Institutionalizing Technical Assistance: The Case of Zamboanga del Sur Rural Development Project

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The Zamboanga del Sur Development Project which commenced in 1972 with substantial grants from the Government of Australia adopted institutionalization as a strategy to sustain the development activities it started in the province. As a result, the Project acquired, in addition to its responsibility of uplifting the economic and social conditions of project beneficiaries, the functions of planning, structuring and guiding local institutions on matters of technology transfer, fostering changes in values and in orientations, and obtaining support from the government. Viewed in the context of institution building variables like leadership, doctrine, program, resources, structure and linkages, Zamboanga's experience reflects bureaucratic incursions in the implementation of Project activities. Its role of institutionalizing development techniques, values and attitudes is confronted with problems of financial shortages, fast personnel turnover, ineffectual inter-agency coordination, insufficient leadership support and weak commitment of higher authorities. Solutions to these problems determine success or failure of the project, both its component activities and its institutionalization.

Introduction

Technical assistance (TA) since post-World War II has been considered one of the most potentially effective instruments available to developed countries in attempting to redress problems of underdevelopment in the Third World. An accounting of the total resources expended in the name of technical assistance since its inception will amount to a staggering sum which, for all intents and purposes, would be enough to justify the sustained interest and concern for the monitoring of results and outcomes of this development strategy. A postulated and perhaps more plausible explanation for the unflagging interest in the effectiveness of technical assistance apart from the constant quests for lessons about its processes is the desire of both policy-makers and academicians to discover why the strategy after almost three decades of intensive experience seemed to be replete more with failures than successes.

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The literature on development particularly those which monitor the lack of, or extent, and direction of change in the socio-economic conditions of recipient countries have cast doubts on the effectiveness of TA as a strategy for social change. The overall beneficial effects of TA seemed hardly visible in most of the recipient countries.

Efforts on analysis and the search for causes of problems and their solutions continue to be unhampered by fluctuations in magnitude and changing types of worldwide technical assitance. The US Agency for International Development (USAID) and similar agencies of other countries like Japan and Australia are in the forefront of these efforts.

So far, the emerging general observations are: that TA is characterized as no better than palliatives, the effects of which are short-termed and superficial; that TA seems to be incapable of penetrating deep-rooted problems of poverty in Third World countries; and that the heavy reliance on traditional bureaucratic organizations of recipient countries is apparently counterproductive to the strategy. In addition, TA may develop a feeling of dependence instead of fostering self-reliance among recipient people. Another point against TA is its potential adverse effects on existing domestic patterns and institutions as local values are likely to change and some sectors of the population would be unduly displaced.

On the world food problem, for instance, among the issues uncovered are "the incompatibility of specific techniques to local physical and socio-cultural conditions and the short time span of most technical assistance projects." Furthermore, "difficulties have arisen from the lack of relevance of technical assistance efforts to some segments of the population and from the presence of outside experts."[1] As a distinguished professor and foreign consultant puts it:

> We are still weak in our cross-cultural perspectives and are still inclined to assume . . . the applicabuity of U.S. models to entirely different cultures without recourse either to comparative models, which are increasingly available, or sufficient effort at the strategic planning stage to redesign familiar models to indigenous needs and capabilities . . .[2]

The relevance of these statements is not confined to agriculture alone as they probably equally apply to other fields like education, health and nutrition, and infrastructures such as roads and bridges, and irrigation system construction.

As early as 1962, another major development strategy which might increase TA's effectiveness, if not provide potential solutions to TA's weaknesses was evolved. At that time, the concept of institution building seemed to be the most promising perspective for inducing social change.[3] Research-

ers have been drawn to work in this field of study "in order to strengthen technical assistance performance. Most of the sponsors of this work have clearly hoped for a pay-off in this area."[4] Institution building (IB) is defined as "the planning, structuring and guidance of new or reconstituted organizations which (a) embody changes in values, functions, physical, and/or social technologies, (b) establish, foster, and protect new normative relationships and action patterns, and obtain support and complementarity in the environment."[5] As conceptualized by Milton J. Esman and Associates, the guiding concepts of IB which identify operational methods and action strategies are contained in the sets of variables affecting transactions between an institution and its environment. The institution variables are: *leadership, doctrine, program, resources,* and *internal structure.*

(1) *Leadership* refers to the group of persons who are actively engaged in the formulation of the doctrine and program of the institution and who direct its operations and relationship with the environment.

(2) *Doctrine* is defined as the specification of values, objectives, and operational methods underlying social action.

(3) *Programs* refers to actions which are related to the performance of functions and services constituting the output of the institution.

(4) *Resources* are the financial, physical, human, technological, and informational inputs of the institution.

(5) *Internal* Structure is defined as the structure and processes established for the operation of the institution and for its maintenance.[6]

The second set of variables called linkages defines and clarifies the nature of the exchanges and transactions of an institution with relevant parts of its environment. The four types of linkages are: *enabling, functional, normative* and *diffused.*

(1) *Enabling* Linkages, with organizations and social groups which control the allocation of authority and resources needed by the institution to function.

(2) *Functional* Linkages, with those organizations performing functions and services which are complementary in a production sense, which supply the inputs, and which use the outputs of the institutions.

(3) *Normative* Linkages, with institutions which incorporate norms and values (positive or negative) relevant to the doctrine and program of the institution.

(4) *Diffused* Linkages, with elements in the society which cannot clearly be identified by membership in the formal organization.[7]

Institution Building (IB) therefore, as "a perspective on planned and guided social change" encompasses complex problem-areas dealing with the

introduction and acceptance of new technology, other norms and values be they political, social or cultural. It includes measures which strengthen the capacity of organizations to deal with their total environment and which incorporate innovative norms and values into the behavior of individuals and groups in the society.

This study assesses the experience of the Zamboanga del Sur Rural Development Project against relevant criteria of the institution building perspective, identifies and examines the issues involved and analyzes how current efforts could possibly resolve some of the identified obstacles to the institutionalization of the Project.

