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AN EVALUATION OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH AND TRAINING PROJECT

(631-0007).

by

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for

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SUMMARY

In this evaluation we have attempted to do two things:

(1) Measure the actual project outputs against the project outputs; and

(2) Explain why there were discrepancies in the expected achievements.

Generally, the project has not achieved a significant part of its goals. This comes out clearly if one considers project components such as the transfer of research know-how through American junior and senior researchers, equipment and support services. See body of report for details.

An increase in the number of senior researchers projected in the project has not actually taken place at CRED. The only area of major project success (considering performance in other areas) is in the academic training of young Cameroonians. Training was envisaged for 7 Cameroonians in U.S. colleges and Universities to obtain higher degrees (6 M.A.s and 1 Ph.D.) but only 4 have been trained so far. Also, training was planned for 2 librarians (Anglophone and francophone) in Senegal and Nigeria but only one candidate has been trained. It can therefore be argued that the training component of the project had 55 percent success.

The poor performance of the project as a whole stemmed from a number of factors:

(1) The design of the project which was not well thought through and which led to very ambitious project goals with limited funding and other resources, and in a very short time frame. Institution building is a slow process and requires an average of nine years in societies with strong support institutions and structures already in place;

(2) The poor timing and quality of project inputs (human and material); and

(3) The structural and personnel changes in the donor and recipient implementing agencies.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Social Science Research and Training Project (631-0007) has received seventy-one percent of its total funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and twenty-nine percent from the Government of the United Republic of Cameroon (GURC). The project agreement document was signed in 1977 giving the project a five-year life period (1978-1982). The major goal of the project was to strengthen GURC'S capacity through the National Office of Scientific and Technical Research (ONAREST) to plan and evaluate rural development projects.

Though the project paper was signed in December 1977, the projects origin dates much longer. Initial talks about the possibility of setting up this project began as far back as 1974 between USAID/GURC officials. A project of this nature to strengthen and build GURC'S major research institution was considered necessary by both parties. At these initial meetings GURC was represented by Professor Mbui and Mr. Ndoumbe Manga, then director of the Institute of Human Sciences (ISH) and head of Center for Economic and Social Sciences (CSES) respectively. These meetings delineated CSES as the unit of ISH to be strengthened and also set the general tone of the project which was to emphasize research, training and equipment. In 1976 Professor Mbui was transferred to the Prime Minister's office and Mr. Ndoumbe-Manga became acting director of ISH and at the same time retained his former position as head of CSES. In 1977 Mr. Norman Green of USAID/Yaounde brought Mr. N'sango Arouna, a researcher with ONAREST, into the tentative project design team. The Cameroonian members of the design team, however, argue that they had very little input into the final project paper and that they were presented with a fait accompli.

The final project document retained the North Province as the field research site. It also retained three phases for the project. Phase I was to examine the effects of directed development. Phase II was to conduct baseline studies of three sub-divisions, and Phase III was to conduct two "New Lands" Studies

Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy of Boston University was contracted to jointly implement the project with CSES. According to the project agreement paper Fletcher would provide a senior research fellow who would supervise field research in Phase II of the project. It was also to provide experienced American junior researchers to work in the field with Cameroonian junior researchers who were supposed to receive advanced training in U.S. Colleges in the Social Sciences after completing their field work. Also, according to the project paper, the Cameroonian researcher, Mr. N'sango was to supervise Phase I of the project and GURC was to provide a senior research counterpart for Phase II with the implicit understanding that the first two Cameroonians trained in the U.S. under the auspices of the project would assume the supervision of Phase III of the project.

The beginning of Phase I of the project coincided with the transformation of ONAREST into the General Delegation of Scientific and Technical Research (DGRST). Shortly after this transformation, there were structural and personnel changes within the research institution. Mr. N'sango who was supposed to supervise Phase I of the project was appointed director of studies at the Research Delegation. A new director and an assistant-director were appointed at ISH. Mr. Vroumsia became delegate general of research. Structurally CSES was split into two new centers:

(1) The Center for Economic and Demographic Research (CRED) and

(2) The Center for Research in the Social Sciences (CRESS).

