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CONSULTANTS'FINAL REPORT

UNEDIL TRAINING IN ACTION RESEARCH
KENYA INSTITUTE OF ADMINISTRATION
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A. EVALUATION OF OUTCOMES: ACHIEVEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

In the judgement of the consultants, the objectives of the Action Research Workshop as stated in the Project Document (Task Group Meeting, KIA, June 26-30 1989) were achieved. Some fifteen (15) participants took part in skill practice sessions which covered all the major steps of action research. As a culminating activity, each participant developed complete action research proposal on a management problem which she/he planned to implement on return to her/his country. With further refinement, and the development of a client relationship[p, at least 75% of the proposals will probably meet the UNEDIL criteria for funding.

The technical report being prepared by KIA will constitute a complete guide which participants may use in conducting a similar course with their own institutions so as to increase action research capacity. The report contains a time schedule, objectives, learning activities, and readings for eight (8) modules. At least 5 of the trainees should be qualified to conduct such an action research workshop. Of the training team that conducted this workshop, all but two are highly competent trainers who can conduct a similar workshop with the highest professional skill.

The conduct of action research by the participants in their own countries should produce research reports, models, and cases and other training materials that will enrich the African training material on management. The workshop design can also serve as a model for TOT's which employ experiential and active learning as a major instructional methodology.

B. EVALUATION PROCESS: WORKSHOP PROCEDURES

1. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS:

Administrative failures on both KIA and UNEDIL had a negative impact at times on the learning climate of the workshop. With the transfer of the KIA task group leader to another institution, there was a leadership vacuum regarding the logistical and administrative support which KIA, as the lead institution, was to give the workshop. Lack of clarity as to who was the responsible KIA on site coordinator, and as to the role of KIA, led to a host of administrative problems about space, training aids, participation of KIA staff in training, and preparations for travel to and from the hotel to the KIA conference center.

Perhaps the most emotionally draining administrative failure was precipitated by UNEDIL's failure to clarify, promptly explain and distribute the subsistence allowance and describe funding procedures for support of action research proposals. Parenthetically, neither consultant had received any contract from UNEDIL as of the last day of the workshop, and the

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official terms of reference for the consultants were
distributed on October 5.

These administrative issues created a lot of psychological
stress among all participants and training staff. It seemed
all too clear that the respective roles of KIA and UNEDIL
regarding coordination and support of the training activities
were not carefully worked out, and responsibility for support
activities for the action research module have not been
institutionalised at KIA.

   Lessons For the Future:

1. There should be a clear division of labour understood by
all between UNEDIL stafF, EDI staff and KIA staff as far as
administration is concerned.

2. UNEDIL staff should arrive at host institutions in time to
clear the administrative hitches and not handle them during
the training.

3. Subsistence payments to participants should be ascertained
before the beginning of training and they should be paid on
arrival.

4. Above all budgets should be shared to those who need to
know so as to avoid the passing of conflicting financial
information which destabilises group work. Too frequently
training was disrupted by strong feelings about subsistence
payments or the lack of accurate information for funding
research.

5. KIA should institutionalise the project by making its
activities institutional rather than personal. An official
coordinator of all future UNEDIL activities needs to be
appointed. Mr. Henry Rono, of KIA assumed this role <u>Pro Tem</u>
during the workshop and did an outstanding job. KIA should
also by develop proposals for activities which will
systematise its role in leading the AR component of the UNEDIL
project, and which will enable it to train its faculty in the
concepts/strategies of organisational development (O.D)as an
outgrowth of AR.

2.   TRAINING DESIGN: CONTENT AND PROCESS

The training plan proposed in June 1989 at KIA had several
shortcomings which reflected the possible lack of
consultation on AR and experiential learning during this
meeting. Thus, the proposed content was imbalanced, with too
little time devoted to the Action Research Process and Steps
and too much time devoted to research-client interaction (3
days) and no time devoted to the development and critique of
action research proposals. Although the training plan
indicated that the training methodology was "participative",
and " experiential", the training content was assigned to
various management institutes for development with no guidance

as to how to develop an integrated design which emphasised "learning by doing". Thus the planning team, though intellectually committed to experiential learning, had very limited skill in conducting such training. Most trainers came expecting to participate in a traditional workshop where lecture-discussion was the major method. Indeed, in spite of assignment of various modules to different institutions, only one trainer arrived having done any preparation. Likewise, trainers brought very few training materials and action research concepts and strategies.