Zamboanga del Sur Development Project

The Zamboanga del Sur Development Project (ZDSDP) is a multi-component, two-phase technical assistance project planned and implemented under the bilateral agreement between the governments of the Philippines and Australia. It is one of two integrated rural development projects administered under the Philippine-Australian Development Assistance Programme.[8] Project total cost for the phases is estimated at P751.8 million. Australia is expected to contribute some P342 million (P8.70=$1.00) from 1947 to 1985. Phase I of the project which covered the period April 1974 to 1981 concerns the development and implementation of infrastructure, agriculture and social services projects to meet essential problems and needs of the province. Phase II which commenced in 1981 and ends in 1985 seeks to complete projects under Phase I, executes new projects to complement other programs of the Project and eventually transfers the Project's functions and activities to the corresponding government agencies, through the gradual process of institutionalization. This process entails the development of capability of various responsible Philippine agencies at the provincial and regional levels to ensure the continuing development of the province.

Project Goal, Purpose and Components

To attain the ultimate goal of peace and order[9] in the province of Zamboanga del Sur, the Project sought to achieve two major purposes: (a) to raise the living standards of the majority of the population in the project area, and (b) to generate a self-sustaining development effort employing existing institutions.[10] These purposes and goal of the Project are expected to meet squarely the developmental needs of the province which were identified in the sociological survey undertaken in 1977. This survey provided the background and baseline information on the major problems of people in municipalities to be directly influenced by the Project. For example, the surveyed areas presented a picture of "a dominated semi-subsistence agricultural society," whose demographic characteristics are "high (although probably fluctuating) mortality, morbidity and infant mortality rates, and very high

fertility rates." With "substantial in-migration" as a plus factor in population growth rate," income levels are low, and the distribution of the available wealth is very unequal. Levels of literacy and accessibility to education are low, as are opportunities for social and physical mobility." In addition, "for a substantial section of the population, provision of all types of services is generally low and difficult to either reach or pay for."[11] These findings validated the Project's purpose on the need to raise the living standards of the people.

On the peace and order goal, the study reflects the general sentiment of many respondents that the "insecurity prevailing in much of Zamboanga del Sur is a major difficulty facing their barrio;" that "this problem must be re-solved if there is to be a major improvement in the levels of living of the peo-ple in the province," and that "the origins of insecurity do not lie entirely in a religiously-communal confrontation but are largely socio-economic and political."[12]

The Project's purpose on institutionalization is a recognition of the apparent weakness of the Project strategy in providing long-term continuity for what will be accomplished through the foreign technical assitance. Local institutions must be prepared to absorb and continue the functions and responsibilities temporarily undertaken by the Project.[13] It aims to fulfill development commitment to the province through (a) the improvement of infrastructure facilities like roads and bridges, irrigation works and provision of water supply in the barangays, (b) agricultural extension and research in crops and livestock, fishery and forestry development, and (c) provision of improved social services in selected communities.

Planning for Institutionalization

Key Concepts

As defined by advocates of the IB Model, institutionalization is "the process by which, through the instrument of organization, new ideas and functions are integrated and fitted into developing societies, are accepted and have acquired the capacity to sustain themselves, and in turn, influence the larger environment in which they function."[14] It is considered the end state of institution building where some measures of success have been at-tained by the organization in

(1) its *technical capacity* to deliver innovative services.
(2) its *normative commitments,* i.e., its staff has internalized the innovative ideas, relationships, and practices for which the organization stands.
(3) its *innovative thrust,* viz, the ability to continually learn and adopt to new technologies and political opportunities.

(4) its *environmental image*, meaning "the extent to which the institution is valued or favorably regarded in the society," and

(5) its *spread effect* referring to the "degree to which the innovative technologies, norms or behavior pattern. . . .have been taken up and integrated into the ongoing activities of other organizations"[15]

The concept of institutionalization by the IB model advocates does not provide a close-fit with the requirements of the Zamboanga Project in view of the scheduled termination of the Project in 1985. Besides, the multi-purpose nature of the Project requires interagency participation and build-up of capabilities of many agencies. As a corollary, the criteria of institutionality, namely: technical capacity, normative commitment, innovative thrust, environmental image, and spread effect,[16] must be viewed in another light as will be discussed below.

As conceived by ZDSDP II planners, institutionalization involves filling up the vacuum created by the withdrawal of technical assistance, the continuance of the self-sustaining development effort under the direction of local institutions. The assumption is that TA through appropriate management planning and implementation could successfully transfer functions, responsibilities and resources to the cooperating agencies.[17] Phase II—in contrast with Phase I which was mainly production oriented—should emphasize technology transfer and the building up of capabilities of cooperating institutions.[18] Additionally, it was envisioned that the role of the project organization would be changed from merely being an implementor of infrastructure and agriculture projects to that of coordinating office whose primary concern is to extend national programs and integrate foreign-assisted programs in the province.

Delineation of Responsibility

As embodied in the Planning Study Report and the Memorandum of Understanding for Phase II, the Government of the Philippines (GOP) through the field offices of its various ministries shall determine and implement policies governing institutionalization. The offices preferably at the regional level are expected to formulate the policies, procedures and standards with respect to their participation in the Project.

Australian technical assistance, on the other hand, would emphasize support and assistance to implement GOP policies. Australian aid shall be directed toward strengthening participating institutions "to the point where they are able to meet their responsibilities without further assistance from Australian aid."[19]

The time frame, however, would be different for the two governments. While the depth of Australian involvement would be constrained by the ex-

tent to which cooperating institutions could absorb and takeover transferred functions and responsibilities of the Project, the Philippine transition effort would be "more of an evolutionary nature and accordingly more time consuming."[20] Following this planning premise, the involvement of the two governments in so far as resources is concerned became more distinct. Australian contribution in financial, manpower and equipment resources followed a decreasing pattern while Philippine allocation of resources was held to almost the same levels during the five-year period. The involvement of the two governments in the Project is specified in the program objectives for Phase II which are:

(1) Completion of infrastructure projects identified and started during Phase I;
(2) Continuation of the agricultural and irrigation program;
(3) Undertaken new infrastructure projects necessary for developing capability of responsible institutions;
(4) Undertaken (a) manpower studies in the Project and the institutions, and (b) comprehensivie manpower planning for the province;[21] and
(5) Continuation of community projects in the social services sector.[22]

The above program objectives are to be translated into more concrete work plans, specifying inputs and responsibilities between the Project and the co-operating agencies through a duly approved Memorandum of Agreement.

