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TRAINING FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN TANZANIA

"A Case Study in Sustainable Development"

I. INTRODUCTION

Tanzania, the country where modern man may have originated, is a land of great size and beauty. More than 60 different ethnic groups with distinctive histories, language and traditions people this mosaic of more than 19 million. Physically, the nation extends over 362,000 square miles, ranging from the coast of the Indian Ocean to the height of Mount Kilimanjaro to the interior rich farm earth of the Southern Highlands.

"Experimentation" might best capture the development path of Tanzania since independence. Use of a national language - Kiswahili; stressing of education and literacy; and fostering of deep seated national pride and interest in political stability have served the country well.

Economic experimentation has been less successful, leaving the country among the poorest in the world. After considerable pressure from the IMF, World Bank and other donors Tanzania in 1986 devalued the shilling and began to open up its economy.

But this story from a USAID perspective began in 1978 and ironically closed officially in 1986.

The Training for Rural Development I Project was designed originally in response to a request by then President Julius Nyerere to then President Carter to assist the country to develop more human resource capacity, particularly in the agricultural sector. At the beginning two strains of thought existed as to project direction: The Minister of Agriculture favored a massive long-term U.S. training project and the Minister for Rural Development favored a grassroots improvement in outreach and extension in the fertile, rain-fed regions of the southern highlands.

TRD I became a bifurcated effort attempting both, providing degree training for 80 Tanzanians and pilot testing improved organizational, management and incountry training approaches for reaching villagers. TRD II built on the particular success of the incountry pilot efforts and explicitly using a systems approach attempted to improve agricultural production and quality of life in five high production potential regions in the country. The two projects were implemented with USAID assistance from 1979 - 1986, at a level of \$11.45 million. Due to the Tanzanian default to the U.S. Government TRD II was terminated more than two

years ahead of schedule. Tanzania continues it today through its own resources and ingenuity.

The author was the primary American involved with the Project from the time of the Tanzanian request until USAID withdrawal and has continued to follow incountry developments closely. The data sources are wide-ranging.

II. THE TARGET SYSTEM

"Static"

This is the part of the Tanzanian Rural Development set-up that was directly targeted by TRD. Its territory included five (there are 20 mainland regions) regions of the country, Iringa, Mbeya, Ruvuma, Rukwa and Arusha., including within these regions 300 villages, four village training centers, 22 District Development Directorates, five Regional Development Directorates, as well as local governmental organizations at Ward and District levels. At national level the system included a National Coordinating Committee (NCC) composed of Principal Secretaries of the involved Sectoral Ministries, a small Project Coordination Office within each of the Sectoral Ministries (Agriculture, Livestock, Natural Resources, Community Development and Cooperatives). It also included educational and support institutions in Tanzania charged with village improvement and management improvement, including the Institute for Development Management (IDM) and the Continuing Education Centre of Sokoine University of Agriculture.

The target system was a natural subsystem of the larger Tanzanian rural development system, operating within national policies, politics, goals, institutions and financial arrangements.

For the purpose of this discussion the environment includes the rest of the Tanzanian system, beyond the scope of the description above and the external international environment, particularly influencing macro level policies and decision-making within Tanzania.

Initially key stakeholders included President Julius Nyerere, the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Rural Development, the Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Manpower Development and the USAID Mission Director. Rather quickly the circle of stakeholders expanded to include a rather large group of previously U.S. trained middle and upper middle managers and the author.

There was rather general agreement from the beginning that the system for "delivering the goods" to villagers was in decay. Village training centers in the target system were in two

cases empty and in two cases poor managed and underutilized. The two operating centers received some budget support from the government. Built originally with donor funds - in one case USAID and the other Nordic money - neither had a functioning village outreach program. Staff, many technically well trained, largely sat in the centers waiting. An organized demand system - from above or below did not appear to exist.

While well structured and decentralized, the regional and district management support systems were inefficient, fairly isolated and non-interactive. It was interesting to note that after the signing of the agreement Regional Development Directors in the two of the Project regions, were rather quickly replaced with capable, energetic U.S. trained leaders. (A key stakeholder, the Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Manpower Development - now Deputy Principal Secretary to the President of Tanzania played a key role here). Most of the villages in the Project regions had governments in name only, agricultural production was declining and there was a general attitude of sitting and waiting for the Government to deliver development as promised.

