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Observations of  
THE INTERNATIONAL FIELD OPERATIONAL SEMINAR\*  
on  
PRACTICAL EVALUATION TECHNIQUES  
for  
NONFORMAL ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS



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\*The Seminar was sponsored jointly by World Education and the National Christian Council of Kenya at the CPK Guest House in Mombasa, Kenya, from October 23 to November 5, 1977.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
GENERAL BACKGROUND	1
EVALUATION OF SEMINAR ACTIVITIES	4
<u>What Was Learned</u>	5
<u>Sharing, Exchanging Views and Experiences</u>	9
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FIELDWORK AND POLICY MAKING	14
THE EFFECTIVENESS OF WORLD EDUCATION'S INTEGRATED FUNCTIONAL EDUCATION PROJECTS IN AFRICA	18
CONCLUSIONS	22
NOTES	23

### Tables:

<u>Participants and Institutional Affiliations</u>	2
<u>The Pre- and Post-Seminar Comparison</u>	5
<u>Comparison of Individuals' Pre-Seminar Statements of Objectives with their Post-Seminar Statement on Objective Achievement</u>	8

Appendices available on request from World Education.

## GENERAL BACKGROUND

The International Field-Operational Seminar on Practical Evaluation Techniques for Nonformal Adult Education Programs was held at the Church Province of Kenya Guest House, in Mombasa, Kenya, from October 23 to November 5, 1977. The seminar was cosponsored by World Education and a local organization, the National Christian Council of Kenya (NCCCK). It was hosted by Tototo Home Industries. The seminar was made possible by financial support from a number of organizations: the United States Agency for International Development, the Hazen Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation, UNICEF, UNFPA, and World Education.

Participation in the seminar was limited to Africa as a region, and primarily to the countries in which World Education is currently assisting local public and private agencies engaged in conducting integrated functional education projects for adults. The selection of participants was made with preference for those staff members directly involved in the implementation of these projects and who, therefore, stood to benefit from understanding the process of evaluation. Four participants were invited from the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development, Family Life Education Project, Ghana. These were individuals involved in the implementation of the project at the district and national levels. Four participants were invited from the Ethiopian Women's Association's Integrated Family Life Education Project. Similarly, these were the core staff involved in the field operation part of the project. The Kenyan participants were selected by their own organization, the NCCCK, although World Education made a specific request for the participation of two individuals because of their deep involvement with Tototo Home Industries. The Sierra Leone participants represented two organizations with which World Education plans to work—the Young Women's Christian Association and the Planned Parenthood Association. The following breakdown represented the overall participation:

### Participants and Institutional Affiliations

<u>Country and Institution</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Ethiopia: Integrated Family Life Education	2	2	4
Ghana: Department of Social Welfare and Community Development	4	-	4
Kenya: Home and Cottage Industries	4	2	6
Sierra Leone: Planned Parenthood Association and YWCA	-	2	2
Resource Personnel: Columbia University, City University of New York, University of Nairobi, World Education	3	2	5
Administration and Logistics: World Education, NCKK, Tototo	1	-	1
TOTAL	14	8	22

### Goals

The overriding short range goal of the seminar was to provide short but intensive training for the African-based staff of the integrated functional education projects assisted by World Education and, in the process, to demystify the evaluation process so that participants would cease to perceive evaluation as the exclusive domain of scholarly experts. The demystification of the seminar was to be accomplished by making the participatory team work the modus operandi of the seminar. This made the seminar unique in that it was unlike many an international seminar of "experts" frequently held in the developing countries and in which the Third World participants merely record, often in awe, the utterings of the "experts."<sup>1</sup> The training was specifically designed, first, to acquaint the participants with the approaches to and techniques of evaluation, and, second, to alert them to the need for an ongoing internal evaluation process built into their projects and designed to provide the information necessary for decision making.

The long range goal of the seminar was that the participants would be able to adapt some of the approaches and techniques learned and apply them in monitoring the effectiveness of their home projects.

In order that the seminar would be less theoretical and more practical, the cooperation of a self-help, income-producing project in Mombasa—the Tototo Home Industries—was enlisted. Tototo, which started in 1965 with the goal of assisting urban and village women to earn a living, now manages eight craft centers in and around Mombasa. These centers provided the testing sites for the seminar.

The last goal of the seminar was to act as external evaluators to Tototo. Specifically, Tototo hoped that the seminar would accomplish two tasks on its behalf. First, it hoped the seminar would assist it to assess how it had been doing over the past year in relation to its own goals and objectives. Second, it hoped the seminar would assist it to develop an ongoing, manageable evaluation plan it could use in determining what direction to expand and improve its programs.

Four major activities comprised the day-to-day operations. First, there were the large group meetings where either the resource persons introduced topics for the day or the small group teams reported on their previous and/or ongoing activities. The large group meetings also served an extra purpose as the setting in which the logistical and other housekeeping pieces of information were made available. Second, there were the small group teams. In organizing the teams, an attempt was made to have a participant from each country on each team; to have a balance between males and females; and to have a Kenyan on each group who could serve as an interpreter. The small group teams met in sessions during which they planned their strategies for collecting and evaluating data from the sites. Methods of data collection were decided upon, reviewed, criticized, and reassessed and the formulation of the product of the team work took shape in these small group sessions. Third, there were the site visits which provided the opportunity for interaction with the villagers and during which the actual collection of data on the activities of Tototo Home Industries took place. Fourth, there were individual work sessions which took place between field visits and the large and small group meetings. Individuals could be seen reading under trees, writing on pieces of flip charts, or reading another team's product. Finally, it should be pointed out that a conscious and successful attempt was made to strike a balance among the four major activities.