Structure for Institutionalization

The implementation of Phase II programs and the coordination of the building-up of agency capabilities are administered at the national, regional, and project levels. At the national level, two important bodies namely, the National Council on Integrated Area Development (NACIAD) and the Inter-Agency Steering Committee (IASC) perform advisory and policy-making functions. NACIAD's role could be considered confined to or mainly coordinating and overseeing Phase II programs through the IASC (see Figure 1).

The Inter-Agency Steering Committee is chaired by a Cabinet Coordinator. Its membership comprises the Provincial Governor, representatives from National and Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), the Region IX Executive Council, the Australizan Embassy, the Executive Director, the Australian Executive Director, the Project Director and from other participating ministries and agencies.

At the regional level, the Inter-Agency Regional Advisory Committee (IARAC) executes decisions and policies enunciated by the IASC. The Provincial Governor heads this committee with the NEDA Regional Director as Vice-Chairman. Project officials who are members of IASC also sit in this

Committee with the regional representatives of different ministries and agencies completing its membership.

A Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) is responsible for development and direction of the Project. TCC is chaired by the Project Director, with provincial representatives of ministries and agencies as members.

These three committees ensure the accomplishment of the Project's program of activities as well as vertical and horizontal coordination. Most importantly, it serves as a mechanism for smooth institutionalization of the Project.

It should also be mentioned that four new structures are in effect added on to the organization set-up used during Phase I. These divisions are: (1) Policy, Planning and Programming, (2) Information and Publications, (3) Monitoring and Evaluation, and (4) Manpower Training and Development. These new units in Phase II coordinate and rationalize the participation of other agencies at the project level.

Figure 1: Interim ZDSDP Phase II Organizational Structure
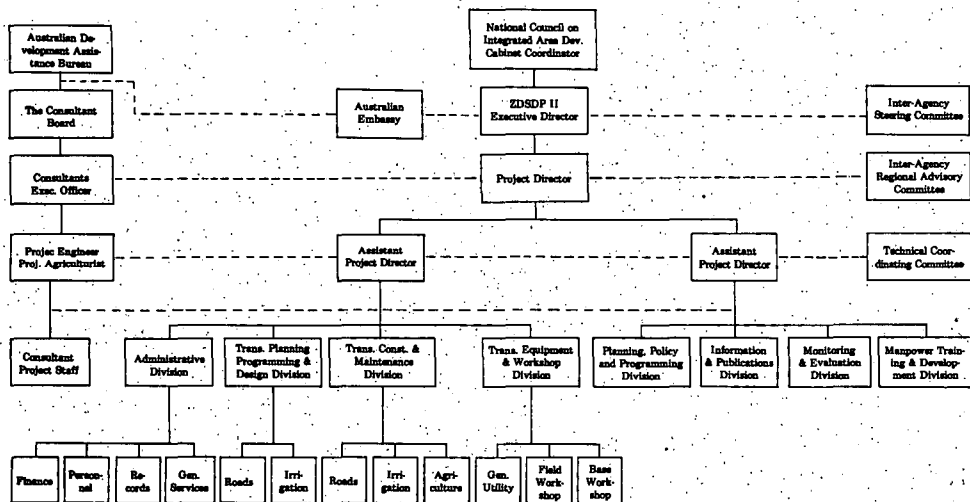
Variables as Issues

The two sets of variables briefly discussed earlier are factors deemed important to an understanding and guidance of institutionalization efforts. While these sets of variables are formulated to suit institution building needs of single, new or reconstituted organization, it may be argued that the context of the Zamboanga Project vis-a-vis the IB model would be different since the project organization is temporary and the target of institutionalization involves no less than 10 cooperating agencies. Applying the model would require assessing many agencies against the set of variables but leaving out the Project organization in view of its temporal nature.

Without doubt, some conceptual twist is involved. However, the relevance of the model will suffer no significant diminution if the project itself would be assessed against the variables for the following reasons: First, the Project organization assumes a nuclear role in effecting the process since its exclusion will create a vacuum. Second, the Project acts as intervenor, guiding the cooperating agencies in acquiring new technology, be they in management or in infrastructure and agriculture. And third, the Project is the instrument that will propel the agencies toward institutionalization. This modifies the model somewhat as it suggests that the variables leadership, doctrine, programs, resources, and internal structure would be requisite features not only of organizations to be built up but also of the temporary organization instrumental in the building up process. These variable then could constitute the issues in reviewing the experience of the Zamboanga Project.

Leadership

This is the most important of the variables since it circumscribes the guidance aspect of institutionalization. In the Zamboanga Project, this role is performed not by one but several officials. At the national level, the cabinet coordinator and chairman of the IASC is the highest official of the Project. He has broad authority and responsibilities in project policy making, policy implementation and interagency coordination. The Executive Director is the second highest official of the Project. Aside from being incharge of the Project Office in Manila, his responsibility ranges from ensuring compliance of all provisions in the Memorandum of Understanding to executing of policies, guidelines and decisions promulgated by NACIAD and the IASC. In addition, he has the authority to set rules and procedures on project operations as well as to monitor fiscal matters and work accomplishments.

The highest ranking official in the project site is the Project Director who is responsible for the direct supervision and coordination of the activi-

ties of cooperating agencies in the province. He is expected to implement all policies and directives concerning project operations. The Planning Study Team recommended two Assistant Directors to assist the Project Director to carry out the two functions of the Project, namely: (a) implementation of technical programs in infrastructures and agriculture and (b) the coordination of agencies with particular emphasis on building up their capabilities.

The Provincial Governor acts as Chairman of the Inter-Agency Regional Advisory Committee. As member of the IASC, he wields certain power and influence over the Project and should be considered part of the leadership group.