The training team in June apparently consisted of eight (8) members. When the consultants met at KIA on September 18 to start planning the workshop, there were only two trainers available. The KIA "lead" trainer had departed for a new job, and several KIA trainers had other professional conflicts which resulted in their being present for planning on an "in/out" basis. The two trainers from West Africa did not arrive until the day before the training begun (September 24). KIA by the second day had made a substitution for the trainer who had been transferred. By the third day of planning, 5 trainers were available for planning.

The consultants thus faced two major tasks during the planning: 1. helping the training staff develop a training design for action research workshop which would be "experiential" in approach and 2. conducting a "mini-TOT" in experiential methods for trainers. One week to train trainers is too short a time. The trainers were under tremendous pressure to learn and then train the following week. This also led to the continuation of the "mini-TOT" by the consultants as the trainers were training. Daily critiques and feedback sessions were conducted by the consultants to help the trainers learn new modules they had not conducted and to re-design learning activities to meet changing needs. Over-all, the trainers responded to the demands of the situation with a high degree of motivation to learn on the spot. A real training team had developed as a result of the week spent in planning.

During the planning, it became apparent that only one or two of the trainers had ever used any participatory learning methods. Thus learning to design experiential exercises was a skill that had to be learned "in the heat of battle". A major problem was the lack of training materials for reading by the trainees. The resources of the consultants, therefore, had to be heavily relied on. Significant materials were made available to the training team and others left with the KIA. However, that is not sufficient for the training role in the long term. There is therefore need to improve KIA library holdings in action research (AR) and other areas related to the UNEDIL program.

Lessons for the Future:

1. Consultant inputs on training design, both content and process, should have been requested in June while preparing for the training. Where possible, it is most beneficial to have consultation both during the planning and implementation stages of workshops. The June meeting did not have resources to help plan and "experiential" workshop.

2. If the trainers do not have experience in active, participative, or experiential methods of training, a T.O.T. prior to implementing the workshop should be mandatory, and it should be of about 7-8 days duration with a long weekend (3 day break between it and the conducting of the training.

3. The training, if it is to include field practice, and interaction with clients, should be about 3-4 weeks. Three weeks for a workshop of this type is the bare minimum.

4. Participants in any workshop which is concerned with improving managerial problem solving capacity or developing strategies for organisational/system change, must come to the workshop having a real problem for action research (not a simulated problem). This must be a conditionality for participation. Thus, no institution should select a candidate unless the nomination is accompanied by evidence of a client, an identified management problem, and evidence of some preliminary work. These can be used by the host institution and UNEDIL to sift nominees. None of the participants in this workshop came with any preparation or with an identified AR problem. Consequently, most of the problems presented for AR were no more than simulations.

5. Trainers and trainees must arrive on time. Experiential training is not like traditional training where it is easy enough to read someone's notes on a lecture. It was most difficult to integrate late arrivals, especially trainers from West Africa.

6. UNEDIL should assist KIA in developing a list of essential library for AR and also in the purchase of the same.

7. KIA should develop a funding request for library resources acquisition.

8. Training resources, especially flip charts, flow pens, transparencies, etc., were in short supply because KIA is going through a period of reorganisation. The lead institution of any future UNEDIL workshop must assume a more active stance in assuring the availability of basic training resources, and, if such is lacking, make provision prior to training for their rental or purchase.

C.   SELECTION OF TRAINERS:

Criteria for selection of trainers need to be upgraded to
insure that trainers selected will possess the necessary
education and experience to conduct the training. There were
some trainers selected by their institutions who clearly do
not have the background, temperament or interest to learn new
training methods and consequently, the workload of the
trainers was uneven. Some had to carry a much greater
workload than normal because several trainers were very weak.
The EDI position is that nothing can be done on this score
because they are selected by their institutions.

