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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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Ministry was also anxiously awaiting republication of The Ghana Farmer.

During August 1976, the information/media specialist arrived and immediately began work to repair the unit's printing equipment and set up a new darkroom. On his arrival the communication support project still had not identified a pilot region in which to design and test communication support strategies for client-centered development.

With the arrival of the information/media specialist, formal editorial training of the reassigned technical officers began at the ISU. Originally, the project planned to combine this training with gathering material and rewriting for The Ghana Farmer. However, immediately after training began, a serious problem became evident. The technical officers that now formed the ISU editorial staff had all been trained as agriculturalists, and their only previous writing and reporting experience had been gained through preparing reports. Also, most of them lacked the confidence in their abilities and their positions to professionally interview senior Ministry officials. This problem was compounded by Ministry officials who tended to treat the editorial staff, not as reporters, but rather as junior officers. Based on the judgment of the information/media specialist, the staff did not have sufficiently refined writing skills to produce even rough drafts of publishable articles.

Because of these problems, publication of The Ghana Farmer, if it were to be more than a verbatim collection of academic research, would have to be delayed until additional reporting and writing skills were developed by the ISU staff.

The communication support project could not afford to begin a program of classroom training unrelated to production required by the Ministry. To solve this problem, additional extension publications were given priority over The Ghana Farmer as a focus for editorial work.

Rabbit Breeding-- An Innovation
Without Institutional Support

One of the early requests for ISU assistance in producing an extension publication had come from the National Rabbit Project. This project had started relatively successfully with direct support from the then ruling Supreme Military Council. The National Rabbit Project's founder and manager, Newlove Mamatah, was not a formally trained animal husbandry expert. Mamatah had come from a background in adult education. However, he had become convinced that improving local breeds of rabbits, and providing Ghanaian farmers with the improved stock was a viable method to attack problems of meat storage, protein requirements, and cash income generation on rural farms.

Mamatah was a self-taught expert on rabbit breeding and had become a recognized international authority. He had developed a large breeding facility near Accra, and had produced sufficient purebreds and hybrids to begin distributing them to potential breeders. When Mamatah first approached the ISU in June 1976, his project had recently been placed under the Department of Animal Husbandry in the Ministry.

Mamatah negotiated for several weeks with the ISU and the communication support project over a publication detailing cultural practices of rabbit breeding and care. Because the project wanted to assure that the publication was as useful as possible to farmers in different areas of the country, additional material had to be gathered. However, as discussions with Mamatah continued, it became clear that diffusion of this locally developed innovation was not mainly a problem of persuading farmers to adopt. Mamatah had more offers for his hybrid and purebred rabbits than he could fill. However, there was considerable concern about whether the diffusion of rabbit breeding would be equitable, reaching the rural areas where it would do the most good.

To achieve equitable diffusion, Mamatah required the support of by sup the Department of Animal Husbandry and the Ministry as a whole. He eventually confided that Ministry officials and several elites in Accra were skeptical about both public acceptance of rabbit meat, and the National Rabbit Project in general.

While equitable and effective diffusion of rabbit breeding required various communication support products including an extension booklet, communication support was also required to assist the National Rabbit Project in gaining a higher priority within the Ministry itself.

Prior to the publication of the rabbit breeding booklet, the communication support project manager arranged to have rabbit served as the meat dish at a major Ministry function for senior staff. The Commissioner of Agriculture tasted rabbit for the first time at this function, reporting later that he had thought it was chicken. Most senior staff shared his pleasant surprise when the source of the meat was announced. Several others also admitted they had never eaten rabbit before.

In another attempt to obtain improved support for the National Rabbit Project, the communication support project arranged for Mamatah to be featured on a weekly television program co-produced by the ISU and the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC). This was done with full knowledge that, while few farmers had electricity, much less television, most senior government officials watched the show.

Publication of the rabbit booklet corresponded with the completion of major renovations at the ISU. Ministry officials were invited to the unit to celebrate the ISU's return to productivity, and each member of the delegation was given

a complimentary copy of the publication. The communication support project's choice of this publication to indicate renewed ISU operations also helped focus Ministry attention on the National Rabbit Project.

Each of these activities was related directly or indirectly with the process of publishing the booklet. Without the request for the booklet, other forms of support for the National Rabbit Project would not have been justified according to ISU and project priorities.

Throughout the communication support project's tenure in Ghana, it continued to devote resources to assisting the National Rabbit Project to improve its credibility with agencies whose support it required if diffusion of rabbit breeding was to be carried out equitably and effectively. The project also used ISU support of the National Rabbit Project as a focus for exploring a diverse set of communication related activities and media products. These included research, slide tape production, demonstrations, training, and rabbit breeding trials involving the rural population. Details of these activities will be described in the following chapters.

These activities were the communication support project's first expansion of communication support beyond media production, and demonstrated its willingness to deal with target audiences within the institutions that affected assistance to the farm population.

Despite these activities, the communication support project's work with the National Rabbit Project never became the primary focus for pilot region exploration of client-centered communication support. The National Rabbit Project had no rural institutional framework and it remained, like the Fertilizer Use Project, dedicated to an isolated innovation that offered a potential solution to only a limited aspect of small farmers' lives.

Project Adopted Development
Oriented Pilot Region Program

The early experience of the communication support project taught its staff that a narrow definition of communication support not only restricted the project's functions, but also constrained it from applying various strategies that could potentially promote equitable, client-centered development within institutions that supported these goals.

The six month period between March and August 1976 was a period of both frustration and growth for the communication support project and its staff. It was also a period in which the staff grew increasingly concerned over the project's failure to move substantially into a rural pilot region. Aware of the curtailed resources of the project, and with increased knowledge of the fragmentation and complexity of the Ministry in the regions, the project manager had decided that the project could only afford to move into

a rural area effectively as an adjunct to a rural program with substantial resources of its own. Prior to August 1976, each of the projects and programs that had been explored had been limited conceptually to a deterministic, mono-innovation approach and none had spare resources to be dedicated to rural activities by the project and the ISU.

In August, a new opportunity was found. Shortly after the arrival of the information/media specialist in Accra, the communication support project manager made a trip to Ghana's Upper Region. On this trip, he spent four days with the newly appointed program manager of a soon to be operationalized, region-wide agricultural program.

As planned, this new program would approach agricultural development with client-centered goals. It would not attempt to diffuse a series of innovations within the Region, but would bring in a large package of innovations purported to be relevant to local farmer needs. The program would also contain sufficient flexibility to allow for the farmers to express new problems and needs to which the program would respond.