The Australian Executive Officer is responsible for the Australian team of experts. As counterpart of the Project Director exercising advisory and consultative functions, the Australian Executive Officer is another official whose contribution to leadership function cannot be over-emphasized. In sum, project leadership as exercised by these officials constitutes a collective process such that various roles like policy-making, internal management, and transactions with the external environment are distributed among the members. In all these, the requirements of inducing change in behavior and patterns of action and not the maintenance of the status quo should be the dominant attribute of leadership.

The nature of the emerging pattern of leadership of the Zamboanga Project Phase II could be better gleaned from events comprising its early years.[23] Phase II was deemed to have commenced on 1 January 1981. The IASC first met after almost one year, on 17 December 1981.[24] The IARAC, on the other hand, first met on 27 May 1981. The TCC has been holding regular monthly meetings since August 1981. Aside from the time lag in convening the two important committees at the regional and national levels, it was observed that "there are indications that these committees are not functioning as intended."[25] As regards the substantive content of the meeting, the observation is:

> It is evident in the meeting of the IASC and some of the TCC meetings that more emphasis and attention is being given to infrastructure . . . than on other sectors. Moreover, projects are treated on a sectoral basis which tends to ignore inter-sectoral relationships thus losing the integrated concept of the project.[26]

In another report, the seeming imbalance in attention and emphasis given to other project components is attributed to a structural defect: "When the chairman outranks all members of the (inter-agency) committee, his and his agency's interests are likely to dominate the proceedings and transactions . . . "[27] Other reasons given which may have generated this impression are:

(1) most of the key project officials come from the Ministry of Public Works and Highways (MPWH), the lead agency, and

(2) the absence of a permanent secretariat entrusted to prepare a more or less inter-agency agenda.

A balanced inter-agency coordination has crucial relevance in eliciting support and cooperation from the agencies particularly in technology transfer and the building up of their capabilities.

After almost a year of Phase II implementation, the other positions in the leadership cadre have likewise been subjected to critical comments and observations. The position of the Executive Director, for instance, is considered redundant, "as it only tends to concentrate decision-making and administrative functions in Manila, in effect, adding another level to the decision-making hierarchy."[28] Additionally, the Office of the Executive Director is viewed by another study group to be of limited value and usefulness to the Project in the later stages of institutionalization. The study group contends that "once institutionalization gets underway, it will be closely followed by steady diminution of inter-agency transactions in Manila as these will be shifted to the provincial and regional levels."[29]

As observed, the exercise of leadership in the Project has involved different personalities from many agencies that transcend various levels of authority and implement different national programs. At times, these personalities are guided by several and conflicting priorities. This situation creates problems of teamwork and may weaken integration of efforts to achieve project objectives.

Doctrine

Esman considers doctrine as the most elusive of the variables since it is "the expression of what the organization stands for, what it hopes which are projected by the leadership to its internal and external audiences to gain and maintain support for the organization and its purposes."[30]

The docrines of the Zamboanga Project as defined earlier are quite explicit: the ultimate goal of peace and order in the province as the end result of raising the living standards of project beneficiaries and the generation of a self-sustaining development effort employing existing institutions.

To Phase I project personnel and the people of the province, the Project stands for programs like roads and bridges, deep wells, irrigation, and extension and research in agriculture. Internally and externally known conceptions of the project doctrine are therefore confined to improving the lives of the people. What is unclear and less known is the Project's implications to peace and order. This narrow and limited understanding of the project

doctrine seems to have been carried over to the early years of Phase II. Project functionaries and people expectations remain focused on the direct benefits accruing from the Project. Project impact on peace and order and the institutionalization aspects of Phase II receive insufficient attention in terms of specific strategies and allocated resources. The matter on the transfer of functions, responsibilities, and resources as requisites to capability build up tends to be overshadowed by too much concern over the problem of meeting set targets in infrastructure and agriculture.

Program

Doctrine is translated into action through programs or set of activities undertaken by the project. The Zamboanga Project has adopted the integrated approach to rural development which means inter-sectoral involvement of many agencies. The on-going activities of the Project require the participation of four ministries (Agriculture, Public Works and Highways, Natural Resources, and Local Government) as well as from agencies/government instrumentalities like Philippine Coconut Authority, National Irrigation Administration, National Manpower and Youth Council, and the Provincial Government. These agencies and government instrumentalities are supposed to assist and be assisted by the Project in carrying out activities in livestock development, multiple cropping, coconut lands development, tree crops, fresh water fisheries, roads and bridges construction, irrigation and water supplies.

Although shortfalls from targets were recorded during Phase I and the early part of Phase II, the program variable is turning out to be the major success indicator of the Project especially if it is assessed from the viewpoint of the beneficiaries. The only problem is that the concern for production and accomplishments in these areas has been construed as competing if not adverse to the parallel objective of institutionalization.[31]

Resource

Theoretically, technical assistance projects encounter fewer problems of resources. Contrasted with the bureaucratic mode of administering development activities, TA projects should be comparatively well-off in equipment, in field and office facilities, and funds for personnel allowances and benefits. Financial resources committed to the Zamboanga Project are indicative of adequacy, not of shortages. For Phase II alone, the revised total project cost amounts to P394 million. Of the P394 million, the government contribution is 67% or equivalent to P264 million. The balance of P130 million constitutes Australian aid. About 40% of the Australian aid has been earmarked for plant and equipment, spare parts, tires and other supplies. Committed resources are therefore of considerable magnitude compared with what are

being allocated to the regular programs of the various field offices of the co-operating ministries in the province.

