

Revitalizing public management training in the Americas

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SUMMARY

The decade of the 1980s signalled major changes within public administration and development-oriented activities. As a consequence of the internationalization of the agendas of practitioners and academics working in these areas, there is today a growing convergence among public policy, public management, public administration and political science. Given the complexity of the public sector cross-nationally, what has become necessary in public management education is the design of programmes that meet specific needs and priorities and which are responsive to very different national settings. This particular case study is centred around one endeavour to achieve more effective interfacing between theory and practice, in the teaching of public management and the design of development programmes in the United States (US). It is based on an assessment of a 10-year co-operative endeavour between the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration and the US Agency for International Development. The outcomes of this project provided not only leverage for important changes in the teaching programmes of schools concerned with international management education but also built a new relationship between government and a non-governmental organization through the contacting out of management development work.

Since the early 1980s, there has been considerable ferment in public administration, public management, public policy and political science. While intellectual traditions in each of these areas embrace different sets of interests, varying agendas and distinct concepts as to which public issues warrant attention, by the end of the decade the acceleration of transitions to market economies and more open forms of governance on a worldwide basis had engendered increasing convergence among them. Despite different perceptions as to what constitutes relevant research and teaching, today these fields are coming to share common concern with the performance of public sector institutions, more precise identification of the actors and stakeholders influencing policy outcomes, and greater interest in the way in which public issues are articulated and processed. In such a setting where globalization of the economy and internationalization of public issues are on the increase, established demarcations between the public and private sectors are disappearing, as well as those between domestic and international policy arenas. As a consequence, one finds growing interest in internationalizing professional education and in designing curriculum and course offerings, which will enable the recipients of advanced training and education to respond more effectively to the demands of the marketplace and to demonstrate greater capacity in resolving the issues at hand.

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LINKING PUBLIC POLICY, BUREAUCRATIC PERFORMANCE AND TRAINING

In light of these circumstances, there are three sets of conditions that public management education must be able to confront during the 1990s: how to improve public managers effectiveness to conceptualize and process relevant data from their external policy environments (by focusing attention on how issues are processed and how alternative choices can be posed more clearly), how to manage more effectively the interpersonal and interorganizational dynamics within the policy domain under their jurisdiction (through enhancing the skills component of management training), and how to look ahead and plan more effectively to anticipate the uncertainty and turbulence characteristic of politics and markets (through the incorporation of strategic management considerations). Because this task is a complex one and there are no ready-made formulas and an established literature to draw on, here the issues are outlined. It is suggested that, because the public sector is so complex and subject to such great variation from one country setting to another, each programme must make its own decisions and develop its own design for confronting these issues according to the resources, personnel and the needs at hand. This is followed by an extended case study of one endeavour in the United States (US) designed to change perceptions of public management in developing countries by involving faculty and public affairs schools graduates in a series of ongoing technical assistance activities.

First, the public management literature is generally quite clear in specifying how public managers must have a broader perspective and set of concerns involving the external environment of public organizations. This is a setting that involves one in an array of different political, economic and social issues. To date, the primary way in which these issues have been approached is centred in the collection of appropriate case material from real-life decision-making situations. This material is written up in didactic form. Cases are used in the classroom in which the instructor together with class participants analyse the case and the particular course of action taken. This is done either through review of how a particular set of decisions was reached, or through the design of a feasible strategy that the participants arrive at as a consequence of interpersonal dynamics and the analytical process engendered through focused dialogue.

In the development management literature, this approach to public management is usually referred to as the political influence model in which political stakeholders are specified, the resources of each key group or individual are assessed, and attention is directed at the lobbying and bargaining that goes on until a particular outcome is produced, in which winners and losers are designated.¹ Within the Latin American context, the materials generally recognized as having the greatest relevance for public sector work along this line of training are those developed at the Instituto Centroamericano de Administración de Empresas, through their programmes and training centres in Managua, Nicaragua and Alajuela, Costa Rica. Over time, these materials have been refined and expanded, until today it is apparent that this model of instruction is far more sophisticated in its analysis of public decision makers' policy environ-

¹ For a comprehensive summary of this approach, see the discussion of the political influence model in development management in White, 1987, chapter 9.

ments than was the case originally when so many of the materials were almost exclusively firm specific. The newer case material drawn from structural adjustment policy making and implementation not only requires a juxtaposition of economic and political analysis, in specifying the conditions to be dealt with and in the handling of economic and political data, but also introduces key analytical concepts in the development of alternative strategies before case analysis begins (Lindenberg and Ramirez, 1989).

Second, while there is a long history of training programmes around the world in which public administration has been identified with the teaching of routine administrative skills (such as organization and methods, office management, position classification, programme budgeting and public accounting), it is important that such work with middle-level and lower-level personnel be separated from the preparation of senior-level personnel with managerial perspectives. At the latter level, what is required is the introduction of policy perspectives and the focusing of attention on the intersection of issues derived from the external environment with those coming from within a single public organization or related group of public organizations with overlapping activities in the same policy arena. What has been taking place here is a redefinition of the concerns of public affairs in the direction of expanding the domain of issues considered relevant to public sector management.

