


INSTITUTION-BUILDING AND PROJECT PLANNING

by


I. L. BALDWIN

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I. INTRODUCTION

It is a genuine pleasure to discuss this topic with you. My interest in the subject goes back over a decade, and I have just finished participating in a research study concerned with the identification of the factors responsible for the success of university contracts in technical assistance to institution building projects abroad--the CIC-AID Rural Development Research Project.

Fortunately, our research project started some two years after the initiation of the work of the Pittsburgh-Syracuse-Michigan State-Indiana group on institution building, and we leaned heavily on their early theoretical constructs in the design and conduct of our research. Although there is some overlap in the work of the two groups, the two research efforts largely complement each other. The Pittsburgh group was concerned with the development of a theoretical construct of the essential features of institution building and with the testing of a theoretical model in the field. The CIC study was concerned with the identification and evaluation of the factors concerned with the successful operation of technical assistance projects in institution building.

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2/ Vice President Emeritus, The University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin.

With the development of the basic institution building model by the Pittsburgh group, the CIC researchers were free to direct their efforts in large part to the operation of the technical assistance process.

The Pittsburgh study of institution building was broad with respect to the type of institutions studied. The CIC study was restricted to the technical assistance process in the building of institutions for agricultural education and research. Further, it was restricted in large measure to technical assistance projects supported by A.I.D. through university contracts. In spite of these limitations on the sample studied, it is believed that most of the findings of the CIC study are broadly applicable to the process of technical assistance in the building of many different kinds of institutions, under a wide variety of social, political and economic conditions.

Although many institution building projects are conducted without any outside technical assistance, our present concern is restricted to those institution building projects which are assisted by outside technical assistance. The planning of a technical assistance project to an institution building project in one of the developing countries must be concerned both with the essential features of institution building and with the process of giving technical assistance to the host country project. This paper will cover both aspects of the topic. I will use the word institution in a broad sense to cover any human organizational structure designed to perform one or more functions thought to be needed by some segment of society.

Changing conditions create a need for new services. Also, new services often are created to serve as agents of change. These new services or functions may be added to some existing institutions or new institutions may be created for the purpose of performing the service

or discharging the function. The redirection of an old institution is a task of institution building just as truly as is the creation of a new institution. Old institutions may be rebuilt to serve new functions; they may also be rebuilt to increase the efficiency and the effectiveness with which they discharge old functions. Institution building is concerned with either the creation of new institutions or with purposeful changes in old institutions.

The following discussion of "The Use of the Model in Planning" will be organized around certain suggestions which arise primarily from the findings of the Pittsburgh and CIC studies. It is difficult to pinpoint specific credit to one or the other of these studies, since many of the following suggestions arise, in fact, from the findings of both studies. In general, the Pittsburgh studies were concerned with the institution building process and the CIC studies with the ways in which technical assistance can best be given to an institution building project. However, both studies were more or less concerned with the two different aspects of the total problem.

The planning process naturally divides into two broad areas:

First, the overall planning at the national level which leads to the decision to establish an institution building project, and

Second, the more specific planning associated with the initiation and conduct of the institution building project.

As a basis for planning at each stage, the planners must, first, make as accurate and complete an assessment of the present situation as is possible and, second, must make some estimation of the changes which will occur over finite periods of time. There is never available as much information as would be desirable. However, in the developing nations the quantity of the needed data often is meager and the quality may be questionable. In the first stage, the planners must have sufficient

data, which they consider reliable, to justify action on the decision of whether or not to initiate an institution building project. Here, the first decision may well be one to secure the needed information. If there is sufficient information to justify the establishment of an institution building project, this is usually adequate for the initial planning for the operation of the project. However, in many cases, one of the first tasks of technical assistance is that of assisting in the identification and collection of additional important types of data needed for the successful operation of the project. The hazards of making plans on less than an adequate amount of background information can be minimized by making an immediate and vigorous effort to collect the vital data and in maintaining flexibility in the plans to allow for changes in operations based on new information.

