

MIL
363
U84

FD-AAI-048

15M-207

688-0204 - (1)

6880204001501

~~FD-AAI-979~~

CLASSIFICATION
PROJECT EVALUATION SUMMARY (PES) - PART I

Report Control
Symbol U-447

MALI RURAL WORKS PROJECT

2. PROJECT NUMBER

688-0204

3. MISSION/AID/W OFFICE

Bamako

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

REGULAR EVALUATION SPECIAL EVALUATION

5. KEY PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION DATES

A. First PRO-AG or Equivalent FY	B. Final Obligation Expected FY	C. Final Input Delivery FY
----------------------------------	---------------------------------	----------------------------

6. ESTIMATED PROJECT FUNDING

A. Total \$	
B. U.S. \$	

7. PERIOD COVERED BY EVALUATION

From (month/yr.)	
To (month/yr.)	Sept. 1980
Date of Evaluation Review	

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

A. List decisions and/or unresolved issues; cite those items needing further study. (NOTE: Mission decisions which anticipate AID/W or regional office action should specify type of document, e.g., airgram, SPAR, PIO, which will present detailed request.)

B. NAME OF OFFICER RESPONSIBLE FOR ACTION

C. DATE ACTION TO BE COMPLETED

Project terminated 30 September, 1980

9. INVENTORY OF DOCUMENTS TO BE REVISED PER ABOVE DECISIONS

<input type="checkbox"/> Project Paper	<input type="checkbox"/> Implementation Plan e.g., CPI Network	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) N.A.
<input type="checkbox"/> Financial Plan	<input type="checkbox"/> PIO/T	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Logical Framework	<input type="checkbox"/> PIO/C	
<input type="checkbox"/> Project Agreement	<input type="checkbox"/> PIO/P	

10. ALTERNATIVE DECISIONS ON FUTURE OF PROJECT

A.	<input type="checkbox"/> Continue Project Without Change
B.	<input type="checkbox"/> Change Project Design and/or Change Implementation Plan
C.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discontinue Project

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

George Thompson, Acting General Development Officer

12. Mission/AID/W Office Director Approval

Signature

Typed Name

Date

13. SUMMARY

This project was terminated after nearly two years of operation because of near total failure to accomplish its stated goals and purposes. The failure was the result of a multitude of factors. The project was badly conceptualized and designed in the Malian context. At least three of the four parties responsible for project implementation (GRM, contractor, USAID) performed poorly. The beneficiaries commonly performed poorly also, but this could have been the result of misunderstandings and bad preparation by the other actors.

The project was designed to establish a series of decentralized regional offices to jointly identify economically useful sub-projects with the beneficiaries, and coordinate and support the joint GRM/beneficiary effort to complete them. In fact, the processes for identifying, designing and approving sub-projects was so complex, cumbersome, authoritarian and centralized as to make their timely implementation impossible. Communications and logistics were difficult and slow even in the context of an underdeveloped Mali. The regional offices were widely disbursed over the country, cut off from normally poor transport routes and systems for parts of the year. Most of the technical assistance staff and vehicles were assigned to the national office in Bamako.

The Regional offices were inadequately manned for the job. Project personnel tended to be incapable, unable or unwilling to do the work, and many apparently never understood what had to be done. Trained staff were in short supply and supervision was poor. While some of the advisory team were clearly incompetent to do their jobs and were relieved of their posts, others were blocked from doing what was necessary by the cumbersome administrative system, some very authoritarian oriented personalities in key roles, and the host country contract mode that relegated the contractors to a passive role. The situation was reinforced by a GRM attitude that an advisory team was unnecessary and that they should be provided project funding without technical assistance or supervision. There was a high rate of personnel turnover among all parties.

As a closing gesture to the local populations and political structure that had realized heightened expectations of the project, heretofore frustrated because of inactivity, the project staged a final accelerated construction period during the last hot season (May - September) before termination which met with limited success and a misunderstanding by the GRM of the motives. During this period, 11 wells, an irrigated small-town vegetable garden, a water channel to aid irrigation flooding and the repair of a dike were completed. Before this, three sub-projects had been completed--two wells and a water channel. The total costs of this project was approximately \$1.2 million averaging \$75,000 per sub-project.