Seen from this perspective, it becomes important to define our field of endeavour as the study of those policies, programmes, and projects that governments formulate and implement. Rather than turn attention inward to routine, day-to-day operations, the introduction of a policy perspective focuses attention on what goes on inside governments more generally, what governments as particular sets of public organizations and public servants do, and how governments interact with the economy, the polity and society. Such a perspective makes no prior assumption about the role of the state, but rather seeks to understand and shape the debate over the role of the state in society and the economy. As such, it embraces several distinct components of political science frequently excluded in more narrowly focused administrative curricula: those governmental institutions that shape and define public policies in individual countries, the actors or agents who set policy agendas and determine policy outcomes, and the policy processes through which public choices are defined, redefined, and implemented in the form of concrete programmes, projects and activities.²

If all this is taken into account, then it should not be necessary to belabour the point that the appropriate context within which to introduce such concerns is the university through the creation of new professional schools or the broadening of the mandates of already established schools to include a wider set of concerns linked to the consolidation of more open governance and more viable, productive market structures.

Third, thinking strategically and looking ahead in the development of short-term, medium-term and long-term plans entails identifying the constraints and opportunities in the design of institution-building strategies and programmes geared to the improvement of managerial effectiveness. Broadening the issue agenda in public management education entails giving active consideration to three crucial variables contributing

² A book that is a key in the shift in management training away from technical skills to a broader conceptualization of the administrative process in terms of policy analysis is Grindle and Thomas, 1991.

to constraints on improved managerial performance in individual countries: the existing power structure, the politics of donor organizations and host countries institutions, and the roles played by key actors and stakeholders—that is to say, by those with vital interests in policy outcomes. Matching these constraints are three countervailing sets of variables identified with opportunities for improving organizational performance: timing (i.e. the conjunctural factors creating a propitious environment within which to act), resources (that is, the human, financial and institutional components essential to project success) and coalition building (that is, giving specific attention to the development of strategies for bringing together the resources, the institutions and the actors necessary for concerted action).

One way of approaching design questions of this type is to look at project experience in the donor community where concerted efforts have been made to link up technical assistance in public management with the university community. Selected for consideration here, as an illustration of how thinking strategically can provide leverage for important changes not only in course content but also in professional publications and in development-oriented institutions, is one instance of extensive co-operation between government and a group of non-governmental academic organizations in the search for greater success in public sector reform. This particular programme was instrumental in bringing about change in the development management field. It represents one particular response to how public policy concerns combined with interest in improved bureaucratic performance can be achieved by tapping into the resources of more specialized non-governmental organizations and by promoting co-operative work that cuts across government, donor agencies, and host country organizations in such a way that new sets of linkages can be built.

THE CASE HISTORY OF A CO-OPERATIVE AGREEMENT IN DEVELOPMENT: THE MECHANICS OF GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS IN THE US ACADEMIC COMMUNITY

The 10-year co-operative agreement between the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) and the US Agency for International Development (AID) has become a microcosm of the shifts that have been occurring in the utilization of human resources in development management. Project assessment to date suggests that changing international conditions have required rethinking the way in which human resources are developed and used in staffing development-oriented programmes. If personnel management is conceptualized as a field encompassing all activities related to people in organizations, how projects are designed becomes of crucial importance in assessing public management training needs and in rethinking professional management-oriented education. Initiated in an era of cutback management and contracting out, NASPAA's work centred initially on developing a centralized roster from US universities with accredited public affairs and administration programmes and using it to get people to the field. Beginning with a large number of formal interventions of 1–2 weeks' duration, over time the focus shifted to longer term interventions designed to assess a country's training needs and to develop a critical mass of in-country human resources. As interest in sustainable programmes grew, attention centred on developing more comprehensive strategies involving regional experts and host-country nationals in programme

implementation, as well as work with organizations seen as networks of decision makers central to policy goals of immediate priority.

In the administration of US technical assistance, one of the major personnel changes during the 1980s was extensive reliance on organizations outside government to conduct technical assistance activities. In an era of cutback management and the contracting out of government services, this has become increasingly common in light of the severe limitations placed on the staffing of central bureaus and field missions under direct-hire arrangements. As a consequence, there are today a multiplicity of non-governmental organizations concentrated in the Washington area under a variety of contractual relationships with government that supply a major part, if not the majority, of US technical services abroad. The co-operative agreement between NASPAA and the Bureau for Science and Technology in the USAID constitutes one of the many arrangements arrived at during the past decade for the delivery of technical services tied to the development of human resources in the developing world.