Amidst these activities, three aspects of the role of the five resource persons could be identified. First, each resource person had input into the final design of the seminar; and as the seminar progressed, the resource persons met daily to refine the design and maximize learning opportunities for all, based on each day's experience. Second, responsibility for facilitating particular sessions was rotated among the resource persons. Third, the resource person was indeed a participant, a member of his/her group who struggled with and learned as much about evaluation as any group member.

At the conclusion of the two weeks, a formal evaluation of the seminar was conducted. The instrument used was a questionnaire consisting of both pre-coded and open-ended questions. The questions were designed to tap the participants' reactions to the various aspects of the seminar, to solicit suggestions for future seminars, and to assess the likelihood of the seminar achieving its long range goal: the adaptation of the techniques learned at the seminar to the home projects. The formal assessment was in addition to the informal evaluation which was carried out throughout the life of the seminar through casual conversations and observations.

The results of the evaluation are discussed under five subheadings: Evaluation of the seminar activities; the relationship between fieldwork and policy making; the effectiveness of World Education's integrated functional education projects in Africa; and the conclusions.

## EVALUATION OF SEMINAR ACTIVITIES

The basic question here is whether or not the seminar accomplished its goals. Before the question can be answered, however, an examination of the participants' pre-seminar expectations should be undertaken since these expectations have strong bearing on whether or not, in the view of the participants, the seminar achieved its goals.

A pre-seminar questionnaire, answered several weeks before the participants arrived at Mombasa, revealed that the pre-seminar expectations fell under four major themes. The first theme, cited by 82 percent (14) of those responding, was the desire to learn the approaches, methods, and techniques of evaluation. The second theme, cited by 35 percent (6) of those responding, was the desire to share, exchange, or compare experiences with the other participants. The third theme, cited by an equal number (35 percent [6]), was the desire to upgrade and/or improve their knowledge of evaluation.

The fourth theme was the expectation of the Tototo Home Industries, expressed through its manager, that the seminar would assist them in finding answers to a fairly long list of questions (see Appendix I). From the analysis of the expectations, however, it was clear that 82 percent (12)—the majority of the participants—were new to the idea of evaluation. It is with these expectations in mind that participants were asked the question Did the seminar generally meet your expectations?

The response to the question does reveal the extent to which the seminar met the participants' expectations and, indirectly, the extent to which the seminar reached its goals. Eighty percent (12) responded in the affirmative, none answered in the negative; whereas 20 percent (3) answered that it met their expectations "some." Upon probing, however, it became clear that those whose expectations were not fully met had unusually ambitious expectations. For example, it would have required stretching the seminar beyond the limits of its time and resources to answer satisfactorily all the questions posed by the manager of Tototo Home Industries; however, her appreciation of the answers the seminar was able to provide is reflected in her own statement: "Although the seminar did not cover all the answers Tototo expected, it has clarified

a lot of matters in some of Tototo's groups." The other participant whose expectations were only partially met expected that at the conclusion of the seminar a booklet on evaluation would be issued, something the seminar simply did not intend to do. The third and last partially satisfied participant expected to visit several sites. Time and resource limitations, however, made it necessary to assign an individual to a group, and a group to a site so that the group would become more fully acquainted with one site and therefore be able to collect more reliable data. It is evident, therefore, that the three ambitious expectations could not be fully met.

What Was Learned. If to learn evaluation techniques, share experiences, and improve on skills were the participants' expectations, the seminar apparently met these. The question that still remains is, What exactly was learned, shared, or improved upon and how well was it all done? In order to assess the quantity and quality of the skills acquired at the seminar, a question was asked: Please circle the number on each item below that indicates how much confidence you have in your ability to do the following things related to evaluation. The question was basically a confidence scale designed to elicit, first, what was learned among the six basic techniques covered at the seminar (observation, interview, group discussion, questionnaire, case study, and baseline survey) and, second, to assess how well these techniques were learned. The responses indicate that 75 percent (11) of the participants not only learned something new but also that they learned it well enough to be able to use it with a high degree of confidence. The table below illustrates the fact:

The Pre- and Post-Seminar Comparison

<u>Participants (12)</u>	<u>No Experience with Technique and Expressed Desire to Learn About It—Pre-Seminar</u>	<u>Level of Confidence in Ability to Use Technique—Post-Seminar</u>
P1	Case Study	4
P2	Questionnaire	4
	Case Study	5
	Group Discussion	3
P3	Case Study	5
	Baseline Survey	5
P4	Case Study	4
P5	Case Study	4

<u>Participants (12)</u>	<u>No Experience with Technique and Expressed Desire to Learn About It—Pre-Seminar</u>	<u>Level of Confidence in Ability to Use Technique—Post-Seminar</u>
P6	Group Discussion Baseline Survey	3 4
P7	Case Study	5
P8	Group Discussion Case Study	5 4
P9	Observation Baseline Survey	4 4
P10	Baseline Survey	4
P11	Group Discussion	5
P12	Observation Baseline Survey	4 4

Average Movement: 0-4.2 (75 percent [11] of Participants)

- Note:
1. Confidence Scale used: No Confidence 1 2 3 4 5 Complete Confidence.
  2. In all cases the technique(s) had never been used by the participant before and were his/her expressed choice for learning.
  3. Three participants who had used the desired technique(s) occasionally or frequently are not included. Omitted is one participant for whom no pre-seminar data is available.

In addition to the specific techniques learned at the seminar, the participants were asked if the seminar was helpful to them in discovering how they could evaluate their own projects at home. The response to this question was unanimously affirmative. The items mentioned as new discoveries, however, depended very much on the participants' previous acquaintance with the evaluation process.

