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**PLANNED CHANGE: THE CREATION
OF A NEW COMMUNITY**

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Professor Colson is best known among anthropologists for the work she has carried out since 1946 among the Plateau and Gwembe Tonga of Zambia. This long term investigation of the Tonga, spanning a generation in time, has not only deepened our understanding of the human condition cross-culturally, but - of equal importance - has contributed to the formulation of sociological principles that help explain patterns of persistence and change in society, as well as the binding moral and contractual obligations that characterise human behaviour everywhere. The title of her lecture - 'Planned Change: The Creation of a new Community' - reflects her long-standing interest in how people get things done through planned action.

Professor Colson's observations have been recorded in numerous publications, many of which are now considered classic reading in social anthropology. In all she has published - as author or editor - ten books dealing mainly with her Tonga material, several monographs, and more than fifty articles which have appeared in journals, symposia, and encyclopedias.

Among Professor Colson's many honours and awards, she has been a Simon Senior Fellow, Manchester University; Fellow, Centre for Advanced Study in the Behavioural Sciences, Stanford University; Lewis Henry Morgan Lecturer, University of Rochester, and Distinguished Lecturer, American Anthropological Association. She was elected to the National Academy of Sciences in 1977, and, in the same year, was made an Honorary Fellow, Royal Anthropological Institute. In 1978 she was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

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PLANNED CHANGE: THE CREATION OF A NEW COMMUNITY *

by Elizabeth Colson

Introduction

A new industry came into being in the years after World War II, and with it a new community, dedicated to the proposition that other peoples are in need of external assistance if they are to reach standards of production and amenities now associated with the industrialized West. The industry is a multinational phenomenon, composed of agencies whose personnel belong to a specialized community with its own assumptions, procedures, and vocabulary - that is, in the anthropologist's terms, it has its own culture.

A.F. Robertson, a British anthropologist, contends that we know little about this community:

[We] do not really know who the planners are, let alone such anthropologically interesting things as how they behave and what they have for breakfast. We are left with only the most formalistic evidence of what they think - plans, project reports, economic models, and the like ... In no way is the unilateralism of the development process more evident than in the contrast between the faceless, barely corporeal frame of the planner, and the painfully dissected body of the peasant, slum-dweller, or tribesman (1981:6).

This is too strong. We know more than Robertson claims - at least about the international development planners and their community. The development community is of special interest to social anthropologists for various reasons, not alone because it interacts with people with whom we too are concerned. It challenges us because it demonstrates the rapidity with which communities form, establish distinctive cultures, and build support systems, and conform to the rule that whatever brings it

into being, a community once formed has self-preservation as its primary task. The growth of the development community also speaks to larger issues because the key communities of today are of like nature. Jet travel and rapid communication favor the growth of mobile communities based on industries and service agencies, both private and governmental, rather than the old localized communities which are still used as the basis of political representation and legal jurisdiction. The multinational development industry, like other multinational industries, shifts its resources and personnel from country to country, engages local people in its operations for the moment, and then frequently moves on without much thought for the impact of either its coming or its going. To a large extent, it seeks to be self-regulating, which is good for it, but not equally good for those who can be regarded as its clientele.

The international development community, in some respects, is an Alice-in-Wonderland world with a logic of its own, bewildering to one who first encounters it expecting it to be primarily oriented to improving the lot of the peoples of developing nations. Goals enunciated on high clash with one another, and with practice on the ground. Other apparent absurdities include the provision of technical advice which is patently inappropriate in the context within which it is to be implemented, the clinging to tried routines which have failed in the past and are likely to fail again, the commissioning of and payments for reports destined only to be filed, the endless succession of workshops and conferences which consume energies and budgets, and the way in which information is bracketed out.

Little of this makes sense if one tries to understand international assistance as a technical process. It makes very good sense if one assumes that the agencies are staffed by rational men and women who are primarily absorbed in the maintenance of their own community and ensuring their place within it. Such an assumption also explains the failure to develop good

linkages with the localized Third World communities the community is mandated to assist.