In this particular case, NASPAA first agreed in 1979 to tap into the management expertise of faculty at its schools and that of its graduates working as consultants in the development management field. Bringing them together in a single, centralized roster and utilizing a small professional staff in Washington with easy access to the AID made it possible to place management experts in the field on relatively short notice, when missions wished to avail themselves of these resources. While contracting work of this sort is not out of the ordinary in today's Washington, what was different about these activities is the way in which a mechanism was developed for mobilizing academics, rather than full-time consultants, with relevant knowledge and experience in a way that few individual universities could respond to on short notice.

Under a co-operative agreement, country missions may contract directly with a single co-operant to provide a technical service with less paperwork and fewer delays when compared with the normal contracting process. While a number of organizations have utilized the co-operative agreement mechanism, what was distinctive about this arrangement was the extent to which it tapped into a pool of managerial expertise dispersed throughout the US and provided access to a multiplicity of individuals and institutions rather than the resources of a single organization. In this instance, an academic association, in co-operation with the bureau in the AID/Washington most closely identified with research and development, took on the responsibility of attempting to bridge the gap between theory (in this case research and academic-based instruction) and practice (i.e. consultancy services designed to improve performance in development management activities in a field setting).

Such arrangements have provided a mechanism that has proven to be quite flexible in responding to a wide variety of field needs on the part of government, but what remains open to question is the extent to which educational institutions and academic programmes can derive a benefit from them. In this case, by tying NASPAA with a central bureau organized by function rather than region, it was possible to arrive at a set of mutual benefits for both parties. With the assistance of the central bureau to which the co-operative agreement was tied, the non-governmental organization specified in this agreement was able to provide services directly, without going through the formal contracting process and with the co-operating central bureau facilitating execution of the work through handling intragovernment communication, transmitting

the necessary documentation and serving as facilitator in the execution of the activities that were agreed.

In a context where public contracts have come to constitute a time-consuming and complex process—as they must be formally announced, solicitation from all interested parties accepted on the basis of bids, and awards assigned to the most appropriate bidder in terms of cost and services—the co-operative agreement format has offered many missions a convenient alternative. While such arrangements provide relatively quick turnaround in getting technical work accomplished, there is a trade-off in that missions must accept more direct central agency involvement in field activities. The advantage is insurance of greater accountability on the part of the non-governmental organization involved in the provision of a technical service. The disadvantage is the potential for excessive micromanagement from Washington of project activities provided by the non-governmental organization and, in the case of academic institutions, the possibility of deflecting attention from concern with faculty development and more effective training of students for public service careers.

At a time when monitoring contractor performance without impinging on the organization's capacity to perform its services has been heightened by problems in the defence industry, this particular arrangement warrants re-examination. It minimizes problems of accountability, while insuring constant feedback between the governmental office and the non-governmental organization supplying the service, as such activities must be co-managed. In the case of the NASPAA project, there was an AID project manager in the bureau for Science and Technology monitoring funding and offering policy guidance (to make certain that the priorities and practices of the AID were respected) and a NASPAA project manager responsible for the execution of the technical services and activities that were agreed. Through offering recommendations and expressing opinions on the work provided by the non-governmental organization, such work if creatively managed can bring together into a single package central bureau concerns with policy and programme development, field mission focus on the country context and host-country counterparts, and non-governmental technical expertise oriented towards tasks that are relatively free of the political preferences of donor and recipient institutions. Such a view does not deny that serious problems can develop in implementing such schemes, but these are no different from the usual tenuous relationships, uncertainties and ambiguities that accompany development work in general, a multiplicity of interests and competing perspectives as to what priorities should be and what work is to be done is always present.

In this instance, the co-operative agreement mechanism was tied to a second vehicle developed in this era of contracting out to increase flexibility: an indefinite quantity contract. In a context where the need frequently arises for missions to exercise more direct control over technical services, through fixing specific scopes of work and detailing how the money is to be spent, the indefinite quantity contract arrangement has had the potential of creating a framework whereby field-directed instructions for the execution of work orders can be enhanced and specific amounts of money allocated by missions.

The indefinite quantity contract arrangement thus made an additional mechanism available to the NASPAA whereby mission-specific work and budgets for the activities stipulated could be channelled directly to it as a non-governmental organization, again without having to go through the formal contracting process for each activity.

Numerous consulting organizations today have indefinite quantity contract arrangements with various AID offices and this has become a mechanism utilized frequently by consulting organizations with long-term ties with government. The NASPAA Bureau of Science and Technology indefinite quantity contract, however, was different in that it was essentially an addendum to a co-operative agreement that defined a very specific set of parameters, as opposed to the open-ended character of most other indefinite quantity contracts, which stand alone and are frequently referred to as 'fishing licences' in contractor jargon. In this particular case, while honouring mission-directed scopes of work and budgets, the NASPAA indefinite quantity contract involved work only when these activities could also be oriented towards institutional learning by one or more of the participants in the activity or could offer new insights into the execution of such activities.