The Kenyan participants were generally not acquainted with internal evaluation. This fact is reflected in the items they cited as their new discoveries. Comments such as "I discovered the idea of not waiting and not setting aside some weeks just for evaluation, but doing a continuous assessment every time I visit my group" reflect the new awareness of the significance of an ongoing internal evaluation. Another Kenya comment, "My project has been evaluated several times but I had never taken

part in the exercise" reflects previous awareness of external evaluation, but a new awareness of the participatory, ongoing, internal evaluation.

The comments from the Ethiopian participants reflected an obvious acquaintance with the internal evaluation process, hence were characterized by the mention of additional specific techniques newly acquired or improved upon at the seminar. Three participants mentioned "group discussion" as a new technique to them, and one they might find useful at home. One participant discovered the potential loopholes in basing decisions on the first impressions and he also learned how to handle those impressions. Another participant enhanced his appreciation of the open-ended questionnaire and also thought the technique might be attempted at home to allow participants to tell more of their aspirations. The idea of starting group discussions by using a picture on which the group could project their own ideas, telling what they thought was depicted in the picture, impressed one participant who indicated he might try it at home. The acquaintance with the ongoing internal evaluation among Ethiopian participants is due to the fact that the Integrated Family Life Education Project in that country has been practicing it for some time now.

The comments from Ghana reflected some awareness of the evaluation process although the ongoing internal evaluation is not now built into their project. The comments also reflected a general appreciation of all the techniques learned at the seminar. One participant indicated he discovered the benefits of informed small group discussions, open-ended questions, and more actual site visits and observations. He indicated that these might be applied to the Ghana project. The general theme expressed by the Sierra Leone participants was that although there were no ongoing projects assisted by World Education, all the techniques learned at the seminar were new discoveries that might prove useful when such projects were eventually instituted.

Pressed to identify the most and also the least useful outcome of the seminar, the participants advanced several themes. In identifying the most useful outcome, the experience of having learned an actual evaluation method, technique, or skill emerged as the major theme cited by 83 percent (10) of the participants. This can be attributed to the fact that in the pre-seminar statements of expectations, the participants were asked to, and did, identify the techniques with which they were not acquainted and with which, therefore, they wished to be acquainted during the seminar. With the definite pre-seminar objective of acquiring specific skills, the usefulness of the seminar depended on the successful acquisition of those skills. In comparing each individual's pre-seminar statements of objectives with their post-seminar statements on the seminar's usefulness in meeting those objectives, a strong consensus emerges. Out of a possible 30 points, restatements won 20, approximate restatements won 3, whereas unlike statements won 0 points, as the table below illustrates. What is strongly indicated in the table is that the seminar met the specific learning objectives for the majority of the participants.

Comparison of Individuals' Pre-Seminar Statements of Objectives  
with their Post-Seminar Statement on Objective Achievement

<u>Participants (15)</u>	<u>Restatement</u>	<u>Approximate</u>	<u>Unlike</u>
P1	2	-	-
P2	2	-	-
P3	-	1	-
P4	-	1	-
P5	2	-	-
P6	-	-	0
P7	2	-	-
P8	2	-	-
P9	-	1	-
P10	2	-	-
P11	-	-	0
P12	2	-	-
P13	2	-	-
P14	2	-	-
P15	2	-	-
<b>Total</b> 15	<b>10x2=20</b>	<b>3x1=3</b>	<b>2x0=0</b>

Restatements and Approximate Restatements: 23 out of a possible 30.

Note: Scores: Participant Objective—Outcome on Objective

- 2 Post-Seminar Statement of Seminar's Use is Restatement of Pre-Seminar Objective
- 1 Post-Seminar Statement of Seminar's Use Approximates Pre-Seminar Objective

## 0 Post-Seminar Statement of Seminar's Use is Unlike Pre-Seminar Objective

The experience of sharing ideas emerged as the second theme cited by 17 percent (2) of the 12 participants who answered the question. No clear theme emerged in identifying the least useful outcome of the seminar. The four participants who cared to identify the least useful outcome of the seminar cited the visit to the game park.<sup>2</sup>

Another participant thought that the somewhat hurried manner of presentation of the small group papers to the larger assembly could have been improved. A third participant thought a particular technique (case study) was the least useful, while the fourth thought the free time for mixing together could have been extended. From these scattered examples, it is evident that no clear theme emerged in identifying the least useful outcome of the seminar.

Sharing, Exchanging Views and Experiences. If learning the techniques of evaluation emerged as the major expectation among the participants, the desire to share, exchange views and experiences during the seminar emerged as no less significant. In order to learn whether adequate opportunities were provided for exchanges, and whether such exchanges actually transpired, a question was asked: Did the planning of the seminar allow adequate opportunity (a) for small group work; (b) for large group discussions; (c) for informal exchanges of views; (d) to explore Mombasa?

The response to the first three parts of the question was unanimously affirmative. The arrangement of working in small groups of five drew special praise from most participants. Some typical comments: "By the small group work I was able to learn from other participants and even take part too." This is a comment by a particularly shy female whose level of participation appeared to progress from zero in the beginning to frequently volunteering to be the presenter of her group's work to the assembly. A particularly vocal male participant commented: "Almost everything we did, we used the small group method to give room for each participant to express his/her views."

Large group discussions (assembly) drew less enthusiastic comments despite the 100 percent agreement that adequate time was provided for them. Some typical comments: "As usual in large group discussions, most people don't like to talk." "The time given to large group discussions was enough." "Large groups tend to be dominated by people who talk a lot and thus hinder the quiet people from participating."

Whereas a unanimous agreement was expressed to the effect that enough time was allotted to informal exchange of views, there were some who felt that more of this exchange had to do with the task at hand (learning the techniques and evaluating Tototo) than the exchange of views regarding the home projects. An illustrative comment: "Our discussions were mainly focused on the seminar. Yet enough time was not allotted to discuss one's own project at home to allow participants to learn from one

another. Anyway, informal discussions have covered the gap." Others felt that much informal exchange of views occurred in the small group meetings. An illustrative comment: "This was quite evident since we had small groups to deal with during workshop sessions."