The lessons to be learned from this experience include:

- a. Do not spread meager resources too thin over wide areas, especially in the context of poor transport and communication systems. This includes skilled personnel.
- b. A decentralized system of project management is difficult to establish within a highly centralized and authoritarian-oriented government.

*Memo: 6-20-80
Rural Works*

- c. A decentralized system of project management assumes skilled and motivated personnel. The present systems for recruitment and assignment of capable personnel of the GRM, USAID and contractors do not guarantee such personnel.
- d. In the context of this project, if not of Mali as a whole, the Host Country Contract does not meet the needs of USAID.
- e. Rural development projects must be coordinated with the beneficiaries, local government officials and local political systems if they are expected to function without conflict.
- f. Local communities have a social structure, are organized to some degree, and are not ignorant of their development and survival needs.
- g. Projects must be designed with a clear picture in mind of the national and local social, political and administrative structures to be involved, and what can or cannot be implemented. Project resources must fit with the planned needs for implementation.

14. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Funding for the Mali Rural Works Project was terminated by USAID on 30 September 1980. Its termination was opposed by the GRM for a variety of reasons, none of which relate to the successful implementation of the project. The project failed in implementation and this final evaluation is an attempt to document what went wrong.

The scope-of-work for the evaluation (attached) was drafted in June 1980 which outlines clearly the comprehensive approach. The results will be stated in qualitative rather than quantitative terms since there was not much to quantify. The evaluation reviewed the relevant documents of the project. Three evaluation memorandums were written by project related personnel: Contract team leader, mission anthropologist and the acting USAID project manager. Many other implementation memoranda were used as sources of information. Much more information for the evaluation was gathered through interviews and conversations with virtually all project related personnel. The GRM has submitted an evaluation report (attached) that supports its position not to terminate the project. The GRM would not concur with much of what is presented in this evaluation although many of the problem points raised are the results of the earlier conversations with project related officials who were the early leaders in project criticism. GRM officials will not be asked to sign off on this report because it would not be appropriate for any official to do so given the present GRM official stance. Thus, the methodology is qualitative in nature - descriptive. The descriptive statements will be supported by a variety of memoranda and documents mostly produced during the latter stages of the project. There seems to have been some hesitation to document early project problems by project personnel. This hesitation, not uncommon with other projects as well, very likely resulted in the prolonged life of a project that from the start had major design and implementation problems, i.e., some kind of inertia to take potentially unpopular actions. The participants in the evaluation were limited to those persons that were still present at the time the decision was made to terminate the project: USAID, contractors, and GRM. Of course, many of the documents reviewed originate with the project's inception, i.e., the Project Paper. Where possible, the time frame of the evaluation starts with the first stages of the project, a period of about 3 years, 2 of which was the period

of implementation. The actual evaluation activity has been spread between about June 1980 to January 1981, some months after the termination of USAID funding.

