INVISIBLE INK

The Function of the Expatriate Advisor

R.L. Tinsley

PREFACE

This text presents ideas shared in a series of workshops conducted by the author. The Community Services Association (CSA), a counseling and social services organization serving a large third world expatriate community, sponsored the workshops. The four to six session workshops were held over a three-year period. These structured discussions reviewed the participants' experiences on "how to maximize personal effectiveness" in an advisory environment. Although the discussions concentrated on the country where the workshop was held, the concerns are common to most developing countries. The text is a composite of participants' experiences. Some items will be more or less relevant depending on the specific country involved and the scope of the project. If there is a bias, it is toward agricultural research projects. These are the projects the author has worked with for 10 years in four countries. Workshop participants shared experiences from Asia, Africa, and the Americas.

The author wishes to acknowledge the inputs of all workshop participants whose thoughts have contributed to the text. In addition, the author is grateful to the people who reviewed earlier drafts and contributed useful suggestions for the final copy. In particular, the author wishes to thank Allan Cremer of TAMS. He was the leading participant in the first workshop, and contributed substantially to the initial revision of the workshop format. Thanks to Joel Wallach of CSA for his assistance in organizing the workshop, and to Jim Layton of Colorado State University for his input in formulating the initial discussions. Finally, the author wishes to thank Genevieve Allison for editorial assistance in preparing the manuscript.

Table of Contents

Preface i

Table of Contents ii

Chapters

1. CHANGE AGENTS 1

2. VISIBLE & INVISIBLE INK 4

3. STUMBLING BLOCKS 10

4. DOING THE RIGHT THINGS 19

5. DEVELOPING PEOPLE 27

6. FOR YOUR BEST EFFORTS 35

7. BOTTOM LINE 39

Chapter 1

CHANGE AGENTS

Departing for a foreign assignment, advisors have noble ideals of aiding their less fortunate comrades struggling to survive in developing countries. Advisors are eager to share the experiences they have worked a lifetime to acquire and to demonstrate how developed countries prospered. They expect to be met by receptive people anxiously waiting to learn and immediately apply this hard won knowledge.

Shock, frustration, disillusionment follow when the advisor realizes, he may genuinely not be wanted! He could be considered an imposition--merely a tolerated guest--accepted only as a channel through which to gain other tangible and personal "goodies." He is a "non-person," who must justify his very presence--not in terms of his expertise--but in terms of "what he can assist his professional associates to accomplish." Why? Because:

-his host has adapted to the administrative structures resulting from a limited resource environment;

-the operating environment restricts peoples' ability for achievement;

-it makes alternative rewards more attractive; and

-requires expatriate assistance to orient officials toward accomplishing their nation's economic development.

The objective of this text is to increase the expatriate's understanding of the work environment he is entering. He should then comprehend why troublesome situations arise, effectively manage activities, and prevent crises from happening.

Technical Assistance

Technical assistance, as used herein, is the process of assisting developing countries through projects supported by expatriate advisors. The process usually involves a donor, who is making a monetary or in-kind contribution, and a recipient or host country that is receiving the benefits. The monetary contribution (either grant or loan) is planned to achieve a specific end. Donors can be international institutes such as the World Bank, UNDP, or FAO; government agencies such as USAID, IDRC, or CIDA; or private foundations like Ford or Rockefeller. There are occasions when host countries obtain outside consultants directly without donor financing. This type of

consultant can be very helpful to a country receiving multiple sources of assistance, and needing help to determine which programs are really beneficial to the host country.

The objective of technical assistance is to promote some form of change in the recipient country. The type of change is agreed upon in advance, and will be expressed in some form of tangible economic or technical terms. However, change by definition is disruptive to the established institutions. Therefore, the accomplishment of change commonly requires some institutional adjustments in the host government that can be resented by entrenched personnel. Regardless of the wording, change is always the ultimate objective. This must remain foremost in the advisors mind. Until some change is assured, the advisors job is incomplete.

The Expatriate

Expatriate assistance is often stipulated as part of this change process. The donor usually insists on including expatriates, whereas the recipient commonly questions the need. The recipient's reluctance to accept the expatriate team is the natural outgrowth of man's general inability to see beyond the limits of his own knowledge. In addition host personnel want to maximize the direct benefits received from the donor, and resent watching their money spent supporting expensive foreigners. A recipient may thus regard the inclusion of expatriates as a "necessary evil" in procuring other donor benefits. The host may even suspect the motives of the donor concerning gaining political favors, marketing products, etc.

The expatriate enters an environment in which he automatic ally has two bosses:

-The donor, who looks at him as implementer or "change agent" and,

-The host, who may look at him as an essential aggravation to endure for the duration.

The expectations of these two clients may be diverse. The donor wants the expatriate fully involved, and holds him accountable for the success of the Project. The recipient may prefer to keep advisors on the sidelines without the authority to direct project activities. The first boss determines the advisor's salary and benefits; the second boss accepts, rejects or dismisses him.

Most expatriates are reasonably well-qualified technical specialists; economists, engineers, agronomists, etc., who are interested in and capable of attaining exceptionally good technical accomplishments. The specialist may not be prepared for the role of an advisor in an unfamiliar culture, where his host questions the need for an outside expert. Also, the host probably doubts the expatriate can comprehend the national culture well enough to accomplish his assigned task. Many established professionals, who are proven leaders have faltered on overseas assignments and have been asked to return home prematurely.

The role of the expatriate advisor is the focus of this text. What is the expatriate's job, how is it defined, what are the real expectations, where are the job sensitivities, and what are the potential pitfalls--the "Invisible Ink" in expatriate advising? This text hopes to provide ideas on how an expatriate can maximize his effectiveness in achieving and sustaining desired changes. This would allow him to enjoy his international tour without becoming frustrated, disenchanted, and discouraged.

The Text

The text is divided into the following five parts:

1. Projects: Chapter 2 reviews the nature of technical assistance projects, how they are formulated, what are the expected outputs, and how they are evaluated.

2. Host Environment: Chapter 3 describes the general educational and administrative background into which the host country and the expatriate's host associates are locked. This is to help advisors see the rationale for his associate's actions.

3. Strategy: Chapter 4 looks at the overall perspective on how to operate within the technical advising environment.

4. Tactics: Chapter 5 reviews the effectiveness of various activities advisors undertake while promoting their national associates i.e. counterparts.

5. Responses: Chapter 6 considers what types of things are likely to happen in response to the advisors actions. Why these responses occur and what to do about them; perhaps just "grin and bear it."

Chapter 2

VISIBLE & INVISIBLE INK

The usual method of implementing technical assistance is through projects. These projects are the end product of a process that begins with the national development plans, plans formally made and documented such as national 5-year plans. The national plans are broken into various programs for the different economic sectors. The sector programs are then split into different projects. Those projects with external funding and expatriate assistance are agreed upon by the donor and the recipient and formalized by a written agreement. The Project is implemented via a contract between the recipient (or the donor) and the expatriate organization.

Types of Projects

Technical assistance projects are the final result of the national development plan in which the government makes a specific investment, possibly through a donor, for a specific set of benefits. Technical assistance projects form a continuous spectrum beginning with purely capital development projects on through strictly advising projects. The latter end of this spectrum is the concern of this text.

Capital improvement projects have a specific and tangible task to complete. This is usually some form of construction such as a bridge, grain elevator, or communication center. They are projects with a clearly defined beginning and end. When finished, the completed facility is turned over to the host organization to operate and use.

Advising projects are those in which expatriates interact directly with the daily operations of the host government to improve the functioning of a recipient organization. Such a project would include agricultural research working to improve crop varieties and production practices, small loan administration that makes money available to private and public sector organizations, sewage disposal management works to keep the sewage from backing up on the street, etc. These projects are less specifically defined than capital improvement projects, but are confined to a fixed time frame that is usually extendible. These technical assistance projects are the primary concern of this text.

Integrated projects do exist when a capital improvement project, such as a communication center, has in addition an operational training component to follow the completion of the physical plant. The training component is an advisory effort.

Location in Time

Although all projects have a specified beginning and eventually have a specified end, and an expatriate could serve on a project at any time during its operation, the Project must always be viewed as to how it fits in the host country's overall development plans. In this context any Project is only a temporary interlude in a single portion of the host country's long-term development process. The advisor can be certain his host associates are acutely aware of this. Host colleges are a part of the permanent scene, while the advisor is a temporary visitor. If the advisor's activities are out of focus with his host, the host has only to be patient; the advisor will fly off into the sunset.

Therefore, the natural tendency to relate all efforts to the Project's time frame, or to plan for all activities to terminate when the Project terminates should be suppressed. An advisor should expect and be willing to leave while activities are in progress--activities he will not be around to see finished.

Terms of Reference

Most projects are contractually specified in explicit technical terms as to direction the Project will take and what out come to expect. Added to these specifications are some references to "institution building" and "personnel development" or training. The technical specification followed by vague references to institution building is politically essential. With capital improvement projects the institution changes can be reasonably clear. It is necessary to develop the technical skills needed to run the new physical plant.