The experience of the Project during its first year, however, indicated extreme difficulties in Government of the Philippines (GOP) funding. The Project appeared to have suffered more than the field offices of ministries in terms of budget approval and releases of funds. For fiscal year 1981 for example, the total releases made by the Ministry of the Budget to the central offices of cooperating agencies was short of ₱5,044,150 as measured against Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) estimates. Funds actually received by the Project was ₱10,536,661 less than the MOU estimates.[32] Funding became such a big issue. It grew to a point where the Australians were constrained to equate the level of GOP funding with the degree of commitment of the Philippine Government. It was postulated that the level of funding should be the principal index of commitment. And that "commitment could be viewed as the ultimate measure of how institutionalization could be performed by GOP along with Government of Australia (GOA) participation."[33] It was also observed and reported that if such fiscal problems persist, there would be adverse effects on the:

(1) credibility of the Project to improve socio-economic conditions in Zamboanga del Sur,
(2) the maintenance of completed roads and other structures,
(3) completion of targets in road construction and areas to be irrigated,
(4) timely compensation of project personnel and rate of turnover,
(5) training to upgrade levels of skills of project personnel,
(6) improving the capability of cooperating agencies, and
(7) repair and maintenance of equipment to service remaining activities of the Project.[34]

The financial problems experienced by the Project in its first year have raised doubts among Australians that the institutionalization objective—generating a self-sustaining development effort by employing existing institutions—might not be attained. Filipino Project officials, on the other hand, are optimistic, citing the temporariness of the problem. Although project leadership was not without fault in the events that shaped and led to substantial disruptions in project operations because of fund shortages, the position taken by Filipino officials seemed to have been upheld by the results of a study done on funding. The study cited the following reasons which have caused funding problems in the Project:

(1) Delayed signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the two governments. This document was supposed to provide formal authorization to the Project and cooperating agencies on matters of fund allocation and expenditures.
(2) The Project failed to submit the 1981 request in March 1980, partly due to the delayed decision to commence Phase II.
(3) Delays and/or reduction of requested funds were the results of non-compliance with Ministry of the Budget's requirements.

(4) Certain amounts of fund released for the project were either retained in the Central Office of the line agencies or in the Region without advice to the Project.[35]

The study also emphasized that the causes of budgetary problems do not indicate inadequacy of GOP funding. Placed directly under NACIAD, the Project was supposed to enjoy continuous and adequate support from the President of the Philippines. Budget officials likewise expressed the view that "GOP with its cooperating agencies, is financially capable of sustaining the activities of the Project even after 1985."[36] The agencies are authorized to secure additional funding from the Foreign Assisted Projects Support Fund.

As of December 31, 1981, Project manpower resource numbered 1,289 for the infrastructure and related components and 199 personnel in the Agriculture Component. An additional 112 new positions were awaiting approval by the Office of Compensation and Position Classification of the Budget Ministry.

The Planning Study Team identified three problem areas which should be considered for resolution before the termination of the Project in 1985. These are (a) employment security, (b) employment incentives, and (c) training.[37]

Employment Security. Employment security of Project personnel means unequivocal provisions for their retention or absorption by cooperating agencies after termination of the Project. The necessity to secure from the GOP a firm commitment about future employment of Project personnel is of extreme relevance to institutionalization of the Project. As the Planning Study Team puts it:

> . . . professionals employed and trained by the Project are employed on contract. . . in ZDSDPII, the strategy is to phase the project mode of development into line agencies during which time there will be continual feeling by contractual staff of insecurity. This feeling may lead to a rapid turnover of professional staff as they seek more secure employment elsewhere.[38]

Rapid turnover of personnel thus has detrimental effects to the institutionalization aspects of the Project since the building up of capabilities of cooperating agencies largely depends on these trained personnel. A possible solution which could probably minimize this problem and, at the same time, promote transferred technology would be for the Project to have a higher ratio of detailed personnel over contractual/casual employees.

Employment Incentives. The Planning Study Team likewise called attention to the difference in the number of work days between the Project personnel and cooperating agencies staff particularly NIA. Project personnel

work six days a week, while those from NIA and other agencies work only five days a week. This situation poses certain problems. NIA employees assigned to the Project who are paid on a monthly basis appear to receive no salary differential for extra work day. There is therefore little incentive for the monthly paid employees to work beyond the regular working days. These differences in salary scales might compound the limited absorptive capacity of the agencies and likewise encourage trained project personnel to seek employment elsewhere after termination of the Project.

Training. There is no manpower planning in most of the cooperating agencies which could have helped the Project in matters of career opportunities, promotion and training. The Project has to assume much of the responsibilities for training. This is apparently adequately provided for in the infrastructure (roads, bridges, water supply and irrigation), agriculture, and management areas. Overseas training is provided by the Project for supervisory staff and top level management in the form of courses in training of trainors, training tours and assignment, and research program in Australia, India and Sri Lanka. Little training, however, is undertaken for administrative and support personnel which could have improved significantly the capacity of the Project to overcome administrative problems in records management, reporting and monitoring, and budgetary requirements and procedures.

The results of the Institutionalization and Manpower Study indicated that these personnel problems were organizationally-induced, the causes of which might be one or a combination of the following:

(1) low compensation and incentives schemes making employment opportunities less competitive with other employing sectors (private and overseas);

(2) Poor retention of trained and competent personnel due to a combination of low salaries, lack of opportunities for advancement, and inadequate motivational and managerial schemes;

(3) limited opportunities for individual and manpower development through training, especially for the administrative and support services personnel;

(4) absence of manpower planning and personnel information sytem necessary for manpower allocation, utilization and development which led to inefficient decision-making with regard to people resources;

(5) poor absorption capacity of responsible agencies for the present project personnel force and consequent possible turn-over; and

(6) unfavorable environmental conditions like unstable peace and order, unfavorable employment climate, and inadequate and intermittent political and logistical support for component strategies.[39]

Internal Structure

The internal structure of a project organization depicts and delineates authority and responsibility relationships among key project officials. The

structural arrangement may facilitate or hinder internal communications and consequently determine to a large extent the quality of decision-making and interpersonal relationships in the organization. As designed and adopted with modifications for Phase II, the project internal structure (see Figure 1) comprises a hierarchy headed by an Executive Director followed by a Project Director, two Assistant Directors, and several division chiefs.[40]

As discussed earlier in the section on leadership, some disadvantages to project operations are observed to have been caused by the creation of the position of Executive Director. It is considered another level added on to the decision-making hierarchy. The position, clothed with the necessary authority on project operations and based in the MPWH compound in Manila was observed to be functional and useful in effecting transactions within MPWH. It was not however as effective in dealing with inter-sectoral or inter-agency matters.[41]