15. EXTERNAL FACTORS:

- a. Changes in project setting. The biggest change in the setting during the life of the project was the return of Mali to civilian rule by a constitutional government. This has led to the reinforcement of political authority at the circle level. Both administrative and political figures in the circles felt a stronger need to be involved in the process of bringing the rural works project to the people who they represented or had responsibility for. They were not involved in the project design and, except for some after-the-fact information, these offices were left out of most of the planning for the sub-projects. In some cases, the political figures have had a major input in sub-project selection which resulted in some sites being included that were some of the most difficult to reach and with which to work in the circle, while some of the easier sites were not developed. Thus, there has been both too much and too little involvement of the local officials and political figures in sub-project selection. This involvement was not well coordinated or controlled at the regional level. It would have taken an experienced and highly perceptive regional coordinator and technical advisor to deal with these problems at the circle level. Such an individual was not available.
- b. Validity of assumptions as stated in the Project Paper Logical Framework.
 - (1) The assumption for the sector goal, "That community-generated local development initiatives can provide a significant measure of improvement in the production and level of living of rural populations.", does not relate to "Assumptions for Achieving Goal Targets:" but relates to the validity of the means of verifications. This inability to focus on the reality of the project in the PP likely sets the stage for what followed-- a Project Paper to some great extent unrelated to the realities in the field.
 - (2) The assumptions for achieving project purposes:
 - (a) "That the desirability and feasibility of promoting and assisting local participation in rural development initiatives is a GKM priority." Recent government statements and documents suggest that this assumption is still valid.
 - (b) "That the rural works activities have been carefully selected and designed so as to demonstrate practically, feasibility, and sufficient economic justification and desirability to the villagers." The verb tense "have been" seems a poor selection in the context of a paper that expects the villagers to identify the activities but it perhaps reflects one of the major problems in the implementation. The villagers continued to request support for activities that appeared too simple and basic for the project personnel. The raison d'etre for project personnel was motivation and training of villagers. The projects that emerged from the start did not require such an activity but got directly at the major problems faced by the villagers--water, its availability and control. This assumption appears to have been the most problematical for the project.
 - (3) The assumptions for achieving outputs:

"That suitable activity interventions can be found which are appro-

priate to community initiative under labor-intensive development rural works criteria."

There were several local socio-political factors that were either not clearly identified, understood or ignored that relate to this assumption and that strongly influenced village initiative and participation:

(a) Conflicts of interest within communities that stifled cooperation: (tenant farmers vs. landowners, farmers vs. herders and ethnic/linguistic groups vs. other groups).

(b) Mandatory low prices on sales in the cereal market was one of the factors that discouraged village populations from innovation, realizing that their impoverishment was for the benefit of the cities.

(c) Rural-urban and out-of country migration reduced the effective labor force. They could earn higher salaries, undergo less hardships, and free themselves of many social constraints by moving.

The Mission anthropologist has pointed out some related, mistaken assumptions made during the design of the project about rural villagers needing outside assistance to become motivated and organized, and in the process identifying sub-projects that would improve their lives. There are countless examples in the country and region of projects in which villagers have been involved in rural works that corresponded to their priorities, i.e., bottom-up development. A related implied set of mistaken assumptions was that villagers did not know what government aid was available to meet some of these needs, did not have a mechanism for expressing these needs and correspondingly that local officials were unaware of these needs. Acting on these assumptions as if they were facts resulted in local government hostility toward the project personnel because they felt the project was undercutting their authority. This in fact was the case.

Another unstated and misguided, if not wrong, assumption related to the underemployment of the villagers during the hot season. There is little doubt that in the project regions there was less activity during this season than in some others. This is however only partially true in the region of residual moisture agriculture in the Goundam region. In the hot season the lake recedes and as recession occurs, crops are planted. This is a continuous process which lasts well into June when some of the earlier planted crops are ready for harvest. In any case, the hot season is the dry season and a time for work early in the day or the time for labor migration to some of the regional towns where the pay is better and the distractions many, if a job can be found. Voluntary labor is not in the game plan if there is an alternative, especially during harshness of the hot season.

In short, there were problems with this assumption in terms of what was "suitable" and "appropriate" to the project and its structure and what was needed by the villagers. The villagers' needs were much simpler and direct than the project criteria had assumed, for a variety of reasons.

(4) "That community and local government manpower resources are adequate to manage and perform the activities."

As is stated elsewhere in this paper, community manpower resources are likely adequate to manage and perform most of the activities that were defined as needed by the villages but that they were commonly not mobilized

by this project. Local government manpower were also generally adequate but were commonly left out of the management and performed by Rural Works Project personnel who were commonly less skilled and experienced than the local government people.

(5) "That support inputs are provided on a timely basis."

This assumption was probably only partially realized during most of the project's life because of a combination of the problems of communication and transportation, and the highly centralized project administrative structure that allowed only minimum authority to rest at the regional level. Almost all project-related decisions came from Bamako.

