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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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over-zealously and spent more than C100,000 on account in a period of less than three weeks. When project personnel returned to the Region in early 1977, they found that most skilled laborers from Ministry department's regional staffs had been sent to the institute. Needed materials were obtained from local merchants or diverted from Ministry building sites on orders from the "World Bank Project."

Although these actions placed the project in the position of justifying the gross overexpenditures, they clearly demonstrated the expectations of local merchants and Ministry personnel about the amount of URADEP money about to come into the Region.

There was no expenditure by URADEP for these initial renovations of the Navrongo Farm Institute or many of those which eventually followed. A sum of well over C500,000 was provided by the Regional Government, in part to support the agreement with the Dutch Government, and in part as a general regional development project. The assistance provided by the Regional Administration and eventually by the Dutch Government allowed the Communication and Training Department's URADEP budget to be used for new construction, equipment, and materials.

The Regional Administration's commitment also assisted in convincing the Dutch that the department had the support of Regional Government as well as that of URADEP and showed

that when justified, substantial changes could be made to plans outlined in the URADEP Appraisal Report.

During the period in mid-1977 when the Dutch Government agencies were working on TREND's design and the rehabilitation of the institute was well underway, the facility was renamed to reflect its new functions. It became the Institute for Field Communication and Agricultural Training, or as it was known to Program staff, IFCAT.

Farmer Survey Assisted in IFCAT Planning

In addition to contributions from the communication support project, the Dutch project, URADEP's appraisal guidelines, and the extension staffs, the design of IFCAT had input from the Region's farmers.

The farmers' input was obtained in the process of conducting a survey of 432 small-scale farmers who lived in a proposed FSC area surrounding the institute. A survey of these farmers was done by the communication support project because URADEP's Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation Department had difficulty in recruiting a chief and did not begin operations in 1977. The project used staff from the ISU and extension officers from the Region to conduct the pilot survey in September and October 1977.

Information on agricultural practices, traditional communication channels, innovation diffusion, and

farmer-Ministry contact was gathered from a random sample of farmers living within a seven mile radius of the FSC that was to be located on the IFCAT grounds.

The coded data was taken to the United States for computer analysis in December 1977. However, the project had to rely on a personal friend of one of its staff to oversee data processing and shipment of the results back to Ghana. The data was never returned to Ghana during the course of the project and only a rough analysis of the survey was completed. Despite this unfortunate development, preliminary investigations, the cursory examination of the data done in Ghana, and prolonged discussions among the team that carried out the survey provided a better understanding of the communication problems that existed in the area.

The survey exercise suggested there was a basic misconception held by the Ministry's extension staffs about the problems of the local farmers. Those who worked on the survey found a greater instance of farmers who wanted help than they had intuitively expected. In addition, the extension officers who acted as interviewers reported surprise at the number of farmers who said that they had attempted to gain some sort of assistance but had been frustrated because of departmentalization and red tape.³¹

stressed gathering information from farmers as opposed to duties that stressed giving out information and persuading farmers to adopt innovations or participate in new agricultural campaigns.

This conclusion became input into future IFCAT courses for URADEP's extension staff. The survey itself was proposed later as a model for the design of more comprehensive data gathering efforts by the Monitoring and Evaluation Department. A secondary benefit of the survey exercise was that it again brought together staff from the ISU, the institute, and the Ministry's departments in the Region. This group of approximately 25 officers worked together an average of 12 hours per day for six weeks. The rigorous schedule involved continual discussions as well as interviewer training, questionnaire preparation, rural interviewing, data coding, and verification.

The support staff at the institute used the survey as a "shake down" exercise. Housing, feeding, coordinating and arranging for travel and transport claims allowed the staff at the institute to gain a new perspective of what IFCAT would expect of its administrative support. It helped familiarize staff with arranging and processing overtime pay and travel and transportation claims. They also dealt with the logistical, physical, and organizational constraints of the Upper Region. As a whole, the exercise affected subse-

quent planning and emphasized the need for IFCAT to have a strong administrative section to support its communication and training programs.