All 125,000 farm families in the Upper Region were planned as the clients of the new program, and it contained a mechanism for giving the farmers a new means of organizing themselves and influencing the program's priorities. The program did not emphasize direct attempts to influence the

attitudes and behaviors of farmers among of its goals. Rather, program goals emphasized changing the regional institutions and physical environment in ways that would allow for improved agricultural production.

The new program's resources reflected considerable thought on the enormity of the tasks it proposed to accomplish. Funding included over \$50,000,000 with over 50 per cent allocated to imported equipment, farm supplies, and other resources unavailable in Ghana.

Despite its size and location in the region most remote from Accra, this new program appeared to have both a philosophy and a set of resources that would allow the communication project a wide range of activities. Even before he had returned to Accra from his four day trip, the communication support project manager had decided that the Upper Region would be the setting in which the project would begin to explore, design, and hopefully test client-centered communication support strategies that would expand the functions of the ISU.

Summary

This chapter describes the initial cuts in the communication support project resources and its battle to regain these resources through alternative means. The implications of a change in the ISU organizational position were

described as improving its status and giving each of the Ministry's departments equal access to ISU services. The problems of recruiting counterpart staff were related to civil service regulations, but still the project had considerable success in obtaining other local staff and additional expatriate assistance.

Two cases of project assistance to Ministry projects were shown to be considerably different although both dealt with attempts to diffuse innovations. In the first case, the complexity of the innovation was found by the project to be greater than suggested by the research project that developed it. This additional complexity was discovered in the process of gathering information needed to translate the research results into a practical extension manual. Producing an extension booklet was shown to include talking with potential adopters and members of the institutions that would be held accountable by adopters if the innovations caused problems.

In the second case, work with another project on an extension publication evolved into activities attacking a different type of constraint. In this case the Ministry itself was not particularly supportive of an innovation that had been developed outside its direct control. The communication support project found it necessary to use publication of an extension booklet about this innovation as the focal

point for a variety of other activities oriented to improving support for the innovation within the Ministry. The extension booklet itself became a source of information about the innovation for Ministry policy makers and lower level staff. Activities of the project supporting this innovation went beyond media production, and included demonstrations, and direct lobbying by the communication support project staff.

The complex goals of the communication support project in producing each of these media products included demonstrating to the Ministry that the ISU was again becoming productive, and training the ISU editorial and production staffs.

The chapter concluded by recounting the project staff's frustration at not being able to identify a pilot area and a trip to the Upper Region on which a new program was introduced to the project manager. This program appeared to have the potential to provide the project with institutional support in a rural setting. This Region was therefore chosen as a pilot area in which to explore communication support for client-centered development.

The next chapter describes the activities of the project in the pilot region and an eventual proposal for a national communication support system for the Ministry.

Notes

1. This procedure was possible because the FAO Regional Office in Ghana needed local funds to pay local expenses. The Ministry allocated local currency to meet a portion of the ISU's equipment needs to FAO, which set up a Trust Account in foreign currency of an equivalent amount. The initial amount of foreign currency generated through this procedure was approximately \$18,000. It was used to buy production and training equipment.

CHAPTER V
COMMUNICATION SUPPORT FOR
INTEGRATED AGRICULTURAL
PROGRAM

Introduction

The decision to assist the Upper Region Agricultural Development Program (URADEP) changed the focus and potential of the communication support project. This chapter has six sections, five of which are oriented primarily toward URADEP. The first describes URADEP as planned. The second reviews the process by which the communication support project analyzed URADEP's plans and needs in the area of communication support. The third describes the actual communication and training institution that the project attempted to set up for URADEP.

The fourth section describes a communication support effort outside the parameters of this training by renewing the previous description of the project's support of the National Rabbit Project. This section describes the widening of this support as rabbit breeding was introduced in the pilot region. Fifth, the chapter provides an example of activities undertaken by the project in the service of

URADEP that dealt with improving its relations to the Ministry of Agriculture in Accra.

The sixth section deals with the final months of the project. It describes a proposal written by the project to the Ministry of Agriculture that outlined the steps necessary to institutionalize communication support for agricultural development in Ghana.

The Appraisal Report as a URADEP Plan

The planning of the Upper Region Agricultural Development Program took place over a two-year period. The Ministry of Agriculture had had little success with its programs in the Upper Region. The Upper Region was farthest from Accra and, partially because of its sub-Saharan climate, the most fragile in terms of potential food shortages. In 1974, a World Bank mission identified the potential for an integrated agricultural program within the region. Following a formal request from the Ghanaian Government and two additional missions, the Upper Region Agricultural Development Program (URADEP) was proposed by joint World Bank, British Government, and Ghanaian Government teams.¹ Approval came in mid-1976.

The comprehensive Appraisal Report written by these missions became the predominant operational, organizational, and fiscal planning tool for the Program. This document,

entitled "Appraisal of Upper Region Agricultural Development Project - Ghana,"² provided the URADEP staff with a comprehensive outline of the Region's agricultural problems and a set of integrated solutions tailored to the culture and constraints of the Upper Region. The Program outlined in the Appraisal Report had been developed from a basic integrated agricultural development model that had been the basis for World Bank loans to Nigeria and Malawi.³

Because this document was used as a basic planning guide by everyone within URADEP during its initial stages, the background, organizational, and operational sections are reviewed here in some detail.

The Upper Region

The Upper Region has about ten per cent of Ghana's population (about 930,000) and about 125,000 farm families. The cash income of a typical farm family was estimated to be about C280 cedis (\$220) per year in 1975.⁴

The Appraisal Report provided a succinct agricultural overview of the Upper Region:

The Region is endowed with a hardworking community of small farmers that has developed an ability to survive in a steadily declining environment caused by increasing population, onchocerciasis and other health hazards, declining soil fertility, worsening soil erosion, sporadic lack of water, and the absence of proper infrastructure and services. Their ability to survive is closely associated with a husbandry system of intricate mixed cropping that is designed to give maximum insurance against vagaries of climate and disease.⁵

While the Upper Region farmers proved themselves hardy by their continual survival in this harsh area, they were on a path leading to declining production of even their low yielding but hardy varieties. Soil erosion was increasing rapidly as bush fires ravaged vast areas annually and more fields remained in continuous production year after year to meet the needs of a growing population.

The harshness of the physical environment was compounded by poor roads and a traditional system of scattered farms. Cash crops like tomatoes often brought a minimal return for the farmers. Low farm gate prices were dictated by a lack of transportation into the rural markets and lack of organization by the farmers themselves. Small farmers were usually at the mercy of the market women and those who would risk their vehicles to buy at the rural markets. The centralized locations of farm supply outlets in district capitals made transporting inputs to the farms extremely difficult. These factors, along with the absence of loan facilities, prevented small farmers from boosting yields through utilization of modern innovations such as fertilizers and improved seed.