These Third World communities do not provide its financial support or form its constituency, and therefore have little control over the kind of assistance offered or the way in which it is offered. Their members can boycott, sabotage, or otherwise fail to cooperate with what is being brought to them, but they do not have the initiative. This is true even of national officials who negotiate with competing development agencies, for although proposals are said to come from the countries to be assisted, such countries usually have little choice but to sponsor one or another project from the narrow range currently acceptable to the international community. Local complaints about poorly chosen, redundant, and badly implemented projects are equally unlikely to register on the international community, shielded as it is from close association with all except the small number of national elite who themselves are usually isolated from rural life or the life of the poor even in the national capital.

Members of the mobile international community plan for people they do not know, who live and work under conditions of which they have little comprehension. Sometimes they implement without having acquired knowledge. They do not stay to live with the results. Planning is a career which rewards its practitioners even though their plans ensure that local people fail.

During the past thirty years much money has been spent and a great many people have been employed, on a short-term or long-term basis, in trying to bring about increased productivity, improved health and longevity, and to ensure a literate, vigorous, docile, contented, grateful population. Probably there is no corner of the so-called developing world where someone has not been sent to orchestrate a transformation. And probably no corner of that world lacks scars left by failed schemes. Certainly international teams have had successes. The wiping out of smallpox is a triumph. Proportionately more children survive into adulthood.

Almost everywhere birthrates are declining, although not fast enough to avert the hunger years that lie immediately before us as the world's population continues to increase. Some have prospered from the introduction of new seeds and new technologies, while others have had an opportunity for the kind of education that opened new doors for them.

Nevertheless, there is general agreement that the record of international assistance in the Third World is anything but satisfactory, even taking into account that much so-called development funding goes for military assistance or in the interests of buying international allies. Paddock and Paddock (1973), former employees of USAID, go so far as to say that we do not know how to bring about long-term improvement in productivity and local standards of living elsewhere in the world. Irma Adelman and Cynthia Morris (1973: 199) argue even more strongly that economic development efforts so far have worked against the poor. The data available to them in 1973 showed both an absolute and a relative decline in the average income of the very poor. I have seen no evidence that the decline has not continued.

Despite some thirty years of international assistance aimed at promoting economic growth and improved standards of living, many countries of the Third World are bankrupt today and unable to find foreign exchange to pay for essential supplies. Zambia, where I have done much of my research since 1946, is two years in arrears in paying its suppliers, according to a recent newsletter report. I have been told that the visitor to Zambia might be wise to bring along some salt: there is none in the shops, nor are there other supplies once taken for granted.

Not only are countries bankrupt, but their political stability is threatened by the angry despair of their citizens, who remember better conditions and blame their governments for what has gone wrong. Rising oil prices at a time when prices for their own commodities continue to fall, rapidly increasing populations, and

the follies of some of their leaders are involved in the debacle. So is international intrigue. And so are the distortions in their budgets created by participation in joint projects sponsored by one or another agency of the international community, which always have some cost to the recipient country.

The Brandt Report on international development issues appeared in 1980. It is subtitled "a program for survival". It is an urgent plea for massive capital transfers over the next decade to enable threatened countries to survive imminent financial collapse and to right the imbalance of economic power between the north and the south. Given the dominant political climate, the Brandt Report is unlikely to find much response among the countries of the north. If it did, one would still ask how the international development community can be induced to respond to local demands so that assistance given under the new dispensation will have a better chance of success.

A Search for Understanding

The occasion of the Moses Lecture has given me the incentive to examine the development community and what it does and so to fathom various inconsistencies which have puzzled me over the years in which I have been peripherally, very peripherally, involved with it.

In 1946 I began work in the central African country of Zambia, at a time when it was still very much part of the British colonial empire, and I have returned to it many times over a period of almost forty years. I have seen the country become independent and welcome the arrival of voluntary and international aid programs. I have watched a large number of different efforts and their impact on the countryside. Meantime I have also come into contact with the development community through other channels. In the late 1950s I had a short-term involvement in the planning of a training program for employees of the agency which later evolved into the United States Agency for International

Development (USAID). These men and women were being assigned as technical assistants to newly independent African countries. Someone in the agency thought they would be more effective if they arrived with some knowledge of the countries where they would work. Not all of those sent to us gave that suggestion even lipservice.