IFCAT Established

Throughout 1977, the activities of the communication support project and the ISU in the Upper Region were oriented toward designing IFCAT and exploring the existing relationship between the farmers and the institutions that served them. The project staff was aware that this design could not come solely from URADEP or the communication support project, since Dutch assistance had been requested and approved. In September 1977, a team representing the organizations with input into the TREND project visited Ghana to put TREND's design in final form. During this visit, design of the initial structure of IFCAT's organization and the new more complex facility was approved by URADEP. For the next 18 months, the work of the communication support project at IFCAT became basically advisory. It consisted of assisting the TREND project and URADEP to establish and to begin coordinated operations of its media production and training facility.

By May 1979, IFCAT had developed into a broad based communication and training facility that was very different from the ramshackle facility found by the communication sup-

port project 29 months earlier. New power lines carried electricity 24 hours a day to the institute and a new water system assured the staff and students of a good supply of water year round. The classroom blocks had been rebuilt, dormitories furnished, new staff quarters were being completed, and the dining hall was clean and operated as part of an organized administrative support section.

But the most significant changes that occurred during this period were not physical but organizational and operational. These were establishment of IFCAT's five training and production departments. After twelve-months operation, these departments were the major part of communication support's operational definition within URADEP. The functions of these departments were suggested in proposals of the communication support project, of TREND, and even of URADEP; but their actual organization and practices evolved as IFCAT began to operate. This evolution came in response to identified needs, resources, and the characteristics and skills of the IFCAT staff.

These five departments were Extension Communication, Agricultural Training, Small Scale Irrigation Training, Visual Communication, and Radio Training. Each had a set of goals with regard to the products and training they produced and there was a tendency in the early months of operation to avoid the difficulties inherent in making coordinated

attempts to attack a particular training need or other problem. This tendency for the departments to operate in isolation was particularly obvious during an initial period devoted to recruiting and training staff and to provide URADEP with immediate training and media assistance. However, by May 1979 the departments themselves were making stronger attempts to coordinate their activities and thus provide URADEP with a system of integrated communication and training support.

Extension Communication Department

The Extension Communication Department was the section devoted most specifically to training in interpersonal and group communication skills. Two Dutch communication specialists and four Ghanaian officers designed the curriculum used to provide URADEP extension staff with skills unique to the Upper Region. During the first year of operation, this department worked closely with URADEP's agricultural Field Operations Department to design extension goals for the Program. Aimed at the FSCs as they were established, the early goals of the department were registration of the farmers in each FSC area and organization of farmer demonstration programs showing effects of improved agricultural techniques. Over 400 extension officers were brought to IFCAT in groups to learn about the new system and to discuss

techniques for working with the farmers. During 1979, the department began supplementing IFCAT based training with mobile teams working in rotation to set up training programs at the 97 FSCs. (Seven more than the 90 originally planned FSC's set up by URADEP to cover the Region efficiently.)

Obtaining information about the problems and constraints of the farmers was a priority for this department. To maintain an "ear to the ground", two FSCs were selected as areas for intensive pilot work run by the department. In these areas, alternative extension systems were tried and used to provide data for subsequent training designs. The activities in these pilot areas provided the department with a continuous source of information used to improve both field programs and training course designs.

Six officers recruited to this department received scholarships under the TREND project to attend an extension communication courses at the Agricultural College at Watteningen in the Netherlands. One officer was also given a full scholarship to The University of Iowa School of Journalism and Mass Communication. The scholarships assured the department of improved staff skills in the future.

Agricultural Training Department

The Agricultural Training Department had difficulty in recruiting staff to coordinate its function of providing

technical agricultural training for URADEP staff. Those identified as suitable for staff positions were already in important URADEP posts. While the effort to recruit permanent staff continued, personnel from URADEP's technical staff and from IFCAT's Extension Communication Department temporarily taught courses and filled in.

