt betrayed. They said the recommendation would do nothing to remedy the problem. They stated openly that the evaluation was a failure and that nothing had changed. The agricultural economist did admit that at least others within DPAAE were aware of the issue and that they were perhaps making changes. The agricultural economist also said that he appreciated the recommendations of the evaluators to emphasize qualitative, as well as quantitative methods. But, by and large, the team undervalued the good aspects of the evaluation because it failed "to get rid of their problem." The two statisticians saw no positive gains from the evaluation. The head statistician began increasing his efforts to send the chief of SSD of long term training and in fact completed these arrangements. He bet that his problems would cease once he had another counterpart. The USDA advisers were also angry because the evaluation team had not gone to the Minister to discuss their

findings and recommendations. If they had, at least the Minister would have become aware that the USDA advisers were having an extremely difficult time. Being politically acute, the Minister may have put additional pressure on the chief of SSD to make concessions.

Hence several months following the evaluation, although stakeholders continued to try to negotiate and implement recommendations of the evaluation report, the predominate reaction to the evaluation was negative. In the following section, the reasons why stakeholders viewed the evaluation as virtually useless and how the evaluators might have carried it out differently will be explored.

Reflecting upon the evaluation, one notes three more-or-less stages. In the "pre-evaluation stage," stakeholders began to line-up their issues and points of view to be "heard" by other stakeholders and the evaluation team. Thus, the AID project officer and the USDA advisers drafted a series of memoranda outlining their issues and concerns, interpreting the organization, labeling the "problem," and defining the solution. As is typical in donor projects, AID, as funder, attempted to maintain control of the process by drafting the SOW and selecting the evaluation team. They carefully selected individuals who they thought would best address their concerns and help them find the solution which they had futilely sought. During the first initial briefing of the evaluation team, AID and the USDA advisers attempted to assure the output of the evaluation by making it clear that they believed that one individual, namely the chief of SSD, was impeding the project's progress, and that the evaluation team was solicited to help get rid of him. They, in effect, gave the team their "marching orders." There is certainly an inherent bias, and some say, a natural justification, for the donor and implementation team to employ the evaluator to help them get a point across. They are, after all, attempting to transfer a new technology to the recipient nation, and as "change agents" are often if a position to seemingly "push" the beneficiaries.

During the next, "evaluation phase," the chief of SSD began to exert his efforts to control the outcome of the evaluation by "following around" the institutional specialist, joining him for interviews and basically following him in his tracks to see what he was up to. The Chief of SSD added his perceptions on the issues on a person-to-person basis all throughout the evaluation. During this phase, AID backed-off and did not actively participate. The host country counterparts, on the other hand, actively participated in interviews, meetings, and field trips.

In the "post-evaluation phase," the AID project officer took the lead in negotiating the recommendations left by the team, while the USDA advisers lobbied against the recommendation to promote the chief of SSD, and the DPAE counterparts complained about the personal style of the evaluation report which they declared made it useless in the Moroccan government context.

When one looks at the evaluation report, one sees various categories of statements. First, there are empirical statements which illustrate that the evaluators have brought new information to stakeholders. For example, the interviews with clients of DPAAE have brought a client perspective to the project team so that they are more aware of how those who they are trying in fact to serve perceive the project activities and how project activities might be changed or improved to better serve these clients. In addition, this information also generated the possibility of user fees to help cover recurrent costs of the project. Some other statements, already well-known to change agents within the project, provide new information to stakeholders who were somewhat distanced from the project.

Second, there are empirical findings and judgments about those findings regarding the quality of the technical work being accomplished and how that work is impacting on the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization. These statements include the previously quoted findings regarding the area sampling frame, the aerial photography, the impact of training and economic studies, and the quality of economic analysis. These statements reduce the uncertainty of stakeholders regarding what activities have taken place, increase the credibility of change agents, and "tell the story" of the project. These statements together make sense of all the disparate activities within the organizational construct. Thus, when the evaluators judge that the area sampling frame is of an extremely high quality and that other activities in statistics likewise are extremely well done, or when evaluators say that the economics component has greatly improved the analytical capacity of the DPAAE, they are "rationalizing" and fitting into a project strategy everything that has happened and, in so doing, making possible the next steps. These steps, for example to now focus on non-sampling errors and methodology, or to pull back on quantitative economics and fill in the qualitative context or to work to build the analytic capabilities of other economic bureaus, naturally flow out of the story which the evaluators have written concerning the past. By showing how the future derives from the past, the evaluators have taken what Guba and Lincoln call the "soundings" of various stakeholders, blended them with the unique evaluator perspective, and created a reality about what happened.