II. PLANNING TO DETERMINE THE NEED FOR AN INSTITUTION BUILDING PROJECT

Although the two stages of the planning effort merge one with the other in actual practice, at the theoretical level they can be sharply separated. The items to be considered in the first stage are fewer in number than those of the second stage, but they are of overriding importance. It is impossible to make a success of a project which should not have been started, with the possible exception that mistakes in the timing of project initiation may be corrected by the passage of time.

A. Country Needs

Institution building projects should develop out of a thorough assessment of country needs and the development of a list of priorities. The logical approach first establishes order of priority by broad categories

such as agriculture, industry, transportation and communications, education, national defense, etc. The next step involves a determination of the shifts in resources, men and money, which will be required to insure that the areas of high priority do, in fact, get priority attention. For example, if the development of the nation's agriculture has been given high priority, what new, or improved old, public functions and services will be required and what new resources will be needed? Acceleration in the rate of growth will only be achieved if the conditions of the past are in some way changed. Usually this involves both additional resources and additional or improved public services. Almost certainly the need for new and improved services will be more than the available resources can support. Again, an order of priorities must be established. Additional or improved public services or functions can only be provided through institutions. These may be either new or rebuilt old institutions. Institution building projects established as a result of such studies and determinations have good chances of success. They will serve an important country need.

B. Type of Institution

Having reached the decision that both certain new, or improved old, services are needed and that they have a high priority, the planning now centers on the type of institution needed to provide the service. The following are important areas of consideration.

1. The Doctrine of the Institution

The nature of the services to be performed needs further refinement to establish more precise purposes and objectives. Translation of the mission to be accomplished into a modus operandi for the institution

leads to the development of doctrine which sets the pattern or determines the character of the institution. The omission of these steps in the planning process may result in an unsuccessful attempt to graft a new nontraditional function or service on a traditional type institution.

2. Compatibility with the Environment

Although the proposed institution must be designed to serve the mission, it should also be compatible with the cultural and political environment. This does not preclude the development of a new type of institution. It does require careful consideration of environment and of the linkages which the new institution must develop with various elements of that environment. The new institution should fit into its environment as smoothly as is consistent with its function as an agent of social change.

3. Build New or Rebuild the Old

If the desired service or function is a new one, there probably is an existing institution with a related service or function. If the mission is one of improving an existing service, there certainly is an existing institution. Will the new function or the improvement of the old be better served by building a new institution or by rebuilding an old one? There is never an easy answer to this question. There are both advantages and disadvantages to each course and each case presents a different mixture.

At this stage in the planning process, it often seems easier to rebuild an old institution than to build a new one. Building a new institution may dictate the liquidation of an old institution if undesirable duplication is to be avoided. It is difficult to build a strong vigorous and effective institution but it is also difficult to

liquidate an old institution which has outlived its usefulness. At the stage of actual institution building, it usually is far more difficult to rebuild an old institution with the necessary changes in doctrine, program and structure than it is to build a new institution with the new doctrine, program and structure. The disruption of old established doctrines, programs, organizational patterns and habits is a traumatic experience for the old staff members. They quite naturally view this as a threat to their security.

C. Demands on Resources

Before reaching a decision to proceed with an institution building project, both the host country and the donor country or agency should "count the cost". Enthusiasm for the value of the project may blind one to the cost. Two aspects merit consideration, the costs in men and money and secondly, of particular importance to the donor country or agency, the probable length of time over which assistance will be needed.

1. Costs in Men and Money

Institution building projects might be started on a scale large enough to meet all of the needs or, more probably, will be started on a much more modest scale which will not meet more than a portion of the needs. There never seem to be enough resources of men and money to meet all of the needs. Consequently, a decision usually must be made as to whether a project of a scale consistent with the available resources can be expected to build an institution which will contribute services of greater value than the resources used. An often overlooked factor is that of the available supply of competent manpower. If a new institution

is to succeed in bringing about social change, it must have competent leadership, not only at the top but also at intermediate and lower levels. The more difficult the task is, the greater is the demand for first-class leadership. The larger the scale of operations is to be, the larger will be the number of competent leaders required. The demands for scarce leadership talent should be carefully considered in determining the priority of any project.

