

*Education and  
Human Resources  
Development*

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L A T I N A M E R I C A A N D T H E C A R I B B E A N

# Training for Development

*Review of Experience*

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# Training for Development

*Review of Experience*

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In 1989, the Education and Human Resources (EHR) Division of A.I.D.'s Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) commissioned a series of three evaluations in education and human resource development: basic education, vocational education and training, and participant training. A fourth study of management education and training is planned.

These studies present lessons learned about the design, implementation, and evaluation of donor-assisted projects. Each study examines the relevant literature as well as actual site visits of programs or projects in the LAC region. The studies focus on the experience of the U.S. Agency for International Development over the past fifteen years. In addition, the work of other donor organizations is considered.

The studies are research and reference documents that lead to practical applications in project design, implementation, and evaluation. Part I of this series presents the *Reviews of Experience* and Part II the *Practical Applications* for each subsector.

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Human resource development (HRD) is one of the most important contributions that the U.S. Agency for International Development (A.I.D.) makes to development. The ability of a population to use the physical and financial resources at hand to establish a stable and productive society is crucial to lasting economic and social development. HRD encompasses a broad range of activities: formal education at all levels from primary education through specialized graduate studies, vocational and management education and training, and nonformal education of all kinds.

Recognizing the importance of the topic, the Education and Human Resources Division of A.I.D.'s Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) sponsored a set of four studies to identify and share lessons from experience that can be useful in designing and implementing future programs in basic education, management education, vocational education, and participant training. This study addresses the issues related to participant, or overseas, training for development purposes.

Participant training is generally a useful intervention that can make a continuing contribution to economic and social development over the course of an individual's career. The purpose of this study is to identify design and implementation measures that increase the broader development impact — rather than the personal impact — of training. To address this issue, the study takes the approach that training is an input into broader development objectives, rather than an objective itself. As a concept, this approach is hardly unusual. However, in practice training is often designed and implemented in isolation from the broader objectives that it serves. This contributes to difficulties in both the implementation and the evaluation of participant training programs.

The primary use of this study lies in sharing experience and lessons related to design, implementation, and evaluation. We expect that it will provide new information and insights both for people with experience in training and for those with expertise in other areas. In addition, this study draws some broader management and program conclusions, which are discussed in this summary. They relate to the role of training in achieving program-level objectives, the analysis of institutional and national contexts, project design, and the management of training to improve its effectiveness and efficiency.

The development impact of training should be assessed on several levels. The first level of impact is immediate — the direct utilization of the skills and knowledge gained and the subsequent effect on economic development. In this case, career development is used as a proxy measurement for contribution to society. Utilization of training is the primary basis for most impact evaluations. Beyond the immediate use of skills, the second level of impact is organizational and institutional: training can contribute to improving organizational performance and efficiency and thereby have a significant impact on development. Another level of impact comes from improving the training process itself; the institutional ability to design and implement training is often as important as the specific skills transferred. A country or institution's capacity to effectively plan and implement human resource development programs is essential to addressing human resource constraints over the long term.

Training is usually seen as an implementation detail by USAID missions and, as such, seldom receives significant management attention, particularly as an issue that cuts across all sectors of development. Appropriate management attention should be focused on training at

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the program, design, implementation, management, and evaluation levels. The increased emphasis in A.I.D. on program planning and impact highlights the importance of improved management: training cannot have a program-level impact without program-level planning.

On the program level, training must be conceived with a clear understanding of the institutional and policy context in which new skills and knowledge will be utilized. In part, this requires appropriate analysis of personnel and wage policies, institutional culture, capacity to plan and implement training, and other contextual factors. Skill shortages created by labor market conditions (such as low wages) cannot be resolved by training programs, no matter how well implemented they are.

What is also required is a commitment from both donors and host governments to strengthen the policy and institutional environment — that is, to promote effective training policies and systems and the capability to conduct needs assessments, to implement training directly tied to organizational objectives, and to relate training to career development. For donor organizations, impact at this level is possible only if all training is coordinated and implemented with a common vision of institutional and policy development. In practice, program-level impact tends to be subordinated to the immediate needs of project implementation.

Human resource development and training activities are often underdesigned on both the program and project levels compared to other development interventions. Sector assessments that exhaustively analyze interest rate policy, exchange rate mechanisms, and institutional structures may fail to recognize the human resource or training needs of the sector.

The design of training activities, either as training-only projects, or in concert with other institutional or sector interventions as project-related training, must be based on clear objectives and indicators of achievement. This basic design requirement drives all subsequent decisions about feasibility studies, the nature of training, implementation mechanisms, selection criteria, placement, and evaluation. This is an obvious statement, but training is unusually susceptible to vague and unspecified objectives. When training is seen as an objective in itself, the

project objective is to "increase the number of trained people," an objective that lacks programmatic context and fails to guide project implementation decisions. This is the single most important area in which training programs can be improved. This is true on the project and the individual levels, both of which require organizational development strategies and training plans to be effective.

The key to effective implementation of participant training is to select the best person and place him or her in the right program in the right institution. Effectiveness is increased with adequate pre-training orientation, supplemental activities, and post-training follow-on. If the individual is working in an enabling environment and the training is appropriate to the job, the probability is high that the training will be used. While the elements are simple, adequate implementation requires considerable time and effort. Training is the most labor-intensive activity that A.I.D. does; doing it right is even more intensive. The implementation chapter of this study discusses issues and approaches for every stage of implementation.

While many of the lessons related to implementing successful training programs are well known, the biggest challenge facing USAID missions is the need to apply these lessons consistently in all training activities. In general, participant training is peripheral to the conceptual and administrative management of USAID missions. As such, training is a detail that is designed and implemented separately in each project rather than within the context of mission policy and standards. Moreover, the management structure of missions inhibits their development of program-level, cross-sectoral approaches to human resource development and training that would facilitate coordination in both concept and implementation to achieve economies of scale and build capacity in the host country.

This study is organized by general issue and project stage: program, design, implementation, evaluation, and special issues. Thus, the study should be useful as a future reference as well as an immediate review of experience. Findings and conclusions from the study are summarized below.

**FINDINGS**

**CONCLUSIONS**

**Program and Context**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Labor force conditions, personnel and wage policies, and institutional factors may be more important than the lack of trained people in causing shortages of some skills.</li> <br/> <li>• Donor organizations and host country governments often fail to have overall strategies for human resource development on any scale larger than immediate project needs. This results in training being seen as a short-term project issue rather than a long-term development issue.</li> <br/> <li>• HRD constraints to sectoral development are seldom analyzed with the same rigor as other structural or policy constraints. Indeed, sector assessments may fail to make any mention of human resources.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project feasibility studies should carefully assess whether the HRD problem is primarily one of supply and demand, in which case training would be appropriate, or structure and incentives, in which case training alone would not be adequate.</li> <br/> <li>• Both donors and host countries need a program strategy framework for planning and implementing training.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- For donor organizations, a program approach should take the form of an HRD strategy that cuts across all sectors. This strategy should serve to clearly define program objectives, coordinate training across projects and sectors, and use training activities as a mechanism for strengthening host country capacity in planning and implementing training.</li> <li>- For host countries, this should take the form of a training policy for public sector institutions and development of the capacity to conduct appropriate needs assessments and training plans.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
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**Project Design**

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|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training activities are often underdesigned relative to other types of interventions. The objectives of training are often unclear, causing confusion in the implementation and evaluation of projects. Indicators of project success may be only a restatement of the outputs – training a specified number of people.</li> <br/> <li>• A.I.D. and other donors have shown considerable creativity in adapting standard overseas training modalities to meet the needs of projects and participants.</li> <br/> <li>• Training is as likely to be as effective and well-utilized in training-only projects as in project-related training. More important than the structure of the project is management attention to the details of design and implementation.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased management attention to training would improve project design. This would include:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- clearly articulated objectives and indicators to guide decisions on design, feasibility studies, implementation, and evaluation;</li> <li>- objectives that reflect a reasonable expectation of what training can accomplish. In some cases, intermediate-level achievement indicators may be appropriate;</li> <li>- comprehensive feasibility analyses that address training issues as well as other technical issues;</li> <li>- use of appropriate training modalities; and</li> <li>- training budgets and schedules that recognize the potential for delays in the process from selection through completion.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
|---|---|

**Project Implementation**

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|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a considerable amount of knowledge about how to successfully implement training at each stage of the process. However, this knowledge is not consistently applied to all training activities.</li> <li>• Recruitment and selection is a critical step in ensuring the success of an individual training plan. Selection of higher quality participants is an effective cost-containment measure because fewer people will fail to complete the program. The procedures used in this stage have an implicit impact on equity of access – whether by gender, ethnic group, socioeconomic class, or geographic location.</li> <li>• Appropriate attention should be given to each stage of the planning and placement process to achieve the basic goal of placing the right person in the right program at the right institution. Preparatory orientation programs and supplementary activities during the training period are relatively low-cost activities that increase the productivity of training.</li> <li>• Overseas education and training can be a very expensive means of meeting skill needs. Attention should be given to ensuring that the most appropriate and cost-effective training alternative is found to achieve the training objectives. Cost-containment measures should include both direct cost-reduction negotiations and indirect measures to improve overall program efficiency.</li> <li>• English language training (ELT) is a significant factor in the timing, cost, and success of U.S. training programs. Missions have been successful in establishing cost-effective ELT programs in home countries, third countries, and the United States.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mission management should take policy and organizational steps to ensure that the best training procedures are applied consistently in all projects.</li> <li>• Greater attention to recruitment and selection procedures and criteria is a worthwhile investment. They should be clearly stated and publicized. The equity implications of any recruitment and selection criteria should be explicitly reviewed by the mission.</li> <li>• Consistent procedures should be established for each step to ensure a quality placement. Key steps include:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- developing training plans with clear training objectives;</li> <li>- identifying appropriate training institutions with programs that address the specific interests of the participant;</li> <li>- providing adequate pre-program orientation to both cultural adjustment and specific program requirements involved in the training program. This may include activities both in the home country and in the United States;</li> <li>- providing opportunities for participants to participate in supplementary activities such as seminars, internships, and professional conferences to broaden their exposure and increase the relevance of the training; and</li> <li>- providing reentry counseling and assistance to participants to ease the transition back into their home country and work environments.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Missions should clearly establish expectations for cost containment at the program or project level rather than at the level of tuition payments only. This should include careful selection of qualified candidates and adequate preparation.</li> <li>• Diligent use of Training Cost Analysis is an effective means of understanding and controlling training costs.</li> <li>• Specific consideration of the ELT requirements of a project should be included in the earliest stages of financial and management planning.</li> </ul> |
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**FINDINGS****CONCLUSIONS**

- A.I.D.'s policy is to discourage dependents from accompanying participants to the United States. This is often very difficult for participants and in some cases may contribute to early termination of otherwise successful training programs. Some limited studies indicate that having dependents accompany participants does not have a negative influence on training.
- Follow-on of returned participants has been a continuing problem, in terms of both tracking returnees and evaluating program impact. Few missions have effectively implemented the A.I.D. mandate for follow-on beyond improving record-keeping. Over the past two years, the LAC Bureau has begun some innovative follow-on programs through CLASP.

- A.I.D. should review its experience with dependents of participants to determine if a more flexible policy might be warranted in some cases. Any policy adjustment or reaffirmation should be jointly developed with the U.S. Consular Service.
- Donor organizations should integrate planning for follow-on activities in the earliest stages of project planning. Non-project mechanisms are needed to ensure sustainability of follow-on activities.

**Evaluation**

- Evaluation of training in A.I.D. has generally been limited to review of operational issues. Despite universal recognition that training must be applied to be effective, few studies have effectively measured impact. To a considerable degree, this is due to methodological constraints and lack of agreement on what constitutes success.
- Impact evaluations often fail to define the study objectives or relate them to the original project objectives, to set standards of success, and to interpret results in relation to specific changes in project management. Many of these problems are derived from initial designs that failed to establish clear objectives and indicators. Impact studies for CLASP II have been designed to address these problems.

- Project and program evaluations should have clearly defined objectives in terms of what questions need to be answered and how information will be used.
- It is useful to distinguish between studies that are essentially research into effects and those that are truly designed as evaluations of anticipated impact. Both are legitimate and useful. Research allows for greater flexibility in project implementation and study, whereas evaluation ties projects to specific objectives. However, research-oriented studies will seldom adequately answer questions about program achievements, particularly in projects that lack clear objectives at the program level.

**Management of Training**

- Training staff in most missions function as a service to technical offices, with little contribution to project design or implementation. Few missions have a mechanism for either policy or conceptual leadership in training.

- Missions should make effective use of their standard operating manuals to clearly establish policies and expectations about the design, implementation, and follow-on of training.
- Mission management should recognize the need for consistent quality and application of lessons learned in all training activities.

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## *Introduction and Methodology*

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### **Introduction**

Human resource development (HRD) is one of the most important contributions that the U.S. Agency for International Development (A.I.D.) makes to development. The ability of a population to use the physical and financial resources at hand to establish a stable and productive society is crucial to lasting economic and social development. Abundant natural resources are of little value to a society incapable of exploiting them productively on a sustained basis. Conversely, many of the constraints imposed by a limited physical resource base can be overcome by a motivated and capable people. These situations are amply illustrated in countries around the world today.

HRD encompasses a broad range of activities: formal education at all levels from preschool education through specialized graduate studies, vocational and management education, and nonformal education of all kinds. Under the broad subcategory of "training" are a range of activities including management training, academic degree-oriented studies, on-the-job training through technical assistance, vocational training, and specialized technical training for professionals. Training for development purposes, however, is not limited to the acquisition of technical knowledge or analytical skills, but represents a combination of skills, knowledge, attitudes, and motivations that can effect institutional and societal change.

This study was sponsored by the Education and Human Resources Division of A.I.D.'s Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) as one in a series of evaluations of human resource development. The focus of this study is participant training in general as well as specific training under the Caribbean and Latin American Scholarship Program (CLASP). The purpose of the study is to identify lessons from past

experience that will be helpful in the design, implementation, and evaluation of future training activities. This study is a mechanism for sharing experiences among A.I.D. missions and bureaus and with the broader development community.

The audience for this study is A.I.D. project and program managers who design, implement, and evaluate projects with training components and, to a lesser degree, policy-level officials. Some of the issues are unique to A.I.D. project and program mechanisms, and much of the discussion is oriented toward A.I.D. management. Nonetheless, most of the findings are applicable to any participant or overseas training program or to any project-related training. This study was greatly enriched by the contributions and experience of other donors and implementing institutions, and we hope that it will in turn be useful to this broader development community.

Participant training is fundamentally different from the other programs reviewed in this evaluation series (basic education, vocational education, and management education). While all four are fields of human resource development, participant training lacks an intrinsic and clear-cut objective that defines success. The other fields are essentially *institutional development* activities that have an internal logic and consistent context in which both the process and the outputs contribute to development. Participant training, on the other hand, is a *mechanism* for providing training in a range of overlapping fields. Only the context in which each individual training program is planned and implemented provides meaningful objectives related to institutional and national development.

This difference has important conceptual and programmatic implications. Training can be perceived and treated as a distinct development

sector, on a par with trade and investment, agriculture, and health, or as an input that contributes to broader development objectives within each sector. This distinction is important because it establishes the basis upon which success is defined, and therefore drives design and implementation decisions. Indeed, much of the difficulty in evaluating training programs derives from a lack of consensus on the objectives and criteria for success. Obviously, this lack of a standard definition of success complicates a study intended to identify factors contributing to success. This issue is discussed at greater length in the paper. For the purpose of analytical consistency, this study treats training as an input into broader development objectives. As such, training is a cross-sectoral issue affecting institutional development and sectoral objectives rather than a separate sector of development.

With this in mind, it is understood that there are few specific "lessons" that apply to all situations. Rather, within a set of general guidelines there are numerous ways in which participant training can be adapted, planned, and implemented to achieve program or project goals within a particular institutional or country context. The main body of the report is a discussion of findings, lessons, issues, and examples of different approaches to training.

Two general types of training programs are discussed and compared in the study. The first is the "standard" participant training program, in which individuals are selected and trained specifically to meet identified human resource needs in an institution or country. The second is training for leadership development, which is exemplified by the Caribbean and Latin American Scholarship Program. Initiated by A.I.D. in 1985, CLASP is distinctive in three ways: (1) its emphasis is primarily on meeting the needs of a specific target group – the economically and socially disadvantaged – while also meeting the human resource needs of the economy; (2) participants are selected on the basis of leadership ability; and (3) all training is conducted in the United States to improve relationships with the United States and to promote an understanding of a pluralistic society and market

economy. Although CLASP training is still coordinated with the development needs of each participating country, many of the project design and implementation decisions are based on the unique objectives of the program. This study draws upon the experiences in both "standard" participant training and CLASP training.

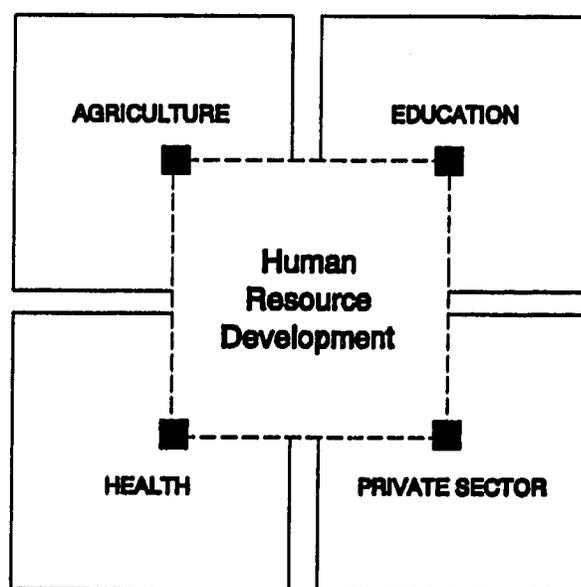
## Conceptual Framework

### Training Model

The simple graphic in Figure I-1 illustrates the approach taken in this study: that HRD activities cut across all other development sectors rather than constituting a separate sector. As a concept, this is self-evident, but training is seldom designed or implemented from this perspective. All of the discussion in this study starts from the assumption that the significance of HRD is derived from its contribution to broader objectives of institutional and national development.

FIGURE I-1

### The Role of Human Resource Development in National Development



The model illustrated in Figure I-2 is an adaptation of one used in Gulley (1987), which shows the conceptual linkages between training individuals and the ultimate economic development objectives. Whereas A.I.D. tends to focus much of the analysis and design of training activities on the individual, Gulley extended the focus to include a separate assessment of the following stages: organizational change, institutional development, and social/economic development. This is shown under "Level of Impact" in Figure I-2.

This model also links each level of impact to the A.I.D. stages of project design and further identifies the factors that influence design and management at each stage. For example, success at the level of the individual participant is dependent upon the adequate assessment of his or her

training needs and the development of an appropriate training plan. The key factors that influence achievement of organizational objectives include context analysis, organizational needs assessments, and integration of participant training into the broader program objectives. On the societal level, the critical factors will be training policy and the development of host country capability.

The value of this model is twofold: it relates particular activities to different levels of objectives or impact, and it emphasizes the relationships among the different levels. The interactive relationship between the goal-level activities and the output- and purpose-level activities is important because success at each level strengthens the others.

**FIGURE I-2**  
**Conceptual Model to Link Planning and Implementation of Training**

		IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS	
		LEVEL OF IMPACT	ISSUES AND ENABLING ACTIVITIES
<b>A.I.D. PLANNING PROCESS</b>	<b>OBJECTIVES</b>		
	Goal	Social and economic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Host country policy</li> <li>• Donor agency program</li> <li>• Coordination to build host country capability in HRD</li> </ul>
	Purpose	Organizational & institutional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program</li> <li>• Integration</li> <li>• Needs assessment</li> <li>• Context analysis</li> <li>• Objectives and indicators</li> <li>• Program-to-program linkages</li> </ul>
	Output	Individual personal & professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual needs</li> <li>• Training plans</li> <li>• Supplementary activities</li> <li>• Follow-on activities</li> </ul>
<b>ACTION</b>	Input	Training	

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## **Project Model**

The program and project context of training within overall donor assistance is also an important factor in identifying lessons learned to improve the efficacy of training. The A.I.D. approach to project design, the Logical Framework (or logframe), is a tool to rationalize the design process, establish clear objectives and indicators for each stage, and provide a framework for evaluation. It is well suited for reviewing issues in stages and, more important, for identifying the linkages between stages. As such, it is a particularly appropriate structure for analyzing training in the context of project or program objectives.

The logframe is a matrix tool that requires objectives and specific performance indicators for each stage, ways to verify the indicators (data sources), and assumptions for each objective. The training model in Figure I-2 shows the training activities and issues related to each of the project stages. The four stages are:

- **Program goal.** Represents the longer-term development objectives toward which the individual projects are intended to contribute. At this level, the objectives and indicators represent large-scale changes that are the sum of activities of many projects.
- **Project purpose.** Objectives are the focal point that should drive all project decisions about the combination and scope of project activities. The project-level indicators (End of Project Status [EOPS] indicators) are the specific changes that define the success of the project for both design and evaluation purposes. Therefore, to be useful, EOPS indicators must be specific, measurable, and an accurate reflection of the purpose.
- **Outputs.** The specific project activities that, taken together, are supposed to achieve the project objectives. Outputs are specific operations that are (in general) less susceptible to outside influences not anticipated by the project design. Outputs are the basic and lowest level of achievement in a project because they represent activities that, by themselves, may have no impact on the project objective. The relationship between the outputs and the purpose is the crux of project design. The linkage between the outputs and

expected results (purpose) is a development hypothesis — "If these are provided, then this will occur."

- **Inputs.** The building blocks of the project in very general terms — money, vehicles, technical assistance, and training.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Methods**

The primary purpose of this evaluation was to synthesize existing knowledge rather than initiate original research. The data were collected through multiple sources and mechanisms: interviews, general literature, project document reviews, and case studies. Conclusions were drawn from both the consensus of the literature and the evaluator's analysis based on available information and interviews.

This evaluation of training for development took place in several stages. The initial stage of the evaluation was to interview knowledgeable people in A.I.D., other donor agencies, and implementing institutions to identify critical issues about participant training and specific projects that illustrate either successful or unsuccessful approaches. The second step consisted of a literature review of selected program and project evaluations conducted by A.I.D. and other donor agencies, academic research organizations, and private firms. This was followed by visits to four countries in the LAC region to review individual projects with innovative elements and overall mission management of training programs. The four LAC missions that served as case studies were the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Jamaica. Each of these missions has a CLASP initiative with different activities and a distinctive approach to training in general.

This study made no attempt to conduct an impact evaluation of training through interviews with returned participants. Although the issue of impact has not been answered to the satisfaction of many informants, this study could not usefully add to the existing studies, which represent tens of thousands of interviews with and questionnaires prepared by participants. It relies on the literature to provide information from the perspective of the participants themselves.

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No significant problems were encountered in conducting the study. Most of the key donor institutions cooperated enthusiastically with the effort and responded generously with documents and interviews. Internal or restricted documents provided useful background material even when they could not be incorporated into the report.

### **Definitions**

Although most of the HRD terminology is self-explanatory, each host country and donor institution has its own specific definitions. In some cases, the terms themselves are ambiguous. For purposes of this study, the broadest applicable term will be used to discuss the issue at hand. In other words, the lessons apply to all types of training unless specific reference is made to a particular subsector of training.

- **Academic program.** Any educational program with the objective of attaining a degree.
- **CLASP training.** Training conducted under the A.I.D. Caribbean and Latin American Scholarship Program that targets disadvantaged members of society for leadership development training.
- **Development training.** Training with an objective of attaining a broader impact on an institutional or societal level rather than just on an individual level.
- **Long-term training.** Training that lasts nine months or longer or two full academic semesters.
- **Management education.** Degree-oriented programs with an emphasis on management, usually at the M.B.A. or equivalent level.
- **Management training.** Nondegree courses or specialized training programs that address management concerns at various levels.
- **Participant.** The term used by A.I.D. for any individual sponsored for overseas training.
- **Participant training.** An A.I.D. term used to describe any training program conducted in a country other than that of the host or recipient country.

- **Project-related training (PRT).** Training conducted to meet the specific human resource needs of a project that combines a range of inputs (such as technical assistance, equipment, and vehicles) to meet broad sectoral or institutional goals.
- **Short-term training.** Training that lasts less than nine months.
- **Technical training.** Preparation for work in a particular structure or system. This is distinct from education, which is considered a more general preparation for life in a society.
- **Third-country training.** Any training program that takes place in a country other than the donor country or the host (recipient) country.

### **Structure of the Report**

The report is organized according to the different stages in the program and project cycle – program context, project design, implementation, and evaluation. The final section reviews topics of special concern: USAID management issues, women in development, and CLASP. This organization is intended to make the lessons easily accessible to readers with specific interests. The level of overlap among the sections is kept to that needed to make the discussion of each issue as complete as possible. The presentations in each section are not limited to broad lessons learned. Given the nature of the topic and the diverse range of activities and objectives, this would be of little value. Rather, the discussions review the issues in each section, draw appropriate conclusions from the literature, and illustrate alternative approaches taken in various circumstances.

# II

Program and

Context

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The supply of training as an input is no guarantee that it will be effectively utilized at the macro level.

— Paul 1982

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The impact of training on economic development depends upon both the policy and institutional contexts in which the training will be used and the relationship of the training to long-term human resource and organizational development needs. At the institutional level, a common criticism of training programs is that individuals acquire needed skills and knowledge, but often are unable to apply them in the work environment. This is often the result of emphasizing the training of individuals without simultaneously promoting the development of institutional strategies for and support of human resource development (HRD). This issue is particularly important as A.I.D. begins to place greater emphasis on program-level impact. In the context of a strategic HRD focus, training can promote institutional and policy changes that have a discernible impact on social and economic development.

For most training, long-term impact is contingent upon factors beyond the influence of the project itself; increased capacity of individuals will not necessarily have an impact on an institutional or social level. These primary factors include the host country's economic, institutional, and policy environment. Both program- and project-level strategy and planning must take such factors into consideration to improve the potential utilization of training. In general terms, the issue is the degree to which participant (over-seas) training is:

conducted in a supportive and stable macro-economic environment that provides opportunities to use the training;

- coordinated with existing host country and institutional human resource development plans;
- cognizant of relevant organizational or policy factors that will affect the utilization of the trained individual; and
- integrated into the overall development program in such a way as to benefit from economies of scale and maximize the developmental impact of the planning and provision of training as well as the skill transfer itself.

While recognition of and adaptation to the host country context is crucial, equally important is the degree to which the training program is designed to contribute to policy and institutional development. At both the program and project levels, the *process* of planning and implementation can effectively assist the host country in developing a supportive policy framework and management capabilities, while at the same time achieving project goals. In order to do so, however, the importance of the broader development objectives must not be subordinated to the immediate pressures of project implementation.

Both the host country and the donor organization have a responsibility (1) to evaluate adequately the contextual factors affecting utilization; (2) to address specific project training needs from the perspective of larger HRD or organizational needs; and (3) to maximize the developmental benefits to policy and institutional development that can be derived from the process of managing and implementing training.

## Host Country Policies and Programs

The host country policy and economic environment is a determining factor in the effective use of training, at least in the negative sense. Although good policies and a supportive environ-

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ment do not guarantee the effectiveness of training, negative personnel and manpower policies or a poor economy can preclude effective utilization.

At the broadest level, employment possibilities in the economy establish the demand for individuals with specific skills and education. These opportunities are greatly enhanced by political stability and an appropriate set of economic, monetary, and trade policies that encourage free enterprise. In the context of human resource development, an effective basic education system and an adequate stock of educated manpower are basic preconditions for the utilization of training. While these broad contextual factors must be recognized as important influences, they are largely outside the scope of this discussion.