In advising contracts the institutional aspects may best remain ambiguous. The institutional needs as seen by the host and by the contractor could be substantially different. The host may perceive the needs only in terms of technical training of lower echelon personnel. The advising team may, in addition, recognize a need for substantial administrative reform, which includes all levels of the government. It would be unthinkable for any host government to write a contract that definitely states administrative reform as a primary objective of the Project. This would imply senior host personnel are incompetent. No recipient would sign such a contract--no matter how much money was involved.

To be effective the advisor must accurately evaluate the importance of the technical specifications vs. institution building. The question is, "To what extent are the technical specifications nothing more than a mechanism for doing the necessary institution building and personnel development?" The temporary time frame of the advisor must be considered, in contrast to the permanence of his host, plus the host government's need for multiplier benefits to continue after the advisor has returned home. No country or donor can justify funding a technical assistance project solely for what is accomplished during the expatriate assisted contract.

Although the "project documents" for an advisory project are written in fairly specific terms, they should not be considered as the rigid, final word of the Project's activities. The Project documents are assembled by the donor and recipient. They are edited and reedited numerous times until they reflect the compromised opinions of all parties, except the implementing team. The gestation period from original idea to a fielded implementing team could be two years or more.

With this many people involved over this length of time, the final documents will reflect the lowest consensus of opinions held at the time written. The documents may not accurately reflect what the host really wants, what the implementing team will encounter once in the field, or the continued conceptual evolution. To implement an advisory project as written a year or more earlier, would suggest that all problems were finalized, all thinking done, and the long-term implementing team of highly qualified professionals is being asked not to think!!

Perhaps, it would be better to accept the Project Papers as the best conceptual thinking at the time they were written. They thus serve only as a starting point, rather than a final statement of what the project will accomplish. The project activities should then evolve in the direction, which accomplishes the most relevant work. Good evaluators should look more at deviations from original plans, and the reasons for the deviation, than at verbatim implementation of the project documents.

Funding

Although the terms donor and recipient imply one is giving all while the other is receiving all, in reality most projects are jointly funded by both the donor and the recipient. This is frequently on a 50/50 basis, with all donor funds matched by funds from the recipient national budget. Sometimes "counterpart funds" are also indirectly provided by the donor through such sources as PL 480 commodity sales.

Even though the donor is providing the greatest monetary value, when viewed on a relative resource base the recipient's contribution is usually a greater percent of his national economy. This can become a sensitive issue and lead to a tug-of-war as to whose money is being spent. A highly possessive attitude sometimes develops among host associates. They feel, once the contribution has been made, the funds are the recipient's--the donor has relinquished control. When the contribution is a loan, even at extremely favorable (essentially giveaway) interest rates, the very necessity of repayment intensifies the possessive attitude.

Host Perceptions

Recipient organizations agree to expatriate funded and advised projects in their development effort for several reasons; chief among these are to:

-Provide essential equipment and commodities requiring scarce hard currency,

-Provide overseas training for professional staff members,

-Provide operating funds not readily available from the national budget,

-Facilitate the work plans of the host institute, and

-Obtain foreign technical expertise.

In the early stages of a Project, senior host officials are more likely interested in tangible "goodies" such as vehicles, equipment and travel/training opportunities. As the Project progresses and respect develops for the things expatriates can do; appreciation increases for the additional operating funds, and the ability of expatriates to facilitate operations within the government. The last thing senior host administrators value from expatriates is actual technical expertise--the very item many advisors feel is their primary reason for going abroad. More experienced host administrators will immediately think of the operating funds and facilitating project activities. However, even experienced host administrators will usually look to their own personnel for technical knowledge.

Mutual Experience

In the total, shared experience between expatriate advisor and the host organization, the recipient country has been receiving technical assistance much longer then any expatriate has been in the field. Thus the host country has the edge on experience, particularly at the higher administrative levels. And, they are becoming progressively more knowledgeable in how to make certain the assistance received is serving their national needs; not aiding external political objectives of a donor.

Host country personnel are acutely aware of the high cost of expatriate assistance. They know that an advisor's direct benefits (excluding housing, schooling, travel, etc) per month equal what they themselves earn in a year. This knowledge of the dual economy is an extremely sensitive one. Host associates often think expatriate benefits come from money rightfully allocated for host country betterment.

Project Findings

During the operations of a Project, any and all findings must be accepted and appreciated by host associates, in order to be sustained and lead to appropriate changes. This is because everything eventually goes through the Project Director, i.e. the most senior person in the host government directly associated with the Project--the expatriate's ultimate boss[1]. Project Directors tend to be tied-up with meeting various individuals on a wide assortment of concerns, most not related to the Project's objectives. They are, therefore, more accessible to host professionals than to advisors. If a Director has a technical question he will normally ask his professional staff--not an expatriate. Technical questions are put directly to an advisor only under extremely unusual circumstances. Such circumstances would occur when a Director needs to deflect a political issue or resolve internal conflict. To some extent this is a political necessity for the Director. He cannot appear to lose face in front of his peers by publicly acknowledging his dependence on foreigners.

Project outputs desired by host countries are simple, easily implementable, nationwide solutions to all problems, independent of their complexity. Centralized governments like single policies that can cover the entire nation. Ministers become uncomfortable when policies have to be modified to accommodate regional differences. Such expectations are basically unrealistic. While looking for simple solutions, the host officials also want the most "modern" technology available, regardless of its practical usefulness. The fanciest computer, the most sophisticated laboratory equipment, etc. are always favored even if they cannot be used to full capacity nor serviced if broken.

Project Evaluation

During the normal operations of a Project, evaluations will be conducted, probably during the middle of the Project's life and again at the end. These are conducted at the request of the donor according to the donor's own format, and frequently with the help of outside consultants. Such evaluations can be helpful in recognizing the evolutions that have taken place, and in making formal adjustments in the original project documents. By the mid-project review the original documents are at least 5 or 6 years old and may be functionally obsolete.

During a project evaluation, the reviewing team will inter view the expatriate team, the host government staff, ministry officials and representatives of the donor. The evaluation will take a very close look at the technical accomplishment of the Project. While reviewing the technical progress--for political purposes--all presentations will be made by the host country personnel. A host professional can, at his discretion, skillfully represent the weakest of technical accomplishments with "good showmanship" and totally ignore, or may even discredit solid accomplishments unilaterally done by expatriate team members.

---

1. The term Project Director is an ambiguous term. Not all projects identify the most senior host personas the project director. In some cases the title is used by the most senior expatriate. In this text the term Project Director will always refer to the most senior host government person. The most senior expatriate will always be the Chief of Party (CoP).

Such equipment is viewed as a status symbol of modernization and equated with progress and development.

The final evaluation report will tend to reflect the opinions of the host country about the Project. The advisor's personal performance will be evaluated more on the rapport established with host associates than on actual professional contributions. This may be expressed in all kinds of technical and experiential terms, but will probably reflect personal feelings. Take care!!

Nonexistence

Unable to promote his own work, and with the likelihood that what he does might be overlooked, the expatriate advisor could get the feeling that he is "nonexistent." As painful as this might seem at first, it may be a worthwhile attitude to accept. Certainly an advisor would not expect to be listed on the host government's organizational chart. And, anyone not on the organizational chart--just isn't! Practically, it is a good concept to remind the expatriate, he is on the sidelines; a behind-the- scenes promoter of an associates efforts, and not an out-in-front doer. If ever in doubt, take careful note of the times previous advisors are referred to and their efforts are appreciated. Do not be disappointed if they are remembered only by the mistakes they made. They came! They worked! And they left! Good-bye!!

Chapter 3

STUMBLING BLOCKS

Technical advisors are often bewildered by their host associate's apparent lack of interest in getting things done. The associates appear to waste a lot of time visiting other associates and drinking endless cups of tea, etc. However disconcerting these behavior patterns are, associates may be acting in a very logical, effective manner. Most expatriates would do likewise if they were a permanent part of the host environment. The puzzling behavior patterns are the natural response to the institutional structures developed under scarce resource economies found in most developing countries. The limited resources result in educational and administrative systems, which hinder the development process, they are supposed to serve. Both systems may have originated during a colonial period and have continued almost unchanged since independence. Today they form a mutual reinforcing, vicious circle that stagnates development efforts. The problem is strictly an institutional one. It is not related to the intelligence of host personnel. The objective of this chapter is to examine the learning and working environments usually found in recipient countries, and their effects on the attitudes of host personnel and the Project's activities.

Education

Student Selection: In most developing countries university admission is based on competitive exams. Students are given their choice of faculty according to their scores on standardized exams. The top students go to medicine, engineering and law, with the bottom scores going to arts and agriculture. These exams are very competitive. Non-qualifiers will be only allowed to attend technical schools or no school at all--or will just become part of the unskilled labor pool. The results of the entrance exams show that almost all university students come from the major population centers, where secondary schools are stronger. This is even true for the agriculture faculty, where a rural influence might be helpful. Most agricultural students, as well as their professors come from urban areas and have little, if any, farm experience. Students from rural areas usually have little opportunity for higher education. Even when student space is allocated to rural areas, the children of absentee landlords will suddenly return to their ancestral homes to take their exams.