Third, there are a series of stakeholder proclamations reported and supported by the evaluation which served to vent hostile feelings which had built up over time in the sometimes agonizing change process and also to "expose" certain negative power moves. These statements include such things as "the USDA advisers were angry that one adviser was granted home leave but not the others, and the evaluators disapprove of such discrimination." Also, the statement, provided by the USDA advisers that "AID project management operated without consulting the team of decisions and actions affecting the project," served to warn AID to collaborate more in the future. These statements seem trivial and

unimportant but in fact they serve a critical "day in court" function of getting one's point across to others when normally those others would not have to them seriously. By channeling them through evaluators who have been given the authority to report what is happening in the project, such statements are made more powerful.

Fourth, there are judgments about burning "issues" regarding how the project is being carried out and disagreements about its future direction. These statements mostly deal with the issues which the USDA advisers and the AID project officer laid out prior to the evaluation. One such statement which directly responds to the USDA adviser's concerns that the data processing bureau was being underutilized is: "A plan is currently being developed by the Data Processing Bureau and the advisers proposing steps to improve usage of the system. The evaluation team strongly supports this effort and suggests that experimentation with decentralization of data entry be initiated."¹⁹ Such a statement, rather than bringing in an empirical perspective, empowers the stakeholders holding the point-of-view. The evaluators made several of such statements in support of the issues and strategies laid out by USDA prior to the evaluation.

Looking at how the evaluators handled these latter "issue-driven" statements, one notes that the evaluation is an almost masterfully balanced piece, in which the evaluators have supported some points of view of some stakeholders and some of others and have consciously tried to get their point across without offending only one group and not another. When one compares the report to the above-summarized three stage evaluation process, one sees that what happened was that the various stakeholders lined up their issues to be considered by the evaluators, the evaluators explored the project and came to their own conclusions, and pronounced a final judgment. Thus, this part of the report does not really provide a lot of "new information" to stakeholders, but passes judgments on various points of view and tries to resolve the impasse both by publicly declaring these judgments to individuals somewhat removed from the project but in a higher position to make decisions regarding the project and by trying to "bring reason" to bear on the situation by showing stakeholders that no one is completely right and no one completely wrong in this situation.

From a "rational," judgmental perspective, these statements are very effective. And, in fact, the scope-of-work requested an independent judgment of these issues. Yet, the statements undermined the value of the evaluation. For example, the recommendation of the evaluation team to raise the SSD to the level of a Division, keeping the same chief, made rational sense when one examines the situation. This recommendation was based on "good judgment." After all, as all parties agreed, SSD behaved and was recognized de facto as a division in terms of the resources it mustered and the power it exercised. And the Chief of SSD has garnered considerable support for the project. He was, the evaluation team found, its most avid advocate. Moreover, the evaluation scope-of-work asked the

team for a "judgment." Of course, AID and the USDA advisors were counting on the evaluation team supporting their own point-of-view. But, logically, one can see that the evaluation team could not rightfully be used to "bump off" the Chief of SSD. After all, that would indeed be an intrusion into the internal affairs of a country, a highly political strategy which would be very difficult for an American evaluation team to pull off. Moreover, it was not the place of the evaluation team to undertake such a blatantly political move, and they resented the expectation, made clear in their initial briefing, that that was what the other Americans wanted them to do. This is a common strategy of donors and implementation teams to select evaluators to put pressure on the host country to make what they considered desirable changes, but in this case, the evaluation team was too experienced and too "fair" to fall for it. No one could say whether their conclusion was in any way driven by a reaction to the expectation placed upon them. What is clear is that it "shocked" the implementation team and led to their conclusion that the evaluation was not useful to them.