2. Long-Term Nature of Institution Building

Institution building is a long-term process and should not be started without both a full realization of this fact and a strong commitment by the host country. A donor country or agency should not offer technical assistance unless it is willing to make a strong and long-term commitment to the project. However, under appropriate circumstances, one-time capital assistance by a foreign donor to an institutional building project may be useful.

Examination of past experience with institution building projects which have had U.S. technical assistance indicates that, with few exceptions, 10 to 15 years of operation should be considered the minimum for satisfactory results. A few examples can be found of apparently successful technical assistance efforts in institution building with five years or less of such effort. However, the far more common result with short-term technical assistance has been the failure to give the host institution any permanent help and, in many cases, positive damage has been done by short-term technical assistance efforts. Both host country and donor country should be deeply committed on a long-term basis before starting an institution building project.

D. Donor Country or Agency Role at this Stage of Planning

Both the host country and the donor country or agency are inevitably concerned with the planning associated with the conduct of the institution building project. Both must be concerned at least to some extent with the planning associated with the decision to establish an institution building project. However, in some cases the host country has reached a decision to establish an institution building project before the prospective donor country or agency is aware that such action is contemplated. In this case, the prospective donor country or agency must carry out its own planning and evaluation studies to determine whether it should join efforts with the host country on this particular institution building project. In other cases, a donor country or agency may independently carry out planning studies which lead it to the conclusion that the host country needs a particular institution building project and then offer to provide the host country with a large measure of support for such a project. Rarely is such a proposal made in an open fashion. However, offers of assistance have often encouraged host governments to engage in projects in which they had little genuine interest. Such projects are usually doomed to failure, regardless of the intrinsic worth of the project. Fortunately, in most cases, the host country and the donor country or agency are aware of the ideas of the other at least in a general way at an early stage in the planning process.

Even where there is joint participation in reaching a decision to proceed with an institution building project, there is not always joint agreement, either actual or apparent. Apparent agreement often does not represent actual agreement. Complete communication of different cultures through different languages is difficult to achieve. Joint

planning will not secure agreement on all items, but it provides the continuing forum which is a prerequisite for establishing confidence and actual communication. Of course, joint planning may point up the fact that the differences are so great as to dictate the desirability of abandonment of either the institution building project itself or of the donor's technical assistance to the project. If such differences do exist, the sooner they are discovered, the better.

III. PLANNING FOR THE OPERATION OF A SPECIFIC INSTITUTION BUILDING PROJECT

Having reached the decision by the host country to establish an institution building project and by the donor country or agency to provide technical assistance to the project, now each must start the more detailed planning required for the operation of the project. Some of the items considered in reaching a decision to establish the project will again be studied in relation to project operations. In addition, several other items must be considered in planning for the operation of the project.

A. Joint Planning

The advantages of joint planning for the conduct of a technical assistance project far outweigh the disadvantages. Naturally, certain phases of the planning are the exclusive responsibility of the host country and others of the donor country or agency. Such exclusive responsibilities usually are concerned with the amount of resources, both men and money, which are to be committed to this project. Even here, joint discussions with frank presentation of viewpoints are helpful. Certainly those aspects of planning concerned with the development of goals, doctrine,

programs, structure, linkages and utilization of resources should be conducted jointly.

Usually more than one entity is involved in both the host and donor country complexes. In the host country, both the officials of the central ministry and those of the institution have an interest in the project. In the United States, a considerable portion of the technical assistance in institution building by A.I.D. is actually carried by other federal agencies through PASA and by universities and other nonfederal organizations through contracts. Both A.I.D. and the agency rendering the technical assistance are vitally interested. Wide participation by all entities vitally concerned generally contributes greatly to the smooth operation of the project.

B. Development of Doctrine

The development of doctrine is one of the most important aspects of institution building. The doctrine represents the spirit or the "heart and soul" of the institution, and it is the doctrine to which we in the United States owe our institutional loyalties. Doctrine is used here to encompass both the purposes and objectives and the modus operandi which is developed to attain the purposes and objectives. In the early stages of institution building, it is advisable to write out and to secure agreement on the various significant features of doctrine. In an older vital institution, much of the doctrine which guides the institution is unwritten but widely known and accepted. It forms the body of tradition which guides the institution.