16. INPUTS, AND THEIR PROBLEMS

a. Personnel: there were major problems with the quality, quantity and location of personnel throughout the life of the project.

(1) Quality and turnover: the background and skills needed to fill the role of regional coordinator are several and crucial. Some of the skills can be trained (rural development theory and practice and administration), while others require some experience and specific personality types (e.g., coordinating ability, political perceptability, tact, etc.). The GRM personnel assigned to these roles were generally young, untrained in the methodology, not very experienced in anything, and it is doubtful that they clearly understood the job to be done. In the case of both regions, Goundam and Douentza, the personnel filling these positions were changed at least once during the life of the project. This was to allow the original regional coordinators to go to the U.S. for long-term training. The national coordinator was changed three times. The final change occurred in the last 3 months of the Project, after which the position remained vacant.

Some members of the technical assistance team were not of the quality necessary to get the job done. It is not easy to determine if some of these men were simply incompetent, if they did not want to do the work under the harsh conditions in the field, or if they did not understand what was to be done. In any case, at least two of the advisors were relieved of their duties for incompetence, including a project engineer. There were at least two contract team member resignations plus an attempted resignation by the Team Leader. These were sparked by the complete frustration produced by an administrative system that did not allow them to work to accomplish their assigned tasks. This was reinforced by negative, defensive attitudes on the part of some key GRM personnel.

There are some indications that the quality of some of the USAID project managers over the life of the project could have been better. Again, the question is one of competence to do the job, willingness to face the conditions necessary to keep in touch with the project and understanding of the job to be done. There were at least four different individuals filling this USAID role over the life of the project.

The high turnover of personnel was in part an indication of personnel quality. There were those who could define the problems and escape the frustrations of the unworkable through system resignation. In other cases, the incompetent were terminated. Some could not or did not want

to do the work at hand. This personnel turnover was a cause of project failure over the long run---the lack of continuity in administration, lack of motivation and the presence of growing doubts about project possibilities. All were contributing negative factors.

(2) Quantity: for the job to be done, project personnel were spread too thinly over too wide of an area. Part of the problem had to do with the personnel based at the national headquarters in Bamako---the main technical staff: GRM and contractors. The regional headquarters were distant, the roads bad and all basic communications between the various offices poor. Given these conditions, there were too few personnel to do the job. Either the centers of activity should have been closer to national headquarters or work should have been centered in one rather than in two widely separate circles. The numbers of the project personnel should have been increased to a level that would allow the work to be carried out in a timely manner. A project aircraft would have been able to take care of some of this problem but sufficient personnel would have likely been the more economically feasible solution. Better long-range transport rarely can substitute for continuous face-to-face contact.

The project as designed was to be an intensive approach with rural development workers working closely with the villagers in the identification, design and the implementation of the sub-projects. This was to be a system not unlike that tried in the 1960's "Community Development Era", with varying degrees of success and failure. To do this highly personal job, however, only two rural development workers were assigned to each circle. Circles are commonly the size of some New England states in the U.S. Each man was given a motorcycle to compensate for the distances involved. They were to be supported and supervised by a regional coordinator who had a Land Rover. In short, this intensive job was manned by a skeleton crew.

(3) Use: The GRM did not desire to have a technical assistance team attached to the project. They felt they could carry out the project activities as designed without such assistance. Experience indicates that USAID expectations of what a successful project is suppose to accomplish and GRM expectations were not the same in terms of management of funds, vehicles, etc. USAID put the contract team under a host country contract, which puts the contractors and project resources directly under GRM control with USAID management attempting to monitor the actions. The contractors reported directly to the GRM and not to USAID. In this case, the GRM relegated the contractors to a passive, inactive role without any decision-making function, thereby limiting the effectiveness of the team in their role of advisors in a situation where seemingly the GRM personnel did not clearly understand the purpose of the project. This situation was further complicated in that the contract team was composed of a high percentage of French nationals in this ex-French colony where both groups, French and Malians, sometimes have difficulty forgetting their respective ex-colonial status. It is unclear as to what level of hostility resulted from this element in the equation, but it was a contributing factor in establishing basically negative attitudes between GRM and contractor personnel over the life of the project.