THE SPECIFICS OF THE NASPAA PROJECT

From 1979 to 1989 the NASPAA had two co-operative agreements with the AID, the first extending from 1979 to 1983 and the second, from 1985 to 1989. In the interim, between agreements, the prior agreement was extended through the contracting of follow-on technical services, which required extension of the original date to permit execution of the services that were agreed. In each case, the vehicle through which these activities were organized and executed was a project paper drawn up by the AID office responsible for the agreement in co-operation with the co-operants. The first was known as the Project Effectiveness Project and the second, the Performance Management Project.

The first agreement centred around generating a large volume of individual project activities and was designed to ensure greater effectiveness through the enhancement of management skills among host-country nationals—either by offering training seminars in the field or conducting evaluations of training programmes and other activities related to human resource development. The second was designed to focus on more comprehensive, longer term programmatic activities in an institutional context and was directed towards achieving greater impact than the more isolated interventions characteristic of the first agreement. Moreover, as these activities were tied to a central bureau, the mission of which was more closely linked to applied research and the dissemination of knowledge in technical assistance than had been the case with the other bureaus, the emphasis in the second agreement fell on specifying the lessons learned and sponsoring publications intended to be of greater interest and use to the practitioner.

By the end of the first agreement, the NASPAA had accomplished several objectives. First, a full-fledged roster was in place and in operation. Beginning with a limited number of entries, by 1983 that roster had been revised in form as well as content, updated and entered in a computerized system whereby consultants could be identified by a number of different criteria, according to the nature of the assignment and the skills needed. Backing up this roster was an updated file with the resumes of the individuals entered into the system.

Second, the NASPAA had demonstrated a capacity to respond to mission requests and to provide quality technical services. This is demonstrated by the large number of activities carried out and the money brought into the project through mission

buy-ins (i.e. contractual agreements between agencies whereby missions committed additional funds for activities executed by the NASPAA according to tasks stipulated in the service orders that were negotiated). This information is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Field activities and buy-ins under the co-operative agreement

Buy-ins	Year	Mission funded (\$)	Central bureau funded (\$)
3	1980	\$14,057	\$60,077
5	1981	\$158,427	\$202,142
20	1982	\$380,960	\$350,000
19	1983	\$333,348	\$153,999
20	1984	\$790,229	\$449,600
29	1985	\$880,802	\$1,060,820
26	1986	\$1,027,585	\$538,000
25	1987	\$1,522,401	\$535,000
16	1988	\$903,988	\$668,000

Source: Financial records 'NASPAA Funding-Performance Management project'.

Third, while the roster was organized around individuals available for short-term field assignments, by 1984 the project had begun to have more substantive impact on the NASPAA schools and programmes. Not only was there a core group of individuals drawn consistently from the NASPAA-affiliated institutions, but also a number of longer term relationships involving people active in development management and with close ties with missions in the field had evolved. By the mid-1980s these were twofold: the contracting of two long-term senior staff members (one in the NASPAA's Washington office as a senior management specialist and the other in the field as its Asia regional specialist, and the development of programme capability to organize development management seminars on a regular basis through one NASPAA institution in particular (the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs at the University of Pittsburgh).

Rather than a clear-cut demarcation between agreements suggested by a reading of the two project papers, the first agreement really was indistinguishable from the second when examined in terms of services and activities. The first simply flowed into the second. The justification for the continuation of the relationship between the two organizations was not so much the projects arrived at, but the convenience offered by the co-operative agreement mechanism as a vehicle through which missions could continue to contract for needed services in development management on a continuing basis. Accordingly, the extension negotiated in 1983 permitted field activities to continue on an interim base until the inter- and intra-agency climate was appropriate for a new formal agreement. Once the timing was right, a new co-operative agreement was quickly put together and, given the need for immediate response, much of the language of the first agreement was incorporated into the second. Only later, once the mechanism was in place and approved for 5 years, was a project paper prepared articulating the conceptual framework under which activities were to be organized during the second phase.

The pragmatic quality of this relationship is underscored by the numerous individual activities contracted under these agreements. As the first need was to demonstrate to government the capacity of academic-based consultants to respond to 'hands-on'

practical problems in development management in lesser developed countries, there was little time as these services were being developed to ponder the lessons learned or how to disseminate the results to a wider body of practitioners and academics interested in development management generally. During these years, the most important accomplishment was the identification of new management expertise concentrated within the NASPAA schools but not confined to them—people with the ability to respond to field conditions with all the delays and indeterminacies entailed in such work. This point warrants particular emphasis. This work took place in an organizational context where earlier work in public administration had been so thoroughly discredited during the late 1960s and early 1970s as to imbue a whole generation of US government project managers with scepticism if not disdain for public sector work geared to the administration of development programmes. During the 1980s, in contrast, the public affairs and managerial emphasis given to the public-private interface in the developing world went a long way towards re-establishing legitimacy for this field in overseas programmes among practitioners on the basis of the ability to produce results.