The other structural issue concerns the positions of the two Assistant Directors. One is supposed to assist the Project Director in the implementation of unfinished Phase I activities and recently started activities. The other is to work on the coordination of agency involvement in the institutionalization process. As enumerated in the annexure of the Memorandum of Understanding, the functions of these two positions show little distinction between line and staff functions. The Administrative Division which is a staff unit is placed alongside technical divisions in infrastructure and agriculture under the Assistant Director for implementation. Anyhow, the internal structure is not fully operational after more than one year of implementation. The staffing pattern of the staff divisions on planning, information, and monitoring and evaluation is yet to be approved by higher authorities. In effect, the Project perforced was operating under the Phase I structure which did not incorporate the institutionalization aspects of the Project. With the new divisions practically inoperative, the internal structure therefore suffers from gaps in communications and decision-making. Authority and responsibility for planning the transfer of functions and resources of the Project is unclear and dispersed.[42]

Linkages

Every project organization must maintain an effective network of interorganizational relations where exchanges of goods, services and other values take place. An organization serving as vehicle for innovation and perpetuation of certain desired values obtains support from and reduces resistance to change through linkages.

The IB model specified earlier four types of linkages that an institution building organization should initiate, cultivate and nurture. It was apparent that Phase II planners also envisage the three inter-agency committees to per-

form the linkage functions of the Project. The composition of the Inter-Agency Steering Committee appears tailored-fit for transactions with sovereign and resource granting agencies (enabling linkages). The Regional Advisory Committee and the Technical Coordinating Committee are capable of dealing with inputs-contributing and outputs-using agencies and groups (functional linkages). The three inter-agency committees, in their respective jurisdictional levels could also resolve problems with agencies (normative linkages) which share overlapping interests in the objectives of the Project. Should there be problems with groups not aggregated in formal organizations (diffused linkages) like the unorganized farmers, fishermen and students, the Project's information and publications unit must be in a position to meet contingencies in this area.

Linkages primarily must serve at least two purposes of the Project: (a) ensuring inter-agency coordination of targetted activities in the various components, and (b) promoting cooperation among the agencies in building up their capabilities to facilitate the institutionalization process. The three existing inter-agency committees at the national, regional and project or provincial levels should have been adequate to meet these two purposes. Because of the relative "newness" of the institutionalization facet in contemporary inter-agency relations in the Philippine setting, much of the difficulties encountered are in this area. It should be mentioned that the cooperating agencies are of different structural and legal characters. Since these agencies operate under different organizational mandates, they have different priorities, different programs as well as different sources of funds and expenditure procedures. For example, the structures of the National Irrigation Administration and the Philippine Coconut Authority are corporate in nature. The Bureau of Forestry, and the Bureau of Fishery and Aquatic Resources although under one ministry are, at the provincial level, organized differently when compared to the provincial office of the Ministry of Agriculture. The latter is integrated under one administrative roof together with the functions of the Bureau of Agricultural Extension, Bureau of Plant Industry, Bureau of Soil and Animal Husbandry. This heterogenous character of the agencies must be considered by the Project in its attempt to reconcile varying agency objectives and interests in order to meet the requirements of institutionalization. Besides, these agencies are in themselves highly institutionalized. "Their normative patterns (operational codes) are maintained so tightly as to be invested with a sacred character, . . . norms and relationships, patterns of behavior, customs and practices are not to be tampered with easily."[43] The inability of the Project to secure full cooperation from some of the agencies is understandable because

> In principle, it is easier to induce desirable changes when the reasons for the discrepancy [between intended and actual results] are predominantly intra-institutional, than when the difficulties lie in the linkages with other segments and institutions of society or in the total environmental context.[44]

Policy Implications

A five-year period from 1981 to 1985 has been set for the institutionalization of the Project. Although observations contained in this paper are tentative,[4][5] they constitute enough leads and bases for drawing up statements which implicate suitable changes in policy. In addition, the problems encountered by the Project, for example, delays and inadequacy of funding and inefficient inter-agency coordination are evident and are likely to continue until the end of the Project. The experiences of most Philippine projects bear out and support this observation.

Effective leadership for the institutionalization of technical assistance departs from the conventional type of leadership in that it gives more emphasis to innovative thrusts. The leaders' pattern of behavior coincides with those of change agents, as one of persistently acting and trying to influence the internal as well as the external environment. The type of leadership which emerged in the Zamboanga Project as it has been provided for by the Memorandum of Understanding and subsequent planning documents could have been made more effective, if suitable policies were available. Existing policies which provide for a cabinet coordinator, which allow ranking project officials to have offices far and away from the project site, and which rely heavily on the use of inter-agency committees, are based on, and formulated for, development activities. These contain little or no institutionalization components at all.

Leadership experience in the Zamboanga Project strongly suggests the need for involvement of a limited few with proven IB orientation. They should be sufficiently clothed with authority to directly manage resources and coordinate activities in the project site. Policy in this regard should aim for a type of leadership that (1) embodies adequate delegated authority of agency officials detailed to the project with minimal intrusions from above, (2) emanates from a project structure which is not heavily dependent on inter-agency committees and (3) places co-equal responsibilities on technology transfer on both local leader and expatriate official.

Policies governing the formulation of programs are also needed to ensure that institutionalization activities are made integral and *not just added* on to the project. Institutionalization functions like transfer of technology should be reflected in the organization structure with well-defined corresponding responsibilities and required resources. Monitored and controlled under a given timetable, institutionalization requirements would not then be left to chance nor given low priority in project operations.

A review of policies governing allocation and utilization of resources is strongly indicated by the Zamboanga experience. Delays and shortages in counterpart funding may be traced to policies which fail to distinguish tech-

nical assistance projects from regular on-going programs of the government. As a result, transactions have to be made under stringent and cumbersome procedures, rules and regulations.[46] Since institutionalization entails fostering new ideas and techniques and patterns of behavior, policies ensuring high priority for training and management improvement should also be considered.