Institutional support of agriculture in the Region was inadequate. The departmentalization of the Ministry of Agriculture created a large number of mutually exclusive and noncomprehensive extension efforts. The long discrete arms

of each department controlled regional versions of programs planned in Accra with little coordination and minimal effect.

Government resources for regional agricultural development were disproportionate to population. From 1971 to 1974 only 2.4 per cent of the Ministry's budget went to the Upper Region, despite the fact that ten per cent of the nation's population lived in this nearly exclusively agricultural Region.⁶

The lack of institutional support for agriculture in the Region was evident in the short supplies of farm inputs and the inadequate resources provided to the various extension staffs. A drive through any of the Region's districts revealed a multitude of vacant Ministry buildings and broken down machines.

Prior to URADEP's inauguration, members of the Ministry's regional staff were fond of summarizing the institutional support problems by telling visitors a joke. If you made an error in the Ministry Headquarters, you might be sent out to a rural post far in the bush. If you made a mess of your rural post you were sent to the Upper Region headquarters.⁷

These basic problems -- the Region's harsh environment, an underdeveloped physical infrastructure, and inadequate institutional support -- were the areas URADEP was designed to address.

URADEP's Planned Goals and Strategies

URADEP was intended to affect the entire Upper Region. Its two principal objectives were "to increase agricultural production and thus farm incomes, and to establish permanent farmer support services."⁸

To accomplish these objectives, the URADEP Appraisal Report proposed a redefinition of agricultural service, intensification of extension efforts in crop and animal production, development of needed physical infrastructure, a major effort to arrest soil erosion, and development of specialized commercial and financial institutions to assist the Region's farmers.⁹

Within this broad framework of general objectives and strategies, the Appraisal Report provided relatively specific plans, budgets, personnel requirements, and operational objectives. Detailed plans were provided in the areas of farm development, physical infrastructure, institutional support, and development planning.¹⁰

The farm development section, a key element to the entire program, specified the establishment of Farmer Service Centers (FSCs) within the Region. URADEP plans included establishment of 90 FSCs. In total, the FSCs were to be located so as to bring agricultural inputs and services close to all of the Region's farmers.

The essential nature of the FSCs was noted in the Appraisal Report:

Each center would serve some 1300 farmers within a radius of 5-6 miles, and would be the focal point for farmer groups and associations, agricultural extension, nutrition and health services, marketing, rural engineering (blacksmithing), maintenance of farm machinery and equipment, and the supply of inputs.¹¹

In addition to the FSCs, farm development provided for farm inputs, improved grain storage systems, better animal health services, development of ten large ranches, a seed multiplication and research unit, establishment of radio transmitting facilities to broadcast within the region in four languages, a pilot functional literacy program, a program directed at improving human nutrition, and a program to expand the in-service training opportunities of the 1700 personnel working on the Ministry of Agriculture's staff in the Region.¹²

Physical infrastructure development under URADEP would mean construction of 120 new small dams and rehabilitation of 100 existing dams, provision of about 700 village water wells, a soil conservation program to protect approximately 400,000 acres of land from further erosion, construction of project buildings including the FSCs, supply of vehicles to assist with input distribution and staff movement, and construction of two 9,000 ton per annum cotton ginneries.¹³

Institutional support under URADEP would call for establishment of the Farmer Services Company (UR), Limited (FASCOM). This company was to sell all farm inputs through stores located at each FSC. The company was to set up fiscal linkage to the Bank of Ghana, to several commercial banks, and to URADEP itself. It would operate independent of the Program under its own board of directors. The FASCOM plan also contained a provision to establish a fiscal equity link with the Upper Region Farmers themselves. Through payment of a surcharge on FASCOM distributed products, the farmers would be contributing to a trust fund which would eventually build up equity to be shared by participants.

Other forms of institutional support outlined in the Appraisal Report were strengthening the regional branch of the Agricultural Development Bank (ADE), assisting the regional development corporation (URDECO), providing the regional Ministry of Agriculture organization with a complete Project Management Unit (URPMU), adding a Land Development Section to the agricultural services in the region, adding a Planning and Monitoring and Evaluation Department, and adding a Communication and Training Department.¹⁴

The Organization of URADEP

URADEP's planned organization would have five departments comprising the program management Unit (URPMU) with

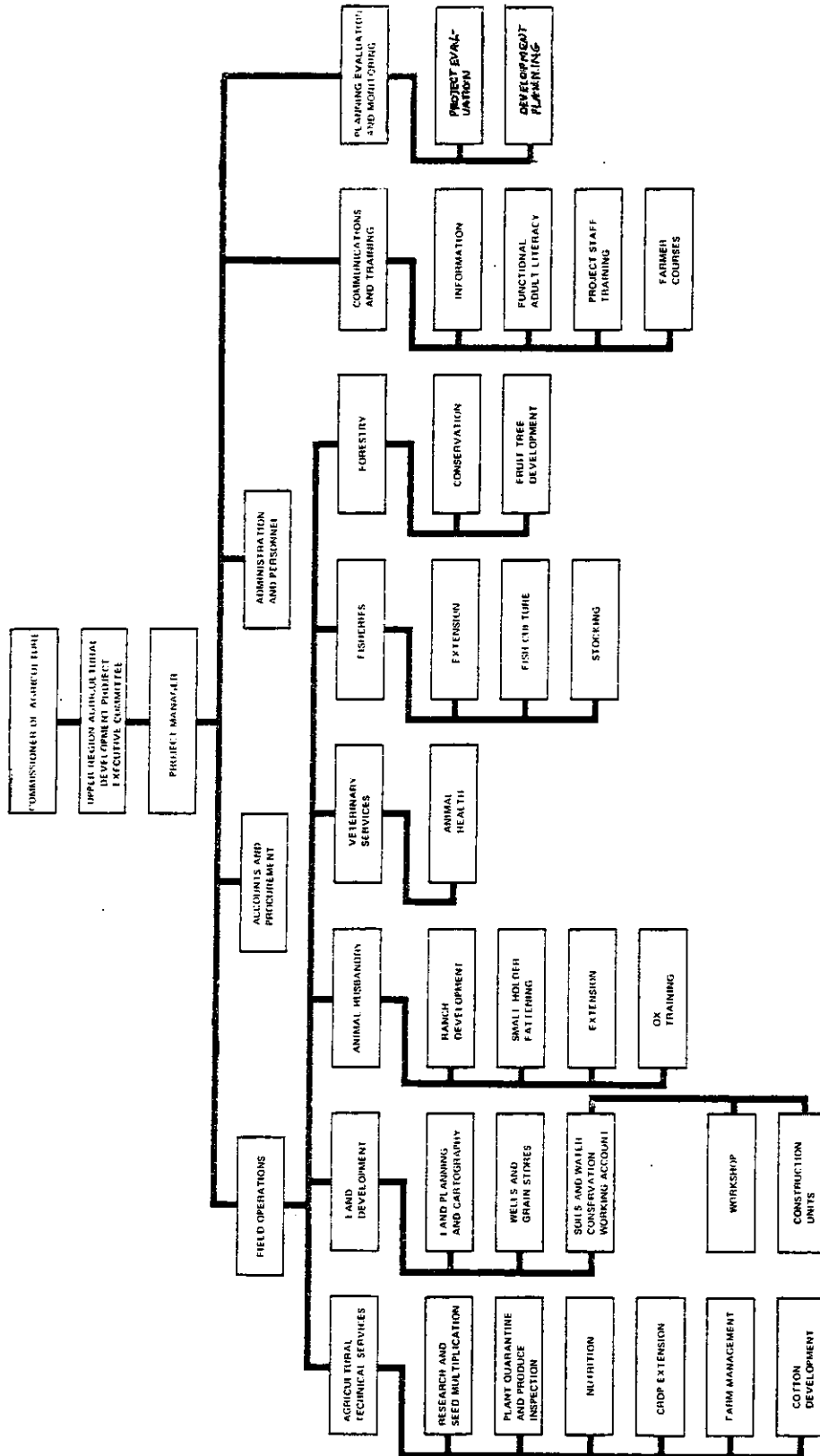
technical and operational linkages to FASCOM and a variety of related agencies within the Upper Region and at the national level. Five URPMU Department chiefs were to be recruited. They would be directly responsible to the program manager. The planned organization of URADEP is shown in an organogram taken from the Appraisal Report and noted here as Figure 5.1.¹⁵