At the sector and institutional levels, the key issues are (1) the capacity to plan, manage, and implement training; (2) personnel policies and systems; and (3) an enabling administrative culture (Paul et al. 1989). The third element, an administrative culture that encourages effective utilization of all managers and employees, is relatively self-explanatory. The development of such a culture is a management problem, and thus can be addressed through management training. This is not to minimize the challenge — it is a rare organization that effectively establishes and maintains an enabling organizational culture. Part of the development of such a culture depends on management philosophy and capability, but part also depends on structures related to the first two issues — training policy and personnel systems.

### **National Training Policies**

Training, and particularly overseas training, is often criticized for being conducted in a vacuum, that is, without reference to an organizational training plan or development strategy. To the degree that any specific training is coordinated with a broad plan, it will have a greater impact. The implicit assumption is that institutions actually have training plans or HRD strategies and the capacity to implement the training. This is clearly not the case in many, if not most, governments and public sector institutions.

Donor-financed projects usually focus on discrete parts of a national training system: strengthening training institutes, conducting needs assess-

ments, or managing overseas training. Neither the host government nor the donor organizations place significant emphasis on the formulation and implementation of a coherent policy framework.

Dr. Samuel Paul has made the argument that national training policies are an essential precondition for the effective development of a human resource base and the utilization of training for public administration (Paul 1982; Paul et al. 1989). A training policy acknowledges the need to upgrade continuously the skills and knowledge of existing employees and to develop new capabilities linked to organizational goals and employee career development. Training policies give employees the knowledge they need to pursue career aspirations and enable training institutions to determine course needs and plan program development.

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A major precondition for the effectiveness of these education and training programs is the existence of a national training policy for public service. When training activities are performed in an ad hoc manner without the guidance of a policy framework, inefficient use of scarce resources and costly duplication of effort are bound to occur.

— Paul et al. 1989

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Training policies should combine systematic analysis of present and future manpower requirements and training needs with the flexibility needed to adapt to changes. A comprehensive policy would include guidelines on conducting ongoing training needs assessments, designing and planning training programs, monitoring and evaluating the training, and developing the institutional capability to implement the training. To appeal to employees, the policy must establish clear linkages between personal training and career development (Paul 1982).

While the rationale for such systems is clear, training policies have yet to be established in more than a handful of developing countries. Indeed, the level of coordination and planning goes far beyond what developing countries and

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most developed countries achieve, or even aspire to. The impediments to development of such policies can be significant, starting, in some countries, with the lack of a civil service. A few countries in Africa and Asia have initiated efforts to formulate policy on at least some training issues, but most find that it is difficult to maintain adequate budgetary and political support or to integrate training into broader personnel policies (Paul 1982). Therefore, the thoughts of experts in these fields can usefully be seen as directions to move toward rather than standards against which to assess programs.

### **Labor and Personnel Policies**

Basic labor force conditions such as wage levels, personnel policies, and effective demand for specific skills are often the root cause of skill shortages in governments. Donor organizations and host governments must realistically assess the importance of such contextual factors in designing training activities and conducting needs assessments. Not infrequently, projects will provide training to alleviate manpower shortages *despite* a recognition that wage levels drive off qualified staff. A ministry's desperate need for economic planners does not mean that there are no economists, only that they will not work for the ministry.

Some institutions are particularly vulnerable to wage-level competition, including business and management faculties, civil service, and health care organizations. For this reason, unfilled staff positions are a misleading indicator of training needs. In Jamaica, a national shortage of nursing staff persists despite years of nursing training financed by the government and donors. In this case, the competition for trained nurses is from other countries, because trained nurses emigrate to avail themselves of better career opportunities abroad. Wage-level competition can undermine otherwise effective training programs. For example, the tourist industry draws qualified staff from the hotel management faculty in the Dominican Republic. Even Malaysia, which has an excellent national training program that combines research, training, and consultancy, can meet only two-thirds of its need for training staff in management institutes due to wage competition (Paul 1982).

Civil service remuneration, tenure, and promotion policies are frequently mentioned contextual constraints to the improvement of public admin-

istration. Evaluations often find that returned participants move from the public sector to the private sector. In some cases, the wage differential alone is the primary motivation. In other cases, personnel policies have an equal weight: returnees either find no job available or the job is not suitable for their training. In countries without civil service laws, the utilization of training of even technical personnel can be eliminated by changes in leadership. Poor planning, particularly through inadequate manpower studies or needs assessments, can also significantly reduce a returned participant's opportunity to use the training.

The literature is limited on experience in addressing policy and structural constraints in part, one suspects, because these constraints are most commonly recognized in hindsight. During the early stages of project design, such concerns are likely to be relegated to secondary importance behind the immediate needs of project implementation. On the policy dialogue level, donors may have difficulty in reconciling the need to increase civil service salaries with their macroeconomic advice to reduce government spending. Possibly the most common response to such contextual constraints is a programmatic restriction on financing some types of training.

Some countries are attempting to address wage differentials through a combination of salary and nonsalary incentives. In Jamaica, for instance, a major government initiative has been introduced to increase government salaries to a relatively competitive level and to supplement salaries with perquisites such as duty waivers and vehicles. Interestingly, overseas scholarship opportunities themselves are considered an effective incentive for talented people to enter and remain in the civil service. In this context, Jamaica calculates the benefits of the scholarship to include the work of qualified personnel prior to training as well as utilization of new skills afterward.

### **Donor Agency Program Planning and Strategy**

Evaluations of donor-funded training programs often identify weaknesses in the strategies to achieve development impact. To a great degree, evaluation findings highlight failures to recognize adequately the types of policy and institutional constraints to utilization that were discussed above. In addition, training programs often fail

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to promote policy or institutional development because of their focus on accomplishing outputs rather than purposes. The literature identifies these issues: (1) the general focus on short-term project objectives rather than on strategies for long-term development impact; (2) the weakness of needs assessments and manpower planning in preparing programs and projects; and (3) the lack of coordination of training with the host country.

### **HRD Strategies and Policies**

Like the host countries, donor organizations seldom address training on the policy or strategy level as a component of human resource development. HRD strategies, if they exist, are usually narrowly focused on formal education or vocational education rather than on broader manpower development issues that would include training on a cross-sectoral basis. Sector studies that deal exhaustively with policy issues such as tariff structures, level and quality of services, financial policy, environmental concerns, and research/extension capability may make no direct reference to manpower strategy or sectoral human resource development needs (Barker and Sterling 1985). Among the A.I.D. sector studies reviewed for this study, only two treated manpower development as a distinct subject, and none provided a comprehensive review of the human resource constraints to sectoral development. This situation is particularly striking given that the vast majority of individuals interviewed for this study identified human resource weaknesses as the primary constraint to development and, indeed, the source of most "structural" constraints.

In the absence of long-term strategies, donor programs focus on short-term project implementation needs rather than broader human resource development objectives. A World Bank review of project-related training (World Bank 1982) noted this short-term focus and concluded that projects generally give a low priority to training in both design and evaluation. The study found that training impact is limited by a failure to adequately assess training needs and to allocate sufficient staff to training issues. This review led to several changes in the World Bank's management and oversight of training. The training specialist staff was strengthened, and the Bank instituted annual reviews of the quality of training assessments and plans in project documents.

Within A.I.D., the Office for International Training (OIT) is the institutional base for policy development and implementation of participant training. Its training policies (A.I.D. 1988) are primarily oriented toward operational rather than program or strategy concerns, and planning requirements such as needs assessments are not universally adopted at the mission level. Without strategies or manpower assessments that place all training in a particular program in the context of long-term HRD objectives, training is considered only in the context of project-specific needs. Of the four USAID missions visited for this study, only one had made an attempt (unsuccessful) to develop a comprehensive HRD strategy.

Addressing human resource development on a project-by-project basis clearly limits the potential impact of training. Sectoral HRD strategy would enhance the opportunity to achieve policy or institutional reforms, economies of scale in managing training, and improvements in host country capability to plan and implement training. A *program strategy* could direct training in all projects to contribute to higher-level goals through coordinated policy reform or use of local training and analysis capacity. Instead, objectives are usually addressed on a project level, with distinct objectives such as (1) strengthening local training institutions; (2) strengthening capacity in national training systems to develop training policy, conduct needs assessments, and plan training; and (3) developing capacity to manage and coordinate overseas training. A *project intervention* to strengthen a training institute might provide a targeted combination of technical assistance and conduct a set number of training courses. In contrast, a *program strategy* might supplement the technical assistance project with the requirement that training needs in all projects be met by this particular training institute.

The project approach is exemplified by the Development and Management Training (DMT) project in India, which had an objective of improving in-service training in ministries by upgrading the technical and management training capacities of major Indian training institutions through links with U.S. counterpart institutions (USAID/India 1984). If developed as a program-level intervention, this activity might have addressed training issues in all USAID

projects, but there is no indication in the evaluation that this was the intent.

The Indonesia Overseas Training Office (see Box II-1) illustrates the experience of trying to meet broad program objectives for overseas training. In many ways, this experience typifies the pattern of both the donor and the host country, focusing on lower-level accomplishments. The local government failed to provide the budget, staff, and vision needed to achieve significant policy or institutional changes, and USAID's overriding interest appeared to be on the operational rather than the programmatic or policy level.

Another issue related to the consideration of training in the context of overall human resource development is the determination of program priorities. This issue is often formulated in terms of alternatives — primary or university education, general or vocational training, etc. — rather than in terms of the appropriate mix. In the literature, some studies review the arguments and estimations of relative rates of return to education and conclude that an appropriate donor policy is one of balanced support. While the relatively high return for primary education should encourage a substantial emphasis on this level, it is also recognized that higher levels of education and specialized training are essential for development and deserve donor agency support.

#### **Needs Assessments**

Needs assessments play an important role in enabling donors to understand the contextual factors that may influence the utilization of training as well as to identify specific training needs. This element of project planning will be discussed in the next chapter.

Equally important, however, is the recognition on the program and policy level that needs assessments are more than simply a project requirement. In fact, they are an essential skill that any government or institution needs in order to develop adequately a personnel development and training plan. Therefore, the process by which needs assessments are conducted may be as important, if not more so, as the information generated for project implementation.

#### **BOX II-1**

##### **Indonesia Overseas Training Office**

**Background.** The Government of Indonesia (GOI) established the Overseas Training Office (OTO) to (1) formulate national policies on overseas training; (2) communicate training needs and priorities to donor agencies; (3) assist GOI development agencies in defining training objectives; and (4) implement overseas training programs. The OTO receives operating funds from the World Bank and USAID's General Participant Training II Project.

**Achievements.** The OTO has done exceptionally good work in the areas of preparing departmental training plans, academic aptitude testing in the Indonesian language, English language training, cross-cultural orientation, and placement through subcontracts with U.S. universities. However, the policy component has significantly lagged behind operational activities.

**Assessment.** While recognizing the achievements of the OTO, an evaluation noted that training plans could be greatly improved with a focus on organizational development rather than individual scholarship needs. The small OTO staff is not adequate to assess training needs in terms of organizational development for GOI ministries. Indeed, this level of personnel planning is well beyond the scope of the project.

The staffing and budget problems at OTO are partly derived from a failure to institutionalize the office. Still not a permanent GOI institution, OTO staff are borrowed from other ministries and financed by donor funding. Policy oversight is conducted by an informal group of officials.

The lack of substantive host government support clearly limits OTO's ability to achieve its objectives. Donor organizations appear to be primarily interested in the effectiveness of the placement services — a key concern in meeting implementation targets. Until both the government and donors provide support for the broader objectives of the OTO commensurate with their potential impact, its achievements will be limited to localizing the administration of training. While these achievements are real and noteworthy, much of the OTO's potential contribution to improving planning and utilization of training has not materialized.

In the context of A.I.D. project planning, needs assessments are usually viewed as a one-time task – a stand-alone activity related to specific project needs rather than a program-level, institution-building objective. As a result, the issue of needs assessments must be addressed anew with each project. While an initial project study is important, long-term developmental impact hinges on the ability to conduct systematic surveys over a reasonable period of time to keep the information relevant and up-to-date (Paul et al. 1989).

Strengthening host country capacity to conduct needs assessments and to manage training is sometimes a specific donor objective, either as a distinct project activity or as an implementation mechanism. As a distinct project activity, institution building is a specific objective and may receive sufficient management attention. When institution building is linked to implementation, however, management attention is usually focused on the objective of training a given number of people rather than on developing institutional capacity.

It is useful to consider the difference between program and project approaches to developing institutional capacity in this area. Within the context of a single project, even significant institution-building efforts may have limited long-term development impact. Projects, by their very nature, are distinct operations with limited time frames. A program approach, on the other hand, may be better able to use established institutional capability to meet training needs in all projects on a continuing basis as a matter of policy. The capacity can only become a development asset for both the country and donor agency if this capacity is used for all relevant projects within the framework of a program strategy. The experience in Ecuador (see Box II-2) provides an example of a successful project that did not evolve into a developmental asset for lack of a program policy applied to many projects.

#### **Coordination of Training with Host Country**

Poorly articulated training programs and strategies can also result in poor coordination with the host country. As in most development activities, the level of host country cooperation and enthusiasm is critical to success (CIDA 1986a). USAID often works closely with specific departments in

#### **BOX II-2**

##### **Ecuador National Training System**

**Background.** The Ecuador National Training System (NTS) Project was initiated in 1980 to institutionalize a public sector training system by creating a ministry-level coordinating body and upgrading staff capabilities in government training units. USAID/Ecuador provided training, technical assistance, equipment, and materials.

**Activities.** The national training system developed an information system and conducted human resource surveys to determine basic civil service statistics by position in the cities and provinces. A model training system was designed and successfully implemented in the Ecuadoran Water Resources Institute (INERHI), due, in part, to strong support from INERHI's management. Implementation included training of trainers, curriculum and material preparation, selection, evaluation, and follow-on.

**Accomplishments.** The project exceeded all EOPS indicators by a substantial margin and received increased government budget support. The training philosophy and methodology were praised in the evaluation, and many government officials accepted the importance of this type of training.

**Postscript.** Despite the success of the project, the national training system and its capabilities were forgotten when the project ended. There was limited knowledge of the project outside of the mission's HRD office, and there was no mechanism or policy to coordinate future USAID training needs assessments through the NTS. Two years after the end of the project, needs assessments for large public sector projects were being conducted by outside consultants.

a ministry to develop training plans, but on the organizational and governmental levels coordination is often minimal. This can weaken the host government's ability to coordinate national and donor training activities and force the USAID mission into the awkward position of responding to a wide variety of unsuitable training requests. An evaluation of USAID projects in Yemen found that the government was unclear about USAID training priorities, considering scholarships "slots" to be filled rather than parts of a plan. Lacking either a mission strategy or an agreement with the government to establish training

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priorities, USAID had to negotiate requests on a case-by-case basis and had to function as an intermediary among government institutions (AID/ANE/DP/E 1988). This clearly undermined host government efforts to address training needs more systematically and to provide employees with accurate information about available training opportunities. Government officials in many countries have noted that other donors are more likely to provide clear and timely information about annual training opportunities. The Country Training Plan, a document specifically recommended for this purpose in A.I.D. policy, is apparently seldom used in coordination with host governments.

Many of the studies reviewed for this evaluation included recommendations for a more constructive role for donor agencies in training as a part of human resource development and institution strengthening. In general, such recommendations focused on the following priorities:

- targeting programs on the training of trainers;
- strengthening education and training policy;
- improving institutional capacity to conduct needs assessments;
- improving local personnel policies and management;
- strengthening local training institutions through faculty improvement and improved training materials; and
- making greater use of local training institutions.

These priorities emphasize institutional development and policy reform rather than simply increasing the number of trained people. While the literature recognizes that donor-assisted training can meet training gaps in specialized areas, primary objectives should be directed toward structural improvement. Implementation of these suggestions requires a more explicit donor policy and strategy for the role of training in human resource development than is now common.

## **Lessons Learned**

The basic findings related to program and context are:

- Effective planning and utilization of training are often hampered by weak personnel systems and training policies in the recipient countries.
- The economic and labor-market environment, particularly wage policies and the relative demand for certain skills, has a direct impact on the ability of public sector institutions, and to some extent of countries, to recruit and retain skilled individuals.
- Analysis and planning for training frequently focus on project-level concerns, which tend to be narrow and short term, rather than on the relation of project needs to longer-term human resource development issues.
- Human resource constraints are seldom analyzed on the sectoral or institutional levels with the same thoroughness with which policy constraints, finances, or level and quality of services are analyzed.
- Donor organizations do not systematically develop HRD strategies or policies either within sectors or across sectors with which to assess project-level decisions. The cross-cutting nature of human resource development is seldom recognized operationally or within a policy context.
- A.I.D. training programs are often poorly coordinated with host country governments, thus limiting their ability to systematically address training needs.

The implications for program planning include:

- Training programs and projects must adequately assess the economic, policy, and institutional contexts in which training will be used. In particular, preliminary analysis must determine the cause of shortages of skilled personnel. Is it an actual shortage that can be addressed through provision of training or a shortage that has been induced by poor wage or personnel policies?
- Every training program should contribute to the development of appropriate and effective training policies and the capacity to plan and manage training on the part of the host country. Development of the capability to plan and manage training outweighs the specific benefits of individual training to particular projects.
- Sector assessments should include specific references to the manpower and HRD issues that constitute constraints to institutional or economic development in that sector.
- Both host countries and donor organizations need to develop a broader vision of how training programs fit into long-term human resource development efforts. This would require the adoption of training policies on the part of host countries and institutions. Donor organizations should develop cross-cutting human resource development strategies or policies to establish a framework for all project-level decisions.

# III

For purposes of this study, project design issues will be discussed separately from those of implementation and evaluation, although many of the same observations apply to all stages of training. This section will focus on design decisions concerning objectives, alternative project and training modalities, and feasibility analyses.

*If any generalization can be made about the design of training components, it would be that training is often underdesigned relative to other activities.* A World Bank study found that training was among the least well-prepared project components and was seldom placed in a long-term or sectoral context (World Bank 1982). The identified weaknesses extended from initial appraisal reports that often failed to relate overseas fellowships to specific training needs or manpower constraints to training plans that failed to match the educational level of trainees to the level of training proposed. These findings are echoed in numerous A.I.D. project and program evaluations.

The critical factors in project design are (1) establishing clear project objectives and indicators; (2) recognizing the strengths and weaknesses of alternative project structures (project-related training versus training-only projects) and selecting training modalities that effectively address project and participant objectives; and (3) conducting feasibility analyses (needs assessment, economic analysis, and institutional analysis) that adequately investigate the relevant issues.

## **Objectives and Indicators**

The single most important factor in project design is establishing clear and measurable objectives and indicators. Project objectives and indicators inform the entire process of project design, implementation, and evaluation. The determination of the type and nature of feasibility

studies to be conducted should flow directly from the objectives. Vague objectives and weak performance indicators clearly contribute to conceptual problems in implementing and evaluating projects. Training activities are particularly susceptible to weak objective statements and/or indicators of accomplishment that are not consistent with the stated objectives.

The basic question for training activities is whether the objective is career development for individuals, institution building, the relieving of manpower constraints (specific or general), or leadership development. In each case, the training objective should be defined as specifically as possible.

In project-related training, the training component is usually a relatively small factor contributing to specific institutional changes. The project objective is specific, but the role of training in attaining the objective may be unclear. Often no specific organizational or personnel objectives are established against which to plan or measure the success of the training component itself. Without a clear objective for the subcomponent, planning is difficult and no appropriate indicators of success in training can be applied. In such cases, evaluation must be on the level of the entire project, with training as an undifferentiated element.

University institution-strengthening projects are somewhat of an exception because achieving project objectives depends directly upon faculty development. In such projects, faculty training has a direct and obvious impact on the ability of the university to increase enrollment or to initiate new programs of study. Equally important, the planning of appropriate types and levels of training directly relates to the overall project objectives of university strengthening.

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On the other hand, projects that consist entirely of training seldom have a direct link to any particular institution, so a clear definition of success is more difficult. These projects frequently set objectives on the output level in relatively vague terms and then establish indicators that reflect changes in trainees' careers. A representative sample of training-only project objectives would include:

- Developing a trained cadre of public and private sector representatives at all socioeconomic levels, and enhancing this cadre's skills in policy making, planning, management, and technical areas required to support political, social, and economic development.
- Expanding the manpower capabilities of ministries, universities, and private, nonprofit organizations to implement development programs effectively.
- Relieving manpower constraints in critical skill areas.
- Financing training in the United States at the graduate level or in short courses in critical areas.
- Providing increased numbers of trained personnel capable of planning, managing, and implementing development programs with an emphasis on managerial and supervisory requirements.

These very general objectives are sometimes made much more explicit at a sub-objective or planning level through identification of specific "critical areas" or specific organizations. In many cases, however, the objective remains at the very general level of increasing the supply of trained people and the indicators are equally general, such as "participants return to important positions," or "participants are utilizing their skills." It is not unusual for the end of project status (EOPS) indicators to be a restatement of the expected outputs, usually in terms of the numbers of people trained under the project. This effectively defines success in terms of the lowest level of achievement — sending people out and bringing them back. These objectives and indicators provide little guidance for selection, placement, and evaluation.

Understanding what training is intended to accomplish is often obscured by a focus on skills rather than outcomes. For example, a project will note the need for a statistician without referring to specific organizational objectives. USAID/Ecuador is trying to improve articulation of these linkages by requiring a logical framework approach for all training that will link outputs with purpose and goal objectives. This is a new requirement, and it is not yet clear whether it helps to think through the training needs.

It is important that training objectives and indicators represent accomplishments that are achievable through training. Some projects establish indicators of success that are not closely enough linked to successful training. For example, a private sector training project established EOPS indicators of increased production and expanded exports, even though the ability of the participants to influence these changes was minimal. In this case, the project manager ignored these indicators, indeed had forgotten that they existed, because they were not reasonable expectations for the training.

Objective statements are also a guide to planning and feasibility studies. For example, an objective of "relieving manpower constraints in critical skill areas" should lead to a relatively detailed analysis of manpower constraints (in terms of both numbers and specific skills) to answer the questions: (1) What are the critical skills? (2) Are there shortages? (3) If so, are the shortages caused simply by a lack of people with the training or by personnel and wage policies that discourage people from applying for such jobs? (4) If supply is the problem, what level and type of training are necessary to relieve the constraint? Indicators of achievement for this objective could be related either to achievement of specific activities (removing manpower constraints) or to employment and retention of personnel in organizations targeted by the needs assessment. On the other hand, indicators of individual advancement, such as salary and promotion, would not be closely related to the project objectives.

A general training project aimed at leadership development can also inform the implementation and evaluation process if the objectives and indicators are relatively specific. For example, an objective of developing "a cadre of U.S.-

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trained leaders in [a specific sector or institution or field]" would require a feasibility analysis that would: (1) identify people who are already in or are likely to move into leadership positions, and (2) identify factors that would encourage their promotion. The analysis would take into account promotion policies for that specific institution, social and economic structure, family and educational background, and other indicators of success. In leadership projects, the anticipated outcome is that former participants are in influential positions. It would not be necessary to show that success was attributable to training but that the project had successfully identified and assisted "up-and-comers." In this case, indicators such as salary, promotion, and position evaluated on either a one-time or longitudinal basis are entirely appropriate both for feedback into project design and for assessment of impact.

Institution building constitutes the context within which most development training is justified and is a primary, if often unstated, objective in most training activities. The particular problems posed by establishing institutional development as an objective are important enough to warrant some additional discussion.

Despite the importance of HRD activities to overall development, clear evidence about the contribution of participant training to institutional development is scant. Public sector institutions have been the focus of most donor-financed participant training, but evaluations show that a significant proportion of participants leave the sponsoring institutions after they return, and many leave the public sector entirely. In many cases, the training itself may contribute to attrition when the acquired academic credentials improve employment prospects. Moreover, the impact of participant attrition may be exacerbated if the best employees are selected for training and are thereby assisted in leaving.

The approach taken in some countries is to sponsor only less prestigious (and possibly lower-quality) training that does not contribute to employee mobility. This, of course, may have an equally negative impact on work productivity and quality, thus placing the short-term concern of staff retention over the broader contribution to society.

Some development professionals minimize the importance of this attrition, recognizing that the

trained individual may move to a job in which his or her contribution to the society is greater. Even where this is true, it does not resolve the original problem of institutional weakness that formed the rationale for a training intervention. There is little evaluative data as to whether new skills are effectively institutionalized within a sponsoring organization (with the possible exception of university development).

A significant conceptual ambiguity exists on the primacy of institutional development as a training objective that affects both design and evaluation. While the objective may be institutional development, the focus during implementation and evaluation is usually on individual skills and achievement rather than on organizational changes. Needs assessments, when done, seldom look at training within the context of an organizational change strategy. The operating assumption for participant training has been that trained and capable individuals can reintegrate into their sponsoring institutions and apply their new skills to effect changes. This assumption has often proved incorrect when the institutional culture is not receptive to different approaches or values. The project design must clearly articulate whether the objective is to effect changes in *individual* or in *organizational* behavior. This distinction is essential to analyzing and planning a training program.

Projects that include institutional development objectives must conduct adequate pre-project feasibility analyses to understand the institutional and policy context of the organization and to address the structural causes of skill deficiencies. Recognizing the limited ability of the public sector in developing countries to compete for skilled labor, project designs must be oriented toward incorporating the skills, if not the individuals, into the institution. While staff turnover is a fact of life in any organization, and returned participants have legitimate career aspirations that should not be limited to public service, it should be stressed that institutional development, not individual career goals, is the basis for donor funding. The project objectives and indicators should reflect this understanding.

There is no easy solution to developing appropriate objectives and indicators for institutional development. The issue revolves around the distinction between training individuals and training for organizational change. The question

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is integral to the whole issue of sustainability and has direct implications for many aspects of training project design and evaluation.

The institutional development strategy of training a "critical mass" of people to change the organizational culture is difficult to assess. Although the concept of critical-mass training is frequently and casually used, it is seldom either defined or evaluated. More important, it is seldom related to specific organizational objectives. Overseas training is rarely the primary means of achieving this type of critical mass.

Experience with utilization of training indicates that a working "critical mass" might refer to a particular combination of positions rather than an absolute number or percentage of employees. Several studies indicate that a determining factor for utilization of new skills is interaction with co-workers and supervisors. One study of returned M.B.A. scholars indicated that training supervisors on the nature and content of M.B.A. training would facilitate effective utilization of the participants (Goodwin and Nacht 1984). Another study emphasized that human factors were a more significant constraint to utilization than were equipment or logistical support (Gulley 1987). Explicit recognition of these human factors could result in training designs that provide a range of training to the significant elements of the work group.

Training aimed at achieving organizational changes must recognize different training goals for the various audiences. Training for senior managers would seek to strengthen commitment by emphasizing *awareness and interest* prior to proceeding with specific technical training at the operational level. Given senior management support, a substantive *understanding* of the new system is needed for supervisors and affected co-workers. Both of these types of training may be necessary to complement the traditional focus of achieving technical *competence* on the operational level. Without the complementary programs for managers and supervisors, the burden of achieving organizational acceptance of new approaches falls entirely on the technical staff. This often limits the real impact of training.

Pairing appropriate achievement indicators with clear objectives is always challenging for training projects. The common practice of restating outputs is a result of the difficulty of trying to

find direct indicators. A study for the Canadian International Development Agency developed a framework of evaluation indicators for HRD interventions, including institutional development and project-related training (CIDA 1986b). The indicators for project-related training include a range of issues from initial design and feasibility through implementation and impact. Design issues include supply and demand of training at the national and project levels and "reasonable verifiable operational goals and objectives specified for the training component." Post-training employment data are used as much as an indicator of design adequacy as a proxy for impact. At the impact level, the indicators include improvements in development planning and ultimate impact on broader development goals (e.g., reducing malnutrition and illiteracy).

