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PLANNING FOR ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE :
AN INFORMAL TOOL KIT FOR MANAGERS

A Report Prepared for MRDM/TD

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Report Overview	i
Outline of Planning Kit Contents	1
Planning Change: Basic Management Tasks	2
The "SWOTsUP" Analysis: Basis for Planning	5
Assessing Org. Performance: A Sample Checklist ..	8
Estimating Stakeholder Support: A Worksheet ...	15
Creating Effective Work Teams	16
Active Listening: A Critical Management Skill ..	19
A Checklist for Improved Listening	21
Basic Steps in Problem Solving	22
Problem Analysis Sheet	24
Using Brainstorming to Improve Your Options	25
Project Planning Worksheets	28
Completed Staff Work: Old Tool for Today's Needs	30
List of Books on Management and Innovation	32
<u>Appendix A</u> : Sample of Staff Survey Questionnaire	

REPORT OVERVIEW Page One

This is the second of two reports prepared for PM/TD on organizational change. The first report discussed *Strategic Management* factors which significantly affect the climate for staff creativity and innovation. The present report focuses on techniques and formats for *planning specific organizational improvements*. It is designed to be an informal self-help kit for A.I.D. managers concerned with making changes in their organizational structures, programs, procedures, etc..

The material presented herein reflects: (1) my involvement in initial activities to create the new Asia and Private Enterprise [APRE] Bureau in A.I.D., (2) current literature on organizational innovation, and (3) my organizational change experiences with A.I.D. and other institutions over the past three decades. During my work with APRE in late 1990, I was impressed with the positive and open-minded approach to organizational issues which was taken by Mrs. Henrietta Holsman Fore and her management team. I hope that this high level of commitment and cooperation on organizational change will continue, so that other A.I.D. managers faced with similar issues will have positive Agency-specific experiences on which to draw. After APRE had its organizational changes underway, a broader Agency revamping was announced. Consequently, it was agreed that materials I developed during the APRE experience should be broadened and expanded so that they might have wider application within A.I.D..

"Organizational change" can refer to either planned or unplanned change and it can have a negative or positive impact. This report focuses on planned *organizational change or innovation*. Innovation is the deliberate introduction of new and better ways of doing the organization's business. It may result from the cumulative efforts of many small improvement efforts, as well as from major innovation projects. Innovation results when creative ideas from people are acted upon to produce results. The development and use of innovation or project teams are important for linking staff into the innovation process. The teams should include people with different approaches to problems, so as to generate a wider range of ideas from which to draw in planning innovation. Similarly, the leaders and members of teams need to use *problem solving and decision making techniques* which make the best use of an individual's creative potential. These include such approaches as "brainstorming"--which separates the *idea generation phase* of problem solving from the *idea evaluation phase* to generate more action options. This kit includes information and worksheets which will hopefully be useful to the manager in these areas.

REPORT OVERVIEW Page Two

It is recognized that many managers are so busy coping with current routines and daily crises that they may have little time to plan innovations. However, organizations which rely on reactive or fire-fighting strategies may quickly become obsolete if their operating environments are rapidly changing. Therefore, it is assumed that a critical task of A.I.D. managers today is to maintain a proper *balance* between: (1) internal organizational competencies and (2) the changing demands being made on the organization by external forces (including key clients and other stakeholders). Maintaining this balance requires A.I.D. managers to continuously pursue improvement and innovation, not only in programs but also in *organizational systems* (strategies, structures, leadership styles, values, etc.) and in *human resources development*. In short, A.I.D. needs a critical mass of proactive managers who treat organizational change not as a unique or special event, but as a regular organizational process requiring the application of learnable skills.

To create innovative organizations, managers must use personal leadership styles and skills which help their people to understand and commit themselves to the unending pursuit of quality and innovation. Several management studies indicate that *staff are more likely to support new schemes if they are allowed to participate in decisions which affect them*. This suggests that democratic or participatory leadership styles are more appropriate in promoting organizational innovation. Such styles require managers to share decision making authority with staff. In doing this, a manager also needs to define for subordinates the unit's authority limits in any given situation, so that they understand which factors they can and cannot influence.

In situations where there are high staff stress levels associated with organizational change, managers can *increase communication flows* to reduce uncertainty and confusion. Managers should keep communications honest and not try to cover up unpleasant factors which may be associated with a change (e.g., staff reductions or transfers). They should be very visible and available to staff during periods of organizational uncertainty. Where there are legal or contractual restrictions on what information the manager can share with subordinates about pending changes, these restrictions need to be clarified early in the process. Finally, managers and their staffs should make maximum use of the inhouse training that is available in several of the areas discussed herein.

PLANNING FOR ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE:
AN INFORMAL TOOLKIT FOR MANAGERS

Outline of Contents

This collection of information sheets and worksheets was prepared as part of HRDM/TD's effort to assist interested A.I.D. managers in planning organizational improvements. The kit contains the following items:

- (1) A brief description of the basic management tasks involved in planning an organizational change.
- (2) Information and worksheet for analyzing (a) organizational Strengths and Weaknesses and (b) external Opportunities and Threats underlying Planning decisions. This "SWOTS UP" assessment is to help the manager identify gaps between current organizational capacities and the demands being made on the organization. The results of this assessment can be used in preparing the manager's personal Action Agenda. (A sample staff survey questionnaire is appended to the kit for reference since such instruments may be used to systematically collect information on staff perceptions of internal conditions and external trends.)
- (3) A sample Organizational Performance Checklist to help managers evaluate their organization's progress and identify improvement needs.
- (4) Information and worksheets on (a) creating effective work teams, (b) improving listening skills, (c) problem solving and goal setting, and (d) using "brainstorming" to generate more creative action options.
- (5) Project Planning Sheets to help the manager move from the problem solving and goal setting process to specific steps for planning organizational improvements and innovations.
- (6) Information on Completed Staff Work (which may be useful in preparing transmittal or action memos on project proposals).
- (7) A list of books on management and innovation.

The kit focuses on areas that HRDM/TD's cooperative efforts with A.I.D. units indicate are important in pursuing organizational effectiveness. However, the kit is not intended to substitute for the practical insights and experience of managers and their staffs. Moreover, many of the ideas herein will be familiar to staff who have worked on development projects in our cooperating countries. However, the target of change and improvement in this case is not host country counterparts but the A.I.D. staff itself. It is often easier to give others advice on change than to implement it at home?

We suggest that you skim each item in the kit and become familiar with what is here, before you begin working on any particular item.

We would welcome your suggestions for improving this kit. Pass them on to Robert R. Leon de Vivero, Toni Mitchell, or Jim Brady in HRDM/TD, Room 307, SA 2 (ZIP4+0206).

PLANNING ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE:
SOME BASIC MANAGEMENT TASKS

I. TREATING INNOVATION AS A CONTINUING MANAGEMENT TASK

Research suggests that the organizations which remain healthy over time continuously innovate and improve their programs and management systems. They keep organizational skills honed to anticipate and address changing external conditions (including the changing needs of organizational stakeholders: clients, financiers, suppliers, etc.). Effective managers thus treat their organizations as systems of interrelated and interdependent components which must be well coordinated (led) to achieve program and other goals on time. In order to obtain needed resources, the organization must demonstrate that its programs are having a positive and significant impact on clients and other key external groups. In the A.I.D. situation, reaching the appropriate level of innovation may require more managers to shift their focus from inputs and internal activities to outputs and external impact. "Outputs" are the services, information, advice, funds, etc. which the organization produces for the outside world. To stay effective over the longer term, the manager must not only pursue program improvements, but also try to increase organizational competencies and staff skills and motivation. The organization's people are its most critical resource for innovation. Among other things they are the source of the creative ideas which lead to innovation. The following sections discuss some tasks managers must perform in identifying improvement needs, creating an action agenda, and planning specific improvement projects.