The five departments were Field Operations, Accounts and Procurement, Administration and Personnel, Planning and Evaluation and Monitoring, and Communication and Training.

Basically, the Field Operations Department brought all of the existing regional departments of the Ministry of Agriculture under a coordinating umbrella and added organizations specifically needed in the Upper Region. Most members of the Ministry's departmental staffs would be responsible to URADEP Field Operations Department. Most field operations of the Ministry's departments within the Upper Region would come under the Field Operations Department. The field operations of URADEP would be coordinated by this department's chief.

The second department, Accounts and Procurement, would be responsible for preparation of annual budgets and coordination of URADEP monetary assistance to FASCOM, the Agricultural Development Bank, The Cotton Development Board, the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC), and the related

Figure 5.1: Planned Organization of URADEP.



commercial banks. It would also set up a procurement system to take local conditions and the intricacies of international competitive bidding procedures into account. This department would establish a complete accounting section for the Program.¹⁶

The third department, Administration and Personnel, was to handle all personnel matters: recruitment, staff transportation, office management, security, and staff housing. URADEP's administration would be different from the equivalent departments within the Ministry because of URADEP's high degree of autonomy and parastatal status. As a parastatal body, many of URADEP's higher ranking personnel could be recruited under fixed-term contracts, with service and salary conditions not constrained by civil service regulations and scales. However, the majority of the Program's employees were to be seconded (temporarily transferred) from the Upper Region Ministry organizations. Although they would continue their employment relationship with the Ministry with regard to promotion and other benefits the seconded staff could be given special privileges by URADEP. The Administration and Personnel Department would need to work out a system to accommodate the peculiarities of URADEP as a "hybrid" organizational entity within the Ministry.

The fourth department, Planning, Evaluation, and Monitoring (PEMD), would be charged with evaluating the Program on a continuing basis. The department's evaluations would assist management, and permit effective supervision.¹⁷

To accomplish these evaluations, the department would carry out a baseline survey within the Region and follow this up with periodic surveys to provide longitudinal data.¹⁸ The survey design accommodated exploration of such variables as farmer response to URADEP actions, changing patterns of farming, and incremental farmer incomes due to URADEP investment.¹⁹

This department would also carry on an existing program of market price monitoring and would attempt to devise a system for utilizing market price information to assist farmers in obtaining the best prices for their surplus harvest.

These four departments would rely on the services of the Communication and Training Department. Plans for the Communication and Training Department laid out in the Appraisal Report entailed diverse activities.

The Appraisal Report recognized that serious problems in communication, education, and training would need solutions if agricultural development were to proceed.²⁰

Seventeen different languages including English were spoken in the Region. Seventy five per cent of the

population could be reached by using three local languages. However, each of these was distinctly different and there was no "lingua franca." Only two local languages spoken in the Region had a written version. Estimates of illiteracy ranged from 80 to 95 per cent.²¹

In response to these constraints, URADEP's plans contained a functional literacy pilot scheme, a regional radio network, and plans to greatly expand extension contact between the farmers and agricultural service personnel.

The functional literacy pilot would have 1,500 participants split between two sites located on opposite ends of the Region (about 140 miles apart). In setting up this scheme, the Communication and Training Department would develop functional links with the Ministry of Labor, Social Welfare, and Cooperatives. In addition, the department would establish and produce two rural newspapers in two local languages for use by the scheme and its client farmers. The department would also produce extension brochures and slide tapes in conjunction with the Catholic Missions in the Region.²²

Regionally generated programming put out over a URADEP FM radio network would fall under the purview of this department. Existing Ghana Broadcasting Corporation facilities were inadequate. Therefore programming would not begin

immediately. First, transmitters and studios would be built and a staff of radio broadcasters with skills in the Region's main languages would be trained by GBC. Once this was accomplished, the URADEP funded Upper Region transmitters would begin broadcasting 55 hours of locally produced programs per week. The Program planned to supply over 20,000 battery operated receivers at subsidized prices to the Region's farmers.²³

The Communication and Training Department plans called for the department to establish a "new approach to training."²⁴ over an old Ministry operated Farmer Training Institute and set up a modern facility capable of multiple course levels for every section of the URADEP staff. Training conducted by the department involved general staff induction, specific training courses for the extension staff task forces, refresher courses, management courses, technical courses covering Program oriented innovations, accounting courses for FASCOM and URADEP clerks, and other courses as needed.²⁵

The department would assume responsibility for follow-up of staff training, URADEP public relations, and the production of training materials, extension publications, and audio-visual aids.