It should be mentioned that both the participants and the seminar planners expected that the exchange of views regarding home projects would occur. The planners, however, did not expect this exchange to occur solely on an informal basis; hence two specific sessions were devoted to ensuring that participants increased their knowledge of each other's projects. In the first session, each country team was asked to prepare a written description of its home project and to use it to give a verbal presentation to the assembly. In the second session, on the last day of the seminar, each country team addressed itself before the assembly to the question of the application of the acquired evaluation techniques to the home projects. In this session the teams enumerated the implications of their seminar learnings to the home projects.

Further efforts were made at using mealtimes for mixing the participants from different countries in the hope that more informal discussion about the home projects would be carried out. The response to the following question: From your observations, how do you rate how well the participants from different countries mixed (a) at mealtime; (b) during free time? indicates that a strong measure of success in mixing was achieved and exchange regarding home projects occurred. Asked to rate their feelings in a scale ranging from poor-good-to-excellent, 20 percent (3) thought the mixing was poor, 80 percent (12) thought it was good, and none thought it was excellent. The range of candid comments reflected the interest participants had in this aspect of the seminar. Here are some illustrative ones: "Very poor, and that was a mistake right from the start. Participants were given accommodations just as they came from their countries. Sierra Leoneans together, Ethiopians, Ghanaians, and so on. Thus when they went to the tables they walked together, and sat together." This participant thought that a different housing arrangement could have influenced mealtime mixing. Yet it should be mentioned that this accommodation arrangement was made in consultation with a number of participants who preferred to stay together with their countrymen/women, perhaps as their way of hanging on to something familiar amidst the strangeness of a new environment. Another critical comment: "Some participants from the same country habitually spoke their language so they grouped together." This comment can correctly be directed to one or two country teams. Other comments, however, indicate satisfaction with the level of mixing: "It was not very well done in the first and second days, but it opened up later and the mixing improved. Name tags should have been prepared the first day." "This was average and I think it could have been better if we all could speak the local language here." In summary, the majority rated mixing as good.

How well the participants mixed at free times, usually after meals, was rated slightly higher. Only 14 percent (2) thought it was poor, 80 percent (12) thought it

was good, and 7 percent (1) thought it was excellent. The comments made about mixing at free times were not significantly different from those made about mixing at meal-times. In summary, the opportunities for inter-country exchange of views on projects were made available by scheduling two formal sessions to discuss the matter. Some good mixing and exchange of views evidently occurred even though some of the exchange had to do with the seminar.

As to whether there was enough time to explore Mombasa, only 33 percent (5) of the participants responded in the affirmative; 67 percent (10) responded in the negative. The negative response can be interpreted as a credit to the seminar planners, for the purpose was certainly not tourism. Some illustrative participant comments were: "It was a business-minded seminar"; "It seems to me the program was so tight, one had hardly any time to explore Mombasa!"; "Free weekend, free evenings, no complaints."

The success of a seminar, however, does not depend entirely on how meticulously it is planned. Planning is merely the provision of a structure within which certain activities take place. To be sure, planning or structuring must be carefully done, but it is the quantity and quality of participation within the structure that make the difference between the success and failure of a seminar. It is with this in mind that the participants were asked the question: Do you feel individually that you participated enough in your group discussions, site visits, and presentations?

In response to the question, the participants rated their level of participation on a five-point scale ranging from not enough to enough. All participants expressed the feeling that they had participated enough, with 53 percent (8) rating themselves at the extreme (5) end of the scale, and 47 percent (7) rating themselves very close (4) to the extreme end of the scale. None expressed dissatisfaction with their level of participation.

Those who did not rate themselves at the extreme end of the scale cited their previous lack of acquaintance with the process of evaluation as the reason for their slow start in participation; but they also noted that, as they gained confidence in the techniques, their level of participation quickly rose until, at the end of the seminar, they felt they had participated enough.

Asked if their level of participation might have been hampered by the presence of a few who may have dominated the activities, only 27 percent (4) indicated having experienced a tendency on the part of some participants to dominate activities, whereas 73 percent (11) experienced no such tendency. The basis of the apparent domination was identified as the tendency of those who knew more about the operation of Tototo to be called upon, or to take it upon themselves, to explain certain issues more often and at length. It might be added that the tendency was often observable when the discussions probed into the mission of Tototo, which apparently is both commercial and assistance oriented. The probing tended to throw some Tototo staff into the defensive

role thereby offering explanations of the apparent contradiction and, in the process, appearing to dominate.

Asked to comment on whether it would be worthwhile for them to attend a follow-up seminar if one were to be held after six months, 87 percent (13) of the participants answered in the positive, with the rest, 13 percent (2), answering in the negative. The theme stressed by those answering in the positive was that they were eager to implement some of the techniques they had acquired and that a follow-up seminar would help them assess the implementation effort. They emphasized the point that the participants in the follow-up seminar should be the same persons who were in Mombasa if the maximum benefit was to be achieved. Those who answered in the negative stressed the point that in six months they did not think they will have implemented what they had learned; therefore, a follow-up seminar would be premature. One suggested a year as the more appropriate timing. In short, it was the individual's assessment of the time he/she needed to implement the newly acquired techniques that determined his/her timing for the follow-up seminar. There was no question as to the desirability of the follow-up seminar itself.