- b. Commodities: Because of the poor transportation systems that change drastically throughout the seasons---dry season sand to the floods of the rainy season---there were some delays in timely implementation of sub-projects and major expenses incurred due to the high cost of transport. Bad management in the choice of season to move heavy commodities, e.g., cement, re-bar, added to the project costs.
- c. Other GRM Agencies Support: The project was intended to coordinate services of other GRM agencies that were already located in the project regions in the implementation of some of the sub-projects. The assumption was that these GRM agencies had the resources in terms of heavy equipment, skilled technical staff, office facilities and equipment and operational funds to act in a support capacity for the project. This did not prove to be the case. In some cases, the Rural Works Project acted as a support organization for the other local agencies because it was the only one with the necessary operational funds. In other cases, there was neither the equipment nor the necessary skilled personnel to carry out relatively simple sub-project actions. There were other cases where the project requirements for personnel and equipment were less of a priority for these support organizations than some other jobs, thus rural works sub-projects were delayed in implementation.
- d. Project Structure: One of the aims of the project was to establish decentralized regional offices of the project in various experimental circles throughout the country. This did not occur. A national coordinating office and two regional offices were established but the main force of the project including staff and project vehicles (8 of the 10 project vehicles) remained based in Bamako. The idea was to service the distant regional offices from the national headquarters in Bamako on a timely basis. This in fact resulted in poorer levels of supervision, and decreased personnel enthusiasm and training at the regional level.
- e. Funding System: It has been suggested that one of the problems with timely project implementation was the delay in movement of funds through the system, with the USAID Controlers office receiving the blame. But the Controlers office cannot act without acceptable processed paperwork as a basis and this paperwork was slow in coming throughout the project. While there was a National Accountant for the project and a contract team advisor to this accountant, the established accounting system never produced consistantly acceptable paperwork for USAID purposes. There were many long delays between funds spent and the request for project reimbursement. Most of the vouchers submitted were sent back to the project offices for clarification, adjustment for disallowed expenditures and distinctions to be made between operating expenses and sub-project costs. It is not clear why the project accounting office could never develop a consistent system acceptable to USAID. Here too, as noted previously, the difficulty of the contract team members working with the GRM personnel seems an important factor.

17. OUTPUTS:

The first of the contract team staff arrived in country during September 1978, approximately one year later than the arrival was scheduled in the Project Paper. Within a two year period, 4 Regional Offices were to have been established. Only two of these offices were ever established. An estimated

figure of 12 sub-projects were to have been programmed during the first two years, subject to slippage due to size of projects identified. In all, 23 sub-projects were approved for implementation during this period and 18 of these were completed during the same period. For a complete breakdown of sub-project activity see Memorandum from Guimba Keita to Dick Scott, dated 19 September 1980, "Status of Mali Rural Works Sub-projects - Project 0204". It must be noted, however, that 17 of the 23 approved sub-projects were approved during April 1980, as part of the accelerated work program put into effect at the time the decision was made to terminate the project, and 15 of these were completed during this same period. This included three sub-projects that had been approved during an earlier phase. A key point to note however, is that until the final accelerated work program, in May 1980, only 3 sub-projects had been completed, and all those were in the Douentza Rkgn.

As noted, 3 of the contract team arrived in-country during September 1978-- Team Leader, Engineer and Technical Advisor. See Memorandum from Guimba Keita to Helen Vaitaitis dated 19 August 1980, "Mali Rural Works Project 688-0204 Status of GRM, ORT and Peace Corps Personnel From the Beginning of the Project Up To This Date" for the details of personnel assigned to the project. In any case, the first sub-projects were submitted for approval during October 1979 and approved during November 1979, just over a year after the arrival of the first members of the contract team. No GRM personnel were assigned to the project until two months after the arrival of the first contract team members.