To satisfy these tasks, the planning document provided the Communication and Training Department with one

expatriate, three other senior officers, six training officers, two community development officers, four clerical staff, and a production staff consisting of one junior illustrator.²⁶

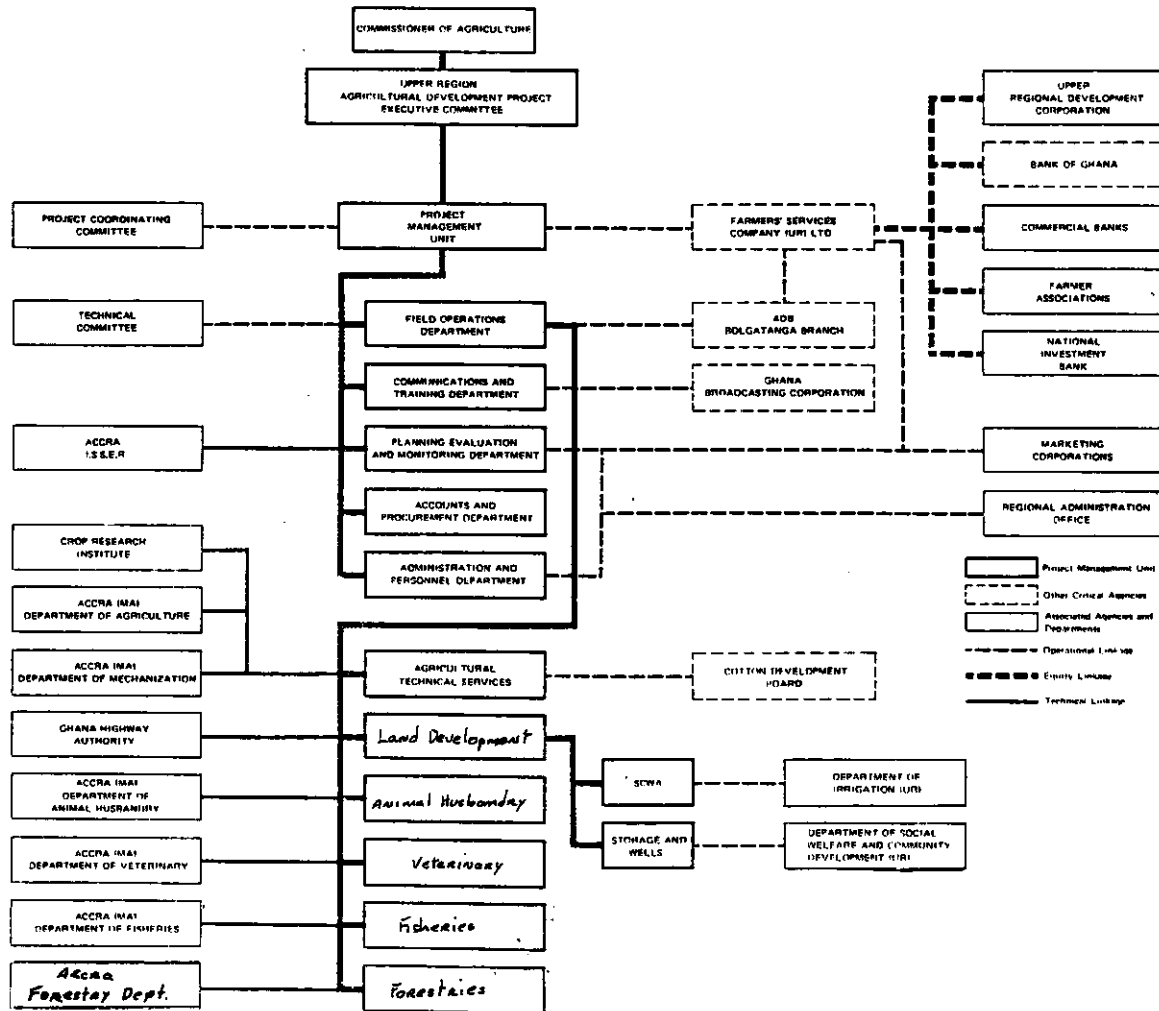
URADEP Linkage of External Organizations

The five departments organized as the Program Management Unit were coordinated by their respective chiefs under the Program Manager. Despite the internal coordination possible through URADEP's autonomous status, the Program could not hope to succeed without defined linkages to a variety of government and private institutions which would affect its funding and operation.

FASCOM was the organization most intimately related URPDU. This new commercial organization would not only free the URADEP field staff from involvement in the distribution of farm inputs, it would provide the farmers with an investment in the Program. FASCOM was one of several new or existing organizations to be linked to URADEP's operation. These links were shown in an organogram in Figure 5.2.²⁷

The solid lines in Figure 5.2 depict neither authority or communication, but rather a technical linkage at both program and national levels. Operational linkage, depicted by dotted lines, denotes the formal communication channels between URADEP and the other organizations.

Figure 5.2: Resource, Funding and Technical Linkages of URADEP



The committees shown in Figure 5.2 were new entities to be established along with URADEP. Their efficient operation was important to assure a free flow of communication into and out of the Program since the several uncoordinated channels linking the Region to the National level organizations were to be discontinued.

Prior to URADEP, for example, messages and orders between the Department of Animal Husbandry in Accra and the Upper Region office of the Department of Animal Husbandry were direct and discrete from messages and orders sent between other departments and their regional offices.

Under URADEP, if a question within the Animal Husbandry Section of the URADEP Field Operations Department needed clarification from the Department of Animal Husbandry in Accra, the proper channel would be Chief-of-Field Operations to the Technical Committee and then to the Department of Animal Husbandry (the director of each Ministry department was to be a member of this committee). The channel was to be used in both directions. The overall plan intended to create a system of regional coordination of most Upper Region agricultural activities. As a by-product regional decision-making power would be substantially increased.

The chart shown in Figure 5.2 also suggested URADEP would have a much broader scope than previous Ministry definitions of the "agricultural sector". The Appraisal Report included references to a wide range of institutional, infrastructural, technological, and fiscal relationships that were considered essential to Program success. An interesting note was the inclusion of the Farmers Associations as one of the equity linkages to FASCOM. (see Fig. 5.2) These associations would gain fiscal equity in the FSCs through a return of a surcharge on FASCOM sales. These associations were, like the Technical Committee, new organizations that would have to be established along with URADEP itself.

The chart also revealed the lack of any communication linkage between URADEP and the World Bank or the British Government. Both organizations were investing large sums of money into URADEP (over \$30 million), had considerable impact on the implementation and evaluation of the Program. Although the World Bank and the British Government would have a veto in recruitment of all expatriate staff, these organizations were not linked technically or operationally on this summary chart.

