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The thesis traces Ghana's political, economic and social development during the 1970s and 1980s, and the incipient role of project communications, including efforts made at setting up printing and communications facilities.

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Ghana - A Land and Nation of Diversity

Ghana is a diverse nation. A West African nation of about nine million people, Ghana occupies approximately 160,000 square miles.

Ghana's southern coastline arches gently for over 250 miles along the Gulf of Guinea about six degrees north of the equator. Broad coastal plains and river deltas give rise to densely forested hills in the interior. The northern quarter of Ghana is dominated by pastureland and fields.<sup>6</sup> Ghana's climate ranges from two rainy seasons along the coast to a wetter climate in the forest areas, and then to an annual dry and wet cycle of seasons in the sub-Saharan north.

Over forty ethnic groups bring cultural variety and many distinct languages to the country. The British imposed English as the official state language during the colonial era and it was retained after independence. But in the rural areas of the north, local languages predominate, changing frequently as traditional tribal boundaries are crossed. Ghana has diverse natural resources and export industries, but continues to rely heavily on cocoa as its major foreign exchange earner. Ghana has traditionally been the world's largest producer of cocoa. Other significant export industries are timber, industrial diamonds, and gold. Recently, oil and natural gas have been discovered along her coasts.<sup>7</sup>

### Colonial Organization and Development

The Dutch and Portuguese conducted coastal explorations in the 15th Century. In the latter part of the 19th Century the British colonized most of modern Ghana and named it the Gold Coast.

British colonial administration set up a wide spectrum of organizational, infrastructural, and physical systems in the colony. The British subordinated the traditional tribal systems to a bureaucratic government and a civil service modelled after her general colonial pattern. For administrative purposes, Britain sectioned the colony into eight regions and subdivided them into districts and subdistricts.

Britain also developed the cocoa, gold, diamond, and to a limited extent, timber industries. Roads and telecommunications were set up and improved especially where resources were being exploited.

Planned development of the colony's social services began in the early 20th Century. The Governor General introduced the first planned program in the 1920's to improve transportation, education, and health services.<sup>8</sup>

Another example of national development planning in the early 1950's sought to reduce the colony's dependence on cocoa for foreign exchange. Nationwide agricultural stations were set up to assist farmers in crop diversification and livestock improvement.<sup>9</sup>

The educational system was another target of pre-independence social development and this remained a high priority after independence. Less than 1100 primary schools and only 12 secondary schools in 1950 grew to more than 7000 primary schools and 85 secondary schools by 1964. Over 1.5 million students were enrolled.<sup>10</sup>

#### Independence Brought Change and New Problems

Ghana was the first African colony to gain independence. The British released the colony to its own elected government in 1956. Many Africans viewed Ghana as the "shining black star" of African freedom and hope. This view was justified as Ghana began independence with the highest literacy rate and the highest per capita income in Africa. Ghana's material wealth was also substantial. When Britain relinquished control, she freed a cocoa export trust fund of 53 million pounds sterling.<sup>11</sup>

During the first decade of independence Ghana launched numerous economic and social development programs under the charismatic and popular Kwame Nkrumah.

With resources apparently abundant, Nkrumah began the formidable task of shaping the government and social system into a modern state. The broad ethnic mix, large areas of rugged and diverse terrain, relatively undeveloped physical infrastructure, and few city and agricultural centers

complicated the task. Of the eight administrative regions, both the Western and large Northern regions had been only minimally developed under British rule.

Soon after independence Nkrumah began massive, capital-intensive projects for the improvement of the country's infrastructure. In the early 1960's, he coupled these projects with a plan to create an African socialist state that would be independent of the West and self sufficient.

Nkrumah planned to showcase Ghana as a modern nation with strong leadership capable of major industrial production as well as a center for African culture. Thus, Nkrumah began several major projects. He started an elaborate complex of political and governmental structures and a sports complex in the capital of Accra. Ghana began building a complete man-made port with adjacent planned city and industrial complex ten miles down the coast from Accra at Tema. Nkrumah's grandest single project was the construction of sub-Saharan Africa's largest hydroelectric dam at Akosombo. When this dam was completed, it formed the head of a man-made lake over 200 miles long. Plans were also made to upgrade the nation's transportation, electrical, and telecommunications systems.

The capital of Accra and the coastal cities were the greatest benefactors of these massive government projects. Projects in the rural areas were given a lower priority

initially, and this priority continually decreased as foreign reserves began to dwindle after the price of cocoa fell in the early 1960s.<sup>12</sup>

Nkrumah's concept of agricultural development emphasized large scale, communal, state-owned farms. These farms used heavy machinery and cadres of government paid employees known as "workers brigades." Brigades included some local farmers, but their ranks consisted mainly of unemployed men recruited from the urban areas. With the emphasis on the state farms, few resources went to assisting the small scale farmer during the Nkrumah regime.

Economics Dominated  
Political Changes After  
Nkrumah

Ghana faced growing economic problems in the 1960's. Foreign earnings dropped as the price of cocoa fell in the early 1960's and the government's large, capital intensive projects had eaten deeply into foreign reserves. Several population sectors, including the military, became disenchanted with the government's policies and leadership. In 1966, a military group staged a coup overthrowing Nkrumah's government and began shifting policies away from a socialistic orientation.<sup>13</sup>

The workers brigades were among the problems associated strictly with Nkrumah's socialist schemes. Low production

records, heavy machinery costs, and the socialistic base led to the demise of the worker's brigades in 1969. Concurrently, the new government began emphasizing assistance to small farm holders.

While small farmer development has continued to pose new problems for the government, there has not been a return to the state farm system on the scale advocated by Nkrumah. The cost of that mechanized, large-scale approach to agricultural development can still be seen throughout Ghana's north in the form of scrap heaps of rusting machinery too costly to repair and too expensive to use.

Since 1966, Ghana has been governed by a succession of military and civilian governments each of which has maintained that small scale agriculture is an important aspect of Ghana's development planning. Each military coup has justified seizure of power because of government corruption and economic failures. The prosperity Ghana exhibited at independence was short lived and has eluded Ghana ever since.