They thought that if you threw enough money and expertise into a country, you were bound to get economic growth and all good things. This, after all, was in the days when planning for development was beginning to be dominated by Rostow's theory of economic growth through massive technological inputs. Because they expected to bring about a rapid transformation wherever they were sent, it was a waste of time to learn about local conditions which would soon be different. Not surprisingly, the training program did not last long.

By 1972 the Rostow model was being questioned. By then it was apparent that programs being urged upon Third World countries were not working as expected. Massive debts were being incurred. The poor were becoming more noticeable. Congress then directed USAID to shift from capital-intensive projects to projects tailored to benefit the poorest of the poor, especially those in rural areas. McNamara's famous pronouncement made about the same time called for a shift in World Bank programs to assist in the building up of the countryside. Other UN agencies and various bilateral agencies echoed the same concerns and redirected efforts in much the same fashion.

It was not only that the political elites in countries poor in local revenue were diverting foreign assistance funding to the financing of better livelihoods for themselves, or that the rapid rise in oil prices after 1973 made technology suspect if it was dependent on foreign oil. The very premises on which plans had been made did not stand the test of practice. During the 1950s and 1960s, "modernization" was assumed to be a technical process

that worked given the right inputs. It was also assumed to be a good thing, presumably because most of those recruited into the development community were economists, lawyers, and technical experts who thought little about social and political impacts. They were asking for a series of revolutions, whether they knew it or not, and revolutions always bring about radical shifts in power relationships and access to economic resources. In a revolution, some people are going to be hurt, and if they can, they fight back.

The Green Revolution, based on new strains of cereals with associated technology, was hailed as a triumph in the 1960s. In practice it turned out to impoverish large numbers of subsistence cultivators. They lost their land in the vain attempt to keep up with the few who had both the resources to invest in the new technology and the political clout to obtain additional credit. In Asia and Latin America, the gainers from that revolution now confront large numbers of landless laborers, whose labor they replace with machines wherever possible. Other interventions have had the same divisive effects on local populations. As a result, old social networks which once provided security to rural populations, and minimized risks through the sharing of gains and losses, have been dismantled. Many who still have some claim to land find they can no longer maintain themselves as respected members of their communities. Throughout the world, a flight from rural areas to cities is in progress as people try to improve their lot or find a way to survive (Arulpragasam, 1979; Franda, 1979; Havens, 1975; Huizer and Stevenhagen, 1973; Lloyd, 1979; Mencher, 1978).

It is not surprising that critics were demanding a new approach by 1972. By the mid-1970s various policy statements suggested that the development industry was being revolutionized. In the late 1970s, when I became involved in various committee and workshop meetings organized through the National Academy of Sciences which related to development, and included officials from various development agencies, much of the talk emphasized the new policy

lines. Speakers called for research that would enable them to do a better job in meshing with local possibilities so that projects would be viable in the long run. They spoke of appropriate technology, of the need to involve local leaders in the planning and implementation of various schemes. Projects were to aim at improving the lot of the rural poor, and care was to be taken not to undercut the resources of the very poor or worsen the condition of women and children. Technology was not to be the final arbiter of what would be done; each suggested project would be evaluated for its probable social impact. If possible, management of various projects should be devolved to those who understood local conditions and were responsive to local constituencies, and the governments of Third World countries were to be encouraged and helped to carry out such decentralization.

To an anthropologist, all this sounded reasonable and promised well. The myth that rural peoples reject opportunities offered by the development community because of innate conservatism or cultural biases has been demolished again and again, though it continues to be comforting to the community to believe that the failure is due to "them" rather than the flaws in what is proposed (Bartlett, 1980b: 2-3). In 1979, the Berkeley Decentralization Project, funded through a contract with USAID, provided the occasion to explore the degree to which the new rhetoric was matched by performance. Lenore Ralston, James Anderson and I spent the next year reviewing much of what had been written about development projects at the grass-roots level. It was the discovery of the clash between what is said and what happens that led to this paper.