Another missing linkage was the relationship between the Program and the various non-governmental organizations (NGO's) operating agricultural projects within the Upper

Region. Their relationship to URADEP was left unclear in its plans.

Despite these missing links, URADEP's internal and external organization and linkages as outlined provided a highly complex plan. For some involved in the initial on-the-ground operations of URADEP, this planning document became a starting point from which to adapt and modify. For others, the Appraisal Report was perceived as a rigid operational definition to be closely followed and defended.

Design and Planning of URADEP's Communication and Training

The involvement of the communication support project with URADEP began with the August 1976 trip to the Upper Region for the Program's inauguration ceremony. Afterward, the project redirected significant resources toward assisting URADEP to begin operations.

By October 1976, the Senior Principal Secretary of the Ministry had agreed that the project's association with URADEP was a suitable pilot activity for the ISU. From the communication support project's perspective, URADEP provided the potential resources for exploring communication support for integrated agricultural development.

The embryonic state of URADEP between August 1976 and April 1977 allowed the communication support project to operate in a unique role. Because ISU staff began working

in the Upper Region immediately, for over five months the Communication and Training Department was the only operational department of URADEP. Other departments could not begin operations until a chief was recruited and senior staff had arrived. Communication and Training began work in September with the manager of the communication support project as its acting head.

During this eight-month period, the loan from the World Bank was not activated because of administrative problems and URADEP was also without foreign funds. Other than a start-up fund in local currency, URADEP had no control over the Ministry's Upper Region budget and methods for placing Ministry personnel under the Program had not been clarified. Thus, despite the knowledge that over C60 million would flow into the Region through the Program, and that soon the Program would control most of the Region's agricultural operations, there was a six-month period when those representing the Program had few resources and little direct authority.

This situation created problems for several of the URADEP senior staff who began to arrive early in 1977. But, for the staff from the communication support project, compared to the problems they had experienced in their own project, the situation in the Upper Region was a relief. With the Upper Region as a project pilot area and URADEP as the Program around which assistance would be centered, authority and resources would be relatively assured.

Despite the many peripheral duties required of specialists during the birth of a Program as large and complex as URADEP, most of the project's work was devoted to examining URADEP's communication support requirements. Three related activities demanded immediate attention if a communication support system for URADEP was to be successfully implemented. They were:

1. Design and implementation of a strategy to gain support for URADEP start-up operations among the Region's farmers and the Ministry staff.
2. Reassessment of the staff and funds required by the Communication and Training Department.
3. Rehabilitation, expansion, and equipping of a training facility to replace the Farm Institute at Navrongo.

Clarification of URADEP's Role Needed in Upper Region

The first of these activities was required to forestall URADEP from creating problems by forced entry into its operational phase prematurely. In early trips to the Region, the communication support project staff visited a wide range of regionally based organizations and leaders involved in agricultural development. Among the problems encountered during informal interviews with these leaders was a perception that URADEP expatriates and outsiders were going to

take over the Region and control all agricultural projects and resources.²⁰

Another problem surfacing in discussions with regional leaders was the preconception that URADEP would discriminate as to which farmers it would assist. Rumors persisted that an organized group claiming to represent the World Bank Project had been calling meetings of farmers in the rural areas and extorting money from them by promising preferential treatment by the Program once it got under way.

Among Ministry of Agricultural regional staffs some officers spoke of the Program as a threat to their Ministry jobs; others saw it providing them with higher salaries and more job benefits; and a third group saw it providing them with the needed resources to accomplish their assigned jobs.

Even the Region's contractors had preconceived notions about the large sums involved in the Program. Contractors were willing to supply large amounts of materials without cash as long as the World Bank Project was mentioned as the receiving organization.

The most skeptical group identified during these early visits to the Region was the staff from the various "non-governmental organizations" (NGO's) operating agricultural assistance projects in the Region. Most of these organizations operated small projects, concentrating for prolonged periods on small groups of farmers. The sheer size of the

new Program evoked serious doubts about its viability. Also, the fact that these organizations had not been included formally in most of URADEP's plans, despite their long experience and dedication in the Region, contributed to a generally negative attitude toward the Program.

These real and potential problems were complicated by the lack of any campaign or office dedicated to explaining the actual plans and organization of the new Program. That URADEP would begin with, at minimum, a false image, and more likely a negative impression about what it would be bringing to the Region was a distinct possibility. The communication support project recognized this danger in late 1976 and devised a plan to clarify URADEP for both Upper Region farmers and the Ministry's regional staffs.

URADEP Explained at the Regional Agricultural Show

The project explained the basic structure, methods, and goals of URADEP to a wide cross section of the Region's farmers through a display at the annual regional agricultural show.

This show's history spanned from the colonial era and was the largest annual regional activity. A team of ISU staff with help from some of the agricultural teachers at the Navrongo Farm Institute worked on the display.²⁹

The display was intended to create an impression of URADEP's size, its comprehensive approach to agricultural problems, and its efforts to provide service to every regional farmer. The display also represented URADEP as an umbrella agency willing to assist other programs and projects in the Region. Finally, the display attempted to portray URADEP as an agency which, despite its size, was accessible to farmers and welcomed participation and advice.

The display was about twice as large as those normally erected at the agricultural show. Basically, it was constructed by amalgamating the 1:50,000 map sheets covering the Region. The map sheets were mounted on a plywood back measuring 13 by 24 feet. Locations of the 90 FSCs, the radio stations, the training center, URADEP headquarters, and the district centers were shown on the map and connected to a legend by brightly colored strings.

Various elements of URADEP's service programs and its organizational structure were explained in charts and photographs on the side walls of the display. To foster participation, a platform was built, allowing farmers and others to view the map and study towns and villages at eye level. The display offered many persons their first opportunity to see a map with sufficient detail to locate their rural homes accurately and to consider their relationship to other regional features.

Staff from the ISU and the Farm Institute who worked at the display spoke three of the local languages and wore monogrammed URADEP shirts. They explained the Program and helped people find their homes on the map, while stressing the close location of the relevant proposed FSC. This staff had spent an afternoon in mutual briefings, continually downplaying any suggestion of a large scale impact by URADEP during the upcoming growing season. They explained to farmers that the size of the Program and its need to obtain equipment from overseas required it to begin operations slowly and deliberately.

The URADEP display was well received, with approximately 30,000 people attending the two-day show. Those attending included the Commissioner of Agriculture, the Regional Commissioner, and many members of the regional staffs of the Ministry of Agriculture. In addition to explaining URADEP to a large number of people, the display brought participating ISU, Farm Institute and communication support project staffs in contact with many influential government officials and chiefs from the Upper Region. These contacts proved beneficial over the next two years.