The department's role also included assisting technical experts who came to IFCAT to teach specific agricultural courses to develop their own teaching skills. The department was also set up to assure that new methods being taught fit well into URADEP's overall integrated approach. Within IFCAT the department also acted as a liaison between technical experts and the departments of Extension Communication, Visual Communication, and Radio Training. The goal was to assure that communication skills training, print media support, and, if necessary, radio support were included as part of the presentation of new techniques to the farmers.

The Agricultural Training Department administered courses on a variety of innovations and existing techniques for URADEP's growing staff of extension personnel. Another goal of the department sought inclusion of skills and techniques presented during IFCAT courses in the ongoing training programs being established by IFCAT at each FSC.

The communication support project instituted a rabbit breeding and breeder training program into the Upper Region under the organizational umbrella of this department.

Small Scale Irrigation Training Department

The Small Scale Irrigation Training Department was not a part of the original URADEP or Communication and Training Department design. It grew out of a need identified by a communication support project staff member who had been assigned to IFCAT in the Upper Region. This department, although part of IFCAT, was located approximately 50 miles from Navrongo. It was set up in an abandoned middle school near three small dams. Small dams were emphasized by URADEP because of their special significance in the semi-arid region and the potential they held for generating a second crop and supplementary income for the small-scale farmer. But construction of small dams required community labor and organization to build spillways, canals, and to maintain the irrigated fields.

The nature of the extension work required that both technical and communication skills training be done in the rural areas. IFCAT's original design was expanded to accommodate this need. This department was set up successfully, in part, because a local expatriate volunteer who had built a working example of a community-operated, small-scale irrigation scheme was recruited through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). He worked with the staff member from the communication support project and a

Ghanaian irrigation agronomist to expand his model and to develop a training curriculum.

Visual Communication Department

The Visual Communication Department (VCD) was established as the print, audio-visual, and photographic wing of IFCAT. An old kitchen and dining hall was renovated and expanded to house a complete layout, editorial, publication design, off-set print, and photographic facility. A Dutch and a Ghanaian, both professional graphic artists, were recruited by TREND and URADEP respectively as counterpart department heads.

A locally recruited agricultural extension officer who was a member of the ISU staff assigned to pilot region work was transferred to IFCAT and then sent to the Netherlands to obtain training in offset printing at the Dutch State Printing House.

During 1978 and the first five months of 1979, the VCD's activity was devoted primarily to in-service training, preparation of the facility, and production of forms, registration cards, reports, and signs needed by URADEP and the other IFCAT departments. Eventually, the department began to experiment with production of training and extension materials. During this period it assisted with an elaborate slide/tape production on soil erosion in the Upper Region.

It also produced a variety of technical manuals that were sent to the FSC's. However, these operationally oriented products comprised a minor portion of the department's work. Its senior staff fought a continual battle to free the VCD from administrative products for URADEF. Senior staff worked on design of a wide range of support materials, from a rural newspaper and extension booklets to slide/tapes and demonstration displays.

To assist the VCD redirect administrative printing requirements, additional photocopiers and a small offset duplicator were ordered for URADEF's Administration and Personnel Department. However, problems with electrical supplies and untrained operators kept requests for forms and duplication flowing into the VCD.

Radio Training Department

The Radio Training Department -- another IFCAT department not planned in the Appraisal Report -- was set up in a renovated chicken brooding house at the institute. A trainer from Radio Netherlands Training Center served for 18 months as department head.

Twelve Ghanaians were recruited for their knowledge of local languages, on-the-air voice quality, and reporting aptitude. They were trained in three teams, each devoted to a different Upper Region language. Their training took over

nine months and consisted of courses at IFCAT and a period of training in the Netherlands. The curriculum for the Radio Training Department included writing broadcast copy, gathering information from the rural areas, editing tapes, doing local interviews in the local languages, and developing short programs.