Local and National Priorities

One of the first discoveries we made, largely guided by an article by Donatus Okpalla (1980), a Nigerian social scientist, was that development workers and rural people operate on very different assumptions about the meaning of development. When development personnel speak of rural development, almost invariably they think

of some activity they expect to increase agricultural productivity. They are annoyed, to say the least, when farmers use rural credit to set themselves up in a transport business or local shop or pay school fees for their children. Their indignation makes little sense to rural people, who think that development should mean obtaining better local amenities or improving their own incomes and life chances. If development workers want their clients to be better off, then they should encourage them to make the best use of such opportunities as they have. Rural cultivators usually want their children to escape to the cities, where they stand a chance of a salaried job which can help the whole family to rise in the world. For them, increased productivity is a means to an end, not an end in itself, and if they can reach that end by other means, that may be the best strategy. Attempts to persuade rural cultivators to cooperate in communal enterprises to improve agricultural productivity have small chance of success. On the other hand, the same people will pool labor and money to build schools, health centers, roads, and other amenities.

Economic security may be given lower priority than development personnel assume. Other demands on life may be more important even to the poor. Selby and Hendrix found Indian villagers and city migrants in Mexico giving highest importance "as often as not" to "what they call 'liberty', which can be interpreted as a desire for independence, autonomy, freedom from outside interference - in a word, a feeling of control over their own lives" (1976: 238-39). Those who offer help to improve the lot of local people may be seen as undermining that control. Gwembe Tonga of Zambia told me in 1963 that they had refused the help of British volunteers who offered to help them improve their housing and their village layout because they feared they would then be subject to rules laid down by the outsiders about how they were to live in their villages.

Again, development personnel, together with the national elite,

look to local communities to provide themselves, through self-help schemes, with various services which otherwise would have to be supported by the national government or some other governmental source. Local communities, however, use self-help schemes as a means of staking a claim on government to provide services. If they build schools and health posts, they expect government to staff and supply them. Development agencies are willing to provide what they call infrastructure - that is, buildings or other installations or training - but expect the costs of long-term maintenance to be borne by others, preferably the users. Local people provide buildings and other installations if they must, but only with the expectation that maintenance will be taken over by other agencies (Ralston, Anderson, and Colson, 1981: 52-54).

These are all points of misunderstanding that set local people and foreign assistance personnel at cross-purposes. The recent emphasis upon the use of intermediate or appropriate technology may well have added to the confusion. Technology so labelled may well be known locally. Foreign planners, for instance, may assume that people have not built a road because they need instruction in road building and need to be supplied with simple equipment, and that having been helped over the first barrier they will then be able to maintain the road. Local people, on the other hand, may have decided against investing in building a road because they have counted the cost of maintenance under local conditions. It may be of no great job to get people together to build a road or even install a causeway. Many people in developing countries have worked on such projects when required to do so by colonial governments or other authorities, and they know a good deal about how to build with minimum equipment. They know, however, that the really difficult job is maintenance - the rounding up of work crews to do periodic repairs. No local man or woman may be willing to bear the social costs involved in having to chivy neighbors into making repairs, which everyone knows will be a recurrent tax.

I suspect that if one looks at the local point of view, that it is easy enough to explain the abandoned roads, wells, schoolhouses, and other remnants of former assistance programs. People cooperated initially under pressure from their governments, or because they saw some immediate gain in the form of wages or other perquisites. They may have hoped to cannibalize equipment. They did not regard the installation as a long-term asset if they had to bear the cost of maintenance. Infrastructure, properly understood, consists of the social organization which can both build and maintain.

Development personnel frequently look to self-help schemes to provide the impetus for such organization, believing that once people see the advantages to be gained from working together, they will move forward progressively, using the team organization once created to undertake new projects. This turns out to be wishful thinking. Self-help enthusiasm in most of the world is a short-lived affair, whether immediate objectives are attained or not. May (1978: 189) found that few of the numerous self-help groups organized in Papua New Guinea, in the 1970s survived more than three to four years. We have no such precise figures from elsewhere, but it looks as though May's finding will probably hold for most other countries. Glowing accounts of the triumphs of self-help usually turn out to be based on associations in the midst of their first project.

The Bracketing Out of Information

After this, perhaps the most striking thing we discovered was how much of this was already known to members of the development community and that knowing it made no difference. Robert Chambers's Managing Rural Development and Cyril Belshaw's The Sorcerer's Apprentice were published in 1974 and 1976 respectively. They are as good statements about general principles to be considered in planning for rural development as I have found, even though they build upon what Foster (1962) and

others had said earlier. It may be disappointing that the principles turn out to be primarily common sense rules that require no elaborate models and provide no general foolproof formula that can be applied anywhere and everywhere. Probably the most important principle that developers need to grasp is that schemes need to be handcrafted to fit local circumstances.