After Nkrumah, a military junta ruled briefly and then turned the nation over to a parliamentary government under Dr. K.A. Busia. Busia did not succeed in solving Ghana's problems and was overthrown by a second military coup in 1972. From 1972 to mid-1978 the nation was headed by the military government of General Ignatius Acheampong.

The general population lauded Acheampong during the first years of his rule for his programs and promises to improve the economy and end corruption in the government.

A principal Acheampong strategy was increased import controls. He coupled import controls with increased government participation in the sale and distribution of essential consumer commodities and agricultural inputs. These measures were supposed to reduce imports of luxury goods and eliminate unfair practices by corrupt traders. For example, the government, through the Ghana Supply Commission and the Ministry of Agriculture became the sole importer, distributor, and vendor of chemical fertilizers.

#### Civil Service Expansion and Increased Corruption

While this strategy had obvious benefits, there were also unpredicted problems. The strategy's success rested on the assumption that government employees would not themselves become corrupt. As government involvement in commercial affairs increased, civil service employees of many government agencies became involved in the sales and distribution of what were frequently scarce commodities. The government employees belonged to a civil service system that had its roots in the colonial era. But during colonial times, native members of the civil service were exceptionally well educated, competent, and well placed in the local



society. After independence, Ghana's civil service became massive. Membership was no longer dominated by elite social classes.<sup>14</sup>

By the 1970's many government agencies were grossly overstaffed. For example, Ghana Airways had four passenger aircraft with a seating capacity of under 700 in 1977. Yet, the government owned airline had over 3500 civilian employees.<sup>15</sup>

While the civil service had continually grown, reforms in its size, organization, and operations had done little to generate productivity or efficiency particularly from its lower ranks. The civil service commanded a low degree of loyalty from its employees and the low pay was offset only by the extremely high job security the service offered.<sup>16</sup> Inefficiency, absenteeism, and even petty theft seldom resulted in disciplinary action.

Civil service regulations made it difficult to punish poor workers and to reward good ones with promotions and other incentives. Promotions and salary ratings below the highest civil service ranks were seldom based on creativity, diligence, or proven job skill. Normally, only formal education was considered in promotion applications.<sup>17</sup>

Thus, civil servants had few incentives to be creative or productive in their work. At the same time, many of these workers found inflation eroding their pay. Then, with

the new import controls and government run distribution systems, they were assigned duties that afforded opportunities for corruption without fear of serious reprisal. These circumstances created an environment where honesty and dedication were hard to justify on a rational basis.

Acheampong Sought Agricultural  
Production as Economic Solution

Despite these problems, the import regulations and controlled pricing system under Acheampong did have positive effects on Ghana's economy between 1973-1975. Three years of good harvests both inland and from the coastal waters assisted the import controls in improving Ghana's economy. To improve self reliance and reduce food imports, Acheampong initiated a national program to increase local food production in 1973. Operation Feed Yourself, dramatically increased government emphasis on small scale farming. Operation Feed Yourself promoted increased production in all agricultural areas, even backyard gardening in urban areas. In 1974, the program was expanded through Operation Feed Your Industries to include production of raw materials for Ghana's agri-based industries. To be successful, these programs needed a nation-wide commitment to food production and improvement of crop varieties.

Following bumper crops in 1973 and 1974, large areas of Ghana experienced drought for the next three years. The

drought brought food shortages, increased importation of foodstuffs, and finally, famine in Ghana's Upper Region.

Acheampong Overthrown Amidst  
Economic Hardship and Corruption

After 1975, shortages of consumer staples were compounded by the lack of many commercial and industrial supplies from the legitimate market. Even government agencies began having difficulties obtaining materials needed to operate. For example, the national press found problems in obtaining paper stock, film, and ink. Black and white 16mm movie film could only be purchased on the black market at prices ten times higher than its official price.

The popularity of Acheampong's government declined after 1976 amid spiraling inflation, shortages of raw materials and consumer goods, and increasing charges of government corruption. His popularity suffered further when he proposed a return to civilian rule based on a "Union Government." Union Government was the name given to what Acheampong claimed to be a new governmental form uniquely designed for Ghana's need. This new form would be civilian rule, but without political parties. The parties would be replaced by representation from each functional sector of society. This representation would include substantial groups from the nation's military and national police.

Several organized sections of Ghana's population, including leaders of former political parties and university students, were displeased and distrustful of this proposed governmental form. Dissent grew following a national referendum held despite a ban on meetings or dissent from Union Government opponents. In the early months of 1978, Acheampong's leadership grew steadily less accessible even to his military council. Finally, in June, 1978, Acheampong was forced to resign and was arrested by a group of his fellow officers.

New Leaders Have Not  
Solved Ghana's Problems

The new leaders under Colonel F. Akuffo eventually dropped Acheampong's plan for Union Government and allowed political parties to begin open operations in preparation for national presidential and parliamentary elections. Thus the military regime agreed to hand over control to a new civilian government in July 1979.

Economic conditions did not improve during the second half of 1978 or the first half of 1979 despite drastic monetary reform measures, including a series of devaluations of the Ghanaian cedi.<sup>18</sup> In March of 1979, in a move that surprised most of the citizenry, the government closed the national borders for one week and changed the country's currency to new, devalued notes. Despite these monetary

reforms, conditions failed to improve for the average consumer and charges of corruption in the military grew.

Shortly before national elections were to be held in June 1979, a young air force lieutenant staged a coup and set up a short term government council. Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings held power in Ghana for less than 90 days. During this period he and his fellow members of the "Armed Forces Revolutionary Council" (AFRC) vowed to end corruption in the military and the commercial sector and then turn the country over to an elected civilian government.

The AFRC summarily tried and executed eight former national leaders including Akuffo and Acheampong. Traders were ordered to return hoarded goods to the markets and to begin selling them at controlled prices. When hoarded goods were found, they were seized by the military and sold to the public. When the large traders of Accra's central market did not comply with the orders of the AFRC, the market was searched, dynamited, and bulldozed.