One expert argues that the nature of development training is such that intermediate measures are required to provide meaningful indicators (Bhola 1982). A measurement of successful skill transfer at the individual level is too narrow to provide meaningful project feedback (e.g., did the trainees learn to sew?), while the ultimate project goals (e.g., textile exports increased by 50 percent) are too broad. The number of people trained is a measurement of the adequacy of feasibility studies and implementation but sheds little light on whether the training is being used as intended. An appropriate intermediate-level indicator might measure utilization of training in achieving specific organizational or personal objectives that contribute to the broader project goal.

A direct benefit of developing appropriate intermediate-level indicators is that they can also more clearly define the type of training needed, thus improving project design. One useful approach is to link training directly to clear organizational objectives and strategies of organizational change (Fehnel and Graham 1986). The Performance Improvement Planning (PIP/OD) approach to organizational development is a methodology specifically designed for determining training needs and developing training programs within an organizational context (Abramson and Halset 1985). It has the practical advantage for training design of working from a specific anticipated use to develop a training plan, avoiding such imprecise goals as "strengthening" the institution. As a project evaluation tool, these performance objectives are

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appropriate indicators for evaluating the training component in a meaningful way. With this greater degree of specificity for the intermediate-term objectives, both the donor agency and the sponsoring organization can make an informed decision as to whether the particular objectives are worth the cost of the training.

A similar, if less rigorous, approach is done by specifying objectives for the participant after he or she returns home. One variation of this is done by the USAID mission in Guatemala, where each participant signs a contract to complete specific development activities after returning home, such as conducting a series of seminars for co-workers. The mission emphasizes that returnees must meet these development objectives after they return. It is not sufficient that they simply do a better job. This approach has two advantages. The first is that expectations are specified for both the participant and the donor organization, so both planning and evaluation should be clearer. The second is that this approach allows for specific judgments about the value of the training – an implicit cost-benefit analysis.

Several A.I.D. projects have experimented with making the sponsoring institution responsible for developing training plans that establish a context and specific objectives for the training. While this can undoubtedly be useful, the experience in practice has been that few firms or organizations have the capability to develop good training plans.

**Summary.** Defining clear and measurable objectives is the most critical stage in the design of training projects, but many projects fail to adequately perform this task. If the training component does not directly lead to a measurable change, intermediate objectives and indicators should be used.

### **Project Structure for Participant Training**

At the early project design stage, several basic decisions must be made. The first is the design of the project itself: How is training related to a project framework or integrated into other development activities? The second is the issue of design of the training component: How should the training be conducted or designed to get the maximum benefit and contribution to project

objectives? Clear project objectives are needed for both of these decisions.

### **Project Design Modalities**

Training activities are included in different types of projects and are related to project objectives in different ways. A.I.D. uses both training-only projects and multi-input projects with a training component (also called project-related training [PRT]). The World Bank and some other multi-lateral donors generally place greater emphasis on project-related training, which is often provided by technical experts assigned to the project. In the mid-1980s, the World Bank began to finance more training-only projects, which are called freestanding training projects (World Bank 1988).

A study for A.I.D. assessed the experience with various models of participant training through a review of project evaluations for 107 projects (Elmer and Moser 1986a). The study distinguished different types of training activities under the broad categories of "training only" and "PRT." A third category separated centrally funded projects from mission-funded projects. The two primary categories included the following types:

- Training-only projects (bilateral and regional)
  - General training
  - Scholarship programs
  - Sector-based training
- Multi-input projects with training elements (PRT)
  - Institution building
  - University support
  - Sector-focused training
  - Training with OPEX personnel (expatriate operational experts who temporarily fill government positions while host country personnel are attending training)

The study attempted to identify key design and implementation issues for each design type as well as issues that applied to all of them. The study was structured to find patterns in existing evaluations rather than to compare and contrast the alternative designs against a common standard of success. Indeed, A.I.D. evaluations of training are heavily oriented toward implementation issues rather than impact and seldom use any standard definition of success (see

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Chapter V), so the study must be understood in this context. Therefore, it is not surprising that the findings for any project design type highlight implementation issues common to all training and that most issues for specific project design types apply to all projects to some degree. In other words, all training has common issues that must be addressed, regardless of the design.

The most notable conclusion one can draw from this pattern is that the details and quality of project design and implementation are generally more important than is the structure of the project. A more directed comparison of PRT and general training projects in Yemen found that there was no difference between them in terms of introducing new ideas or application of training (AID/ANE/DP/E 1988). The most important factors for successful utilization of training would appear to be:

- a receptive institutional and economic environment;
- host country commitment;
- adequate identification of priority training needs and project manpower requirements;
- clear project and training objectives;
- sound feasibility studies;
- good selection of qualified participants;
- well-prepared training plans;
- sound project management; and
- follow-on.

While the Elmer-Moser study does not identify a preferred project design for training activities, it does find that problems in some of these areas are more likely in some project designs than others. Therefore, it is useful to direct management attention to these areas whenever necessary. Below are some general observations from the Elmer-Moser study and other sources.

***Training-only projects:***

- are versatile in responding to training requests and in providing "head start" training for upcoming projects.
- are generally better designed and implemented than PRT. They are more likely to use training specialists and to receive more management attention.
- are better for developing a "critical mass" of skilled manpower if focused on a particular

sector rather than simply providing general training. (No definition of "critical mass" was provided nor was the appropriateness of overseas training for this objective discussed.)

- are likely to have little focus, usually due to limited needs assessments and lack of government manpower planning strategies and priorities. As a result, the link between participant selection and training needs is often weak. Sector-based training projects are generally better than general training projects at establishing training priorities, and general training projects are better than scholarship projects (long-term academic training).
- are difficult to evaluate because participants are not tied to specific institutions and their training may not be related to any particular organizational change. Definition of training priorities and needs is generally better with sector-based projects than general training projects.
- are likely to be seen within the mission as a fund to finance "targets of opportunity," a euphemism for ad hoc support of requests for which no other funding source is available. This can create mission management problems when requests are inconsistent with project objectives. Projects with greater focus (i.e., more restrictions) have more problems in this area. CLASP, in which training is restricted to nontraditional target groups and types of training, found this to be a problem in the early years until all technical offices understood how to use the project appropriately in their sectors. Many missions have found the conceptual focus provided in the Social Institutional Framework (an analytical document that identifies target groups and needs) to be useful in this regard (see Box III-1).

***Multi-input projects (PRT):***

- are likely to provide more focused and relevant training than training-only projects.
- are not usually faced with significant numbers of nonreturnees. Because most participants in these projects are going back to established jobs and families, trainees have many incentives to return.

**BOX III-1**  
**Social Institutional Framework**

**Background.** CLASP II is a training-only program with the relatively unusual objective of strengthening three processes in the host countries: pluralistic democracy, free enterprise market economies, and broad-based economic development. The program strategy is to focus on leaders in key institutions and professions whose training will have a broad impact on their community or society. The program also has specific requirements in terms of the participation of women and socioeconomically disadvantaged people.

**Approach.** The Social Institutional Framework (SIF) is an analytical tool used in project design to identify target groups for training that meet the program criteria and are complementary to overall mission objectives. The SIF is useful in several ways. First, it enables each mission to define the objective of the regional program specifically enough to reflect the realities of each country's social, economic, and political structure and contribute to the overall USAID program. Second, by defining specific target groups and types of training at the project design stage, the SIF provides a programmatic basis for responding to inappropriate training requests from the government or other USAID offices. At the same time, participation in the SIF design enables the other USAID technical offices to think creatively about training nontraditional groups that are supportive of the ongoing programs.

**Example.** Each mission has defined and used the SIF somewhat differently, reflecting different circumstances in the host countries and different USAID program objectives. USAID/Guatemala focused the SIF and the project on rural, indigenous leaders who were influential at the community level. This enabled the project to define training needs fairly specifically – skills needed to initiate and plan for development and self-determination at the community level. Equally important, this facilitated the design of follow-on activities and establishment of highly appropriate indicators of achievement. Follow-on included assistance in finding financial support for community projects, and the success of trainees in initiating project proposals was an excellent indicator of utilization of the training.

- are susceptible to problems in the coordination of the training component with other project activities. In some cases, participants do not return in time to meet their obligations under the project.
- may have problems finding enough qualified candidates if adequate needs assessments are not carried out.
- are less likely than training-only projects to use standard criteria for selection or to have well-organized placement procedures. As a relatively small component, training seldom receives significant management attention, and training concerns are almost never addressed in feasibility studies.

**University-support projects:**

- generally have higher repatriation and utilization rates than other types of projects.
- ensure that the training is relevant because of the nature of the academic work. University faculty are more likely to return to the sponsoring institution and remain there than are civil service participants.
- sometimes have difficulty getting the anticipated number of participants because of language problems and teaching workloads.
- are very susceptible to program extensions to complete the academic work, particularly at the Ph.D. level.

**Institution-building projects:**

- require institutional commitment to ensure the utilization of training.
- are likely to experience problems because of poor selection procedures and availability of candidates.
- often have problems retaining participants, particularly in the civil service.
- often train junior-level participants who have limited ability to introduce changes in their organizations.

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**Summary.** Training can be an effective development intervention regardless of the structure of the project or whether it is a primary or secondary component. While different project design types are susceptible to different kinds of problems, each problem can be eliminated if sufficient management attention is given to the training component to ensure good design. In other words, good design for a training component is the same in any type of project.

### **Training Design Modalities**

In the past, A.I.D. studies have not assessed the relative contributions and effectiveness of different training modalities in meeting specific objectives. Many HRD officers express an interest in identifying an "ideal" mix among short- and long-term training, in-country training, long-term academic training, nondegree academic training, observation tours, and other modalities. However, identification of the best modality can only be done in the context of the specific project objectives. A brief review of the characteristics of standard training modalities, and some notable adaptations, is useful.

**Undergraduate training** has the greatest potential impact on an individual's career prospects. A recent study of participant training in Nepal (Kumar and Nacht 1989) found that undergraduate scholarships to Indian universities awarded to individuals who would otherwise not have attended college had a "profound effect on the careers of these trainees." The university degree enabled them to get responsible jobs in government and the private sector instead of the semi-skilled and menial white-collar jobs available to high school graduates.

Studies have expressed concern about the potential for cultural alienation when young people spend these highly impressionable years in a foreign culture. In the Nepal program, this was not an issue because of the cultural similarities between India and Nepal. Training in the United States, however, exposes participants to a very different culture and values. Younger or immature participants who are away from home for many years sometimes have trouble readjusting to their own culture and are more likely to emigrate. Participants should have a good knowledge of and appreciation for their own country and culture to enable them to evaluate the new culture and place it in perspective (Jenkins 1980).

The acceptance of academic credentials is an issue with regard to undergraduate education. The procedures to obtain acceptance of a foreign degree for further education or professional accreditation are very country-specific. In some countries, a relatively simple form is required; in others, the process can be extremely tedious and costly. A.A. (two-year) degrees in particular may not be accredited for continuing undergraduate or graduate study in the host country. Experience has shown that these requirements must be clearly understood and communicated to participants before they begin the program.

Long-term **graduate training** has been an important component of donor scholarship programs over the years and is effective in meeting higher-level training needs. Nonetheless, the time required, the nature of the candidates (mid-level), and the potential for organizational disruption in the home country are problems that several studies have addressed. The disruption inherent in losing qualified staff for lengthy periods of time is particularly acute in small organizations and can significantly affect institution-strengthening goals. One evaluation called this a "highly questionable investment" for donors, and argued that training for institution strengthening may be better accomplished by honing specific technical skills through in-country workshops (Tarnoff et al. 1986).

Evaluating any academic program is difficult, particularly at the undergraduate level. The impacts are only manifested over the long term and are difficult to link to the training experience. Long-term participants who are not already employed have no organizational affiliation, so the targeting of training for institutional impact is difficult. Participants who are already employed frequently find reintegration into the institution a problem and often leave the sponsoring organization. Graduate credentials from U.S. universities in particular can increase the risk of attrition, and while such an outcome may be advantageous for the individual's career or overall country development, it can be harmful for the project and institution (Tarnoff et al. 1986). Because A.I.D. policy requires participant training to be directed toward institutional development rather than individual advancement, the impact of training on career advancement is a problematic indicator of impact.

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**Short-term technical training** activities are usually targeted to specific skill transfer needs or to exposure to new approaches. Because short-term participants usually return to existing positions, they are more likely to have an immediate impact than are long-term participants (Chesterfield et al. 1989). Moreover, a precise needs assessment can increase the likelihood that the training will be utilized. On the other hand, such training is less likely to have a significant impact on an individual's salary or career mobility. Therefore, the specific objectives and expectations of the training must be clear during design and implementation to facilitate selection and placement and to identify appropriate indicators of success during evaluation.

Multilateral donors often use **technical assistance** (technical cooperation) as a primary mechanism for project-related training. During the 1980s, the World Bank sharply reduced its use of consultancies as an explicit training modality, and correspondingly increased its use of in-country training. This change reflects the Bank's intention to use PRT as an opportunity to address broader long-term needs than those generated in a particular project, so that all training is both sector- and project-related (World Bank 1989). While A.I.D. usually includes a significant technical assistance component in most projects too, there is usually a conceptual distinction between technical assistance and training. Although there is often an implied training role for technical assistance teams, it is seldom articulated or established in firm contractual terms.

The literature raises a number of issues about the use of technical assistance as a training modality. Critics point to the experts' lack of understanding of local context, the lack of linkages with institutional development, and the short time frame of technical assistance. Other identified problems are unrealistic expectations on all sides, lack of adequate local counterparts, and a misplaced emphasis on changes in technology rather than changes in administrative systems and/or the political basis for project and policy decisions (UNDP 1989). In addition, institutionalization of the skills of technical experts is limited if the experts are working in isolated project management units rather than integrated into existing units (Auerhan et al. 1985).

**Adaptations** to these primary training modalities are often necessary to meet the training needs of participants or donor institutions. For the participants, constraints such as job and family commitments may limit availability. Sponsoring institutions are justifiably concerned about the high cost of overseas training and the relevancy and applicability of training to host country realities. In many cases, projects have the objective of combining the training component with the strengthening of local universities. Therefore, some projects may adapt the design of training to reduce costs, increase relevancy, reduce attrition or nonreturn, and improve access to training opportunities.

Academic programs are most often adapted for reasons of relevance, access to training, and cost containment. Probably the most common adaptation is to encourage **in-country thesis work**, which has the potential to reduce the total time away from job and family, increase the relevance to home country needs, and reduce costs. A common problem is the difficulty of providing academic guidance and quality control during the in-country research phase. Projects may provide for visits by academic advisors to the country, but scheduling, cost, and logistics problems are common. Some projects contract with professors from local universities to serve this function.

**Split-degree training** combines educational institution-building objectives with academic training to deal with several issues: weak national academic institutions (particularly at the graduate level), degree equivalency, and cost containment. This approach consists of a collaborative educational program between a local university and a foreign university, with mutual acceptance of credits and the granting of a degree from one of the participating universities. The collaboration may consist of course work in the United States and thesis preparation and degree granting from the local university. The example from Sri Lanka (see Box III-2) illustrates one country's experience with this approach (Dunbar 1987; Robins and Uphaus 1987). The evaluation unfortunately did not provide any information on the effectiveness of the approach, the quality of the education provided, and the actual cost savings.

### BOX III-3

#### Split-Degree Training in Sri Lanka

**Background.** USAID/Sri Lanka was strengthening the University of Peradeniya Post Graduate Institute of Agriculture (PGIA) through an education project and utilizing PGIA to provide degree training to address manpower needs for agriculturalists. Training was intended to be a mixture of U.S., in-country, and split-degree training, but administrative complexity and complaints from those who did not go overseas resulted in a decision to use only the split-degree training model. Participants attended a non-degree program in a U.S. university, followed by in-country research and a degree granted by PGIA.

**Experience.** Because it was a new program, implementation was difficult until the roles and responsibilities of the trainees, contractors, ministries, PGIA, and U.S. universities were clarified. In many cases, PGIA lacked the facilities (research, library, equipment, transportation, finances) to support adequately in-country research, and academic supervision was poor. A serious threat to the program arose when Ministry of Agriculture officials and the agricultural graduate association questioned the quality of PGIA academic and logistical support. They argued that the lack of a ministry training policy limited impact and that savings were illusory in view of extended duration and lower quality. They also argued that opportunities to get U.S. academic credentials were an incentive for talented people to join the ministry. In fact, a number of promising candidates did not accept these scholarships in hopes of better offers from other donors.

**Lessons learned.** As with any project, absorptive capacity of equipment and personnel must be assessed in feasibility studies during project design. Institution- or sector-development projects should be based on a ministry training and manpower development policy that clearly establishes training opportunities. Degree acceptance by the professional community is critical to the success of the program. It will affect recruitment, employment potential, and training utilization.

Another modality has been developed in Indonesia to strengthen local graduate training capability while the graduate students are being trained. This approach, termed *sandwich training*, relies heavily on foreign faculty members to teach graduate-level courses "sandwiched" in between

local faculty courses. This is primarily an institutional development model for in-country graduate education. Other variations combine in-country training and overseas training in an attempt to keep costs low but maintain relevance and high quality. In Guatemala, a three-tiered training modality, also called "sandwich" or "combination" training, starts with in-country training for a large group of people in a given content area. The most successful students are selected for U.S. or third-country training, followed by a significant level of in-country follow-on training.

**A collaborative exchange** of scientists, academics, and researchers enables developing country and donor country institutions to exchange specialists to conduct research and build capability. The experience in India (Spieeler et al. 1987) indicated that while short-term exchange visits of two to four months on specific subjects can be sufficient, a collaborative exchange of six to twelve months is better to allow more thorough research. The Indian project combined flexibility in selecting researchers with the structure of a priority ranking of scientific topics. In the Dominican Republic, a similar effort is planned for the Agricultural University Strengthening Project, in which university capability in research, administration, and teaching will be developed through faculty exchanges of one to two years with U.S. universities.

An alternative to traditional overseas scholarships is *split-semester training*, which was used in Lesotho to respond to the training needs of mid-level and senior managers in a small organization without excessive disruption of normal project activities (see Box III-3). The project circumstances contributed to this approach: a small, dynamic institution with clear objectives and high staff morale; participants who were all mid-career professionals with practical experience; and training that was part of an ongoing project linkage with a U.S. training institution. In such circumstances, this design can be a good alternative to traditional graduate training. While the danger of staff turnover still exists, this approach can maximize the value to the institution by tying the research and training to its specific needs.

The World Bank has a pilot project in Ethiopia in *short-cycle postgraduate programs* to address the problem of training urgently needed specialists

**BOX III-3**  
**Split-Semester Training in Lesotho**

**Background.** The Long Distance Training Center (LDTC) in Lesotho needed graduate-level academic training for a critical mass of key staff members, but long-term training would seriously disrupt the project. The project wanted to focus on institution building and avoid treating the trainees as isolated individuals attending different institutions with different curricula. This would also obviate the need to reintegrate them into their institution.

**Solution.** The Center developed a split-semester program through linkage with the University of Massachusetts, in which staff would attend one semester of course work, return to Lesotho for eight months of independent study in addition to their normal work, and then return to the United States for a final semester to complete the degree. The initial idea of one semester at the University of Massachusetts and two in Lesotho was rejected because of the university's concerns about research quality and content control with such extended field work.

**Outcome.** Eight staff members completed training through the split-semester program, but four left the LDTC for other jobs. One now serves as Lesotho's Ambassador to Great Britain and another as the Director of the National Curriculum Development Center. A limited analysis estimated the costs at \$24,700 per person, indicating little, if any, savings. The analysis did not do comparative cost breakdowns or account for the value of reduced disruption and increased relevance.

**Lessons learned.** A high degree of institutional coordination and cooperation is needed between the training institution and the home institution for course content, logistics, and class scheduling. The home institution must be willing and able to assist in the independent study component and not overwhelm the participant with work piled up during a four-month absence.

without disrupting ongoing activities. This training modality will be used to replace overseas fellowships as a means of training specialists in fields with limited staff needs, such as manpower planning and health administration (World Bank 1989).

**Nondegree academic training** is used to provide specific training at a reduced cost. A common

justification for the nondegree approach appears to be financial: the funding provided is inadequate to train the desired number of people in full academic degree programs. The assumption is that the participants are primarily interested in a targeted educational experience rather than an academic credential. Experience in many countries has shown this to be a false assumption, particularly for long-term training. Participants have a very strong incentive to remain in the United States beyond the scheduled departure date to complete requirements for a degree and are often encouraged by professors and other students to do so. Consideration must be given to the legitimate career aspirations of the participants, who have invested substantial time and energy in the training program. Given the experience with this mode of training, a pre-project feasibility analysis should justify the decision not to sponsor degree training and should assess the trade-offs in terms of skill utilization, career development, and recruitment as part of a cost-benefit analysis.

Numerous training professionals believe that **supplemental management training** should be provided to all overseas technical trainees, recognizing that many will be promoted to management positions upon their return home. Master's-level participants are most likely to be promoted, while doctoral candidates are much less likely to assume management positions (African American Institute). In 1987, approximately 17 percent of A.I.D. participants were receiving management training, up from 9 percent in 1982, with master's-level scholars most likely to receive supplemental training (Seymour 1987).

Several studies have concluded that most participants would benefit from general training in project management, design, and evaluation and communication and leadership skills (Elim 1982; Morrison 1986). Surveys of training needs often identify abstract management skills such as problem definition and resolution, planning and organization, new problem-solving techniques, communication and interpersonal skills, analytical methods, and other management techniques (AID/ANE/DP/E 1988). Anecdotal evidence indicates that important attitudinal and cognitive changes in these areas can occur in programs of only one to two weeks (Elim 1982; AID/S&T/IT 1984).

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Another design option, although it is not strictly a training modality, is the provision of loan funds to participants rather than educational grants. The Development Training and Support project in Guatemala provides 70 percent of the scholarship assistance for training in the Pan American Agricultural School in Honduras on a grant basis. In addition, USAID contributes an additional 15 percent of the annual cost of education in the form of loans that students are obligated to repay to a rotating loan fund. This component of the project has not yet been evaluated, and the financial analysis in the Project Paper did not address the feasibility of the arrangement.

**Summary.** Overseas training can be provided to meet training needs of participants at almost any level. Traditional long-term and short-term programs can be adapted or combined with in-country or third-country programs to meet almost any objective. The challenge is to clearly define the objective, the expected level of achievement, and the particular constraints facing the project and the participant.

### **Project Feasibility Analyses**

Training needs assessments and other project feasibility studies form the operational link between a project's objectives and its activities or outputs. The design and nature of the needs assessment should be derived from the project's objectives. A.I.D. policy requires that needs assessments be conducted prior to or during the project design phase. However, inadequate assessment of training needs is a frequent criticism in project and program evaluations.

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All participant training programs are expected to be supported by thorough needs assessments and economic analysis. Training needs assessments are to be conducted collaboratively with the host country prior to or during project design in order to establish the number of participants to be trained, the type, level, and location of their training, as well as the availability and general qualifications of the participant candidates.

— A.I.D. 1988

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### **Training Needs Assessments**

The need for adequate training needs assessments at the design stage is repeatedly mentioned in evaluations of A.I.D. and other donor projects. A 1982 World Bank review of training in twenty projects in different sectors and countries concluded that most projects were not preceded by systematic manpower studies and management reviews of agencies to determine the place of training in the range of remedial measures. The best training programs were designed for new activities or new organizations because comprehensive planning was needed in those cases.

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Training needs, to the extent that they were recognized, tended to be treated in a perspective which was both narrow and short-term — a consequence, in part, of being linked to projects which were focused on other issues.

— *The World Bank 1982*

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In addition, training plans were usually much better prepared for more highly structured occupations, such as accounting, and for those components that had been discussed with the host country organizations over a period of years (World Bank 1982).

There are three general levels of needs assessments: national (program), institutional (project), and individual (activity). The distinctions among the different information needs at different levels are not always recognized. It is not uncommon that an assessment, if done at all, is completed only at one level, thus depriving the training program of needed information.

At the program level, an appropriate assessment is fairly general: it gives a broad understanding of the trends in manpower needs and identifies the role of training in the range of programmatic options. Methodologies range from complex input-output analyses to surveys and interviews, each of which has its own implications with regard to cost, accuracy, and flexibility. Some argue that the common methodology of using labor coefficients for projected production is unreliable and ignores basic issues of substitu-

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tion, cost, and future changes in patterns of production (Psacharopoulos 1984). It may be more useful to look at relative priorities for levels and areas of education and training rather than attempting to develop a blueprint.

At the institutional level, a needs assessment must recognize an organization's maintenance and development needs — what it requires to maintain existing capabilities and to develop new capabilities in the future (Paul 1982). A questionable indicator that is sometimes used at the institutional level is unfilled positions; as noted above, this frequently reflects labor-market conditions rather than training needs. At the individual level, the assessment should be part of the planning stage to ensure that the specific training needs of the participant are met.

In A.I.D., needs assessments usually consist of a compilation of opinions based on interviews with key informants. One training expert who was interviewed noted that such assessments are often initiated by USAID missions without referring to project objectives specific enough to give the study clear direction. Moreover, the project training eventually conducted may not be based on the needs assessment at all. In many cases, particularly for project-related training, needs assessments are not done at the design stage. Rather, during implementation the "specifics of the annual plans are worked out between the project officers and their counterparts in the ministries. . . . The discussions involved in *working out* a training plan are as close as most projects get to making needs assessments" (USAID/Pakistan 1989, 38). In other cases, the needs assessment is conducted as part of project implementation — which is to say after the project budget has been established. By working backwards from an approved project design and budget to a training plan, the contribution of training is significantly weakened.

Needs assessments are also prone to emphasizing technical skills over value changes and high-level administrative and technical training needs over low-level needs. The literature argues that administrative training should not be viewed only in terms of technical and managerial skills, but should include attitudinal and value changes. Abstract objectives such as a commitment to national goals and values and an understanding of the complexity of the national environment are

valid (Bhola 1982; Paul 1982). Moreover, in addition to managerial and professional needs, needs assessments should review all required skills. One agricultural education project evaluation found that failure to provide training for technicians to maintain and repair "high tech" equipment was an expensive mistake (Dunbar 1987).

Many needs assessments simply determine whether enough qualified candidates exist to meet the projected number of trainees. This is clearly an important issue (although not the only important issue): a lack of qualified candidates is a primary reason why training projects "fail" (AID/IG 1984) and often results in program extensions, a need for consecutive degree training, higher costs, and delayed project activities (AID/IG 1986a). Common hindrances to availability are academic background, English language ability, job and family constraints, the economic or career value of additional training to the participant, and factors that restrict training opportunities to a limited pool of candidates. Such limiting factors frequently include government policy, although in some cases project design is also a factor. In the Dominican Republic, a project requirement that each participating firm submit an Enterprise Training Plan severely restricted the supply of candidates (see Box III-4).

While candidate availability is an important question, needs assessments must also address two broader issues: (1) meeting the target institution's manpower needs for specific organizational change, and (2) developing the host country's institutional capacity to plan for HRD. In terms of the first issue, needs assessments tend to focus on the specific skills that are required for a project and on the individuals who will receive the training; this can isolate planning from the larger context of human resource needs and organizational development. For most organizational changes to take place, training is needed for some combination of technicians, co-workers, supervisors, and managers. A.I.D.'s traditional approach is that trained individuals are expected to be catalysts for change in the sponsoring organization. Without adequate planning at the organizational level, however, such a catalytic role is a heavy, if not impossible, burden on the trainees.

The second point recognizes that few host country institutions systematically analyze

**BOX III-4**  
**Dominican Republic**  
**Development Training Project**

**Background.** The Development Training Project supports private-sector export industries in the Dominican Republic through short- and long-term training. The project requires that all participating firms complete an Enterprise Training Plan (ETP). The ETP is a firm-level needs assessment that identifies specific constraints to the firm's performance, establishes priorities of training needs to address these constraints, and identifies candidates for training. All candidates must have been employees of the firm for at least one year prior to the training.