These new centers, CRED and CRESS, had new heads and Mr. Njoumbe-Manga who was very intimately associated with the Social Science Research and Training project was left with no post. This reduced enormously his ability to contribute to the project. It is important to mention that the head of CRED has since been changed. These organizational changes with possible effect on the project were not only restricted to the Cameroonian research institution. USAID/Yaoundé experienced similar changes in personnel. There was a new USAID Mission Director and a program and project officer.

Considerable attention has been paid to the historical background of this project so as to emphasize how changes in the project environment (donor and recipient included) might have affected perceptions and behaviors of those closely involved with the project at the different phases. The questions to ask are :

(1) Did these numerous structural and personnel changes in the project environment between 1974 and 1982 help or hinder project goals?

(2) If they did, which are the major contributing variables? Answers to these questions are the prime concerns of this study. Before answering the above questions it is important to describe the research methods used in this evaluation.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

In conducting this evaluation the author has used extensively project documents both at the USAID Mission and CRED/ISH offices for background information on project goals, purposes and intended beneficiaries. He also interviewed extensively ISH Personnel who were partially or intimately involved in the project. Field research was done to compare original project objectives with actual project performance during its entire life span.

Two field trips lasting a week each were taken to project sites: Maroua, Yagoua and Kaele. During these trips an unstructured questionnaire was used to interviewiew a twenty percent random sample of the interviewees in the sample of project junior researchers. The rational for interviewing this sample group was to see if the project had any effect on the villagers. Thirty percent of the project enumerators were also interviewed to discover some of the data collection problems encountered and to determine if these problems are significant enough to bias the data collected. This aspect of the study was considered of prime importance because the kinds of data collected might influence the attitudes of possible end users of the research. Three junior researchers: BIKOI, Motaze (Cameroonians) and Sallinger (American) were interviewed to see how they perceived the project strengths and weaknesses and possible areas of improvement.) This author was particularly interested to see the perception of these junior researchers toward the project just before they joined it and after they completed their field assignmentq. The other researchers involved with the project could not be reached. (This/reports were available and read. However, some of the highly controversial issues raised in their reports such as farm distance from village could not be resolved without personal contact with them. Also, records of the enumerators were closely examined and contrasted with some of the final reports presented by the junior researchers.

Possible project end-users such as the devolpment societies in the North Province (SEMRY, SODECOTON and CENTRE - NORD), departmental and provincial delegations of Agriculture, MADES, CTFFS, North Cameroon Seed Project, the Governor's office, the Provincial delegate for the Ministry of Economy and Plan, and sililar structures in Yaoundé were interviewed to determine project awareness and reaction to the project in general.

To interview end-users distance was used as a major variable. The distance variable was divided into three levels:

(1) Divisional level. This was further divided into ten, twenty and thirty kilometres of the radial area of the project site. To determine these distances the furthest distance covered by the junior researchers in one direction from a central locus such as Maroua, Yagoua and Kaele were used;

(2) The Provincial level; and

(3) The national level which is Yaoundé for purposes of this study.

Finally, the sociometric technique was used to determine power distribution within the Institute of Human Sciences. This exercise was considered important because of its ability to locate those individuals who could provide leadership in projects of this nature. Hierarchy and power were examined to find out if there is a correlation between the two. Technical competence of personnel was closely examined with decision-making power in particular fields with the intention to see if these two are correlated and to what extent.

Before proceeding to discuss findings of this study it is important to briefly state the project objectives and goals.

PROJECT GOAL

The project goal was to strengthen GURC'S capacity to plan and evaluate rural development programs. This capacity was to be strenghtened by developing the Center for Economic and Demographic Research (CRED) to the extent of enhancing its credibility to contribute to Cameroon's development. It was also believed that CRED could become more credible if it had adequate human and material resources to conduct research, and collect and disseminate socio-economic data for development programs in North Cameroon.