National elections were held on schedule and the civilian government was given power in September 1979. According to recent reports, the Ghanaian people continue to hold the now retired Rawlings in great respect.<sup>19</sup>

The president and parliament governing Ghana since Rawlings stepped down have not succeeded in sustaining the sense of renewed nationalism and honesty that the AFRC had

begun to establish. By the middle of 1980, renewed charges of government ineptitude and corruption were being made. The economic problems of the country continued to worsen. There was evidence that Ghana was experiencing the worst shortages of consumer goods, petrol, industrial supplies, and raw materials in its history.<sup>20</sup> Africa's "black star" continues to struggle as this study is written.

Within the volatile, problem-ridden past two decades, numerous bilateral and multilateral agencies have attempted to assist Africa's "black star". Some have helped the star to shine while others have served only to tarnish it.

Historical and economic factors thus contributed to a difficult political and economic environment for a communication support project requiring a continual flow of raw materials for media production. Normally easily obtainable materials like paper and ink would become major problems for the communication support project. In addition, the daily living conditions of the population were made more difficult by shortages in staples and services. Obtaining goods and services most would take for granted required more time for everyone, regardless of social strata. Efficiency and morale of the project staff and its clients were effected.

However, the organization most critically related to the project was the Ministry of Agriculture. The impact of economic problems and general bureaucratic conditions within

that organization had a special relevance to the project because the Ministry housed the project's client agency and the various agricultural projects that became the focal points for assistance efforts. Insight into these efforts is aided by knowledge of the Ministry's organization, its problems, and its goals.

#### Ministry Organization

The Ministry of Agriculture was a major branch of Ghana's bureaucratic system. Despite a number of reorganizations, it remained structurally similar to the agency set up under British rule to administer and develop the agricultural sector.<sup>21</sup>

Ghana's Ministry of Agriculture was organized hierarchically with the nexus of control near the top. The Ministry was headed by an appointee (a minister under civilian regimes and a commissioner under military governments). This position was political and changed on the basis of policies and goals of the government in power.

Continuity in administration and planning of agricultural programs and policies were provided by the Ministry's Senior Principal Secretary (SPS). The SPS was the highest civil servant in the Ministry and functioned as senior administrative and executive officer under the commissioner. Under the SPS's office were the central treasury of the

Ministry, its central stores, personnel department, and a variety of specialized administrative units.

Departments and parastatal boards and corporations formed the next Ministry level. In 1975, six departments operated autonomously with responsibility for a specific aspect in the agricultural sector.

These departments were the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Animal Husbandry, the Department of Veterinary Services, the Department of Fisheries, the Department of Economic Planning and Statistics, and the Department of Mechanization and Transport.

The parastatal boards and corporations under the Ministry's control included the Grains Development Board, the Cotton Development Board, the Bast Fibers Board, the State Farms Corporation, the State Fishing Corporation, and the Cattle Development Board.<sup>22</sup>

The directors of the departments and the parastatal bodies formed the organizational level just below the SPS. As of 1975, each had equal rank and authority. Each director was a specialist in agriculture with both administrative training and specific knowledge of the technical functions of his or her department.

The highest officer level outside Accra was the regional officer who administered his or her department, board, or corporation in one of Ghana's regions. Below



these regional heads were district officers and subdistrict officers. Departments, boards, and corporations whose goals included diffusion of innovations had extension staffs at the district and subdistrict levels.

This Ministry organization was set up in 1974. Before then, the Department of Agriculture had been above the other departments organizationally. Even after the 1974 reorganization, the Department of Agriculture remained the most generalized with peripheral functions such as operation of the Ministry's Manpower and Training Division, the Home Extension Division, the reference library, and the Information and Publications Unit (IPU).

#### Organizational Problems

Coordinated and integrated agricultural development was complicated by the number and operational autonomy of the departments and organizations in the Ministry. Directors ran their departments as organizationally discrete subunits of the Ministry. Regional, district, and subdistrict officers from the various departments and parastatal bodies were seldom under any obligation to coordinate their activities or pool their resources. Orders for each rural department, corporation, or board officer came down from headquarters through discrete channels. The result in the rural areas was a large number of relatively independent projects,

programs, and campaigns aimed at changing different but frequently overlapping aspects of the small farmers' methods and lives.

### Resource Problems

The lack of coordination at the regional level and below grew worse as economic conditions in Ghana became more difficult. After 1974, the Ministry's field staff found its allocations of operational tools like field gear and vehicles reduced. It also became increasingly difficult to obtain spare parts for the motorcycles extension officers owned and used for their field work.

Discrete administrations and field programs of the various departments, boards, and corporations made resource sharing extremely difficult at the regional and district level. By the mid-1970's, many extension officers became immobile. Their immobility conflicted with the additional stress the national government was placing on assistance to small scale farmers.

The variety of departmental efforts with different goals but few resources led many small farmers to see the Ministry of Agriculture as a fragmented organization with an office-bound field staff.<sup>23</sup>

### Field Officer Training Problems

Lack of coordination and dwindling resources in the field put serious constraints on Ministry's efforts to assist small farmers. An additional constraint centered on a lack of quality training facilities beyond the mere technical aspects of modern agriculture and farm management. Again, the quantity not the quality of training determined rank.

Nationally and regionally, most senior officers had degrees in some agricultural major from either a Ghanaian university or a university abroad. Senior technical officers (STO) operated mainly at the district level. An STO generally had a diploma earned after completion of a three-year university course in agriculture. Below the STOs were the bulk of the field extension staff, the technical officers (TO). A TO usually had a diploma earned during a three-year course at one of the Ministry run agricultural colleges. Lower grade extension personnel generally had some on-the-job training and, in numerous cases, had attended a one year course in general agriculture at one of the Ministry's six farmer training institutes.

Ironically, considering the separation of functions between the departments, all of the Ministry's TOs, had the same three-course except those in the Departments of Fisheries and Veterinary Services.

Supposedly, these officers' technical knowledge in agriculture should not have posed a problem in their extension duties. However, at all levels, formal training lacked an emphasis on communication skills. Group effectiveness, interpersonal effectiveness, community organization, and use of print and visual media products were not covered substantially in the agricultural college curricula. As a result, the TO learned about agricultural innovations in depth but not about strategies for diffusing innovations effectively or equitably.

