



Proposal for the Development of an Evaluation System—Bolivia¹

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The activities proposed here vary from those proposed for Phases III to V in the original MSU proposal made in February 1976. The field trip brought to light a number of considerations which alter Michigan State University's (MSU) perception of what can be done in assisting the SNDC. The new set of activities proposed here will entail less time on the field than originally proposed, but will be spread out over a longer period. *This new set of activities will focus on developing the criteria for evaluation and developing the means for testing.* In addition, it will place a greater emphasis on training SNDC staff in evaluation.

It is generally accepted that research and evaluation are necessary components for development organizations. Research usually performs functions of need analysis, while evaluation usually serves as a means for end-of-project justification. But these activities have come under closer scrutiny and have been found to lack usefulness for program improvement. The separation of research and evaluation into distinct, formalized, functions has resulted in a tendency for activities to be justified for the sake of research or for the sake of evaluation, instead of relating to the whole of organizational activity.

Evaluation, in particular, suffers from this isolation from the whole of organizational activities. There is insufficient concern for determining what it is that *should* be evaluated and how evaluation could be best carried out. Evaluation is done, but generally done for formality's sake. It tends to result in long, detailed papers done by outsiders with minimal usefulness to the effectiveness of a particular project. Neglecting efforts at determining what should be evaluated and developing the means to effectively carry out the evaluation, has left evaluation sterile and ineffective in many development situations.

The proposal attempts to deal with this problem by using both research and evaluation in developing an evaluation system that is relevant to the needs of the organization as a whole. This paper proposes an evaluation plan that uses research *for* evaluation—a plan that converts research into on-going evaluation.

Purpose

This evaluation plan is to be submitted to the SNDC and USAID/Bolivia in fulfillment of Phase II of MSU's *Proposal for Technical Assistance in Non-formal Education* to the SNDC and is an outcome of the field trip carried out January 8–February 18, 1977. The field trip fulfilled the first phase of activities. It provided an opportunity for MSU to gather data on,

1. The current evaluation activities.
2. What SNDC wants evaluated and the variables to be evaluated.
3. What sort of evaluation system SNDC leadership view as ideal.

¹ Proposal for the development of an evaluation system for the training component of the Servicio Nacional De Desarrollo de la Comunidad.

The *second phase* of activities proposed outlines the procedures for a simple, functional evaluation system for its Training Division.

The findings from the field trip point to a number of concerns which are reflected in this plan:

1. There was no attempt to relate evaluation to program improvement. The evaluations carried out were limited, tending to be more akin to reports of activities. In addition, there was no systematic data gathering for evaluation from Training Center to Training Center, nor any consistent statements of criteria for evaluation.
2. The Training Center instructors recognized that to carry out effective evaluation, they need training in evaluation themselves. It was readily evident that no amount of good intentions and administrative commands will substitute for the lack of evaluation skills on the part of the SNDC staff.
3. A need exists to cultivate a commitment to a scientific basis for change. Educational programs are designed and perpetuated with minimal data for decision-making on utility and effectiveness. Evaluation data are useless unless decision-makers and technicians intend to see themselves and their work change on the basis of evidence from evaluation data.

The evaluation plan proposed here is designed with the intent of developing SNDC capabilities to conduct effective evaluation. It is assumed that MSU's part is to provide appropriate training. This plan is submitted to the SNDC and USAID/Bolivia for their consideration and revision, as necessary.

Objectives

Based on the feedback from the field survey, the plan relates to the following objectives:

1. To evaluate the "success" of the training program in preparing community leaders and promoters to have an impact on their communities.
2. To evaluate the "effectiveness" of the instruction in terms of the ability of the participants to learn the subject matter at hand.

Clarifying Assumptions

The circumstances surrounding this proposal demand that certain assumptions be clarified. For the sake of a clearer understanding, the following assumptions are specified:

1. In conversations with USAID/Bolivia staff, Steve Wingert and Lew Thorton, in March of this year, they indicated, informally, a preference for MSU's involvement in setting up the evaluation system. Thus, the plan involves input from MSU.
2. In light of the lack of a specific Bolivian coordinator for this evaluation activity, periodic input from MSU likely is needed for training SNDC staff in evaluation and for training SNDC staff in the coordination of the evaluation plan.
3. The plan is intended to provide most extensively for formative evaluation of the training component. It is assumed that, over time, these evaluation activities will create a need for more data that will lead to broader evaluation and, at the same time, for more effective SNDC training operations.
4. These evaluation activities are intended as a learning experience in the process of evaluation as well as serving needs for straightforward evaluation. Thus, the plan is basic and limited so as to facilitate the learning and management on the part of the SNDC staff.
5. This evaluation plan aims to evaluate the training component of the SNDC and should not be confused with evaluation of the co-operatives' agricultural services, capitalization

- rates, etc. *The proposed evaluation will center on the relationship between training and successful work in the field by training program participants, and the relationship between training and effective learning.*
6. Training in evaluation will be most effective when accompanied by in-service (“on-the-job,” “in-the-field”) training.