PROJECT INPUTS

USAID was to provide the following inputs :

(1) A senior researcher contracted from July 1978 to June 1980 for a period of 24 months. He would perform the following services during his contract:

a) Organize and supervise 3 field teams for research;

b) Prepare a state of the arts study on research in the North Cameroon and help prepare a proposal for future research programs in the area;

c) Help organize a seminar in early 1980 on "Issues in North Cameroon Development";

d) Assist ISH documentation and information service in the acquisition of materials and equipment;

e) Assist the head of CRED in organizing courses for training middle-level technicians in research techniques.

f) Act as liaison with the AID office in Yaoundé for project implementation; and

g) Act as counselor to the head of CRED to achieve the purposes of the project.

(2) A junior Researcher (July 1978-1979)
He was to serve as field researcher for Phase I of the project.

(3) Three Junior Researchers (Oct. 1978-May 1980). They were to serve as field researchers for Phase II of the project.

(4) Two Junior Researchers (August 1980 - March 1982)
They would serve as field researchers for Phase III of the project.

(5) A Senior Researcher/Consultant (May 1981). He would provide consultation services for Phase III of the project.

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PARTICIPATING TRAINING:

(1) 6 U.S. long term training programs. Masters Degrees in Sociology/Anthropology or Economics:

- Two participants associated with Phase III of the project were to leave for training Dec. 1977.
- One participant associated with PHase I of the project would depart for training june 1979.
- 3 participants associated with Phase II of the project would leave for training September 1979.

(2) 1 U.S. long-term training program for Ph.D. in the social sciences, for a senior researcher assigned to CRED. He was to leave for training June 1979.

(3) Two Africa long-term training programs for librarians/ documentalists. They were to leave Oct. 1978.

(4) 3 Africa short-term study/observation tours for senior CSES/CRED Staff to visit Social Science Research Centers. Departure planned for Oct. 1979.

(5) 1 Africa or U.S. study program in administration of research activities for a senior official of ISH. This was scheduled for Feb. 1981.

EQUIPMENTS :

4 all terrain vehicles, for use in field research projects.

1 microfiche/microfilm reader, with storage cabinets

1 photocopier, with supplies

Various books and documents for ISH Library

Paper and printing supplies for printing documents;

Tape recorders;

Photography equipment;

Purchase and installation of "SPSS" computer package (if determined to be applicable and appropriate for research projects); and local supplies to support field research (Camping equipment, jerry cans, seals, weights, etc)

SUPPORT SERVICES :

Support for two in country seminars

Employment of local staff by contract;

6 Junior Researchers

1 printer, for off-set press

Support for field research projects (per diem and travel)

- Translation and printing services
- Vehicle maintenance.

PROJECT OUTPUTS :

By the end of the project life it was hoped that the following will be accomplished

a) A state of the arts study of socio-economic research in North Cameroon and a comprehensive plan for future research in the area;

b) 3 major field research projects completed in North Cameroon and 6 field research reports produced;

c) 7 Cameroonian researchers complete academic training in the U.S. and on-the-job experience in Cameroon;

d) Training completed for the following persons:

- 12 research assistants (6 presently employed and 6 new ones), in-country.
- 2 librarian/information specialists, long-term in Africa.
- 1 off-set printer, short-term in-country
- 3 researchers, short-term in Africa;
- 1 research administrator, short-term in Africa.

e) Adequate equipment of ISH documentation and information services.

f) 2 seminars completed concerning :

(1) "Issues in North Cameroon Development" and

(2) "Social Science Research in Cameroon"".

RESEARCH FINDINGS

This part of the report will be presented in three sub-categories: (1) Research (2) Training (3) Equipment.

Each sub-category will include a brief analysis of project goal, how much of it was achieved and how well.

RESEARCH

The research component of this project had a dual purpose. Besides data collection on relevant developmental issues, it aimed at providing an interdisciplinary framework within the Cameroonian research institution (i.e. sociologists, geographers, economists, etc. working as a team analyzing the same problems). It was implicitly hoped that close research collaboration between the "more advanced" U.S. junior researchers and the "less experienced" Cameroonian junior researchers would strengthen the latter's survey research skills. The senior researcher in the project was also to help improve the quantitative skills of the junior researchers. The logical question to ask after this brief description of research goals is were they met?