Not only had the extension staff's training been short on discussions and practice of communication strategies, but this staff found few extension tools existing at their field stations. By the mid-1970's, the Ministry had a serious shortage of printed and visual products designed to assist staff training, organizational communications, and extension. Without these materials, the field officer in the Ministry of Agriculture found himself equipped for his duties with only his technical knowledge and his mouth.

Government Run Farm Supplies  
Sales and Allocation Problems

The training curriculum for extension officers also failed to equip them to handle additional duties related to allocation and sales of necessary farm supplies.

With increased government involvement in importation of essential raw materials, many extension officers had these duties overlaid on their traditional roles. By 1975 the Ministry of Agriculture became the sole distributor of fertilizer; many field officers were assigned these allocation and sales duties. Lack of training in bookkeeping and sales did not hinder extension officers' newly found positions of power over farmers who needed the inputs.

Frequent shortages and the government-subsidized pricing system facilitated a black market price for farm inputs sold outside legitimate Ministry channels far exceeding the price authorized by government.

Thus, these distribution and sales functions, low civil service pay, high inflation, poor job conditions, and shrinking resources put many extension officers in a tempting position to become farmer extortionists and black marketeers.

This continually deteriorating situation forced the Ministry in 1974 to ask the United Nations to assist it in the reconstruction of an internal publications and public relations unit. As a result, a series of activities ensued which led to the planning and implementation of the communication support project for Ghana.

IPU Viewed as Potential  
Resource by Ministry

Following the 1974 reorganization, the Ministry continued to search for ways to improve both its image and its operations. A thinly stretched extension staff with diminishing resources was continually being given expanded duties. Operation Feed Yourself and Operation Feed Your Industries encouraged even the town and city dweller to join in food production. Simply put, the Ministry was charged with spreading information and persuading both farmers and non-farmers to adopt new practices and participate in national agricultural campaigns when it had a woeful lack of resources.

The Ministry needed new resources and strategies for increasing the reach and efficacy of its programs. One potential resource then idle and unproductive, was its own small Information and Publications Unit (IPU).

Set up within the Ministry prior to independence, this unit had produced and published extension materials and an agricultural research journal entitled The Gold Coast Farmer. After independence, the IPU had continued to publish the journal as The Ghana Farmer. In addition, the unit produced extension and public relations materials for the Ministry. In the late 1960's, with equipment and training assistance from the United States Agency for International

Development (USAID), the IPU obtained two offset presses and photography equipment and increased its extension publications.

However, after USAID assistance ended and Ministry reorganized the IPU slowly lost its production capacity. By mid-1974, most of the printing equipment was inoperative and all but one of its editorial staff had either left the civil service or been reassigned.<sup>24</sup> By reestablishing the IPU the Ministry would regain the prestige which had been generated by The Ghana Farmer and, once again, have its own internal printing facility for production of extension materials. The IPU would also provide additional channels for assuring national press coverage of Ministry programs and pronouncements. Thus, while the Ministry could justify returning the IPU to a productive state, it had neither the equipment nor the expertise to accomplish this job. Both equipment and training expertise would have to come from some external agency.

In 1974, the Ministry asked the Food and Agriculture Organization's Regional Office for Africa (RAFR) to evaluate problems at the IPU and to help procure new equipment. A technical expert in photography from RAFR surveyed the IPU's equipment and found most of it either broken down or rapidly deteriorating.<sup>25</sup>

The unit's equipment problems were reported to FAO's Regional Information Officer. He suggested to the Ministry that new equipment would solve only part of the IPU's productivity problems and that FAO should be asked to send a mission to analyze the unit's needs in more detail.<sup>26</sup>

The ministry requested a project formulation mission from FAO. A two man mission arrived in Accra in February 1975. One was a project officer from the organization's Development Support Communication Branch (DSC/FAO), and the other was an independent communication consultant.<sup>27</sup>

#### FAO Mission and Project Appraisal

The consultants spent 14 days working through IPU problems and preparing a proposal for the Ministry in which to strengthen and expand the unit's operations. Throughout the period the consultants worked closely with agencies whose support would be essential if a project proposal were approved. As parent organization of the IPU, the Ministry of Agriculture's goals for a project were given high priority. But the consultants knew that any successful proposal would also accommodate the goals of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) as the project's funder and DSC/FAO as the project's international executive agency.

Resources and organizational relationships to the unit pointed out the obvious importance of the goals of the three



agencies for the project. Goals also evolved from less obvious but equally important sources. These sources were the groups who would eventually staff the project and work with the IPU on a day-to-day basis. One group was the staff of the IPU itself, and the other would be the expatriate staff component of the project. The mission tried to obtain input from representatives of these groups. The IPU staff was visited in Accra, and one of the mission's own members was a likely recruit for manager pending negotiation and project approval.

The DSC/FAO mission first discussed the goals of each agency and group, and then decided how all goals could be built into an acceptable project proposal. The mission found there were many similarities among the goals, but also some significant differences. The Ministry's goals for returning to IPU to productivity included equipment purchases and staff training. Acceptable productivity for the Ministry meant publication of The Ghana Farmer, extension bulletins, and newsletters. IPU productivity from the Ministry's perspective also included the staff's ability to coordinate coverage of Ministry announcements, events, and campaigns. Finally, the Ministry wanted its small reference library revitalized and merged with the IPU.

DSC/FAO shared the Ministry's goals for equipment purchases and staff training. However, DSC/FAO also placed

high priority on orienting the project toward a general development communication model. DSC/FAO wanted the IPU to work closely with the needs and plans of the field extension officers and farmers in the rural areas. The agency wanted the "top down" orientation of the Ministry officials balanced by a "bottom up" orientation in which a substantial amount of the IPU's production was in answer to requests for communication support that had come from the lower levels of the Ministry's organization. That is, DSC/FAO wanted this project to become involved in efforts to explore strategies designed to substantially involve the users of mass media extension messages in their planning and production.

DSC/FAO brought a strategy for giving the IPU a "bottom up" orientation into project negotiations. To obtain a more user-oriented production approach, DSC/FAO suggested that the IPU expand to include offices and perhaps production facilities in several of Ghana's regions. This would reduce both the physical and social distance between message producer and message user. While each regional facility would coordinate its activities with the IPU office in the capital, it would concentrate on production of localized, specialized products in direct support of the Ministry's regional programs.