In most world cultures, the concept of institutional loyalty is far less well developed than it is in the United States. In most cultures, loyalties are given to leaders of institutions rather than

to the institution itself. As a consequence, the status of the institution rises and falls with its leadership, in most cultures. The Pittsburgh institutional building model is concerned with the building of an institution with a life and a character of its own; an institution which is recognized as a worthy entity apart from its current leadership.

Doctrine must mature over a period of years; however, the basic character should be established in the planning stage. In the joint planning process, both U.S. and host country personnel should keep in mind the culturally based differences in concepts about institutions. Through the detailed planning process, many of such differences will be resolved.

1. Refinement of Purposes, Objectives and Goals

In an overall way, purposes, objectives and goals were established during the process of deciding to build the institution, but at this stage these are rarely defined with enough specificity to serve as a blueprint for institution building. Refinement of these general ideas about purposes, objectives and goals is necessary in planning for the operation of this project both to insure that they are widely understood and accepted and that they are realistic in terms of the resources which are being made available.

Statements of purposes and objectives are properly couched in long-range terms. Successful operation, however, demands that more definite short and intermediate-range goals be established. Short-range goals should represent the first steps toward achievement of the long-range purposes and objectives of the institution. Short-term goals can usually be clearly defined without difficulty. Intermediate-range goals cannot be defined as sharply as the short-range goals. However, they

can be made more precise than can the long-range goals. Annual or biennial updating of the short and intermediate-range goals serves to guide the project steadily toward the long-range purposes and objectives.

2. Modus Operandi

The hopes and aspirations of those charged with the responsibility for building the institution need to be translated into a modus operandi which will capture the imagination, the loyalty and the best efforts of all associated with the effort. Some will say that this is a function of leadership, and it is. But at its best, it transcends leadership and becomes a part of the tradition and culture which guides the action of all associated with the project.

Much of the development of the modus operandi will come from actual operations, but the spirit and the style should be established in the planning process. A basic decision relates to the extent which the responsibility and authority of the administrative head is to be delegated. Without some information on this point, it is impossible to make meaningful plans for the operation of the new institution. To a considerable extent, the modus operandi established in the planning sessions will be carried over in the operation of the institution.

C. Evaluation

The initial planning should not only establish goals, it should also establish plans and mechanisms of evaluating progress in reaching those goals. Each entity concerned with an institution building project should plan for regular annual evaluation of its own efforts in the total project, but provision should also be made for evaluation of progress in the total institution building project. Certain aspects of the institution

building operations deserve annual evaluation, others can only be fairly evaluated over a longer period of time. Appropriate benchmarks should be established at the start of the project so that later progress can be measured.

Each project will be different and each should develop a plan and establish a mechanism for evaluation which will meet the needs of that project. Not only are evaluation plans needed for themselves, but the making of such plans will serve to clarify the purposes, objectives and goals.

D. Scale of Operations

Success can only be achieved if the scale of operations is commensurate with the available resources. The requirements for success should be carefully evaluated. If the resources of men, money and facilities are insufficient to provide a reasonable hope of successful operation at the desired scale of operations, action must be taken either to find ways of augmenting the resources of men and money or to make the necessary reductions in the scale of operations. With respect to the second alternative, care should be taken not to start a project at a scale of operations below the minimum required for success. Available resources almost certainly will be less than desirable in any institution building project. Ways to augment the resources should be an important agenda item for the planners.

E. Leadership

Competent, dedicated leadership is a prime requirement for success. This is equally true of the host country leadership and of the donor country leadership. Good leadership is a scarce commodity

everywhere in the world, but is particularly scarce in the developing countries where only a small proportion of the population have had the education and the opportunity to develop their leadership capacities. Good leadership is important at the intermediate and lower levels as well as at the top level. In recognition of the importance and difficulties of recruitment of high-grade leadership, the project should be planned with the objective of making the leadership posts as attractive as possible to first-rate people. Strong leadership is necessary to secure staff loyalty. The program should be designed both to attract and to develop strong leaders.