Evaluation Plan

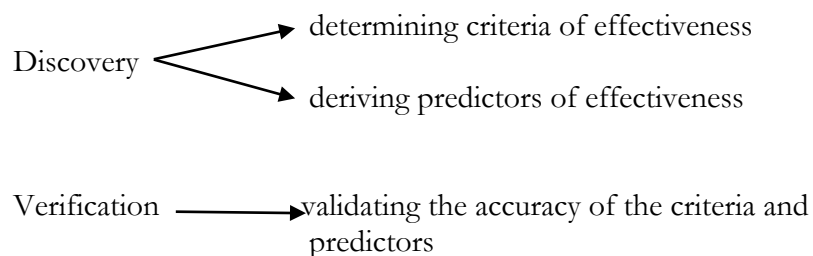
In order for evaluation to serve as a basis for decision-making, it needs to provide judgments on the worth of what is evaluated. For this process of judging or valuing to be scientific, the entity being evaluated needs to be judged against certain criteria or statements of worth. But it is not sufficient to merely subjectively state criteria; there must be a concern for validating the criteria and validating the testing, i.e., the process for measuring the degree of attainment of that criteria. It is when either criteria or measurement (or both) have not been validated that research comes into the picture. A need exists for research that will lead to responsible measurement and evaluation within the training component of the SNDC.

Research, in this case, has two functions: discovery and verification. Discovery has two tasks: it reflects a concern for determining the criteria of effectiveness, and for deriving predictors of effectiveness. Determining the criteria involves identifying the values which accurately represent success. It is a determination of what standard(s) determine effectiveness. Determining criteria, in this case, requires more than simply expert opinion; it is necessary to make systematic observations of what an effective cooperative is, and of what constitutes effective teaching of cooperative management skills. These observations need to be tempered by comparing them with the purpose of the entity, and what decisions about criteria, based on the systematic observations, will be used to represent effectiveness.

From these criteria certain predictors can be derived. The predictors are characteristics or behaviors which make for effectiveness. The predictors are what is tested when measuring for the degree of success. (The degree to which the criteria are fulfilled.) For example, a criterion for effective cooperatives might be the presence of accurate, up-to-date record books. The training program cannot train record books, but it can train (and test for effectiveness) people with certain characteristics or abilities which seem to be correlated with good record-keeping. In this case, predictors might include certain levels of mathematical ability or management skills.

The first function of research in this plan has been stated as one of *discovery*—discovery of criteria and predictors. The second function is one of *verification*—verification demands validation of the criteria and predictors of effectiveness. This process requires systematic monitoring to determine whether the criteria are, indeed, an accurate statement of effectiveness, and whether the testing of predictors actually measured the degree to which the criteria are met. Testing must be refined until a high degree of validity is reached. It is not enough that ways of measuring training effectiveness in the field, or of measuring teacher effectiveness, be devised. *These tests need to be refined (validated) to the point where they actually measure what they are supposed to measure.*

The research in this plan involves the functions of discovery and verification.



These functions can be carried out simultaneously, as needed; they should not be considered as steps. They simply describe the process of establishing a scientific basis for evaluation that goes beyond reporting and end-of-project justification to establish the worth or value of on-going development activities.

Research for evaluation in this plan refers to the role of research in discovery and validating effective measurement in evaluation. *Evaluation itself in this plan has four principle operations:*

1. *Describe* what will be evaluated, including goals and objectives.
2. *Measure* the degree of success the program is having in training cooperative leaders, or the degree of success the trainees have in the field. What is measured (tested) here are the characteristics or behaviors (predictors) that correlate with criteria of success or effectiveness.
3. *Assess* (compare) the measurements against the criteria.
4. *Evaluate* (make judgments) on the “success” of the training program and “effectiveness” of the instruction based on what SNDC leadership determines are acceptable standards of accomplishment. At this point, the evaluation questions are answered with statements on what is working and what is not working with recommendations for change.

With this understanding of the principle operations of evaluation, the role of research is evident in the need for effective measurement, valid assessment, and responsible evaluation according to criteria of success or worth.

Procedures

The following procedures outline the process of developing the evaluation system. The emphasis on the process reflects a commitment on the part of MSU to encourage local participation and decision-making in an evaluation system that the SNDC staff will use. Not only will this approach enhance local commitment to the evaluation system, but also the experience of direct involvement in the specifics of designing an evaluation system will serve as an educational experience that will free the SNDC staff to carry on subsequent and broader evaluation on their own.

The two priorities for evaluation identified by the Training Center staff are:

1. Evaluation of the “success” of the training program in preparing community leaders and promoters to have an impact in their communities.
2. Evaluation of the “effectiveness” of the instruction in terms of the participants’ ability to learn the subject matter at hand.