This DSC/FAO goal was more grandiose than those of the Ministry. It would require substantial new commitments of

manpower and local resources if included in the project proposal.

The expansion of the IPU into a national communication support system for the Ministry complete with regional production facilities would also require a substantial commitment of foreign exchange for imported equipment and international staff salaries. To obtain foreign exchange, the mission had to consider the goals and position of UNDP.

UNDP had no specific goal for this project. Its role in development assistance planning was normally a general one supporting the priorities of requesting governments and facilitating development planning and coordination. But UNDP does act as a monitor of project planning and execution to assure that funds are provided only for conceptually sound ideas and spent according to project plans.

When the mission visited the local office of UNDP, it found no support for a proposal which would attempt to set up a national system of mass communication production facilities without first testing the idea on a much smaller scale. UNDP's general goal and policy was to avoid major risks with development assistance funds. Fortunately for the project, the Ministry of Agriculture had placed a high priority on UNDP assistance with the IPU.

IPU staff goals for any project were learned when the mission visited the IPU in Accra. Conditions at the IPU

were even worse than had been reported earlier. For example, the building was a ramshackle, temporary structure unsuitable for photographic work or print production. Electricity and water services were irregular. The small dark-room had no air conditioning and lacked ventilation. Printing machinery was either broken down or severely corroded by the sea air. Staff morale was at a low ebb.

With productivity at almost a standstill, there was very little to fill the working days of the 38 person staff. Of the previous editorial staff of 14, only one remained on full-time duty.

The prospect of revitalizing the IFU excited the staff. They expressed their goals for any assistance project in specific terms. They requested new equipment, regular supplies of expendable materials, training leading to promotion, improved staff organization, and a return of the IPU to full productivity. With these staff goals in mind, the project would need to provide a means to train new staff as well as to provide more experienced staff members with training programs that would qualify them for promotion.

While this visit provided the mission with additional goals and information, it was too brief to allow for a careful assessment of most staff skills. The editorial and information gathering skills of the existing staff or of potential project recruits were not tested. Additionally,

the mission did not assess, in depth, the numerous constraints on promotion and work incentives that were part of Ghana's civil service system.

Therefore, the mission gained only a superficial understanding of the problems at the IPU. It failed to recognize the severity of IPU constraints such as procurement of printing and photography supplies on the local market and the effects of low pay and limited incentives within the civil service on attempts to generate a productive work atmosphere.

The communication consultant's goals were added after the mission had discussed the project with all other relevant parties. His goals were important because he was a potential project manager. This consultant brought to the project formulation a background in diffusion of innovations research, work in development project evaluation, and experience in overall communication support design.

The consultant found the revitalization of the IPU in Accra and simultaneous establishment of satellite units in several regions to be too large. On the other hand, concentration on the Accra unit would likely lead to the IPU having the "top down" orientation that DSC/FAO wanted to avoid. The consultant wanted a project emphasizing the design of communication support systems rather than production of mass media products. These designs, worked out and

scientifically tested in the rural contexts of development, would be a principal product of the communication support project. The consultant also foresaw utilization of the IPU for a broad spectrum of communication support services such as group and interpersonal communication skills training for extension workers and other Ministry personnel.

Adding these goals to those of the Ministry of Agriculture, DSC/PAO, UNDP, and the IPU staff, the mission developed a workable plan that was presented to the three agencies for approval.

#### The Communication Support Project Proposal

The proposal for a communication support project, a product of the mission members' data gathering and negotiation, was a compromise. In various ways and to different degrees, each constituency was accommodated.

The Ministry's project goals had a high priority in the proposal. The IPU would be re-equipped and rehabilitated under the project. UNDP would provide funds for equipment, supplies, and international personnel. The Ministry would provide building funds to house the unit and the reference library. The IPU staff would be receive additional training and the project's timetable would stress a rapid return of the IPU to production. Under the proposal's guidelines, publishing The Ghana Farmer, printing an extension

newsletter, and publishing a series of extension bulletins would take place within 12 months of the project's inception. Finally, the reference library would be merged with the unit and expanded to become a documentation and data retrieval center. Having accounted for the Ministry's goals in the proposal, the mission melded together a compromise solution accommodating the goals of the other agencies and present and future project staffs.

The goal of a national system of communication support facilities was not abandoned. But UNDP's unwillingness to commit money to a sketchy concept and the communication consultant's skepticism about projects that tried to do too much too soon required that this system be removed from the project's initial activities. Rather than attempting one grand effort, the mission proposed a two-stage project. The first stage would operate the IPU in Accra and in one rural region. This region would serve as a "pilot" for the project and allow for a small scale trial of new, field oriented communication support media products and strategies.

The IPU in Accra would return to productivity in the first stage, but much of its production would be in support of agricultural campaigns in the pilot region. Here, the project could experiment with "bottom up" support, group and interpersonal skills training, and alternative communication strategies for assisting small scale farmers.

The second stage of the project would follow and be based on the results of tests conducted and on experience obtained during the first stage. If definite achievements had been accomplished in the pilot region, the second stage would be an attempt to adapt and replicate the pilot region model to the nation as a whole.

Pilot area work would be more than a secondary activity of the project. The IPU production unit and the pilot area were strongly linked in the proposal. The proposal clarifies this linkage when it changed the Information and Publication Unit's name to stress the field orientation of the production facility. The proposal called it the Information Support Unit (ISU).

In addition to compromising on the size of the project and its organizational orientation, the proposal outlined basic components of the project's strategy for obtaining these goals. Also, a flexible timetable for project activities was built into the first 18 month stage. This flexible approach would allow the project to choose alternative strategies as the staff became more familiar with the pilot area and the problems of the Ministry and the farmers.<sup>28</sup>

#### Project Equipment and Staffing

The proposal also included equipment specifications, expendable materials, and job descriptions for both expatriate and Ghanaian staff.<sup>29</sup>



The expatriate staff include a project manager/communication specialist and an information/media specialist full time and a short term position for a technical librarian. The information/media specialist would be located in Accra and be oriented toward production and training. The project manager would work primarily with the pilot area and communication strategies and training.<sup>30</sup>

The Ghanaian staff descriptions included counterparts for the expatriates and editorial staff for the IPU. One of the shortcomings was the proposal's failure to discuss in greater detail the qualifications and absolute necessity of the Ministry providing appropriate persons for the counterpart positions. The mission failed here because it was unfamiliar with the strict promotion regulations of the civil service, and therefore it did not know how difficult it would be to recruit skillful, experienced officers in these specialized areas.