F. Programs

The doctrine must be translated into programs which will fulfill the objectives. Our examination of past experience reveals many failures due to the attempt to fulfill new and different objectives by minor modification of traditional programs. The program is the action oriented part of the institution building process and it is here that practitioners cling to the traditional most strongly. This is particularly true in cases where an attempt is being made to rebuild an old institution. New purposes and objectives must lead to new doctrine and new doctrine must lead to new programs.

G. Structure

Both the structure of the institution being built and the structure of the technical assistance efforts need attention in the planning stage.

1. The Institution Being Built

The structure of an institution should be designed to serve the program and should be as simple as is consistent with the purposes. There is a strong human tendency to copy something familiar as we build a new institution. In the underdeveloped countries, the familiar institutional pattern is the European pattern of the earlier colonial power. With the advent of large U.S. technical assistance programs, the tendency has been to copy U.S. institutions. Almost certainly neither pattern is appropriate either with respect to type of structure or to complexity. The mission of the institution is designed to serve the needs of the developing nation and the structure should be designed to serve that mission. The tendency to copy something from a foreign land not only leads to the error of trying to fit a new function or service into a structure which was created for a different purpose, it also leads to the error of attempting to build a structure which is entirely too large and complex for the size of the operation. The structure should be as simple as possible. It is always easy to add to an institutional structure and make it more complex as the scale of operations grows, but it is exceedingly difficult to contract a complex structure into a simpler one.

2. Technical Assistance Efforts

The United States in structuring its technical assistance efforts has in large measure used standardized formats. Such uniformity of format for technical assistance avoids many mistakes and makes it simple to monitor projects, but it also encourages inefficiency and hampers effective operations. I am pleased both with the product and with the spirit which made possible the recent joint AID/University look at university contract technical assistance efforts. The new

experimental format will allow considerable flexibility and will encourage innovations in technical assistance. Not all innovations will be improvements, but some will be, and our knowledge of technical assistance will be increased. I hope that similar cooperative studies will be made in the other facets of A.I.D.'s program of technical assistance.

H. Linkages

Environmental linkages must be developed if the institution building project is to be successful. Institutions, like individuals, cannot live alone. An institution is designed to serve one or more functions for society. To do so requires linkages to those segments of society served and to other institutions serving similar functions and similar segments of society. Similar linkages must be made with those institutions furnishing the resources needed for operation. Linkages with other less closely associated institutions also are important.

The CIC examination of institution building projects showed that the failure to develop linkages with other institutions was both widespread and was serious in its effects on institution building. This may be due in part to the relatively rapid rate of institution building which has occurred in many of these countries. When a new nation attempts to build a full complement of needed institutions in one or two decades, it is not surprising that the development of appropriate linkages among these institutions is overlooked. However, in large part, little attention had been given to linkages, either by host or donor country personnel. Planning for the establishment of the necessary linkages is an essential part of the early stages of institution building.

I. Improving Technical Assistance Efforts

All who have studied the situation agree that efforts should be made to improve the quality of our technical assistance efforts. The United States started its technical assistance efforts with little knowledge of the problem and with little relevant experience. It is not surprising that some of the early technical assistance efforts were not successful. Perhaps we should have been surprised at the many which were at least moderately successful. Over the years, we have learned many things about technical assistance efforts. Unfortunately, we do not always make use of the things we have learned. Three areas need attention. First, projects should be designed to attract first-class people. Second, overseas workers generally need better orientation than they have been receiving. Third, very few U.S. institutions which are and probably will be in the future asked to conduct technical assistance projects are adequately prepared for the task in any sense other than being as well or better qualified than any other institution.

1. Attract First-Class Personnel

In the United States it has been difficult to recruit the best of our leadership for technical assistance efforts. A careful study should be made to determine the reasons for this. Then an attempt should be made to design projects so that they would be more attractive to the top leadership of our country. Certainly, the technical assistance tasks are important; projects can be designed to make the tasks both challenging and rewarding to top flight people.

