

RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND PARTICIPATION PROJECT
Project No. 931-1137 Coop Agreement No. AID/ta-CA-1

Interim Evaluation

The Office of Rural Development and Development Administration and Cornell University signed a Cooperative Agreement (AID-ta-CA-1) under the terms of the Basic Memorandum (AID/ta-BMAS-8) on September 28, 1977. The purpose of the Agreement was to enhance participation in processes of rural development within less developed nations. The life of the project was to be four years at a total cost to the Office of \$1,623,597. Development of this project by DS/RAD and the subsequent agreement with Cornell were prompted by the importance which field missions placed on participatory dimensions of rural development in responding to a questionnaire asking them to assign priorities to a series of potential topics for future work. The essence of the cooperative agreement made of enlisting outside expertise to further the Agency's work has been to achieve collaboration on terms other than those of a grant or a contract. The outputs to be generated are less specifiable and ascertainable in advance than would be the case under a contract but require the parties to work together unlike those applying to a grantee. In establishing the terms of the Cooperative Agreement, the parties assumed that their somewhat distinct interests would be mutually served and enhanced through such a collaborative venture. The Agency's needs were understood to include program-

focused applied research and consulting activities, often on short notice. Cornell's interests were understood to include knowledge generation, adding to its intellectual capital, within the framework of constraints imposed by the university enterprise. The Cooperative Agreement was designed to promote a high degree of flexibility such that Cornell would be able to enlist individuals qualified to meet particular mission requirements in host countries when and as those needs became apparent.

The Cooperative Agreement with Cornell has been in operation for two of the four years of the life of the project. The purpose of this evaluation is, therefore, to review progress, examine problem areas, and chart directions for the remaining years of the project. This evaluation is based upon a draft prepared by Dr. Alice Morton, the previous project manager, comments upon that draft by members of the project committee, new information concerning project progress that became available after it was prepared, and upon discussion of this information and earlier draft at Cornell on August 1-3.

This evaluation will (1) review the goals, purposes, and expectations of the Cooperative Agreement specified in the Scope of Work and reflecting the thinking expressed in the Project Paper, (2) recount the progress made under the Cooperative Agreement in terms of these objectives, (3) identify problems and issues emerging from the first two years of activity, and (4) indicate courses of action to be taken to deal with these problems and issues during the subsequent life of the project. Except as indicated, these recommendations represent points of consensus emerging from discussion of the draft evaluation at Cornell in August.

1. Project Goals and Purposes. The Rural Development and Participation Project (RDPP) evolved from general recognition within the community of assistance rendering agencies that growth, represented by investment and increases in GNP, was not a sufficient albeit a necessary ingredient of development. The project reflected a growing general awareness that more attention should be directed to the distribution of the costs and benefits of development particularly from the point of view of the majority of LDC citizens who remained poor. But no assessment of the distribution of benefits and costs could be undertaken without the perception of the recipients concerning the meaning to them of these terms. To get those perceptions and to insure that progress was made toward more equitable development, active participation

in development processes by the intended beneficiaries was deemed mandatory. Recognizing the complexity of the development process and the persistence of constraints on participation in questions of policy determination and policy implementation, the project was designed to "strengthen practitioners understanding of the social processes at work, the key variables, the identification of relevant role sets and attitude sets... [and] the identification of those areas where the appropriate use (or avoidance) of government authority can make a difference in the quality and range of popular participation." (PP, page 10) The university's role was to be "policy oriented, directed toward improving the effective use of public resources and public authority." (p. 10)

The Project Paper singled out four areas of public policy where strengthening participation would be of particular importance: (1) designing programs "which will contribute to, or at least not lessen, the villagers' capacity for collective action to further their own welfare and manage their own lives" and to compensate for the weakening of traditional institutions and leadership roles consequent upon the development process; (2) strengthening the planning capacity, administrative structures, local institutions, and information gathering processes so that services, investment, and economic opportunities actually reach the poor giving them something to participate in managing and distributing; (3) strengthening of local government and

local administration through " 'applied' community or social analysis" directed to the "collective management of vulnerable, exhaustible, or scarce productive assets [requiring] careful balancing of public authority, local participation, and technical expertise [and] a good understanding of the local culture and the evolution of institutional mechanism for working within that culture"; and (4) strengthening of the methodologies of participation in such areas as data gathering, project evaluation, and diffusion of technologies and rural education opportunities.