Research was conducted on the effects of directed development in the Kaele and Yagoua periphery and baseline data were collected on cultural patterns in three sub-divisions of Diamaré division for phases I and II of the project respectively. The outcome of these pieces of research was a report from each researcher. The mere fact that this research was conducted could be seen as a plus for the project goals. It would be necessary, however, to examine the quality of the research done.

This is the fifth and the last year of the project life and phase III has not begun which makes the activities of this phase a total failure. A state of the arts study of socio-economic research in North Cameroon envisaged in the project has not been done.

1) Research Strengths :

Some of the positive aspects of this research were the policy relevance of the topics studied and the systematic plan envisaged for future research in North Cameroon. Also, the pilot nature of this project meant the possibility of extending similar research activities to other parts of the country. But the major strength of the project is its attempt to establish a basis for an on-going socio-economic data bank on cropping patterns labour and other agricultural inputs in the North province. It also helped explain recent resistance to the cultivation of certain major "Cash crops" (export crops) such as cotton in the area. This research confirmed impressionistic view with empirical evidence that that considering the labor input in a given farm unit it is more profitable to cultivate food crops than cotton. Such findings led researchers

to conclude that if this trend continues (i.e. increase in food prices without comparable price hykes in export crops) farmers will eventually abandon the cultivation of cotton. Such findings are essential to policy makers in both governmental and non-governmental development agencies, especially in the planning of major projects like the Center North. Other aspects of this research examining the impact of development organizations such as SEMRY and SODECOTON on its target population disclosed very sensitive information pertaining to the exploitative nature of the small landed class vis-à-vis the share croppers. Such information pointed to the fact that the remnants of a feudal system in the area in the close of the 20th century ought to be eradicated if development has to be meaningful to a large majority of the society. Despite a number of positive aspects of the project there were areas inwhich weaknesses were very glaring and might have jeopardized the credibility of this whole research endeavor.

2) Research Weaknesses :

A major weakness of the research stemmed from the conceptualization of the project document. This problem indesign made it difficult for the contracting University to find an experienced senior researcher with Cameroon experience to fill the post of senior researcher for the project. As a matter of fact the first two candidates with extensive field experience in Cameroon contacted for the position declined because they knew that it was close to impossible to build and strengthen a research institution in two years (contract period of the senior researcher) envisaged in the project document.

Also, the fact that the designers of the project came from a North American background where interdisciplinary study teams have been fashionable within the last decade and will perhaps continue in that vein in the foreseable future, led them to overestimate the receptability of an interdisciplinary research team spirit in the Cameroonian environment. But interviews with project researchers indicated very little collaboration among them. This lack of collaboration was blamed on their different academic backgrounds (i.e. economists, sociologists and geographers, to mention but a few). This lack of cooperation was also encouraged by open disagreements between the Cameroonian senior counterpart and the senior project researcher on matters of research methodology, the former arguing that a common methodology across disciplines in the social sciences was not appropriate. Because of these conflicts in perception, there was a tendency for the American Senior researcher to spend more time with the American junior researchers who shared his views and came from the same academic background.

It can therefore be argued that though research was done, transfer of technology from the senior and junior American researchers did not take place. It can be further argued that even if methodological questions had not been raised the transfer of

technology through the medium of American graduate students would still have serious problems. This is because these students are often too busy collecting data for their theses and dissertations that very often there is just no time to impart knowledge to others. Also, the use of young graduate students to transfer research technology in this project would still have been doomed even if they had had time to impart the knowledge because the junior Cameroonian counterparts claimed that they had the same academic qualification so there was nothing they could learn from their academic equals. The argument of academic equality was based on the number of years spent in college and not on degrees obtained.

This section on research weakness cannot be concluded without a brief examination of how the data was collected. Discussion will only focus on two aspects:

(1) Timing of research; and

(2) Quality of enumerators and amount of time spent on their training.

