



Nonformal Education in Bolivia¹

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During the ten years of USAID support of The National Community Development Service, there has never been an evaluation of the training activities. Strong impressions of the success and value of the NCDS have developed. Thus decisions for continued support of this Service have been made on the basis of subjective judgments. A thorough evaluation of the operations of the field training centers (the largest programs within the service) and a descriptive study of the other programs will provide valuable data for future planning as well as useful insights on these non-formal education activities.

The plan calls for an evaluative project of five months' duration, to be staffed as an in-house project with assistance of technical specialists in evaluation from the United States. It is assumed that the Nonformal Education Section of The Technical Assistance Bureau will be interested in providing the technical assistance needed for this project because of its potential value for the increased understanding of one of the most crucial forms of non-formal education: community improvement through human resource development.

Purposes

Evaluation of the training programs of The National Community Development Service will result in these gains for AID/TAB and USAID/BOLIVIA:

1. Increased understanding of the values of education within the broad community development context.
2. Focused information about the worth of particular NFE experiences as utilized in these programs.
3. Formative data on which USAID and the Government of Bolivia can plan improvements, augmentations, and discontinuations of programs within the NCDS.

Studies to be Conducted

1. *An evaluation of the training centers.* The primary concern is to be an evaluative study of the worth (consequences) of the several programs provided in the five training centers operated regionally by the NCDS. A brief description of those centers follows:

NCDS Campesino Community Development Training Center Program

The NCDS maintains five fully-equipped centers where men and women campesino leaders, chosen from their communities, are sent for various short-term courses in community and co-operative development, agriculture improvement, marketable crafts

¹ Evaluating the Effectiveness and Describing the Non-Formal Education Programs of the National Community Development Service, Government of Bolivia. Tentative manuscript, from final session with David Bathrick, September 17, 1974. Prospectus for a proposal or basis for a request for proposals. Prepared for TAB, Non-Formal Education, Education and Human Resources, AID/Washington. Prepared by Ted Ward, Michigan State University in support of request 8/14/74, to Bernard Wilder from David D. Bathrick, Chief, Community Development Division, USAID/Bolivia

training, first aid, home improvement, and so on. Those centers are located in rural areas, but relatively close to urban centers.

2. *A descriptive study of the other major services of the NCDS.* This study will provide much-needed descriptive data on the nature and scope of the composite programs of the Service. Although not as objective and definitive as the findings from the evaluative study, it is assumed that findings from the descriptive research will provide needed intelligence about program operation. If so, decision-making about the programs will be facilitated. The findings will also be useful as baseline data for subsequent detailed evaluations of these programs.

Brief descriptions of these programs follows:

1. *Short-Term Specialized Community Level Courses.* Instructors from the training centers are sent to requesting communities to give short-term courses at the community level. Though not as elaborate as the center's resident program, it is cheaper and gives broader coverage.
2. *Activities of Community Level Assistants.* Over 900 local change agents at the community level, 800 of whom are volunteers, work in the following categories:

Village Level Workers.....	60
Village Level Worker Supervisors.....	33
Voluntary Leaders	450
Voluntary Women Social Promoters	350
Women Home Extension Workers.....	23

All of whom provide basic instruction and demonstration at the community level in their area of specialty. In addition, there is a separate Rural Women's Social Welfare Program utilizing female personnel from the above grouping.

Design of the Evaluative Study

The evaluative study will have two major facets: (1) A formative evaluation, designed as a comparative analysis of similarities and dissimilarities among the five training centers. (2) A summative evaluation, designed to establish costs and effects of each of the programs in the centers and of the sets of programs as a whole in each center.

Ideally, an evaluation of this sort would be based on a set of longitudinal measures. Demands for proximate data upon which to base funding decisions do not allow this luxury. Further, the design will necessarily have three major weaknesses, again because of time and cost constraints: (1) Operating-level personnel of the programs will need to serve as data-gatherers. (2) Secondary indicators of effects in the communities will need to be used. (3) Random sampling of previous participants would be logistically infeasible.

It is assumed that the contractor will take into account the first weakness in terms of the sorts of questions to be asked in the interviewing both in terms of complexity and proneness to biased reporting.