The display's design, construction, and participation also gave project and ISU staff an opportunity to work closely with staff from the Navrongo Farm Institute. The latter became the communication support project's base in the Upper Region.

Extension Officer Seminars
Helped Establish Training Needs

Use of the agricultural show to try to create a positive regional image for URADEP was part of the project's initial effort to assure that misconceptions about the Program's plans did not become dominant within the Region. The show reached farmers directly, but it was not an all pervasive channel. A second channel for both direct and indirect contact to the Region's small farmers was the regional extension staffs.

Over 500 extension officers worked for various Ministry departments in the Upper Region. These officers eventually became "extension task forces" as URADEP assumed authority. These men and women would represent URADEP in the FSC's. They comprised the largest groups to be trained by the Communication and Training Department. Their attitude toward URADEP, their knowledge of the Program, and their abilities to carry out its strategies and to serve the Region's farmers were crucial to the Program's plans.

The communication support project had learned of the diverse opinions and lack of specific knowledge about URADEP among the Ministry's staffs. Shifting this diversity and lack of knowledge toward a favorable opinion and sound knowledge of the Program's operational plans became a pilot region priority in early 1977.

In order to accomplish this task, the communication support project held a series of three day seminars at the Farm Institute for over 400 extension officers from across the Region during February and March. February and March. The seminars's schedules left little time for detailed planning. However, it was necessary to hold them in March in order to finish before the rains began and before the officers were needed for normal extension duties. The timing of the seminars also provided the communication support project an early opportunity to gather data about the extension staff's knowledge and skills. These data became input for designing training curricula for the Program.

The seminars served the communication support project's effort to set up URADEP's Communication and Training Department in several ways. Through its emphasis on "mono-concept training" the Appraisal Report had suggested that the extension staffs lacked technical knowledge about relevant agricultural innovations. Discussions with over 400 extension officers and their superiors during these seminars indicated that technical knowledge about general Upper Region agricultural practices and several of the relevant innovations was not a significant problem. Seminar members also demonstrated a keen knowledge of the organizational structures and procedures in both regional and national offices of the Ministry. However, they displayed very little knowledge or

skills that would allow them to manipulate these structures and procedures to improve extension efforts.

From the perspective of the extension staffs, major constraints on their effectiveness with farmers related almost exclusively to Ministry problems. Poor equipment, no transportation, poor service conditions, and slow Ministry payment of expense claims and allowances were mentioned repeatedly.

Structured group exercises led by the communication support project revealed a lack of training in group and interpersonal communication concepts and skills. The staffs, however, showed general enthusiasm for additional training in these areas. They agreed that, regardless of other changes, additional training in these areas might well result in improving overall extension work. During discussion sessions, the extension staffs continually raised the lack of institutional support as a major cause of slow development in the Region. There was little mention that farmers might be too rigid individually or culturally to resist innovative practices and ideas.

Problems of institutional support, of communication skills training, of media support for the extension staff, and lack of organization in agricultural campaigns were raised by the extension staff and discussed during the seminars. This last problem was explained through several

regional versions of the "disaster stories" heard by the project in relation to other mono-innovation campaigns.

One example given by several extension officers told their assignment to increase tomato production around a large dam in order to feed a newly opened tomato canning factory. A complete package of supplies had been designed by the Ministry to encourage farmers to participate. Some extension officers reported that they even had been successful in assisting villages to obtain farm input loans. During an entire dry season the farmers worked on the irrigated fields. The crop was good, but, as it ripened and was harvested, no vehicles came to transport the tomatoes to the factory. Tons of tomatoes rotted at the edge of the fields.

The next year these same extension agents were asked to return to the same villages and ask the same farmers to again grow tomatoes for the factory. They reluctantly returned and were able to get some farmers to participate. That year the vehicles did arrive at harvest time, but no one would tell the villagers what price they would receive for their crops. The extension officers did not know the official prices, and eventually one chief was taken to the tomato factory. Factory officials told him the price had not yet been set by Accra headquarters. The farmers had no options and the tomatoes were picked up from the fields before they rotted. Weeks later, the farmers learned that

the factory's price was less than one quarter of the local market price.

The next year these same extension officers were asked to go to the same villages to ask the same farmers again to grow tomatoes for the factory. Again they went.

That these officers continued to do their assignments was surprising to the expatriates at the seminars. That there was a morale problem among the Ministry staffs was a surprise to no one.³⁰

The communication support project additionally focussed its seminar efforts on an explanation of the basic structure, goals, and timing of URADEP to the extension staff. The aim of this focus was to stop the numerous rumors about URADEP and to begin shifting the Ministry's staff from their departmentalized mode of operation and toward a more integrated operational structure. The explanation was also intended to leave the Ministry staff with a coherent picture of URADEP which they could pass on to their farmer clients.

The seminars were organized during a three-week period in January, overlapping with the presentation of the URADEP display at the agricultural show. In order to prepare for the arrival of the participants, the Farm Institute had to be cleaned up and classrooms and dormitories had to be revamped. Many extension officers travelled over 100 miles to Navrongo in open ten-ton trucks, but once they arrived

they were accommodated with clean rooms and good meals. They were listened to and had their first opportunity to supply input into planning for the Communication and Training Department and URADEP as a whole. These factors appeared to create a positive attitude by most participants toward the Communication and Training Department and toward URADEP's plans.

Reassessment of URADEP's Communication and Training Resources

The agricultural show display and the extension officer seminars provided more than an explanation of URADEP to relevant groups. These activities also made significant contributions to the communication support projects's reassessment of the Communication and Training Department.

During this early involvement in the pilot region the project continually discussed what it was accomplishing for the Program as well as the overall needs of URADEP for communication and training support. Compared with the elaborate designs for other URADEP departments, Communication and Training appeared to have had much less planning. After several trips to the Upper Region and participation in the agricultural show and the seminars, the project clarified URADEP's communication and training needs.

The Appraisal Report grossly underestimated required communication and training resources in three major areas.

1. Technical training for the Program's innovations could be done by URADEP staff from several departments. But there was no provision for teaching of effective training techniques. In addition, the training plans outlined in the Appraisal Report neglected communication skills for the extension staff and organizational communication skills for management staff.
2. Training of rural broadcasters was delegated to GBC's training department in Accra. This training department had no one from the Upper Region or who spoke the local languages which would be used by the regional broadcasts. In addition, training in Accra would preclude the types of field assignments that would be a necessary part of gaining rural broadcasting skills.
3. The Appraisal Report called for the Communication and Training Department to produce two local newspapers; all of the extension and training materials for the Program; and presumably, internally required forms, reports, and signs. Despite the complexity and diversity of these requirements there was no provision for a printing or photography staff. Only one junior grade illustrator had been planned.