"Dynamic"

As captured in an earlier paper about Tanzanian decentralization by Dr. Garry Thomas, titled "The Center and the Periphery" - the further from the Center one traveled the greater the decline in both capacity and performance. Environmentally, authority came from the top down, yet the country's stated development philosophy and the decentralized structure called for it to push up from below. Behaviorally managers reacted to orders from above then directed, ordered and controlled those below. Behaviorally trainers provided "right" answers to villagers on the rather infrequent occasions when they met.

While peopled with government workers with technical skills and at the village level a great deal of indigenous know-how, the system was largely reactive, frustrated and somewhat paralyzed. There were few opportunities for the system to learn and change as a system. The scattering of highly trained individuals over the large geography of a country with poor communication systems, isolated people who together might devise ways of acting. Few positive incentives existed for improved performance although negative sanctions were applied rather whimsically if a "big person's" expectations were unmet.

Economically, it was a tough time. Oil prices were high and the war with Uganda had nearly bankrupted the country. Salaries were low, although higher officials received more

perquisites such as housing, vehicles and opportunities to travel outside the country.

The Project rather early deduced that the country's decentralized structure, positively stated grassroots development philosophy and goals and the number of technically well-trained people in the system might be able to "orchestrate" a new path with strategic and technological change.

III. INDUCED CHANGE: THE FACILITATION OF THE TARGET SYSTEM

The intervention was designed to catalyze the "target" system into action so as to better assist grassroots villagers to improve their incomes, production and quality of life. Without the benefit of the SCOPE model TRD used systems theory as a guide. (For example the first exercise in TRD management training, asked participants to map the existing Tanzanian rural development system as they saw it.) Systematically scheduled cycles of experiential training for managers and trainers were followed by routine follow-up and consultation on-the-job so that performance could be observed. Initially these tasks for performed by outside TA by the end of the Projects these tasks were performed entirely by Tanzanian staff. External orientation was explicitly treated with units on managing change, managing the external environment and sessions of positive power and influence. Many within the Project came to believe they could and would change the system, in fact to such a degree that they became a political force, rather threatening to some elements in the country uninterested in movement toward a more participatory, democratic operational mode. Fortunately the key, key stakeholders in this Project identified themselves from the beginning. The Minister of Rural Development (mentioned earlier and now the Minister of Agriculture) and the Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Manpower (now the Deputy Principal Secretary to the President) strongly influenced the direction of the project and have supported it in every conceivable way up to the present. The advisor to the President for Rural Development (a Yale trained PhD in political science and a well published scholar) became actively engaged early in year three of the Project and deserves much of the credit for strategizing and thinking the Projects into sustainability. The Regional Development Directors provided the real day to day leadership, dynamism and over time more money from their budgets for both implementation and sustainability. Much went on behind the scenes of a political and influence nature that was real, hard hitting and at times highly risky for those involved. The deep relationships built among the ever expanding TRD family, the common beliefs, norms, language and jokes were probably essentially to surviving the shock of the Project close-out.

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From the beginning TRD paid particular attention to ... involving women throughout the system from the village to senior women politicians and managers. Village impact studies seemed to indicate that much of the spread effect of learnings gained in TRD village training to others not attending the training came from the women involved (men often tended to adopt the practices on their own plots, but were not so likely to share the knowledge with others in the village). Women managers also appeared to play essential roles in managing the projects over the stress hump of USAID pull-out. Women as a group appear to be key stakeholders.

In terms of increased valuation of outputs, four of the five TRD Regions are now called "The Big Four". Agricultural production increased threefold in these areas over the life of the Project. TRD certainly does not claim entire credit but village impact studies and comparisons with other regions have shown that it was definitely a contributing factor. Over the life of the project a large demand system for TRD services developed at all levels of the system and continues to this day.

The following quotation from the May 1984 evaluation of TRD speaks rather directly to the SCOPE notions without identifying them as such:

"The progress of TRD to date indicates that, in general, the project purpose will be achieved by the end of project, although the degree of achievement will probably vary between project specific regions based on the extent of involvement. TRD appears to have wide-spread acceptance within the TANGOV and with villagers which has lead to positive results."

"TRD shows that a systems approach to improved utilization of existing government resources is possible. Too often planners and donor agencies complain about the inefficient use of human and other resources within governments, but shy away from tackling the problem in a systematic manner. Instead, they address specific constraints within an organization rather than focusing on the linkages between organizations or parts of organizations which affect operations. An overall, general effort to improve the system can lead to positive results, since it requires several types and levels of organizations working together in a coordinated manner for rural development to occur. The TRD management training program for officials is proving that it is possible to achieve this."