Instruction: The most common method of instruction is memorize/recite. Students are expected to memorize the information in lecture or reference material, with a single, final, strictly objective exam taken verbatim from the material provided. It is common for professors to enter a class, distribute notes, walk to the lectern, and read aloud the notes just handed out. Then, having exposed the students to the material, the professors' job is finished. It is the students' responsibility to understand and comprehend the material.

When students from this environment attend classes in the US and are given several texts for a class, they have been known to ask the teacher, "Which text is most important? Which one shall I

memorize?"

In countries where national social policy stress broad-based higher education, faculties are overcrowded and professors may have little but to conduct classes in this way. If there are 1000 or more students in a class, not all the students can physically get into the classroom, let alone have a chair with a writing arm. How then could the most committed professor possibly provide individual attention, or use subjective exams? He would never have time to grade subjective exams. Laboratory classes may be even more of a concern. University budgets often barely pay professors salaries and provide minimum basic maintenance on buildings etc. There may be no funds to keep labs equipped and supplied. Students are lucky to get a laboratory demonstration instead of a discussion of what a demonstration would contain. To actually get hands-on laboratory experience is almost impossible.

Faculty: Most faculty members are products of the same system. They graduated with high grades and were given the chance to continue in the same old system for their graduate studies. Therefore, they have limited practical experience, and scant research opportunities to gain vital experience they need. Furthermore, they only have rare chances to attend international professional meetings where they can interact with peers and acquire additional information.

The only exception is the select few who are able to get advanced training overseas. These faculty members may be the only source of new, up-to-date information for making a single revision in class syllabi and lectures. This may be the primary reason why much of the information disseminated is approximately 10 years old, and directly taken from translations of developed country's texts. The information may not even focus on relevant local concerns. An agricultural curriculum in a developing tropical country may concentrate on the temperate climate crops of the developed country from which the text was translated or from which the professor received his advanced degrees. There would then be only a minimal coverage of the major or secondary crops grown locally. One faculty, in a country where rubber was an important plantation crop, had no discussion of rubber cultivation in the agricultural or forestry curriculum.

Faculty salaries are marginal at best. Professors need outside income just to make a decent living. This is commonly obtained by writing and frequently revising a required text; or by consulting on the side. Also, since qualified faculty are scarce, individual faculty members may hold de facto full time appointments at two or three universities concurrently. They are expected to travel a weekly circuit between the various universities giving lectures. This naturally reduces the time faculty members can spend in reading fresh material, and preparing or updating lectures, to say nothing of meeting with students. The pressures of circuit riding, writing text, and consulting, results in individual student conferences being the last thing a professor has time for, regardless of his professional dedication.

Circuit riding is strenuous, so missing a circuit occasionally is common. Professors then have to make up the lectures with marathon sessions lasting for hours at the end of term. The exam

follows immediately, of course!! The professor may be unable to schedule a circuit during the official exam period.

Many faculty members are well aware of their short-comings and protect themselves by developing an almost "God-Head" image, that defies the two-way student/professor dialogue imperative to stimulate intellectual development. In one workshop a distinguished professor was presenting a brief paper. The professor got up, made a few very casual comments to the friendly audience, and then delivered his paper. For his technical delivery his voice jumped an octave or two and preceded in a staccato tone that dared any student to interrupt or even to ask questions when he finished.

The Graduate: The ultimate result of this educational system is a graduated professional cadre that has survived an endurance contest of memorized and recited lessons. In the process they may have learned to look to their professors as the source of all knowledge; not to be questioned. They have accepted all information in published texts as the absolute sacred truth. The result is a reasonably good theoretical base upon which practical application can be developed, but a tendency to believe they have a complete set of knowledge, which causes some confusion when initially asked to apply their knowledge. There appears a sub conscious awareness that something is missing, and a sense of insecurity.

Administration

Style: Having learned in school not to question the authority of the professor, the graduating professional who enters the government service may look unquestioningly at his supervisor for direction. This then provides a desire for, and appreciation of, a highly autocratic administrative style in which:

ALL "KNOWLEDGE"

COMES FROM

THE TOP

!!

Subordinates do not dare question superiors, and supervisors do not ask subordinates for information. "How could a subordinate possibly know anything useful?" With this expectation, rewards are provided for "yes" people who reinforce this bias. Innovation is risky. Achievement-oriented people with new or contradictory knowledge will be bypassed and belittled even if there is recent data to support their ideas. Since knowledge is equated with experience and the reinforcing of superiors, most promotions are based on seniority not on merit.

Ingrained Policies: The immediate result of this autocratic strictly "top down," no-challenge administrative style is that a policy, once established, becomes completely ingrained as if set in reinforced concrete. Policies cannot be modified to keep up with the normal evolution of economic conditions. Frequently the origins of policies cannot be traced to their source, which may date back to colonial times 50 years or more ago. Each succeeding generation of civil servants has simply memorized the established policy and recited it verbatim when asked, never questioning; never updating. It just becomes the "party line" on which the organization functions.

Ingrained policies also lead to the assumption that, having been formulated and implemented, they are really working for the benefit of the intended people. There is no feedback mechanism to inform the policy makers otherwise. Subordinates may officially reinforce how well things are functioning, even while informally griping among themselves. The end result may be top management persons almost completely isolated from those they genuinely wants to serve. The only way to influence policy change may be through cabinet action, in which one minister criticizes the short-comings of another ministry. Then and only then sparks will fly and possible changes will be made.

Bureaucracy: The general bureaucracy usually appears over staffed with many people sitting around doing little. This may not be over staffing as much as ineffective organization--a result of not being readily able to translate theoretical education into practical action. There is probably ample work that could be done, if the available personnel could be effectively organized. In countries that guarantee employment to all university graduates, the over staffing/under organizing problem can be acute--the civil service in essence being a discrete welfare system.

Once hired, civil servants normally are very difficult to dismiss. Regardless of how little is accomplished or how delinquent their attendance, their pay continues. The effort needed to discharge an individual is just too much for most managers to cope with. The guaranteed employment severely restricts the Directors supervisory options. He cannot readily transfer some one to an outlying area unless the employee is willing to go, nor deny a transfer to someone requesting a transfer to a more centralized area. In practice the Director has to accommodate the whims of his employees rather than the employees accommodating the Director.

Another serious problem that contributes to limited accomplishment is limited operating funds. With more staff than can be effectively organized, the budget may barely cover basic salaries for professionals, severely curtailing actual operating funds. Probably one of the first things sacrificed is the clerical personnel needed for efficient organizational communications. Usually only the Director will have ready access to clerical support. An entire research station in which papers are prepared in English may have only one English typist to handle all correspondence and reports for a professional staff of 40 researchers.

Organization pyramids tend to be shallow so that virtually everyone in the Project (even the janitors and laborers) will report to the Director. There may be only four or five levels between

the lowest professional staff member and the Minister for whom he works. One more level reaches the country's President. Even with this limited organization, there is a tendency to bypass administrative levels by jumping middle managers. When a young professional by-passes his supervisor and approaches a senior administrator, the administrator will frequently welcome and accommodate the young subordinate. Thus the administrator fails to exert the self-discipline of sending the young professional back to his proper supervisor. Instead the senior administrator considers the incident an indication of the by-passed managers incompetence. Fear of such by-passing and the poor reflection it can have, further limits a manager's ability to supervise his subordinates.

Directors: Directors, who normally head technical assistance projects, feel they are personally responsible, not only for all aspects of the projects efforts, but also for the personal well- being of each individual working for them. Directors are usually kept busy doing essentially routine operational and personnel work. The Director's day will frequently be spent meeting a continuous stream of subordinates barging in without appointments seeking personal favors, presenting their side of rival in-fights, etc. The Director must accommodate these intrusions to prevent being bypassed and losing face to his immediate superior. While trying to attend to these personal favors, he may be continuously interrupted to sign an endless number of standardized forms that somehow cannot be signed by anyone else.

The real problem appears a basic lack of "delegation of authority." This could easily be true, but there may be a "method to the madness" in the form of providing the Director with administrative control over what is going on in the Project. As long as he signs all the papers and people have to come to him for favors, he maintains control of the system. Directors can be seriously concerned their Minister will confront them with a trivial question such as how many pencils were used, etc., and they will appear incompetent if they cannot answer immediately.

Directors working under this avalanche of personal requests, in-fight monitoring, and signing of routine authorizations etc., can rarely keep track of the technical work of the Project. They have scant time to read the project reports, objectively evaluate individual contributions, or do any strategic planning. Yet! isn't planning the primary responsibility of this administrative level??

When Directors do have time to think about technical ideas, they tend to be extremely cautious. They have survived and advanced in the system. They do not want to jeopardize their position. Thus, they will be very skeptical of any concepts contradicting the "party line" and want the information carefully verified and worded before being accepted. Cautious attitudes can even extend to distribution of Project findings. Directors might prefer to allow reports to stack up in piles, rather then have them freely distributed. Even though the Director is not the author, if a report is criticized, the Director will feel person ally responsible for the contents.

Unable to read reports and properly credit people for their professional contributions, Directors rely on what they are told. Naturally, they evaluate people according to the amount of personal contact. The more a person barges in and consumes the Directors time, the greater will be the Director's opinion of him.