The integrated area development approach with or without institutionalization objectives has long been hampered by difficulties in coordination. Coordinating bodies like councils and committees seemed ineffective in bringing about linkages which result into full integration of multi-agency activities. As this is a palpable problem in most projects aside from having decisive effects on institutionalization, a thorough policy study may be needed to consider various options.

An attractive policy option is to grant as much autonomy in financial and personnel management to technical assistance projects. When a technical assistance project is authorized (by policy and Memorandum of Understanding) to directly transact budget proposals and allocations with the Budget Ministry and has control and supervision over its organic as well as detailed personnel, the need for inter-agency committees will be greatly reduced. The need to coordinate and synchronize project activities similar to those being performed by other agencies in the project area must also be resolved and finalized during the planning stage.[47] Thus, the Zamboanga experience will be useful in reviewing, modifying and possibly formulating new policies governing leadership, resources and linkages needed for institutionalizing technical assistance.

Conclusion

There seems hardly any question which could be raised against the relevance of the ultimate project goal of achieving peace and order in the province. Nevertheless, its attainment largely depends on how tenable and applicable the proposition A then B to the Project. This means that if the Project succeeds in its purposes of economic upliftment and institutional build up, the end result will be peace and order. Goal and purposes relationships in this case may only be as strong or as weak as the theory on the causative link between the economic and political dimensions of development.

Easier and smoother implementation of programs would have probably resulted if the instutionalization objective of the Project were made distinctive and operationally separate from the economic development objective. These two objectives have different time span and may, for purposes of efficiency, require the involvement of different personnel.

The planning done for institutionalization of technical assistance in the Zamboanga Project was on the whole thorough and systematic. It was an adequate attempt to define administrative roles of project structures, allocate resources and define general procedures. It was defective only where most other plans were defective: in anticipating risks and uncertainties, in providing preventive measures against small brushfires, and in suggesting affective behavior amidst constant pressure. These factors explain why, to a large extent, the implementation of any institutionalization effort remains basically a reactive process.

Resources constitute the lifeblood of any development project. The project implementors' mettle is often tested against problems of resource scarcity. It can be said in the same vein that availability of resources makes coordination relatively easier. Zamboanga's almost traumatic experience in funding has brought about negative effects which otherwise would not have been obvious. The adequacy for instance of the planned internal structure paled in significance, while the mechanisms for linkages became information-giving and talking fora. While it may be said that the greatest obstacles the Project had encountered were administrative in nature, effective linkages particularly with the political and clientele groups could have been sufficiently explored and pursued.

The counterpart system is supposed to help highlight the distinction between Phase I and Phase II representing the "blueprint" and "process" stages, respectively, of the Project. This was observed to be known and understood by only a few project officials. The shift of orientation from one stage to the other was operationally desultory. In one instance, it was interpreted to mean immediate transfer of functions and resources of the Project to the cooperating agencies.

The IB model intensively used in this paper leaves little doubt as to its usefulness and relevance to the review of the Zamboanga experience in institutionalizing technical assistance. Zamboanga's IB goals of technology transfer, capability build-up of agencies, and sustained development under the auspices of local institutions have derived better illumination and in-depth dissection from the institutional and linkage variables formulated by Esman, *et al.*

On the travails of development project "institutionalizers," it may be said that two decades of lead time in experience and research in so complex a concept and process would probably be insufficient to produce quick "cookbook" solutions. Recognizing the uniqueness of any development project viewed in the institutionalization context, the ZDSDP experience offers both problems and opportunities to those willing to accept the challenge.

If it will be of any consolation to policy makers and project implement-
ors whose disappointments and frustrations tend to persist and grow as more
and more problems and constraints are uncovered by studies on the adminis-
tration of technical assistance projects, Hirschman's observations could no
less be sympathetic:

> It quickly became apparent to me that all projects are problem ridden; the
> only valid distinction appears to be between those that are more or less suc-
> cessful in overcoming their troubles and those that are not.[48]

The Zamboanga Project (Phase II) was one year old when reviewed. The
remaining four years would be enough to work out solutions to the problems
identified in this paper.

Endnotes

[1] D. Woods Thomas, et al., *Institution Building: A Model for Applied Social
Change*, with an Intoduction by Narry R. Potter (Cambridge, Massachussetts: Schenkman
Publishing Company, 1972), p. 1.

[2] Milton J. Esman, "Some Issues in Institution Building," *Institution Building: A
Model for Applied Social Change, supra*, p. 85.

[3] William J. Siffin, "The Institution Building Perspective: Properties, Problems, and
Promise," *supra*, p. 113. The Inter-University Research Program with participants from
the Universities of Indiana, Michigan State, Pittsburgh, and Syracuse had been using this
perspective since November 1962 in studies of certain efforts to induce social change. The
Committee on Institutional Cooperation between 1964 and 1968 undertook many stu-
dies on technical assistance in agriculture; the focus of analysis was on "Building Institu-
tions to Serve Agriculture." These studies contributed greatly to the literature on institu-
tion building including "thoughtful, experience-based, prescriptive and evaluative state-
ments."

[4] Milton J. Esman, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

[5] Milton J. Esman and Hans Blaise, "Institution Building Research—The Guiding
Concepts," Pittsburgh: Inter-University Research Program in Institution Building 1966
(mimeo); also cited in Milton J. Esman, "The Elements of Institution Building," in
Joseph W. Eaton (ed.), *Institution Building and Development from Concepts to Applica-
tion.* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1972), p. 22.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.

[8] The other project supported by this program is the Samar Integrated Rural Deve-
lopment Project (SIRDP) which commenced in 1979 and expected to be completed in
1985. Project estimated cost of SIRDP is P905 million with foreign funding of A$25 mil-
lion from the Australian Government and $27 million from the World Bank.

[9] As stated in the Planning Study Report (p. 211) of 1980, peace and order as the ultimate project goal is premised on the assumptions: (a) "That the deprivation of development is a cause of unrest in the Province of Zamboanga Del Sur" and (b) "that indicators selected must reflect whether the raising of living standards does have an impact on peace and order in the province.