- a. In this project the Sahelian communities affected cannot be considered to have been trained and assisted in planning and designing rural development works. The nature of the organization of the project precluded this from being accomplished.

A highly centralized government institution, and an authoritarian-oriented National Coordinator, combined with inexperienced and under-trained regional coordinators unable to take any initiative on their own, served to reinforce the already centralized administrative system. Sub-projects were identified by the regional offices but the final write-up of the sub-project proposals was done at the national headquarters. In some cases this resulted in inaccurate descriptions of the local scene. The involved process of sub-project review, revision and approval was complex, time consuming and again very centralized, with final approval and review resting with the USAID Mission Director. Systems of communication and feed-back to the field offices was slow, difficult and apparently poorly organized until the establishment of a radio network was made during the last few months of the project. The regional offices were not kept informed of the status of the various sub-projects submitted for approval. Long delays between field work and final approval resulted in frustration and finally non-goal oriented offices. Until the final accelerated work period (May-Sept. 1980) no sub-projects were completed in the Goundam region and only three were completed in the Douentza region--two wells and a water channel. This centralized structure left the local political and administrative personnel out of direct project involvement.

- b. The training for the GRM field staff included a 2-week training period in Bamako just before field assignment, a one-week training period for

the Douentza field team (which was attended by the Regional Coordinator from Goundam), and a 2-day training seminar in Bamako for all field staff. This training was accomplished during the first year of the project. It was supplemented by field instruction by members of the contract team. The quality of some of the contract team members, the conflict of relationships that apparently existed between the team and GRM personnel and the long periods of time when there was no advisor in the Goundam region, all combined to limit the amount of field training accomplished. There are two past Regional Coordinators presently in training in the U.S. in Rural Development and should return during August 1981, after the project has been terminated.

- c. To suggest that Sahel communities were provided technical and support assistance to implement specific rural works would be generally wrong. The one exception would be the channel at Gouber Lake which the villagers dug with the help of technical support, tools and considerable urging. The rest of the sub-projects, for all practical purposes, were accomplished for the villagers rather than by the villagers. In a limited number of cases, wells were completed with the support of the villagers but they themselves did not provide most of the work. In at least two cases, Farash and Aratan, one of the main problems in the completion for the sub-projects, was to get continual village support in the form of laborers.
- d. Most of the sub-projects completed were wells and are in use.

18. PURPOSE:

- a. To build motivation and capacity in Sahel communities for villagers to participate in all phases of development rural works, including identification of practical and feasible initiatives, activity design, implementation, and management of the rural works facilities.
- b. Decentralization and improvement of GRM support capacity and systems to facilitate community-generated rural works.

Both a. and b. above are related and to some degree rhetorical rather than realistic. To assume that Sahelian rural communities require motivation to participate in development activities that they have identified as beneficial to improving their lives is incorrect. To get them "to participate in all phases of development rural works" may be another problem. If the system of project identification and implementation could have been from the bottom up as is implied in the term "decentralization", the villagers would have been more likely to have participated more fully in the project. The GRM, however, is a highly centralized system of government with the individuals playing the key roles indoctrinated into an authoritarian stance. There is a clear pecking order with the villagers at the bottom. When asked, the villagers clearly identified what they saw as their priorities, but following the patterns of the past, government involvement generally means government control if not government funding, especially when a foreign donor is involved. (e.g., the food program and other follow-up activities to the drought of the early to mid-1970s). A central system of government combined with a foreign aid program establishes a set

of expectations in the context of this sort of project. To train villagers out of this set of expectations requires an intensive effort. As defined in the Project Paper, the personnel levels, quality of personnel and the system of project organization do not allow for the intensive effort.