After two weeks in Ghana, the mission left with the Ministry's preliminary approval of a two-stage project to strengthen and expand its communication support facilities through assistance to the ISU.

In retrospect, the proposal continues to appear strong. The ominous economic problems building up at the time might have been discussed more fully, but the mission could not have predicted that within two years such essential media

production materials as paper, film, offset plates, and even drawing pens would disappear from the country's legitimate markets.

If the mission had had more time to inspect the rural countryside and talk to the Ministry's extension staff, it might have chosen a smaller, less complex area than a region as a pilot area for the project. The mission did not learn then that most regions had over 300 extension workers operating within a fragmented set of Ministry organizations. The mission also did not discover that these staffs were frequently without telecommunications, transportation, or other tools for coordination and extension.

There is no doubt that additional information might have been accounted for in the proposal if the mission had been structured differently or had made additional trips to Ghana. But all project proposals are bound by some set of assumptions. The fewer that are allowed, the more complex the planning process and the greater the likelihood that situations requiring assistance will worsen while details are being worked out.

In the case of the DSC/FAO mission to Ghana, the proposal accounted for the complexity and diversity of relevant goals, and contained sufficient flexibility to account for changes in Ghana and the Ministry of Agriculture.

### Summary

This chapter places the communication support project within the a context of a fading star among Africa's independent nations. Ghana's rich resources, cultural diversity, British colonial heritage, and high national goals were shown to be both a source of national pride and tradition and a source of economic, political, and bureaucratic problems.

The legacy of British colonial service reconstituted in the administrative hierarchy of Ghana's civil service and expanded through increasing government control of essential supplies and services was described as a contributor to both economic problems and potential corruption.

The Ministry of Agriculture's organization, bureaucratic goals, and problems were described as complex and rooted in the national economy and shifting government policies. The constraints of the Ministry were shown to be as numerous in the mid-1970's as its orientation toward diffusion of innovations was strong.

The chapter suggested several areas where the Ministry could benefit from an internal capacity to produce media products to extend the efforts of its field workers. In attempting to reactivate the Information and Publications Unit, the Ministry's goals were presented in the context of other goals held as equally important by agencies and

constituencies that were necessary actors in any assistance project. To obtain the resources necessary to rebuild the IPU and retrain its staff, the Ministry chose to go outside its own structure to seek assistance and in doing so had to agree to a more comprehensive assistance project than it had originally planned.

The analysis of the goals of each agency or constituency were taken into account by a project formulation mission sent to Ghana by the Development Support Communication Branch of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The compromise which resulted became the operational plan and international agreement for the communication support project to Ghana.

The next chapter describes the early months of this communication support project.

### Notes

1. The project manager of the communication support project in Ghana, and chairman of this dissertation is Joseph Ascroft, Associate Professor of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Iowa, long standing communication consultant to several UN agencies.
2. In addition to Dr. Ascroft, other participants on the Ghana project have been within easy reach for the author. Alan Brody, who served with the project for 14 months, was a student at the University of Iowa while the study was written. Mr. Robert Agung, another participant in the pilot area, was also present while the study was being written. Mr. Agung is completing work on a BA at the University of Iowa School of Journalism and Mass Communication.
3. For a more detailed account of the project see, Gary R. Gleason, "A Personal perspective on GHA75/004, Strengthening the Information Support Unit and Reference Library," Report submitted to Development Support Communication Branch, GII Division, Food and Agricultural Organization, Rome, Italy (December, 1979).
4. S. N. Eisenstadt, "The Changing Vision of Modernization and Development," Communication and Change in Developing Countries: The Last Ten Years and the Next, eds., Wilbur Schramm and Daniel Lerner (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1976), p. 36-37.
5. These descriptions are general. For a more detailed account of the history of Ghana and the difficulties of its governments and civil service, see: David Apter. Ghana in Transition (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press and Robert M. Price, Society and Bureaucracy in Contemporary Ghana (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1975). The periodical West Africa is also recommended for both current coverage of the country and background material.
6. Mylene Remey, Ghana Today (Paris: Editions J.A., 1977), pp. 9-13.
7. West Africa, July 7, 1980, p. 1285.
8. R. A. Twumasi. Medical Systems in Ghana, (Accra, Ghana: Ghana Publishing Corporation, 1975), p. 45.

9. Twumasi. Medical Systems in Ghana, p. 45.
10. Twumasi. Medical Systems in Ghana, p. 50-53.
11. Twumasi. Medical Systems in Ghana, p. 46.
12. Robert Pinkney. Ghana Under Military Rule: 1966-1969 (London: Methuen and Company, Limited, 1972), pp. 58-59.
13. Pinkney. Ghana Under Military Rule, pp. 38-117.
14. Victor Le Vine. Political Corruption: The Ghana Case (Stanford, California: Hoover Institute Press), 1975, p. 90.
15. Daily Graphic, (Accra, Ghana), October 8, 1977.
16. Robert M. Price. Society and Bureaucracy in Contemporary Ghana (Berkeley, California: University of California Press), 1975, pp. 205-19.
17. Price. Society and Bureaucracy in Contemporary Ghana, pp. 184-91.
18. The official exchange rate went from 1.15 cedi = 1 U.S. dollar to 2.75 cedis = 1 U.S. dollar between 1975 and 1979.
19. Christian Science Monitor, July, , 1980, p. .
20. Christian Science Monitor. July , 1980, p. .
21. The one exception to the authority of the Ministry of Agriculture over the agricultural sector was the development, production, and harvesting of cocoa. Because of the continued dependence of Ghana's economy on her cocoa industry this area was administered by a separate ministry, the Ministry of Cocoa Affairs.
22. The boards and corporations operated under different administrative and budgeting procedures and constraints from the Ministry's departments. Although part of the Ministry, they utilized operational guidelines more similar to those of commercial corporations. One significant difference was that the boards and corporations were freer to set their own salary schedules and promotion guidelines. The departments were bound by strict civil service regulations.
23. Farmer and extension officer interviews conducted in

preliminary work for a farmer survey revealed these observations. Interviews conducted in June and July, 1977 by Gary R. Gleason and Robert Agungga.