The second weakness is not assumed to be severe because of the potential for use of demand and participation data. As explained in the theoretical concept section following, the fact that these programs use a minimum of symbolic inducements, requirements, or extrinsic rewards allows the inference that changes in public demand over a multi-year period is logical evidence of the worth of the training as seen by the learners.

The third weakness is not unusual in evaluating complex social-change operations. There are thousands of scattered communities affected in one way or another by these programs. They are

related to the programs in different and largely unknown ways. The actual locations of former participants are mostly unknown, and the logistics of locating random samples are overwhelming. Thus elaborate statistical methods of data analysis are out of the question. The study will necessarily make the most of careful anthropological methodologies, treating each of the five centers as a case study. Within each of the five cases, studies of representative samples of three sets of participants will be conducted:

1. Participants who are actively promoting the program among their peers.
2. Participants who are apparently personally affected but who do not seem to be engaged in pass-it-on activities.
3. Participants who seem to be on the margin of disinterest.

Forms of Data

1. Program descriptions.
2. Demographic data on program personnel.
3. Enrollment, demand, and participation (attendance) records.
4. Interviews of program personnel.
5. Interview of learners, present and past.

Design of the Descriptive Study

The descriptive study of the other NCDS services is to be appended to the major evaluation of the training centers. The major procedure will be gathering and analyzing descriptive and quantitative materials on the various services provided.

The following data will be compiled for each program:

Kind of services provided	Descriptions
Number of people served in each	Quantitative
Trends in services	Descriptions
Trends in numbers of people served	Quantitative
Costs of services in terms of separate data for salaries, administrative costs, and other significant categories.	

The descriptive study will examine the following services of the NCDS:

1. Short-term specialized Community-Level Courses.
2. Community-Level Assistants:
 - a) Village-Level Workers (and Supervisors.)
 - b) Voluntary Leaders.
 - c) Voluntary Women Social Promoters.
 - d) Women Home Extension Leaders.
3. Rural Women's Social Welfare Program.

Conceptual Background

In contrast with the typically remote and abstract reward system of formal education, nonformal education usually relates to practical and immediate motivations. Learners engage in nonformal education because they believe that certain of their needs will be met. When their needs are not met, they are free to drop away from the experiences. In its most "pure" form, NFE does not depend on merit certificates, compulsory attendance laws or other artificial stimuli for its success and validation. Instead, it meets social and economic needs in ways that are so clearly functional that learners value them primarily for reasons of utility.

The patterns of participation in such educational experiences are one valid indicator of their educational worth. When people of poverty invest their time and meager resources in voluntary educational experiences, it is a reasonable assumption that they believe the experiences will have worth. When the pattern of participation over time shows increasing demand within a given region, it is reasonable to assume that the participants are spreading a good word about the worth of the experiences.²

One of the major problems in conducting scientific studies upon which to base evaluations of complex forms of social education is the difficulty of specifying indicators which are both logically indicative of the purposes of the education and also measurable within the parameters of logistical reality. Thus since the NCDS training programs are largely operated on intrinsic motivation alone, the demand for their services is an indicator of great promise.

In the evaluative study, much attention is to be given to the relation of the training programs and the meeting of perceived needs of people. The study will attempt to discover what, in fact, are the motivations that operate in reference to the NCDS rural training programs.

Key questions are the following:

1. To what aspects of the training are the initial motives related?
2. What additional motives develop during the learning experiences?

Relevant background data:

1. The largest USAID-supported community development program in Latin America is the National Community Development Service of the Government of Bolivia.
2. The current USAID loan to the National Community Development Service supports about 50 salaries per month (average) for training personnel in the centers.
3. In its ten years of services in and through the regional centers there have been 16,000 “graduates” of training programs. The current output is 350-400 per month.
4. The literacy rate in 1973 among adult rural populations was 9.2%.
5. The primary school dropout rate is 64% in the rural sector.
6. The actual availability of schooling in the rural sector is far from complete, though data are not readily available.

On the basis of these facts, it is a reasonable assumption that nonformal education, of the sort represented by the NCDS programs, is more likely than schooling to have life-changing impact on the rural poor.

The NCDS (with USAID/BOLIVIA assistance as needed) will provide:

1. Twelve data-gathering persons for one month each.
2. A project co-ordinator, based in La Paz, to serve as a counterpart.

² These assumptions would not hold if other and more extrinsic motivations were present. The proposed evaluation will include attention to the validity of the assumptions.