**Experience.** The original intention was that the ETP would be mailed to potential firms and returned as an application. However, because few firms could complete such a document without substantial assistance, its value as a diagnostic tool was limited, and needs statements were seldom specific enough to be used for training program design. These difficulties limited the number of eligible firms and delayed the project.

The ETP format was then modified to make it easier to complete and to link training more closely to a firm's constraints. In addition, the mission initiated a series of workshops to help firms complete the ETP. Although more firms completed the ETP, the total number of participants remained much lower than anticipated. At this time, pressures to increase project output have led to greater emphasis on locating interested individuals who could motivate their firms to participate, thus effectively substituting individual training interests for organizational needs.

**Lessons learned.** Completing these training plans was very time- and labor-intensive, and conclusions about training needs were more closely related to the available training slots than the analysis of a firm's needs. Moreover, because only existing employees of participating firms were eligible, the number of qualified candidates was limited to only one or two people in some firms. Pressure to meet numerical targets encouraged the project to cut corners and accept incomplete plans. Finally, the information was not communicated to training providers, so courses were not tailored to the firms' needs. The project evaluation concluded that, given the weaknesses, the ETP was no better than existing national needs assessments for some types of training. The evaluation recommended that the ETP process be modified and used only for long-term training, and that selection for short-term training be based on previously conducted needs assessments.

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Developing a country's human resources includes manpower planning, matching the individual's needs with a planned program (both academic and nonacademic), placement in an appropriate training program, and improved performance in the workplace. . . . Donors may play a critical role in assisting a government to develop a modern human resource development process; however, the system must become over time the responsibility of the host government.

— USAID/Pakistan 1989

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training needs by (1) maintaining inventories of the prior educational, training, and experiential background of their employees; (2) forecasting

the numbers and kinds of trained personnel they will need in light of the pace of relevant technological development and staff turnover; and (3) seeking to link supply and demand at the various levels with a training plan (World Bank 1982). They even find it difficult to distinguish staff training needs from the need to hire new staff (Cecchi & Co. 1988).

When needs assessments are conducted in isolation from host country institutions (usually as a stand-alone task performed by consultants), they contribute nothing to the long-term development of the host country. Nor is the host country the only loser: donor organizations must also "gear up" anew for each project rather than coordinating all the projects in an effort to strengthen the host country's institutional capability in manpower planning and staff development. Even when projects are intended to develop such institutional capacity, "the press

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and urgency of operational needs often push institutional development and capability building activities to the sidelines" (USAID/Pakistan 1989).

### **Implementation and Budget Planning**

Implementation problems are often related to problems in initial planning, scheduling, and budgeting. A common scheduling problem, particularly in multi-input projects, is that the training component is not well coordinated with other project activities. As a result, participants often return so late that they are unable to work with the technical advisors or, in some cases, they come back after the project has been completed. Large projects are particularly susceptible to this problem because management attention is concentrated in the early years on larger project components.

Project delays due to selection procedures, extensive language training, and educational program extensions can substantially slow the planned introduction of trained individuals into the project. Delays of a year or more to complete academic training are not uncommon, particularly at the Ph.D. level and during joint master's and Ph.D. training. One recommendation is that programs with Ph.D. training components should be at least ten years long to allow for institutional development after return (Dunbar 1987).

Detailed training and training implementation plans are much more likely to be included in training-only projects than in multi-input projects. In an effort to concentrate management attention on the training component, several USAID missions now require that all Project Papers include a training plan and an implementation plan. In general, training should be initiated as soon as possible after a project begins in order to minimize the impact of delays on project implementation.

Budgeting is also directly affected by program delays, longer-than-anticipated English language training, and academic program extensions. Cost and time overruns in graduate academic training are commonplace. Overly optimistic assumptions are often made at the design stage that tuition waivers will be obtained, placements will be in low-cost schools, and foreign students will finish their degree programs in the minimum amount of time. A more prudent and realistic approach would be to use conservative assump-

tions for the average length of English language training and academic programs. Some studies recommend 26 months for two-year master's degrees and no less than 48 months for Ph.D. degrees.

A.I.D. policy also requires the use of the Training Cost Analysis (TCA) system for estimating training budgets, analyzing competitive contract bids, and monitoring expenditures. The use of this budgeting tool is valuable because many programs significantly underestimate the costs of training or fail to include standard allowances. The use of TCA is discussed in Chapter IV under Cost Containment.

### **Economic and Institutional Analyses**

A.I.D. policy (A.I.D. 1988) requires "thorough . . . economic analysis," including particular attention to cost-effectiveness issues such as alternative modalities for training and personnel development; incentives that affect the recruitment and retention of trained personnel; and provisions for recurrent salary costs. While such analyses are common in training-only projects, these issues are seldom addressed in project-related training documentation, nor are the human resource constraints within the institution.

Economic analysis of project training has been approached in numerous ways, with no common methodology among projects. Most project-related training is not addressed in project feasibility analyses at all. One project justified the cost of overseas training by using the salaries of agricultural experts in international agencies as the shadow price for the economic contribution of agriculturalists working in the local economy. Another used cost of filling civil service positions with expatriate specialists as the alternative to U.S. training. A few analyses use expected salary increases to estimate social benefits, although such increases seldom offset the cost of overseas training in most countries. Other project analyses focus on the reasonableness of the cost estimates, often comparing the proposed training cost to that incurred in another project. Such issues as how attractive the training will be to an individual in terms of personal financial return are seldom addressed.

The A.I.D. guidelines on the economic analysis of projects (AID/PPC 1987b) argue that the difficulty of monetizing the benefits of training

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makes it imperative to use cost-effectiveness analysis rather than cost-benefit analysis. In this type of analysis, an attempt is made to identify the least costly approach among alternatives for implementing the training. In this case, the benefit is identified as the achievement of training rather than the utilization of the training.

Institutional analyses in Project Papers sometimes refer to needs assessments but seldom have a real overview of HRD constraints within the organization or attempt to link the proposed training to specific organizational changes. Few project analyses address the issue of candidate availability.

### **Lessons Learned**

The findings are:

- The critical stage of project design is the definition of clear and consistent objectives and indicators.
- Training activities can be successful in both training-only projects and project-related training; there is no particular correlation between project structure and utilization of training. Far more important is the management attention given to the training component.
- Many training modalities are available to meet different country and project needs.
- Needs assessments are essential to determine whether qualified candidates are available and to determine the specific training needs to achieve stated organizational objectives. Unfortunately, needs assessments are often inadequate.

Implications of these findings for project design include:

- The process of designing training activities, and particularly of conducting needs assessments, should be considered a potential institution-building activity.
- Mission management needs to ensure that attention is given to the adequate design of training components in all projects, not just training-only projects.
- Very careful attention should be given to defining clear objectives for training components in the context of organizational development.
- Although the organizational approach is extremely useful for identifying needs, planning training, and achieving results, a tradeoff does exist. The focus on a few organizations limits the pool of qualified candidates, and the needs assessment requires more management intensity.

# IV

## Implementation

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The issues discussed in the previous chapters — program context and project design — affect the potential for the long-term developmental impact of training. However, the immediate success of training, in terms of effectively and efficiently transferring information that will be used in the home country, depends on the quality of each step of implementing the project.

Although the activities described in this chapter address implementation concerns, they must be explicitly recognized and planned for in the project design stage. Project planners must provide adequate budgets for each of these activities to enable the project manager to select the right people and place them in the right program. Managing training programs is labor-intensive, and doing it right is even more so.

This chapter reviews the basic steps required for training programs — from recruitment through follow-on — and discusses the requirements for each stage. In addition, examples of innovative approaches used by A.I.D. and other donors are included to share these experiences with a broader audience.

### Recruitment and Selection

The recruitment and selection of trainees is a critical stage for project success because it determines whether qualified candidates will enter the program. However, programs often fail at this stage; A.I.D. evaluations frequently point out weak recruitment and selection procedures that limit project success (Elmer and Moser 1986). Training programs must invest in adequate selection procedures and criteria that are based on the training objectives and that recognize the implicit impact these procedures and criteria will have on equity considerations.

A clear distinction needs to be made between recruitment and selection procedures (Aguirre 1990c). The goal of recruitment is to develop a

pool of qualified candidates that is larger than the number of scholarships. The selection process then evaluates these already-qualified candidates to find the best. Published advertisements can increase the pool of qualified candidates and may increase the number of applications from outside the capital city.

*Explicit recognition of training objectives is the key to establishing appropriate selection criteria and procedures.* Program objectives may be as clear as the development of specific skills needed for organizational development, or they may focus on leadership, values, and equity. For some objectives, appropriate selection procedures may seek to identify truly outstanding individuals, while other objectives may necessitate focusing on job positions within an organization. Whatever the program objectives, consistency with the training strategy, training plan, and selection criteria is essential.

The key to a good selection process is communication and consistency: donors must clearly communicate the selection criteria, consistently apply them, and never accept candidates who fail to meet the criteria. A.I.D. policy requires that all participants be selected in accordance with standardized criteria that have been approved by the mission and host country rather than by relying on seniority lists submitted by the government (A.I.D. 1988). However, the use of standardized criteria applied to a pool of pre-qualified candidates is not a common practice, particularly in project-related training.

The basic *selection criteria* should be the qualifications needed to complete a training program, that is, academic capability, language capability, health, etc. Projects that fail to apply these criteria may find a high percentage of students who fail to complete academic programs (AID/IG 1984). The difficulty of selecting and

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The key to selection of any group is that the contractor or mission cannot give in or be weak about some candidates. Everyone has to be subject to the same criteria.

— *Ecuadoran project manager*

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planning for language skills affects both technical and academic programs and will be discussed below. In addition, some USAID missions have found that severe screening on individual characteristics such as personal commitment to development goals, demonstrated contribution to the profession or community, and leadership skills can increase the likelihood of both academic success and subsequent return to country and use of training (USAID/Peru 1982; Gillies 1991).

In some countries, academic aptitude tests are used to improve the mission's ability to predict student performance. Such tests provide comparative data that may be more meaningful than local high school or university transcripts. Some Latin American countries use Spanish versions of the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and the Graduate Records Exam (GRE) for this purpose. In Indonesia, an aptitude test was specifically developed to identify people with high academic potential (Moser et al. 1988) (see Box IV-1).

The use of selection committees composed of mission, host country, and private sector representatives has been very effective in some projects. Such committees can develop strong community or institutional participation and commitment and result not only in the selection of outstanding candidates but also in follow-on community support and linkages to employers. In some programs, the increased commitment to the project makes the selection process as important as the identification of good candidates. Several informants stressed that the keys to a successful selection committee are the clear communication of project objectives and the use of systematic selection criteria and procedures. To be effective, however, the committee must have the final authority to select the candidates.

Special considerations for selection apply to **group training** for short-term technical programs (Aguirre 1990c). In addition to meeting the selection criteria, an ideal training group should

meet two additional requirements. First, it should be a trainable group in the sense that all members have common training needs. Such elements as literacy level, educational background, professional experience, area of interest and preparation, proposed use of the training, and relevance of the training must be considered. As the Caribbean and Latin American Scholarship Program (CLASP) has found, it is not enough that all group members be health

#### BOX IV-1

##### Indonesia General Training Project II: Test Potensi Akademik

**Background.** The selection of qualified candidates through an objective process had long been a concern to USAID in its Indonesia training projects. Traditional selection criteria such as grade point average, personal interviews, and job performance did not include adequate safeguards against the influence of seniority or favoritism. Inefficient recruitment and selection procedures had also resulted in an inadequate pool of qualified candidates. A 1985 British Council study estimated that 40 percent of the available scholarships were not filled because of selection and language problems.

**Experience.** The Overseas Training Office developed the Test Potensi Akademik (TPA) as an objective measure of academic aptitude. The test, along with the pre-TOEFL, was given to eligible candidates pre-selected through organizational training plans. In order to maintain eligibility for an overseas scholarship, candidates were required to pass both tests. Although only 15 percent of those taking the test achieved passing grades, this was adequate to develop a pool of more than 200 qualified candidates. The TPA has attracted much attention in Indonesian higher education and is being considered as a selection tool for local universities.

**Lessons learned.** An academic aptitude test can significantly improve the objectivity and efficiency of a selection process. However, effective use of this tool requires administrative and budget support for continuing test research and development, test monitoring and security, and management. Also, the administration and establishment of passing scores must be coordinated with the number of scholarship opportunities to avoid creating an overly large pool of qualified candidates with high expectations.

workers: they must also be at approximately the same professional level with the same training needs. It should be emphasized, however, that the training *objective* is the determining factor. For example, a mixed group of health workers may be appropriate for a workshop on techniques to improve communication and collaboration across different levels of health care provision.

The second important factor is that the group members must be compatible. A productive group dynamic is conducive to learning as well as to creating networks upon return. Training providers are familiar with the phenomenon: some groups just "click," while others remain a bunch of individuals. One USAID mission deals with this issue directly by using a group interview technique that focuses on group dynamics (see Box IV-2).

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Recruitment patterns used in the choice of trainees may perpetuate existing power structures or may introduce a new generation of nontraditional leadership from new social classes.

— *Bhola 1982*

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*Equity* is also a consideration in the recruitment and selection process. The use of selection criteria such as academic achievement, English language capability, and social skills favors the relatively advantaged urban middle class over the rural poor. This is true for gender as well as ethnic and socioeconomic considerations. Project designers must recognize the distributive impact of selection criteria in determining the appropriate criteria to achieve project objectives.

Programs designed to develop leadership or high-level scientific knowledge may be justified in applying strict meritocratic criteria and professional peer review in order to identify truly outstanding individuals (Jenkins 1980; Coleman 1984). But projects with broader social objectives may develop procedures and criteria that allow greater participation by non-elites. For example, CLASP II uses an analytical approach (the Social Institutional Framework) to identify leadership patterns among disadvantaged populations and to establish selection criteria. Appropriate indicators of disadvantaged status

#### BOX IV-2 Group Interviews in Ecuador

**Background.** In an effort to increase the trainability of short-term groups in the Caribbean and Latin American Scholarship Program, USAID/Ecuador developed a group interview process that explicitly recognizes group dynamics. A consultant assisted in designing the group interview process and trained the project staff in group dynamics; thus the staff needed outside assistance only for the first group.

**Procedures.** Qualified candidates are interviewed in groups of four. After each candidate identifies himself or herself, questions are introduced for general discussion in the group. Questions vary according to the group but may include: What are the weaknesses in leadership of your profession, and what can be done to change this? What are the obstacles to development? If you could resolve only one problem, what would it be? and Why should you be selected for the group, and what contribution can you make? Each candidate is rated by each interviewer on the following characteristics:

- leadership
- fit with candidate profile
- contribution to group discussion
- potential for impact
- ability to articulate ideas
- group dynamics
- comparison to other candidates
- level of experience

**Lessons learned.** The mission believes that the group interview process is very useful, particularly in selecting candidates for leadership qualities. An advantage of group interviews is that peers can validate the leadership position and accomplishments of the individual.

In one case, the training group consisted of young political leaders from many different political parties. The mission determined that selection was crucial to this particular group and dedicated considerable effort to the process. One candidate was a very dynamic individual whose exceptional leadership potential was evident to all of the interviewers. However, he did not function well in the group setting and was not selected for this program. The mission later arranged another training opportunity through a different mechanism.

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may include not only family income levels and ethnic background, but in some cases parents' educational level, employment, geography, gender, and previous travel. Criteria for the selection of potential leaders might focus on specific achievements or on qualities of leadership, such as confidence, the ability to articulate vision, and the ability to initiate change (Gillies 1991).

Timeliness of selection is a major factor that affects project schedules, budgets, and program quality. A.I.D. recommends a minimum lead time for programming training of three months for short-term training and six months for long-term training. Unfortunately, this standard is seldom met. Mission training officers, placement firms, and training providers regularly complain about delays that result in increased costs, reduced program flexibility and quality, and short departure notice for participants. In many cases, the selection or nomination process depends on lengthy official processes. However, the only solution is emphatic and repeated communication of lead time requirements to project officers and counterparts.

The selection process is susceptible to innumerable disruptions caused by differing agendas, cumbersome administrative processes, and poor planning. In many cases, the first two factors are interrelated. For example, a study of participant training in India illustrated a "tortuous" and time-consuming selection process in which the ultimate decision was made personally by a minister. This indicates that the training was more significant than the mission understood, that selection is "part of an elaborate system of distributing or denying rewards whose etiquette we may never fully understand." Therefore, selection procedures must often be based on a realistic recognition of existing cultural and institutional mechanisms for career advancement, and A.I.D. must try to work effectively within the system (USAID/India 1984).

It is important to recognize that rigorous selection procedures are highly labor-intensive and therefore expensive. Reviewing large numbers of applications, giving personal interviews to short-listed candidates, and making visits to the place of employment take time. For this reason, many missions hesitate to invest in adequate selection procedures. However, it is important to recognize that the selection of highly qualified candidates can reduce overall program costs by

increasing the likelihood of negotiated tuition waivers or reductions. Even more important, it reduces the chance of program failure brought on by inadequate participants — an event that greatly increases the average cost per participant. Similarly, selection criteria that identify people with established careers and commitment to their country's development can reduce the potential for nonreturn after training.

**Summary.** Every project should invest in a careful recruitment and selection process that is designed to meet the project's specific objectives. The process should identify a pool of qualified candidates, establish clear and consistent criteria, and recognize the implicit impact on social equity. Group training requires the compatibility and trainability of the group's members. The costs incurred by careful selection may be offset by reduced real program costs through fewer instances of program failure and lower rates of attrition.

### **Preparation of Training Plans (PIO/P)**

The preparation of training plans for the individuals or groups to be trained is the key point at which the specific needs of participants are communicated from the mission to the placement specialists or the training institutions. It is only through accurate and comprehensive communication of the participant's background, objectives, skills, and needs that an appropriate training institution can be selected.

Project evaluations repeatedly emphasize the need to identify the individual's job responsibilities, to include practical training opportunities, to tailor programs to meet the participant's needs, and to involve the participant and his or her supervisor in the planning stages (Moser and Elmer 1986). However, there is little evidence that projects address these concerns or that participants and supervisors are systematically included in a meaningful way in the planning process.

An effective training request should include a limited number of training objectives that are appropriate to the program length. The request should specify how the training will be used, existing job responsibilities, and desired areas of academic specialization. The personal background of the participant should be included if home stays or other personalized activities are planned. Specific objectives should be defined

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for supplementary activities, such as "Experience America," if they are desired (Aguirre 1990c).

Customized training may be necessary for some individuals or groups, such as rural development groups, the informal sector, and other small groups with diverse needs. Such populations may have little free time, limited resources, and specific needs to adapt technology to their particular setting (UNDP 1989). The experience in CLASP has been that considerable advance work is needed to ensure that training for special groups is relevant and useful. In some cases, it is helpful if the training provider visits the host country and conducts a needs assessment to identify specific skills and technologies that are relevant in the home context. Such an assessment should be a participatory planning exercise rather than an expert analysis.

As is the case with effective selection procedures, the development of well-designed training plans can be labor-intensive. It requires an element of give-and-take — consultation with the participant and modification of the plan to meet the training needs. Again, the investment is worthwhile because the goal is not simply to provide training, but to provide training that can be used. A.I.D. recommends a minimum lead time for programming short-term training of three months and six months for long-term training.

**Summary.** Adequate preparation of training plans requires a few well-defined objectives that are clearly communicated to the participant and the training institution. Customized training is often needed to meet the specialized needs of rural community groups and the informal sector.

## **Placement**

The goal of implementing training programs is to place the right person in the right program at the right institution. The great variety of interests, cultures, and capabilities among the universities and training institutions in the United States and third countries makes the placement process challenging.

Donor organizations use various mechanisms to identify appropriate training institutions and to place and monitor participants. They may choose to work through the cultural attaché at an embassy, to submit applications directly from the participants, or to contract with donor or

host government employees, or private placement firms. A.I.D. has a central worldwide placement contract that many missions use; some missions, on the other hand, work directly through universities and private contractors.

Little research has been done to evaluate the relative efficacy of different implementation mechanisms, although each clearly has its own advantages and disadvantages. The range of activities that are provided, however, must include recruitment, selection, preparation of training plans, orientation, placement, monitoring, reentry, and follow-on. In some USAID missions, all stages are conducted by contractors, including in-country pre- and post-training services. In general, this will be the most expensive alternative, but the expense can be justified if the contractors provide high-quality, comprehensive services. At the other extreme, selection and training plan preparation may be done entirely by the host institution and placement through individual applications to universities. This approach is feasible only for academic programs and may be subject to program failure due to a lack of qualified candidates, poor placement, a lack of orientation, and limited monitoring. Such problems are avoidable but not uncommon, given administrative systems and their tendency to award scholarships to individuals for reasons other than academic potential.

Project-related training is sometimes implemented through a technical assistance contractor, which is often linked to a U.S. university. Such systems can be effective because the consultant team will have a working knowledge of the training needs. The potential disadvantages of this system include unfamiliarity with A.I.D. training procedures and a concentration of placements in only a few universities.

The key to appropriate placement is communication among the participant, the placement contractor, and the training institution. The advantages of a single contractor include the possibility of daily communication between field and home offices and continued personal contact with each participant during the training period. This increases the likelihood that the relevant background and training needs of the participant will be shared with both the placement contractor and the training institution.

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Participants have been placed in a wide variety of U.S. educational institutions -- large and small institutions in rural and urban locations, community colleges, specialized training institutes, and major state universities. The appropriate placement depends on the program and the participant's needs and interests. However, all things being equal, placement is often more successful in U.S. universities that have an interest in or ties to the host region (Tatto 1987). The state of Florida, for example, actively encourages improved linkages with LAC countries through tuition reduction and other incentives. In CLASP, many participants have had good experiences in small, community-based institutions in which foreign students are a welcome novelty (Aguirre 1990a). Training institutions in small cities and towns also have the advantage of lower living and transportation costs. Many students find living on the maintenance allowance in cities such as New York, Los Angeles, and Washington, D.C., to be difficult.

Numerous potential benefits of study in U.S. institutions have been identified in the literature. Apart from the excellent quality of higher education available in the United States, the benefits include greater fluency in English, the prestige of overseas study, career mobility, improved cultural affinity that may ease participants' dealings with U.S. businesspeople (and donor agencies), and the development of commercial linkages. Equally important, although intangible, are the benefits that derive from exposure to American attitudes and values, including an improved understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the U.S. model of pluralism and free enterprise. Participants who live in the United States may develop a new perspective on their own economic and social system. Many A.I.D. managers believe that the impact on attitudes and the increased familiarity with U.S. management systems are as important as the technical skills that are transferred.

**Summary.** Placement in U.S. universities requires in-depth knowledge of the range of educational opportunities in the United States combined with intimate understanding of the needs of the participant and the objectives of the program. Regardless of the mechanism used, successful placement depends on clear and frequent communication among the participant, placement contractor, and training institution.

### **Third-Country Training (TCT)**

An issue in participant training is the balance between third-country and U.S. placements. A.I.D. policy is to encourage participant training in the United States unless third-country training has a greater developmental value and is more cost-effective (A.I.D. 1988). Nonetheless, third-country training has been strongly recommended in several A.I.D. evaluations as a mechanism for strengthening regional educational institutions as well as for potential cost savings (AID/IG 1986a). A major study of TCT in Africa strongly recommended a policy mandate to use third-country training in the region to strengthen regional institutions (Johnson 1983). The study found that costs for both short- and long-term training were significantly lower in regional institutions. While other studies have found exceptions, this appears to be true for most types of training.

Among the issues in third-country training are relevance, marketability of degrees, cost, "brain drain," style and cultural similarities, and quality of education. The issues are highly specific to regions and institutions. An early study of TCT (O'Brien and Jacobs 1977) found that A.I.D. treated the issue entirely from the perspective of project needs rather than a larger strategy. No studies have comprehensively addressed the question of what individuals can be best taught through TCT in any region or assessed the marketability of third-country degrees. The cost of TCT scholarships in the African American Universities (AAU) programs in Africa was found to be higher than for comparable U.S. training under the African Graduate Fellowship Program (AFGRAD), but the repatriation rate was higher. This stipulation is important because the report found that the highest cost incurred by the U.S. scholarship program was that too few students returned home.

As a mechanism for developing and strengthening regional centers of excellence, the experience with TCT has been mixed. In Zambia and Ghana, the use of local institutions to train other Africans created tensions because of the perception that the activity deprived local students of scholarship opportunities (Johnson 1983).

Some TCT has the advantage of providing an environment that is similar to the home country. This may reduce or eliminate language and

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**The need for relevance must be balanced with the need for exposure to different ideas, technology, pedagogies, and cultures.**

*— Johnson 1983*

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cultural barriers, increase the applicability of the training, and reduce reentry problems — all of which increase the efficiency of the transfer of knowledge. On the other hand, the very similarity of culture and administrative procedures may limit the participant's exposure to new ways of thinking and approaches to problems that can be part of an overseas experience.

Numerous evaluations have noted that participants prefer U.S. degrees. In most cases, this reflects the real market advantage of a foreign degree. In Thailand, for example, earnings are tied both to higher levels of learning and to foreign rather than local degrees (Coleman 1984). In Africa, a marked differential in earning power was found (annual salaries of \$2,500 for African graduates versus \$3,600 for graduates of U.S. schools) — a difference that may also be due to U.S. graduates moving into the private sector while local graduates remain in the public sector (O'Brien and Jacobs 1977). Other studies have noted the side benefits of U.S. training: fluency in English, prestige, ability to deal with American businesspeople, and greater career mobility (Jenkins 1980; AID/ANE/DP/E 1988).

Advanced developing countries may have different conditions that limit the need for overseas training. At one time Brazil sent half of its scholarship students to the United States, but now it restricts overseas study to programs that meet the following goals: (1) to secure quality that may be lacking in domestic programs; (2) to avoid intellectual inbreeding; and (3) to cater to special needs in which domestic programs are inadequate or nonexistent. The result is that overseas training is now limited to Ph.D.-level training for the very best candidates (Jenkins 1980).

**Summary.** The appropriateness of third-country training can be assessed only through a subjective weighing of the importance of different factors against the project objectives. The factors may include impact on career mobility, cost, exposure to alternative cultural and management

norms, relevance, incentive for qualified candidates to apply, and availability of quality programs.

### **Pre-Program Orientation**

Recommendations for improving orientation programs have frequently appeared in A.I.D. evaluations over the past thirty years. Among the suggestions that have been made are thorough briefings on program details; guidance on personal and social adjustment to a different culture; and expectations about food, housing, weather, and discrimination. Evaluators have also urged that more lead time to prepare for departure be built in (Moser and Elmer 1986).

Pre-program orientation takes many forms. Some programs combine pre-departure orientation with additional orientation in the United States. The traditional A.I.D. orientation for individual participants in project-related training consists of an hour or two of conversation with the mission training officer concerning travel and housing arrangements, health insurance, and other administrative matters. While long-term participants may have an opportunity during English or remedial training to prepare for the experience, short-term participants do not.

CLASP has made a special effort to recognize and meet the pre-departure orientation needs of its target group of disadvantaged individuals. CLASP participants are often younger and less sophisticated than traditional participants, have no knowledge of urban life even in their own country, and have not been exposed to other cultures. Orientation may last from two to three days up to one week and vary in intensity according to the needs of the group. The Ecuador program has two pre-departure meetings. The first is a two-day meeting about one month prior to departure to determine the emphasis and needs for the second meeting. The content of all pre-departure activities includes a range of activities, from administration and logistics to role-playing and thoughts about what the participants will do when they return. Some lessons learned in CLASP are presented in Box IV-3.

While CLASP participants clearly have special orientation needs, the literature argues that orientation is important even for relatively mature Ph.D. students (Jenkins 1980). A

**BOX IV-3**  
**CLASP Orientation Lessons**

Orientation is an important element in CLASP. These recommendations are excerpted from the *CLASP Fourth Annual Report* (Aguirre 1990c).