A problem faced by almost all the junior researchers in this project (Cameroonian as well as American) was that of timing. Take Lynn Sallinger's research for example which deals with cultural patterns and some aspects of labor distribution. To obtain a better picture of the activities of the households studied the time unit ought to go from January to December. But like many others in the project her field research began in June 1981 (unfortunate timing and probably no fault of hers) and extended to June 1982. Here we see that she has covered 12 months but in actual fact she has only covered the cultural activities for 6 months in 1981 and 6 months in 1982. The question to ask is what becomes of the activities between January and June of 1981 and those between June and December of 1982? Technically she cannot substitute the 6 months covered in 1982 in the 1981 gap and infer annual cultural activities but unfortunately one finds such weaknesses in most of the reports which pose serious questions of credibility.

Another issue which seriously hurt the credibility of the field research in this project was the quality of the enumerators used. Project enumerators were interviewed to know their academic background and work experience (research related) so as to assess their preparedness for the job they performed. They were asked how many years of formal schooling they had, and their activities prior to participating in the project. They were also asked to state precisely how long it took to train them to perform the job of enumerator. I also asked them if at the time they accepted the job they meant to stick with it until the end of the project or did they intend to leave if a more permanent and better paying job came up.

Answers to the questions on academic background and work experience related to research of the enumerators showed that

the most qualified among them were holders of the First School Leaving Certificate (8th grade level) and most of them had no past research experience, while a few had earlier served as enumerators for development organizations like SEMRY and SODECOTON but dismissed for dishonest data collecting practices. The average time spent for their training as enumerators was three days which was not enough for people without any prior research experience and who had very little formal academic training. Such weaknesses in the background and training of these research collaborators gave very little credibility to the end product of the research especially among the end users within the project zones who were aware of their qualities. This attitude of disdain shown to the quality of research came out when the author attempted to find out how end users perceived the research done under the auspices of the project.

Concerning the question which aimed at finding out if the enumerators intended to work with the junior researchers throughout the research. All of them said that because of the temporal nature of their contract it would be wise for them to look for more permanent jobs. This feeling was explained by the large number who abandoned the researchers for permanent jobs with the government or to attend school. This constant change of enumerators did not help the credibility of the research.

A possible solution to this problem would have been to recruit these enumerators on a permanent basis to work for CRED in their different linguistic zones.

TRAINING

The training component of this project had two phases:

(1) field training; and

(2) academic training.

Part of the field training has already been discussed in the research section. Out of seven Cameroonian researchers expected to receive field training, four did which is 57 percent achievement of the projected goal.

The academic training in U.S. colleges is the area with the greatest success. Out of the projected number of seven candidates to be trained in the U.S., four have so far received training. The project envisaged the training of two librarians, but only one received training. Three African short term study tours for senior CSES staff was accomplished. One Africa or U.S. study program in administration of research activities envisaged for a senior official of LSH has not been accomplished.

If we measure the training component in aggregate terms it can be argued that a significant percentage of its projected goals

was achieved. An individual assessment of parts of the training component was impossible because most of the participants could not be reached.

EQUIPMENT

The heavy equipment such as 4 all terrain vehicles, a photocopier, and a typewriter expected to be bought during the life of the project were all bought.

A certain number of books, about 68 in number, were said to have been bought for ISH library but less than 50 percent were found. Paper, printing supplies for printing documents; tape recorders; photography equipment, camping equipment, measuring weights and measurement tapes that were supposed to be bought for the project were not seen throughout this evaluation study.

These equipments were deemed necessary to strengthen CRED but apparently they cannot be seen at the end of the project life which makes us wonder whether the goal was only to strengthen the institution during those years of the project life or whether the project had long term goals.

Also, during the evaluation an attempt was made to assess the quality of existing project equipment (vehicles in particular) and estimate the cost of future maintenance. Some maintenance cost for 1981 were available at the Maroua USAID garage for IT 10446, IT11714 and IT 11711 blazers. Available data on these vehicles were not consistent. See table I.