No less important was the creation of independent resources through which it became possible to conduct more focused, in-depth work with a wider variety of organizations. As a small, relatively new academic association created in 1971 to provide a more effective framework within which standards could be set and accreditation provided for public affairs and administration programmes, the NASPAA initially had neither the staff nor the resources to mobilize effectively management specialists in the US for work abroad on its own. Combining the income, the staff, and the network generated by technical service work and other financial and human resources accumulated through associational activities standard to small professional organizations, the NASPAA generated a substantial resource base of its own by 1988. Through it donor-funded programmatic activities could be responded to more effectively and greater selectivity exercised in identifying more sustainable activities where its resources, those of donor organizations and host country organizations could be matched more effectively.

New applied research in development management is different from that produced under other auspices, probably the least visible aspect of this project and the most likely to be overlooked, given the divergence between the worlds of government and academia at the point where politics, administration and policy intersect. In large part, as an *umbrella* academic association, emphasis was placed on publications identified with the individuals conducting the work, rather than with the organization. Aside from field reports issued in the context of mission-based activities, these publications fell in three categories: people-centred development programmes and participatory management endeavours, state-of-the-art surveys of the development management field and new initiatives in the development management field in response to the revival of interest in management topics internationally. The latter embraces themes as diverse as the new institutionalism in the context of the emphasis placed on the sustainability of development programmes, policy reform and structural adjustment as shaped largely by African experience, and the application of strategic management concepts to developmental issues and concerns (Korten and Klaus,

1984; Korten and Alfonso, 1983; Hage and Finsterbusch, 1987; Kerrigan and Luke, 1987; Rondinelli, 1987; White, 1987; Kiggundu, 1989; White, 1988).³

THE IMPACT OF CHANGING CONTEXTUAL CONDITIONS ON CLIENT-CENTRED WORK

In looking at this particular project as a set of evolving relationships over the past decade, the pattern that emerges is movement from a large volume of discrete activities of short-term duration, involving numerous US academic-based consultants, to fewer longer term activities centred in an organizational context, consisting of a larger number of host country and regional experts.

One way to track this evolution is to summarize the number of buy-ins for fields activities, to state the total amounts involved and to compare them with central bureau funding (Table 1).

While these figures supply information regarding overall trends in this project, totals such as these obscure internal nuances. Warranting specific mention here are instances of forward funding both by the central bureau and by missions in those cases where activities extend over more than a single fiscal year or, in one instance, when an old balance was transferred forward in moving from the first to the second agreement. Skewed results as a consequence of these factors are the greatest in funding of the Bureau of Science and Technology for 1985, when both forward funding and the transfer of the balance left from the first agreement took place. Another pattern reflected in these totals but not readily visible is central bureau funding from sources other than the Performance Management Project, as the NASPAA moved to the end of the second co-operative agreement. The relevance of this point is that it supports the contention that the primary utility of these arrangements for government over the years was the mechanism not the content. Whereas in 1988 there was a notable drop in funding for the Performance Management Project and hence a decline in moneys that could be used to support employees on annual salaries, other opportunities arose in the form of central office buy-ins for contractual work under the NASPAA's auspices. What all this meant in the final analysis was that as the project approached conclusion, these arrangements provided the AID/Washington as much as the AID missions in the field with a flexible way to contract-out services quickly, effectively and efficiently—when compared with intra-agency procedures and requirements prescribed for other types of technical work, be it under contract or direct hire arrangements.

There is a second pattern in the evolution of this project warranting further discussion that is not apparent by examining its funding: changing patterns in the use of skilled human resources in development management—both in terms of project management and technical services provided in the field. The project began with the NASPAA having to demonstrate to sceptical missions that its people had the capacity to carry out work in development management effectively—in a context where many career employees in technical assistance programmes doubted the capa-

³ Examples of the first category are Korten and Klaus (1984) and Korten and Alfonso (1983). Belonging to the second category are Hage and Finsterbusch (1987), Kerrigan and Luke (1987), Rondinelli (1987) and White (1987). Representative of the third set of materials are Esmen (1991), Kiggundu (1989) and White (1988).

city of academic personnel to perform the services missions required. In an era of privatization and preference for market-oriented strategies, there continued to be numerous US personnel abroad who, when they thought of management needs, saw the work as more appropriate when managed by organizations or individuals affiliated with private-sector perspectives, regardless of higher costs in overheads, on the grounds that by definition these consultants would be more attuned to the pragmatic needs of the field and mission direction.