With the possibility of a follow-up seminar, the participants were asked to suggest what they would like to see done differently in the future. Although two participants commented on several areas, it is accurate to indicate that 33 percent (5) of the participants suggested that future seminars be conducted in the same manner as the Mombasa seminar, whereas an equal number—33 percent (5)—suggested only some minor changes in the area of programming. These changes included more consultation with or involvement of the participants during the planning, at least on the first day of the seminar so that possible program changes could be made. Three participants commented on the duration of the seminar, two suggesting that it be lengthened while one suggested that it be shortened. It should be noted, regarding the first suggestion, that the level of participant involvement in the learning activities of the seminar was very high; however, they were not involved in the administrative decisions affecting the everyday activities of the seminar. Such decisions were collectively made by a team of resource persons.

This is perhaps as it should be for the sake of accountability. The commentators on the duration of the seminar did not elaborate as to why they thought it should be shortened or lengthened.

The suggestions on accommodations, made by 13 percent (2) of the participants, were to the effect that improvement should be made in the future in both local and facilities, such as a better conference room, improved lighting plus reading desks in the rooms to enable participants to continue working on their papers at night. It was suggested by another 13 percent (2) that the size of the future seminars should be broadened to include representatives from more countries. It should be pointed out regarding the two suggestions that while improving on the attractiveness of the location and better country representation are possible and always desirable, the choices are often diffi-

cult ones involving the availability of resources. The same point can be made regarding the suggestion by another 13 percent (2) that the amount of allowance be reconsidered and upgraded. Finally, two comments were made regarding personnel. One was that the resource persons should be allocated to groups in such a way that their temporary withdrawals to attend administrative and planning sessions would not affect the discussions in the groups to which they are assigned. The last suggestion was that the resident coordinator could be more helpful and perhaps more friendly. The two suggestions should be understood in light of the fact that there was only one resource person per group and one resident coordinator in charge of a variety of logistical details. Again it is conceivable that two resource persons per group and perhaps an assistant coordinator could be a more adequate team; nevertheless, the availability of resources is still a fact with which to be reckoned. In all, the suggestions as to the things that could be done differently in the future seminars are food for thought for the planners of future seminars. At the same time it should be mentioned that not one participant indicated dissatisfaction with food, a fact which must be interpreted as an achievement on the part of the planners of the Mombasa seminar.

Perhaps an additional indicator of the success of a seminar or any event that brings heterogeneous people together, for a period of time, is the number of ties or friendships that develop. The participants were therefore asked if they had made any friends. The response was 100 percent (15) positive, with some indicating they thought they had made friends with everyone, with some, or with a few with whom they would keep in contact long after the seminar. Whether or not these friendships last is another matter. However, it must be noted that within the duration of the seminar, one could observe the presence of a congenial atmosphere that emerged and amicably sustained the group for a fortnight in what was otherwise a tightly scheduled learning experience.

In conclusion, the experience of the seminar can be characterized as successful. Given the participants' major expectations: to learn the techniques of evaluation, exchange and compare experiences with other participants, and to help answer some questions for Tototo, it is evident that not only did the participants learn the techniques, but they also gained a high degree of confidence in the use of those techniques. It is also evident that participants were provided with enough opportunities to share and exchange views and indeed such change occurred, even though some of the exchange concerned the immediate seminar experiences rather than the home projects. The only inconclusive expectation can be said to be that of assisting Tototo Home Industries to find answers to all its questions. Providing comprehensive answers to the questions, however, would have required the stretching of the seminar beyond its limits in time and resources. Besides, it should be emphasized that the role of the seminar was to assist and not to bear the major responsibility for providing the answers. In addition, each team did prepare an evaluation strategy for Tototo sites the team visited. These materials can be used by Tototo in developing an evaluation system of its own.

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FIELDWORK AND POLICY MAKING

In the field of international technical assistance, the question of the relationship between the work done in the field and the policies made at the higher echelons is a perplexing one. A quick observation suggests the existence of a hiatus between the two levels, which in turn suggests the existence of two distinct approaches to the subject of international assistance—the elitist versus the grassroots.

In most of the Third World, the nation-building process has brought with it the establishment of the national elite. It is members of this elite who staff the higher echelons in the various governmental bureaucracies, and who also formulate policies including those on rural development. What has become evident, however, is a widening hiatus that exists between the policy-making elite and the rural populations for whom the policies are made. The policies are often made without the basic data as to what might work, and projects are often initiated without the involvement of the target population. What is interesting is the success with which the elite enlist the financial support of international agencies, thereby making the agencies the working partners in the elitist development schemes which rarely benefit the target population. The primary beneficiaries are usually the elite themselves, carefully playing the middleman's role between international funders and the rural poor. The result is the ever-increasing gap between the national elite and the rural poor. What a New York mayor calls "poverty pimping" is not that different from "rural development pimping." Many a development project has failed while the ponderous, elitist partnerships have continued as a main and fixed feature of international agencies' assistance to the Third World.

It is the ever widening gap between the elite and the rural poor that must beckon the era of grassroots approach to international assistance. The approach, in whatever form, calls for finding ways of bypassing the middleman, the elite, and directly reaching the target population—the rural poor. The rural poor in East Africa, for example, are acutely aware of the widening gap as their resentments continue against the "wabenzi" (those with Mercedes-Benz cars). With this resentment has come also the realization that self-help projects initiated by the rural people themselves, and

designed to solve their own problems, may be the answer. It is at this point that the field-oriented projects, seeking more data as to how to awaken and nurture rural initiative, become important.

The dilemma for international assistance agencies is that of choice in approach. Neither the elitist nor grassroots approach is free of pitfalls. The pitfalls in the elitist approach are fairly well recognized. They include such factors as missing the target, enriching the middleman, and encouraging other forms of corruption. On the other hand, it is an approach that is more popular since it is really entering a partnership with the powerful.