Studio equipment provided by TREND had been matched with GBC equipment specifications for the URADEP radio studio. Thus, all training equipment was compatible with that to be used when the trainees took up positions with GBC.

In addition to providing training, the department developed a basic programming theme for URADEP aimed at providing regional continuity to future productions. The theme portrayed the entire radio programming of URADEP as an "old man". The radio training department attempted to instill a genuine personality in radio URADEP, the Region's "old man". He was skeptical of new ideas because his old ideas had worked, but he was also wise and wanted life to become better for his family. He would try new ways, if they were explained well and were not too risky. He was interested in his Region and its people and seldom tired of hearing new stories and old fables.

The Radio Training Department had the responsibility of assuring that data collected for future programs served the overall training and field programs of URADEP. Trainees

needed to learn how to work with the other sections of IFCAT and URADEP if the radio programs were to be integrated with other media and interpersonal channels.

A major problem of the Radio Training Department during this period was its expatriate head. This training specialist failed to recognize the necessity of accepting additional tasks required by a situation such as that which existed during IFCAT's renovation and building phase. His "specialist" attitude was transferred to some extent to some radio trainees, and this tended to isolate them from the other IFCAT departments. Not until new radio training specialists were recruited from the Netherlands in late 1979 did this situation begin to improve.

Communication Support of Rabbit
Project Expanded to Pilct Region

Outside the communication support project's work on establishing IFCAT, it became involved in an effort to explore the diffusion of rabbit breeding in the Upper Region. This effort included assistance to both the National Rabbit Project and URADEP. It was planned as a means for assisting each to achieve both their separate and mutual goals.

URADEP devoted its first year of operation mainly to recruiting personnel, ordering equipment, and converting the Ministry of Agriculture in the Upper Region into a new

organizational form. As a parastatal program under the Ministry, URADEP had regional autonomy aimed at integration of agricultural services.

Rabbits Became URADEP
Supported Regional
Innovation

One method of establishing URADEP as a distinct organization in the Region was to have it sponsor desirable, useful, and appropriate innovations. The communication support project suggested expanding the National Rabbit Project's activities to the Upper Region as part of URADEP.

The communication support project saw introduction of rabbit breeding into the Upper Region as an opportunity to provide URADEP with a fresh innovation. At the same time the Upper Region activities assisted the National Rabbit Project in its own expansion program.

This innovation also gave an additional focus to the ISU's pilot area activities. Around this innovation, new media strategies, training programs, local research on the innovation, and diffusion research, and alternative diffusion strategies could be designed and tested. Also, introduction of rabbit breeding in the Upper Region allowed the project to explore the process of fitting one innovation into a large scale, integrated agricultural development program.

Regional Research Needed Before Rabbit Breeding Introduced

URADEP agreed to fund a pilot diffusion program that began with local research on breeding. IFCAT's abandoned chicken coops were converted into rabbit hutches similar to those at the National Rabbit Project and 50 purebred rabbits were flown to the new pilot station from the south. An ISU staff member spent eight weeks training at the National Rabbit Project. He was made head of the rabbit research and diffusion pilot at IFCAT.

Records were kept at IFCAT on rabbit health, breeding cycles, hutch construction ideas, and feeding alternatives. The population's interest in the innovation was explored through a demonstration featuring the rabbits at the 1978 agricultural show. More than 600 persons filled out applications indicating their interest in rabbit breeding and their willingness to attend a course at IFCAT.

IFCAT Trained Potential Adopters

In May 1978, IFCAT held a one-week course with 24 participants selected from three basic groups: agricultural science teachers, extension officers, and farmers. These groups represented those who would be talking to large numbers of students about farming, those who worked with the Region's farmers, and the farmers themselves.

Participants agreed to build hutches; to keep breeding, feeding, and health records; and not to sell breeding stock for food. After completing the course and building their hutches, participants were given a pair of the IFCAT purebreds.