II. ASSESSING NEEDS AND SETTING IMPROVEMENT GOALS

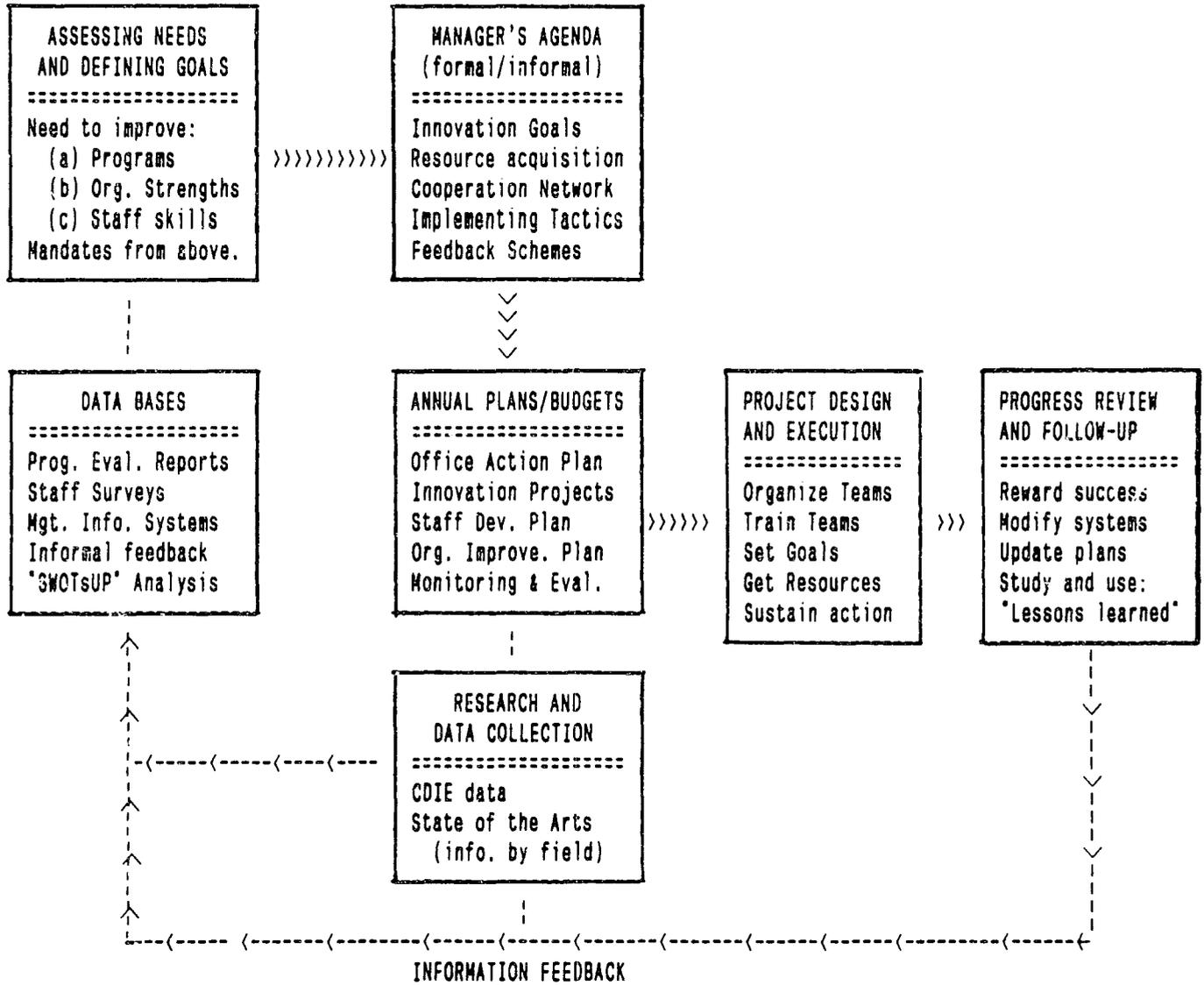
Figure 1 provides an overview of the improvement planning process. In the first phase of planning, the manager develops and uses the best available data bases to analyze current external and internal conditions. This includes an assessment of the relationship between any new mandates for change and ongoing programs. The manager, in collaboration with staff and others, must decide whether current efforts are adequate or need to be modified or augmented to address changing conditions. The needs analysis phase should identify potential improvement areas which can then be subjected to more specific analyses in the problem solving and goal setting phase. The manager must ensure that the set of program and other goals which result are sufficiently specific to be understood by those who must implement them. This may require the establishment of a hierarchy of goals and objectives ranging from the broad general vision statements at the top down to specific targets in the annual work plans of work teams and individual staff members. Without such definite guidelines and plans, it will be difficult to hold anyone responsible for developing and implementing improvements and innovations.

III. DEFINING THE MANAGER'S ACTION AGENDA

After assessing conditions and trends, the manager needs to develop his/her personal Action Agenda to cover the key improvements to be pursued during the coming months and years. This Agenda includes both formal and informal objectives. Some "informal" objectives may initially be only general ideas in the manager's mind. Over time some of these will be dropped while others will become firmer and moved onto the "formal" agenda. To free up resources for new projects, the Agenda may include actions to terminate current low-yield efforts. Implementing some Agenda items requires that they be linked to other A.I.D. programming and resource acquisition processes (CDSS, evaluation plans, personnel actions, etc.).

FIGURE 1

PLANNING ORGANIZATIONAL INNOVATION PROJECTS



The manager's Action Agenda will always be evolving to reflect changing conditions and it will normally encompass plans and projects in various stages of design or execution.

IV. NETWORKING TO OBTAIN SUPPORT FOR THE AGENDA

Once the manager's Action Agenda is defined, he/she needs to get support for the agenda from key actors (e.g., superiors, implementing staff, clients, and colleagues). This includes recruiting senior managers to be "sponsors" for key innovation projects. If important groups waiver on providing support, the manager may need to get them more involved and then hopefully committed to the particular enterprises. When organizing Work/Project Teams, the manager should consider including someone from all key offices and then working to ensure that they participate positively in meetings (and support the project within their home offices). At all stages of the improvement planning process, the manager needs to practice the types of communication skills which elicit support from staff, peers, and other stakeholders. This includes being an active listener, to obtain accurate and honest feedback from people. (See information sheets on "Active Listening" and "Using Brainstorming Techniques".) When properly used, Brainstorming can help people to keep an open mind when examining problems and generating improvement options. The manager may also need to strengthen the unit's systems for "networking" and maintaining regular contacts with internal and external groups whose support is critical to implementing the Action Agenda.

V. PLANNING INNOVATION OR IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

At this point, the manager should have defined his/her priority innovation goals and prepared or updated an Action Agenda. The manager then needs to decide how many projects to pursue and start the project planning process. The organizing and planning tasks for each innovation or improvement project might include the following:

1. Organizing project or work teams to concentrate on specific areas of innovation or improvement (e.g., programs, processes, policies, staff development). The Problem Analysis Sheet and related sheet on "Steps in Problem Solving" can be used by a team to narrow down alternatives for planning specific improvements. The team leader or facilitator can use brainstorming or similar techniques to help the group generate several creative action options. (See information sheet on Brainstorming.)

2. Once specific improvement objectives are defined and understood by all team members, the team can use the Project Planning Worksheets to produce a more detailed action proposal. The team can also periodically refer to the information sheets on Work Teams and Active Listening to see if its own procedures and operations can be improved.

3. After the Project Planning Worksheets or other planning documents are completed, the manager needs to choose strategies for getting project concurrences and approvals. The information sheets on Completed Staff Work may be useful for preparing the transmittal or decision documents needed to obtain organizational clearances and approvals.

THE "SWOTsUP" ANALYSIS: A BASIS FOR PLANNING

"SWOTs UP" is an acronym for [Organizational] Strengths and Weaknesses and [External] Opportunities and Threats Underlying Planning. The manager conducts an analysis of these four areas and their interrelationships in order to decide where to focus the organization's efforts. The results should help the manager to develop an Action Agenda for maintaining the best match between the organization's competencies and the demands being made on it. One strategy is concentrate first on using organizational strengths to exploit external opportunities, while also addressing internal weaknesses and external threats. If the organization is operating in a rapidly changing environment, seeking a good match or fit between the two is like trying to hit a moving target. In such cases, organizational change is a constant and must be managed as such.