- U.S. contractors or trainers should be involved in pre-departure orientation as part of the contract.
- Short-term trainees should be brought together as a group for pre-departure orientation.
- Pre-departure orientation requirements are different for short-term and long-term trainees. Short-term trainees generally have less time to prepare and are very anxious about travel logistics.
- Orientation should include information about the trainee's home country, and all trainees should take information about their country and families to share with Americans. Trainees should understand the typical American's impression of their country.
- Returned trainees should participate in orientation panel discussions that deal with the transition to U.S. social, academic, and political life.
- The concept of follow-on should be initiated in the pre-departure orientation with a discussion of what activities the trainees would view as useful.
- Long-term trainees should be informed of the typical stages of adapting to a new culture and how to respond to "culture shock."

criticism of many U.S.-based orientation programs is that they are geared to indoctrination rather than orientation. The focus for most students needs to be on the practical problems of adjustment to a new social and academic environment rather than on the interpretation of U.S. ideals.

A critical task for the orientation of foreign students is to provide relatively sophisticated counseling to help them acquire an education that meets their needs. One often-heard criticism of participant training is that U.S. education is irrelevant to the needs of third world

countries, particularly in agriculture (Cashman 1987). A related comment is that university-trained graduates tend to accept and practice uncritically the knowledge generated in other contexts for purposes unsuitable to small farmers in developing countries (Lee and Tao 1983).

Studies recommend that educational institutions focus on innovations appropriate to third world farming and offer practical experience on U.S. farms with similar agricultural practices. While recognizing the validity of these arguments, one must accept the fact that U.S. land grant colleges are unlikely to make major curricular changes to accommodate foreign students; their mission, after all, is U.S. agriculture. But training in any field can be greatly enhanced by a good academic advisor and by well-planned practical experiences that complement academic education.

To a considerable degree, the relevance of U.S. academic education to foreign students is dependent upon their ability to pursue aggressively their own educational objectives and interests (Jenkins 1980). Participants must understand how the U.S. educational system works and the proactive role of the student in the process (particularly at the graduate level). This is an attitudinal problem as well as an intellectual one. Few students from developing countries come from an educational tradition that encourages their participation in defining and pursuing educational goals.

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Relevancy in the education of foreign students from developing countries includes learning how to cope with research, to identify and analyze problems, to discover practical applications, and requires a concentration on those aspects of instruction which are applicable, usable, and acceptable in the home country.

— Jenkins 1980

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Even understanding the system is not enough; the participants must understand and appreciate their own country, culture, and technical needs to identify the "missing link" and enable

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them to compare and use the training (Jenkins 1980). This approach to the overseas educational experience must be initiated and emphasized during orientation.

The ability to provide an adequate level of orientation is as much a question of logistics as of intent. All of the training officers interviewed for this study recognized the value of the extended orientations provided to CLASP students. However, they all continue to limit orientation of other participants to a brief talk in the office followed, in some cases, by several days or a week in the United States. By programming large numbers of participants in groups, CLASP and other training-only projects are well structured to provide pre-departure orientation.

Most project-related training, on the other hand, is conducted on an individual and intermittent basis. In the case of the Development Support Training Project in Pakistan, however, a single placement and programming contract serves all of the mission projects that wish to buy into the contract. Despite this central coordination and despite the fact that all participants are invited to the orientation, only an estimated 10 percent actually attend, in part because no travel or per diem support is provided (USAID/Pakistan 1989). A project evaluation recommended that the pre-departure orientation be expanded to two to three full days, including role plays, small-group discussions, cross-cultural discussions, and other activities. This would be followed by a minimum of three days' orientation in Washington, D.C., that would brief the students on cross-cultural skills, survival skills (housing, banking, transportation), and the contractor's responsibilities (USAID/Pakistan 1989).

One clear lesson that can be drawn about orientation programs is that they must be planned and budgeted. If the trainees' attendance is desirable (i.e., if it will improve the program), then it should be required, and all travel and per diem expenses should be paid as part of the scholarship.

**Summary.** Orientation to both the academic and cross-cultural aspects of overseas training is a key program element that should be adequately budgeted and planned. Although it represents only a small fraction of the total cost, orientation can have an important impact on program success.

## **English Language Training (ELT)**

English language capability is a critical skill for training in the United States and can be a valuable career asset to individuals in many countries for technical, commercial, and scientific purposes. It is also vastly problematical for management of participant training and is a major constraint to host selection of qualified candidates (Moser and Elmer 1986a). The time and cost required to bring candidates up to an acceptable level can be considerable even in the best of circumstances, and some people may never reach an acceptable level. The excess time required by some individuals can seriously disrupt project schedules, training plans, and budgets. The main issues in ELT are location and cost of training, advance planning, and language testing.

A 1987 A.I.D. assessment reviewed the experience with in-country ELT programs in twelve countries (Imhoof et al. 1987). The study found a number of cost-effective and high-quality in-country ELT programs, but concluded that no specific model would be applicable in all locations and contexts. Each program was unique in that it reflected a combination of specific program needs and country resources and conditions. Interestingly, the study found that academic candidates beginning at the same level will reach the target Teaching of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) scores in about the same length of time, regardless of program costs, in-country resources, or participant linguistic background. Despite the recognized quality of the programs, the study concluded that missions must recognize the limitations of in-country language training. Such programs can effectively train people through the less-advanced levels of English proficiency, but most participants will still require some ELT in the United States to be able to function in graduate-level academic programs.

Other evaluations and mission experience also argue for the use of in-country ELT whenever possible. In addition to cost considerations, missions have found that it is unwise to send participants to the United States prior to achieving adequate TOEFL scores for university admission (Abou-Sayf and Sidibe 1985). For one thing, there is always the risk that the participant will not be admitted into the intended school. Moreover, the mission runs the risk of having to

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continue costly U.S. residence ELT programs indefinitely. In-country programs are also often preferable to participants because they reduce the time away from their homes and families (Tatto 1987). One alternative that may hold promise but has not been widely tested is third-country ELT programs.

The literature also notes the potential for relating immediate project needs for English language training to long-term developmental impact through the strengthening of in-country ELT institutes. Some programs could make such an impact by working through existing ELT institutes. There is little data in the literature about which factors help to sustain an ELT institute successfully. In the Dominican Republic, the ELT center has discovered the impact that a changing economy can make on the organization's viability. Staff turnover among teachers was common but posed no serious problem as long as economic conditions allowed the center to recruit from the expatriate spouse community. But changes in the cost-of-living and exchange rates have made salaries less attractive to the dwindling number of native English speakers on the island.

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The low failure rate of overseas degree participants is at least partially a reflection of the success of the English language training received under the project.

— *Dukesbury et al. 1989*

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Adequate project management requires that ELT considerations be included in the early planning stages so that all parties appreciate the need to schedule sufficient time for ELT. Evaluations frequently note the project delays caused by unrealistic expectations of the amount and length of ELT that will be required. The role of training officers in improving communication with ELT administrators and A.I.D. project managers and in adapting programs to meet the linguistic, social, and academic needs of special participants (such as CLASP trainees) is important. However, the Dukesbury study noted that mission training personnel are unlikely to be ELT specialists and will therefore need systematic in-service training to perform this role. Competency

testing based on a standard proficiency test such as the TOEFL or American Language Institute of Georgetown University should be used on a pre- and post-program basis to compare program effectiveness as well as to determine the student's proficiency level. Some countries use English language tests for selection and placement as well as to determine proficiency levels. Others have also used proficiency in the participants' native language as a proxy indicator of capacity. While some U.S. universities require TOEFL scores of at least 550 for admission, a study of a Caribbean scholarship program concluded that scores above the 520-550 range were not related to academic achievement (Tatto 1987).

**Summary.** English language training is an important factor in both the success and final cost of training programs. The choice between use of in-country ELT programs or U.S.-based programs depends on local circumstances; no general model is applicable to all locations.

### **Dependents**

The question of whether, and under what circumstances, dependents should accompany the participant on a long-term training program has always been difficult. A.I.D. policy is that dependents are not to accompany or join the participant in the country of training because of cost, disruption of studies, and the difficulties of maintaining a family while in the United States. However, if the mission and host country agree, dependents may join the participant after the participant has been in the United States at least six months and successfully completed one academic term. A.I.D. provides no financial assistance or travel expenses for dependents, so the participant is responsible for covering all costs.

In general, the result of A.I.D.'s policy has been that the majority of participants do not bring their families. Mission training officers have generally supported this policy out of concern about nonreturnees, despite their first-hand knowledge of the hardships it imposes. Some evaluations from areas where there is a high danger of nonreturn have strongly endorsed the current approach (Kimmel et al. 1988).

At least one A.I.D. project has departed from the orthodoxy by actively encouraging families to accompany participants and by supporting spouse training (see Box IV-4). This approach was used as a strategy to increase female participation rather than to reduce hardship — eight of the eleven primary participants were women. In the project paper analysis for the Development Training Project in the Dominican Republic, dependent travel allowance was encouraged, but it was never implemented.

Participants in the Indonesia (Dukesbury et al. 1989) and Zaire (Gulley 1987) programs whose families accompanied them generally finished their studies in less time than average. Moreover, the presence of spouse and family may have reduced attrition in some instances. In the Indonesian case, the eight participants who failed to complete their degree objectives all complained of homesickness and being separated from their families. In the Zaire program, some participants who failed to return had married

Americans while in the United States. Obviously, the presence of a family greatly decreases the risk of romantic involvement.

Not all scholarship programs have the same restrictions regarding dependent travel. Foundation programs in particular may provide travel, tuition, fees, a monthly allowance, and extra pay for spouses and children (Jenkins 1980). There is no indication in the literature that nonreturn is a problem for these programs, which target the very best scholars in a country.

As with most participant training activities, no one rule applies to all conditions or all participants. Without conclusive evidence that dependent travel discourages participant nonreturn, missions will and should continue to exercise caution. Nonetheless, the experience available indicates that missions should not automatically prohibit dependent travel. Rather, other programming decisions affecting target groups, types of training, selection and orientation

#### BOX IV-4

##### Spouse Training Program in Indonesia

**Background.** The Spouse Training Program was introduced in the second phase of the Western Universities Agricultural Education Project to increase the pool of qualified candidates for the regular training program, especially women, who might otherwise not be able to participate. In addition, it was seen as a way to maximize project resources by providing appropriate training for more people.

**Structure.** Criteria for participating in the spouse program were that the training improve income, that the program enable the spouse to be a development catalyst within the community, that the spouse's program end no later than the participant's, and that training plans have coherent themes. While formal training programs were preferred over informal ones, degree programs were less likely because of time constraints. The primary participants, at least half of whom were supposed to be women, had to achieve a grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 in the first semester in order for the spouse plan to be approved. The project would finance 50 percent of in-country ELT, 50 percent of the maintenance allowance, 100 percent of tuition and other training costs, 100 percent of return airfare if the training objectives were met, and 100 percent of health and accident insurance during the training period.

**Results.** Despite the emphasis on recruitment of female primary participants, only three of the first eleven spouse participants were male (spouses of women participants). More male spouses applied in the second group as the program adjusted to this priority. During the program, the major constraint was the English proficiency of the spouses. All of the spouses completed their programs, and most performed well academically. Two spouses joined the regular participant program, and one received a university assistantship for a Ph.D. program. Experience with other participants indicates that those at the Ph.D. level complete their programs more quickly when accompanied by their families. There is no indication that academic performance is affected as measured by the GPA.

**Lessons learned.** A spouse training program has the potential for reducing program time (and costs), increasing the number of women participants, and increasing the number of trained persons.

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procedures, and follow-on programs may have as much or greater impact in reducing nonreturn than do policies on dependent travel. Missions need to weigh the personal burden on participants and possible negative impact on recruitment and program completion against the perceived benefits of the policy for each country. Equally important, A.I.D. should assess its actual experience with dependents under different programs (graduate, undergraduate, short-term, etc.) and review its policy in light of the findings.

**Summary.** The empirical evidence does not show that participants' academic programs are disrupted or that the rate of nonreturn is increased when dependents accompany participants to the United States. Innovative program alternatives may be appropriate to achieve program objectives without imposing significant personal burdens on participants.

### **Supplementary Activities**

A.I.D. has long recognized that technology transfer is not the only benefit of participant training. A significant benefit, indeed one of the justifications for such training, has been to expose individuals from other countries to U.S. systems and values in order to develop personal, professional, and commercial ties between countries. It is A.I.D. policy that programs include scheduled opportunities to meet professional counterparts, receive American hospitality, and attend complementary training activities such as midwinter seminars. The purpose of such contacts is "to help participants understand firsthand the processes of a democratic society and the private enterprise system as well as to develop trust and understanding so that cooperation and commerce will readily grow" (A.I.D. 1988).

A.I.D.'s CLASP is unique in that the objective of "understanding America" was elevated to a primary rationale for a large-scale regional training program. The concept was refined and expanded under the name *Experience America* to include programmed cultural and personal experiences. In the early years of CLASP, the activities were usually cultural exposure activities such as attending sports or cultural events and home stays, which were seen as a vital way to share American social and cultural values. With experience, the programming became more

sophisticated in generating community involvement and targeting specific group interests and needs. Programs arranged periodic meetings with local mayors and city councils, visits to cooperatives or businesses that were involved in the same fields as the participants, and professional interaction. Ideally, the Experience America component is fully integrated into the technical aspects of the training. While such programming can be very labor-intensive, it can also be highly rewarding, as in the case of the young political leaders from Ecuador (see Box IV-5).

Evaluations in some of the participating CLASP countries have found that the interpersonal exchanges and other Experience America activities have been the high point of the program. USAID/Guatemala found that participants remembered such events in much greater detail than the technical aspects of their training programs. This is also true of other, non-CLASP participants. A study of returned long-term participants from the Dominican Republic found that the most frequently cited positive aspects of their training, regardless of the training site, were the cultural experiences and personal and professional relationships (Murphy and Ramirez 1988). Home stays in particular are excellent opportunities for person-to-person communication when the host families are carefully selected and provided with appropriate cross-cultural orientation. Many programs have found it useful to help the participants to prepare scrapbooks about their home country to share with host families and make the cultural exchange a two-way process.

Outside of CLASP, such activities and exposure are often considered to be natural side effects of living in the United States, particularly for long-term participants. Therefore, despite the policy mandate, supplementary activities are rarely specified in training requests and even more rarely have a clear objective. Such activities, if they are done at all, tend to be arranged in an ad hoc manner. None of the mission training policies reviewed for this study addressed the issue. However, several senior mission officials interviewed said that insights from CLASP on the value of the quality of experience, as opposed to the quality of training, were applicable to other projects.

Some programs complement technical or academic classes with internships and visits to government organizations or private firms to view practical applications of theory. In Kenya, the Training for Development Project has creatively used these "attachments" to make practical placements in organizations ranging from steel-tube manufacturers and dry cleaning companies to the personnel division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture for HRD planners. Participants found these experiences to be immensely informative and enriching (Gillies 1991).

**Summary.** Supplementary activities can provide a valuable addition to technical training at relatively low cost. However, they must be planned and budgeted explicitly in the PIO/P with clear objectives that are effectively communicated to both the participant and the training institution.

### **Cost Containment**

The rapidly rising cost of education in the United States and other countries became a priority

concern to A.I.D. in the 1980s. Audits and project evaluations repeatedly found examples of program costs that exceeded acceptable levels; one evaluation cited a master's degree program that cost \$70,000 (AID/IG 1987b). As a result, training projects explored new approaches to contain program costs, and cost containment became a specific objective of CLASP.

A.I.D. audits identified a number of factors that contributed to the high cost of training programs. The most important were management systems that did not enable project officers to track costs effectively, poor payment management, extended English language training, program extensions that allowed participants to get second degrees, and habitual payment of high out-of-state tuition fees (AID/IG 1987b). A.I.D. and contractors were often not aware of universities that offered reduced fees for participants. Although the LAC Bureau had developed a directory of reduced cost education and training opportunities, this information had not reached either the central training office (AID/S&T/IT 1984) or the other regional bureaus

#### **BOX IV-5**

##### **Ecuadoran Young Political Leaders**

**Background.** The Andean Peace Scholarship Program (APSP) in Ecuador sponsored a group of young political leaders from a spectrum of political parties. This was a very different type of group from the normal CLASP participants and carried a substantial risk of failure in the highly polarized world of Ecuadoran politics. The trainees were nominated by their respective parties and approved by the project selection committee. The committee maintained strict eligibility criteria and rejected the first nominees from several parties. One party subsequently refused to participate.

**Experience.** The pre-departure orientation program was lengthened and adapted to the needs of the group. Survival English courses were dropped in favor of more intensive group dynamics workshops to reduce the level of hostility and suspicion among representatives of different parties.

The training program consisted of courses in political campaigning followed by two weeks of work in the New Jersey governor's campaign. The group formed a task force to conduct focus groups among members of the Hispanic community in New Jersey. In this case, the Experience America and technical elements of the training program were inseparable.

**Lessons learned.** This type of group is highly management-intensive and USAID missions must be very flexible to meet the needs of a demanding group of participants. Strict adherence to selection criteria is essential. Clear technical and Experience America objectives must be established and communicated to the participants. If well-planned, this type of program offers exceptional potential for blending the technical and cultural aspects of training.

**Postscript.** The participants were enthusiastic about the program, and many felt that some common ground, personal if not political, was reached among members of different parties. The trainers believe that the personal hostility common in Ecuadoran politics will be reduced when members of this group compete in elections. Participants returned to very influential positions (one was an advisor to the President), and several were planning follow-up activities on their own initiative.

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(AID/IG 1987b). After a 1987 audit, information about such cost-reduction opportunities was more widely disseminated.

The CLASP experience in cost containment is instructive for both the innovative approaches developed and the insights gained. The most direct measures taken to contain costs were to (1) identify low-cost training institutions; (2) negotiate low tuition rates for participants, either at in-state levels or with waivers; (3) arrange for cost-sharing and package programs; and (4) reduce program preparation costs by developing in-country ELT programs or conducting long-term group training in Spanish. Many of these innovative measures became standard practices with placement contractors, thus institutionalizing the cost-containment efforts.

However, cost containment should not be a primary project objective. Training objectives should still be paramount, and programming decisions should be based on training needs rather than on cost. The Central American Scholarship Project (CASP) under CLASP, for example, was intended to demonstrate a lower-cost alternative to traditional A.I.D. participant training. In order to reduce program costs, the project placed students exclusively in two-year community colleges. In this case, cost considerations were allowed to dictate programming decisions. Equally serious, some projects attempted to cut costs by reducing participant living allowances and other such economies that affected the quality of the training. Such measures clearly undermined the purpose of the training in an effort to meet cost guidelines.

Improved management of training costs starts with improved information. The 1987 audit noted that weak participant monitoring procedures resulted in payments to individuals who were no longer in training, who were in training for extended periods of time, or who did not return home. In addition, A.I.D. developed a cost management tool, the *Training Cost Analysis (TCA)* system, that improves cost accountability in procurement and monitoring. While considered burdensome by many contractors, TCA is seen by A.I.D. officials as an effective means of cost monitoring and containment.

However, reducing costs is only part of effective project cost containment. Equally important is the need for a successful project: a cheap failure is a bigger waste of money than a high-cost

success. Cost containment should be viewed from the perspective of the total project rather than the unit (per participant) cost. A study in Africa found that although unit costs of some third-country training were not significantly lower than U.S. training, the higher nonreturn rate from the United States greatly increased the effective cost (O'Brien and Jacobs 1977).

Excessive concern about direct program costs (tuition, housing, etc.) can obscure the value of improving selection, preparation, orientation, and follow-on activities that increase the participant success and return rate. Many training professionals agree that the timely selection of well-qualified candidates effectively reduces costs in terms of success and is critical to the negotiation of tuition waivers. The AFGRAD project, which obtained tuition-free fellowships for hundreds of participants, routinely includes selection visits by college deans to ensure that candidates will be acceptable to U.S. schools for such scholarships.

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Cost containment should be considered in goal-oriented . . . terms, keeping in mind the maxim "penny wise, pound foolish." . . . Cost-cutting measures which adversely affect the participants' comfort or health or the technical quality of the program are illusory if they result in the project objectives not being met. Conversely, increased expenditures and effort in participant selection, preparation, and orientation which reduce the number of failures in long-term programs may represent an overall cost savings.

— CLASP II Project Paper  
AID/LAC/DR/EHR 1989b

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**Summary.** The cost of training programs can easily get out of control without adequate management. Costs can be contained by close monitoring, negotiated reductions in training costs, and innovative programming. Paradoxically, increased investment in selection and placement can reduce overall costs by improving the success rate. Cost containment should never be established as a project objective.

## Return

*Nonreturn to country* (the so-called brain drain) is a major concern of the U.S. government because of the negative impact it has on development projects and the loss of taxpayers' money. An audit of A.I.D. participant training found that the average nonreturn rate of missions in the sample was 7 percent, and the highest nonreturn rate was 34 percent (AID/IG 1987b). More than 40 percent of the countries lost more than 10 percent of their participants. Another study noted the questionable training investment in a country where only one out of every three M.S. students returned — a net loss to the country's economy of two college-educated technicians for every one with a master's (Franks 1986).

The factors that affect whether or not participants return to their home countries are varied. Not surprisingly, the incidence of nonreturn is often closely associated with the participants' prospects at home. Clearly, economic or political instability in the home country reduces the incentive to return. Participants from countries with relatively high levels of emigration to the United States, particularly Central America and the Caribbean, are likely to have relatives in the United States who strongly encourage them to stay here. Better economic and professional opportunities are other common reasons for nonreturn, as is personal involvement with or marriage to an American.

USAID missions have taken many different approaches to reduce the level of nonreturn. Selection is often the first line of defense. Countries with a high potential for nonreturn may as a matter of policy limit the numbers of high-risk participants. In general, young participants are considered to be high risk because of their lack of family and job ties and their often limited prospects in their own country. A candidate with an established position in a profession or the community is much more likely to return. Selection and orientation procedures that screen for demonstrated commitment to the community or the country's development and a sense of obligation can reduce the number of nonreturnees. Other missions simply limit training opportunities for professions with a high risk of attrition. Jamaica, for example, no longer provides overseas training in the health care field. Box IV-6 illustrates USAID/Guatemala's

### BOX IV-6

#### Youth for Guatemala Outreach Program

**Background.** The number of privately financed third world students who attend academic programs in the United States is much greater than the total number of participants sponsored by A.I.D. and other U.S. government agencies. The level of "brain drain" among these students is often much higher than that experienced in A.I.D.-sponsored programs.

**Approach.** In the Development Training and Support Project, USAID/Guatemala decided that efforts to attract these self-financed students back to Guatemala could be a cost-effective way to increase the number of skilled workers. They identified the factors contributing to nonreturn as concerns about employment and prolonged separation from the home country that weakened their ties.

The project supports the "Youth for Guatemala" program of a private development organization in Guatemala, FUNDESA. The project's activities include identifying Guatemalan students in the United States and developing a range of support services for them — including contacting the students through newsletters and news clippings, maintaining a job-listing service or active job referral program, arranging home country summer internships, running alumni programs and organizations, and researching foreign study issues.

**Lessons learned.** The program has not been under way long enough for an evaluation of this component. However, it is an innovative effort that may serve as a model for other countries.

approach to reaching Guatemalan students in the United States and encouraging them to return home.

Many countries establish direct financial incentives to return. Bonding and employment contracts are mechanisms used in some countries to ensure that participants return and utilize their training. Other countries use cosigners or loan guarantors so that someone has to repay the costs of a scholarship if the participant does not return. Virtually all USAID missions require participants to sign some form of commitment to remain and work in their country for a certain period. However, the legal

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validity, monitoring (follow-on), and enforcement of these agreements varies considerably among countries.

The incentives to emigrate can easily overwhelm the measures taken to ensure personnel retention. For example, in Sri Lanka, 14 of 23 Ph.D. scholars did not return (or immediately left again), despite a required bond equal to 1.5 years of salary (Dunbar 1987). The bond was ineffective because the annual salary was only \$1,500 — an amount that was easily paid off once the scholar had taken a job in the West. However, in this case financial incentives to leave may not have been the deciding factor: all of the nonreturnees were members of a minority ethnic group during a period of violent ethnic unrest in the country.

Programming options can also be used to encourage return. For example, requiring thesis research to be completed in the home country is often an effective way to reinforce ties and bring participants home. The career value of the degree is often great enough that participants will make every effort to finish the program (Gulley 1987). In countries with severe nonreturn problems, in-country and third-country training may be substituted for U.S. training (AID/IG 1987b).

Some programs begin the process of reentry and follow-on during the initial orientation meetings and continue throughout the training program. The purpose of such programs is to encourage the participants to plan how they will contribute to their country. This strengthens their commitment and reduces the level of uncertainty about the future. Examples of continuous reentry activities include distributing newsletters to current participants on home country news and achievements of returned participants, holding a reentry planning conference midway through the training period, and even sending birthday greetings to participants.

Dealing with the nonreturn problem requires an adequate participant monitoring system, so that missions have some way of knowing when participants are expected back. The introduction of the computerized Participant Training Monitoring System in most USAID missions will help in this regard. The A.I.D. audit in 1987

(AID/IG 1987b) recommended that missions bill the host country for the cost of training. At the time of the audit, this was not being done, although some countries had established policies to recover training costs if the participants did not return. The Jamaican government has a bonding procedure for the full cost of the training, and the Philippines has a similar collection procedure. However, in both cases the recovered funds go to the host government rather than to A.I.D.

**Summary.** A range of options exists to ensure that participants return and contribute to their country's development. In addition to financial and legal coercion, effective measures include careful selection, consistent reentry counseling, and program requirements that bring the participant home.

### **Follow-On and Reentry**

Follow-on of participant training, or the lack thereof, is the most frequently cited evaluation issue in A.I.D. studies over the past thirty years (Moser and Elmer 1986). However, it should be emphasized that the context and intent have varied in these evaluations. In most cases, they were concerned with monitoring nonreturnees. In others, the emphasis was on follow-on support to help returnees apply their training. Discussions of follow-on may refer to a number of different activities, including:

- maintaining mission records on participants;
- monitoring and tracking returned participants for employment and promotion;
- evaluating returned participants' impact on development;
- establishing alumni associations;
- maintaining U.S. contacts through membership in professional societies and journal subscriptions;
- creating opportunities for participants to train their co-workers;
- initiating continuing education programs to update and reinforce training; and
- providing opportunities to enhance utilization, including offering equipment and employment assistance.

A.I.D. policy requires that all projects with participant training allocate funding for appropriate continuing education and follow-on

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activities; that USAID missions and host countries maintain records for a minimum of three years for all returned participants who were trained for three months or longer; and that all returnees receive certificates of achievement. The policy also encourages extension of the follow-on period beyond three years for returned participants who demonstrate significant professional achievement. The intention of the policy – to "track and support" returned trainees – appears to include most of the activities listed above (A.I.D. 1988). USAID missions are expected to designate a follow-on officer who plans and implements general mission programs as well as specific project follow-on activities.

As with some other aspects of participant training, the practice lags behind the policy. Many senior A.I.D. officials believe that any follow-on beyond simple tracking is inappropriate. Follow-on contact for most returned participants occurs only if they are working on A.I.D.-sponsored projects and thus have informal contact with A.I.D. project officers.

Of course, some forms of follow-on have been done in A.I.D. missions intermittently for decades. USAID/Peru conducted certificate ceremonies, maintained a returned participant directory, and established an alumni association before 1960 (USAID/Peru 1982). Other missions have published returned participant directories, although few have maintained such activities. The A.I.D. Office of International Training's (OIT's) annual survey of follow-on activities shows a renewed interest in follow-on in recent years, and many missions are conducting limited follow-on programs. Among the findings were that 90 percent of the missions contact returned participants, 69 percent include returnees in orientation activities, and 50 percent award certificates of achievement (Elmer 1989a). Nonetheless, project evaluations continue to find that most returned participants do not have any contact with the USAID mission after the training program (Murphy and Ramirez 1988; Kumar and Nacht 1989; San Martin 1990).