EOPS:

a. Communities did generally identify rural works activities when asked to do so by project personnel. After that point they waited, as had been pointed out by the contract team leader, Mr. Buisson of ORT in his memorandum of 14 July 1980, "Evaluation of Rural Works Project". In some cases, this lack of involvement stemmed from the uncertainty of the proposed results. Villagers hesitate to spend resources in things that might fail. They are also not likely to invest in things that the government is going to do on its own. Early in the project, there appeared to be more initiative on the part of the villagers than in the later stages as it became clearer that nothing much was coming out of all the discussions. (See "Outputs".)

b. Communities have not yet been observed in the long-term utilization or maintenance of the sub-projects since it has only been recently that very many have been completed. The wells will be utilized without doubt and the villagers have the ability to maintain them. Some of the other sub-projects, e.g., the pump-irrigated vegetable garden in Goundam and the various channels that allow better inflow of flood waters, can only be judged in the future. The abilities and organization to utilize and maintain are present.

c. The RCD Agents did not live in the villages in which they worked as a general rule and therefore were probably identified as permanent outsiders in terms of village decision-making. Without the insight gained through such participation, the question of how effective the assistance was must remain unanswered. In situations like the sub-project well at Farash, where there was a constant problem of getting villagers to participate in the manual labor aspects of well construction or in the financing of the work, one must question how effective the agents were in getting the basic ideas of the project methodology over to the villagers.

e
he

d. The centralized nature of the Rural Works Project tended to preclude the involvement of many of the other government agencies in the area of the sub-projects. Frequently, these other support agencies were so short in personnel and funds and materials that they were not in a position to support the activities of the Rural Works Project. Organizations like Operation Puits was itself centralized in organization to the point that the one well contracted to be dug in the Goundam region was administratively arranged in Bamako and virtually all official communications (for example on whether the well was officially completed or not) had to be channeled via Bamako. In other situations where support was needed from Operation Puits in terms of renting their compressors and air-hammer to get through rock formations (other contractor well-diggers being utilized), this support was not forthcoming for a variety of reasons, including vested interests.

19. GOAL:

"More effective development of the Mali Sahel; Improved Economic Well-Being of the inhabitants of those communities."

- a. The development of a decentralized system of grass-roots development was to be the tactic used to get at the "more effective development" aspect of the stated goal. For a variety of reasons documented in various parts of this report, the decentralized system was never realized. The village level development of sub-projects (identify, design, implement and maintain) was also not realized. The project administration remained a section of the government bureaucracy with agents periodically visiting the village communities to get some ideas. Villagers were never instrumental in sub-project development and implementation.
- b. As noted, most of the sub-projects were water wells for drinking water. These did not directly effect the economic well-being of the communities. Of the water channeling sub-projects, it is difficult to measure the economic effects. There is virtually no base line statistics of farm production in the areas effected, and no follow-up statistics. There were no detailed studies. Further, the channels of Gouber and Tele have just been completed. It is not at all clear that the channel construction will accomplish what was planned. These results would have to be looked at by technicians at the end of this flood season. Even if the work succeeded, the real economic effects of the sub-projects are not likely to be measurable.

Employment levels were probably little effected by these sub-projects. A limited number of well diggers were hired. In total, including laborers, the well work employed less than fifty men and a sizable proportion of these were working as the community contribution to the project and were unpaid. The Gouber channel was dug by unpaid labor. The work on Lake Tele and on the channel at Douentza was mostly done with heavy equipment.

The Women's Garden in Goundam is as yet unused. The construction work involved perhaps five men. When the garden begins to produce, the income generated will go to the Women's Union of Goundam. It is not clear what exactly the long-term effects of this garden will be on the local population. It will be another source of vegetables in this town which will likely effect the diet of more of the government civil servants in the town than that of the local population.

In conclusion, this project appears to have achieved very little in terms of its stated goal. The local priorities were on getting an adequate drinking water supply first, rather than pursuing sub-projects aimed at improvement of economic well-being. This would have meant tampering with a very efficient but basically subsistence agricultural base. Given the personnel, funds expended, project orientation and the time, very little was accomplished.