In conducting a situational analysis, the manager needs to estimate whether a given event or trend will have a negative or positive impact on the organization (i.e., be a Threat or an Opportunity). At the A.I.D. Office level, external Threats and Opportunities could include (a) intra-agency factors such as the "new program initiatives" (democracy, private enterprise, family-based programs, etc.) or the Agency-wide reorganization and (b) international factors and trends (e.g., the political upheaval in Eastern Europe, the advent of the EEC in 1992, the political turmoil in the Gulf, and the changing role of donors like Japan).

The SWOTsUP Worksheet (below) identifies some general factors which might included in a situational analysis. The manager can modify or augment the worksheet to make it more applicable to his/her particular unit and programs. In looking at *Political or Policy Trends*, for example, the manager would assess the congruence between (a) his/her unit's goals and competencies and (b) current Agency-wide goals and program priorities. If the unit has no programs or staff expertise for the promotion of, say, Democratic Initiatives, does this represent a Threat or an Opportunity for the unit (or is it not relevant)? If the manager decides it is important to have a new project or other form of participation in the "Democratic Initiative", this decision would be one of the analytical outputs. (This then becomes an input into development of the manager's Action Agenda and the Project Planning process--see separate worksheets on Problem Solving" and "Project Planning"). Conversely, the manager may decide that his/her current staff and unit have outstanding Strengths in an area not covered in the Agency's new program initiatives. The manager may then decide that it is important to sell senior managers on the value of retaining such skills and programs by (1) incorporating these into one of the approved initiatives or (2) adding a new initiative which covers existing programs and skills. In short, the analysis should help the manager make decisions about ending, continuing, changing, or augmenting current programs and staff and initiating new programs (with existing and/or new staff).

Worksheet for Analysis of Strengths/Weakness
and Opportunities/Threats Underlying Planning

Instructions: List key factors or trends in your operating environment and then circle a "T" or an "O" to indicate that the impact of this factor is likely to be negative (a Threat) or positive (an Opportunity). After completing the list, select the more important items for problem solving and goal setting discussions with your project/work teams.

I. <u>External Factors:</u>	Is this factor a <u>Threat or an Opportunity?:</u>
A. Political or Policy Trends:	
1. _____	T O
2. _____	T O
B. Economic/Financial Trends:	
1. _____	T O
2. _____	T O
C. Technological (ADP, communications, etc.):	
1. _____	T O
2. _____	T O
D. Our Competition (other donors, USG agencies, etc.):	
1. _____	T O
2. _____	T O
E. Other external trends or factors:	
1. _____	T O
2. _____	T O

II. <u>Internal Organizational Factors:</u>	Is this a Strength <u>or a Weakness?</u>
A. Our current program mix & reputation	S W
B. Current staff skills and expertise	S W
C. Management skills and reputation	S W
D. Effectiveness of networking (vital contacts inside and outside of A.I.D.)	S W
E. Other: _____	S W
F. Other: _____	S W

SOME IDEAS AND TERMS

Why Innovation?: "Firms cannot be innovative without having managers capable of generating creative ideas. At the same time, managers cannot practice their creativity in organisations that stifle and constrain the creative process....However, it is also important to remember that managers can have an impact upon the creative environment and vice versa....Without creativity (internally generated or acquired) one cannot have innovation, and without innovation an organisation cannot be or remain successful." Source: S. Majaro, The Creative Gap. (Longman, London, UK, 1988), pp. 4-5.

Innovation: The innovation process involves the ideas of invention, discovery, or creativity, but goes beyond these. Innovation "is anything that provides usable, unique novel solutions to problems, opportunities, or challenges--whether small or large." Innovation includes not only the big breakthroughs; many little changes and adaptations can also constitute significant innovation. Examples include a new product, new uses for an old product, a novel marketing strategy, new designs of man-machine systems to increase productivity, and so on.
Creativity: The creative person has ideas and these are his or her output. The innovator translates ideas into realities. Action leading to tangible products or services is the output. Source: N.I. Smith and M. Ainsworth, Managing for Innovation. (Mercury Business Books, London, UK, 1989).

Quality Leadership: "Quality Leadership emphasizes results by working on methods. Problems are solved, not just covered up. Dr. Deming tells us to give customer concerns top priority, to study and constantly improve every work process so that the final product or service exceeds customer expectations....Quality Leadership, therefore, focuses on creating a workplace that encourages everyone to contribute to the company. Everyone in the company learns to use a scientific approach to solving problems and making improvements." Source: P. R. Scholtes and others, The Team Handbook: How to Use Teams to Improve Quality (Joiner Associates, Madison, WI 53705-0445, 1988), pp. 1-8/1-9.

YOU MAY KNOW WHERE YOU ARE GOING.
 GOD MAY KNOW WHERE YOU ARE GOING.
 DOES YOUR SECRETARY KNOW WHERE YOU ARE GOING?

[Source: Sign on cubicle wall]

ASSESSING ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE:
A SAMPLE CHECKLIST

Jim Brady, PM/TD
Updated 3/8/91

I. PURPOSE

This sample checklist was compiled to help interested A.I.D. managers assess the general effectiveness of their organizational units. The organization is treated as an "open system" which processes Inputs (resources) to produce Outputs (services, products, advice, etc). The Outputs should relate to achievement of the organization's Goals. *It is assumed that effectiveness should be measured by how well the organization benefits clients and others in the outside world, not by the efficiency of internal activities.* This is an important point, since internal activities may consume considerable staff energy and other resources while contributing little to external impact. The checklist thus emphasizes the management tasks which must be performed to maintain the proper match between internal organizational competencies and the performance demands being made on the organization by key external parties. In pursuing this match, the manager might initially look for areas where the unit's Strengths can be used to exploit favorable external trends or Opportunities. (The separate information and worksheets on the "SWOTsUP" analysis provide more details on assessing organizational Strengths and Weaknesses in relation to current external Opportunities and Threats.)

Figure 1 shows some major components of an organizational system and Table 1 describes some Basic Management Tasks from a systems perspective. You can decide which elements apply to your organizational situation.

As you go through the checklist, try to identify (1) areas where you need to make improvements and (2) the "stakeholders" who will oppose or support each of the possible improvements. A "stakeholder" is any person or group inside or outside of the organization with a significant "stake" or interest in the success or failure of your organization. For example, your office employees are internal stakeholders, while your Assistant Administrator may be an external stakeholder. From an Agency-wide viewpoint, members of Congress are important external stakeholders since they influence funding levels and the manner in which funds are used.

As you use the Checklist, please add items that I have missed, but which are significant to your situation. The PM/TD staff and I would also appreciate your suggestions for improving the checklist.

Figure 1: Components of an Organizational System
(A.I.D. Office)