The goal of the project was the strengthening of A.I.D. mission and host country institutions to design and implement projects broadening access of the intended beneficiaries to decision making, implementation, benefits, and evaluation in development projects. This was to be accomplished through strengthening social analysis of mission projects, improved understanding of the participatory aspects of the development process, more and better manpower for program development, and experimentation with alternative forms of benefit delivery both in missions and in host country institutions. Success in the achievement of these purposes was to be reflected in "increased demand for social science impact and evaluation research in connection with specific development projects," "project-related research studies establishing causal relationships between

development efforts and the social impact of those policies," "utilization of a consulting network and information system by missions and LDC institutions that was to be developed under the project, development of "a body of policy oriented analysis and theory on participatory rural development, and continuing relationships between American scholars and host country institutions on subjects addressed by the project."

To serve all these purposes the scope of work provided for four kinds of activities to be conducted by the cooperator over four distinct stages in the life of the project. The activities specified reflected the emphasis of the Office of Rural and Administrative Development on ensuring that consultants' analyses and inquiries provided direct and immediate support to specific mission projects in the implementation or design stages. These activities were to consist of (1) applied research and consulting (ARC) on rural participation problems and policies, (2) special studies and evaluations of problems commonly encountered in design and implementation of rural participation programs, (3) development of a resource and consulting network related to rural participation, and (4) dissemination of information on strategies to host countries, missions, others in the foreign assistance community, and those in the network. The special studies were to include at least four state-of-the-art papers (SOAPs), and the applied research and consulting activities

were to include "in-depth" work in four countries (IDC), preferably one each in the Near East, Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

2. Project Progress. In the accompanying tables, the timetable for key project activities and the status of project activity as of September 14, 1979 are outlined. Analysis of this information indicates that in most respects the project is on schedule. Since most of the activities being undertaken in the RDPP are still in progress, it is too early to assess the quality of the work done and the impact of the work upon the realization of project objectives in the host countries. However, there have been some indications that the work done so far is highly regarded by the Missions.

Applied Research and Consulting. One of the most important aspects of applied research and consulting under the RDPP is the establishment of "in-depth" consulting relationships in four countries. The definition of an "in-depth" country is left unspecified in the Cooperative Agreement except that among the activities to be undertaken in such countries are "in-depth" advising of missions and host country institutions, advice on data collection and analysis with respect to participation in development, training of host country nationals in the collection and analysis of information on participation, and applied research. The duration of "in-depth" relationships is left unspecified.

At the mid-point in the life of the project, the working understanding appears to have evolved that an "in-depth" applied research and consulting relationship is one that lasts more than one year, integral to a major mission/host country project, multi-disciplinary, and consisting of more than one kind of intervention. On this basis, Cornell appears to have established four "in-depth" country consulting arrangements: Botswana (15 mos.), Costa Rica (18 mos.), Sri Lanka (lengthy relationship proposed by mission), and Yemen (24 months). In view of disappointments in early attempts to establish in-depth relationships in Egypt, Panama, and Nepal, it is commendable that Cornell is almost on schedule in establishing in-depth relationships. Activities in Botswana and Yemen are under way, those in Tunisia about to begin when relationships between the University of Wisconsin Area Development project and the RDPP are clarified, short term consulting is about to begin in Sri Lanka which the mission hopes will be preparatory to a longer term relationship, and the Mission and Cornell hope to begin a long term relationship for at least the remaining life of the project beginning in January 1980 and resulting from an exploratory visit to San Jose by a DS/RAD-Cornell team in August, 1979.

What is the relationship between RDPP interventions and the larger contours and objectives of development in the designated "in-depth" countries? In Botswana Louise Fortmann, Emory Roe, and Charles Bailey, supported by short term assistance from Elaine Aderhold, Dan Sisler and George Wellington, are examining the consequences of production and for distribution of economic and social benefits of the siting of watering holes. They are concerned with the role of local organization affecting these factors, given the Government of Botswana's efforts to mobilize local participation in rural development. This activity relates directly to the effort of the Government to promote development in the large, western, semi-arid, largely pastoral lands so as to relieve excessive population densities along the eastern border of the country. This effort represented by the Government's Tribal Grazing Lands Policy is one of the cornerstones of the Botswana government's development strategy. The Government defines its own objectives in this regard in terms not only of production and appropriate conservation measures but in terms of broad participation in the enjoyment in the generation, distribution, and enjoyment of the resulting economic benefits.