Table I showing cost of vehicle Maintenance for 1981 (in U.S$)

Vehicle Nº	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPT.	OCT.	NOV.	DEC.	MEAN
IT 10446	43205	-	181.85	52.00	152.54	-	111.87	96.89	171.20
IT 11714	-	205.71	100.34	-	156.12	234.53	-	166.19	172.58
IT 11711	-	72.15	130.67	171.49	208.98	137.53	-	87.62	134.74

The above figures do not cover a whole year period, but the months for which data were available represent the most difficult in the North Province especially as the roads become impassable because of the rains.

It is important to mention that the above figures are mainly labor costs. Cost of parts were not available. Also, the above figures do not cover a whole year period, but the months for which data were available represent the most difficult in the North Province especially as the roads become impassable because of rains during this period. If we consider an average monthly

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labor cost of $171.20, $172.58 and $134.74 for IT. 10446, IT. 11714 and IT.11711 respectively plus cost of parts and 15 percent yearly depreciation, we can argue that CRED will not be able to assume the cost of maintenance of these vehicles. But if CRED were to assume the upkeep, its research budget might be diverted into maintenance cost and it would not have served the initial goal of the project which is to strengthen its research capability.

EXTERNAL FACTORS

A number of external factors have been responsible for the poor performance of the project in certain sections especially in the supervision of research. The two main factors are :

1. Structural and personnel changes within the major recipient institution in GURC and less so within the donor agency; and

2. Bureaucratic inertia in GURC.

A) Structural and Personnel changes:

The major structural change which hindered the project was that which split the CSES center into two new autonomous centers - CRESS and CRED. Though the project was being implemented in CRED some of the Cameroonian junior researchers involved with the project were sociologists and needed to be supervised by a senior researcher from CRESS. These arrangements were technically sound but the out-come was over reliance on CRESS and the flow of information (i.e. the reporting of research activities) very often did not reach CRED's leadership, the implementing center. If the structural change did not take place reporting and information flow to the top would not have posed any problems especially as the assigned field supervisor would have had to report to the head of his/her center.

Personnel change within the implementing institution, ISH, and its center affected the project considerably. This is explained by the lack of memory in organizations which makes follow up very difficult. With new personnel in both ISH and AID/Yaoundé perception of the project also changed. The involvement of the AID project officer with the huge Dschang University project might have affected to a large extent his ability to monitor the Social Science Research and Training project. The fact that quarterly progress reports were neither written nor required of the field researchers is an indicator of this lack of follow up from the mission.

B) BUREAUCRATIC INERTIA

Most bureaucracies are slow actors and GURC's bureaucracy is no exception. Because of this slowness, necessary inputs such as the timely recruitment of field junior researchers and equipment clearance at the Douala port of entry took for ever. One of the junior researchers who was expected to work on the "Baseline Studies" as a counterpart a year ago from June was only recently recruited after the U.S. counterpart finished her studies. Also the official nomination of a Cameroonian counterpart after the head of CRED was changed only happened recently which was too late to salvage the project especially after the sudden departure of the U.S. senior researcher.

BENEFICIARIES

The major planned beneficiaries of the Social Science Research and Training Program are CRED/ISH which were to be strengthened and rendered more credible, and GURC and Cameroon development organisations which would use sound data to plan and analyze future development activities. But given the actual performance of the project the main beneficiaries in the short run are those researchers (Cameroonian and American) who actually participated in the project. They would probably come up with theses and dissertations for advanced degrees. However, there is a good chance that CRED/ISH and development agencies including GURC will benefit in the long run if those Cameroonians trained by the project are returned to research and some of their reports disseminated widely in both French and English.

LESSONS LEARNED

This project has mainly confirmed some of the observations made by development scholars like Denis Goulet (1977) about value conflicts and technology transfer across societies. In our particular case discussions at the design stage between AID/GURC officials ought to have assessed the recipient's views on interdisciplinary studies (questions of methodology in particular).

We have also learned the inappropriateness of transferring technology through the medium of graduat students whose major concern in the field is to gather data for their own personal goals (i.e. completing theses) with little or no emphasis on the transfer of know-how.