It is, of course, impossible to say for sure that if the evaluation team took a stance as negotiator and mediator instead of judge whether the results would have been any different, or if the stakeholders had the chance to work in a task force facilitated by an "active-reactive-adaptive style," whether they would have been able to approach and resolve the issue together. Perhaps, the evaluators read the situation correctly that mediation was impossible given the personalities involved and that a "shock" was the best strategy. It did, as previously noted, appear to lead the team to heighten their efforts to send the chief on long-term training, having virtually the same end result as the team desired. However, the emotional response of the team, as volatile as it was, negated the other aspects of the evaluation.

Perhaps, then, this is one situation in which the evaluation team underplayed their role as change agents, and one area in which conclusions and recommendations should better have been replaced by what Guba and Lincoln call an "agenda for negotiation," to be mediated by the evaluator.²⁰ Conclusions and recommendations did appear to serve a good purpose in terms of the technical advances made in the project. But, around the critical issues, "constructions, value positions, and data relevant to stated claims, concerns, and issues"²¹ may have served the stakeholders better "as a powerful means to agreeing on needed change." Instead of providing judgments of their concerns, the evaluators may have tried to simply lay out the various concerns so that all stakeholders could see them and then attempt to deal with them, under the experienced guide of the evaluators. By providing "judgments" where they perhaps should better have mediated, the evaluators jumped right in the political fray, and sabotaged their own power which derived from being somewhat distanced from the daily battle.

Unfortunately, the anger of the team hid from them the positive organizational changes that the evaluation team created. In fact, in

many ways, the team affected the balance of power among change agent-stakeholders. Applying the definition of organization power posited by Frank Heller, et al. in a recent book, Decisions in Organizations: A Three Country Comparative Study, as having ones point of view taken into consideration in the organization decision making process, that is, having influence in the process, we see several power shifts. Getting the Chief of SSD to agree to extend the USDA advisor by two years was a great concession which increased the USDA adviser's standing. Further, by having the advisor work directly with technical experts within SSD, although supposedly at a lower-level in the organization, he could directly transfer his statistics knowledge and no longer have to rely on the Chief to redirect it or not. By working with these technicians, he could begin to more effectively influence the way SSD did business. The team increased the influence and hence power of the USDA chief statistician by providing information to AID and the Chief of SSD that he was far more effective than people had previously imagined. His subdued personality had tended to make people underrate him. After the evaluation, people's confidence increased, which could also have contributed to the Chief of SSD's conceding to extend him.

Power relationships were also affected by the evaluator's exposing the power ploys of certain stakeholders by reporting other stakeholder's issues about them. Thus, the USDA advisors' point-of-view that the Chief of SSD was not a good manager and tended to be arbitrary in his assignment of individuals and also hoarded information from key users was openly published in the evaluation report. This subtle sort of humiliation and "exposure" served to diffuse somewhat the Chief's power because there, for everyone to see, was stated an issue about him. The personalness of the evaluation report in this regard caused the Chief of SSD from showing the report to the Minister of Agriculture. In fact, one of the criticisms of the evaluation team by the USDA advisors was that the team itself did not go directly to the Minister of Agriculture for a debriefing so that he could hear directly the issues about organizational dynamics. By not doing so, the report sat around for eight months, while the USDA advisors fumed, and the issue fizzled, and essentially lost its "punch" by the time a very watered-down version reached the minister.

In her exhaustive study of corporate change, Kanter identified a number of characteristics of successful change and effective change agents. In technical assistance projects, evaluators play a role which allows them to realize several of these characteristics, where other change agents cannot. In the case of donor-funded projects, the uniqueness of the tripartite structure involving three organizations means that other change agents are sometimes locked in an adversarial position which precludes their playing certain change-causing roles.

Kanter found that successful change means that conflicts disappear into consensus and that "pain, suffering, trauma, and resistance may disappear into 'necessary evils.'"²² An evaluator more than any other technical assistance change agent is in a position to

attempt to build consensus by mediating the issues to which the other three change agents hold fast while doing daily battle. Evaluators have more distance from the implementation stakes and practice skills which can assist other stakeholders deal with and resolve issues. And, as Kanter points out, consensus is best achieved "by agreeing to save the face of those who were critical or opposed and not embarrass them by reminding them of it. And the survivors of pain and trauma may in their turn agree to forget."²³

In this way, evaluators naturally fall more in the domain of the "organization development" (OD) change agent because they are more likely to be concerned with processes and with encouraging participation and collaboration and team building among stakeholders. They facilitate what has been called in the literature the "refreezing" stage of the change process, the period of adjustment, reflection, acceptance, or redirection. In this way, they are concerned with helping the project organization improve its ability to function effectively.