24. Kay Killingsworth and Joseph Ascroft. "Background and Supporting Information," Report submitted to FAO/UNDP (March, 1975), p. 1.
25. The IPU office was within 300 yards of the ocean. The salt air corroded typewriters, printing presses, photographic equipment, and even desks and file cabinets. The office lacked air conditioning and there was no way to stop the corrosion unless the office was sealed or moved.
26. Killingsworth and Ascroft. "Background and Supporting Information," p. 2.
27. The DSC officer was Ms Kay Killingsworth who was then stationed in FAO Headquarters in Rome. The communication consultant was Joseph Ascroft, from the University of Iowa.
28. "Assistance in Strengthening the Information Support and Reference Library," Assistance Request to UNDP, Number GHA/75/004 (May, 1975), pp. 4-6.
29. "Assistance in Strengthening the ISU," p. 9-10.
30. "Assistance in Strengthening the ISU," p. 7.

CHAPTER IV  
THE EARLY TRIALS AND ACTIVITIES OF  
THE COMMUNICATION SUPPORT PROJECT

Introduction

The previous chapter provided a context for the communication support project and described its planned structure and objectives as a compromise of goals. This chapter describes the early months, of the project with emphasis on problems that drastically altered its resources and its response to these new circumstances.

During these early months the project manager was forced to regroup as he began to learn more about the bureaucratic and economic realities of the Ghanaian environment. Survival was the major ambition of the project's activities during this early stage. Survival required finding additional resources and demonstrating to its resource agencies that it was moving forward toward at least a minimum of its stated goals.

The description that follows also describes in some detail two cases in which the project became involved in supporting Ministry projects during this early stage. Both of these projects were oriented, essentially, toward the



diffusion of an innovation, but each case demonstrates a different type of problem that may be associated with efforts to diffuse innovations. The response to each project's request for communication support was somewhat unique.

The chapter concludes as the communication support project began to regain some of its potential, and as a pilot area suitable for exploring communication support for development was identified.

#### UNDP Fiscal Crisis Stripped Project of Resources

As it happened, neither the environment of Ghana, nor the organizational problems of the Ministry of Agriculture were the cause of the first event to radically change the communication support project from what was planned. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) was the cause of the project beginning with resources far less than had been proposed.

In 1975, a few months after the DSC/FAO mission had returned from Ghana with a proposal acceptable to each relevant agency, UNDP suffered from a world-wide liquidity crisis. The organization's financial problems affected all projects that counted on that agency for monetary support.

New projects were cancelled outright with few exceptions. One of these exceptions was the communication

support project. FAO requested that this project be allowed to begin. Negotiations delayed the start of the project by five months and resulted in a reduction of the project's budget for 18 months from \$160,000 to \$53,000. This eliminated the information/media specialist and librarian positions, the entire provision for local staff fellowship and training travel, and all project equipment. Remaining was funding for 16 months of salary for the project manager and \$5,000 for miscellaneous expenses.

Somewhat ironically, the discussions between FAO and UNDP had been oriented toward resources exclusively, and there was never a change in the project's goals. What occurred was a sacrifice of material resources but a continued commitment to the project manager who had left his previous job to work on this project. Essentially, the project began with its sole resource the expertise of the communication consultant who had assisted in its planning. He returned to Ghana to attempt to meet the challenge of attaining the project's goals.

#### Alternative Resources Obtained

As soon as the project manager arrived in Ghana in March 1976, the communication support project was attached to the Information Support Unit. The project manager acted as the operational head of the ISU until a counterpart could be recruited.

With few of its planned resources, the project began with a search for alternative means of obtaining the equipment and personnel that were needed to accomplish its original goals. The ISU remained housed in its cramped building and the Ministry had not yet begun even the plans for a new facility. However, there were substantial Ministry funds for the ISU, and because it was unproductive, a larger amount of these funds remained untouched. The unused operating budget for the previous year was used to begin remodelling the ISU building and to purchase some non-production equipment such as fans, air conditioners, and office furniture.

The ISU staff assisted in the remodelling, with messengers and photographic assistants working as painters and carpenter's helpers. Within three months a new darkroom had been built, and the building was rearranged to provide working space for editorial personnel and training. In general, the ISU's appearance was substantially improved.

The project manager found an ally in the FAO Regional Office. The FAO administrative officer for projects in Ghana was familiar with an infrequently used procedure that would allow the project to convert local funds from the Ministry's allocation to the ISU to foreign exchange funds that could be used to procure some of the equipment eliminated from the project's budget by UNDP.<sup>1</sup>

Organizational Position of ISU  
in the Ministry Improved

In May 1976, as these equipment and facility problems and arrangements were being negotiated, the project manager was able to improve the organizational position of the unit within the Ministry. During project planning and when the project started, the old IPU and then the ISU were located organizationally within the Department of Agriculture.

Although this was the largest Ministry department and the most generalized, it had identical formal status to each other department, corporation, and board. In this framework, requests for communication support services originating in any of the agencies outside the Department of Agriculture had to pass through the department director before they could be acted on by the ISU. This framework held a substantial bias against the ISU as a resource agency serving all departments and Ministry projects equally.

Soon after the project began, this problem became obvious and several Ministry officials complained to the project manager. The Senior Principal Secretary discussed the matter and decided the project should be removed from the Department of Agriculture and placed under his office.

This organizational position made it easier for all Ministry departments to have access to the ISU. It also had benefits for the ISU and the communication support project.

In this position the head of the ISU had direct access to the Senior Principal Secretary and a formal organizational position parallel to the department directors. This also brought the communication support project out from under the Ministry supervision of the Director of the Agriculture Department, and allowed project personnel direct access to the Senior Principal Secretary as well. Finally, the ISU staff benefitted because they became oriented more toward the entire Ministry, and thus better able to move between departments to gather information and material for publications and other ISU products.