Host Associates

The host professional--with whom most technical advisors directly work--is a product of the educational system and administrative environment reviewed above. Working under limited resources, with little potential for achievement, the importance of accomplishment is severely diminished, and replaced with other values such as prestige, power, access to perquisites etc. This results in:

Professional Outlook: The professional civil servants are frequently persons who lack a practical technical background in relation to their education and position. They may generally have a high sense of self-esteem, and may not outwardly recognize their limitations--few people can. Even so, it would be difficult to acknowledge them. They may be content to operate on the vague generalizations memorized in school. It may be difficult for them to reflect on how their country differs from the generalizations and they may discard--as wrong--valuable, accurate data that conflicts with the generalized truths. Perhaps, inwardly they probably have a sense of insecurity and a lack of confidence, and so are very sensitive to any form of criticism. They will strongly defend the slightest questioning of his knowledge, and will strongly defend his opinions.

Such civil servants may avoid the insecurity by selecting the narrowest possible scope of work, and restricting their efforts to "safe" areas where they are the unquestionable authority. Within this domain they will freely criticize predecessors, picking apart their work for trivial reasons. This justifies redoing, and redoing the same basic work without any real technical advancement. It does in one sense maximize the output of limited resources. One can gain status by being smart enough to see the faults in others, while not achieving anything oneself.

Unfortunately, the chosen field for concentration is seldom the most essential activity for national development or the most relevant for Project objectives. Most associates will not ask what they can do for a Project. Instead they will offer what they know. If this is helpful, fine; if not, sorry! It is all they have to offer. This makes establishing complex interdisciplinary projects extremely difficult.

Even while not focusing on the most pressing needs for their country, this type of work may have a very strong nationalistic outlook that will prevent seeing how the country fits into the bigger picture of the developing world; nor does it allow a view of possible benefits from knowing the experiences of other countries in a similar economic situation.

Motivation: With this environment there are few highly motivated civil servants. Strongly motivated people tend to drop out early in their careers and either join the private sector or accept an overseas assignment and leave.

Without any real motivation for the success of the Project, individuals may be more interested in Project funded personal benefits of travel and training. Interest in such benefits may be more for financial gain than for professional development. Most international trainees will really skimp on living conditions to save large amounts of their per diem or study stipend. On completing training they may lose interest in the Project, put in their obligated time, and jump ship.

In addition, with civil servant salaries basically low, they may need outside sources of income, and spend considerable time pursuing other financial interests. This results in frequent absenteeism and short workdays.

Since Project success might be secondary to personal benefits, and outside financial interests are time consuming, many associates avoid field visits. Their reward structure is better served by staying in the main office politicking for favors, rather than going to the outlying areas where limited practical knowledge could become apparent. Also for overnight field trips, host government per diem may not cover actual expenses and a trip can cost real pocket money.

Use of Time: Because of the importance of interpersonal and inter-family relationships in most developing countries more is accomplished through informal channels than through established channels. The development of informal channels usually takes time. It is, therefore, almost essential for an effective associate to spend a considerable amount of time and consume gallons of "tea" in establishing and cultivating informal channels. To watch an associate "waste" endless hours visiting people can be frustrating, but it may just be essential for getting work done. Without the informal contacts, many civil servants, particularly at lower levels, will act more as "plugs" on services sought than to facilitate people's needs.

Additional time may also appear "wasted" with self-protection. With a limited resource bureaucracy from which most project participants come, personnel are accustomed to considerable in-fighting to get any share of the resources or appreciation for accomplishments. Such infighting can be carried over to well- funded projects where the benefits of travel and training become highly contested items. Brutal infighting may result among close associates. They will severely criticize each other's work, contributions to the Project, etc. Expatriates must stay clear of this--personal criticizing is a reserved privilege of the host. However, it is often impossible to remain outside conflicts. Advisors can easily become partly entangled, usually by being put in a "no-win" situation of choosing between hostile factions, and then being victimized by the other side.

Another result of the limited resource conditions is the desire to move wherever the benefits

seem most abundant, but never being directly accountable for anything in case it does not succeed. Thus, it may seem impossible to develop an organizational structure with clearly defined, mutually exclusive job descriptions and accounting for all necessary work. The lack of clearly defined activities allows everyone to:

-freely interfere with each other's work,

-omit essential work,

-work only on what they personally desire, regardless of overall project objectives, and

-then pass off all omissions and failures as "not my responsibility."

All unaccomplished work simply disappears into these "responsibility voids" that conveniently appear as needed.

Sensitivity Basically insecure in their knowledge, unable to admit errors, involved in infighting for support and appreciation of any accomplishments, host associates develop acute sensitivity to their entire surroundings--local and expatriate alike. A personal criticism, a benefit awarded to someone else, the unavailability of a vehicle, a lesser training opportunity, etc. can all create violent reactions. The emotional outburst may require the offended person to take several days of TTL-- temper tantrum leave.

Technical Accomplishments:

Work Program The actual technical activities on which host associates concentrate, may be more academic than practical. This could be a result of more theoretical, rather than practical education. In addition, they may focus attention on ideas with the greatest "showmanship" values. Anything that can be made to appear spectacular will be good. It does not necessarily have to work, or even be economically feasible, to implement on a large scale, just as long as it can be made visible during demonstrations. However, nothing can ever appear to be a failure. No matter how poor the final result actually is, one can be assured that associates will try to promote it as the best thing that ever happened. The art of showmanship and cover-up are skills national associates are masters of--guaranteed! That, however, does not imply that the shortcomings went unnoticed. They most likely were noted and will not be duplicated. It is just politically impossible to acknowledge them publicly during presentations or reviews.

Information Technical information--both in terms of referenced publications and accumulated data--will most likely move more verbally rather than through printed manuscripts. This is partly a result of limited administrative and clerical support for publishing reports. It is also an obsessive fear of the original collector that the information will either be plagiarized and published without proper credit, or the data may be criticized as wrong or as conceptually unacceptable. The first

fear is frequently legitimate. It happens. Many MSc Theses will be completely plagiarized by the major professor without due credit given to the student. It may be considered his privilege and shows the desperate need of professors to produce professional publications and receive recognition. The second fear allows for an easy denial if it is later proven to be questionable or politically out of tune. With the verbal transfer of information, technical shortcomings can die quietly. A third reason for the spoken transfer is that information is power to be traded for personal benefits. When a person has information others must to come to him, and thereby promote his self-esteem.

Adjusting to the verbal tradition can be difficult, but it is usually about 80% accurate, and chasing down original sources to some dusty dog-eared file folder is too difficult to be worth the effort. Adjust to the spoken communications. Accept it!

Emeritus Personnel

With all the fierce infighting that can take place for limited resources, benefits, and professional recognition, there is one group of people who can frequently be counted on for good reliable information as well as the political savvy on how to get things accomplished. These are the retired emeritus personnel. Unlike developed countries where a retired person may be gone and forgotten, retired persons in many developing countries actually gain in status. No longer in the dogfight, their age gives them authority, and their valuable experience is appreciated. Thus after retirement they may become more involved than when actively working, and frequently consulted by senior people remaining behind. After all they were the source of all the available knowledge. Identifying and getting to know these people can be very helpful. They have direct access to the top in ways that may not be readily available within the administrative confines of the Project.

To a large extent, these educational and administrative conditions, more than a lack of technical know-how or the ability to formulate technical know-how, are the basic causes for the limited economic growth in developing countries. If these conditions did not exist the recipient countries would have the means to resolve many of their development problems; expatriate assistance would not be needed.

Many of the work related "cultural" misunderstandings between host and expatriate personnel might derive from the different management styles. The "cultural" problems could be an expression of the limited vs. wealthier resources under which the administrative structures developed and were retained. These "cultural" difficulties are perhaps more a common denominator between developing countries, than they are an expression of national identity.

Chapter 4

DOING THE RIGHT THINGS

> Effectiveness means doing the right things
> rather than doing things right--P.F. Drucker

Most technical advisors are selected because they have proven ability in "doing things right". The question is "What are the right things to do" when one is not really part of an organization--when one is merely an imposed advisor thrust off to the sidelines?

Not only is an advisor on the sidelines, he is part of a project that is sitting in the middle of a massive "top down" bureaucracy--a bureaucracy that may resent upward movement of information which contradicts the well memorized "party line." He is generally working with the lower levels of professional workers. Possibly only the Project Director has sufficient seniority to relay information to policy-makers.

Decision-Makers

In developing a strategy for effective advising, the first things that need to be assessed are:

- How decisions are really made, and

- Who can influence decisions.

As discussed above, many policies were made at the ministerial level and have been historically reinforced by generations of civil servants anxious not to offend "The Minister." This provides very little room for immediate change. Certainly direct opposition to entrenched concepts is out of the question. The greatest conflicting argument may be reinforcing the established "party line" as generally correct, while indicating that other things could also be happening. An example is, authorities consistently blame farmers for excessive use of water. However, on-farm observations indicate that most surplus water is actually lost over the spillway at the end of the delivery system. In reporting the problem the strongest acceptable statement acknowledged farmers misuse of the water, but indicated some wastage was through the canals.