Also, the aid agencies reap that precious reward that all of them seek: recognition and praise in the headlines of the recipients' elite controlled newspapers. The recognition is for the benefit of the contributors, taxpayers, or other supporters of the agency, and usually works wonders in terms of continued support.

The pitfalls in the grassroots approach are numerous. First, the rural population is often not aware of the kinds of projects needed; when rural people do initiate projects, they are unaware of the possible funding sources. Often they initiate isolated projects that are cumbersome to incorporate into overall regional or national plans. International agencies which become involved in such projects find them expensive in that they often need constant injections of cash and are without any real possibility of eventually being absorbed into the national budgeting processes. The hope of every international aid agency is that the projects they support will eventually attract the attention of the national policy makers, and hence be incorporated into the overall budgetary process of the regional national governments. The point is that with the grassroots approach, the road to such incorporation is longer and often hazardous. It is hazardous because, if the project appears to be succeeding, it is bound to attract the attention of the national elite, whose reaction may not always be predictable. The reactions may range from enthusiasm and support for the projects to suspicion and hostility. An enthusiastic and supportive reaction may lead to incorporation, thereby allowing the agency to withdraw with recognition and dignity; but suspicion and hostility often lead to the accusation against the agency that it has bypassed the relevant bureaucrats. Worse still, the agency may find itself accused of harboring ulterior motives, which may lead to the thwarting of the agency's efforts and, at worst, forced withdrawal.

The question of the relationship between field work and policy making can therefore be recast and discussed in the context of the relationship between grassroots and elitist approach to aid and development. What is clear, however, is that it is important for an international aid agency to carefully weigh its approach to aiding a development project. Historical evidence indicates that more agencies have opted for the elitist approach. In the African continent especially, this is not surprising, for the creation of the elite itself can altogether be laid at the doors of the agencies themselves. It began in earnest in the late 1950s with the now famous "Winds of

Change Blowing Across the Continent" speech by the former prime minister of Great Britain, Sir Harold Macmillan.

The speech placed the British government squarely on the side of change, recognizing the inevitability of independence for its African territories. But that recognition also opened the door to the international agencies in what might be called the scramble to woo the potential elites of independent Africa. The wining and dining of the potentials was launched in earnest. Visitors' programs to the United States were organized by some, scholarships were dispensed, and other programs designed to win minds and souls went into effect. With the coming of independence, it is the beneficiaries of these programs who are now entrenched as the policy-making elite. In the pre-independence period and circumstances, the wining and dining effort on the part of the international aid agencies perhaps deserved applause. After decades of independence, however, it has become evident that the elite establishments have mostly replaced the colonial elite, a factor which may not necessarily be negative but, in terms of development, the target population is now definitely the rural poor. The agencies faced with the choice between elitist and grassroots approach need to evaluate their efforts more and more in terms of whether or not they are reaching the target.

If, however, the choices appear polarized, they need not necessarily be so. What is needed is some interaction between the field and the policy levels, between grassroots and elitism. The question for the grassroots projects is whether they can positively attract the attention of the policy makers and establish an ongoing dialogue so that they stand the chance of being absorbed into the regular budgets of the governments; the question for the policy makers, on the other hand, is whether they can come down to earth and learn from the field experiences and data so that their policies remain relevant. For the aid agencies, the question is that of adopting an approach most likely to accomplish both.

It is with these questions in mind that the participants in the Mombasa seminar were asked about the nature of interaction existing between their home projects and the national policy makers, and for suggestions as to how the interaction could be improved. The question asked was: Do you feel that your program has channels for making its needs known to the relevant higher officials at the policy-making level in your country?

The answer to these questions indicated that the project staff in all of the participating countries were aware of the need for articulation with the relevant policy-making levels in their countries. Invariably the staff had instituted either formal or informal articulation in order to make known the presence and the needs of their projects. In Ghana, the project formally originated from the government department of Social Welfare and Community Development. In Ethiopia, the semi-formal route of creating an Advisory Board, the membership of which includes some government policy makers, had been done. On the other hand, placing the project under the

sponsorship of an influential but nongovernmental body, the Ethiopian Women's Association, added an extra level of articulation to ensure that the needs of rural women would be known not only to the government policy makers but also to other influential persons in the country. The Kenya participants, in the case of Tototo, employed the informal route of involving influential people in their projects, holding seminars to which the relevant officials were invited, and generally placing their project under the overall umbrella of a respected nongovernmental body, the National Christian Council of Kenya. Indications were that when the programs in Sierra Leone were developed, either the formal articulation with the Department of Social Welfare or the informal articulation through the sponsorship of a respected body, the YWCA, would be attempted. It is evident that the majority of World Education's African-based projects are the grassroots type which, nevertheless, articulate informally with the policy-making echelons of the government.

It is evident also that the grassroots path to development assistance is the desirable path. A successful grassroots project sooner or later attracts the attention of the policy-makers and, more importantly, benefits its target population. Even military governments (Ethiopia, Ghana, Sudan) appear to understand this tenet. In fact, such governments tend to justify their existence, at least initially, by posing as champions of the neglected and cheated rural poor.