#### Counterpart Staffing Problems

As the project manager began searching for qualified Ghanaian senior staff for the ISU, he found civil service regulations on pay and rank made recruiting difficult. Persons with the education required to accept a position heading the ISU already had much higher paying positions in the private sector or in government organizations dealing specifically with media production. Other persons with experience sufficient to equip them to run a communication support unit could not be recruited because they lacked the required educational certification. This left the project manager as both head of the communication support project and acting head of the ISU.

At lower staff levels, rapid progress was made during the summer of 1976 to fill ISU positions. The Ministry reassigned ten technical officers who had formerly worked with the unit, and within six months the ISU had a 12-man editorial staff.

Progress was also made in obtaining expatriate staff. After several months of negotiation, UNDP agreed to assist the project further by releasing sufficient funds to reinstate the information/media specialist position. Production expertise was boosted further when the Ministry agreed to allow the project to recruit a US Peace Corps volunteer from the Ghana Institute of Journalism to assist the ISU with publication editing, layout, and design.

Thus, after six months, the project had grown from one expatriate, a non-productive technical staff, and a broken down building to include a staff and facility approaching what had been originally planned in the project document. All of these resources had been generated from within the project through the persistence and lobbying of the project manager.

Composite Maize--A Case of  
Oversimplified Diffusion  
Strategies

As the ISU rapidly became equipped for publication production, the communication support project began looking for

appropriate field projects requiring communication support. During the first few months of the project, a request had been made for a publication to support the diffusion of composite maize throughout the southern part of the country. The request had come from the head of a FAO sponsored Fertilizer Use Research Project that was operating inside the Department of Agriculture. After seven years of local research, the project had come up with recommendations for growing a composite maize with new cultural techniques including fertilizer use and new storage techniques designed to reduce post harvest grain loss.

This project had provision for an extension specialist, but the post had not yet been filled and the project manager was anxious to begin diffusion efforts. The Fertilizer Use Project appeared to be a useful client for the ISU and one that could strongly benefit from ISU assistance. Also, an improved maize variety appeared, at first, to be a worthwhile innovation which the local farmers could use to increase their yields.

One area where the Fertilizer Use Project had conducted its research was the Central Region, and the Ministry was interested in a diffusion campaign there to spread the innovation. If the Central Region were accepted as the pilot region for the communication support project, its pilot section would then be only about one hour by road from ISU

headquarters in Accra. This would give the project easy access to a rural area in which to begin exploring communication support. Publications designed from work with the small farmers could be easily moved to Accra for editing and production, and easily distributed and tested in the rural areas. Also, the Fertilizer Use Project and Ministry goal to diffuse composite maize could provide the project with opportunities to field test various communication strategies ranging from media products to training and farmer organization.

Based on these interests and the need to begin production at the ISU, the communication support project began exploring the ISU staff's abilities to publish an extension booklet oriented toward literate farmers and extension workers. In accordance with a project policy that the users of ISU products should be involved in their design, the project manager and a team of technical officers, a photographer, and graphic artist visited the rural areas where fertilizer and seed trials were being conducted. This team began translating the technical jargon of the Fertilizer Use Project's report into a step-by-step, illustrated guide explaining what a farmer needed to do to produce the higher yields of the new maize varieties.

As the team went deeper into the technical report and began discussing each step surrounding the production of the



new varieties with extension workers, problems were discovered. They found that the process was not only complex, but that it required several supplies that were not available on the average small farm, and would be difficult for a small farmer to obtain. Farmers required chemical fertilizers, insecticides, and special polyethylene sheets to grow and prepare the maize for storage according to the report's recommendations.

The communication support project assisted the ISU to produce a booklet clearly explaining the new process in relatively simple terms. But neither the Fertilizer Use Project nor the Ministry could guarantee that even those who understood the process would be able to obtain the materials required to follow it through.

As more was learned about this innovation by the project, it became clear that it involved a cluster of mutually dependent innovations. If the cluster was adopted, research had shown that significant increases in maize production could result. However, this cluster of innovations itself, was dependent on both institutional support and supplies that were beyond the scope of the Fertilizer Use Project's planning and budget. The polyethylene, the fertilizer, the insecticides, and related factors such as farm loans and marketing assistance could not be guaranteed on an annual basis by the Fertilizer Use Project or even by the Ministry.

Promoting this new practice required that institutional support guaranteeing the availability of these needed services and supplies be provided in order for composite maize to become adopted widely and equitably.

The production of the booklet on composite maize was not solely a service to the Fertilizer Use Project. The booklet's production served the internal needs of the the ISU and the project as well. It was used to assist with the production and editorial training of the ISU staff. In producing this booklet, the staff was introduced to editorial procedures that depended heavily on close interaction between the ISU and the publication's potential audience throughout the production process. This booklet also helped demonstrate the ISU's renewed production potential to the Ministry.

While both the ISU and the Fertilizer Use Project benefitted from the production of this extension booklet, the communication support project was reluctant to devote additional resources to the composite maize diffusion campaign. This reluctance was based on the premise behind the Fertilizer Use Project as an agency which assumed that adoption of one narrowly defined innovation would contribute significantly to the small farmers' development. Yet, the institutional support required for widespread equitable adoption was not present, and other significant problems had been

ignored. Also, from the perspective of the Fertilizer Use Project, the task had been basically completed once the research recommendations were published. In reality, that project was winding down. This did not excite the communication support project which was struggling for additional resources so that it could enter the rural areas. It was decided that the single factor, deterministic approach of the Fertilizer Use Project did not fit with project goals related to exploring farmer-centered communication support.

Improvements at ISU  
Generated Ministry Support

By late summer of 1976, the ISU was receiving numerous requests for publications and other mass media-related products from divisions and units throughout the Ministry's departments. New photographic equipment had arrived and the Central Ministry began calling on the ISU photographer for a variety of public relations and press assignments. The project was able to use the vastly improved photographic capabilities of the ISU to do a bit of public relations of its own. A weekly display of Ministry related activities, photographed by the ISU, was posted in a central location in the Ministry, and the project began receiving compliments about improvements at the ISU. This enthusiasm was echoed by the Senior Principal Secretary. However, he continually reminded the communication support project manager that the