Sustainability is a difficult concept in participant training. In other projects, training is often the component that provides sustainability and institutional development. However, in the context of the skills of the trained individuals, sustainability refers to a continuing capacity to utilize those skills. Follow-on programs are one means of achieving that sustainability.

The argument for continuing support to returned scholars centers on a recognition of the human element of training as a mechanism for transfer and adaptation of technology (Goodwin and Nacht 1986). Most training programs have traditionally been oriented toward individuals who are expected to introduce new technology and approaches in their home country. Goodwin and Nacht argue that it is particularly difficult for foreign-trained professionals in the third world to maintain morale and avoid obsolescence of technical capability over time. Attempts to introduce foreign values, attitudes, and technologies into existing institutions usually go against the current. They call this phenomenon of intellectual and morale decay "human decapitalization." Goodwin and Nacht argue for a long-term association with returned participants. Put simply, change agents need occasional reinforcement. The keys to continuing to challenge cultural norms are self-confidence and renewal.

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Graduate or professional training in the West results in changes in style and attitude as much as in knowledge of subject matter. A student learns such things as professionalism, assertiveness, openness to innovation, discipline in approaching problems, timeliness, scientific standards, hard work, self-confidence . . . and the excitement of discovery. These qualities are exceptionally fragile, particularly in an environment in which they are not rewarded, recognized, or encouraged. Decay is worst in provincial settings or where the profession is mixed (i.e., teacher-administrator).

– *Goodwin and Nacht 1986*

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Decay in intellectual capability and morale is the result of inadequate resources, loss of facility in English, few or no rewards or reinforcement, the need to conform, a lack of research or output, the lack of an innovation ethic in the institutional culture, and loss of contact with the profession (Goodwin and Nacht 1986). Follow-on programs should be designed in the context of the conditions in each country and the program objectives: political culture and development, integration of institutions, ability of the culture to deal with controversy and dissent and innova-

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tion, and structural differentiation and other cultural or political constraints to utilization of training. Where the conditions are hostile, a higher and more intensive level of follow-on may be justified to compensate for them. Goodwin and Nacht suggest possible activities such as refresher trips, sponsorship to conferences, joint research, and support for continuing institutional linkages.

The participants themselves want follow-on programs to maintain their professional capability (Murphy and Ramirez 1988). Participants interviewed in several evaluations emphasize that they want *substantive* contact with USAID that utilizes their professional skills. Although A.I.D. has trained many professionals over the past thirty years, few missions make a systematic effort to draw upon this pool of skilled people for project design, implementation, and evaluation. This can be a cause of frustration among returned participants who object to the import of advisors in their own skill areas (Gulley 1987).

Some of the most intensive efforts at follow-on have been in CLASP, which has specific requirements to fund and design follow-on programs. Most of the CLASP follow-on activities emphasize networking, continuing education, and provision of services to other participants. Activities have included:

- assistance with job-search skills (résumé writing and job interviews);
- follow-on training courses and seminars;
- organized reentry meetings with presentations by employers;
- establishment of alumni associations and lending libraries;
- participant newsletters; and
- associations to help returnees design and propose community projects.

The Central American Scholarship Project developed a regional network of alumni associations and conducted two alumni association summit meetings with representatives from six Central American countries. On a single-country level, one of the most active follow-on programs has been in Guatemala (see Box IV-7). Virtually all of the follow-on programs to date have been directed toward CLASP participants, with few structured programs available to participants from other projects. The Guatemala program may expand the alumni association to include other USAID participants.

Alumni associations, participant directories, and talent banks are often proposed as follow-on activities, but there is little definitive information on the key factors involved in initiating and maintaining such associations. A recent study for USAID/Dominican Republic (Broehl 1990) suggests that successful alumni associations must grow from spontaneous organizing efforts by members and should be directly related to the members' specific professional and personal interests.

The role of the USAID mission should be to facilitate, not direct, the design of this effort. Once the alumni establish commitment and have a vision of what the association will accomplish, contractor support can help them implement activities to achieve their goals. This implies a different relationship between the alumni association and the contractor than is usually the case. Donor organizations should understand their own objectives and should clearly state the level of support that will be forthcoming. If a mission's primary objective for an association is provision of low-cost services to the mission training program, it will be disappointed.

An important element of follow-on is immediate reentry support designed to help returnees assimilate and find employment. Donors must recognize that participants face very real challenges in readjusting to their home country, work environment, colleagues, and family members whom they may not have seen in years. Returned participants often comment on the difficulty of dealing with the suspicion, resentment, and even hostility of co-workers and supervisors. Reentry programs in the United States or in the home country can be used to ease this adjustment as well as to increase the incentive to return. Ideally, reentry programs will involve supervisors and co-workers as well.

While reentry activities often concentrate on long-term participants, some CLASP projects have found that even short-term trainees can experience readjustment problems, whether because of cultural differences or the resentment of co-workers. Alumni associations can be a useful forum to air reentry problems. Some reentry programs also include counseling sessions with psychologists and presentations by local employers on the job market and job-seeking skills. In some countries, reentry programs assist returning participants to com-

**BOX IV-7**  
**CLASP Follow-on Program in Guatemala**

**Background.** The Guatemala Peace Scholarships Project initiated a range of extensive follow-on activities to support its target group of rural community leaders from disadvantaged areas. An alumni association with more than 2,000 members produced a periodic newsletter, ran a job placement center, and provided assistance with recruitment and orientation of new participants. A special fund supported community development projects initiated by returned participants. In addition, a follow-on training program was started to provide semiannual one-week training programs for all short-term trainees.

**Experience.** The fund for small projects was a natural extension of the project objectives in that it provided financing for community leaders to initiate and implement projects such as building schoolrooms and community water facilities. However, the expectations of the thousands of returned participants greatly exceeded the available funding, and the alumni association lacked the administrative capability to administer the fund. Allocation of the scarce funding became a divisive issue. In a later project, the alumni group decided to provide only information and technical assistance in seeking grants from other sources.

The follow-on training program, which operates independently of the alumni association, is an ambitious, large-scale effort to provide continuing training to disparate groups of returned short-term trainees in all training areas. After a slow beginning, trainees embraced the program, and over 2,000 participated in the first week-long module. Interest remains high and attendance ample, in spite of some attrition as the program nears its end.

The alumni association was an active and enthusiastic organization with regional subgroups that made significant contributions to the project. However, the association was heavily dependent on the project implementing office — in fact, its by-laws presupposed the continued existence of that office. When the implementing office ceased to exist in September 1990, the association found itself without the means or mechanisms to continue in operation and has since ceased functioning. The association's present leadership will be included in the last year of the follow-on training program for short-term returnees in an effort to revitalize the organization.

plete their training programs by helping them to apply for academic and professional recognition of their degrees. In countries where this is a costly or very time-consuming process, such assistance can and should be part of the scholarship program.

A review of the CLASP experience and of previous follow-on programs makes it clear that such follow-on activities must be planned, integrated into the overall training program, maintained, and adequately funded. Follow-on should be introduced as early as the selection process to emphasize both the participants' ultimate contributions and the resources that will be available to them after return. Activities can include periodic communication with participants during the training period and even special meetings to discuss activities after return. The involvement of local organizations can strengthen the link to the community (USAID/Peru 1982; Aguirre 1990b; Broehl 1990).

Although there is little definitive experience, follow-on programs may be able to improve the utilization of new skills, reduce the rates of nonreturn, and increase networking among returned participants. Some program objectives may justify extensive continuing support. For example, projects that are intended to develop future leaders have a clear interest in and justification for continued tracking and support of individuals. University-strengthening projects may find other follow-on activities more appropriate, such as opportunities for faculty exchanges, support for attendance at professional seminars, and periodic seminars at the local university.

**Summary.** Follow-on is often a neglected element in donor programs. Effective programs are needed not only to track participants for evaluation purposes, but also to enhance the investment that has already been made and to reduce intellectual decay.

## Lessons Learned

The key lesson from experience is that every stage of the participant training process requires attention. The single most significant weakness in training programs is the failure to recognize that success depends on selecting qualified people, placing them in appropriate programs, and supporting them after return. Of course, attention to detail does not come easily. A.I.D. managers know that participant training is one of the most management-intensive activities in

the mission. *Doing it right is even more time-intensive.*

Rather than repeating the previous summary paragraphs here, we offer in Box IV-8 an example of a project that was explicitly designed and implemented to apply the lessons of the past to a new situation. It is not the only such project, nor are these activities necessarily applicable in all countries. It is, however, an instructive example of a conscientious effort to treat training seriously.

### BOX IV-8

#### Kenya Training for Development Project

**Background.** The Training for Development Project in Kenya is a general training project designed to follow up on the Kennedy-Mboya airlift program of the early 1960s. The target group is the "best and the brightest" — professional leaders from any field that contributes to development. Half of the participants are from the public and half from the private sector.

**Design.** USAID, host country, and contractor staff worked together to develop conceptual and operational definitions of professional leadership, which were integrated into all phases of the project from selection to follow-on. The initial budget recognized and accepted the cost of customizing programs for this group.

**Selection.** All scholarships are widely advertised and competitively selected through a rigorous process that includes pre-screening of documents, review of essays, personal interviews, worksite visits for private sector applicants, and final selection using written grading criteria by separate public and private sector committees. The effective participation of host country counterparts has created strong commitment to the project.

**Placement.** All participant services are performed by a single contractor with offices in Kenya and Washington, D.C. Placement starts with one-on-one counseling with participants to define training objectives and to provide frequent communication and review until the training plan is approved. In the United States, the low ratio of participants to staff allows the contractor to revise programs quickly.

**Orientation.** In-country orientation and preparation includes a two-day general orientation, GRE and Graduate Management Admission Test preparation programs, and computer literacy courses. Most participants also attend the Washington International Center (WIC) program in the United States and a brief reception and orientation at the home office.

**Supplementary activities.** Both long- and short-term participants attend a combination of training or academic courses and practical "attachments" directly related to their training objectives. Attachments may include observation or on-the-job training in private firms, professional conferences, leadership or management skills seminars, and internships.

**Follow-on.** Planning for reentry and follow-on begins just after selection, as participants are encouraged to explain how they will use the training. The pilot follow-on program began with efforts to determine what the returned participants were interested in and what they needed; it included a newsletter, a resource library, a fund to provide grants for small projects, and an alumni association. USAID and the contractor recognized that the alumni association must be initiated and sustained by returnees, so USAID's only participation was to provide an opportunity for former participants to discuss the idea.

**Summary.** None of the activities of the project are exceptional, but combined they have applied most of the lessons from experience. The rigorous and fair selection procedure finds the best candidates, and high-quality placement and support services maximize the potential for appropriate training. The costs of this type of customized training and close support are high, but they are balanced by the value of direct applicability of training and a lack of program failures.

# V

Evaluation of training is a difficult and somewhat controversial subject. There are two general types of evaluations: **process**, which is a monitoring function to assess implementation performance and provide immediate feedback; and **impact**, which attempts to measure or identify the contribution of training to development. Impact may be measured on the level of a specific project or on a broader program level that reviews achievements across sectors or over a period of years. The two are clearly related, since process data are necessary for an impact evaluation, and impact data give meaning to the process findings. However, for a variety of reasons, most evaluations fail to meet the information needs of donors and host governments.

The following discussion reviews the issues of designing and conducting evaluations, examines pertinent evaluation methodologies and findings, and draws conclusions. It does not presume to propose a methodology; rather, it is intended to be a resource for project managers faced with the need to evaluate. While some issues pertain to process, the emphasis of this chapter is on the more difficult subject of impact evaluations.

## **A.I.D. Evaluation of Training**

It is A.I.D.'s policy that information must be systematically collected and the participant training program regularly evaluated (A.I.D. 1988). The purpose of the required evaluations is twofold – (1) monitoring of implementation and (2) evaluation of impact on the participant, project goals, and overall development goals. The recently developed Participant Training Evaluation System (PTES) consists of generic questions that are required to be part of all A.I.D. evaluations to establish a worldwide database for analysis. The core PTES information is to be augmented by mission-specific information. The PTES consists of four sets of questionnaires: pre-

departure, completion of training, post-training after six months, and post-training two years after return and at regular intervals thereafter.

The PTES is the most recent effort to overcome the methodological and conceptual obstacles to measuring impact that have left A.I.D. and other donors searching for an acceptable approach since the early 1960s. It is a source of great frustration to development professionals that after thirty years of training hundreds of thousands of people, there is no clear evidence, other than anecdotal, of the contribution of this training to development objectives.

A few general observations can be made about A.I.D. evaluations of participant training. First, most project-related training is not evaluated at all: a recent study found that participant training was not even mentioned in 60 percent of the evaluations reviewed. Evaluations that do review the training component generally just count the number of people trained rather than assessing short- or long-term impact (Hopstock et al. 1989). A study of training evaluations noted the problem and recommended that project evaluation guidelines be reviewed to develop a more useful system for assessing training activities and measures for determining their impact (Moser and Elmer 1986).

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Most evaluations of [multi-input projects] tend to be virtually silent on both operational and impact matters relating to participant training.

– Moser and Elmer 1986

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Program-level evaluations likewise take little note of training. In a recent impact evaluation of Indian agricultural universities (Busch 1988), assessment of the huge training effort was limited to a single statement of fact that over one

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thousand Indian faculty members were sponsored for graduate degrees. While the major focus of this evaluation was not training, it is nonetheless striking that a primary component of such magnitude was virtually ignored. This evaluation of a decades-long effort concentrated on specific institutional objectives failed to provide any programmatic insights regarding design or impact of overseas training.

Evaluations of training-only projects usually focus on operational issues rather than impact. Utilization is usually addressed in the context of trainee satisfaction or vague statements of using the training "a lot" or "a little." Of course, assessment of operational issues can be useful because the issues are common to most projects. Unfortunately, many studies limit the usefulness by tabulating rather than analyzing the data. For example, studies may tabulate the facts of implementation -- number of trainees who received orientation, participated in planning, were promoted, or were satisfied -- without analyzing the relationships among the facts to determine if participation in planning is related to greater trainee satisfaction or skill utilization.

The lack of impact data substantially limits the value of findings about operational issues. Design and implementation procedures are assessed without reference to whether they affected the outcome. While such research may yield information about management or efficiency, it provides no insight to project managers as to whether a change is needed, and if so, what change, to achieve project objectives.

The weaknesses of many existing evaluations are related to a few generic issues in evaluation design. Evaluations can be effectively designed only to the extent that clear thought is given to these issues, which are discussed in the following section.

## **Issues in the Evaluation of Training**

### **Evaluation Objectives and Interpretation of Results**

Clearly understood objectives are crucial to designing an evaluation that will obtain useful information. An evaluation can be conducted for one of several purposes: (1) to document institutional accountability and preserve a historical record, (2) to conduct research into what hap-

pens to people with training, (3) to measure achievement against specified training objectives (*impact*), or (4) to effect changes in existing or planned programs (*process*). The first three purposes may not be related to any planned decisions; the last purpose is explicitly to meet management needs.

Institutional accountability, at its most basic level, requires the least amount of rigor and planning. The primary design issue is determining the minimum information needed to meet basic accountability requirements. In most cases, this will be limited to total numbers trained, costs, and possibly trainee satisfaction. Most evaluations are done at this level.

On a higher level of program accountability, impact evaluation is increasingly of interest to A.I.D. managers in order to measure progress toward achieving strategic program objectives. However, meaningful evaluation on this level is directly dependent on whether or not training objectives were established at the design stage. The majority of training projects lack achievement-level objectives and are therefore almost impossible to evaluate meaningfully on this level. Most "impact evaluations" conducted by A.I.D. are in fact research into the effects of training on individual careers rather than assessment of planned achievements.

Process, or management-oriented studies, focus on a few key questions: What decisions will be influenced by the study, and how will the information collected be useful for those decisions? The litmus test for a good process study is whether or not the information can be acted upon.

A.I.D. guidance draws the distinction between evaluation methodologies and information requirements for project management and those for academic research. There is a direct trade-off between time and cost on one hand and the level of confidence in the results on the other. It concludes that "timeliness and expediency are the key criteria for management purposes even if this compromises data accuracy or comprehensiveness" (Herman 1987). While these needs are not mutually exclusive, the driving force for most A.I.D. studies should be management needs for project decisions.

In a recent A.I.D. workshop, respected evaluation experts Lee Cronbach, Donald Campbell, Leslie Kish, and Harold Levine were invited to discuss evaluation design and methodology (Bernbaum 1989; AID/LAC/DR/EHR 1989b). Dr. Cronbach initiated the discussion by emphasizing the user's information needs. He presented a matrix for making investment decisions about evaluation and, indirectly, assessing the importance of research questions. The matrix (see Figure V-1) compares the level of uncertainty about an issue with the amount of leverage, or power, to effect changes. If one has no information about an important issue (high uncertainty) and can take action to resolve problems (high leverage), a large investment is warranted (lower right-hand corner). If, on the other hand, one is already pretty sure of the answer (low uncertainty) and cannot change things anyway (low leverage), no significant investment in evaluation is needed (upper left-hand corner).

**FIGURE V-1**

**Decision Matrix for Investments in Evaluation**

		LEVEL OF UNCERTAINTY	
		LOW	HIGH
AMOUNT OF LEVERAGE	LOW	No or minimal investment	Moderate investment
	HIGH	Moderate investment	Large investment

This simple yet valuable decision tool is useful for (1) determining the cost that is justified for an evaluation, (2) assessing the degree of uncertainty about each question, and (3) forcing a systematic thought process – if you have this information, what specifically will you do with it?

Useful evaluations are based on appropriate and relevant research questions, the formulation of which is seldom easy. A common question posed for this study was, "Which is best, short-term or long-term training?" The only possible answer is that it depends on the objectives. For example, a case study in Central America concluded that short-term training is most effective in achieving quick results because the participant maintains a community or organizational position from which to work (Chesterfield et al. 1989). An evaluation in Nepal, however, concluded that long-term undergraduate level training in India (third-country training) has the greatest impact on an individual's career prospects (Kumar and Nacht 1989). Each study concluded that a type of training is best for a particular objective. The objectives for training differed in each case; therefore, the appropriate kind of training differed.

A similar study question is, "Where should I put my training money – health or agriculture, economists or field technicians?" Clearly the desired answer involves comparing the relative socioeconomic benefits in different sectors or fields of training, resulting in a priority list of training that gives the most "bang for the buck." One is tempted to answer in terms of methodology: Establishing economic value for a range of job categories or skills would be vastly time-consuming and inherently unreliable even for relatively standard professions in health or agriculture; assessing the contribution of non-standard positions such as community leaders or organizers would be even more difficult. Even if the measurements were reliable, the context would play a major role and could change even within a single country. The contribution of an individual in an enabling institutional or policy environment would be significantly different from that of someone with the same skills in a hostile environment.

However, a methodological objection may be a disservice because the question itself may be wrong. It implies a lack of program objectives, that the training is somehow an isolated activity. *Rather, sector, institutional, or project strategies and objectives should drive the type and nature of training. The justification for training should be derived from strategy-level objectives.*

Interpretation of evaluation results is equally important. The manager must be clear as to what the information means and how it can be

used for decision making. If utilization of short-term training is low, it may not be a reflection of the length or type of training, but rather of the planning, context, or institutional commitment. To be useful, the information must not only explain what is happening, but also why it is happening.

Asking the right questions and understanding what the results really mean is particularly hard for follow-on evaluations of participants from many different projects over many years. Generic questions about the adequacy of implementation procedures (selection, planning, orientation, etc.) offer little useful guidance unless they can be linked back to specific practices. Since procedures often differ across projects and time, the context can be lost and the information is of limited value in making specific adjustments.

#### **Project Objectives and Definitions of Success**

An evaluation assesses achievement in relation to objectives and expectations established in the project design. A good project design establishes reasonable expectations for achievement commensurate with the nature, level, and quality of the training. It is clearly unfair and unproductive to establish new objectives after the fact and then hold managers responsible for them. However, if the original design fails to establish clear objectives, the evaluation must focus on the output level (numbers trained), measure trainee satisfaction, or establish its own measures of success, such as promotion, salary increases, or other indicators. In some cases, the actual objectives of the program are overlooked in favor of "standard" criteria for success (see the example in Box V-1). All of these are poor substitutes for measurements that reflect what was originally intended.

Most impact-level evaluations have a problem defining objectives because analysis is not focused on any one project. Such studies seek to draw conclusions from the experiences of people trained in different fields over a period of decades and are therefore necessarily divorced from the original objectives of the training. Some evaluations lump many types of training experiences (long-term academic, observational tours, short-term technical) under the common rubric of "training" and then apply more or less standard criteria of success for all (promotion, salary, opinion of utilization, length of employment with

#### **BOX V-1**

##### **Technology Transfer in Tunisia: Evaluating Project Strategy and Objectives**

**Background.** USAID/Tunisia conducted two technology transfer projects with substantial amounts of graduate- and undergraduate-level participant training in the United States. A 1986 evaluation reviewed both projects from the viewpoint of technology transfer by participant training and concluded that they were "outstanding successes" as scholarship programs. The study found that the program had significant prestige, and competition for the scholarships was high. The indicators of success for the projects were (1) a high grade point average, (2) high rate of degree completion, (3) low dropout rate, and (4) high rate of return. The recommendation was that the training be continued because the manpower needs were not yet met.

**Assessment.** Two years later, an audit of the larger project reached very different conclusions. The previous evaluation had used inappropriate indicators that did not reflect the project objective — to wean Tunisia from dependence on overseas fellowships. The project feasibility studies and strategy had emphasized Government of Tunisia institutional development to plan and manage technology transfer rather than the transfer of specific skills. However, the project design and implementation concentrated on meeting training numbers rather than developing Government of Tunisia capability in HRD planning and management. The project design lacked a quantifiable purpose and failed to identify the manpower needs of training institutions that would eliminate dependence on overseas training. The project analyses failed to show why overseas training was considered to be a cost-effective approach to manpower development. Previous studies had shown that participant training did not reduce manpower deficits because few participants stayed in Tunisia.

**Lessons learned.** The lessons from this case apply to all phases of design, implementation, and evaluation, and illustrate once again how achieving project outputs can become more important than achieving the larger institutional development objectives. Clear and consistent objectives that drive project analysis, implementation, and evaluation are essential.

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sponsoring organization, etc.). For purposes of the evaluation, training becomes an objective in itself rather than an input contributing to a broader objective. Without considering the context in which training was designed, implemented, and justified, the conclusions have limited validity in terms of impact. However, such studies may be useful as research if they find a pattern of common experience among individuals who had a given type of training.

Before "success" can be measured, it must be defined in a meaningful way in the context of the project objectives. Part of the difficulty of drawing broader conclusions begins here — there is no universally used or accepted definition of success. In theory, the answer is easy: successful training contributes to economic and/or social development at a level equal to or exceeding cost of training. In practice, where some measurement is needed, the issue is less clear. One way to define success is to compare it to failure, but failed training projects are difficult to find. One A.I.D. HRD specialist stated flatly that there are no failed training projects. In fact, the only projects to be judged "failures" by evaluations failed to train the targeted number of people. This illustrates the working definition of success for most projects — the participants left, attended courses, and came back.

The official measures of project success in A.I.D. are the End of Project Status (EOPS) indicators, which serve as guides for both project design and evaluation. However, purpose-level objectives and indicators for training are often vague. Project-related training can justifiably be judged in light of overall project objectives if the training is directly contributory and essential to project success, such as faculty education for university projects. However, project objectives like "increased capacity" have limited value for project design or evaluation. Most often, the training component is neither mentioned nor implied in the objectives.

A related problem is the absence of *standards* of success. For example, even if promotion is an appropriate indicator, there should be some standard of achievement necessary to consider the project a success. The standard might be a percentage of participants promoted, or position achieved, or promotions received within a given time period. However, many project designs and evaluations ignore details of timing, linkage to

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An appropriate analogy for evaluating impact is that of a person taking target practice — without a target! Only after taking a few shots, the individual explores the terrain to find the marks left by the impact of the bullets and then draws a "bull's eye" around the mark and calls it a direct hit.

— Gulley 1987

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the training itself, and overall project objectives, and in effect define success as the level achieved. For example, one evaluation of a major training project found that 25 percent of the participants had been promoted (over an unspecified amount of time), indicating that the training contributed *directly* (emphasis is mine) to increased responsibility. One wonders at what point the percentage is low enough to be considered a failure, and how long it took some of the participants to be promoted.

The type of evaluation data collected must also be specific enough to make a standard meaningful. In some studies, the data rely on retrospective trainee opinions of whether the training was used "a lot," "somewhat," or "a little." A manager might understandably be at a loss to find an appropriate programmatic response to the finding that 65 percent of the trainees found the training "somewhat useful" or have "done something" with it.

To a degree, the difficulty in defining success is a conceptual problem that stems from a persistent tendency to view participant training as an end in itself rather than a means. As an input, training is a tool for achieving goals, for facilitating interventions, or for contributing to sustainability. In this framework, the context of stated objectives is crucial. If, on the other hand, training is seen as a purpose or an end in itself, the logical standard of success is completion of the training itself and working in the home country.

#### **Indicators of Success**

Objectives are put into concrete terms through explicit indicators that measure the specifics of achievement. Is it enough that the trainee simply does a better job at work, or are specific accomplishments needed? What is an indicator

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that the individual is doing a better job — his opinion, supervisors' opinions, promotion or salary increase, or an outside assessment of the quality of work? Indicators are a crucial factor for both design and evaluation, and care must be taken to understand what the data actually indicate.

General evaluation questions such as "what is the impact of training programs?" can result in efforts to establish blanket indicators of success for training. The usefulness of establishing the same criteria for trainees from short-term courses in public health as for individuals who achieved Ph.D.s in economics, ignoring the context and objectives of the training, is questionable. No single set of measures or indicators is appropriate or useful for all training programs. The impact, or even the definition of success, will depend on the context (institutional, policy, etc.) and the objectives and type of the training.

Identifying useful indicators of success is directly related to finding the appropriate level of analysis. Evaluations often mirror the implementation focus of training *individuals* rather than training within the context of a strategy of *organizational change*. Evaluation indicators therefore focus on the impact of training on the career of the individual participant. Although A.I.D. policy is that training is not for the purpose of advancing individual careers, the lack of other stated objectives may limit alternatives.

An important aspect of finding the right indicators is ensuring that they represent an impact or result of the skill enhancement derived from training rather than from other factors. Commonly used indicators such as salary or promotion may be misleading in institutional systems that do not reward merit. The determining factor of promotion in many countries may be seniority, personal or family connections, or other conditions (Gulley 1987). If this is the case, it is not illuminating to establish promotion as a standard of success. On the other hand, if promotion is largely automatic upon achievement of certain levels of training, then the promotion simply indicates that the individual attended training — a fact already known. It may not reflect increased capability. Alternatively, a promotion may move the trainee out of the area of specialty for which he was trained, thus limiting potential for utilization. Moreover, this standard implicitly assumes that the objective of the training was to

advance the individual. Even in a meritocracy, however, promotion may not be a reasonable expectation for the impact of some types of short-term courses. Thus, care must be taken to select appropriate indicators.

In one well-researched case, the training was actually an obstacle to promotion within the sponsoring organization (Gulley 1987). While the participants were attending long-term academic programs in the United States, management and supervisory positions were filled by their (untrained) contemporaries. A methodology that used promotion as an indicator and compared participants in the organization to a control group would reach unfavorable, and very misleading, conclusions about the impact of training.

Another way of defining appropriate indicators is to find an intermediate level close enough to the training to assume some linkage but removed enough to be meaningful. On the one hand, national economic performance statistics or even overall institutional performance may be too broad to be useful indicators. On the other hand, some evaluations never move beyond assessing the cost-effectiveness of actually conducting the course.