To accomplish even limited changes, will require identifying individuals who, for whatever reasons, have access to the top and can exert influence. Such people generally include the Project Director, key leaders or employees within the institution who have the confidence of the Director, and emeritus persons. Getting basic ideas through to these people, and allowing them to do the political reworking may be necessary. They usually have the political savvy to know just how much

the "party line" can be challenged at any given time and they may be interested in promoting such ideas for their own benefit. CoP's and home office coordinators may also provide a reinforcing support, but most will not make direct contributions. These expatriate leaders occasionally have audiences with Ministers to review project activities.

Management Reform

Modifying autocratic administrative style is probably the change most needed in developing countries if they are to sustain progress without assistance. Unfortunately no effective manner has been found for expatriates to exert any influence on the management system. Even trying is a major taboo!! Very likely, there is no faster way for an expatriate to get into trouble, than to be critical of managerial style. Most managers, including Project Directors, are professionals who have come up through the ranks with no management training. They have succeeded in the system and understand how it works. Any attempt to review managerial style is instantly taken as a personal affront for which the expatriate, even the CoP, is out-of-line.

If management change is addressed, any effort must come from within the host institution. One possible means would be specialized training for a professional who works closely with the Director and has the Director's confidence. This person may then provide an element of enlightened management. An alternative means is to promote short courses and follow-up consultation for host professionals conducted by nationals who have studied management in developed countries. These people know and understand both worlds. However, they may be criticized for having been out of country too long. A final possibility would be requiring management classes for long-term advanced degree trainees. The trainees may resent this as interference in their technical training, but most returning, advanced degree trainees so rapidly move into administrative positions, that the management classes are desirable. All three of these possibilities are "paper concepts" waiting to be tried.

Indonesia may have made a revolutionary attempt at administrative reform.[2] They are reported to have retired a large percentage of their civil servants selectively at full but fixed pay. The remaining civil servants received substantial raises and expanded responsibilities. Inflation was then allowed to depreciate the value of the fixed pensions, so that as the retirees became slowly unhappy with their pensions they would seek employment in the private sector.

---

2. This idea was presented during one of the workshops as a part of the discussion. The actual source or accuracy could never be confirmed. It does contain some exceptional ideas that warrant consideration.

The Expatriate's Role

Focus: Although most advisors were hired because of their technical skills, directly exercising those skills may not be their most effective activity. An advisor must quickly decide how much to concentrate on plying his own technical skills vs. developing the technical skills of his host associate or institution. The decision must be based on potential long-term benefits to the host country and whether the more effective effort may be to focus on the people with whom one is working. They may be the only possibility for an advisor effort to have any multiplying leverage.

Granted, it is much easier to provide a good example of how well a specific technology or procedure can work. This gives one a good sense of accomplishment, but it can also fly away when the advisor departs. Working with individuals is far more difficult, the amount of achievement less, but it has greater potential for sustained accomplishment after the advisor leaves, and more total impact in the long run.

Activities: The types of activities in which an advisor could become involved are:

-Doer
-Motivator
-Facilitator
-Provider
-Controller
-Teacher

Being the actual "doer" of various activities may not be effective. Perhaps one must look beyond the frequent expression "If you want anything done, then do it yourself," and replace it with "If my host isn't helping, it won't survive--so why bother!" Furthermore, when one does things by himself he can easily conceptually overwhelm his associates, without knowing. If this happens, associates will not understand what is being done, and will lose interest in the program. The advisor may then be left alone and when he leaves all his efforts will terminate.

More effective activities, particularly as the project matures, are motivating and facilitating host associates. This means encouraging associates to do the necessary work, and removing any obstacles hindering their efforts. Facilitating includes assuring the essential materials and equipment are available, obtaining the needed administrative support, and coordinating with other organizations. When concentrating on motivating and facilitating, the actual accomplishment may be less, but at least the proper people are doing the work.

With the administrative constraints of the host government, motivating and facilitating may be more easily accomplished by expatriates than by host associates. Just the physical presence of an expatriate may generate enough respect, and status to provide the motivation needed to break down barriers within the bureaucratic structure, so that Project work will get done. Without the presence of the expatriate, the system's "plugs" will effectively hinder host personnel and their

motivation to get through the "plugs" will stop. In the role of a facilitator, Directors finally get a solid appreciation for expatriate assistance. Directors recognize that work just gets done easier with the expatriates around. Unhappily they can rarely relate this to the administrative style that stymies their own peoples' efforts.

The job of advising implies teaching. This is the area in which most advisors really want to concentrate their efforts. It is the fairly straightforward job of informing, promoting and encouraging new ideas among associates. The work is basically adult education done in a give-and-take tutorial manner. It is an important part of the advisor's effort, but he will usually not spend as much time teaching as he would desire.

The need to be a provider is always a part of the job, particularly in the early stages. At this time there is a need to get the project hardware ordered and in-country. This requires a lot of work in determining specifications, etc. The rapid acquisition of materials can be very important. They provide the first tangible evidence of project accomplishment, and satisfy the initial host expectations. Once the original hardware has arrived, the job of provider is reduced to specifying supplemental equipment, etc. as the need arises.

Before large amounts of equipment arrive, some attention could be given to inventory control. In many countries property is very strictly controlled. Controls are commonly a one-way accumulation with no means to dispose of, salvage, or write off worn out, broken, or lost equipment. Old tires, junk car batteries, and other useless items are just turned in and accumulate in piles. All properties must be signed for and eventually accounted for by someone from the time they are received until eternity. An employee's final accounting may not occur until he retires. Then all the records for an entire 30-year career may be recovered and an accounting demanded. A careless retiree may find his complete pension forfeited to reimburse the government for items he has signed for during his long, dedicated career; items he can no longer locate. A strict system like this may be necessary to protect the government from being pilfered by its employees. But, with this threat, people are understandably reluctant to sign for any equipment unless it is absolutely essential. Expatriates may be in a better position to sign requisitions--their pensions are not jeopardized.

When confronted with this type of rigid inventory system, a Project may benefit by developing a less stringent method in which host personnel manage the flow of equipment, but keep it in the Project's name. Then, as the Project terminates, all equipment can be checked. The broken, worn out, or lost items can be disposed of, salvaged, or written off--only the good, usable property officially signed over to the government. Take care! To do this effectively, the problem will have to be identified and acted on early in the Project, before most expatriate teams have a chance to become fully acquainted with host governments operating procedures. Check with other projects.

Another part of the job of provider is to arrange training opportunities for associates. This is one of the more sensitive issues for an advisor. The external training program is usually one of the

major personal benefits associates obtain from the Project. The possibility for training may be the primary reason some associates joined the Project. Competition for training can be a major source of infighting. Expatriates usually recognize a need for advanced preparation for long-term trainees, to aid a rapid adjustment to the academic life in developing countries and success with their studies. Such preparation must precede trainee selection. This puts the advisor in the middle with no way out. The best that can be done is to keep the expatriate involvement in training decisions as confidential as possible, and to keep any infighting in the host country's activities.

Preparing long-range training programs--specifying individuals and time of travel--for the entire duration of the project, is asking for serious trouble. More often than not, training decisions are political rather than technical. They represent rewards for past services. This is particularly true of short- term training--one to three months. Selection may be based on seniority or other criteria. Individuals will be sent in a predetermined order to the next available class, regardless of how marginally the class is related to the trainee's job. In- country training could appear a solution, but usually does not carry enough prestige or sufficient financial reward to encourage participation.

The role of controller is usually minor, but also important and somewhat sensitive. Usually CoP's are more directly involved in this than other members of the advising team. Advisors represent the donors who want money spent as wisely as possible. There is little problem when this involves providing specifications for generally accepted equipment or training programs. The problem surfaces when the advisor feels that something is not really needed or not in the best interests of the Project and the host feels it is important. Then it is a case of "Whose money is this?" The host position is "It is our money and we can spend it as we like." Usually the point has to be conceded, and the advisor's input is simply advising, "It is not a good investment."

Advising Output

The advising component of projects become involved in many different activities, with various types of output. The extent to which the outputs are effective in promoting change often depend on the degree of host vs. expatriate involvement.

Written Reports: One of the most common forms of project output, and one in which expatriates may spend a lot of time, is written reports. These can be an effective record of Project activities and results, and provide a tangible output for the donor to evaluate project progress. However, reports may not prove effective in promoting change--the ultimate objective.

To be effective in promoting change a project report must have accurate, unbiased information. It must then reach and be read by influential people. Only rarely does this happen. Too often in order to be accepted by the Project Director and passed on to the Minister and Cabinet, the information cannot conflict with the "party line." Directors will often ask that data be revised to fit

established criteria. An example is revising calculations on water use of rice to be certain that the final figure is similar to the established water needs of 17,500 m^3/hectare. Frequently host associates are too tied-up in other activities to take time to read lengthy reports. This is particularly true of the Project Directors, who are in the best position to apply the information effectively.