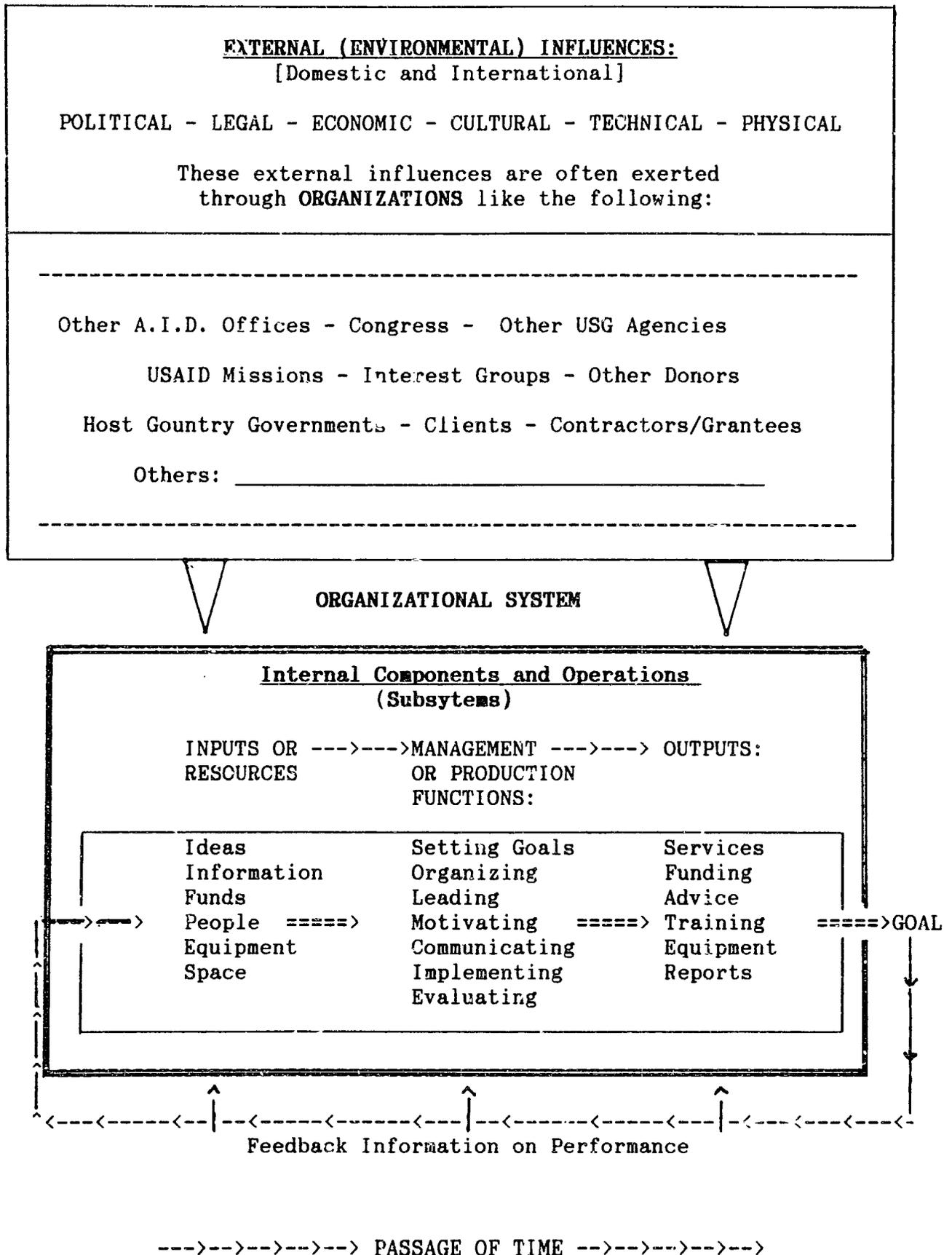


Table 1 - BASIC SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT TASKS

1. **SYSTEM DEFINITION:** Define the boundaries of your organizational system and the major internal components. Then identify and assess current and projected external trends/organizations which can have a significant impact on your organization.
2. **ORGANIZATIONAL FIT WITH ENVIRONMENT:** Assess match or "fit" between (1) current organizational goals and capacities and (2) demands/needs of key external groups ("stakeholders"). Then revise organizational plans and goals as needed to address current and future needs.
3. **MANAGER'S ACTION AGENDA:** Establish your personal Action Agenda which defines the specific tasks and resources needed to achieve continuous improvements or innovations in (a) programs, (b) the organizational set-up, and (c) staff training and development.
4. **SPECIFIC WORK PLANS:** Using Manager's Agenda and other guidance, work with staff to (a) set medium and short term goals and (b) make annual work plans for each unit and individual. Plans at each level should include some specific quality improvement and innovation goals for (1) programs, (2) organizational development, and (3) staff development. Plans should include specific target dates for reaching progress benchmarks or milestones.
5. **RESOURCE BUDGETS:** Commit financial, human, and other resources needed for implementing plans.
6. **PROGRESS MONITORING:** Assign responsibility to specific units/persons for monitoring and reporting on (1) key external trends and key stakeholders or competitors and (2) progress of organization toward goals.
7. **QUALITY IMPROVEMENT TEAMS:** Create and empower teams at all levels to improve quality of services. Provide teams with training and facilitator services needed to organize and operate effectively.
8. **LEADERSHIP:** Review and improve leadership styles and behaviors of managers and supervisors so that these provide a climate which encourages staff creativity and innovation. Stress importance of managers' daily actions in increasing mutual trust and cooperation.
9. **REWARD SYSTEMS:** Link performance evaluation and reward systems to each unit's or person's progress on achieving improvements and innovations.
10. **OPEN COMMUNICATION:** Ensure that organizational communication flows are sufficiently fast, open, and accurate--to facilitate organizational learning and decision-making. As needed create special modes to facilitate communication and action on improving operations (e.g., get independent feedback on organizational performance and impact).
11. **REVIEW AND REVISION OF SYSTEM:** Schedule regular reviews of internal progress/problems and external impact (meeting needs of clients, employees, and other organizational stakeholders). Always have disinterested parties as "devil's advocates" in important reviews (to keep discussions realistic and avoid excessive group conformity or "group-think"). Act on feedback and review information to make needed changes in goals, programs, or internal operations and staff.

II. USING THE CHECKLIST

After each item below, indicate its Importance to your unit, by entering an H (high), M (medium), or L (low). Next, rate how effectively the item is now being addressed (Present Level of Effectiveness) on a scale of 1 (Lowest) to 10 (Highest). Finally, indicate the level of effectiveness the organization should try to achieve on this item during the next 6-12 months (Target Level of Effectiveness). The ratings can be used to help identify areas where (a) improvements are needed or (b) things are working well and may only need to be reinforced or expanded.

ORGANIZATIONAL PLANNING CHECKLIST

ACTION ITEMS	IMPORTANCE OF ITEM (Hi-M-Low)	EFFECTIVENESS:	
		PRESENT LEVEL (1-10)	TARGET LEVEL (1-10)
1. <u>UNIT GOALS AND PLANS:</u>			
1.1 A <u>written statement</u> of our goals and priorities has been given to all staff members and other key "stakeholders.	_____	_____	_____
1.2 Annual Office <u>Work Plans</u> have been approved which <u>include improvements</u> in programs, procedures, and organizational systems.	_____	_____	_____
1.3 A plan to get <u>staff expertise</u> for new efforts has been prepared and approved.	_____	_____	_____
1.4 A <u>Staff Development Plan</u> has been approved (to prepare current staff for new or changing tasks).	_____	_____	_____
1.5 <u>Funds</u> are available for implementing above actions.	_____	_____	_____

ACTION ITEMS:	What?	When?	Who?
1.	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____

ORGANIZATIONAL PLANNING CHECKLIST

ACTION ITEMS	IMPORTANCE OF ITEM (Hi-M-Low)	EFFECTIVENESS:	
		PRESENT LEVEL (1-10)	TARGET LEVEL (1-10)
2. <u>STRUCTURE AND STAFFING:</u>			
2.1 Clear formal/ <u>functional statement</u> and organizational chart have been issued.	_____	_____	_____
2.2 Special <u>work teams</u> are organized as needed to supplement the functional structure (e.g., to <u>network</u> with key stakeholders or <u>implement innovations</u>).	_____	_____	_____
2.3 Inter-relationships and <u>tasks</u> of all work units and teams <u>are clear</u> .	_____	_____	_____
2.4 Current or planned <u>mix of staff skills</u> meets needs of new program initiatives.	_____	_____	_____
2.5 Schemes have been established to recognize staff service on special teams or tasks.	_____	_____	_____
3. <u>IMPLEMENTING PROCEDURES:</u>			
3.1 Guidelines on resource allocation priorities issued (linking funds and staff to new priorities).	_____	_____	_____
3.2 Financial management and control systems in place. (e.g. clear delegations of authority and procedures for committing funds.)	_____	_____	_____
3.3 Clear programming procedures and documentation issued. (Or an action plan exists to update existing systems).	_____	_____	_____
3.4 Program/OE Budgets reflect new priorities. (Some funds are provided for innovation and experimentation.).	_____	_____	_____