During the pilot phase several relevant facts were learned about rabbit breeding in the Region. As opposed to year-round breeding in the cooler southern climate, the purebreds multiplied very slowly or not at all during the dry season. Northern farmers found the southern hutches too expensive and suggested much cheaper alternatives obtained by substituting locally available materials such as pieces of rubber tires for manufactured hinges. There was also some indication that the rabbits bred better in open areas rather than hutches. This information was sent to Accra, and the ISU relayed it to the National Rabbit Project.

Pilot Region Work Generated New Support for Rabbit Project

The Upper Region pilot attracted the interest of FAO's Development Support Communication Branch. Rabbit breeding became the topic of a filmstrip produced by FAO with assistance of the ISU and communication support project. The production gave ISU and IFCAT staff an opportunity to work with a professional photographer and scriptwriter specializing in the relatively inexpensive but versatile and potentially powerful medium of filmstrips with sound.³²

The Upper Region rabbit breeding work was used as a focal point during inauguration of a National Rabbit Breeders Association, and in additional television appearances by Newlove Mamatah.

This pilot activity also became one of the arguments used by the communication support project manager in an interview in UNDP's internationally distributed magazine that solicited external funding for the National Rabbit Project.

While the potential for successfully diffusing rabbit breeding in the Upper Region was not fully known by the time the communication support project finished, the activities in connection with the National Rabbit Project and with URADEP helped suggest broad parameters for communication support.

The ISU's support of the National Rabbit Project included interpersonal and group contacts, mass media products including a booklet, a published interview in an international publication, a demonstration, television shows, filmstrips, and photographic displays. The communication support project was instrumental in furthering research on rabbit breeding, conducting training courses, and opening a variety of feedback channels from early adopters to the National Rabbit Project. These activities and products were selectively targeted by the project toward

potential adopters, toward those who worked with potential adopters, and to those whose support was needed to assist the National Rabbit Project to gain improved institutional acceptance. The strategies and research devised and conducted were complex. But this complexity was necessary if the innovation was to be diffused broadly and equitably in a program that was desired by the farmers and supported by the government.

Pilot Area - Headquarters Links
Assist URADEP with Ministry

Another notable area of communication support activities arose out of identification of a URADEP need for improved organizational communications along the lines of internal public relations between itself and the Ministry of Agriculture in Accra.

The communication support project had not planned on devoting resources to this area. However, in the course of pursuing other pilot region objectives of the project, it had been necessary to develop special communication linkages between the Upper Region and Accra. These linkages became important to URADEP as well.

Pilot Area and Headquarters in
Accra Used Unorthodox Channels

Communication support project activities in Accra and the pilot region were extremely interdependent, particularly

during the year before IFCAT was developed as a media production center. Printed materials for URADEP were produced at the ISU in Accra, a story for The Ghana Farmer on URADEP required a flow of information from the north, and negotiations for the Dutch project required continual updating of bureaucratic progress in the south and progress at URADEP and IFCAT in the north.

Both the headquarters and pilot region sections of the project required accurate, detailed information from the other. Frequently, this information was informal and could not easily fit into reports. In any case, reports took staff away from other duties and took precious hours to prepare. The mail and telecommunication systems linking the Upper Region to Accra seldom operated efficiently, and the Ministry's two-way radio was almost continually broken down. To alleviate these problems, the communication support project built up a system of informal channels and means that allowed the two sections to remain in close contact and carry out their activities in a coordinated fashion. The project used a variety of channels:

1. Project staff agreed that they would accept the 540-mile trip between Accra and Navrongo as routine. Although this was hard on both personnel and vehicles, the staff knew it was an option that could be used whenever necessary.

