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EVALUATION OF EFFECTIVENESS OF INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS
IN AFRICA
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I - Definition

One of the reasons why African societies find it difficult to achieve a clear and satisfactory definition of economic and social development is due to the constant change surrounding this concept. Herein it would be obviously unwise to establish rigid definitions. The growth and change of African society is a very dynamic thing. Any adequate long-run definition of economic and social development in Africa must be a dynamic one. This is not to excuse the person concerned with research, evaluation or planning in Africa for being other than absolutely clear about the definitions he adopts for his immediate purpose and the consistency in their application. Such definitions may, of course, have tight and rigid boundaries or they may be framed within some flexibility and tolerance in their boundaries.

Various economic and social characteristics will often provide more useful boundaries not only for purposes of definition but more importantly for purposes of integrated rural development programme planning. The most important point to make, in respect to definition, is that African administrators, planners and evaluators must strive for clear definitions of their terminology and for a maximum clarity of communications with each other. Evaluation will often in itself reveal the extent to which lack of clarity in communication has damaged the effectiveness of integrated rural development programmes in Africa. However, the evaluator who is careless about his own definition of terms and his own clarity of communication may further confuse the situation. There is a particular responsibility upon those engaged in planning and evaluation in Africa to ensure that this does not happen.

II - Conditions

It is of fundamental importance to recognize that evaluation must essentially be concerned with possible change in
an existing integrated rural development programme in Africa. One of the obvious preconditions for evaluation to occur is a state of uncertainty about a particular integrated rural development programme and a felt need to reduce the uncertainty.

The consequences which arise may include significant change in the integrated rural development programme and hence in its pattern of staffing. No change in the programme but increased confidence in those involved or complete abandoning of the programme in favour of an alternative. Thus it is easy to see why genuine evaluation has all too rarely been undertaken.

Professor Alan Klein has commented: "Many workers find all kinds of reasons and rationalizations for avoiding a thorough, honest examination and tabulation of their scores of effectiveness and failures".1

III — Objectives

1. To examine the goals of an integrated rural development programme within the context of the Programme environment

2. To measure the extent to which the integrated rural development programme is successful in achieving these goals.

3. To measure the extent to which expenditures of resources upon the integrated rural development programme is justified by its results.

4. To test possible alternative methods of achieving the integrated rural development programme's goals.

5. To develop a system of providing a continuing check upon the effectiveness of an integrated rural development programme in order to facilitate its review and change as part of the continuing process of programme operations.

1/ Klein Alan, Reaching Teenagers - Through Effective Programming New York City Youth Board .... 1956
Structures and "Structurations"

1. Self-evaluation

Organizations, whatever their character and purposes of the people concerned, and people working within an organization can be identified with the goals of the organization, with its clientele or with specific aspects of its programme.

At the same time, people concerned with evaluation have their own personal interest in their evaluational activities. The evaluator doubtless must have some commitment to objectivity, to a critical and searching analysis of programme, and very likely a commitment to a particular kind of theoretical or conceptual background.

Wildansky had commented: "The ideal organization would be self-evaluating. It would continuously monitor its own activities so as to determine whether it was meeting its goals or even whether these goals should continue to prevail. When analysis suggested that a change in goals or programmes to achieve them was desirable, these proposals would be taken seriously by top decision-makers. They would institute the necessary changes, they would have no vested interest in continuing the current activities. Instead they would steadily pursue new alternatives to better serve the latest desired outcomes.

The ideal member of the self-evaluating organization is best conceived as a person committed to certain models of problem solving. He believes in clarifying goals, relating them to different mechanisms of achievement, creating models (sometimes quantitative) of the relationships between inputs and outputs, seeking the best available combination. His concern is not that the organization should survive or that any specific objective be enshrined or that any particular clientele be served."2/ The central commitment of evaluative man

is to solving problems in the right way. "Evaluation should not only lead to the discovery of better policy programmes to accomplish the existing objectives, but to alteration of the objectives themselves .... The objectives as well as the means for attaining them may be deemed inappropriate. The result of having evaluative studies that are carried on during the life cycle of a programme is that evaluators and programme personnel must level uneasily as we shall see side by side. The result of periodic evaluation of the established programme is that while one group of men is making statements about the worth of the activities, the other group is devoting its life to the programme. The first element of evaluation therefore which often proceeds simultaneously with programme operations, must be a search for objectives against which to evaluate the programme. Programme personnel cannot be expected to kindly take the remarks that they do not know what they are doing (and if they did know they would presumably be able to specify precisely their current objectives).