A useful exercise in thinking through evaluation indicators is to trace each one to specific aspects of design, implementation, or impact related to the finding. A sample approach to this exercise is illustrated using common indicators in Figure V-2. This chart is intended simply to illustrate the thinking process rather than to present conclusions or to be an exhaustive review. This exercise is useful in providing a bridge between process and end-use information.

### **Causality**

Determining the importance of showing direct causality is a key issue in the design of an evaluation. An A.I.D. discussion paper on evaluation reviewed this issue (Herman 1987). Historically, many evaluation systems assumed that causality not only could be measured but *must* be measured for a sound evaluation. However, the lack of control over external factors inherent in development projects results in sophisticated and expensive research designs to introduce statistical controls. The paper recommends a "softer" approach for many evaluations that emphasizes information needs of project

**FIGURE V-2**  
**Evaluation Indicators**

	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Measure of</b>
<b>Individual</b>	Completes course	Selection/preparation
	Learns new skills or attitude	Selection/preparation
	Is satisfied with course	Needs assessment, training plan, placement, course quality
	Returns to country	Selection, orientation, enforcement (bonding, contracts, etc.)
	Has appropriate job	Needs assessment, host country agreements
	Applies skills	Needs assessment, institutional analysis, quality of training, utilization
	Trains others	Project design, impact, spread effect
	Is promoted (merit)	Selection, needs assessment, quality of training, credentials
	Is promoted (seniority)	Unrelated
	Accomplishes specific organizational goals (training objectives)	Needs assessment, training request, quality of training, follow-on, organizational support
	Achieves specific professional accomplishments	Selection, quality of training (possibly), impact
	Assumes position of leadership or national prominence	Selection, possibly credentials, potential spread effect for impact, probably not result of training
<b>Project</b>	Projected numbers reached	Implementation, management, needs assessment
	Trainees return and work in planned jobs	Selection, needs assessment, planning
	Trainees remain at sponsoring organizations	Institutional analysis, government commitment
	Quality of organization's work improves	Needs assessment, quality of training
	Project objectives accomplished	Project design, needs assessment, training quality, impact
	Manpower or skill deficit reduced	Needs assessment

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managers rather than attempts to prove a direct causal linkage.

A conceptual paper prepared for A.I.D. in 1985 proposed a comparative methodology to evaluate the developmental impacts of A.I.D.-assisted training using control groups (Sanguinetti and Kimmel 1985). In this approach, which offers some interesting ideas about the assessment of training, primacy is given not only to establishing causality, but also to distinguishing the impact of A.I.D.-assisted training from other training. In selecting this approach, one is explicitly assigning as much importance to the sponsorship of the training as to its impact or utilization. Alternatively, one might make general observations about the value of U.S., third-country, or in-country education to career goals regardless of sponsorship simply by reviewing career patterns in the country. Such an approach might have the advantage of providing input into programming decisions rather than establishing a record for program accountability.

This issue must be clearly addressed and the implications understood in planning for project and program evaluations.

### **Methodology**

The discussions and approaches to evaluation methodology can be complex and confusing to people unfamiliar with the concepts. The issues largely boil down to efforts to ensure (1) the validity of the data (through multiple sources, appropriate questions and techniques, etc.), (2) the needed degree of causality, and (3) the significance or meaning of the findings. While important, the choice of methodology is not a primary consideration; rather it is a secondary issue after the very difficult questions of objectives, audience, and indicators are settled. The methodology should maintain adequate flexibility to identify unanticipated results as well as forecasted effects.

The main methodological issues raised in the literature, and reflected in the different approaches taken by A.I.D., are the use of pre- and post-training tests or control groups to improve attribution of change to the training; the definition of appropriate indicators; the length of time for longitudinal follow-on; the use of participatory or observer evaluation modes; and the appropriate use of quantitative and qualitative approaches. The discussion of specific evalua-

tions below illustrates some of these approaches. There is no "right" approach — the right methodology is a reflection of study objectives, information needed, and funding and time available.

Methodological issues were discussed at length in the CLASP impact evaluation workshop (Bernbaum 1989). The main indicators of CLASP were defined as (1) impact of training on attitudes and knowledge about the United States, (2) impact of training on career development, and (3) impact of training on leadership skills. The group concluded that structured quantitative measures were less likely to yield useful data in these areas than were qualitative approaches. Career development and leadership were both recognized as difficult to quantify and measure reliably over a period of time, and the manifestation of these impacts may change. Control groups and pre-test data were not considered feasible or cost-effective for this project; retrospective accounts of returned participants were considered reliable enough. On the issue of the appropriate length of time to collect longitudinal data, the group agreed that any causal linkage weakens over time and the effects of training interventions dissipate. Moreover, some behaviors will go "underground" and be less readily observable. It was decided that one or two follow-ons for short-term participants over a year's time were sufficient. The follow-on period for long-term trainees needed to be considered further. In any case, the point was made that agreement to participate in a set number of follow-on surveys at set times should be included in the initial training contract. Moreover, this should be equally binding on A.I.D. to avoid "evaluating people to death."

The discussions of methodology, objectives, cost, and reliability show that some questions can be answered more easily than others. Some types of training inherently are more difficult to evaluate or require longer-term and more costly studies. This fact can be recognized and placed in the context of project objectives. It should not, however, be allowed to drive programming decisions. On several occasions in this study, people indicated that some types of training were no longer being offered because the impact was long-term and difficult to measure. This implies either that the objectives were not clear to begin with or that evaluation concerns are being allowed to dictate programming decisions.

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## **Evaluation versus Research**

Some distinction is probably needed between what is strictly evaluation of achievement of planned objectives and what is, in effect, operational research into effects of training. Many of the studies fall into this latter category, although they are considered to be evaluations. The difference really lies in the relationship to project objectives. An evaluation should be structured so as to measure achievement in relation to objectives. Research is structured so as to answer questions about effect, such as impact of different types of training in different fields on promotion, application, job mobility, etc. Some of the research-type studies have been useful in identifying unintended effects of training, such as the tendency of public sector employees to use their new credentials to find employment in the private sector.

The importance of the difference lies primarily in the rigor and structure of the study. If decision makers recognize and accept that what they want to do is applied research, there is less need to contort project objectives and indicators into an artificially "evaluable" structure.

## **Overview of Existing Evaluations and Methodologies**

As discussed above, most training is either not evaluated at all or the evaluation is limited to operational concerns. The operational or process evaluations are carried out either as part of the ongoing project monitoring or as a final evaluation at the output level. A more limited number of evaluations are designated as impact evaluations that are concerned with measuring achievements at the purpose or goal level. The findings of the operational studies have been incorporated into the previous chapters on design and implementation, and the salient characteristics of these evaluation designs have been discussed above. This section will address the perplexing issue of evaluating long-term impact.

A.I.D. has conducted only one worldwide impact evaluation. This longitudinal study of participant training, conducted by the Bureau for Social Science Research (BSSR), completed personal interviews with returned participants in thirty countries between 1960 and 1966 (Gollin 1969). A variety of reports on the country, regional, and worldwide level were produced, as

well as special reports and analyses. The objectives of the evaluation were to determine levels of utilization, identify factors affecting utilization, review nontechnical aspects and administrative procedures, and assess other issues such as participants' age and value of third-country training.

The study established utilization as the key objective and cross-tabulated this with most of the other variables, including selection, planning, satisfaction, orientation, employment status, and follow-on. The findings represented opinions of the participants rather than those of outside observers. The study linked greater utilization with more technically oriented fields, longer-term rather than short-term training, U.S. or Far East rather than third-country placement, a close relationship with USAID before and after training, and involvement of the participant and his or her supervisor in planning the program. The recommendations emphasized greater participant and supervisor participation, more long-term programs, better formulation of training needs in the design stage, better orientation about program content, and improved follow-on activities and contact with the USAID mission.

The BSSR evaluation was notable for the sheer scale of the study and the extensive cross-tabulation of perceived utilization with design and implementation issues. The study did not assess cost-effectiveness or attempt to place a value on the benefits. A second effort at worldwide assessment in 1967-1972 resulted in more than 10,000 exit interviews with returning participants but was never expanded to include pre-departure and follow-on interviews in-country. Therefore the study could not provide any insights into the eventual value of the training.

Recognizing the methodological and conceptual problems in attributing developmental changes to a training experience, in 1974 A.I.D. attempted to develop and test criteria and a methodology to measure the impact of training on a participant's job performance. The contractor, the American Institutes for Research (AIR), developed and field tested a methodology that started with identification of specific changes (critical incidents) and then traced them back to a training experience (Schubert 1976). The methodology

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was criticized by A.I.D. as having neither a control group nor a systematic pre-training/post-training assessment through which to identify actual changes in behavior, as well as lacking a mechanism for third-party validation (Elim 1977). The A.I.D. response also questioned the decisions to collect reports only in the six months after return and to adjust for the role of the supervisor. While recognizing that neither this nor any other known methodology could adequately measure the degree of impact, the A.I.D. conclusion was that this approach would not be useful in developing a quality control system for the implementation of training.

In the 1980s, A.I.D. sponsored a study to review evaluation findings about participant training since the 1950s, analyze the findings by type of project, and develop a key bibliography of documents (Moser and Elmer 1986). This study offered useful insights into the nature and extent of training evaluations in A.I.D. and noted that the same findings were repeated year after year, raising questions about management response to lessons learned. Since the study reviewed only existing documentation in A.I.D., the focus was on operational issues rather than impact.

Apart from the efforts to make global conclusions about the A.I.D. training program, impact evaluations have been conducted for country and regional projects. It should be noted that the definition and indicators of "impact," research methodologies, and purposes of the evaluation differ among the studies. The following descriptions of relatively recent A.I.D. evaluations illustrate some of the documentation available.

- *USAID/Dominican Republic.* Approximately 25 percent of the participants who were trained from 1979 through 1988 were interviewed on such indicators as satisfaction, employment and salary status, continuing contact with the United States, relevance and utilization, and recommendations for improvements. The study included short- and long-term, academic and technical, and U.S. and third-country participants. All answers were the retrospective opinions of the participants. (Murphy and Ramirez 1988)
- *USAID/Dominican Republic.* This study focused on long-term training in agriculture. Over half of the 450 individuals trained from 1967 to 1989 were given questionnaires

addressing issues of employment, salary, job changes, utilization and spread effect, and training implementation and follow-on. The retrospective opinions of the participants were validated through questionnaires to the sponsoring institutions and analysis of the USAID database. The results were disaggregated by sector, field of study, sex, and other variables. (J.E. Austin Associates 1990)

- *USAID/Nepal.* The mission conducted three major evaluation studies: a sample survey of returned trainees; a set of organizational case studies; and a series of in-depth interviews on selected issues of participant training. AID/Washington then synthesized the reports to highlight the lessons learned. The survey tracked approximately 20 percent of the 1,719 people who had been trained abroad for at least twelve months since 1951. Of the sample group, 44 percent had received B.S. degrees, mostly from India; 26 percent had M.S. degrees; 3 percent had Ph.D.s; and 27 percent received nondegree training. The survey tracked career impact and utilization. The institutional case studies attempted to identify the impact of the returned participants and concluded that the trainees had raised the level of skills and professionalism of the sponsoring organizations. The great majority of the returnees had remained with the public sector. The study identified achievements of the organizations and the roles played by the trainees and analyzed the context. (Timilsina et al. 1987; Himalayan Studies Centre 1988; Kumar and Nacht 1989).
- *USAID/Pakistan.* The mission sponsors the largest USAID training program in the world and has conducted several evaluations in recent years. One evaluation of training for an agricultural research project used questionnaires focused on implementation issues and effectiveness of training for long- and short-term trainees. All responses represented retrospective opinions of the trainees, and little analysis beyond straight tabulation was conducted. The somewhat anecdotal approach to assessing utilization drew on specific instances of outstanding research contributions. In these cases, the link back to graduate training in agricultural research was reasonable to assume (Gant 1986). An evaluation of the Development Support Training Project reviewed a range of planning, operational, utilization, and

organization issues. The study interviewed 124 returned short- and long-term participants about operational issues as well as perceived relationship of the training to the job and career impact. The study also interviewed supervisors on operational and utilization questions. (MSI 1989)

- *Africa.* A survey of 800 AFGRAD alumni relied on retrospective opinions to determine utilization and impact on African development. Indicators used were employment, promotions, specific actions taken to initiate change, continued contact with the United States, and recommendations for improvement.
- *CLASP.* Country evaluations – consisting of surveys of returned trainees as well as of reviews of the administrative mechanisms related to the entire process from trainee recruitment to follow-on – have been conducted in all the countries of Central America, the Caribbean, and Andean region that participate in CLASP. The impact indicators have been

trainee satisfaction and perceptions of the United States; in-country surveys have also probed trainees' assessment of the applicability of the training to their countries. One study of CLASP trainees provided useful insights as a field test for the potential value of qualitative approaches for the evaluations of impact (Chesterfield et al. 1989), but the subject missions questioned whether the small number of cases was representative of the overall project experience. CLASP II evaluation is designed to combine qualitative and quantitative approaches, and indicators will focus on the applicability of training and the U.S. experience on the job and in the community (see Box V-2).

One A.I.D. project evaluation is notable for proposing a conceptual model and study methodology for training (Lukomski 1983). The model begins with the recognition that each step of a successful training program builds on the previous one and that the analysis must work through the sequence of steps and results. The

#### BOX V-2 CLASP II Evaluation

**Background.** Evaluation under CLASP II represents an important conceptual advance from that of the first years of CLASP. As in the past, data on trainee satisfaction and attitudes as well as certain process indicators specific to the program will continue to be gathered while trainees are in the United States and after they return home. However, a conceptual shift in evaluation practice reorients both the methodology employed and the overall goals.

First, traditional quantitative methodologies are now augmented and complemented by "qualitative" or "naturalistic" approaches, using such techniques as focus groups with trainees, open-ended interviewing, and case studies which may highlight special program initiatives or post-training accomplishments of individual returnees or training groups. These methodological innovations are designed to ensure the achievement of the second area of refinement in the evaluation model, i.e., a greater attention to the assessment of the impact of CLASP training. Here, indicators to be used include the role of the trainee in community activities; patterns of career advancement and changes in activities in the work place; participation in formal follow-on activities; and the use of technical, Experience America, or leadership skills acquired in CLASP training on the job or in the community.

**Experience.** A recent evaluation of CAPS in Guatemala was the first in-country endeavor to use this new approach. A survey was conducted of nearly 500 returnees, using a proportional sample of the principal categories of trainees. A new survey instrument was designed to respond to the increased emphasis on skills application and community participation. Sixteen focus groups were carried out with specific subgroupings of the trainee population; the themes of the survey were expanded in free-ranging dialogue, and the trainees brought forward new perspectives and information. Case studies also formed part of the effort, focusing on special activities in which the trainees were engaged, including a reforestation project and trainee-initiated, small-scale training initiatives. The result of this new multi-disciplinary approach is a broader understanding of how the trainees themselves perceive the impact of CLASP training on their lives as well as documentation of the concrete activities that illustrate this impact.

relationship between levels is specified. By addressing issues at all stages, the model seeks to examine activities in the context of results so that reasons for success or failure can be determined. This uses a shortcut logic that says if higher-level stages are successful, then lower-level foundations are also adequate. Possibly a more important insight, the proposal argues that the standard operational evaluations (with a focus on levels 4-8) are primarily monitoring exercises that "search for problems and/or mistakes which may, or may not, have caused programs to fail" (emphasis is mine) (Lukomski 1983). The levels of analysis are:

**Level**

- 1 Select *sector* to be assisted.
- 2 Select *institution* to be assisted within sector.
- 3 Identify *problem* to be solved in institution.
- 4 Select *individual* to solve problem.
- 5 Prepare *participant* for training program.
- 6 Establish *program objectives* (training needs).
- 7 Design training program (content, type, duration).
- 8 Implement *training*.
- 9 Program *objectives met* (individual's training needs satisfied).
- 10 Participant *uses knowledge* gained.
- 11 Institution's *problem solved*.
- 12 *Institution* more efficient or effective.
- 13 *Sector* conditions improve.

Lukomski argues that evaluations at levels 11, 12, and 13 are seldom appropriate or necessary and should be limited to a few cases. All data can be obtained by questionnaires and the participant database. Success is measured on level 9 (do participants believe that their needs were met) and level 10 (are they able to use the new knowledge). While this structure does provide some insights into the linkages between process and impact, one notes that the analytical basis for training (institutional and policy context and constraints to solving the problem) that is the true link from levels 1-3 and levels 10-12 is not mentioned.

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) sponsored a series of studies about experience and evaluations of human resource development, resulting in a set of evaluation guidelines for different types of HRD interven-

tions. The review of evaluation methodology found that the majority of project evaluations used retrospective descriptive data only, using either a survey of the target group or existing project data. Only 2 percent of the evaluations used extensive field studies or a quasi-experimental approach. The majority of the studies approached the evaluation as a standard comparison of outputs and objectives with accomplishments. The review found that analysis of economic and social indicators (including changes in value or attitude) was uneven, with many evaluations not addressing social changes at all. Impact assessment was generally better for specific impacts of project training than assessment of cumulative effects (CIDA 1985). As with the A.I.D. experience, the CIDA study found instances where the indicators of success were not clearly identified.

Other organizations have also initiated studies of the impact and utilization of scholarships and training. The Institute for International Education (IIE) has sponsored numerous research papers over the years. In one study, the researchers interviewed a range of informed people in three countries who were considered likely to have interesting reflections on the topic of intellectual and professional decay. The study relied on free-flowing conversations rather than on a set questionnaire (Goodwin and Nacht 1986). An earlier study of returned Brazilian scholarship recipients also favored the methodology of extended and partially structured interviews over large-scale questionnaires to address issues such as utilization and reentry (Goodwin and Nacht 1984).

Another particularly interesting study of training, conducted by James Gulley for his dissertation research, focuses on the key issue and dilemma of development training: the link between career impact for individuals and organizational-institutional change (Gulley 1987). This study focused on the impact of graduate-level and technical training of 53 staff members of the Studies and Planning Service (SPS) in Zaire. In this instance, the objectives of the specific training studied were very clear, enabling the researcher to look at impact on different levels related to the same objective. The evaluation model shown in Figure V-3 focuses on three levels of impact: training leading to personal and professional growth, which has an effect on organizational develop-

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ment (operational effectiveness) and which in turn contributes to institutional development (sustainability), and eventually social/economic growth. The point is emphasized that survival of the organization is not sufficient for its institutionalization. Rather, the institutionalization process requires not only survivability but also legitimacy, capacity to perform, linkages or exchanges, adaptability, and sustainability.

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Organizational development focuses primarily on the effectiveness of internal operations. Institutional development focuses on the organization in relationship to its external environment and its capacity to fulfill its mission over time.

— *Gulley 1987*

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The research methodology used is equally interesting. The study mixes quantitative and qualitative data to achieve multiple sources and methods of data collection. In-depth interviews were conducted with four major sources and subgroups within each source: (1) returned participants still employed in SPS and those employed outside SPS; (2) comparison groups inside and outside of SPS; (3) key observers (SPS personnel and supervisors, technical advisors, etc.); and (4) users of SPS services. These sources mixed the perceptions of cultural and organizational insiders and outsiders and balanced other document sources.

The value of this model is immediately apparent. The study explicitly addresses the issue of institutionalization and sustainability, arguing that the "question of impact of training must be seen within the framework of institutional development" (Gulley 1987). Unlike many studies and development officials, it does not beg the question and implicitly accept the argument that training has the desired impact as long as the individual stays in the country. The limitations, however, are also evident — the approach is relatively expensive and can only be used where the training is clearly related to organizational objectives.

The Gulley study provides valuable insights into the whole issue of the impact of training in

addition to testing a methodology. In this case, the environment was hostile; personnel policies, wage levels, economic decline, political tensions, and bureaucratic structure all discouraged retention of staff and utilization of training. More than 75 percent of the returned participants had left the sponsoring institution, and about 60 percent had left the Department of Agriculture entirely. Nonetheless, the study concluded that the SPS had developed as an organization, acquiring the best-trained staff in the ministry and producing the best information on agriculture in the country.

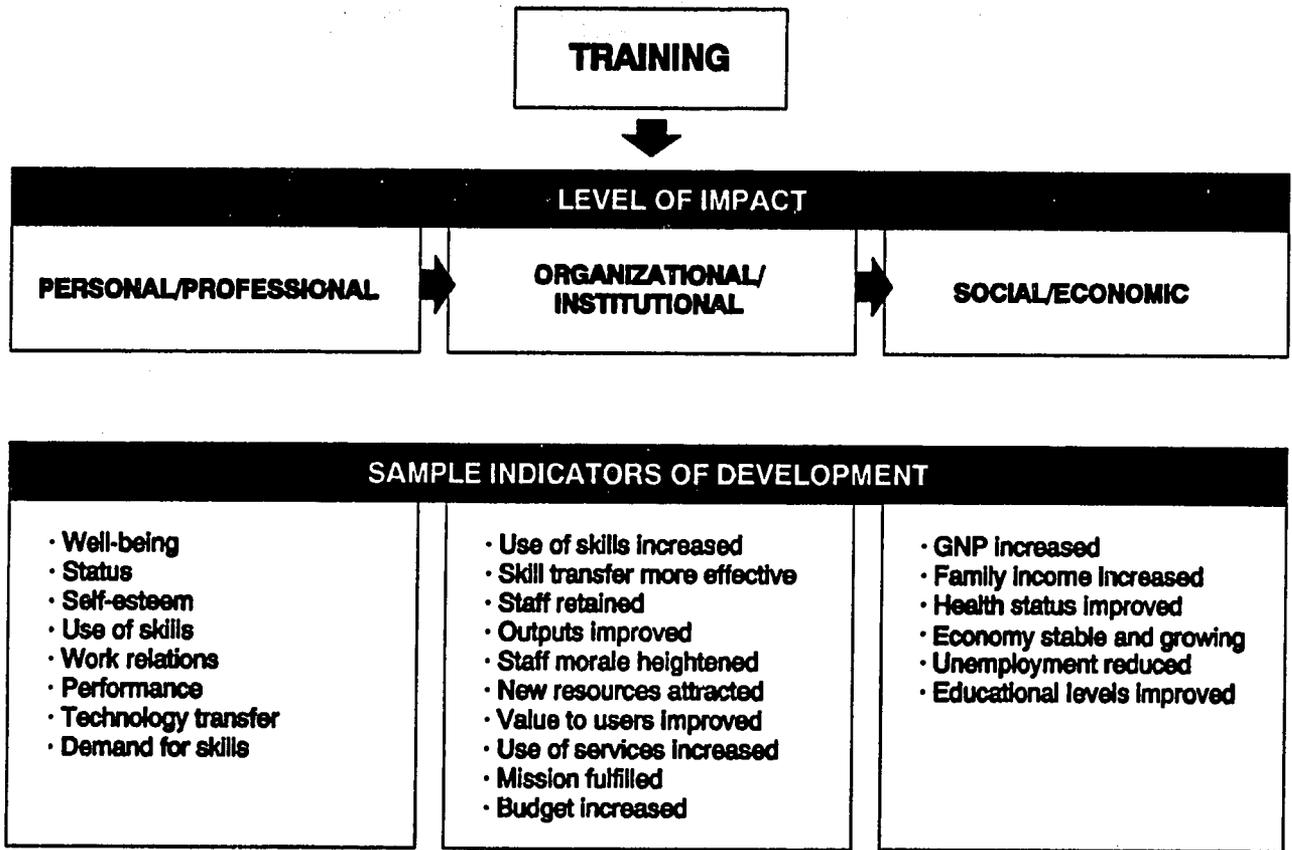
On the institutional level, SPS had improved its linkages and status in the government and had seen increased demand for its services and outputs. Interestingly, the participants who had left for other jobs in the agricultural sector contributed to the unit's institutionalization by encouraging the use of SPS services by other organizations and by their own professional competence and achievements. SPS is recognized as a source of capable professionals. In this case, the trade-off is between two beneficial, although different, impacts on the sponsoring institution. In losing staff, "SPS has given up technical expertise but in return has gained greater access to agricultural policy and decision making" (Gulley 1987, 138).

In pointing out the dynamics of the institutional issues, Gulley also highlights the basic dilemma facing donor agencies. Whatever the benefits to institutionalization, the high level of staff attrition requires a continuing flow of new scholarships to maintain the quality of output. This fact and the implications for policy and programming need to be explicitly recognized in future program decisions.

### **Reducing Uncertainty: Conclusions from Existing Evaluations**

In the spirit of the Cronbach investment matrix (Figure V-1), the conclusions of a number of program and project evaluations were reviewed to determine if the level of uncertainty on some issues had been reduced. Despite the methodological and conceptual differences of existing evaluations, some reduction of the level of uncertainty on certain issues might be possible.

**FIGURE V-3**  
**Gulley Model for Evaluation of Training**



There are inevitable differences among countries that preclude blanket conclusions. Moreover, even some operational issues that are widely addressed may reach, at best, very general conclusions. For example, consistent evaluation recommendations for improved orientation procedures or follow-on programs only show that current programs are weak and there is a "felt need" for improvement. They do not provide specific guidance for investment decisions on alternative types or levels of activities. More important, they do not measure the actual value of the programs on the bottom line – achieving specific objectives. Virtually no evaluations have consistently compared the impact of programs with good orientation or follow-on activities with those with poor or nonexistent activities.

Given these very real caveats, existing evaluations do show some consistent trends in terms of general effects of training on individual careers

and perceived utility. Although frequently used as proxy indicators for program impact, these effects are seldom focused enough to be meaningful measures of achievement of program objectives. Program evaluations must necessarily be based on clearly established relationships between the training and the strategic objectives. Nonetheless, these findings do provide information that can improve our understanding of training effects and can improve project designs. The general patterns found in existing evaluations include:

- Most participants return to their home countries and take appropriate jobs. Most will remain employed in their sectors of expertise. However, nonreturn rates vary substantially by country. The numbers of participants who remain in the home country throughout their complete careers also vary by country.

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- Most returnees agree that training was worthwhile and would recommend the program to others.
  - Most returnees agree that they utilize the training to some degree. The measures and percentages may vary, but, in general, a high proportion use the training.
  - Many returned participants have risen to positions of great administrative, political, and scientific prominence in their countries. Many individuals have made significant contributions to their countries. A.I.D. officials have found that this often improves working relationships in addition to strengthening the host country organizations.
  - Over time, most participants will be promoted. However, training may have little impact on achieving this in the public sector.
  - In many countries, a large proportion of returned trainees move from the public to the private sector. There are a few demonstrated exceptions to this trend (e.g., Nepal), but, in general, the private sector is often the ultimate beneficiary of training although it has traditionally sponsored few trainees. In some fields of training (e.g., business management, hotel management), the private sector beneficiaries may be multi-national firms or very large businesses.
  - Long-term academic training in the United States culminating in a degree, particularly a graduate degree, appears to increase job mobility within the home country (to the private sector) and outside of the country.
  - Degree equivalency and acceptance is an important factor affecting utilization and career development in undergraduate and A.A.-level academic training. The situation is highly country-specific.
  - Over time, most participants' salaries will increase. In some cases this is the result of training. However, significant salary increases are usually linked to a move to the private sector, which may be facilitated by the credentials (e.g., a degree) received from the training.
  - Educational institutions generally have higher return rates, longer staff retention, and better utilization of returned participants.
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## Lessons Learned

In addition to the general lessons discussed above, some conclusions can be drawn about the process of evaluating participant training.