Evaluation Questions

Translating priorities into practical questions:

1. Does the training lead to success in the field?
2. Are the training courses being taught effectively?

Plan Of Activities

The Plan of Activities encompasses two sets of activities designed to fit the specifications of the evaluation plan: One set of activities provides a way to design an evaluation system for evaluating campesino-leader “success” in the field after training in the SNDC Training Center. The second set of activities provides a way to design an evaluation system for evaluating the “effectiveness” of the instruction of the SNDC training component.

Success in the field is defined to represent the ability of the trained campesino-leader to contribute to the fulfillment of the criteria for effective leadership of co-operatives. The degree of

success or non-success then reflects back on the adequacy of the training program curriculum and instruction in terms of its “transfer” or application in the field.

Effectiveness of the instruction is defined to represent the ability of the staff to deliver instruction; the ability of the students to reach a minimum mastery level of the subject matter, and the utility of the instructional materials to help the students in learning. The degree of effectiveness or ineffectiveness reflects back on the adequacy of the training program to help students master the subject matter.

The focus in both sets of evaluation activities is on evaluating the training program for the purpose of program improvement.

The input of MSU into the following activities is designed so that MSU staff will work alongside SNDC staff to guide in the carrying out of the evaluation plan and, more importantly, to train SNDC staff in carrying out the plan on their own. The bulk of the training in these activities will be carried out in the context of applied field experience and accompanying seminars, not in classroom lectures on evaluation theory.

The specific activities in each phase may be carried out simultaneously; the listing of the activities according to categories is simply to facilitate the enumeration of that which the evaluation plan dictates needs to be done.

PHASE III (September 1977 through November 15, 1977) MSU input: 3 weeks

Phase III activities will define appropriate criteria and predictors, set up the first two evaluation operations of description and measurement, i.e., putting the evaluation system in motion. MSU input in this phase will be limited to three weeks and will provide on-the-job training in the research and initial evaluation activities. SNDC staff will then carry on the research and evaluation activities throughout the Phase III period.

PARALLEL ACTIVITIES IN PHASE III

Activities for Evaluating Campesino-Leader Success in the Field	Activities for Evaluating Effectiveness of Instruction of the Training Component
1. <u>Identify “success” in the field:</u> a. Compile a list of criteria for success from national and regional cooperative development staff. b. Observe and interview in selected cooperatives in each of the regions to verify and refine the criteria and to identify potential predictors. c. Process the survey findings and compile a joint list of criteria. d. Determine if the criteria are consistent with the purposes of the cooperative system. 2. <u>Identify predictors which correlate with the criteria for success:</u> a. From the data gathered in the survey of the co-operatives (1.b.), make a statistical analysis of the predictors to determine which correlate best with the criteria of success. It is important that	1. <u>Identify criteria of effective instruction:</u> a. Observe training courses to determine what factors lead to effective instruction. b. Set standards for minimum levels of course mastery required for course graduates. 2. <u>Identify teaching procedures, instructional materials, etc., which appear to fulfill the criteria.</u> These will serve as predictors of instructional effectiveness: a. Test the predictors to verify the validity of the predictors. b. Statistically analyze the predictors to determine those which best correlate with the criteria. 3. <u>Devise ways of testing for the predictors that will enable the effectiveness of the instruction to be tested.</u>

these predictors be in keeping with the items or characteristics for which the training program can train people. b. Test the predictors in the field to verify the validity of the predictors. This will involve returning to the cooperatives to test for the validity of the predictors. 3. <u>Devise ways of testing for the verified predictors:</u> a. Construction of tests and simulations for measuring the success of the training program graduates. 4. <u>Set up an evaluation system:</u> a. <i>Describe</i> the entity to be evaluated, including goals and objectives of both the co-operatives and the training program. b. SNDC and MSU <i>review the evaluation process</i> and make recommendations for change, if necessary. c. Evaluation activities to continue according to the established processes.	4. <u>Set up an evaluation system:</u> a. <i>Describe</i> the entity to be evaluated including the goals and objectives of the training program. b. Set up procedures for <i>measurement</i>—ways to administer the testing devices designed in (3) above. c. <i>Verify</i> the testing and criteria and establish base lines for continued lines for continued refinement of the evaluation tests and of the criteria. d. SNDC and MSU <i>review the evaluation process</i> and make recommendations for change, if necessary. e. Evaluation activities to continue according to the established processes.
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PHASE V (March 1978) MSU input: 2 weeks

Phase V activities will serve as an opportunity for finalizing the training of SNDC staff in evaluation, and for reviewing and refining the evaluation systems. After these two weeks of activities, the SNDC staff will continue with the evaluation system as they have designed it.

PHASE V

1. SNDC training program staff and MSU staff *assess* and *evaluate* the new evaluation data gathered from the testing of program graduates and from the testing of training program effectiveness.
2. The evaluation systems are reviewed and refined.
3. MSU staff sponsor a seminar on skills in gathering, processing, and analyzing data and in determining implications for change.
4. SNDC staff continue operating the evaluation systems, as revised.