In conclusion, it has been argued that the apparent hiatus between the work done in the field and the policies made at the higher echelons can be properly recast as the problem of the elitist versus the grassroots approach to development assistance. Although historical evidence shows that most international agencies have opted for the elitist approach, World Education has opted for the grassroots approach, as most of its African-based projects illustrate.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF WORLD EDUCATION'S INTEGRATED FUNCTIONAL EDUCATION PROJECTS IN AFRICA

An outsider looking at World Education ten years ago would have wondered how literacy training assists rural people to act more effectively in addressing their own problems. Today, however, literacy training is but one aspect of what World Education does. The main thrust of World Education's activities is to assist, especially in training, the staff of the public and private agencies that conduct integrated functional education for adults. Assisting in conducting integrated functional education for adults is a process far more comprehensive than mere literacy. A village group, for example, may define its problem to be X. Its members may organize to solve the problem, but the solution of problem X may lead to problem Y, the solution of which may point to the necessity of tackling problem Z. The interrelatedness of problems is a recurrent feature especially of the problems of the rural poor; yet it is a feature often ignored. The solutions to those problems, in turn, require an integrated approach allowing for the fact that, for example, making every villager literate is, on one hand, a solution to a problem, but on the other, it is an opening of a Pandora's box in terms of elevating the villager's life expectations beyond what the immediate environment can satisfy unless, of course, they organize to change the environment itself. The integrated approach, however, must also be functional in that it should be designed with consideration to practical possibilities, taking into account the human and other resources available. In short, the capacity to help the rural poor define their own problems, decipher their interrelatedness, and consequently to help organize integrated approaches to the solutions, bearing in mind the practical possibilities, is the essence of integrated, functional education for adults. The expertise in this process is therefore the technical assistance World Education delivers.

Beyond the meaning of the terms, however, the effectiveness of any project is measured on the basis of whether or not it achieves what it sets out to achieve. To learn how the participants in the Mombasa seminar assessed the strengths, weaknesses, and the overall effectiveness of their home projects, a question was asked: In what areas do you consider your project at home to be strongest? Three of the four partici-

participants from Ghana cited the income generating aspect of their project as the strongest area.<sup>3</sup> The Ghanaian view underscores a major positive development in the operations of World Education. Since its inception the identity of World Education had been synonymous with literacy education. However, the recent awakening to the fact that as a technical assistance agency it needs to, and can, deliver other benefits in addition to literacy has taken hold. To supplement literacy programs, therefore, World Education has moved to embrace the concern with providing the rural Third World population, whenever possible, with expertise in initiating their own income-generating projects. The statement by the Ghanaian participants therefore is a strong endorsement of this move. The move reflects more accurately the concerns of the majority of the post-colonial populations of the developing world.

The Ethiopian participants unanimously emphasized the practice of evaluation in their project as the strongest element. This is hardly surprising to those who are acquainted with the operations of the Integrated Family Life Education Project in Ethiopia. It is the only project assisted by World Education in which internal evaluation for decision making is routine. Specifically, the participants cited the pre- and post-interview technique of evaluation as one tool with which their program is very familiar. The emphasis in the field rather than the office, in the management of the project, was also cited as an element of strength. The IFLE is, of course, a multipurpose project that includes generating income. Its purpose is stated as to develop an integrated approach to adult education in health, nutrition, agriculture, family, and civics: to help participants cope with problems, with special emphasis on self-help and income generating activities; to use all available human and material resources by working with existing governmental agencies; to enable participants to use literacy, arithmetic, and problem-solving skills as tools for development. In such a multipurpose project, evaluation for decision making is especially important.

The Sierra Leone participants were not able to answer the question since their projects were still on the drawing board. The Kenyan participants, who were mostly the staff of Tototo, appeared not to possess a clear view of the strengths of their project. A mention was made of its organization, its concern for the needy, its attractiveness to many groups; nevertheless, what became clear from the answers was that not much thought had gone into the assessment of the strengths of the projects.

An opposite question was asked: In what areas do you consider your project at home to be weakest? The Ghanaians were not unanimous in their answers, but they pointed out several weaknesses. First a mention was made of the literacy aspect of the program as weak because some people in the village were not interested in this aspect. The second participant mentioned the unavailability of literacy materials as also a weak aspect of the program.<sup>4</sup> The third participant mentioned the difficulty of working with volunteer instead of paid facilitators as a weakness. Finally the problem of inadequate funding for the small scale economic projects initiated by the villagers was mentioned as a weak aspect of the project.

The Ethiopian participants tended not to perceive weaknesses in their project. The only weakness cited was the lack of consistent follow-up in the activities of the self-help cooperatives, which had been initiated as a direct result of the IFLE efforts. This participant would like to see more consistent follow-up activities.

The Kenyan participants did perceive several weaknesses in their project. Cited were weaknesses in the information-gathering and documentation activities, which result in the inability of Tototo to understand fully the needs of the village groups with which it works. Understaffing, lack of funds, and poor leadership in several village projects were also cited as weaknesses.

When asked: What are the two major problems you have in running your home project? the Ethiopian participants cited the following problems: The existing socio-political situation, the absence of a project manager (for the moment), the shortage of adequate personnel, the inadequate transportation and backing to facilitate concentration in the field performance, and the lack of finances. The Kenyan participants cited the following as major problems: Lack of adequate funds, inadequate information and feedback procedures, rising costs of material triggering the demands to increase the wages of craft producers, lack of means of transportation and shortage of coordinating staff. The Ghanaian participants generally emphasized the lack of funds as their major problem. Specifically, they needed funds for developing and printing the literacy materials, for paying the facilitators who now work on a voluntary basis, and for engaging and retaining competent staff in the project.

