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The Training of Human Resources and  
More Effective Use of Extension Person for Development

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by  
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Introduction

In the last several months, AID has begun to formulate new policies for its technical assistance programs in agricultural development. One of the new policies calls for a concentration on helping the small commercial farmer in the IDC's since this has the greatest potential for increasing production above the levels of on-farm consumption. The second policy change currently under consideration in the Agency is concerned with revitalization of the training programs in AID. Both of these policy changes have been of utmost interest to BIFAD and JCAD and I would like to direct my remarks this afternoon to these two issues.

Basically, this trend will bring us back into the institution building type of activities that were common in our foreign aid programs 15 years ago, but which have almost disappeared from the scene in the intervening years. It would be useful to quickly review where we were in the institutional building business 15 years ago as a basis for knowing where we must start today.

Institution Building Theory and Practice

Many of you will remember Milton Esman's outline of the major categories of institutional characteristics that are important in studying institution building. Let me refresh your memory briefly on our earlier experience in

trying to strengthen these categories, as documented in a 1968 world-wide study.

1. Doctrine

Esman indicated that this is the heart of any organization's concept of its role and function in society. It is the banner under which the organization claims loyalty and support from its publics. In the 1968 study, it was found that we definitely attempted to export the land-grant philosophy as the doctrine around which various agricultural institutions were built. Furthermore, we found that the major accomplishments of "advisers" that we sent overseas was found in their ability to implant this basic institutional philosophy of a highly pragmatic, problem solving, service oriented approach to serving agricultural clientele. This was in sharp contrast to institutional doctrine that had been introduced in most of these countries from Europe.

2. Leadership

The greatest problems we encountered in establishing leadership was to make available a sufficient depth of leaders who were uniformly committed to the land-grant philosophy. Typically, a single change in administration meant a turnover in leadership, and the training and indoctrination would have to be done all over again.

3. Program

The study found that it was most difficult for programs to concentrate their efforts on items and activities that were of highest priority to agricultural development. Furthermore, it was most difficult to face the political pressures and trim the size of programs attempted to a level that could be successfully undertaken with the resources at hand. This meant that all programs were seriously under-funded.

#### 4. Resources

Financial resources, of course, were always in short supply, but the resources which were most difficult to improve were trained personnel and available appropriate technology. Without these resources, host governments were reluctant to squander financial resources on people and programs that had little prospect for improving the agricultural situation.

#### 5. Internal Structure

It has been common experience for review and evaluation teams to visit LDC's every two or three years to find out why the economy has not rebounded overnight after the initiation of an institution building program. Invariably the first recommendation that comes from such a visiting team is to reorganize the structure. This constant reshuffling of personnel and responsibilities has almost certainly precluded any sustained productive effort.

#### 6. Linkages

Esman outlined a number of different kinds of linkages which organizations must have in order to be fully effective. In reviewing our past performances, the 1968 study found that we had neglected this aspect of institution building perhaps more than any other. As a consequence, there was little grass-roots political support that demanded continued and increased financial support of the institutions involved.

#### Extension Efforts in the Past

Of all of the institution building activities which we have undertaken in our technical assistance programs over the last 30 years, we have perhaps had less success with building effective extension activities than in any other line of endeavor. Early on we were sharply criticized by our European colleagues who were working in the same countries under auspices of FAO or UNDP or World Bank. We were sure that they were criticizing us

simply because they did not understand what we were trying to accomplish. The fact of the matter is, however, that we have attempted to transplant most of the organizational form and function of our own extension service into the LDC's with very little serious research and development on the organizational process in which we have been engaged.

There have been a large number of attempts by other groups to find the magic combination. Anthropologists have told us for many years that they held the key to this development. The late Allen Holmberg from Cornell University spent 10 years establishing a program at Vicos in Peru which was aimed at releasing the latent energies available in an indigenous population by removing the political and social constraints that kept them from being productive. That project was very effective so long as it remained in pilot project status and was managed by the outside agency, but when outside management and resources were withdrawn it collapsed almost overnight.

The Ford Foundation initiated a number of intensive agricultural development programs in India, and again these seemed to move very well so long as they were funded by and administered by an external agency. However, when there were attempts to institutionalize this approach, it fell on hard times. We went through a long period when sociologists were sure that community development was the name of the game, but that approach fell into disrepute and has recently been replaced by a similar idea with a different name. The Rockefeller Foundation is still working with the Puebla project in Mexico, but there is considerable skepticism as to whether this approach can be institutionalized upon the withdrawal of the external agent. The World Bank is currently touting an approach called the training and visit system. Again, they have achieved excellent results so long as

external agencies remain involved. The Philippines are quite sure today that the "Masagana 99" experiment is the salvation of the extension dilemma.

This litany of trial and error could go on, but it seems safe to conclude that virtually all of these approaches were successful so long as they remained in the pilot project stage. However, when there was attempt to institutionalize or nationalize these programs, they failed.

### Prescription for the Future

Now that we are moving back into training and institution building, what should we do? It is clear to me that we must address the extension problem from a Research and Development point of view. We can no longer afford the luxury of "shooting from the hips" at the whim of every specialist that comes along. The time has come when both AID and the land-grant institutions must make serious investment of time and energy into understanding the problems and limitations of our extension activities. Any real progress in increasing world food production will be limited by our abilities to assist in the implementation of adequate extension institutions and the training of their personnel.

There are a few basic problems that must be solved in this context. Let me conclude by simply listing these and urging all of you to begin to give serious attention to what is now the major bottleneck in agricultural development in the LDC's.

1. There must be an effective continuum from research through adaptation to adoption of technology. Any organization that does not make provision for this will isolate research from extension, and this has been the cause for failure in much of our efforts in the past.
2. The demand side of introducing technology into production must

be addressed concurrently with the supply side. Piniero and Trigo of IICA have provided excellent models for understanding and implementing these approaches.

3. There must be many more intermediate steps in the process of going from highly technical extension specialist to the ultimate retail level of intimate contact with the farmer. The shortage of trained people has tended to force a reduction in the number of steps involved in this process with a consequent serious loss in effectiveness.
4. Training is at the heart of this whole process. Training must be given to personnel at all levels from the most sophisticated to the least educated person in the chain. Training must be continuous. It cannot be regarded as a one-shot job. It probably must be given in small doses for those with less education. And the training process must be institutionalized.
5. Appropriate incentives for performance is perhaps the greatest bottleneck in the entire system. Typically, the only reward available in a civil service system is promotion, and this means removal from the point where the technician is making a contribution. Ultimately it means removal from the rural scene into the capital city. This results in an upward drain of competence and a continual reliance on poorly trained and poorly motivated personnel at the cutting edge of extension activities. We must remember that training provides an individual with greater mobility and with greater aspirations. This may be the single most difficult item to resolve and it may ultimately drive us toward some form of private enterprise approach which can reward performance at the point of action.

6. Finally, we must find ways to equate rural development with agricultural development. Small commercial farmers will only be motivated to increase their production if this can ultimately be translated into a better life for their families at the rural level.

Let me close with a strong plea for all of us to now turn our attention back to the serious problems of communicating technological information to the small commercial farmers of the world and of training the appropriate personnel to accomplish these objectives.