ORGANIZATIONAL PLANNING CHECKLIST

ACTION ITEMS	IMPORTANCE OF ITEM (Hi- M-Low)	EFFECTIVENESS:	
		PRESENT LEVEL (1-10)	TARGET LEVEL (1-10)
<u>IMPLEMENTING PROCEDURES</u> (Continued):			
3.5 Objective systems exist to regularly monitor progress on goals and provide feedback for review/corrective action.	_____	_____	_____
4. <u>LEADERSHIP TASKS AND STYLES:</u>			
4.1 All managers have <u>action agendas</u> for implementing new goals and programs.	_____	_____	_____
4.2 Managers' EER/PAR Work Plans include specific innovation and improvement tasks for programs <u>and</u> org. systems	_____	_____	_____
4.3 <u>Teams</u> for quality improvement or innovation are <u>organized</u> and meeting regularly to implement action plans.	_____	_____	_____
4.4 Action has been taken to provide managers and staff with needed <u>training</u> on team work and innovation/quality improvement (via classroom and/or on-the-job training).	_____	_____	_____
4.5 Managers' current leadership <u>styles</u> fit new operational requirements. (They practice supervisory behaviors needed to evoke staff innovation.)	_____	_____	_____
4.6 Systems exist to provide non-management/support staff with tangible and intangible <u>rewards</u> for improvements.	_____	_____	_____

ACTION ITEMS:	What?	When?	Who?
1.	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____

ORGANIZATIONAL PLANNING CHECKLIST

ACTION ITEMS	IMPORTANCE OF ITEM (Hi-M-Low)	EFFECTIVENESS:	
		PRESENT LEVEL (1-10)	TARGET LEVEL (1-10)
5. <u>UNIT COMPETENCY AND IMPACT:</u>			
5.1 Managers continuously improve their <u>innovation skills</u> and performance (via training, observations of other organizations, etc.).	_____	_____	_____
5.2 Managers <u>behave</u> consistently in ways which <u>demonstrate</u> a <u>commitment</u> to high quality and continuous improvement of programs and procedures.	_____	_____	_____
5.3 The unit maintains <u>effective contacts</u> with key supporters or stakeholders (e.g., other AID units, other agencies, contractors, and clients).	_____	_____	_____
5.4 The unit systematically <u>monitors key external factors</u> (political/economic trends, state-of-the-art developments, program impact on clients, and actions of its competitors).	_____	_____	_____
5.5 Managers <u>use feedback</u> on internal operations and external impact to improve systems and operations and/or revise goals and priorities.	_____	_____	_____

=====

ACTION ITEMS: What? When? Who?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

WORKSHEET

(Project)

Case _____

(Estimating Support for A Project)

Stakeholder Assumptions

Name _____

	Stakeholders	Major Assumptions	Assumption Rating	
			Importance	Certainty
1.	(Superiors)	Supporting		
		Resisting		
2.	(Peers)	Supporting		
		Resisting		
3.	(Clients)	Supporting		
		Resisting		

(Use additional sheets as needed to cover key groups of stakeholders.)

Source: Alan J. Rowe, et. al., Strategic Management and Business Policy: A Methodological Approach (Addison-Wesley, 1982)

CREATING EFFECTIVE WORK TEAMS

I. TEAM WORK AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The management literature stresses the critical role of the organization's human resources in producing the level of innovation required to progress in today's rapidly changing world. While financial capital and technology may be important resources, their productive use depends upon the quality of the organization's human capital. However, to be properly developed and utilized, people must be effectively linked into organizational structures. This occurs primarily through their participation in one or more small work teams. *Work teams are thus an important means of (1) facilitating the application of human talent to innovation opportunities and (2) providing employees with personal growth and work satisfaction.* After surveying the use of teams in 51 U.S. companies, Glenn Parker concluded:

"...Productivity, quality, service, problem solving, innovation, and rapid response are some of the most significant benefits team players bring to a company. They are helping to develop and maintain the competitive edge. And dare we say it? Being part of an effective team is enjoyable. When asked to report on their most enjoyable work experiences, most people will mention a business team, task force, committee, or other successful team activity. Being an effective team player and working with other effective team players is a great source of personal satisfaction." *

However, effective team work does not come just by putting people together in a work situation. The manager must strive to: (1) get the right mix of skills and personalities on the teams, (2) secure team members' commitment to organizational goals, and (3) provide them a proper setting and structure in which to operate. Figure 2 lists some characteristics of effective teams. The manager and team members can use this list to assess current team performance and to select areas for improvement.

Managers need to understand the factors which produce effective team meetings. Basically, an effective work team is one which achieves organizational goals and meets the needs of team members. This means that there must be shared values and goals. Additionally, both the manager and the other members of his/her team need to understand and perform certain leadership or group facilitation roles to keep the team members working smoothly together to complete tasks.

* Glenn M. Parker, *Team Players and Teamwork: The New Competitive Strategy*. (Jossey-Bass, 1990), pages 14-15.

WORKTEAMS (Continued)

Figure 2
Characteristics of an Effective Team.

1. Clear Purpose	The vision, mission, goal, or task of the team has been defined and is now accepted by everyone. There is an action plan.
2. Informality	The climate tends to be informal, comfortable, and relaxed. There are no obvious tensions or signs of boredom.
3. Participation	There is much discussion and everyone is encouraged to participate.
4. Listening	The members use effective listening techniques such as questioning, paraphrasing, and summarizing to get out ideas.
5. Civilized Disagreement	There is disagreement, but the team is comfortable with this and shows no signs of avoiding, smoothing over, or suppressing conflict.
6. Consensus Decisions	For important decisions, the goal is substantial but not necessarily unanimous agreement through open discussion of everyone's ideas, avoidance of formal voting, or easy compromises.
7. Open Communication	Team members feel free to express their feelings on the tasks as well as on the group's operation. There are few hidden agendas. Communication takes place outside of meetings.
8. Clear Roles and Work Assignments	There are clear expectations about the roles played by each team member. When action is taken, clear assignments are made, accepted, and carried out. Work is fairly distributed among team members.
9. Shared Leadership	While the team has a formal leader, leadership functions shift from time to time depending upon the circumstances, the needs of the group, and the skills of the members. The formal leader models the appropriate behavior and helps establish positive norms.
10. External Relations	The team spends time developing key outside relationships, mobilizing resources, and building credibility with important players in other parts of the organization.
11. Style Diversity	The team has a broad spectrum of team-player types including members who emphasize attention to task, goal setting, focus on process, and questions about how the team is functioning.
12. Self-Assessment	Periodically, the team stops to examine how well it is functioning and what may be interfering with its effectiveness.

Source: Glenn N. Parker, Team Players and Teamwork

(Jossey-Bass, 1990), P. 33.

WORK TEAMS (Continued)

II. SHARING TEAM LEADERSHIP ROLES

The manager may be the formal leader of a work team and responsible for its productivity. However, *the critical leadership roles discussed below can and should be shared among all members to produce an effective and cohesive team.* Research suggests that the team must focus on two categories of leadership roles and tasks during group meetings: (1) achieving the team's goals and (2) maintaining team cohesion and participation (i.e., "group maintenance").

A. Roles for Goal Achievement:

1. **INITIATOR:** Gets the meeting off to a good start. Defines the task or goal to be tackled and any known constraints on solutions.
2. **INFORMATION/OPINION GIVER:** Shares knowledge and opinions about the problem with other members.
3. **INFORMATION/OPINION SEEKER AND CLARIFIER:** Asks questions to get views and data on problems. Rephrases/reflects another person's statements to confirm understanding of what was said.
4. **INTEGRATOR:** Points out relevant relationships among ideas being discussed.
5. **DEVIL'S ADVOCATE:** Keeps group open to different viewpoints. Offers alternative problem analyses and solutions. Acts to protect team from premature closure on action options.
6. **SUMMARIZER/CONCLUDER:** Keeps group focused on tasks and schedule. Periodically summarizes discussion and tests for agreement on decisions. Ensures team decisions and follow-up actions are clear.

B. Group Maintenance Roles:

1. **SUPPORTER:** Encourages all to participate. Gives feedback and praises positive contributions.
2. **HARMONIZER:** Uses humor and other means to relieve tensions. Works to reduce the negative aspects of conflicts which may arise.
3. **BALANCER/CONSENSUS TESTER:** Tries to balance participation. Keeps dominant members from taking over; encourages shy members to talk. Probes extent of team members' support for decisions.

ACTIVE LISTENING: A CRITICAL MANAGEMENT SKILL

"...Today's successful leaders will work diligently to engage others in their cause. Oddly enough, the best way, by far, to engage others is by listening--seriously listening--to them. If talking and giving orders was the administrative model of the past fifty years, listening (to lots of people near the action) is the model of the 1980s and beyond."