In Yemen, the RDPP activity focuses on the ways in which spontaneous local development associations function in promoting and/or hindering economic, political, and social progress in their respective areas. The RDPP activity is part of a larger USAID financed project to provide technical assistance to the associations and in the formulation of rural development strategies making appropriate use of them in working for equitable development. The project as a whole is a central element in the Government of Yemen's attempt to employ substantial monetary resources earned by Yemenis in oil rich states for sustained, longer-term Yemen-based development. In Costa Rica the government, encouraged by the Mission, is attempting to deal with the adverse consequences of pursuing effectively growth strategies advocated by donor institutions in the 1960s and early 1970s. The country presents a prime illustration of the need for re-directed development strategies that inspired the New Directions Mandate the objectives of which are reflected in the purposes and goals of the RDPP. Growth without broad participation in the design and implementation of development projects and equitable participation in the benefits they yield is increasingly recognized by the Government of Costa Rica to be inappropriate. The mission, DS/RAD and Cornell have agreed to provide one individual to the mission for a long term assignment of assessing all aspects of participation in rural development and ways and means of promoting it. The individual selected is to call upon other RDPP personnel

to provide technical assistance on particular aspects of the project.

In Sri Lanka, the RDPP is likely to be involved initially in a water management project involving the formation and evaluation of water user associations, in a rural works project with decentralized planning and budgeting, and possibly later in a dryland crops project in which local organizations are to play a substantial role in the rehabilitation and development of less favored rural areas.

In-depth relationships are also to be characterized according to the types of interventions. Applied research is a prominent feature of all four in-depth country programs under the RDPP, as is advising of missions and appropriate host-country institutions. Advice on data collection and analysis and training of host country nationals to do such work is implicit in the proposals for Sri Lanka and Yemen, contemplated through work with the University of Costa Rica and/or the National University, and largely absent from the design for Botswana. It is important that the capability to monitor the degree and effectiveness of participation remain beyond the life of RDPP interventions, and it would be well for the project to pay particular attention to this dimension, contemplated by the Cooperative Agreement, during the remaining months of the project.

Additional dimensions of anticipated applied research and consulting under the RDPP included the testing of methodologies for conducting research on participation and, in stage three, development and testing of policy guidelines that can be recommended to host country institutions interested in promoting participation. Some process, as systematic as is reasonable, should be established for beginning to derive the contributions of the RDPP to these objectives as the results of field work begin to appear.

In addition to developing four in-depth country/mission relationships, the RDPP has generated two others that are best termed "medium depth." In Jamaica a short term analysis of local organizations became a medium depth intervention when the Mission requested an additional year of services from the Cornell representative. Harvey Blustain is expanding his analysis of the functioning of local organizations in two areas under the rubric of a larger integrated rural development project to include analysis of the effectiveness of development committees being established under this project. In Tunisia, Frank Young and Sandra Bertolli are responsible for establishing an evaluation capability by which the Tunisian government's efforts to reduce developmental inequalities among the various regions can be assessed. While the length of these two interventions, 18 months and 3 years respectively, qualifies them as "in-depth" activities, they are not as multidisciplinary nor do they include a variety of activities by contrast to the

to the four in-depth relationships.

A final aspect of applied research and consulting under the project is short term advising. Since the signing of the Cooperative Agreement nearly two years ago, the RDPP has undertaken work in nineteen countries, in fifteen of which

the work still continues. As of September, 1979 the RDPP appeared to have more active country interventions than any other project in the Office of Rural and Administrative Development. There have been several distinct kinds of advice rendered. In six of the countries, a coordinated intervention to monitor and strengthen the effectiveness of paraprofessionals in health and/or agricultural sectors has been mounted. In Sri Lanka, there is both a short and a longer term activity, the paraprofessional intervention coinciding with longer term work described above. In Guatemala there is both medium and short term work with paraprofessionals, the former involving Professor William Whyte's work with paraprofessionals in the field of agricultural research. Other short term assignments have included designing of training programs for local level development workers and integrated technical teams (Liberia), design of legislation strengthening local government institutions (Domenica), assessment of manpower resources (Cameroon), preparation of an evaluation system for an agricultural sector loan (Dominican Republic), and several others. The best indications at this point of the quality of these interventions is to be found in expressions of satisfaction, such as that from the Government of Domenica, and the readiness with which Missions have accepted the other interventions. In terms of the extent of short term applied research and consulting it is clear that the RDPP is on, if not ahead of schedule.