It is easy to see that people are naturally unwilling to accept any evaluation which demonstrates or suggests failure on their part. An evaluation which is not adequately realistically-based may well be worse than no evaluation at all, because it can be used as a tool to perpetuate ineffective integrated rural development programmes or to destroy the sound ones. One solution to this problem is to place evaluation in the hands of persons or of an organization which is completely external to the integrated rural development programme being evaluated.

**Advantages:**

1. A specialized organization or an individual expert can bring, to bear upon the problem of evaluation, resources and knowledge which are not available to the agency whose integrated rural development programme is being evaluated.

2. An external evaluator can introduce a level of objectivity unlikely to be possessed by personnel engaged in the integrated rural development programme being evaluated.
3. The external evaluator will be much more able to bring upon his evaluation, a comparative experience of similar integrated rural development programmes in other organizations or other countries.

**Disadvantages:**

1. Those working within the integrated rural development programme and closely involved with it will find it easy to resist changes in their programme — they will be able to claim, often accurately, that the external evaluator did not fully understand all factors involved. Even though this is sometimes a rationalization, it is nevertheless an effective one.

2. The reality is that the external evaluator will rarely be able to fully grasp all factors involved in the integrated rural development programme and may very easily overlook important elements.

3. The external evaluator will possess his own personal commitments to various viewpoints leading him to make certain basic assumptions and judgements upon which he then bases his evaluation. This will rarely be made adequately explicit and the evaluation will therefore often be considered in isolation from its basic assumption.

On the other hand, an organization may endeavour to structure itself so as to provide for continuing internal evaluation without reference to external assistance.

2. **Prerequisites**

   a. Those responsible for the policy and administration of integrated rural development programmes must be fully convinced of the needs for evaluation, must agree on the purpose of evaluation, must agree upon the uses and possible consequences of evaluation, and they must be fully involved in making the decision that evaluation will be a part of their integrated rural development programme.
b - Organizational arrangements must be made to ensure objectivity together with appropriate resources and knowledge, this will normally mean the involvement of external persons in the evaluation process.

c - Where external personnel are involved in the evaluation, design, data collection and data analysis should be shared between external and internal personnel so that any artificial distinction between evaluator and evaluated is diminished.

d - In evaluating any service programme, the recipients of the service should be involved in the evaluative process as far as possible.

e - Those who are involved in an evaluation process should share with each other their basic assumptions and values underlying their thinking so that the influence of these upon perceptions of data and upon action recommendations, arising out of the data will be known.

V - Procedures and Methods

1. Several Approaches:

The evaluator must have a broad knowledge of the various approaches and tools available to him and be able to make an intelligent selection from his respective methods to meet the needs of any specific situation. He must undertake a cross-selectional examination of the integrated rural development programme.

2. Problems

a. The evaluator must arrive at a satisfactory definition of exactly what he has proposed to investigate.

b. He needs to have a fully formulated hypothesis which can lead to their proceeding to test by research.
5. **Surveys:**

It may often be necessary to make a survey which involves asking questions and/or having printed questionnaires completed by individuals participating or who have participated in the integrated rural development programme.

The basic questions are:

- What information is to be sought?
- By whom should it be sought?
- In what way should the information be obtained?
- From whom can the information best be obtained?

6. **Experiments:**

There are well respected traditions in scientific experiment which should be given attention just as much in matters of organization as they are in the physical scientists' laboratory. We attempt here to summarize them:

**Criteria of Experiment:**

a. Any experiment of integrated rural development should have a conceptual ratio which relates it to an existing or proposed new theoretical background of integrated rural development. Good practice of integrated rural development is dependent on good theory of integrated rural development and the two should be integrally related.

b. It should be possible to set down clearly the hypothesis which the experiment of integrated rural development is designed to test.