        Future Lessons:

1. It is crucial that in future UNEDIL AR, or other capacity
building training, that only qualified trainers be selected.
Those who are not qualified must be left out for they cannot
contribute to the project objective of increasing AR capacity
in their institutions.

2. UNEDIL must encourage the directors of the training
institutions to develop and abide by selection criteria which
will minimize purely political selection of trainers. It
should communicate this to the respective institutions the
need to replace any trainer whose performance does not meet
acceptable standards. Thus, consideration should be given to
replacing the trainer from GIMPA.

3. All the following members of the trainer staff of this AR
workshop functioned effectively and demonstrated significant
growth in their ability to design and conduct "paraticipatory"
learning: H. Rono, G. Imanyi, E. Wiketye, Y. Bekele, H.
Kithinji, J. Muketha, and G. Mbaya.

4. To deal with the attrition of trainers and to increase
trainer resources for the future UNEDIL programs, the
following trainees were superior participants and are
recommended as potential trainers for UNEDIL programs: Edward
Asante, H. Sawyer, Jacob Ngwa, Nora Mwaura and O. O.
Chukwumaeze.

D.   SELECTION OF TRAINEES:

Again, UNEDIL must assist the directors of the various
institutions to develop selection criteria which identify
trainees who have the greatest potential for returning to
their institutions with the capacity to assume a leadership
role in institutional development.

Clearly some of the trainees were so weak that they must have
been selected without the objectives of the programme in mind.
These are: E. M. Kariuki, C. Kahumburu, M. Mohamed, E. B.
Omisore, I. Temba and Aster Berhane Selassie. Others were able
to just cope. These are: Victoria Ofori, G. G. Ituga, E. L.

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Nchimbi, Samuel Mengitsu and H. Mujeberi. The superior group was composed of O.O. Chukwumaeze, Nora Mwaura, Jacob Ngwa, Edward O Asante and Henry Sawyer.

Future Lessons:

1. Selection of trainees is more important than the institutions seem to be taking it. AR training should not be used to only send participants who stand no chance of developing fundable research and ultimately publishing it. Criteria for selection must be more rigorous.

2. Directors of institutions should be informed by UNEDIL that the ultimate purpose is to publish case studies and assist institutions in building AR capacity. Institutions must select the very best candidates for AR training as they have the greatest potential for implementing and publishing.

E.   STRUCTURE OF UNEDIL PROJECT:

The internal structure of the project is unrealistic in assuming that task force members will go back and train their base institution staff. It is difficult for the consultants to see how AR activities will be institutionalised unless one institution is allowed to create synergy by extensively training its staff and providing a resource to the others. In other words, if trainees merely return to their institutions as individuals and are not part of institution building processes which the institution embarks on to improve itself as a system, there will be little impact on the institutions capacity to conduct AR or other related management development activities.

A critical mass of faculty qualified in AR, consulting, and Organisational Development (O.D.) must be developed within each institution. For example, KIA is now in the process of a major re-organisation, and thus an ideal client for Organisational Development (O.D.), a natural follow-up of AR. If UNEDIL is concerned with institution building at KIA, the next step after AR is to train KIA staff in OD through a workshop which would allow the staff to use its own system to learn skills of OD consultation. Such a workshop could be staffed by combining some of the AR trainers from this workshop with some of the potential new trainers recommended above. The workshop could involve some eight key staff from KIA and eight from other institutions.

In this manner, KIA would be able to apply OD to its own development, train a core group of staff, and become a resource to other institutions.
KIA may want to think about this approach and make a proposal to UNEDIL for support.should think about this and make proposals to UNEDIL.

Over-all the consultants feel that this was a most successful

AR workshop. The major objectives of the AR module in the UNEDIL program were accomplished. Like any beginning effort, this workshop was a "shakedown" cruise which had some "bugs" in the system which had to be eliminated. Feedback from participants was supportive of the workshop as a "productive learning experience even though the pace was hectic and emotionally draining".