The economists and lawyers who dominated many of the development agencies in the 1960s, and the technical consultants who worked with them, could not be expected to read what social scientists had written. In the 1970s, however, the agencies began to recruit an increasing number of former Peace Corps volunteers and others who had worked at the grass roots, including anthropologists. These men and women know a great deal about how local communities respond to intervention, and they have read what their fellows write on the subject. They know, therefore, that if priority is given to consultation with local peoples, agencies are going to have to consider very different projects. They also know that if priority is given to improving the lot of the very poor, then decentralizing management to the local level is unlikely to be a good strategy, given the nature of local power relationships in most parts of the world. In other respects, too, what they know challenges current rhetoric and current practices.

The agencies presumably recruit these men and women for expertise at the grass roots, but we found little evidence that what they know is regarded as important, except at the level of rhetoric. What they know, and what we found out, in fact is useless knowledge because it goes against the working premises of the development community and interferes with existing career patterns.

Communicating across such a barrier is almost impossible, as Salisbury and his associates found when they tried to bridge the gap between local people and developers in connection with the James Bay hydroelectric project in Canada. Their experience is worth quoting:

We had initially thought that establishing and communicating facts" would create attitudes and permit communication between people with different attitudes. We soon found that facts were ignored unless they confirmed prior perceptions, while non-facts were accepted if they were in confirmation of perceptions; that attitudes too reflected perceptions; and that communication between people with different perceptions was almost impossible (Salisbury, 1977: 172).

It is not surprising that the social scientists, once hired, are expected to tailor advice so that it integrates with the prevailing mode of operation of the agency that employs them, or that those in local missions see little point in consulting with local people (Almy, 1977; Ingersoll, 1977: 202-3; Pitt, 1976: 9-10).

The experience of the Maasai Livestock and Range Management Project is a case in point. Between 1970 and 1980, USAID and the Tanzanian government spent over 23 million dollars on the project in which they were jointly involved. In 1978 it was evaluated by an American team which included Alan Jacobs, an anthropologist who had known the Maasai and their country since the 1950s. He has written that all in all, the situation was essentially positive. Namely, that whereas external development efforts directed toward Tanzanian Maasai during the past decade leave much to be desired, their actual effects - while often wasteful and non-productive - have in no way been disastrous and that Maasai pastoralism continues to prosper in Tanzania today, both as a vibrant and productive way of life as well as a still largely untapped resource for regional and national development (1980: 1).

He found the Maasai themselves not overly surprised at what had happened. After all, they had had long experience of broken promises and inappropriate technical advice. Jacob's optimism can be queried, however, if one looks at another level: Tanzania

could not afford its wasted funds even if the Maasai were not harmed.

Note that the Maasai Livestock and Range Management Project was planned before AID was urged to provide the kind of technical aid that takes into account the needs of rural people and their capacity to utilize and maintain a project. It was carried out after the call for a radical rethinking of aid programs and at a time when the catchword had become appropriate technology, the gearing of projects to the improvement of the lot of the rural poor, the need to involve local people if plans were to be successful, and the desirability of decentralizing management. By the last is usually meant devolution to some agency below the national level more immediately in touch with local concerns.

Although the new rhetoric implied that projects must be tailored to local conditions, the USAID employees on the Maasai Project were not overly impressed with the rhetoric. They proceeded on the assumption that they knew what to do. The project team leader "was adamant in asserting that 'research or fact-finding is a luxury that this project cannot afford'" (Jacobs, 1980: 5). It is not surprising that the earth dams built by the project were badly sited both in terms of Maasai usage and the lay of the land, and that all washed out during a year of heavy rainfall. The final two years of this ten-year project "were devoted in large part to collecting basic data, trouble-shooting, and attempting to correct technical implementation failures of the previous eight years" (10).

The Containment of Research

What happened on the Maasai Project is what one would expect when a well-entrenched community is faced with a call for radical reform in the way it lives. By 1972 the development community had been in existence some twenty-five years and had created well-defined channels through which action flowed. Like any bureaucracy, its members had become adept at insuring themselves

against the need for rapid change. Alan Hoben (1980: 350), an anthropologist who worked in the USAID Washington headquarters for three years in the late 1970s, estimates that it takes at least five years before a change in the legislation governing AID will affect projects actually being fielded, given the time schedules on which the agency operates. Given five years, the probability is great that new legislation and new slogans will have replaced those now in effect. Dragging of heels makes sense.