URADEP's Communication and
Training Department Redesign

The project took the Program identified needs and constraints from in the Appraisal Report and drew up a realistic composite of URADEP's Communication and Training Department. The new department design assumed URADEP's operations would be dominated by one of its unique components -- the Farmer Service Center.

The FSC was the main interface between the Program and the Region's small farmer population. If positive change occurred in the farmers' lives as a result of URADEP, the source of this change would most likely be in their interactions with the FSCs. The communication support project work assumed that the FSCs held the key to farmer organization, farmer education, farmer service, and farmer participation in their own development. The project used this perspective and the experience gained through work on the agricultural show and the seminars to reassess the Communication and Training Department.

The first new department requirement was a larger and more complex staff. Orienting the department toward the training and communication needs of the FSC's as a first priority required reallocating the resources originally planned for the functional literacy pilot program. Technical training of semi-skilled extension assistants recruited

under URADEP to bolster the existing extension staffs required a cadre of training officers. A higher than planned level of officers was needed to train the trainers. Communication skills training for extension staff and organizational communication training for management staff were both required. The department also needed additional expatriate technical assistance to help with this training and training management.

Plans for training rural broadcasting personnel were the second area significantly changed by the project. No local language capability existed within GBC's training staff, and the URADEP radio programming was significantly different from anything else in the country. Adopting an FSC-centered perspective toward a regional radio required that proposed programming be oriented in a non-traditional way. The programs had to do more than encourage popular participation in URADEP, educate the Region's population about cultural diversities, and tell farmers about proper timing and husbandry techniques. Although FSC's could benefit significantly from the programming that used URADEP as a source, they would benefit more and begin functioning as planned when the FSC's themselves became sources as well as the receivers of radio shows. With the FSCs as information sources, some reporting could be devoted to locating solutions developed in one FSC area with programming directed at sharing them with other areas.

Gathering information and creating programs about local solutions to local problems would be a new form of broadcasting in Ghana. It required broadcast training immersed in local culture and reporting practice within the Region. The training staff required to allow this type of broadcasting had to be supplied by, and located at, the Communication and Training Department.

A third area added to the department's design by the communication support project was a printing and photography section. The project was leery of an integrated program relying on only one medium for mass communication support. The Appraisal Report had suggested that the department publish at least two rural newspapers for the functional literacy pilot, extension materials, training materials, and also the Program's required forms and reports. The staff seminars suggested the difficulties in staff coordination and morale that URADEP would have to deal with regionally. The program manager had noted in early conversations with the project the necessity of an organizational newsletter. The printing department required production personnel and senior design staff to coordinate publications and integrate printed materials when necessary into multi-media packages for training and extension support. In this department, staff training was essential.

The fourth change made by the project was to add new positions to the administrative section of the training facility. The goal of this change was separation of the administrative functions of the training facility from academic activities. The project's early activities had quickly demonstrated that designing and carrying out a complex training program required an academic head who was relatively free from the tremendous amount of work needed to keep any Upper Region institution functioning. In an economy suffering from high inflation and chronic shortages of supplies and materials needed to feed students, an Institute administrator had a full time job of carrying on a construction program, and operating a fleet of vehicles.

These changes were made with full consideration of required funds. But the project chose to first determine what was needed to provide the support required and then to look for additional funds.

Additional Communication and Training Resources

URADEP officials agreed by early 1977 to provide funds for competitive local salaries for justifiable new positions in the Communication and Training and other Departments. URADEP's status as a parastatal organization removed the civil service restrictions on salaries and promotions and allowed the department to advertise nationally and to recruit skilled staff.

Having found a solution to the problem of obtaining local expertise, the project focused on increasing the budget for expatriates in rural broadcast training and communication skills training.

Additional expatriate assistance was obtained through initiation of a project sponsored by the government of the Netherlands. A Dutch rural communication consultant had been in contact with the communication support project manager about a Dutch proposal to start an African-based extension training program. He was persuaded to bring a Dutch team to Ghana's Upper Region in March 1977 to discuss locating a project in Navrongo with URADEP as its primary client. Within eight months a project was approved and activated. It incorporated a trainer from Radio Netherlands Training Center, two specialists in communication and agricultural extension training, a graphic artist from the Dutch State Printing House, and over \$200,000 in equipment and materials.

The Dutch government named the project, Training in Rural Extension for National Development, TREND. The associated Dutch agencies that proposed and eventually supported TREND began providing input and advice for modifications of the Communication and Training Department even before TREND began operations in the Upper Region.

Rehabilitation of Navrongo
Farm Institute

The third concern of the communication support project in the early months of its Upper Region involvement was the training facility for the Communications and Training Department. Rehabilitation of the Navrongo Farm Institute was begun in late 1976 and required resources far beyond URADEP's budget for the department.

The institute was one of six low level training facilities run by the Manpower and Training Section of the Ministry's Department of Agriculture. It was originally set up to train middle school leavers and men from large state farms in mechanical repair and mechanized agriculture during the years following Nkrumah's regime. Most of the machinery and equipment at the institute was supplied by USAID, and Americans had served on its staff until 1972. When USAID assistance ended, the source of repair parts for the machine tools, tractors, and implements was cut off. As the equipment wore out and broke down the Ministry changed the one-year curriculum's emphasis from mechanization to general agriculture. While the institute was still in operation in 1976, the entire facility was in a state of delapidation and disrepair.

Only six Technical Officer level instructors taught at the institute and the 76 students spent most of their time

working on the school's fields. One of two classroom blocks and one administrative block had lost their roofs in a wind storm two years previously and had never been repaired. Electricity was seldom available from town, and the standby generators had been broken for two years. Water did not flow into the dormitory during the dry season, and basic sanitation facilities were inadequate. Serious problems existed with every physical aspect of the school, and its staff was incapable of making necessary improvements.

Drastic changes were needed to allow the institute to function as a multi-media production center and modern training facility for each grade of URADEP staff and to house the Communication and Training Department. Rehabilitation was not budgeted within URADEP except for provision of C70,000 for new furniture for the dormitories. Initial estimates for rehabilitation not counting new construction, sanitation, or electrical systems for the 20 acre facility were over C500,000.

In late 1976, the communication support project had already set a tentative schedule for the extension seminars to be held in February and March at the Navrongo Farm Institute. Because these seminars were only two months away Ministry officers in the Region were asked to improve the sanitation and general state of the institute as much as possible. A Senior Agricultural Officer responded