The participants were also asked the question: Do you feel your project is making an impact on the lives of the people it is designed to benefit? The majority—87 percent (13) answered yes; 7 percent (1) did not answer. Those who answered in the affirmative again stressed the fact that the economic impact was most visible among the people served by their projects. People who had no source of income at all were learning how to generate some income. This impact was noted to be especially visible among the population served by the Tototo Home Industries in Kenya. But beyond the economic impact, the participants noted the development of the human potential as an intangible, yet perhaps the most significant, impact. When a village women's group was asked what changes have occurred in their lives since involvement with Tototo, the answer was that they were receiving a small income from their own projects. But beyond income they also stated that the demand for their participation in other activities—seminars, agricultural shows, meeting at the chief's camp—had increased and that they were receiving visits from distant places within and without Kenya. The significance of these statements was twofold. First, the increased participation in community affairs by these women had given them an awareness of being part of a process larger and more far-reaching than themselves. They had, in fact, become community leaders engaged in the process of developing their community. The second significance of the statement was that of recognition. People beyond the family circle, village, nation were becoming cognizant of the women's existence. Whereas no one beyond the family circle noticed them before, they were now being noticed and, in the process,

their image of themselves was changing. A participant from Ethiopia stated: "Many individuals and groups have benefited from the IFLE project. Some have secured jobs. Many have improved their income and got acceptance in the neighborhood. Some have achieved leadership positions."

Finally the participants were asked to assess the usefulness and appropriateness of the role World Education was playing in their home projects, and also if there was more World Education could do. The question Is World Education playing a useful and appropriate role in your project? was answered unanimously in the affirmative by the Ethiopian and Ghanaian participants. These are two countries with which World Education has been involved on a continuous basis. An Ethiopian participant cited World Education's role in initiating the IFLE project as useful and appropriate as well as use of evaluation and alerting the staff to its value. The participant added the fact that the services World Education supports in Ethiopia were rendered to the needy. Another Ethiopian participant cited the financial help as useful but thought World Education was exercising too close and strict supervision of the management. The comment is related to the suggestions recently made by World Education representatives regarding the need to confirm and stabilize the local sponsorship of the project, and to fill some of the more important staff positions now vacant.<sup>5</sup> The Ghanaian participants thought World Education's role in providing consultant services in the area of staff training and the production of the literacy material were useful and appropriate, but they added that the finances were wholly inadequate. The Kenyan and Sierra Leonean participants had no opinion since World Education is not currently involved in their countries.

Asked what more World Education could do to assist in their projects, the Ethiopian participants suggested expanding the size and duration of the services, assisting in providing transportation for the field work coordinator, and continuing to assist in providing the technical assistance in the next phase of the project. The Ghanaian participants emphasized the need for more funds to meet the rising costs. They also suggested expanding the programs that generate income, encouraging intra-African staff exchange programs and offering short courses in nonformal adult education abroad for staff. The Kenyan and Sierra Leonean participants expressed a need for World Education to get more involved in their countries.

The statements from Kenya and Ethiopia are fitting illustrations of the effectiveness of the projects undertaken by World Education. It is clear that the integrated functional educational approach to changing the lives of adults does help the rural people become more effective in addressing their own problems. It is also clear that World Education, as a technical assistance agency, is capable of changing in response to the changes in the environment in which it works. Indeed literacy was a most desirable commodity in the colonized Third World only a decade ago and, perhaps, still is in many of those countries. However, as the post-colonial new states have increased their education budgets, the proliferation of the idle, economically unproductive, but highly literate population has become the problem. Some expertise in the ways in which this population can generate income for themselves becomes, therefore, a most desirable commodity.

## CONCLUSIONS

The report has addressed itself to four aspects of the International Field-Operational Seminar on Practical Evaluation Techniques for Nonformal Adult Education Programs.

First, it has described the general background of the seminar. The short range goal of the seminar was identified as providing a short but intensive training for Africa-based staff of the integrated functional education projects receiving technical assistance from World Education and, in so doing, to demystify evaluation so that participants would cease to perceive evaluation as the exclusive domain of scholarly experts. The long range goal was that the participants would be able to adapt some of the approaches and techniques learned at the seminar and apply them in monitoring the effectiveness of their home projects.

Second, the report has looked into the question of whether or not the seminar achieved what it set out to achieve. It concluded that it did, and therefore it can be characterized as a successful seminar. The participants not only learned evaluation techniques but also gained high confidence in the use of those techniques. It is also evident that the participants were provided with enough opportunities to share and exchange views. Indeed such exchange occurred. The only inconclusive expectation can be said to be that of assisting Tototo to find answers to all its questions; nevertheless, the assistance was given within the time and resource limits of the seminar.

Third, the report looked into the relationship between field work and policy making, and concluded that the need for articulation between the two should be recognized within the field of international assistance. The lack of articulation is partly the problem of the hiatus between the grassroots and elitist approaches to development. The report pointed out that World Education gravitates towards the grassroots approach as illustrated by its Africa-based projects.

Fourth, the report concludes that the integrated functional education approach to changing the lives of adults is effective in that it helps the rural people become more effective in addressing their own problems. It is also pointed out that by supplementing its educational programs with income-generating projects World Education, as a technical assistance agency, demonstrates its capacity for change in response to the changes in the environment in which it works.

## NOTES

1. Reaction against international experts often in the service of international agencies has recently been strong as evidenced by the public debate in the leading Kenyan newspaper The Weekly Review (October 10, 17, 24, 1977). At the core of the debate is the relevance of the expertise in the cultural settings, little understood by the "experts."
2. The visit was an optional weekend outing sponsored by the seminar, and in which the vehicle used was stuck in the mud in the Tsavo game park for several hours, raising the fear of attack by wild animals should help not arrive in time.
3. This reference is apparently made regarding a flour cooperative venture that has been started in one of the villages and is experiencing successful marketing in the Ghanaian cities. The major part of the project in Ghana, however, is literacy education.
4. The problem referred to is that the initial 50 lesson materials printed for the pilot program and distributed in three districts now need to be supplemented by more lessons. The cost of printing in Ghana, however, has escalated beyond funds available. The solution to the problem is a high priority with World Education and efforts are currently being directed to the solution.
5. The suggestions were made in light of the changing sociopolitical situation in Ethiopia at a time when the funding of the third phase of the program was being facilitated within USAID.