The pattern of the Maasai Project is repeated depressingly in projects initiated in the last several years, although by now USAID has recruited both social scientists and Peace Corps veterans who have lived at the grass roots and ought to be spokesmen for the desirability of basing new projects on the kind of knowledge that links them to local possibilities. In fact, the agency produces some very good policy statements that suggest that this is now being done. Hoben (1980: 359), however, sees the policy statements as primarily a means of responding to legislative demands. They demonstrate that the agency is in compliance with the legislation, but the terms of reference are too broad to restrict what AID missions in the developing countries actually do. The statements, however well written or well researched they may be, mean nothing in terms of changing what is done.

The best analysis of why so little happens to change the practice of AID or the World Bank, despite the criticism of their records, has been written by Judith Tendler, an economist who has done much consulting for both agencies. Each agency is set up primarily as a banking corporation with a mandate to move funds. Careers depend upon the formulation of projects which can be funded, and are unlikely to be ruined by the later failure of a project. Despite position papers issued at the top, the objective remains the transfer of funds rather than fielding projects that mesh with local demands and local resources (Tendler, 1975).

Indeed, such meshing goes against the grain because it requires local research, and this takes time. Those who plan a project, which must come officially from the country in which it is to be carried out, have little tolerance of research or of other local advice that might require revamping or otherwise challenge or delay what is proposed. It is no wonder that they resist attempts to foist consultants or research teams upon them. If they must have such outside interference, they settle for short-term consultants who can be prevented from acquiring new information. The favor shown to research at agency headquarters is not reflected in the regional and country offices where plans are laid and implemented. Instead, workers at this level search for schemes that are likely to meet with little resistance in being cleared through channels. This usually means a preference for some variation on a previously funded scheme, because such a proposal comes already outfitted with a justification that has proved acceptable (Hoben, 1980: 355). It probably also will be outfitted with a time schedule on which whatever scheme is involved can be turned over to some local agency, national or otherwise, for further support. Cheap and dirty planning requires little research, even of the cheap and dirty kind. Finally, although it is possible to justify some forms of support for improvement of education, health, or other social services, favored projects are ones which can be claimed to have a good chance of improving local productivity as defined by the planners and the national elite with whom they consult. The Maasai scheme was scheduled to improve the production of beef cattle, although the Masai are interested primarily in milk production.

The Spread of Consensus

Tendler emphasizes the overriding influence of the banking mandate in determining projects favored by USAID and the World Bank and the way in which they operate. This does not explain why agencies set up with other kinds of mandates, based in other countries, recruiting on other bases, share many of the same characteristics. This is true even of the large number of small

voluntary agencies which undertake development work. Students in a Berkeley seminar this past year compared different international aid programs and found them conforming to much the same pattern. One, therefore, has to look at the development community rather than at the organization and mandate of any particular agency to understand what has been evolving over the last thirty-five years.

We are dealing with a close-knit international network that transcends the boundaries of the voluntary, bilateral, and multilateral agencies. It is not uncommon to find that an American member of the community has worked for USAID, the World Bank, UNESCO, the Ford Foundation, and perhaps one of the small contract agencies in the Washington region. In national capitals of countries receiving aid, the employees of different agencies spend much of their time with each other, or with the same small number of officials in the appropriate ministries of the host government. In Katmandu, for example, representatives of almost one hundred agencies that provide assistance to Nepal intermingle. Some seventeen different branches of the UN are included in the one hundred, while the United States is represented by delegations from various governmental branches as well as by large numbers of voluntary organizations based in the United States. Voluntary organizations trip over one another as they compete for the chance to start this or that project in Nepal (Judith Justice, personal communication). Nepal may be peculiarly favored because of its beauty and strategic position, but other capitals have much the same kind of development-based community, which plays host to a stream of delegations arriving to see what else can be done. Even smaller centers, if near the capital and provided with good transportation, may have such a community. A USAID employee sent to supervise a project centered on a small town in Upper Volta easily accessible from the capital found herself competing with representatives of five other projects, each funded by a different country or UN agency, and each intent on involving the same population in its development scheme (Nancy Wallick, personal communication).