In preparing written project reports an advisor must remember the people who profit the most from a report are the writer and the reader. The writer profits the most because he must get his thoughts together in the process of writing. The readers, if any, get only the information. If an advisor prepares a report and presents it to his associate as a fait accompli, it will most likely be filed on the "Project Bookshelf" unread and the information will effectively fly away at the end of the advisor's tour--he has failed to complete his job. An example of this would be when an advisor was asked to development a procedure for water budgeting of an irrigation system, while there was already available a computer program from a previous project specifically developed by an expatriate advisor to accomplish exactly this purpose. The previously advisors efforts had simple disappeared as if it never happened.

Written reports should be used as a means to allow associates to express their views. Research personnel may be anxious to do so, because they normally would not get the opportunity to author reports except for the project's existence. An advisor should view report preparation as a means to help the development of associates. But such reports should be a closely coordinated joint effort, with the advisor's objective to have the associate do as much writing as feasible. This allows an advisor a chance to evaluate conceptual understandings, and identify politically sensitive concepts. But one should recognize that most reports may neither be extensively read within the host country, nor lead to substantial change. Justification for reports based on potential readers outside the host country is not valid. Recipient countries cannot afford the luxury of expending their limited resources to educate the rest of the world. Donors, however, are less concerned about this. For expatriates affiliated with other projects in country to read reports may be helpful in implementing the other projects, but since these expatriates will also eventually go home, they still are not the correct readership-- host personnel.

Getting accurate information to decision-makers may be done by extracting single items from reports and relaying them through brief personal notes. Such brief communications at least have a chance of being read by overburdened Directors. This is consistent with the tradition of orally conveying information, popular in most developing countries.

Pilot Programs: In a pilot program, projects may be designed to expand their basic concepts over relatively extensive areas. A pilot program can be an effective way to demonstrate ideas and determine whether they are suitable for wider application. However, a premise that never allows a program to appear a failure, can severely compromise the effectiveness of the information generated. There may be a tendency to promote any bias in the design of the Project, and juggle

the data to assure only positive information is reported. Obstacles encountered may be ignored or rationalized--not solved--to guarantee success, and make the best show. If so, the pilot program may not give meaningful results in terms of any further implementation under normal working conditions. For example, when an agricultural production program brings in all the equipment, seed, fertilizer, etc. needed to plant 1000 hectares to demonstrate maximum yield potentials, the Project will have some beautiful, uniform, productive fields. A winning show! However, when the farmer under normal operating conditions has to compete with 100 other farmers to get the equipment the Project provided or the government cooperative doesn't have the seeds and fertilizer available on time, it may be impossible for farmers to duplicate the Project's efforts.

Under these conditions the main contribution of pilot programs may be to provide critical field experience for host associates. They will know the facts about actual implementation and any bias in the reporting. Thus, they will also know what adjustments need to be made if the concepts are to be extended. For this reason an advisor who insists on corrections in evaluations, particularly in public, could be counterproductive. Public contradiction could force an associate to be more strongly defensive than he means to be, which may force him to press for action on ideas that would otherwise die quietly. An advisor may decide to let the propaganda mill proceed, but privately review the accuracy with associates and confidentially ascertain that correct information on results goes to the proper people. Here again is a job at which expatriates may be more useful than host country personnel. With a multitude of conflicting information presented, Directors eventually gain confidence in expatriates as honest brokers. But, adjusting data analysis must be done discretely to maintain the appearance of information coming from host personnel.

The problem of "showmanship" and "no failures" creates decision-making problems. Most administrators are usually aware of any propaganda and biased reporting that goes into various promotional ideas. This may mean they distrust all new data, and it may contribute to personal infighting among associates. In the end any lack of confidence in new ideas may mean further entrenchment of established concepts.

Ultimate Accomplishments

In assessing the ultimate result of any project, the development of the next generation civil servant leaders, may be more important than any visible impact during the life of the Project. Host associates, who have worked closely with the advising team, may have a tremendous backlog of ideas to implement at the Project's end. However, they may be unable politically to do anything until they have moved into influential administrative positions. At this point they may make use of the project ideas, and the project benefits may finally be realized even though the advising team may be long gone. Fortunately, returning expatriates often find project associates proportionately more advanced in terms of influential positions. For many such advisors, the short-term frustrations may result in solid steps in long-range development.

To moving information on project output to the right people, in the right form to allow

appropriate action and policy adjustment, may require full time 24-hour per day effort by the expatriate. This may be the most challenging part of the job. Feinting in one direction, backtracking, bouncing in again from another direction, this can be a real gray-hair generator, but until it is accomplished, the job is incomplete.

Chapter 5

DEVELOPING PEOPLE

> Give a person a fine reputation to live up to, and he will make enormous efforts--Dale Carnegie

If the primary objective of technical advisors is to promote the growth and development of people, then most of an advisor's efforts must go toward promoting his immediate associates. Therefore, it is most important that host associates do not sit back and essentially allow the expatriate team to run the Project--permitting the hosts to bide their time, accept the "goodies," wait until the team leaves, and then return to their former activities, unaltered. To prevent host associates from sitting back, they must be kept in the spotlight of all project activities; with expatriates fading into the background.

Promoting Associates

There are several ways advisors can promote their associates while remaining a motivating force behind them. One is to be sure they are involved in all decisions. Host associates should sign all essential project correspondence. Since advisors are not included in the organization chart there is usually no need for them to sign correspondence, other than personal matters. This may become a sensitive issue when the correspondence involves a request for TDY assistance. If such requests come from expatriates alone, there is a good chance Directors will feel they are being imposed upon, and the advisors are using Project money to provide for their friends. If an associate is not willing to sign correspondence, take care, something maybe out of line and need review. Even if an associate insists an advisor's signature accompany his own, it may indicate he is not fully agreeing with the message being conveyed. He may want to be able to blame the contents on the advisor if something goes wrong.

Another way to promote associates is to be certain that they are the primary spokesmen for the Project. This can be delicate and even difficult at times. Other expatriates may walk into your office to inquire about the Project and immediately engage you in a conversation--virtually ignoring your associates. Or, you may initiate a discussion with other expatriates and ignore their host associates. Perhaps your fellow expatriates are easier to communicate with, and you find it easier to understand what they are saying. However, host associates are sensitive to the "Expatriate Buddy System" which leaves them out, while foreigners speak for "the host country." It is usually better to have nationals deal initially with all guests and arrange to meet them quietly later if there is a need for further discussion.

Finally try to assure that advisors and associates work in close physical proximity. That is the best way for advisors to know what is going on, and where they can help. At times this takes some doing by the CoP. When the need for expatriate assistance is not fully realized, host personnel can deliberately procrastinate in finding adequate, integrated office space. The host institute may be happy to allow an advising team to rent separate office space, just to keep them safely off to the side. The CoP must be as strict as possible in insisting on physical integration to assure all project personnel a chance to work in harmony and to prevent the two groups from diverging. When integrated office space is not provided, the team may have a major task in demonstrating what expatriate assistance can con tribute.

Technical Effort

To accomplish best results for the Project, the expatriate team must recognize the importance of developing individuals and institutes, not just technology. The advising team may need to concentrate on simpler concepts than they are capable of, or individually interested in, to assure that the host personnel can remain thoroughly involved. If not, the expatriates may achieve some personal benefits, but the recipient country profits little from the assistance.

Once, during a week long conference in one host country which several related expatriate-assisted projects presented their findings, better than 75% of all presentations and 90% of all discussions were by expatriates and other foreign guests. The papers were technically excellent involving sophisticated linear programming techniques, etc. The authors will probably write several "refereed journal" articles and be proud of their accomplishments. However, since the host personnel apparently could neither make the presentations nor take part in the discussion, it is doubtful the host government could use the information collected and the analysis done--the technical effort was wasted.

Data collection usually needs to be a training experience. Many young professionals, who supervise actual data collection efforts, are inexperienced. Thus, some initial data may be of questionable value. Much of the early information and interpretation may later require refining. As experience grows so does the ability of the staff, and the quality of the results.

Occasionally data collection and basic programs become "locked in," and cannot be easily changed. The same data may be repeatedly collected for several years, even when it is no longer needed, after the marginal returns have become negative. This may happen when the junior staff has not seen the entire picture of the project goals. It can be a direct outgrowth of an educational system set up to follow instructions blindly. Therefore, data collection should be planned carefully, with provision for adequate data collection reviews. However, there remains the urgency to get fieldwork started to show project progress.

Technical Inputs

How individual advisors introduce technical concepts will depend on the individuals and how they relate to their associates. Some possible helpful methods are:

Individual Meetings: When discussing technical points, it may frequently be better to meet one-to-one rather than in a group. This may allow for more candid dialogue, for questions or critical comments without being offensive. The need for either person to become defensive is reduced. For advisors, it may be easier to pick up any political sensitivities towards their ideas. One-to- one meetings prevent a "2nd language run around" in which the group shifts into their native language leaving the forlorn expatriate completely out of the discussion. It may be better to develop a consensus with each person, before bringing a group together for formal concurrence.

Questions: Questions tend to stimulate new approaches and point out the boundaries of present knowledge and understanding. Hearing and responding to questions allows associates to develop ideas themselves and usually results commitment to the final concepts. Questioning usually gets better results than a lecture approach. Host associates professionals may be eager for more learning but feel their time for being lectured is over.