A number of lessons were also learned from interviewing villagers. The villagers were asked to give a brief description of what they though the project did to them. Most of them said that the project did absolutely nothing positive to them except waste the time they would have spent working on their farms on questions and activities which were not helpful at all to their productivity and well being. Some of the activities singled out were farm size measurements and the weighing of farm produce.

A further question was asked to find out why they thought this was a wasted endeavor. The response was that they were not actually taught how to use measures and weights to keep records, and besides they were not provided with the necessary equipment to do so even if they had found the whole exercise useful. Others were very disappointed because promises made by some researchers to supply them with seeds and other necessary agricultural inputs were not respected. However, a few respondents felt that the project itself was an indicator that government is enterested in their activities and they felt that benefits would eventually accrue to them.

A follow-up question posed was how would you want future projects of this nature to proceed? A large number of the villagers interviewed felt that their participation should be compensated either fiscally or inkind.

This author understands that the project did not envisage the education of the villagers per se, at least not in the short run. Interest in their opinion was thought necessary to find out the secondary effect of the project on its physical and human environment. The responses of the villagers stated above will need to be taken seriously in future in order to obtain their sincere cooperation in other project zones.

Finally, one of the most serious weaknesses of the project learned during this evaluation was the lack of awareness of its existence by possible end users. This situation could be remedied by improving inter and intra organizational linkages between possible end users of the research product and other research units respectively. The end user organizations would be MINAGRI, SEMRY, SODECOTON to mention but a few. Other research units would be IRA, IRZ and CRFSS. Finally, awareness of the project could also be improved by disseminating research material in both English and French.

INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS OF CRED/ISH (DGRST)

This aspect of the study was considered necessary in order to locate the areas of strengths and weaknesses within the institution which could either help or hinder research. Before we proceed to examine the above points, it is important to mention briefly the purpose of creating the Cameroon research institution. It was created mainly to carry out applied research and not to conduct research for research sake.

With this goal in mind, ideally there ought to be well established linkages between DGRST, all Ministries and development organizations in the nation. A very close collaboration of this triad ought to be strongly encouraged in the definition and choice of research topics. This way there would be fairly defined end-users of research ouput (products). But in reality there is very little of this going on. Most of the time DGRST independently selects and defines its topics of research and because of its limited capabilities, the dissemination of its results are very reduced, which is definitely the case of the Social Scienc Research project. Because of this weakness in the system you find beautiful research just sitting in the library of the Delegation and its institutes without being used. Sometimes you find certain governmental agencies duplicating very expensive pieces of research conducted already by DGRST.

Concern for such waste led me to pose questions on project awareness during this evaluation exercise because users have a tendency to ask for information only when they know it exists. Possible end-users were interviewed at the national (Yaounde), provincial and local levels to see if they were aware of an on-going research project called "The Social Science Research and Training Project" funded by USAID/GURC. For those who were aware of its existence I went on to inquire if they knew what it was all about. Strangely enough less than forty percent had heard of it at the local level (i.e. divisional level). Less than twenty percent of this number knew what the project is all about. But at the provincial and national levels less than five percent had heard of the project and a much smaller percentage was aware of project objectives. This ignorance of the project definitely limits the usage of its ouput.

Some analysts of development projects in the developing world often attribute certain projects failure to over centralization. I wanted to see if this could be a contributing factor in the Social Science Research Project. The indicators that were used are hierarchy and decision making on technical matters. Interviews with ISH personnel showed that area specific decisions were often taken by the most competent technicians in those fields. Therefore hierarchy does not necessarily mean power in this case. Another characteristic of ISH which rejects the centralization scenario as an explanant of project failure is the in-built checks and balances within it. The fact that a director, a center or departmental head may belong to a given center or department , as a researcher and he/she is called upon to report to those heads is an indicator that hierarchy per se is not all powerful. But these

artificial checks and balances might lead to stagnation and ineffectiveness if not used properly.