In addition to these activities Professor Robert Charlick's work on animation rurale, though separately administered within DS/RAD, has intellectually been very much a part of the RDPP. It has been complemented with work in anglophone areas by Professor Harry Blair of Bucknell. Charlick's examination of processes of community development and popular mobilization for this purpose has been undertaken in seven nations, mostly in Africa. The lessons learned from this investigation appear certain to enrich and complement those derived from the RDPP activity proper.

Knowledge Generation. The dividing line between applied research and consulting, on the one hand, and knowledge generation, on the other hand, is a faint one. And that is as it is supposed to be, for the field activities of DS/RAD projects are intended to result both in immediate assistance to ongoing mission and host country activities and in more general insights leading to general advancement in the state of the particular art in question. The capability to provide further applied research and consulting assistance is, in turn, also strengthened. The RDPP was to have completed and distributed the first of at least four state-of-the-art papers by the completion of the second year. This paper, Feasibility and Application of Rural Development Participation: A State-of-the-Art Paper by Norman Uphoff, John Cohen, and Arthur Goldsmith, examined experience in strengthening local

participation in general and in eleven specific sectors, arriving at a series of generalizations about the contours of the activity in which RDPP had begun to engage. Prepared by January 1979, distribution of the SOAP had only begun by the summer due to delays in printing. The authors recognized that the "state of knowledge is not as advanced as the importance of the subject warrants." They emphasized that the monograph was "a beginning rather than a summary of answers to questions about rural development participation." From this perspective the monograph might reasonably be said to have fulfilled its purpose if it generates a large number of questions extending beyond the limits of the inquiry, questions which it is indeed the *raison d'etre* of the RDPP as well as other projects to make an important contribution in answering.

In addition to the state-of-the-art papers, there are a large number of more specific studies of particular areas and problems under the rubric of participation in rural development which are in the process of being generated. Among these are studies of landlessness, women in development. It is anticipated that the findings of these more specialized studies will be incorporated as far as possible in the synthesizing works summarizing the work of the RDPP. A question of some importance is the determination of the focus of these synthesizing state-of-the-art papers. Cornell has

an interest in these being framed in such a way that they spotlight work on the intellectual cutting edges of inquiry on this subject. DS/RAD, sharing that interest, also has an interest in their being designed and focused in such a way that the policy implications and value of the work is evident and explicit. One of the more important aspects of Cornell-DS/RAD collaboration over the next months of the RDPP should be the determination of how these interests can best be harmonized in the synthesizing works summarizing project findings.

Network Development. Under the terms of the Cooperative Agreement, Cornell was to have developed a network of resources facilitating further applied research and consulting on rural development participation. The network is to be the basis for information dissemination activities under the RDPP and by DS/RAD also. While a number of non-Cornell people have participated actively in the work of the RDPP, it appears to be the case that these individuals were for the most part recruited prior to the building of the network. One of the activities that the RDPP and DS/RAD should undertake during the next two years is exploration of ways to make the network, which presumably will continue to grow in size, more useful both to Cornell and to DS/RAD. While there are delicate issues

involving the right to privacy that lurk about both this activity and DS/RAD's separate efforts to build a roster of consultants, much can be done in terms of cataloguing the particular experience and interests of those in the network, involving them more closely in the findings of the RDPP and in DS/RAD activities, and exploring ways in which these individuals can be more closely involved with work on rural development participation.

Information Dissemination. Through publication of papers, conferences and seminars, the RDPP is to make widely available the results of its findings. To date conferences have been held in Yemen, Nepal, and at AID/Washington. Others will no doubt be held both in LDCs and in the United States during the remaining months of the project. One of the collaborative activities in which DS/RAD and RDPP should engage is planning the most useful focus, timing, and format for these seminars. They should maximize the effective dissemination of project findings and enhance the size and capability of the community of those supporting work on rural development participation both in the public and in the private sector. DS/RAD also plans its own publication series which will no doubt include many of the results of the RDPP. Some discussion needs to occur on how to avoid conflict between the

publication of findings in different formats: academic journals and pressures, RDPP monographs, and DS/RAD publications.