Criticism: Host associates can be extremely sensitive to any form of criticism. When criticism is necessary, do it quietly--never publicly--and in a non-personal manner. If possible seek a personally blameless reason for the problem, and provide some form of escape so associates can save face. Be tactful!

Limited Acceptance: Frequently advisors will present logically, reasoned-out concepts that have been effective in home environments, yet they are unacceptable in this setting The tendency is to continue to promote the ideas, thinking they have not been fully understood. Although that may be the case, it is more likely the ideas were understood and turned down. It could be more effective to examine reasons why ideas are rejected. Some reasons for rejection are:

-They don't fit into the political system, and associates are keenly aware of this.

-There is not enough "showmanship" value in the ideas for an associate's needs, thus he is not really interested, even though he fully understands the concepts discussed.

-Similarly, the ideas may not fit his reward structure; thus, he is not interested.

In the case of the first reason it is best to forget the idea or repackage and resubmit in a way that would be politically acceptable. In the other two, these may be areas in which an expatriate can become more directly involved. However, care needs to be taken to assure that due appreciation is obtained before his departure or the ideas will simply die. In all cases it is necessary to reflect on why ideas are rejected.

Failures: No matter how good anyone work is, mistakes are made; ideas don't always work the way they were planned. What happens when something fails to work and cannot be allowed to die quietly, yet an associate politically cannot acknowledge it was a failure? The choice of action can become critical. The advisor and his associate can continue to hammer away with ideas that cannot succeed. The alternative (that allows moving to something more productive) is for the advisor to protect his associates by taking full responsibility for the mistakes. This can be painful, but it may be some of the invisible ink in the job description. Since the advisor is temporary, he is in a better position to accept blame for errors than his associates. This allows failures to fly away with the ex-advisor.

Coordination: In trying to keep associates at the center of activities, it may be necessary to promote communication between different parts of a project. This could require special coordination between various advisory team members, which may be done best away from the office to prevent the "expatriate buddy system" from becoming needlessly apparent. This may be done to stimulate the official action among the host personnel rather than in the expatriate team.

Sidetracked: One major pitfall that awaits advisors is being sidetracked into activities clearly identified as their own and not a part of the host organization. This is a problem particularly when the host country has not fully developed an appreciation of how expatriate assistance can be effectively utilized. In such cases the easiest thing for the host personnel to do is to allow the expatriate to wander off on a project of his own. The resulting "pseudo-accomplishments" allow the advisor to finish his tour with a satisfying feeling of achievement, but no change took place.

Staff Meetings

Most projects will have periodic staff meetings for the combined host country and expatriate personnel. These meetings are designed to review progress and plan additional work. An advisor's contributions in these meetings should be cautious. Too often host personnel allow the expatriates to dominate the discussion. Listening is easy for people who are used to being told what to do. Part of the sit-back-and-wait routine may be the use of the expatriate's language rather than the local language. If expatriates are supposed to be the experts, let them do what they want to do--after all they will be leaving soon.

Such expatriate dominance of joint meetings, particularly during early stages of a project, can sidetrack an entire project into activities not fully supported, or which have limited relevance. Perhaps host country personnel may be keenly aware of the irrelevance but are more interested in personal benefits, so they let the expatriates ramble on. Instead of direct involvement, expatriate's contribution to meetings may be more effective when they ask questions that stimulate discussion from host personnel. This tends to keeps activities supported and relevant, but allows the expatriate a better opportunity to evaluate his effectiveness.

By carefully listening to the host discussions, the advisor has a rare opportunity--a report card

on what has really been accepted and what has been merely tolerated.

In meetings, it is important not to contradict comments directly or put others on the defensive. It may be better to overlook inaccuracies, than to force a public confrontation. Necessary adjustments should be made later in a quiet interview.

Writing

Written Communications: In working with a group used to insufficient clerical support (one that relies extensively on verbal reporting, or simple handwritten notes on a scrap of paper) formal typewritten, letterhead correspondence is reserved for essential communications. The recipient of typed memos or letters, therefore, takes them extremely seriously. Under these circumstances it maybe better to respect spoken communication, and use that means whenever possible. Memorandum written by advisors used to writing and receiving most communication, have often developed a "cast in concrete" aura and been taken far more seriously than they were intended and causing severe strains between the host and expatriate personnel. Visible ink can be a problem!!

When formal communications are essential, they should be written with an associate as the official author. This places the communication in the host administrative system, which gives it more credibility, while keeping the expatriate profile low. Associates can easily do the political editing that will eliminate some problems that may occur when expatriates write memos. If an associate is not interested in helping with a letter or memo perhaps it should not be written. Take the hint!

Reports: For longer written reports the same concept applies, it is preferable for host personnel do the initial draft, even if refusal means the report will not be submitted. Periodic progress reports such as quarterly reports are a good example of papers which host associates can either prepare, or just not submit. Having associates do the initial writing, no matter how poor the language, gives the advisor another valuable source of personal evaluation. His associate will include what he perceives as important according to his priority system. His omissions may indicate problems in conceptualizing or areas not recognized as relevant. Another benefit of the associate's writing is development of language skills--an important qualification for overseas scholarships.

Even with technical reports in advisors may have done much of the actual writing and analysis, it is best to name the host associate as senior author and list the expatriate as secondary author, or just "acknowledged." This is another means of promoting associates, developing their skills, and giving them recognition. If they work in an environment with limited support services for producing publications they may particularly need encouragement and credit. With the associates involved as authors, they will work more on the report and understand it enough to defend it. If a Project Director is involved, it may be politically desirable to leave the expatriate's name off, so the Director will not appear dependent on foreigners. This could result in better acceptance of the ideas--the major objective. When advisors do not include associates, they become vulnerable to the criticism that "you only came here to see how many papers you could get your name on."

Of course, the problem of ghost writing for associates to promote them as accredited professionals may reduce the advisor written output. If the advisors are part of a university contract which operates on a "publish or perish" philosophy this may create problems on campus. Many university administrators have yet to recognize the primary goal of technical advising is personal development and not research, or teaching, or extension. Appropriate evaluation criteria still to be formulated to measure that goal. Another problem for university personnel occurs when they must balance or compromise the quality of their program in order to keep their associates fully involved. This may make it difficult to write the "refereed journal" publications universities expect when considering tenure and promotions.

Junior Staff

In most projects, expatriate advisors work with at least two clearly defined administrative levels. The advisor is usually assigned to work directly with a mid-level associate, and they work jointly with the next professional level below. The latter may contain many newly hired graduates, so the advisor may be in close contact with junior professionals. Because the advisor may actually work at the field locations more frequently than his immediate associates, he provides de facto supervision for the junior staff. Advisors usually enjoy working with young professionals who tend to be interested in technical accomplishments, receptive to new ideas, and greatly appreciate the open administrative style used by most expatriates. However, close collaboration with expatriates can be the "Kiss of Death" to junior staff. Expatriates take care to prevent unintentional damage to their careers or their subsequent advancement to authoritative positions from which project findings can be implemented.

When expatriates provide some supervision for young professionals, they may develop a greater respect for the advisor than for their direct supervisor in the host government. The junior staffers may "cater" to the expatriate for support and benefits. While the expatriate may be happy for the young persons help and support, this close working relationship may cause separation or isolation from the host administration. Antagonisms may rapidly develop between the junior staff and their supervisors. Unless the advisor plans to assist the junior associates to emigrate, it is critical to make certain a positive dialogue continues between the junior staff and the legitimate supervisors in the host system. Otherwise when they leave, the junior staff members who they would most like to see succeed in the government, may be stranded or left out.

Junior staff may feel the need for recognition more than senior staff. They may depend on continuous personal contact with their supervisors and/or advisors in order to maintain interest in their work. This can become a problem because there are only a limited number of people with whom an advisor can maintain close personal contact. If an advisor tries to keep "supervisory" contact with more than six professionals, he will be overextended and the quality of output will

suffer. Four persons may be more realistic.

Moving in the Maze

In many situations host personnel understand the difficulties of surviving in an administrative maze that tends to stifle accomplishment. There are times, when to accomplish the project's work, associates must establish contact in offices they have not previously dealt with. They may not have the informal contacts established to do what is needed. They may then ask an advisor to join them while they establish the necessary contacts. This can lead to what many expatriates would consider a frustrating, wasted day. He will have a "puppy dog" day in which he follows an associate from office to office, consuming quantities of tea, and not understanding a word of what is happening, since most of the conversation will be in the local language. A "puppy dog day" could, however, be a highly productive day. The advisor's presence has given the associate the valuable status and prestige needed. This in turn has opened doors that would otherwise have remained closed, and has allowed him to establish the essential informal contact needed to get around the administrative "plugs."

Personal Notes

There are a few personal actions of minor concern that can contribute to an advisor's acceptability with his host. These include:

Generally, avoid references to conditions in your home country unless they are clearly and directly relevant. Your associates are reasonably knowledgeable about your country, but have a lot of national pride as well. They can resent references to countries where conditions are different from theirs--conditions that cannot be replicated in their own country. References to experiences in other developing countries are generally better accepted, and more relevant.

Similarly and perhaps more sensitive, are references to personal finances and wealth. You are generally living in a dual economy of "haves" and "have-nots." Your associates are certainly aware that you are financially much better off than they are. It is unwise to bring up such subjects, and really best to divert any inquiries broached.