Tom Peters, *Thriving on Chaos: Handbook for a Management Revolution* (page 524)

Listening to other people is hard work--if you do it right. Passive listening means that we relax and let our minds wander during a conversation. Our minds enjoy going off to focus on apparently more interesting distractions. We may rationalize by assuming that the mind can process multiple ideas simultaneously. However, for most of us, our failure to concentrate results in our getting incomplete messages from the person attempting to communicate with us. Active listening means that we keep a tight rein on our mental processes and keep them focused on the person with whom we are communicating. Just as when we play a radio, we keep tuned to one station at a time if we want good reception. Following are some suggestions for managers who wish to become more active--and therefore better--listeners.

"Nature has given to man one tongue but two ears, that we may hear from others twice as much as we speak."

Epictetus

1. If you want to learn, listen more and talk less:

Managers are commonly asked for their opinions, advice, etc., so it is easy for them to spend more time talking than listening. However, actively listening to employees, customers, suppliers, and other "stakeholders" can make the difference between a good manager and a bad one. The manager who spends less time talking and more time listening will better understand the organization's problems and what people think can be done about them.

2. Use "MBWA" to learn what is happening:

Research into "excellent" American companies revealed that many of their executives practice various forms of MBWA--Managing by Wandering Around. This means that you get out of your office and talk to people, but more importantly actively listen to them. The primary purpose of MBWA is to get first hand information on what is going on. A manager should not use MBWA in ways which undermine his/her subordinate managers or supervisors. Listening to employees and acting on the results is also an effective way to empower them. In short, the willingness of managers to listen can make employees feel that they are important.

Active Listening

3. Practice Your Listening Skills:

Following are some ideas for better listening:

a. Concentration: You should focus physically and mentally on the other person while he/she is speaking. Actively process the *verbal and nonverbal messages* being sent to you. Do not interrupt the person because you are eager to respond. Likewise, don't stop listening and start mentally preparing your response so you will be ready to answer as soon as they stop talking. You may miss what they said while you were concentrating on your response. Use verbal and nonverbal signals which indicate that you are listening (using your eyes, nodding your head, etc.).

b. Confirmation: To confirm that you understood what the person communicated, try reflecting back to him/her the message you received. You can thus summarize their message and repeat it back to them in your own words. If you want them to keep talking, you also can use such statements as:

"Could you tell me a little more about that?..."

"You feel that this wasn't the correct decision because..."

"You obviously feel very strongly about that, don't you?"

Using "reflecting" statements or questions helps you avoid making value judgments about whether the person is right or wrong. At this stage of the conversation, you want to keep the person talking until you understand his/her position. You do not inject your opinion unless or until the situation really requires it.

c. Completion: Completing the communication process will depend upon the objective of the meeting. You can use active listening and reflecting skills to help a person talk through a personal or work problem. This approach is more helpful in many situations than trying to give your own views and advice. People who are able to express themselves without being interrupted or criticized often get insights on how to solve the problem themselves. Even if the problem discussed is a work problem which you need to address, active and reflective listening can help you better understand what needs to be done.

Practice your listening skills at home and work and see how they help you better understand people by really hearing to them. Use reflecting skills to let them know you are listening by adroitly mirroring back their messages to them. Reflective listening can also be useful when people ask for your advice, but don't really want it! People may even thank you for the "advice" when all you did was lend an empathetic ear.

A CHECKLIST FOR IMPROVED LISTENING . . .

(How many of these do you practice?)

- ___ When I give an instruction, do I obtain feedback to assure I am understood?
- ___ Do I give my listeners cues to know when "to tune me in"?
- ___ Do I understand that I not only have the right to influence others but they also have the right to influence me?
- ___ Do I know my biases and prejudices so that they do not unduly filter out certain messages?
- ___ Do I understand that people "speak" through a myriad of non-verbal ways, that I must "hear" this communication too?
- ___ If I were listener, would I listen to myself?
- ___ Do I understand that when a person feels he is being understood, he tends to be less aggressive and less defensive?
- ___ Do I understand that being a good listener does not mean I must believe what I am hearing or subscribe to the values of the speaker?
- ___ Do I understand that I am learning little when I am talking?
- ___ Do I try not to over-respond to emotionally charged words?
- ___ When I disagree with something, or find something exciting, do I take pains to listen carefully?
- ___ If I am having trouble being understood, do I understand that the burden is on me to try to understand the other fellow?
- ___ Do I know when I may be intimidating listeners through threatening behavior?
- ___ Can I tell when there is a hostile, emotionally charged atmosphere?
- ___ Do I consider the person involved as well as the situation?
- ___ Have I taken pains to understand this person?
- ___ Do I listen for what is *not* being said?
- ___ Do I listen for feeling tone as well as for words?
- ___ Do I also *look* as if I am listening?

SOURCE: Leslie This, The Leader Looks at The Art of Listening,
(Leadership Resources, Inc., Arlington, VA., 1970?)

BASIC STEPS IN PROBLEM SOLVING

(You may wish to refer to the Problem Analysis Sheet as you go through the following Problem Solving steps):

I. PROBLEM CLASSIFICATION

A problem can be described as a deviation to be corrected or a performance gap to be filled. More specifically, a problem may exist in either of the following situations:

A. Current Performance Levels Do not Meet Standards: A problem can be an **undesired deviation from an existing performance standard**. Here, problem solving may be the restoration of conditions which existed before the deviation occurred. Problem solving would not increase organizational performance levels; it would only restore previous levels.

B. A Need to Innovate or Increase Quality: A problem can also be defined as the **difference between where you are now and where you want to be in the future** (e.g., the gap between your present conditions and your desired future conditions). While current performance may meet the organization's existing standards, it may not be adequate to meet changing needs of key clients or stakeholders (particularly if your competitors are performing better than you). In this case, the problem is trying to establish new higher standards and performance levels through innovation and quality improvement. (For further information on definitions see Kepner and Tregoe in the Reference list)

II. STEPS IN PROBLEM SOLVING

1. **Define the problem or performance gap as clearly and completely as possible. (What, when, where, how, and who?)**

Be sure you are working on the root problem and not just a symptom or a part of the problem. Balance "objective" data with your own feelings about the situation.

2. **List causes of the problem (or reasons for pursuing improvements).**

Sometimes the problem situation is imposed from above and the causes may not be so evident. If so, it may be better to focus more on the positive aspects that can be worked into your analysis and planning. "If life hands you a lemon, make lemonade."

3. **Define the essential conditions or criteria which a solution or proposed change must meet in order to be satisfactory.**

How will you, your boss, and other key actors or stakeholders measure success in solving the problem or achieving your improvement goal? What indicators will tell you when the job is done? Criteria for assessing the feasibility of an option could include: **technical or substantive factors; socio-cultural factors** (e.g., support for the outcomes by clients or implementing staff), **financial or cost factors; policy or legal factors; or political factors**).

STEPS IN PROBLEM SOLVING (CONTINUED)

4. List possible solutions to the problem (or options for reaching your improvement goals).

Use Group Brainstorming (the Technique of deferred judgment) or similar discussion methods to generate as many action alternatives as possible. This means that critiques or negative comments are not permitted during the listing of ideas. The goal is to get everyone involved in proposing creative options, and this requires an environment in which they are free from judgments and criticisms. After everyone has had an opportunity to contribute ideas, the group can modify, augment, or combine listed options. Then, the group can evaluate the options against specific criteria. (For more details, see sheet on Brainstorming).

5. Evaluate the proposed options against your criteria.

Discuss possible negative side-effects of each alternative. Who will support or oppose a particular option?

6. Select the option which best meets your criteria.

7. Check the selected action option against your original problem or goal definition to see if they are consistent.

8. Make an implementation or action plan.

This plan should cover the critical elements of design, approval, funding, implementation, progress monitoring, and use of monitoring information for any needed modification of operations and/or goals. You also may want to discuss strategies for getting support for your plan. (Refer to the Project Planning Sheets for more details.)

9. Inform those who need to know about your decisions.

10. List major follow-up actions and assign staff to these.

What information is needed to track progress?

When will the group meet to assess implementation progress?

11. Begin implementation of your plan.

12. Decide how to use this experience to improve future planning sessions.

References:

Likert, Rensis and Jane Gibson Likert, "A Method for Coping with Conflict in Problem-Solving Groups," *Group & Organization Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 4, December 1978.