2. The communication support project made informal agreements with two other projects that had offices in the Region and Accra linked by two-way radio. One of these projects could set up a phone patch from its Accra station to the ISU office. Unfortunately, even these radio links had frequent problems.
3. The project manager made it clear that internal ISU messages to and from the Region never required a specific form. This allowed notes, last minute thoughts, and even personal favors to be jotted down and sent up and down via other project and URADEP staff who were travelling . As a result of this policy it was normal for a URADEP, Ministry or other staff person who had had recently travelled between the north and south to be carrying some information to one of the project sections. Use of these informal messengers allowed the sections to have information flowing continually. This also, brought the person from the URADEP or the Ministry who had carried a message into contact with one of the project's offices when a message was delivered. This allowed the sections to learn other information about the Ministry or URADEP.
4. Whenever staff from either section met as a result of a trip north or south, time was always left for an

informal discussion of the overall situations in each section. Meetings were seldom restricted to the specific issues that might have caused the trip.

As a package these separate means of moving information and the overall policy of open informal discussion allowed the communication support project sections to respond quickly to each other when necessary and to operate in a relatively coordinated manner.

Ministry - URADEP Problems

The ability of the project to set up a reasonable system linking its two sections was facilitated by its small size. There was no way URADEP could rely on other project's channels, or informal messages; it was simply too large and complex. It needed to have a reliable north-south link of its own that tied it to the Ministry of Agriculture in Accra, and to its own southern offices where shipping and equipment arrival needed coordination.

As URADEP was formed and began operating in the Upper Region, serious Accra-Upper Region communication problems quickly developed. In fact, the alternative links developed by the communication support project became a resource for improving the link between Ministry headquarters and URADEP. This situation arose for a number of reasons.

In the area of organizing agricultural operations, URADEP was very slow in getting off the ground. At the top management level, monthly general policy meetings were held by the Executive Committee that included the Senior Principal Secretary and the Program Manager. Communication at this level was not a serious problem. However, URADEP was very slow in recruiting a permanent Chief-of-Field Operations. For this reason the Technical Committee, which included the Ministry Department directors and was chaired by the Chief-of-Field Operations, did not meet on a regular schedule. When it did meet, the acting Field Operations Chief from URADEP did not inspire the directors' confidence.

This problem, combined with URADEP's autonomy in the Upper Region spawned an atmosphere of mistrust in the Ministry. Rumors and misinformation about the new program were common.

URADEP, because of its autonomy and policy of coordination at the Regional level, essentially eliminated the former links between regional sections such as animal husbandry, veterinary services, and agricultural services and their pre-program superiors in the departments in Ministry Headquarters. Communication under URADEP between the departments and the sections in the Regions was to flow through the Technical Committee. With this committee operating seldomly and poorly, the directors had no formal input

into agricultural policy in a Region that had traditionally been under their jurisdiction.

Even informal communication between the directors and their former subordinates in the Region was substantially reduced under URADEP. With no reliable telecommunications link available, these officers had been used to being called frequently to Accra for administrative purposes and to discuss policy. Some of them had gone frequently on their own initiative if problems in the Region required Department approval from Accra. URADEP, with its power to make all regionally-oriented decisions, held the approving authority and administrative authority for most regional agricultural operations with no outside authority. This reduced the formal reason for travel to Accra. This also reduced the potential for informal talks between regional officers and their Ministry colleagues and former superiors. This reduction of both power and communication displeased some directors in Accra. URADEP management's bluntness in asserting its regional authority made the cooperation between URADEP and the departments worse.

Some directors ignored URADEP during its first year of operations and sent orders directly to their former subordinates. These regional officers were put in the position of having two masters as they remained under the Ministry but seconded to the Program. Some departments virtually cut off

the Region from national Ministry programs. For an extended period no officers in the Upper Region were considered for Ministry scholarships. In another example of isolating the Region, the Ministry training budget for the Upper Region was eliminated when the Navrongo Farm Institute was reorganized into IFCAT.

Project Channels Used to Assist
URADEP - Ministry Coordination

These problems threatened URADEP's success and indirectly the achievement of the communication support project's pilot region objectives. The project, without prior planning, found itself using its alternative link between the Region and Accra as an important part of its efforts to improve relations between the Ministry and URADEP.