Participate in the office amenities of drinking tea. This is frequently more a social act then a refreshment. It consumes a good deal of the workday but much word of mouth information is transmitted during such periods. For expatriates to get concerned about water quality and consume only refreshments brought from home is just poor PR, and can be a source of mild resentment of the "Why are you better than I am?" type. A mild intestinal disorder with each field visit is simply an occupational hazard.

Likewise, refrain from any complaining about host country living conditions, etc. The complaining has two adverse effects. First, your disdain will invariably get back to your host. As a

foreigner you stand out in the crowd, and everyone is all eyes and ears when you act or speak. Any adverse comments are bound to be overheard and transferred back to your host organization. Even drivers understand more of an advisor's language than they speak, and think they understand even more. They overhear conversations, easily misunderstand the intent, yet still make innocent, damaging remarks around the office. This may not be a deliberate effort--just part of the normal casual conversation. Second, complaining tends to make life more miserable for others as well as for the complainer.

Chapter 6

FOR YOUR BEST EFFORTS

After all the efforts at promoting the work of host associates, the advisor should be ready for a host reaction that is less thanks than more frustration. Typical reactions follow.

Dual Administration

Projects often operate with a dual administration, in which each half walks past and around the other half. The expatriates tend to work closely in their "buddy system" and report mainly to the CoP, while the host country personnel work in their own "buddy system" and report to the Project Director. Points of interaction tend to be minimal. Of the two administrations the host system is the only valid one. Host personnel are acutely aware that they represent the real world, therefore, they feel little or no compulsion to keep expatriates informed about what is actually being done. The result is that the expatriate may be continually left in the dark, and subjected to blind side maneuvers. A well planned training program may have lectures switched, typing put aside to accommodate a host associate's "urgent" needs, or cars assigned for expatriate use diverted to other trips, all without any prior consultation.

To be effective, the expatriate must not only recognize the existence of the dual administration, but must also accept the responsibility to integrate the dual structure as much as possible. This is necessary to maintain the Project as a consolidated effort.

The dual administration does one thing. It creates an opportunity to see what the host is actually accomplishing-- sometimes with surprising speed. Actions accomplished are those the host personnel believe important. Take note! They are excellent benchmarks to guide an advisor's understanding of what is needed.

Another aspect of the dual administration is the relative output expected of host vs. expatriate personnel. The expatriate may observe associates taking a rather casual attitude toward work. Expatriates maybe expected to maintain a higher level of productivity.

Part of the dual administration is the distinction between project and host government support staff. Projects usually hire secretaries, accountants, and administrative assistants. To obtain quality personnel the Project will have to pay salaries well in excess of the prevailing government rate for such employees, frequently exceeding the earnings of the Project Director. Working beside someone of comparable job description, but substantially different salary can cause serious resentment. Little can be done about this inequality, except to make certain local hired project

personnel are aware to the issue.

Administrative Control

In a similar manner host personnel will maintain administrative control over all junior staff working with an advisor. Host personnel can, and will, freely interfere with any plans an advisor might make. Junior staff should be encouraged to get host concurrence before complying with an advisor's work plan. Not only does this help keep host associates informed of the advisor's plans, but when junior staff do not check back with senior associates, they are administratively out of line and may get into serious trouble after the expatriates leave. To assure a smooth operation and increase the potential for continuing work later on, it is extremely important that advisors encourage the process of working within rather than upsetting the administrative structure.

At times junior personnel or laborers will refuse supervision by expatriates. During the installation of a computerized communication system, an expatriate attempted to correct a worker cutting tiles. The worker was not getting the edges flush. The expatriate repeatedly showed the worker how to do the job properly, but the worker would return to his original procedure as soon as the expatriate left. The expatriate was not his supervisor, and the worker was neither going to contradict his real supervisor, nor inform his supervisor of the expatriates alternate technique. If the laborer was doing the job wrong, he did not want his supervisor to know. Likewise, if the supervisor had instructed him incorrectly, the laborer could not criticize he supervisor.

Fence Sitting

One option host associates have is to "sit-on-the-fence," and accept personal credit for any ideas that work and reject unworkable ideas as belonging to the advisors, being unable to accept responsibility for failures. Without this escape it may be difficult to obtain the level of cooperation needed. Some of the "invisible ink" in the job description clearly states, "You will accept responsibility for all failure and credit your associates with all accomplishments." After all expatriates can take the heat. They leave and are forgotten, while host personnel must remain and need protection. This need not be a major problem. Regardless of public statements, everyone associated with the Project usually knows who is doing what.

Part of host associates' fence-sitting tactics is their willingness to sign or join in signing correspondence, and then failing to follow through on the necessary action. This may result when a course of action is not understood in advance, or where it is conceptually out of range of the host. When this happens it may be better to back up and start again with a new course of action.

Personal Conflicts

It is difficult to work on any major project without some personality conflict developing between host and expatriate personnel. The most serious personal conflicts develop when any individual is a barrier or "plugs" to the project's progress. For expatriate teams to try to remove these individuals is asking for trouble--invariably it ends with the expatriate receiving an early ticket home. This is simply a question of who is temporary, and who is a permanent part of the system. It is equally unacceptable to associate project shortcomings to the "plug's" influence. Try it, and the Project Director will assure the advisors that the "plug" is the best person available. Make the best of "plugs"--accept them and do what you can to work on the overall project goals.

Other personal conflicts may develop out of infighting that arises from the normal events. Expatriates can be the victims of back-stabbing and character assassination plots as easily as host personnel. There maybe people looking for ways to embroil expatriates in personal rivalries. Thus, even when an advisor wants to avoid conflicts, he may become entangled. When there are personal attacks the expatriate should try to forget them. Any rebuttal or personal remarks maybe relayed back to an associate in a manner that make matters worse. There are just too many eyes and ears around waiting for an expat to say or do something to indicate a personal antagonism towards host personnel. No matter what the facts are, in all personal conflicts the expatriate is always wrong!!

When personal conflicts do arise CoP's have a key role to play. When problems arise Directors usually inform CoP's about the apparent causes. They should relay to the advisor any information about the problem and whatever adjustment is possible. Also if the situation gets out of hand and the advisor must leave prematurely, the CoP should take appropriate action to prevent serious damage to the employee's career.

Recognition

When associates review the project in public, expect them focus their attention on what they are doing, with less attention to an advisor's direct efforts. This is part of the natural tendency to focus on their own work and recognition that the advisor is only temporary. When an associate gives public recognition to an advisor's ideas--and even claims ownership for them--the advisor may be equally proud of the accomplishments.

Professional Opportunities

Unless contractually specified, the normal professional privileges for expatriates to attend scientific society conventions, symposiums and other types of meetings maybe seen by host administrators as unreasonable. Project Directors are politically unable to allow "their funds" to be used to provide expatriates with professional benefits. To request professional support, even when it benefits the Project maybe is asking too much. Directors and their superiors are all too

conscious of the exorbitant cost of expatriate staff. It may result in extensive pressure and criticisms from his administrative peers and staff who also want professional privileges. They, perhaps rightfully, feel the Project was written for their professional benefit. If the provisions are clearly included in the contract, there usually is no problem.

Chapter 7

BOTTOM LINE

> ...The futility of trying, together with the absolute necessity to keep on trying--Albert Camus

There it is! The sometimes frustrating, somewhat topsy-turvy world of the expatriate technical assistance advisor. A world in which the guest should accommodate the host, instead of the host accommodating the guest. A tremendously important job that may best be described as "all responsibility and accountability, but no authority or credit." A job in which advisors are just that--advisors. They have come into the middle of an ongoing development process, but are not and never can be a part of the organization with which they work. They are on the sidelines. Their efforts are less to get something done than to motivate and facilitate the efforts of associates to assure that they can get relevant work done. The advisors are more managers supporting the success of associates than practicing professionals. When they do contribute, it has little value unless credit is given to others. When they fail to fully involve associates, the efforts (no matter how technically sound) may be fruitless. The accomplishments will fly away with him as sure as if they held a plane ticket. The advisor has failed to promote the contracted changes.

Advisors are employed to assist professional associates, who usually respond rational manner to their administrative environment. Some advisors are actively involved in pursuing technical achievements at the bottom of an administrative pyramid that may not be able to hear or accept new ideas, but there maybe no way to address those administrative problems. Until they can be addressed, the technical advisors may remain essential guests. Their physical presence and willingness to assume responsibility may allow advancement to take place or at least allow host associates to take risks.

An advisor's effectiveness cannot be measured by tangible accomplishments, but by spontaneous expression of <u>new</u> ideas from his associates. Advisors only knows they have succeeded, when host show their appreciation for what they did and they cannot honestly specify what they accomplished. They have facilitated the work of others.

Final results may not materialize until years later when associates have advanced to positions with sufficient influence to effect changes. Long-term results may eventually occur as countries develop, and as administrative obstacles are somehow overcome.

Many of the problems confronting advisors are similar to those found in any organization--sometimes more intensified in the developing world. But for all concerned with development and human progress the invisible ink is a major responsibility to both the donor and the recipient.