The early years of this project thus reflected a slow start up as a roster was developed at a time in which central office project staff consisted of no more than a project director and a secretary. To this base were added the first few technical service activities in the field, in a context where the constant turnover of mission personnel presented a continual problem in arranging for follow-on activities. Successful performance under a short-term assignment did not automatically generate follow-on activities or raise the organization's visibility for others as a provider of services in development management.

In the history of the project, the first break through came with the employment in July 1981 of a regional area specialist residing full-time in Jakarta, Indonesia, and supported by mission and regional bureau buy-ins. This was for people-centred development work and participatory management activities in several countries (principally the Philippines, Indonesia, Bangladesh and Pakistan). In January 1982, a second threshold was crossed, with the employment of a full-time senior management specialist in Washington with a personal reputation already established for effective mission work. His role proved to be crucial both in marketing the project through arranging for buy-ins on the basis of his own expertise and in advertising to others the NASPAA's broader organizational capacity to field specialists who could execute assignments with a fair degree of certainty that their performance in the field would produce the desired results. In both cases, the involvement of these individuals in the project became long-term arrangements, with the latter moving into full-time contract work when retirement occurred on 31 December 1987, and the former moving on to full-time work with private volunteer organizations when his AID-supported work came to an end on 31 March 1988. In both cases, the thrust of the work was sustained individual initiatives generating a larger volume of field service activity.

Complementing these developments was the involvement of one NASPAA institution in particular in the project and the channelling of resource to that programme because of the entrepreneurship of its director in developing a capability to organize management seminars in the field in French-speaking areas of Africa. While these activities began with the co-operation agreement providing the mechanism through which start-up work could be initiated, very soon the individual concerned, through aggressive marketing and constant cultivation of mission contacts in the field, developed his own clientele independently of the project. The high point in this relationship, as measured by number of activities, was reached in 1985.

As the project was intended to enhance the development of new professional and institutional capabilities in development management in the US, when mid-term AID-sponsored evaluation occurred late in the 1987 fiscal year, one of the conclusions was that such activities which had become self-sustaining should be spun off through individual contracts directly between the agency's bureaus and US universities. It was argued that this would reduce the large volume of paperwork generated in the Bureau of Science and Technology in servicing these activities and the need

for increased staff on the NASPAA side paid for by the Bureau of Science and Technology simply to process the cables, the financial arrangements and the scheduling of these activities. Prior to that evaluation, informal assessment of the project and its performance had already led to the conclusion that the volume of activities generated would best be handled now that the start-up phase was past by having individual universities assume more of the logistical and staffing responsibilities that went with such work and by allocating less central bureau funds for this work. In a time of resource constraint, maintaining a salaried staff of junior professionals at the NASPAA in support of work conducted by one particular university ceased to be attractive. On the NASPAA side, a number of the people directly involved in the project had come to question the appropriateness of client-centred activities (consultancies as well as project-oriented research seminars and workshops) in public management-oriented education. For some, the problem was that only those schools with international concerns in applied work responded. For others, the issue was whether or not such a mechanism was the appropriate way to involve faculty and public affairs graduates in international activities. The politicization of the Central American setting, where the AID was so heavily involved, gave particular saliency to these issues during the late 1980s.

Accordingly, the number of interventions, as represented in field-service activities, began to drop off in late 1986, with the reduction in volume having its greatest impact in the 1988 fiscal year. This was reflected in the drop in field-service buy-ins that year, amounting to \$297,000. This decline was also caused by termination of the employment of the Asian regional specialist and payment for his contracted services through the NASPAA by various Asian missions.

SHIFTING THE LOCUS OF RESPONSIBILITY

Concurrent with these changes in the volume of individual activities and funding levels was a change in who the people were and where the activities were located. Whereas the project began as one involving US nationals recruiting other US nationals for assignments abroad, either on a short-term or long-term basis, by 1986 other concepts had begun to enter. First, there was less interest in using core project funding to support the training of isolated individuals or groups of individuals in various countries. The concern became institution building and the enhancement of local human resources. Moreover, whereas mission money available for human resource development had centred largely in programmes aimed at Asian countries in the early 1980s—with an increased volume of Latin American activity in the mid-1980s—as the project neared conclusion, it became more African centred. It was there that more resources were available and where more innovative thinking was underway in the donor community as various kinds of co-operative schemes began to be experimented with. A major stimulus was awareness that in so much of sub-Saharan Africa the enormity of the tasks of development and the basic human needs were so great as to far exceed the capacity of any one single donor.

Three mission-funded projects in particular illustrate the shifts occurring: (1) the Paraguay mission's contract to start a business administration programme, (2) the Swaziland mission's buy-in whereby the NASPAA agreed to start-up work in the development of inter-regional management training and human resource develop-

ment at the management level in southern Africa, and (3) the Guinea mission's receptivity to redefining management development activities in terms of longer term concerns with on-the-job performance and with integrating training programmes into considerations of overall organizational performance in sectors seen as crucial to national development.