3. Problems and Issues. The draft interim evaluation of the RDPP prepared in May 1979 identified a number of significant issues and problems in the implementation of the project. These were the subject of discussions at Cornell in August, 1979 between participants in the RDPP and the new project manager in DS/RAD. These issues, and the points of consensus reached in the August meetings on how to address those issues and problems, related to project goals, participation in the participation project, administrative concerns.

A. Project Goals. Have the project goals been formulated with sufficient clarity? Does the experience of twenty-odd months with the RDPP permit and indicate a further sharpening of the goals? A criticism articulated in the May, 1979 draft evaluation was that hypotheses had not been developed to unify the project intellectually and to provide foci for field activities. The Cornell position was that the state of the art on the subject has been such that the hypotheses can best emerge from initial field work rather than precede it. Moreover, RDPP members considered that the establishment of sites in LDCs for project activity could be dependent not only upon pre-existing methodological requirements but perhaps more upon the requirements

of attempting to respond to mission-identified needs, the process of establishing such opportunities for RDPP work in LDCs has sometimes been slow, involved, and frustrating. It was agreed that during the subsequent months of the project, efforts would be made to distill inductively pertinent hypotheses from field work in progress which can be tested as the field work continues. From the formulating and testing of these hypotheses will emerge the intellectual integration of the project and the policy and methodological guidelines that are to flow therefrom.

1. In the absence of a specific definition of "in-depth" countries, questions arose in the earlier draft evaluation concerning which were to be the in-depth countries, according to what criteria, and whether or not from those in-depth relationships the most important insights bearing on the goals of the project could be gleaned. The evolved working understanding of in-depth countries, as indicated earlier, has been those in which work is considerably of importance to the country as a whole, involves a number of different types of assistance, and lasts more than one year. On each of these criteria the four countries identified above stand out. It was agreed that the RDPP would seek particularly from the results of work in these countries the lessons which the RDPP and DS/RAD hope to learn from the project.

2. There was considerable discussion in the previous draft of areas in which the interests and procedures of DS/RAD and the RDPP appeared to differ. DS/RAD was portrayed as being more interested in the RDPP doing things of a developmental nature while Cornell was portrayed as being reluctant to depart from established priorities of academic research. Many questions arose in the draft about who should decide what in terms of the project's activities. How should the topics of state-of-the-art papers be established? How should it be decided in which countries the RDPP should be involved? Some interventions may be seen as more important from the policy perspective by which DS/RAD must be guided while, from an academic standpoint, other country intervention opportunities may be more attractive. DS/RAD's style of activity was portrayed as requiring a more managerial approach to decision making than the honored traditions of academic consensus building might at times permit. It was agreed at Cornell in August that most of these difficulties can and must be resolved through frequent consultation and negotiation between the RDPP director at Cornell and the project manager in DS/RAD while each generates the appropriate degrees of consensus on the points at issue among his respective colleagues.

B. Participation in the Participation Project. The preceding section covers many of the specific areas of concern that emerged during the first months of the project concerning the making of certain decisions. Concerns were expressed in the draft interim evaluation regarding the ways in which decisions were made on the subjects of RDPP papers, the uses made of the network, the tension between Cornell's alleged desire to treat the Cooperative Agreement as a "grant" versus DS/RAD's alleged tendency to regard the Agreement as a "contract," and about the "sense of ownership" of the project at Cornell. It was agreed that the choice of topics for RDPP papers was an appropriate one for the collaborative modes of procedure identified above, and that the collaborative, consultative mode of decision-making identified in the preceding paragraph was suitable for the middle ground between grants and contracts which the cooperative agreement represents. It was agreed that the further development and utilization of the network should be one of the important agenda items for subsequent collaboration between DS/RAD and the RDPP.