20. BENEFICIARIES:

With the completion of the 17 sub-projects, 13 wells and 4 other actions, there are perhaps 30,000 project beneficiaries. The beneficiaries of the well projects number about 5500 persons, averaging over 400 per well. The

sub-project with the largest number of beneficiaries is the Tele Dike with an estimated 15,000 persons. The dike protects the farm land from yearly flooding of most of the population of the town of Goundam as well as that of the villages scattered around Lake Tele. There is virtually no agriculture outside the lake beds and the river backwaters in this region of little rainfall. These population/beneficiary estimates are based on total population, not just the economically active. The people of the villages in this region are basically subsistence agriculturists. There is no attempt to make a breakdown of the village populations into the various social strata. One of the wells, Aratan in the Goundam region, is the domain of tent-dwelling, animal-herding nomads (mainly of Touareg origins with Bella groups attached). No attempt was made to collect data on the numbers of beneficiaries that use this well. There were said to be 10 different camp groups using this well with an estimated population of perhaps 300 people.

21. UNPLANNED EFFECTS:

The only unplanned effect identified relates to the negative attitudes generated by the project among the local political and administrative personnel in the two regions of implementation. This first resulted from being mostly left out of the planning and implementation of the sub-projects, second by the frustration of project inaction vis-a-vis funding and obvious priority sub-projects after having given strong and open public support of the project at its opening, and third by realizing the potential for sub-project success just at the time of project termination.

22. LESSONS LEARNED:

- a. In the context of poor and slow transportation for both people and goods, poor communications systems, few qualified local personnel and limited technical assistance, a project should not attempt to cover wide areas of the country or be located at widely dispersed points. Meager resources must not be spread too thin if the project is to succeed. Project resources must correlate with the job to be accomplished.
- b. Related to a. above, if the project tactic of implementation is an intensive, face-to-face, locally involved approach, the project must be organized and manned in a way to be able to carry out this approach.
- c. In the context of a highly centralized system of government with an authoritarian orientation, it must not be assumed that a decentralized project administration can be established or will function without major and special changes and preparations being made, e.g., highly trained and motivated personnel being available, and the administrative structure of decentralization being clearly spelled out. As noted, project personnel must be of a quality to be able to function under a decentralized system.
- d. If there is to be a technical assistance team, insure that it is placed in an administrative setting that will allow it to accomplish the task that has been set for it, i.e., generally not a host country contract. The reasons include:
 - (1) One of the philosophical points behind the host country contract is that the host country will be in complete control of the project and will learn by doing and making mistakes. The problem with this is that the implementation is done by a government bureaucracy and bureaucracies, all

bureaucracy, are not noted for their abilities to learn from mistakes and to adjust. Bureaucracies are run by a set of relatively inflexible rules for action that attempts to reduce the need for interpretation of events to a minimum, and thereby not an extremely flexible system for mistake correction.

(2) The function of a technical assistance team is, at minimum, to advise on how to do things correctly, if not to teach by example. If the host country rejects the need for advice or the advisors in particular or if the goals desired by the host country and the donor differ, (i.e., a more pleasant way of life as opposed to project accomplishment) the technical assistance team must be in a position of authority or responsibility, or in a joint counter-part relationship to be able to attempt to get the project implemented as designed. As a subordinate in a bureaucracy, an advisory team is in a contradictory role.

- e. A system should be developed for screening host country personnel, direct hire personnel and contractors to insure that they are qualified to do the job assigned, that they do not have any ascribed or achieved characteristics that will get in the way of doing the job. This should include proper attitude and enthusiasm to get the job done and willingness to work and live under harsh conditions when that is part of the job.
- f. It must never be assumed that local subsistence communities are disorganized or ignorant of their development and survival needs.
- g. Projects must be designed with a clear picture of what can and cannot be implemented in mind. Project resources must fit with planned methods of implementation.
- h. To have established offices and personnel roles with technical advisory assistance is not enough to insure that a project will establish a system of accounting that will be acceptable to USAID. This suggests that the USAID Controllers office staff work with project staff in the early stages of project implementation to insure that an acceptable system is established from the start. This would at least reduce misunderstandings of what is expected and what is being done later in the project.