The above arguments show that if the Social Science Research and Training project did not achieve most of its goals, centralization cannot be used to explain it. A variable that could be used to explain fully project failure in this case is the personality variable. Because of the strong personality clash that existed between the American senior researcher and the former head of CRED, information on the project originating from CRED to ISH hierarchy could have been geared at creating resistance to the project and not to look for possible solutions for the problems encountered. To conclude this section one can argue that in the search for project leadership within ISH and its institutions the most useful variables to look for in the personnel is technical strength in the given area and personality. It might be added that the choice might not be a good one if these two are not present.

RECOMMENDATIONS

(1) Scrap most of the project but retain its academic training component. In doing this take into consideration the academic levels of candidates for training and their status within the research organization. This is important to determine if the candidate's status will improve as a result of the training. Interviews with potential candidates for further training under this project see training as a waste of time if it does not change their status within the project. I am therefore suggesting that candidates who are already assistant researchers be given a grant that would eventually lead to a Ph.D. degree. This is because an M.A. will not change their status according to DGRST's classification.

(2) Graduate students should not be used as a medium of technology transfer to counterparts of relatively equal academic levels. This causes friction and generates huge personality problems. More experienced junior researchers with PVOs (with no theses and dissertations to complete) might to more appropriate.

(3) Future projects of this nature ought to involve possible end-users as well as local implementing agencies more fully in the design.

(4) Please before setting the project life span it might be necessary to make sure that the recipient and the contractor can provide the necessary inputs in a timely fashion. Without this there will be a continuous tendency for five years projects to be implemented only in two or three years.

(5) The values and perceptions of the recipient vis à vis the technology about to be introduced should be assessed closely.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

To conclude this study it is appropriate to say that the project identification to enhance DGRST in general and CRED IN particular was a laudable idea. This is because of the dearth in the kinds of research envisaged in the project and also because there is every evidence that Cameroon needs such studies and data in order to get a good grasp of its development problems.

Also, the choice of CRED as the unit of ISH to strengthen was a good one especially because until recently it could be said to be one of the weakest links in the ISH chain. This could be seen if one looks at number of senior researchers and leadership prior to the appointment of Dr. Metuge and his assistant.

However, the fact that such a major project was not well thought through, limited funding, poor timing and poorly defined technology transfer channels being indicators of this, jeopardized project success from the word go.

In the course of this study an attempt was made to find out how those closely involved with the project perceived it. Interviews with the junior researchers disclosed a certain number of elements. The American junior researcher (Sallinger) interviewed in the field was very positive about the project (the research aspect of it), but was disappointed with the limited interest AID and ISH attached to it. She justified this point by pointing at the limited number of field visits made by senior Cameroon counterparts after the departure of Ted Ahlers. The fact that she did not have a Cameroonian junior researcher as a counterpart had a limiting effect on her field experience.

As for the Cameroonian junior researchers, they were very enthusiastic about the project especially as they were promised training opportunities in the U.S. and the opportunity to improve their quantitative skills. Unfortunately these junior researchers seem to have been very disappointed by the attitude of their American counterparts who tended to assume a superior attitude, the Cameroonians argue. This was seen in the fact that the project vehicles were mainly used by the American junior researchers and Cameroonians were eventually forced to use mobylettes to conduct their research. This attitude did not help the conflictual relationship that developed. I asked the Cameroonians how they would like to participate in another USAID funded project in the future. Their response was "Never Again". This shows how deep seated was their disappointment.

The attitude of the Senior ISH personnel toward the project was also examined.. They argued that they had been initially optimistic about the project until the U.S. senior researcher began taking unilateral decisions for the project with the apparent support of USAID. At this point there was bad faith. This behavior seems to have strained the USAID/ISH relationship to the extent that another project of this nature will not be encouraged right now.

These conflict situations between American and Cameroonian junior researchers; and also between the U.S. senior contractor and ISH officials was also a major factor in the project failure. Future projects of this nature should mitigate the possibility of such conflicts by making things clearer at the design stage.

To conclude it can be argued that though this project failed to achieve its major goals its weaknesses can be analyzed for possible solutions in future projects of this nature.