"The TRD management training is based on the premise that training can lead to changes in attitudes and behaviors when teams of colleagues receive the same training and that training is phased and punctuated with performance and follow-up. This overcomes the often encountered problem of

well-trained individuals not being able to utilize newly acquired skills and knowledge because of inflexibility in their working environment."

"Also TRD demonstrates the power of adult education methods centered on experiential, problem-solving techniques to evoke change. It shows that these methods are applicable to working with highly educated people as well as illiterate villagers. The strength of this educational approach is using the trainee as the focal point. The trainee is actively involved in the learning process."

TRD was designed and developed to sustain (we then called it institutionalized), to be as natural as possible (within, rather than outside the normal government set-up) and to learn from and influence its external environment. Creativity and flexibility were explicit learning objectives.

Two major artificialities must be noted, however - 1) a large amount of external inputs including vehicles, equipment, micro-computers, limited recurrent budget support in early days of project and 2) nine years of long-term consistent technical assistance - six years for the author and three for a second TA and a large number of short-term consulting and training TAs.

These rather large resource infusions were also rather abruptly withdrawn by USAID due to the default situation. The long-term consistent TA had both positives and potential negatives. The author stayed so long and was so much the hub of Project catalyzing/adapting and communicating that her departure - as well as the end of external financing - were severe system shocks, both practically and emotionally. It is potentially easier for external advisors to cross subsystem boundaries and the incentives for doing so are in most cases greater for the TA than for those in regular organizational positions.

IV. SUSTAINABILITY: FUNCTIONING OF THE INDUCED SYSTEM

The long-term advisor that served with the author in Tanzania returned very recently from a field visit to the Project. The prognosis - just as the all the signs posted at going away parties for the U.S. advisors said - "TRD will never die."

The training center created first under the Project is the strongest (as predicted in the May 1984 evaluation) and is in ever increasing demand to provide training and consulting to an ever widening set of clientele. Multiple funding sources support activities and income generating activities continue to grow. While the lack of foreign exchange has yet to be felt in a damaging way, vehicles are aging and

could become problematic to continuing village activities if not addressed. While USAID has shown no interest in the Project since U.S. TAs departed and in fact so poorly managed close-out activities that vital equipment purchased with project funds was never delivered, engineering assistance promised was paid for and not delivered and many files are currently either missing or shipped back to Washington, other donors are beginning to use the centers and will assist in supporting some of their needs.

Training for Rural Development is now a national program and the former Project Coordinator is now the TRD Director. The National Coordinating Committee was meeting while the author's colleague was in the country and nine Regions are now involved or about to begin the program. (It is interesting that in this case transfers of RDDs to new regions is resulting in spread and increased demand systems).

The IDM management trainers are in demand throughout the system and by other donors. One TRD trainer is now consulting almost exclusively to the World Bank working to incorporate some of the TRD approaches into the Bank system with considerable developing interest.

On the political and economic front, the economy continues to become more open, entrepreneurship is emerging and the TRD staff is beginning to see a whole new set of possibilities. Politically some of the "power elite" most outspoken against TRD are no longer in government, although still active in the party and some of the more intellectual and less ideological politicians are overtly moving to advocate the types of changes brought to the system by TRD.

Six individuals stand-out in this transition which now appears to be emergent and sustainable. Two are leaders at the national level, two are regional directors, one is the woman principal of the first TRD Center and one is the TRD Project Director. Strategically they were able to cross old uncrossable system boundaries and together reform, re-plan, act, influence their environment and keep people together believing that indeed TRD would never die.

In terms of SCOPE TRD took a systems view from the beginning, built on a reasonably sound decentralization structure, appears to have overcome the terrific economic problems experienced by Tanzania, used the best of what is known about developing capacity/performance and kept working the politics. In revisiting what was done, recovery from project close-out might have been quicker and deeper if:

*More strategic "what if" work had been done

*More analysis of the real roles played by long-term

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committed TAs and how to restructure the communication, catalytic and linkage of various system elements not naturally tied together (in fact TAs are in U.S. they are still interacting rather regularly to help keep this part going

*Better economic planning, for non-donor dependent income