Members of the international development community share much the same local country experience even if they tour outside the capital. Robert Chambers (1980) points to the phenomenon of development tourism: all to the same few, easily accessible places at the best time of the year for travel. This is usually the time when supplies are most plentiful and people best fed. They visit showplaces which do not represent conditions off the beaten path. Short-term consultants, home office visitors, those stationed in the capital - all flow through the favored places. They learn little of the difficulties faced by people in the hinterlands, or what conditions are like in the bad weather months. They can filter out what little they do learn.

In the late 1970s, Judith Justice (1981) found international planners, involved in planning the integrated health program being developed for Nepal, intent on extending the program, although existing health posts could not be staffed or kept stocked with medical supplies. Training programs were set up to turn out health workers at various levels without regard to the fact that these people would soon find themselves in situations where they would have little or no backup support, and would be unable to meet the expectations of those induced to consult them. These men and women were bound to fail - indeed were being set up to fail. One determined health officer who knew his job and was stationed close enough to Katmandu to press his demand for supplies was termed a troublemaker by his superior. One such man, the supervisor indicated, might not be insupportable, but a few more would strain his resources beyond their limits. Better inefficient health workers satisfied to do nothing than men and women intent on providing health care for the people. The international community sees the training; it does not see what happens next. From its pooled experience, largely based on this and other capitals, it creates the image of the ideal project to operate under ideal conditions.

At another level, the network maintains itself. A constant succession of workshops, conferences, and study groups bring together those recognized as experts on technical assistance, with potential allies from academia and industry flown in from various parts of the world, including countries receiving aid. Typically, groups assemble on the first evening equipped with an agenda and perhaps a position paper, spend the next morning introducing themselves and hearing from chair and staff members about their mission, break up into working groups that afternoon to begin to prepare a report, come back into a general discussion group the following morning, and by then, having already lost some members, disband, having been assured by the chair that this has been a very useful exercise. The staff is left to prepare the report.

A hasty check of the newsletter of one organization closely linked to USAID for the purpose of mobilizing technical advice shows some sixteen international meetings scheduled over a four-month period (September through December 1981) - an average of one per week. The meetings were to be held in Washington, Dakar, Freetown, Cairo, Paris, Delhi, Bangkok, Tokyo, and Manila; they ranged in size from small workshops to large conferences. These represented only a fraction of the total number of meetings which during this same period would associate and reassociate members of the development community - meetings sponsored by other branches of USAID, the World Health Organization, the International Labour Organization, the Canadian Institute for International Development, etc. etc.

Meanwhile, in the various agency headquarters, staff responsible for any particular meeting comb the reports issued from earlier workshops and conferences to prepare the agenda and provide the basic data to be used in preparing the reports which inevitably must flow from the coming meeting. It is not surprising that such reports come to read much like each other, for their writers cannibalize what has previously been written, adopt the same

style, and seek to further a consensus about what the community is doing. The reports are not expected to query established wisdom or provide a critical assessment of current practice. Only rarely are they working documents in the sense that academics involved in research are likely to expect. It is most unlikely that any report will lead to future action. As Jack Weatherford has noted of the activities of the United States Senate, in the development community "real decisions are made in face-to-face encounters; documents are added later to legitimize them" (Anon, 1981: 21).

The workshops and conferences which float from one city to another provide the occasion for face-to-face encounters, but they are also ritual events which speak to the value of the development community. They bring together and remind its dispersed members that they are linked in a common endeavor and share the same goals. They impress upon potential recruits from academia and industry the value of an association with the international endeavor and the desirability of supporting it.

The result of all this activity - the exchange of personnel, the intensive association of staff assigned to national capitals, the rituals of workshops and conferences - is a homogenization of goals and approaches. It centers attention upon the common reference group, which is the development community itself. It creates allies in universities, research institutes, industry, and other branches of government which can be mobilized when the community comes under attack. It provides career paths for Third World people, or at least a temporary escape from the shortages of their homelands.

Somehow it is all rather far removed from the hunger, poverty, and despair of so many people in the countries that receive aid.

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