c. The experimenter should make a thorough study of all previous research and theory relating to his proposed experiment of integrated rural development and should establish that what he is doing is a genuine experiment of integrated rural development in terms of testing a complete new hypothesis or replicating in a new situation an experiment of integrated rural development already tested out in another context.
d. From this study of previous research and theory of integrated rural development, the experimenter must develop an awareness of constraints which usually arise, introduce them into his experiment of integrated rural development in order to avoid the danger of distortion of experimental results.

e. Similarly the experimenter must ensure that the methods used are appropriate to the hypothesis of integrated rural development being tested.

f. The results of the experiment of integrated rural development must be recorded in such a way that the success or failure of the experiment can be measured. It is essential that the record also includes precise details for the methods used.

g. The appropriate controls must be built into the experimental design of integrated rural development so that the experimenter can isolate the effects of the experiment from events which occur as a result of other influences. On examining a number of recent reports on experimental integrated rural development projects we find that many of these are simply deceptive and impressionistic. Very few of them have endeavoured to provide some insights into the basis from which the description was written by asking each of those concerned in the experiment.

7. Needs

A particular standard for provision of services might be laid down by experts and then one can measure the extent to which any particular community or region measures up to this standard.

- The next statement which might be made is concerned with what rural people say they want.
- There is also the evidence which might be gained from human behaviour.
- Finally, one can make comparative statements about rural needs.
There are many concepts of planning including the necessity of evaluation. We will just mention some of them:

(please see the following pages)
The Straight-line Model

Exploration for an integrated rural development policy

Definition of the integrated rural development planning task

Integrated rural development policy formulation

Integrated rural development programming

Needs arise in the rural areas

Decision to set up an integrated rural development programme

Definition of goals and objectives of integrated rural development

Assessment and mobilization of resources for integrated rural development

Establishment and operation of integrated rural development programme
The Feedback Model

Planning instigators
problems - needs - concerns
in the rural areas

Investigation on what is and
what will be in the integrated
rural development policy

Values and preference screen

Definition of the integrated
rural development planning task

Value, factual, resources, interest
group and political screens

Definition of the
integrated rural development system and its
functions

Choice of types and levels
intervention of the integrated
rural development programme

Other integrated
rural development policy choices

Parameters of the
integrated rural development programme

Opportunity cost
and social cost
of the integrated
rural development programme

Formulation of the integrated rural
development policy adoption the
integrated rural development standing
plan

Integrated rural development
programming

Evaluation, monitoring and feedback
of the integrated rural development
policy

(KHAN'S MODEL)
The evaluation system functions as follows in the feedback planning:

1. The need arises for study and definition of need in rural areas.
2. General research input.
3. Selection of objectives of integrated rural development programme.
4. Definition of goals and objectives of the integrated rural development programme.
5. Consideration of alternative strategies in the integrated rural development programme.
6. Resources location and development for the implementation of the integrated rural development programme.
7. Continuing evaluation of the integrated rural development programme.
8. Integrated rural development programme establishment and continuing operation.
The Evaluation system of the feedback approach to integrated rural development planning is different if we adopt the practical model proposed by Milton Keynes:

(please see next page)
Integrated rural development
Evaluation methods

Integrated rural development programme feasibility study

Cost Benefit studies

Cost effectiveness

Impact studies

Controlled experiments

Comparison of results

Integrated rural development programmes
users studies

Consumer panels

Opinion polls

Integrated rural development
goals

Clarified objectives

Record: 1 - output standards
criteria-performance

2 - Constraints
inputs - costs - time

Proposed alternative integrated
rural development plans, policies
and programmes

Plan 1

Plan 2

Plan 3

Record predicted outputs and
inputs for each integrated rural
development plan

Evaluation

Choice of the "Best" integrated
rural development plans and
implementation

Monitor actual outputs and inputs
of each integrated rural develop­
ment plan in use

Evaluation

Modification of the integrated
rural development plans or major
stages of process
If we adopt the interactive planning process formulated by Burton, the evaluation system is much more actively present:

(please see next page)
Statement of goals and philosophy of integrated rural development policy

Precise definition of the objectives of the integrated rural development policy

The integrated rural development planning process

The integrated rural development plan implementation

Rural data collection and analysis

The integrated rural development plan formulation

The integrated rural development programmes evaluation
After ten years of various experiences in most of the African countries, it seems that the best evaluation system could be the following:

(please see next page)
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