The first activity exemplifies the shift in locus of authority. When a similar activity was undertaken in 1982 in the Dominican Republic, it was primarily a US-directed activity with the academic organizations and personnel utilized coming from within the US. Initiated with a small grant whereby the NASPAA did the preliminary study, the longer term activity was then assigned to a single US academic institution under direct contract with the Dominican Republic mission. In contrast, the buy-in negotiated in 1986 to start up a business administration programme at the Catholic University in Asuncion was done in co-operation with a NASPAA associate-member institution in Central America, the Instituto Centroamericano de Administración de Empresas, with its faculty providing the consultancy services. In this case, the NASPAA's senior management specialist provided the backstopping and co-ordination of the project over an initial 2 years and negotiated an extension for a third year of activities. While the NASPAA's project staff handled financial and project details, the Instituto Centroamericano de Administración de Empresas provided the actual services, organized the seminar sessions and fielded the faculty who developed the academic programme.

The second activity entailed a very different kind of undertaking. In that instance, training institutions in a number of countries were already in existence and the goal was to strengthen these institutions through promoting regional co-operation within a seven-country group, the Southern African Development Co-ordinating Conference. To accomplish this, under contract with the Swaziland mission and with the support of the regional AID office in Harare, the NASPAA took on responsibility for fielding a resident representative in the region (an African professional from Zimbabwe). Assigned to Mbabane, Swaziland this individual worked directly under the head of the Regional Training Office for the Southern African Development Co-ordinating Conference group, set up a small office (the Management Resource Unit) for co-ordinating activities with regional training institutions and organized two substantive seminars—one on regional trade and finance and the other on regional rail and road transport. As a multidonor project, additional support was brought into this project from the Canadian International Development Agency, the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation and the German Technical Assistance Agency. Carried for 15 months under the AID financing, at the end of the start-up phase, the individual around whom this project had been built then moved on to World Bank employment where the second phase of activities in strengthening regional training institutions was to follow.

The third activity, work with the Guinea mission, represented yet another type of endeavour. Initiated in 1986 as an effort to refocus management training seminars so as to have greater on the job impact (with a small buy-in of \$56,000), through a process of dialogue among the mission, the Aid/Washington and the NASPAA, these endeavours were progressively refocused and redesigned. From this base, a more ambitious strategy was developed in the fiscal year of 1988 in which in-depth work in a single key ministry (the Ministry of Agriculture) was combined with the elaboration of a cross-sectoral, multiorganizational, multi-year strategy for improv-

ing management performance in the administration of both human and financial resources—for a total package of some \$650,000 extending over 2 years, in addition to work funded the previous year. In this instance, the specialists dispatched—both short and long term—consisted of a Senegalese chief of party for diagnostic work in the Ministry of Agriculture and a Malian resident representative for implementing a strategy linking together financial and personnel management in substantive programme areas in agriculture. When the NASPAA/Bureau of Science and Technology co-operative agreement ended in 1989, a separate direct agreement with the Guinea mission allowed this activity to continue for another 2 years.

Thus, as the programme neared conclusion, the locus of the work had become centred within the developing world, utilizing local and regional resources and mobilizing US-based supports more and more to provide backstopping and networking among a relatively small international group of development management professionals. In the process, by 1988 less of this work could be explained in terms of short-term projects and more was taking on definition in programmatic terms on a co-operative multinational basis, combining Latin American, African and US professional expertise as host country and regional counterparts assumed primary responsibility.

RELEVANCY

What is the relationship of this case study in development management to public sector reform and the need for more relevant and dynamic managerial training? This particular undertaking brings into focus many of the underlying issues in the management of development programmes and projects and the training of individuals for this work. It also suggests some of the trade-offs entailed in developing new human resources in development management and in grappling with such policy and management issues as civil service reform, public sector labour redundancy and redeployment of the work force.

First, it suggests that the more appropriate way to generate change in public bureaucracy (that is to say, in the host of public organizations under the direct authority of the central government and outside it) is through more careful design of middle-range strategies that assume a multiplicity of actors, ambiguity and uncertainty. The problem that has to be confronted directly is how to develop the capacity to achieve impact over the short term, when the issues confronted by definition require long-term solutions. In the context of the US and also that of many other countries as well as multinational donor organizations, the nature of the funding cycle requires the development of measurement criteria on an annualized basis. To respond to these needs, one must be able to define one particular component of the development maze and then develop a carefully sequenced work plan, breaking the programme down into self-contained segments or *tranches* that follow a feasible time schedule. In project work, one must always retain a clear cut understanding of the timing factor: the start-up phase in which the particular set of resources required must be pulled together, the middle years of the project when the emphasis falls on the performance of a particular set of field services, and project conclusion whereby the delivery of concrete, measurable products must occur.