Kepner, Charles H and Benjamin Tregoe, *The Rational Manager: A Systematic Approach to Problem Solving and Decision Making*. (Princeton, N.J.: Kepner-Tregoe, Inc., latest edition)

PROBLEM ANALYSIS SHEET

(Before using this sheet, see sheets on Problem Solving Steps & Brainstorming)

1. Define the problem or goal in specific terms (what, where, when, who?):

2. List the specific problem causes (or reasons for selecting the goal):

3. List alternatives for solving the problem (or pursuing your goal).
(Use Group Brainstorming techniques to generate several options;
then select the three most attractive options and list below:

Option 1: _____

Option 2: _____

Option 3: _____

4. List the criteria for assessing the feasibility of implementing
each solution you have identified above. Examples:

a) Political feasibility: Will your superiors support it?

b) Legal feasibility: Will present laws or rules permit it?

c) Financial feasibility: Can you afford to implement it?

d) Socio-cultural feasibility: Will it be acceptable to
(1) people who will implement it and (2) concerned clients?

e) Technical feasibility: Is it professionally sound?
Does it address the problem/goal you defined in Item 1, above?

f) Other: _____

5. Rate the feasibility of each option on a scale of
1 (lowest) to 10 and select the best one:

CRITERIA: --->	POL	LEG	FIN	SOC	TECH	OTHER: _____	RATING TOTALS	CHECK BEST SOLUTION:
Solution 1:	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
Solution 2:	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
Solution 3:	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___

6. Review the actions taken above and make any needed modifications.
After selecting the best action option, you can use the
Project Planning Sheet to outline implementation steps.

USING BRAINSTORMING TO IMPROVE YOUR OPTIONS

1. **WHAT IS BRAINSTORMING?** Brainstorming is a group discussion technique used to encourage the members to be free and creative in generating options for solving problems and improving operations. After the problem or goal is clear to members, they are urged to make suggestions for action and these are recorded. No evaluation of suggestions is allowed during the brainstorming phase. After enough options are listed, then discussion proceeds to improving on the list and then selecting the best ideas for further action. The objective of brainstorming is to get higher quality innovations or improvements by generating more options from which to choose. It has been estimated that an average of 50 ideas may be needed to result in one implemented innovation. Brainstorming tries to eliminate the common problem of group members being reluctant to contribute ideas because they fear criticism by others. Better discussions usually result from groups of 6-10 members. Larger groups may be divided up for brainstorming and the results of the different groups can be combined later.

2. **HOW DOES BRAINSTORMING WORK?** In a brainstorming session, the problem or objective is defined in specific terms (including any real constraints which must be considered). After everyone understands the objectives and constraints, all members are encouraged to suggest as many options as they think of. Novel or wild ideas are encouraged. It is useful to have both a group facilitator and a person who can quickly record ideas coming from group members. There is a free flow of ideas and each idea is immediately listed on a board or flip-chart. No comments or judgments are permitted on any idea until the brainstorming phase is completed. This ban also applies to the use of facial expressions or other non-verbal language to indicate disagreement with an idea. Brainstorming is also known as the **Technique of Deferred Judgment** because everyone waits until after the brainstorming before making judgments about the quality or practicality of a proposed action. The facilitator may use summarizing or reflective listening techniques to be sure that the contributor's idea has been understood. Group members may offer suggestions which build on ideas contributed by others.

After the group reaches a plateau in the brainstorming phase, there can be a discussion of the listed ideas to clarify or generate additional ideas. For example, in looking for ways of improving service or products, you might consider: **Adaptation**: (e.g., car seat belts were adapted from airplane seat belts), **Combination** (combining separate travel request and approval forms into a single form), **Magnification** ("family-size" products), **Minification** (bikinis); **Reversal** (turned inside out); or **Rearrangement**. After the group has finalized its list, the ideas can be screened against feasibility criteria to select the best ones for follow-up.

3. **IS THIS PROCESS TIME-CONSUMING?** Sometimes. However, proponents of brainstorming argue that it helps produce better action alternatives because it generates more ideas from which to choose. It also permits a more creative use of your human talent by providing a climate in which people feel freer to contribute. Moreover, as a group becomes more experienced in effective team work and problem-solving techniques, the brainstorming phase should require less time.

WORKSHEET

(Project)
Case _____

Critical Success Factors

Name _____

(Screening and refining ideas from Brainstorming session)

"Brain-stormed" CSF	Well-specified CSF	Measure of performance

Source: Alan J. Rowe, et. al., Strategic Management and Business Policy: A Methodological Approach (Addison-Wesley, 1982)

MORE IDEAS AND TERMS

Managing Change: "Why do some firms prosper and grow in the midst of change, while others deteriorate and decline? We believe the answer lies in the ability to manage change. This ability stems from accepting change as opportunity, not threat....We define an *entrepreneur* as someone who redeploys assets and resources from areas of low productivity and yield to areas of high productivity and yield. Entrepreneurs achieve this redeployment by *innovating*, which consists of the systematic anticipation, recognition and exploitation of change. *Change* is the basic fuel of innovation, its source, its raw material...Innovation needs to be organized. It is a process--no less a learnable skill than time management, planning, or delegating....Innovation must be no less ongoing and routine than quality control or financial review." Source: M. Robert and A. Weiss, The Innovation Formula, (Harper and Row, 1988).

Facilitation: "Very simply, a facilitator is a person who helps a group free itself from internal obstacles or difficulties, so that it may more efficiently and effectively pursue the achievement of its objectives for a given meeting....Effective facilitation is at the core of group-oriented approaches to problem solving, planning, and decision making....Managers are being asked to do more with less. Learning and practicing facilitation skills will be the surest way for managers to provide the new level of leadership required to meet these challenges, and this is true regardless of industry or professional occupation." Source: T.A. Kayser, Mining Group Gold (Serif Publishing, El Segundo, California, 1990) pp. 12-13

Enjoyment: Enjoyable or optimal experiences are those in which: (1) We confront tasks we have a chance of completing. (2) We are able to concentrate on the task. (3) The task has clear goals and provides us with immediate feedback on how we are doing. (4) We are working with a deep but effortless involvement that precludes awareness of everyday worries and frustrations. (5) We can exercise control over our actions. (6) Concern for self disappears during task performance, but the sense of self emerges stronger after the experience. (7) Time seems to pass much quicker or much slower than normal...."The task is to learn how to enjoy everyday life without diminishing other people's chances to enjoy theirs." Source: Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience (Harper and Row, 1990) pp. 49,70.

PROJECT PLANNING WORKSHEETS
(For Planning Improvements)

1. Org. Symbol/Name: _____ 2. Date: _____ 199__

3. Project Title: _____

4. Describe improvement to be made: _____

5. Who will benefit from this improvement?: _____

6 Focus of improvement (check one or more):

Quality Quantity Timeliness (speed)
 Reduce cost Other (Specify: _____)

7. List major tasks required to make the improvement: Who will do What? Where? When? (Use additional page if needed.)

<u>TASKS</u>	<u>ACTION OFFICER</u>	<u>START DATE</u>	<u>END DATE</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

8a. Resources needed (Funding, staff time, supplies, space):

<u>TYPE OF RESOURCE</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>SOURCE</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

8b. TOTAL COST: _____

9. What are the key factors working for or against the proposed improvement?:

NEGATIVE FACTORS:

POSITIVE FACTORS

10. Rate the feasibility of the project (circle number):

<u>FEASIBILITY FACTOR</u>	<u>PROBABILITY OF SUCCESS:</u>				
	<u>LOWER</u>	<u>--></u>	<u>--></u>	<u>--></u>	<u>HIGHER</u>
Legal (laws/rules will allow)	2	4	6	8	10
Political (support by superiors)	2	4	6	8	10
Technical (expertise, equipment)	2	4	6	8	10
Financial (cost-benefit payoff)	2	4	6	8	10
Socio-cultural (support by implementers, clients)	2	4	6	8	10

Agree on an OVERALL RATING: ----> ----> --> _____

11. Overall Feasibility Decision: Is plan worth pursuing?
If "No", abandon/revise plan. If "Yes", go to Page 2.

PROJECT PLANNING WORKSHEETS - Page Two

12. Project Team: Who will get project approved and executed?:
Leader: _____
Members: _____

13. Key Supporters and Opponents: Whose support is vital for success of the project? What are their reasons for supporting it? How do you convert current opponents?