[10] *Ibid.* It should be mentioned that the project goal of peace and order and the first purpose, raising the living standards of the people, were retained from Phase I. The second purpose was added for Phase II to give emphasis to the institutionalization aspects of ZDSDP II.

[11] Mila Tolentino and Graeme Hugo, "Sociological Survey Report, Project Identification and Evaluation Study" (Zamboanga Del Sur Development Project, June 1977), p. 77.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 77.

[13] Ministry of Public Highways, *Zamboanga Del Sur Development Project Phase II Planning Study Report* (Government of the Philippines and Australian Development Assistance Bureau, April 1980), p. 92.

[14] Esman and Blaise, *op. cit.*; cited in William T. Siffin, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

[15] Milton J. Esman, *op. cit.*, in Joseph W. Eaton (ed.), *Institution Building and Development from Concepts to Application, op. cit.*, p. 36.

[16] See Alejandro B. Ibay, *et al., ZDSDP II: Institutionalization and Manpower Development Study* (Metro Manila: Astra Ink Printers, 1982), p. 115.

[17] *Planning Study Report, op. cit.*, p. 92.

[18] Wayne J.K. Haslam, Executive Officer of the Project, in a short paper, provided the distinction between the two project phases. Phase I was described as a "blueprint" project where targets were specified and quantified to suit a strong production and results orientation. Phase II was referred to as a "process" project where Australian advisers were expected "to foster the managerial and technical skills" of Filipino staff.

[19] *Planning Study Report, op. cit.*, p. 91.

[20] This is an apparent miscalculation on the part of the planners, since building up capability would need more time and may make no difference with Philippine time frame. Both governments, I believe, should have similar time frame.

[21] Although excluded in the enumerated program objectives, this was mentioned as one of the institutionalization strategies for Phase II. See *Planning Study Report*, pp. 149-150.

[22] Initially started during Phase I, the social services component of the Project was not explicitly planned for Phase II except for the expansion and/or follow up of the Sociological Survey conducted in 1976.

[23] For purposes of this paper, personality traits, leadership styles and other behavioral criteria will not be used in assessing project leadership. Instead, a review of the turn

of events and problem situations are deemed adequate as measures of leadership perform-
ance in the project.

[24] The delay in convening the Committee was attributed to the delayed signing of
the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on 11 November 1981. This delay in turn was
traced to the late submission of the *Planning Study Report* and subsequent revisions of
the draft of MOU by both governments.

[25] Zamboanga del Sur Integrated Development Project, *First Joint Review Mission
Report* (xeroxed copy) May 1982, p. 2-3.

[26] *Ibid.* Following this observation, the Review Mission suggested the need for a
Project Office structure which should be independent of any ministry and where the Pro-
ject Director would represent the multi-sectoral interest of the Project.

[27] A. Ibay, *et. al., op. cit.,* p. 38.

[28] *First Joint Review Mission Report, op. cit.,* pp. 3-5 to 3-6.

[29] A. Ibay, *et. al., op. cit.,* p. 38.

[30] M.J. Esman, *op. cit.,* p. 29.

[31] In the implementation of project activities, the budgetary problems encountered
were thought to have engendered more emphasis on program targets than on institution-
alization aspects. See *Report of Review Mission, op. cit.,* p. 3-8.

[32] Specifically, the difference between MOU estimates and the amounts actually
cleared to the project office and field offices of cooperating agencies were MPWH—
P638,000; NIA— P73,000. No releases were made to the following offices whose estimat-
ed contributions for 1981 were: Philippine Coconut Authority—P330,000; Bureau of
Forest Development—P109,000; and Provincial Government—P121,000. See *Institution-
alization and Manpower Study Report, op. cit.,* p. 18.

[33] Apart from the level of funding, the other reasons cited were (a) seeming absence
of momentum for development in the ZDSDP, and the agencies, (b) delayed approval of
proposed staffing pattern preventing full operation of new ZDSDP units, and (c) poor
response of agencies for detail of personnel to the project. See Minutes of the Meeting on
8 March 1982 attended by the UP Research Staff, NACIAD and key ZDSDP officials.

[34] A. Ibay and Associates, *op. cit.,* p. 84.

[35] *Ibid.,* p. 24.

[36] *Ibid.*

[37] *Planning Study Report, op. cit.,* pp. 149-150.

[38] *Ibid.*

[39] See A. Ibay, *et. al., op. cit.*

[40] The only significant change made in the recommendation of the Planning Study
Team was the addition of the positions of executive director and of the assistant director
for coordination whose offices were located in Manila.

[41] Since the Manila Liaison Office under NACIAD did not come into being, the office of the Executive Director had assumed all inter-agency functions at the national level. These functions include following-up agency budgets, propose staffing pattern, approval of memoranda of agreement, etc.

[42] The non-activation of the Policy, Planning and Programming Division and the Monitoring and Evaluation Division in the Project contributed largely to the shortcomings of this nature.

[43] Martin Landau, "Linkage, Coding, and Intermediacy: A Strategy for Institution Building," in Joseph Eaton, (ed.) *Institution Building and Development*," *op. cit.*, pp. 93-94.

[44] Jeri Nehnevajsa, "Methodological Issues in Institution Building Research," in Joseph Eaton, (ed.) *Institution Building and Development*, *supra*, p. 69.

[45] Preparation of this paper covered the period July to December 1982. Past studies on the project covered the entire Phase I from 1974 to 1980 while the Institutionalization and Manpower Study was undertaken during November 1981 to July 1982.

[46] The delayed activation of four divisions charged with the functions of information and publications, manpower development, planning and programming and monitoring and evaluation could be traced to inability of the Project to fulfill many requirements imposed by the Ministry of the Budget.

[47] It is widely held that the need for coordination of similar activities during the implementation of a project is irreducible to zero. It could only be minimized. Geographical areas where activities like road construction, provision of irrigation water, plant pest and disease control, livestock development, health services, etc. will be undertaken by both the Project and the many government agencies should be clearly defined. Lack of coordination would then cease to be a convenient scapegoat for shortfalls from targets.

[48] Albert O. Hirschman, *Development Projects Observed* (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1967), pp. 2-3.