Much has been written about the limitations of project work and the importance

of thinking in programmatic terms (White, 1987, pp. 6-11).⁴ These distinctions are important ones and should be incorporated when possible. But the project cycle is a difficult one to break in development work, because of the nature of the funding cycle to which most organizations have to respond. Multi-year programmes are designed all the time, and then changed. In the case of the US, the crux of the matter is what Congress does or does not do with the annual budget in a context of limited resources in which the needs continually outstrip the available money, of competing interests that must be accommodated and of earmarking to ensure action in particular areas at the expense of programmatic coherency.

Second, issues of context—that is, the particular situations in which one must work—require co-operative action to achieve impact. One cannot go it alone. The lessons of experience in confronting the enormity of development needs in sub-Saharan Africa have made the donor community as a whole especially sensitive to co-operative initiatives. But working with others consumes enormous amounts of time in building mutual confidence, in reconciling competing perspectives and different agendas and in establishing exactly where the mutuality of interests lies. Here, the conclusion is often that at best if one is to have impact as an external agent it is at the margins of the state.

At the personnel level, once a project is agreed upon and the financing secured to start up the work, these issues of context become ones of securing the right mix of individuals in the teams that are to be built—within the host country organization(s), within the donor organization in the central office as well as the field-office staff and within the organization providing the technical service. The conclusion reached here is derived from the contracts reported on above, as they have been compared with other ways of tackling similar developmental problems. It is that the work conducted must be iterative and oriented towards substance, rather than consumed with issues of process and procedure. Conceived in these terms, iterative work becomes a computational procedure in which replication of a cycle of operations produces concrete results which more closely approximate the desired result(s).

An illustration might help to clarify what is meant by the importance of focusing on iterative work and issues of substance as opposed to process and procedure. In working with human resource development in the management field in developing countries, it becomes important to work within the context of carefully conceived steps, each of which can be assessed in terms of the specific product agreed upon and delivered. In the case of Guinea, this iterative work began with a management seminar focused on the improvement of management capabilities in the Ministry of Agriculture in February 1986. The next step was a request for long-term assistance submitted to the non-governmental organization providing the service, through the Ministry of Agriculture in co-operation with the USAID/Conakry Mission. Following a 3-day visit to Conakry in July 1986, the mission approved and funded a proposal for follow-on work. The second step consisted of a planning and needs assessment study conducted in December 1986 and two workshops in Conakry in February and April 1987. At the end of this work (designated as phase I), the mission approved and funded a second proposal for phase II of continued assistance to the Ministry of Agriculture for an additional 12 months, with emphasis on improving its pro-

⁴ An especially cogent discussion of this difference between project and programme is to be found in White (1987, pp. 6-11).

gramme and policy implementation capabilities. Before this work began, the mission director changed. As a consequence of discussions between him and the non-governmental organization providing the technical services, it was agreed that second needs assessment would occur, in the form of an in-depth diagnostic report with particular attention to the ministry's needs for improving its financial management capabilities. Discussion of that report in Conakry and Washington led to a decision to take on a much more ambitious project in reorganizing the ministry, whereby beginning 1 July 1988, the non-governmental organization concerned would field a long-term resident technical advisor, with a mandate to develop a detailed work plan for initiating a series of activities in the ministry for the 1989 fiscal year (from 1 October 1988 to 30 September 1989) (Leighton, 1988).

In short, the elaboration of appropriate middle-range development management strategies requires bringing together the necessary financial and human resources, identifying a particular focus either organizational or thematic (such as the development and implementation of a country training plan), and executing that activity to achieve a multiplier effect that can attend to a country's developmental needs.

Applied to management training, consideration of such issues as these argues for the logic of introducing into the curriculum policy research project seminars, extending over an academic year and involving students and teaching faculty in the analysis of concrete policy issues and case work. But, with the caveat that client-oriented service work be more clearly separated from academically based programmes so that students and faculty may develop more rigorous analytical skills in public policy. Within my own teaching experience, instances of this pedagogical approach would include policy research project seminars on development programme design and evaluation, and Brazilian public policy, in which emphasis fell on the training of policy analysts and the teaching of policy skills through application. In each instance, the complexity of the policy issues required extended analysis and drafting and redrafting of policy research report, as students were trained in project design and evaluation, and as policy analysts with critical skills applicable cross nationally independent of the client-centred model, which underlies so much of the work contracted with public agencies and which is illustrated by the aforementioned case study.⁵

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⁵ This paper is a revised version of a working document prepared for the 'Taller de Expertos para Elaborar Propuestas de Mejoramiento de los Sistemas de Ensenanza-Aprendizaje para la Formacion de Administradores y Gerentes Publicos', under sponsorship of the Red Iberoamericana de Instituciones de Formacion e Investigacion en Gerencia Publica and the Centro Latinoamericano de Administracion para el Desarrollo, San Juan, Puerto Rico at the Escuela Graduada de Administracion Publica, Universidad de Puerto Rico. 15-18 October 1991.

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