<u>WHO NEEDS TO SUPPORT IT?</u>	<u>REASONS FOR SUPPORTING?</u>
SUPERIORS: _____	_____
FINANCIERS: _____	_____
PEER OFFICES: _____	_____
IMPLEMENTORS: _____	_____
CLIENTS: _____	_____
OTHERS: _____	_____

14. Special Action Assignments: Outline actions needed to address key issues of project *approval and implementation*. (Cover Negative Factors and areas of *Low Feasibility* on Page 1, plus actions needed to get support from key stakeholders identified in Item 13.)

<u>ACTION NEEDED</u>	<u>ACTION OFFICER</u>	<u>TARGET DATE</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

15. Documentation Assignments: Who will prepare the data and documentation needed for project approval and funding?:
 Formal Proposal: _____ Budgets: _____
 Equipment/Space: _____ Staffing: _____
 Action or Transmittal Memorandum: _____
 (Refer: Sheet on "Completed Staff Work")

16. These Project Planning Worksheets were completed by:
 Name(s)/Telephone #: _____

COMPLETED STAFF WORK:
OLD TOOLS FOR TODAY'S NEEDS

I. BACK TO BASICS?

Completed Staff Work has been defined as the study of a problem and the presentation of a solution by a subordinate in such form that all that remains to be done on the part of the superior is to indicate approval or disapproval of the recommended or completed action. This definition usually applies to staff work within a large organization and a Staff Paper or Action Memorandum is used to address problems, obtain decisions, and record these actions in the organizational memory bank.

Completed Staff Work can be a significant way of getting support from your "Front Office". However, it is important that you understand exactly what your superiors expect in the way of staff work and action proposals. For example, a senior A.I.D. manager recently expressed concern that *Action Memos in AID/W often do not objectively analyze action options or present meaningful choices to the top officials expected to act on them.* Instead, the analysis is often "mushy" and represents excessive compromising in the clearance process. The same manager observed that many of the problems involved should not even be raised to the top of the organization, but resolved by lower level managers.

II. FOCUSING ON PROBLEMS

A supervisor commonly judges subordinates by their ability to prevent or resolve problems. In this case, a "problem" is defined as an undesired deviation from performance standards which is deemed significant by someone whose opinion counts. This means that you have performance standards which help determine when a deviation exists. You also need to ensure that the deviation is seen by your boss as important enough to constitute a "problem" which merits his/her action. Don't pass the responsibility for problem-solving to your superiors if you have the authority and resources to solve it yourself. In some cases, a "problem" may also be defined as a gap between present and desired conditions. For example, a system may meet current organizational standards but the standards themselves call for less than what is needed to meet the changing demands of clients or other stakeholders. *Completed Staff Work* and an *Action Memorandum* may therefore be the tools for proposing improvements or innovations. However, if you use the Action Memorandum primarily as a means of "selling" your proposal, it may not really represent *Completed Staff Work*. *Completed Staff Work* means that you present your superiors with thorough and impartial information on which to base their decisions.

III. GENERAL FEATURES OF AN ACTION MEMORANDUM

A. Format and Questions to Ask: Following is a general outline of a Staff Paper or Action Memorandum and some questions to ask when filling in each section. Feel free to modify to meet your needs or meet unit standards.

1. Definition of the Problem

What is the deviation or gap you are addressing?
How did it occur? Why must we address it now?

2. Background Factors

What are the causes of the problem? What has been done before? How have conditions changed? What do we know about similar situations elsewhere? What do "experts" say? How was the current problem analysis conducted? What data were used?

3. Alternatives for Addressing the Problem

What action alternatives were considered? What evaluation criteria were used to compare alternatives? What are the best two or three alternatives and why were these chosen? Who supports or opposes which options?

4. Recommended Alternative(s)

Which alternative(s) do you recommend for approval and why? What are the costs (immediate and longer term)? What are the major benefits? What are some possible negative effects of this alternative? Who supports the proposal and why? When will the action begin? Who will implement?

B. Other Factors to Consider: You should touch base with all concerned parties before you submit the formal Action Memorandum. As a matter of professional courtesy, the content of the memo should be seen by all who have a vital interest in the proposed action. Also get written clearances where these are required by the organization. If certain parties refuse to concur in the proposal, this also needs to be made clear to others clearing or approving the Action Memorandum. The "bottom line" is this:

IF YOU WERE YOUR BOSS, WOULD YOU APPROVE THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE AND THUS STAKE YOUR PROFESSIONAL REPUTATION ON THEM BEING RIGHT? IF NOT, DON'T SEND THE MEMO SINCE THIS IS NOT YET COMPLETED STAFF WORK!

SELECTED BOOKS ON MANAGEMENT AND INNOVATION

Jim Brady
Revised March 1991

(Many of these are available in paperback)

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APPENDIX "A": Sample Staff Survey Questionnaire

TO: _____ Bureau Staff

FROM: Jim Brady, Management Consultant

SUBJECT: Survey of staff views

I am currently conducting some organizational studies for the _____ Bureau, and the AA, Ms./Mr. _____, thought it would be valuable to include staff views on current Bureau operations and trends. We would therefore appreciate it if you would complete the attached three-page questionnaire. Many organizations conduct such staff surveys from time to time to help identify areas which need improvement and areas where good practices need support or reinforcement.

On Pages 1 and 2, please take a few minutes to indicate your agreement or disagreement with 20 statements about your Bureau in general or the particular office or unit in which you work. More specifically, you will be asked to check one of the following five responses to each statement:

Strongly disagree
 Disagree
 Neither agree nor disagree
 Agree
 Strongly Agree

If you are not sure how to respond to a statement, you can check: "Neither agree nor disagree"

Page 3 of the questionnaire asks for your written comments and suggestions on the organization.

Do not give your name on the questionnaire. Individual questionnaires will be treated as confidential and only summaries of the information will be included in my report. However, I will use actual written statements from the last page, unless editing is needed to protect the source of the statement. I will provide a report of findings to each concerned Office or Division. I will also respond to requests for a copy of the report from participating staff who do not have ready access to office copies.

SEND THE COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE IN THE ATTACHED ENVELOPE.
 IF THE ENVELOPE IS MISSING, PLEASE MAIL IN ANY ENVELOPE TO ME:

James R. Brady
 c/o _____, Room _____, SA 2
 Mark: FOR ADDRESSEE ONLY

If you have any questions, contact me at PM/TD (202-663-2280) or at home (703-255-3270). Thanks very much for your help.

GENERAL SURVEY OF STAFF VIEWS

Page 1 of 3 pages.

Check appropriate box after each statement.

(Please do not give your name.)

1. The goals and priorities of my office/unit are clearly defined.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. People in my unit work well together.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I am usually allowed to do my job as I see fit.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Most important decisions in the Bureau are made at the top.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Bureau goals and priorities have been clearly defined.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. My office/unit gives high priority to continuously improving the quality of what we do.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Top managers in our Bureau welcome staff ideas for improving operations.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Cooperation among offices in our Bureau is very good.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Staff meetings in my office are usually well-managed and effective.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. There is a well-defined system which employees can use to contribute ideas for improvements.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please go on to Page 2.

GENERAL SURVEY OF STAFF VIEWS

Page 2 of 3 pages.

Check appropriate box after each statement.

(Please do not give your name.)

11. My office/unit has made significant improvements in our operations during the past few months.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. In our office, clerical staff are given respect and recognition for their contributions.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Our Bureau's work is critical to achievement of A.I.D.'s overall goals.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Opportunities to take job-related training have been adequate for me.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. My job is usually rewarding and interesting.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. My supervisor welcomes staff suggestions for improving operations.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. When I do excellent work I receive recognition for it from my superiors.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Our Bureau has excellent relations with staff in USAIDs and other bureaus.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. We need to streamline the procedures for processing documents and messages within our Bureau.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. All things considered, I would rather work here than in any other Bureau in A.I.D..	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