2. Orientation

In general, donor countries have given inadequate orientation and language training to staff members sent abroad on technical assistance missions. First impressions are important, and the foreign expert who arrives in the host country with very little knowledge of that country, its people, its language, and its political, economic and cultural status rarely makes a good impression. Responsibility for such orientation and language training must be the responsibility of the donor, but the recipient country can give much help. The host country should make a special effort to aid the technical assistance worker when he first arrives. The joint planning which precedes the project invitation should include plans by both the donor and host countries for the orientation and language training of the new technical assistance worker.

3. Strengthening U.S. Institutions

Much of U.S. technical assistance efforts have been based on an assumption that the task could be completed in a few years and that we should make the best possible use of such knowledge and skills as we possessed without concern for the future. In recent years, there has been a growing realization that the need for technical assistance by the developing countries will not be met in a few years. Likewise, there has been a growing realization that many of the institutions which are called on to conduct technical assistance need to be strengthened if they are to meet more effectively their responsibilities. There has been an assumption that engaging in technical assistance efforts would automatically strengthen the capacity of an institution for such work. To some extent this is true, but for a variety of reasons much less strengthening has occurred than had been anticipated. Only recently

have the costs to the institution by participation in technical assistance been given careful assessment. Many thoughtful students of the situation now believe that the overall effect of participation in technical assistance has been to weaken rather than strengthen the institution's capacity. This need not be true. Careful planning of technical assistance projects can develop programs which will be both more effective immediately and which will strengthen rather than weaken the U.S. institution. The key lies in the acceptance by all parties that the technical assistance project should be designed both to aid the host country to build an institution and to strengthen the capacity of the U.S. institution to give technical assistance.

J. Participants

Most technical assistance projects make provision for overseas training of selected host nationals. In the U.S. such individuals are called participants. Practically all studies of U.S. foreign assistance efforts point to the importance of this aspect of foreign assistance. In spite of its importance, participant training generally has received inadequate attention. More attention should be paid to the selection of participants in the host country with respect to the role which the individual is to play in the institution after he returns from his foreign training. In the donor country, more attention should be given to the development of a program which will be appropriate for the participant's anticipated future role. It is common experience to find capable young people entering administrative positions with significant institution building responsibilities much earlier in their careers than would be true in the developed countries. Only rarely have young degree seeking

participants been given any exposure to administration and institution building techniques.

The technical training given to participants in most developed countries often is that given to their own nationals. Such programs are designed to prepare young people for the conditions in the developed country. These are not the conditions which the participant finds when he returns to his own country. All too often his desire to use the training he has received leads to either frustration at home or emigration to a developed country. Participants must not be given second-class training, but they should be better prepared to give active support to and leadership in the developmental efforts of their home country. Both host countries and donor countries should give serious and imaginative attention to the problems of selection and training of participants. This can be done best in the joint planning phase of the project.

K. Strategic Planning

The heart of the detailed planning for any institution building project lies in the development of adequate strategic or tactical plans. Who does what; and how, when and where? What resources are needed; at what times are these resources needed; who will supply them? What hazards does the new institution face? What conditions will hamper or serve as blockage points in the institution building efforts? What individuals or institutions have the will and dedication, the means and the opportunity to counteract the unfavorable factors? How can the men and institutions who are dedicated to the project be given the means and the opportunity to overcome the obstacles which can be foreseen?

Some of these considerations are appropriate for host country personnel and some for donor country personnel. Some of the considerations

must be held in the minds of the leaders. However, examination of past experience indicates that much greater joint consideration should be given to the development of strategic plans.

IV. The Value of the Model

This paper has been concerned with the use of the institution building model and certain of the findings of the CIC study in the planning process. Perhaps a few comments about their value or utility in the planning process are needed.

The model provides a useful framework around which the institution building project can be planned. It insures that certain important factors will not be overlooked, but each case presents its own problems and each must find its own solutions. The model only characterizes the areas in which problems will occur and the ease of the model in planning gives a certain degree of protection against unforeseen problems. The model is extremely valuable in its present form and should be widely used by those concerned with institution building, but further research can be expected to bring refinements and improvements.

Certain of the findings of the CIC study have been assumed to have universal validity even though they were derived from a study of a single class of institutions. I hope that those with wide experience in areas other than my own will give their judgment as to the universal validity of these findings.