- The feasibility of evaluating the long-term impact of specific types of training should not drive program decisions. Some long-term linkages may not be possible to evaluate but may be reasonable to assume.
- Missions should target studies to shed light on specific design and implementation issues.
- Missions should distinguish between monitoring functions and evaluation issues.
- Missions should distinguish between research questions and evaluation questions.
- The intended use of the training should be specified either on the organizational or the individual level. This specificity facilitates both initial justification and planning of training as well as establishment of plausible causality.
- Evaluations should clearly distinguish between planned and unplanned events.
- Training should not be evaluated against criteria or objectives that were not originally established for the project. Programs or projects lacking clear linkage to strategic objectives or project achievements should probably be evaluated only on the level of accountability or process. However, since project-related training can be expected to have specific linkage to project objectives, it should be evaluated in terms of its contribution to those objectives.
- In most cases, impact evaluations for training-only projects are possible only if the cumulative total of training is expected to have a specific impact or if specific expected achievements have been established for each individual or group of trainees. In this latter case, project achievement can be measured in terms of the percentage of trainees who accomplish the stated objectives.

**Recommendations:** Recommendations for evaluating existing training projects must be distinguished from those for evaluating future projects. As most existing projects lack a clear set of objectives and indicators and in any case were designed prior to the establishment of program-level strategic objectives, evaluations should be narrowly focused on answering practical questions that can improve future projects. In some countries, this may start with an acceptance of the general findings about career impact and focus on more specific operational questions, such as:

- What are the differences in terms of the planning and implementation of training for private sector workers compared to public sector workers?
- What is a reasonable level of effort to put into recruitment, selection, and placement? What is the minimum level of effort needed to reduce poor placements, failure, and nonreturn?
- What is the impact of the A.I.D. policy on dependent travel? Are there reasonable alternatives that would not pose excessive risks of nonreturn? Under what conditions might these alternative approaches be feasible?
- What is the impact of using strict selection criteria that include leadership or community involvement on return rates, use of training, and subsequent career development?

Project-related training should be evaluated primarily in terms of its contribution to overall project objectives, not in terms of its impact on individual careers.

The design and focus of project and program evaluations for future training activities will depend on the ability of USAID missions to clearly establish objectives, indicators, and linkages to strategic objectives. This will require much more management attention and planning on the strategy and program levels than has been the case in the past. If this is done, evaluation of achievement at the program level will become more feasible.

# VI

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## **Mission Management of Training**

The discussions in the previous chapters have pointed out two important aspects of how USAID missions deal with participant training: (1) participant training is usually seen as an isolated activity or only within the context of a single project, and (2) despite repeated evaluation findings about the requirements of an effective training activity, few projects seem to learn from experience. This section will review how some USAID missions plan and implement training activities and the relationship of this management structure to evaluation findings.

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No element of an economic assistance program is more labor intensive than development training.

— *AID/Office for  
International Training 1983*

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The information for this section comes from a limited sample. Four missions in the LAC region were selected for program and project document reviews, and field interviews were conducted with representatives from all offices. The sample was intended to meet several criteria: distinct programmatic approach to training as evidenced by the mix of training activities, innovative approaches to training exhibited in some projects, and a range of different types of training projects. In addition, discussions were held with training officers from three other missions and with A.I.D. officials in Washington about their mission experience. The answers primarily reflect management in missions in the LAC region, although individuals did discuss their experiences in other missions and regions. With the caveat that this was not intended to be a representative survey of USAID missions, the responses were generally consistent and offer some insights into issues related to the mission management of training.

The primary findings, noted in previous chapters of this study, are that (1) most training is designed and conceptualized on a project-by-project basis rather than within the context of a program or strategy; (2) few missions apply a consistent approach to design and implementation of training due to lack of either mission policies or an organizational mechanism to provide quality control in all projects; and (3) training projects in general receive limited management attention.

## **HRD Program Strategy in USAID Missions**

As was discussed in Chapter II on program and context, few if any missions develop a strategy framework for training or for overall human resource development. Rather, the organizational and policy status of training in most missions reinforces the idea that training is a functional rather than a strategy issue. Training and human resource development are seldom an integral part of strategies or analyses at either the sector or the program level.

None of the missions visited had an operational strategy for human resource development. USAID/Jamaica prepared a draft HRD strategy statement that was to serve as a framework for integrating sectoral strategies (see Box VI-1) (Windham 1989). The strategy laid out the information and decision requirements for the technical sectors to be included, but no further action was taken.

The primary constraints to developing a strategic approach to HRD that would emphasize program-level impact on a cross-sectoral basis appear to be lack of time, office politics, and lack of perceived need. Several people mentioned time constraints as critical; even if they wanted to work through such a strategy, they have neither the time nor funds available to do it. A response to this argument by one HRD officer was that

**BOX VI-1**  
**USAID/Jamaica**  
**Human Resource Development Strategy**

**Background.** In late 1988, USAID/Jamaica contracted an education specialist to develop a framework for understanding and addressing human resource problems in Jamaica. At issue was how the HRD office could effectively interact and coordinate with human resource development activities in the other sectors. The goal was to sharpen the focus of mission HRD activities to increase their impact.

**Experience.** The expectation was that the study would stimulate an iterative process that would culminate in a mission strategy. The initial strategy statement would conduct some basic analysis of existing HRD supply and demand in relation to USAID objectives and establish a framework for more intensive review for each sector. At the completion of each sector review, the HRD office could then develop an overall strategy to meet the needs. This overall strategy might be partially implemented through a multi-sectoral participant training program.

The basic framework proposed in the study was that each sector program would assess current human resource needs, reassess future needs in terms of alternative labor market utilization systems, and develop recommendations for improving utilization as well as production of human resources. The paper stressed that emphasis on production alone would be inappropriate given the structural constraints to utilization.

**Outcome.** After completion of the initial strategy, no further action was taken. Opposition from other technical offices to the idea of increased work with reduced flexibility and control of training resources was significant, and the strategy was not a priority of mission management.

developing a strategy is not that hard — the hard part was accepting the implicit limitations of a strategic focus on some areas.

Office politics is possibly a poor choice of words to describe the constraint on strategic development, as it implies ignoble motives. At issue is the legitimate question of who should control the use of agriculture or health funds in training. Establishment of strategies and policies *limits* potential uses. Because training is seen and used in many different ways — to build relation-

ships with ministers and institutions, to find the best and the brightest, to achieve institutional goals, to respond to targets of opportunity — there will always be some reluctance to give up control.

Finally, some A.I.D. officials simply do not see the need for such a strategy. A conceptual focus on project-related training and a definition of needs strictly on the project level makes a strategic approach an unnecessary burden.

As A.I.D. begins to emphasize a development philosophy based on program-level objectives and indicators, however, training and HRD strategies may assume greater importance. As the focus of A.I.D. interventions moves away from projects, it may become more clear that program- or national-level impact is not achieved by training, but rather by training systems and institutional development. A program-level view encourages better coordination of both process and content of training for institutional impact. An obvious example is the Ecuador training system discussed in Chapter II, Program and Context (see Box II-2). The development of a national capability in planning training activities was marginalized by the lack of a mission HRD strategy. A program orientation, rather than the dominant project orientation of that period, might well have recognized the program-level impact possible.

The primary tool in A.I.D. for program-level planning and monitoring of training is the **Country Training Plan (CTP)**, a required document intended for strategy development and joint planning with the host country (A.I.D. 1988). Although the CTP has been a high profile activity in the LAC Bureau, this has largely been in the context of monitoring CLASP rather than developing training strategies; other mission training activities are only included in the tables, without text reference to objectives or strategies.

The use of the CTP by USAID missions in the region reflects its origins as a project report. None of the missions visited uses the CTP as a management or planning tool — it is seen as an annual reporting requirement that is duplicative of other project-level training statistics reported in other formats. The CTP is neither used nor conceptualized as a tool for planning or reviewing training activities on the sector level. One education officer made the candid assessment

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that if he called a meeting to discuss the CTP or training strategy, no one would come. Even those managers who recognized its potential found the format too detailed for management use. One HRD office manager found that the process of developing the document was useful for thinking the issues through in her office, even though the document itself was not used. This perception never was offered by representatives of other technical offices.

It is clear from Handbook 10 guidance that the Office of International Training (OIT) sees the CTP in broader terms, as providing a framework for linking training to Country Development Strategy Statement (CDSS) objectives and for conducting joint planning with the host government. It is also clear, however, that the field offices, at least in the LAC Bureau, neither use nor conceptualize it in those terms. To some degree, the Bureau's requirement for annual CTP reports encourages this perception. The Bureau needs to review its use of the CTP in light of the new structure of CLASP II, decide what the primary purpose and audience for the document is, and determine if the information gathered justifies the burden on the missions. Future utilization of the CTP as a program tool may require some restructuring of the document to be more useful for mission purposes.

#### **Management Responsibilities for Training**

A.I.D. policy is to designate a U.S. foreign service officer to serve as mission training officer to oversee the participant training program, ensure compliance with A.I.D. policy and procedures, and prepare the Country Training Plan (A.I.D. 1988). Although often in the education, general development, or program office, the designated individual may be from any technical area. The training officer has a cross-sectoral responsibility to assist technical offices and the host country in project design; needs assessments; training plans and schedules; training cost analysis; selection, orientation, placement, monitoring, and documentation; and evaluation and follow-on activities. In addition, mission directors are "personally responsible for appropriate conduct of follow-on activities" and are required to designate a special follow-on officer for this purpose (A.I.D. 1988, 3-2).

Since most USAID mission training officers have no background in training, the role primarily

involves administrative oversight of the FSN (local-hire employees) training specialists who understand the operational requirements of implementing the program. It is common for everyone in the mission to leave all aspects of training to the FSN training specialist, including preparation of the CTP. This is effective because the FSN training specialists have developed expertise in the complex and detailed procedures required to implement a training program.

However, the conceptual management of training does not appear to be as effective as the operational elements. Because training is viewed as an implementation function rather than a strategy or planning element, few missions have staff with interest or knowledge of training in relation to program strategy, project design, needs analysis, evaluation, and follow-on. Most people interviewed felt that the FSN staff have developed expertise in specific implementation issues and are seldom adequately exposed to broader aspects of A.I.D. program and project design to effectively fill this role. Thus, many missions have no one with the authority or knowledge to provide a cross-cutting, broad vision of training policy, evaluation, or follow-on; to coordinate training in different projects; or to apply common standards for participant training in all projects.

Each mission allocates authority and responsibility for training differently. Mission training offices are usually responsible for reporting, while processing, including selection and placement decisions, may be delegated to the technical offices, a mission committee, or, in some cases, contractors. Probably the most common system is to assign training decisions to technical offices, with the training office functioning as a service office. Contractors are usually hired on a project basis, although some missions may use a blanket mission training contract to concentrate policy and operational decisions in one office. An example of this is the Pakistan Development Training Support Project (DTSP) described in Box VI-2.

One of the questions raised for this study was why evaluations over a thirty-year period repeated the same recommendations with little apparent response. Studies since the worldwide

### BOX VI-2

#### Pakistan Development Support Training Project

**Background.** The Development Support Training Project (DSTP) is a comprehensive training project in Pakistan that includes overseas participant training, in-country English language training, in-country management training and institutional strengthening, and assistance to disadvantaged provinces. The project is large, with total funding of \$75 million. In addition to having specific project objectives, USAID/Pakistan uses the project as an implementation mechanism for other mission participant training by allowing buy-ins to the placement contract, which may total another \$65 million by the end of the project.

**Experience.** The use of a central participant placement and support contract allows the mission to benefit from economies of scale, potentially improved coordination of training activities, and the use of standard and higher-quality implementation practices. For example, economies of scale allow for the cost-effective development of standard ELT and orientation programs that could not be justified on a project-by-project basis. The standard orientation program offered to all participants may be expanded to two to three days – considerably longer than could otherwise be justified.

**Lessons learned.** The DSTP approach encourages a uniformity of practice for all mission training activities; a centralized mechanism for dealing with host country organizations to better coordinate training; potential for mission-wide, cost-effective follow-on programs; and greater consistency in evaluation methods, data, and approach.

evaluation in the early 1960s have recommended improved orientation programs, more involvement of trainees and supervisors in planning, and effective follow-on programs. The probable reason that these findings have not been consistently incorporated in program and project design is that few people know that such a pattern exists. Only one of the A.I.D. officials interviewed for this study was aware of the major retrospective review and analysis of participant training in A.I.D. conducted only five years ago by Program and Policy Coordination (Elmer and Moser 1986a, 1986b; Moser and Elmer 1986). The reason for this is obvious – A.I.D. project

managers are usually very busy and seldom have time to read studies that are not immediately applicable to current problems. Therefore, few U.S. direct-hire officers are likely to review studies of training, particularly when it is considered an operational detail that is left to the FSN staff.

**Mission operating manuals.** Mission operating manuals or mission orders usually include a section on participant training that describes the mission policies, procedures, and responsibilities. The mission orders reviewed for this study were generally condensations of the detailed guidance in Handbook 10, emphasizing operational issues of documentation and scheduling. Mission expectations about the quality or content of needs assessments, selection procedures, orientation activities, use of third-country or U.S. training, supplementary activities, follow-on programs, or evaluation are either vague or nonexistent. For example, the entire guidance for follow-on in one mission order required that project officers conduct appropriate follow-on activities, with no discussion of the purpose or anticipated scope of such activities. As a result, there is no common mission conceptualization or definition of training.

Each technical office or project manager may apply a different philosophy of training that defines success, purpose, and relation to the program. Some believe that "training is good in itself – training for its own sake," while others believe that "training is only meaningful within the context of institutional development." Others believe that training should be directed only toward the "best and the brightest."

Each of these philosophies has distinct and obvious effects on how training is planned, implemented, and evaluated. Without a common mission understanding of the purpose of training, consistent application is very difficult. Even missions that have mission orders or policies may not implement them. An audit of project-related training in one mission found that the mission was not following the guidelines of either A.I.D. policy or existing mission orders dealing with project design, feasibility analysis, training plans, and implementation (AID/IG 1986b). As a result of poor articulation of mission policies, the design and implementation of training is usually done on a project level.

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Unless you set broad policy guidelines, there is only farming out responsibility without context.

— *USAID project development officer*

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In response to audit criticisms of poorly coordinated training programs, one mission reorganized its training unit into a separate unit reporting to the associate director and increased its organizational authority for oversight of both HRD projects and project-related training, including specific signoff authority for project papers and training plans in all mission projects. These changes were intended to give the training officer increased status and more direct access to other office directors (AID/IG 1986b).

**Quality control.** Even as there is no core of expertise on the mission level to assess quality of training components, there is also no central review or assessment of training activities. A.I.D.'s Office of International Training manages central contracts to provide placement and other services, but has no responsibility for reviewing training components at the project design stage. However, upon mission request, OIT may provide assistance and training to field offices in the design and management of training activities.

A point of comparison is useful. After a World Bank study identified a series of weaknesses in project-related training activities (World Bank 1982), the Bank strengthened the corps of training specialists who assist with project design. In addition, the training specialists annually review and rank the quality of training components in every project (World Bank 1989). The projects are rated on six criteria:

- clarity of training objectives;
- identity of target audiences;
- description of training strategy;
- composition of proposed training program;
- relevance of training program to training diagnosis; and
- specificity of the training financing plan.

### **Conclusions**

Training is a relatively low priority activity that is conceived and implemented in operational terms on a project-by-project basis. The capability to process participants quickly according to re-

quired procedures is generally very good in most missions. However, training is designed on a project basis and lessons learned are not consistently applied to all mission participant training. Training is not placed in a broader long-term context by development strategies, overlapping needs analyses, or implementation policies. Mission policies, to the extent that they address such issues, are usually vague. In many missions, there is no one to take conceptual charge of the program and no incentive to do so.

To ensure that lessons learned about participant training are consistently applied in all project training activities, mission policies must explicitly address the purpose, operations, and evaluation criteria and apply these criteria to all mission projects. Moreover, the mission should establish a structure for ensuring that such considerations are incorporated in all projects.

The emphasis in A.I.D. on achieving program-level objectives will require that training is addressed in the context of a mission HRD strategy. Training of individuals, by itself, can have no higher-level impact. However, such training coupled with targeted strategies of organizational change or institutional development in the planning or delivery of training could address these higher-level issues and make a discernible impact on development.

### **Women in Development**

The goal of encouraging the participation of women in development activities has been of increasing importance in A.I.D. project design and implementation in recent years. Participant training programs in particular have been seen as an effective way to increase female involvement.

Participation of women in A.I.D. training programs varies widely across the regional bureaus, from an average of 13 percent in Asia to 35 percent in Latin America. In many countries, historically low levels of female participation in the basic education system and traditional cultural practices have greatly limited women's participation in the work force. Where women constitute only a small percentage of total employment, significant levels of participation in training programs are difficult to achieve. The low level of female employment may be particu-

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larly notable in some *fields* (public administration or agriculture), *educational levels* (graduate degree level), and *career positions* (mid-level managers and policy makers) that A.I.D. has traditionally targeted for training (Elmer 1989b).

In addition to the constraints imposed by social and economic structure and A.I.D. programmatic emphases, the location and length of training may also represent effective barriers to female participation. Cultural mores and family responsibilities may inhibit qualified women candidates from accepting long-term or overseas training. For this reason, some programs have been more successful in recruiting women for in-country training programs, which also tend to be less formal and have less stringent educational and language requirements (Strickland 1989).

Missions in many regions have adopted various strategies for increasing the participation of women in training programs. These strategies include establishing female targets at the mission or project level, preparing training plans with specified slots for women, recruiting women from the private sector, providing spouse training or cash incentives, and targeting sectors with traditionally high levels of female employment (Elmer 1989b). The spouse training strategy in Indonesia is an excellent example of creative programming to increase female participation that has numerous benefits for the overall training program (see Box IV-4). General training projects have proven to be more flexible mechanisms for increasing participation of women than sector-specific projects, and targeted in-country training programs have been successful in some countries (Strickland 1989).

In the LAC Bureau, CLASP is an example of how specific targets for women's participation can be used. The program established a requirement that 40 percent of all trainees should be women. A recent review of performance in this area found that, on the average, 42 percent of the scholarship awards went to women. For individual missions, the percentages ranged from a low of 20 percent for the regional office in Central America (ROCAP) to a high of 65 percent in Jamaica (Aguirre 1990d).

In order to meet the CLASP targets, missions often adopted specific training strategies to increase the number of female participants, such as training in occupations that traditionally have

a high percentage of women (e.g., health, education). Other programs established recruitment procedures that aggressively sought out qualified women. This type of attention to the issue and a determined effort to increase participation of women can clearly change historical patterns of distribution of training awards by gender. In the Dominican Republic, for example, only 24 percent of all participants sponsored between 1979 and 1988 were female (Murphy and Ramirez 1988). However, in CLASP, with its gender targets, 41 percent of the awards went to women under the mission component and 47 percent under the central component (Aguirre 1990d).

One of the important lessons learned in CLASP is that women should not simply be "added to" group training programs that have been designed for men (Aguirre 1989). Moreover, there should be more than one woman in a mixed sex training group.

In other regions, strong cultural and religious traditions may argue for adopting a low key and nonthreatening approach to recruiting women. A recommended approach is to develop a country training strategy as a vehicle and conduct specific training needs assessments for women to use as a tool in policy dialogue. USAID missions should be active in organizing information campaigns and workshops that include men in the audience, recognizing that they are the ones who make decisions. Inclusion of returned female participants in these workshops is useful (Strickland 1989).

### **CLASP and Nontraditional Training**

Most of the lessons learned from and appropriate to CLASP have been included in the previous sections and apply equally to CLASP and to regular participant training. The major distinguishing elements of CLASP have been (1) a focus on disadvantaged populations that have not traditionally had access to scholarship opportunities, (2) an emphasis on identifying and training leaders for broader impact, and (3) the political objective of using training in CLASP I to counter Soviet Bloc influence in the region and encourage bonds of friendship and understanding with the United States. In the CLASP II design, this last objective was refined to focus on the more positive goal of familiarizing leaders with the principles of democracy and free enterprise.

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The experience of CLASP has been notable for several reasons. The first is the extent to which the program represented a major departure from "traditional" A.I.D. training programs in terms of target group, type and purpose of training, extent of pre- and post-training support services, and degree of customization of training. The second was the degree to which the project design, objectives, activities, targets, and procedures were imposed on missions by AID/Washington and Congress. The project design established strict targets for total numbers, number of women, number of disadvantaged, split between long-term and short-term training, and number of placements in historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). All training of any length had to be in the United States. In addition, missions had to develop whole new approaches to participant selection, orientation, and follow-on, and a new concept in supplementary activities called "Experience America." The third notable aspect of the program was the range of creative approaches and solutions developed in participating missions as they struggled to meet numerical targets in a high profile project that few people initially understood. The management of CLASP is also unusual in that substantial resources have been devoted to an ongoing process evaluation and to coordination with implementing organizations.

CLASP, while a departure from traditional training, is not entirely unique. Other projects, such as the Training for Development Project in Bolivia and the Disadvantaged Province component of the Development Support Training Project in Pakistan, share elements of the same objectives and target groups.

The lessons learned from CLASP fall into numerous categories. The process evaluation has carefully tracked implementation problems and achievements and shows that the program has largely met its goals. It has also served as a mechanism for sharing experiences and different approaches to training. Many of the lessons learned regarding implementation of training have been included in the appropriate sections of this report.

In terms of project design, the lessons are mixed. A project with very real "new ways" of doing things, CLASP was originally received with suspicion and occasionally hostility by USAID missions whose primary orientation was to

"development" rather than "political" training. With experience and time, however, the program won some fervent supporters among traditional A.I.D. officials. Moreover, elements of the program, such as orientation, Experience America, training cost analysis, and follow-on, have given people new perspectives on training. And the focus on disadvantaged leaders — an oxymoron to many — encouraged a closer look at social structures and more contact with remote rural communities than A.I.D. gets working through government agencies. As with other instances of new approaches being dictated to the field, this strong arm approach was useful in encouraging new ways of thinking about old problems.

On the other hand, there was and is a current of resentment at the level of detail that was imposed under CLASP I. The micro-management implied that people in Washington, D.C., not only knew what was needed but also could impose it on every country regardless of conditions. Many experienced and thoughtful people regarded the quotas as contradictory and the program rigidity as stifling. A preferred approach would have been to establish the objectives and hold the missions accountable for devising appropriate and creative ways to meet them — an approach that would have relied on officials' professional skills to address the unique needs in each country. Numerous creative approaches to meeting the needs of the participants were inconsistent with one or more of the criteria and thus were disallowed. A prime example of this was an effort in Guatemala to combine in-country and U.S. training programs. The approach was designed to provide scholarships in local universities to many disadvantaged Guatemalans and select the most academically capable for further training in the United States. The approach was logical and valuable in every regard except that it did not meet the criterion that all training had to be in the United States. CLASP II has addressed these problems by providing for greater flexibility and creativity on the part of each mission.

Another continuing objection was the existence of multiple objectives that were sometimes difficult to reconcile or even understand. The goal of providing opportunities to disadvantaged people was not necessarily consistent with the requirement to conduct all training in the United States. The numerical targets were sometimes at odds with the requirements for long-term

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training and the funds available. The existence of specific quotas and numerical targets, and considerable pressure to meet them, would sometimes drive program decisions. The emphasis on financial means criteria resulted in some missions taking an attitude of "the poorer the better." Given the extreme difficulty of providing appropriate training for the poorest of the poor, this could be problematic.

A central concept in CLASP is that exposure to the United States — its people, institutions, and values — would have a positive effect on participants in terms of their understanding the United States. The CLASP process evaluation tends to confirm that participants do believe that their understanding of the country and people has improved (Aguirre 1990c). Other studies have found that attending academic programs in the United States provides both language and acculturation that is helpful in later business relations with Americans. Returned students in Brazil who were asked specifically about commercial linkages resulting from the experience found the answer too obvious to repeat. They provided many examples of using U.S. sources because of their experience, knowledge of firms, or contacts (Goodwin and Nacht 1984). Exposure to the U.S. model of pluralism and market economy is also useful in helping participants to develop some perspective on their own countries.

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You can't imagine how important it is to see and feel a free market system and democracy. You start believing in the principles only after you have learned about the problems — see the good and the bad.

— *Brazilian lawyer quoted  
in Goodwin and Nacht 1984*

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In addition to the many specific operational lessons and innovations that are discussed in other parts of this study, a few general lessons on project design can be found. First, establishing cost containment on the level of an objective rather than a management tool places undue emphasis on finances and inadequate attention on results. The potential for compromising quality is ever present. In the same vein,

establishing numerical targets as a primary measure of success will drive programming decisions to make the numbers come out right. The relationship between objectives, numbers, and budget levels is a delicate one.

The target groups for CLASP — young, leaders, and disadvantaged — have distinct characteristics that affect the planning and implementation of the program. Substantially more effort, time, and money are needed to meet their needs in recruitment, selection, orientation, English language training, program planning, and follow-up than for other segments of the population. This is all the more true because the target groups are high risks for not returning to home countries racked by economic or political turmoil.

The effort to combine the specific CLASP objectives of disadvantaged target groups, exposure to the United States, and appropriate technical training with mission development objectives led to an enormous range of training programs. With experience, missions have developed an increasingly sophisticated understanding of how Experience America activities could be expanded beyond cultural events and sports to encourage real interpersonal relationships and participation in a pluralistic, free market system. The ideal, as articulated in the CLASP II project paper, was to integrate the experiential and technical components to provide truly meaningful insights into American values and principles. High risk and successful programs such as the young political leaders in Ecuador (see Box IV-5) were found in many countries.

It is useful to note that the goals of CLASP are not so different from other A.I.D. goals that they can be achieved only through a process divorced from development projects. Mission efforts to use CLASP training to complement development activities in the technical sectors are being facilitated by the Social Institutional Framework approach to defining priority areas. However, for all of the truly innovative CLASP training programs developed over the past five years, the closest thing to a *perfect* CLASP training experience that this observer found was not funded by CLASP. It was found in a training program for school and community leaders and parents in an education project in Jamaica (see Box VI-3). For

these purposes, "perfection" is defined as meeting the following criteria:

- participants are from the disadvantaged class;
- the training is designed to address a specific problem common to all participants;
- the training experience in the United States is specifically appropriate and relevant to the problem and can be successfully adapted to the home country;
- the training illustrates an American response to the problem that clearly reflects specific values or processes in the political, economic, or social system;
- the training is complementary to other host country or USAID programs and objectives in the sector; and
- the training results in sustainable activities with a clear developmental impact in the host country.

**BOX VI-3**  
**School Community Outreach Programme**  
**in Jamaica**

**Background.** The School Community Outreach Programme (SCOPE) was part of a primary education project in Jamaica, and included a range of activities designed to improve effective community involvement in primary education. The contractor, Southern University, identified community and school needs through several surveys and conducted numerous workshops in leadership skills for community action, such as human relations, parental involvement, and values clarification.

**Program.** A serious problem found in many communities was school vandalism. Groups of school teachers and principals, community leaders, police sergeants, parents, and local businesspeople were sent to Baton Rouge to visit U.S. community-school programs dealing with similar problems. All of the participants were selected from their communities. The training program included observation of U.S. programs, discussion with U.S. school and community leaders, and workshops in leadership skills needed to mobilize community effort, formulate action plans, organize volunteer groups, and conduct fundraising campaigns. The program also included social activities and a reception by the U.S. neighborhood associations. By the end of the course, each training group had developed a plan of action for dealing with the problem in its own community.

**Results.** The community representatives returned to Jamaica and began implementing their anti-vandalism programs. Some created associations for graduates of the community schools; others worked through school boards or private sector groups. An evaluation comparing pre- and post-program community surveys found that vandalism in most communities had been reduced or eliminated, fundraising was improved, private sector involvement in and contributions to school programs were increased, and the local organizations were generally stronger and had better morale.

After the first training groups had successfully implemented programs in Jamaica, future training groups visited other Jamaican communities rather than U.S. communities. In this way, more people could be trained at lower cost, and the private sector could be impressed with visible results in Jamaica.

**Keys to success.** Successful training was related to a clear, unambiguous problem and a relatively simple response that required leadership skills and organization.

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