The suggestion that Cornell lacked a "sense of ownership" of the project was particularly disliked by Cornell. One of the problems, conceded in the draft report, has been that two of the three key personnel on the RDPP were lost to the project during 1978-9. John Cohen left Cornell for H.I.I.D. and, though his services were repurchased from H.I.I.D. for

the Yemen activity, he was no longer available to help direct the project. Norman Uphoff, moreover, was on leave during the year. This left Milton Esman with a range of other administrative responsibilities in connection with the Center for International Studies, as the only key person on board. During this period, however, Cornell maintained the high level of activity needed to keep the project on schedule. With Uphoff returned to the campus and to the role of project director, it was anticipated that the staff time available for project management would be considerably increased and adequate to the task. Moreover, the Project will continue to be fortunate in having the services of Dr. Porus Opadwalla as associate director of the project.

C. Administrative Matters. A number of specific administrative matters arising out of the May draft interim evaluation were discussed in the August meetings at Cornell.

1. In view of the fact that RDPP spending was behind what had been anticipated at that point, should the RDPP consider relying less upon mission support for local costs? By August, this issue had become moot, RDPP spending having increased considerably to the point where it could no longer be considered "under-spent." Moreover, all agreed that the cost-sharing principle was an important one to maintain.

2. Publication and distribution of papers. It was agreed that DS/RAD and RDPP would need to place high on

their agenda in the coming months the question of how to reconcile the interests of DS/RAD in establishing its own publication series, RDPP in publishing monographs under the project, and individual members of the project publishing in academic circles. The consensus was that there need not be irreconcilable or even difficult-to-resolve conflicts in this area.

3. Research Associates. The question was how their roles should be defined. It was agreed that these should be apportioned, one or more to each of the four of the in-depth countries. The open positions might be filled by those with primary responsibility for Costa Rica and Sri Lanka work, the others being those with primary responsibility for field work in Botswana and Yemen. It appears, however, that with several senior faculty having knowledge of Sri Lanka and being available to help there, a research associate slot for Sri Lanka may not be necessary.

4. Conclusions and Summary of Recommendations. The Project Manager's central conclusion with respect to the Rural Development and Participation Project is that it has jelled. Difficulties created by the newness of the Cooperative Agreement mode, changes in key personnel at Cornell, protracted negotiations and difficulties in establishing opportunities in LDCs for the project to work despite the high degree of mission interest indicated in an earlier DS/RAD survey, and the intrinsic difficulty of coming to terms with the subject matter of the project itself all contributed to the overall problem. In recent months, however, opportunities for in-depth relationships seem to have come to pass and have been realized, experience with the cooperative agreement mode has

has lessened difficulties in the relationship between DS/RAD and Cornell, progress in addressing the subject matter of the project is evident, and the presence once again of a full roster of key personnel at the Cornell end have enhanced the prospects for progress and a successful conclusion of this activity.

To facilitate progress toward realizing the objectives of the Cooperative Agreement the following specific recommendations have been identified in the foregoing report:

1. Increased attention to the task of establishing the ideas that link and integrate the diverse activities of the project. This can be done through such activities as developing and testing hypotheses, substantive conclusions about the nature of participation, and/or identifying policy recommendations that reflect the common experience of those working in different countries and on different sub projects.
2. Increased attention to the training dimensions of project involvement so that the capacity to gather and analyze information on rural development participation survives the presence of RDPP personnel.
3. Increased effort should be devoted to beginning to distill, articulate, test, and refine hypotheses

concerning the subject matter of the project so that policy and methodological guidelines will follow.

4. Close and frequent collaboration between the Project Manager in DS/RAD and the RDPP director at Cornell, supported by consensus building by each among his respective colleagues, should be the mode by which outstanding differences are resolved. Specifically such collaboration should focus on the subject matter of major RDPP monographs,
 - a. subject matter of major RDPP monographs
 - b. development and uses of the network
 - c. planning of seminars and conferences to disseminate project findings
5. Cost sharing between Cooperative Agreement and Missions should continue to be policy. Attention should be given in cooperative agreements, such as the present one with Cornell, to the tension between the need to include a contribution from the cooperative institution and the increased financial stringency affecting non-instructional university activities.
6. Attention should be given to the problem of ensuring that the interests of publishing RDPP findings under DS/RAD cover, as monographs of the RDPP, and in academic journals do not conflict and undermine one another.
7. Final decisions should be reached early on the responsibilities of, and the personnel to fill research associate positions.