Kanter also found that in instances of successful change, the story that is written about the past is extremely important as a step to creating the future. As she says:²⁴

When innovators begin to define a project by reviewing the issues with people across areas, they are not only seeing what is possible, they may be learning more about the past, and one of the prime uses of the past is in the construction of a story that makes the future seem to grow naturally out of it in terms compatible with the organization's culture.

In the Planning, Economics, and Statistics for Agriculture Project, all three evaluators reviewed issues and constructed a story about the past and began to envision and create a future. The agricultural economist played this role better than the other two evaluators. Whereas the statistician simply listed past accomplishments, the agricultural economist tried to make sense of these accomplishments in the organizational context and to determine how the organization had changed during the project period and what the organization was therefore becoming. The insights that came out of this process greatly helped the project team clarify what they had done and what still remained to be done. The importance of how the evaluators "tell the story" is clearly stated by Kanter:²⁵

How a story about change is constructed also comes to reflect what the organization needs to symbolize, what images it wishes to create or preserve, what lessons it wants to draw to permit the changes to be reinforced or the next actions to be taken by announcing change...The fragility of changes disappear into images of solidity and full actuality.

Furthermore, in so far as evaluators can make sense of, and construct "rational models" of the past, they can reassure stakeholders and harbor support. As Kanter says:²⁶

The importance of defining a clear direction, even if one is almost at the destination, is to build commitment by reducing the plausibility of other directions, to reinforce the pride people take in the intelligence of the system, or to reward those leading the pack by crediting their vision, to remove any lingering doubts about what the direction is and to signal to critics that the time for opposition is over.

Other change agents invest a great deal of confidence and authority in evaluators to play these roles. The nature of the "evaluation contract" implies that stakeholders have deferred to the evaluator the power to make changes. The naturalness with which stakeholders "vent" to evaluators and trust them to carry their message to others; the attempt by stakeholders to convince evaluators to "drive their message home" and hence facilitate their own concept of how the project should proceed; the willingness of stakeholders to defer to the professional judgment of evaluators regarding the quality of work that has been accomplished; all of these actions of stakeholders vis-a-vis evaluators speak to the change agent abilities which they are perceived as having.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Egan, Gerard, Change Agent Skills in Helping and Human Service Settings, Brooks/Cole Publishing Co., Monterrey: 1985, pg 25.
- 2 Kanter, Rosabeth. Moss, The Change Masters: Innovation and Entrepreneurship in the American Corporation, Simon and Schuster, Inc., New York: 1983, pg. 279.
- 3 See, for example, Huse, Edgar F., Organization Development and Change, Second edition, West Publishing, St. Paul: 1980.
- 4 Kanter, op. cit., pg. 286.
- 5 Ibid, pg. 279.
- 6 Harrison, Michael I., Diagnosing Organizations: Methods, Models, and Processes, Sage Applied Social Research Methods Series, Volume 8, Beverly Hills: 1987, pg. 23-25.
- 7 Huse, op. cit., pg 84-5.
- 8 Ibid, pg. 228.
- 9 Ibid, pg. 228.
- 10 Ibid, pg. 228.
- 11 Ibid, pg. 421.
- 12 Ibid, pg. 422.
- 13 Ibid, pg. 423.
- 14 Ibid, pg. 423.
- 15 Evaluation of the Planning, Economics, and Statistics for Agriculture Project, U.S.A.I.D., November, 1987, pg. 20.
- 16 Ibid, pg. 34.
- 17 Ibid, pg. 45.
- 18 Ibid, pg. 53.
- 19 Ibid, pg. 25.

20 Guba, Egon G., and Yvonna S. Lincoln, "The Countenances of Fourth-Generation Evaluation: Description, Judgment, and Negotiation," in Palumbo, Dennis J., The Politics of Program Evaluation, Sage Yearbooks in Politics and Public Policy, Volume 15: 1987, pg. 223.

21 Ibid, pg. 223.

22 Kanter, op. cit., pg. 285.

23 Ibid, pg. 285.

24 Ibid, pg. 283.

25 Ibid, pg. 288.

26 Ibid, pg. pg. 286.

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