This strategy for supporting the relationship between the Ministry and URADEP developed serendipitously within the communication support project. The head of the Communication and Training Department remained based in Accra. From there he worked as head of the ISU and set policy for the Upper Region based team. His ISU position brought him continually in contact with senior officials of the Ministry including the Senior Principal Secretary and most of the department directors. With the detailed information he continually received from the Upper Region both through frequent visits and the informal channels of his own

project, he was a valuable source of current, accurate, detailed information about URADEP. As the project became aware of the potential of its own north-south links, it began using these channels to obtain information needed to straightening out Ministry rumors and provide background information to clarify formal messages and reports.

From the perspective of the communication support staff working in the Upper Region, these channels became a valuable means of keeping up on Ministry policy decisions, problems, and resources that might affect URADEP or IFCAT. These channels were also used to handle logistical problems and prearrange meetings when a trip south was required. Finally, as with the project manager in the south, communication support project personnel in the pilot region found themselves able to provide information about the Ministry and problems in Accra that assisted URADEP in making feasible plans.

The project's alternative north-south channels were entirely legitimate given its organizational position. It was linked to URADEP through its pilot region activities and IFCAT and linked to the Ministry headquarters through the ISU. But unlike other Ministry organizations connected with URADEP, it retained a discrete link between its Accra office and its regional section. This, along with its stated function of assisting URADEP with its public relations and pro-

viding communication support, allowed the project to assist both organizations in alleviating some of the strain caused by their own paucity of formal and informal channels.

Although unplanned, the project recognized that it had become involved in and began to explore another dimension of communication support.

The Project Proposed an
Information Support Board for
Ghana

The project, after almost two years of operations in the Upper Region and three years in Accra, completed a design of an organization to institutionalize the services it and the ISU had been providing the Ministry in terms of communication support. The new organization, an Information Support Board, would operate on a national basis and more than fulfill the goals of each sponsor of the original project. The new organization would sustain publication of The Ghana Farmer and produce other Ministry publications while working with other projects and programs throughout the country.

Pilot Region Contributed to
Design of Information Support
Board

Both the pilot region activities of the communication support project as well as those in Accra contributed significantly to the new organization's design. In the Upper

Region, the project had worked outside the parameters of civil service employment constraints and the Central Ministry's procurement and budget structure in staffing and equipping IFCAT. It had established a viable, productive communication and training center that had attracted extra-ministry local and foreign assistance. Ghanaian personnel who demonstrated ambition, talent, and a desire to be productive despite the harsh environment of the Upper Region had been located and recruited. The project had even discovered a locally produced modular building system that allowed for rapid construction of facilities specially designed to house media production facilities.

Accra Activities Revealed Constraints of ISU

In Accra, the project had survived by continually if temporarily overcoming constraints. It had managed to have one issue of The Ghana Farmer written and printed at the ISU, despite problems in finding writing talent, obtaining paper supplies, and keeping machinery running. The project had obtained additional expatriate talent for the ISU with the assistance of the US Peace Corps. It had located Ghanaian management personnel with media training but could not recruit them under the ISU organizational structure. In working continually with severe personnel and logistical problems, the project had learned the depth of the ISU's

constraints below the levels found in the original FAO/DSC appraisals. In addition, the project had learned not only what the Ministry wanted in terms of communication support, but what the Ministry needed, and perhaps most important, what it could tolerate and realistically support.

ISB Proposed as Multi-Function
Communication Support Agency

The experience of the communication support project in the north and the south was translated into a proposal to the Ministry and the Ghana Government for creation of an Information Support Board to replace and expand the functions of the ISU within the Ministry.

The Information Support Board (ISE) was proposed as a parastatal organization with an institutional status similar to that of URADEP or one of the other Ministry Boards and Corporations. In this way the ISB would remain in the Ministry but would operate along the lines of a production oriented corporation.

The ISB would sell its services and products to the Ministry and agriculturally oriented projects and institutions. It would control its own internal finances and personnel policy.

This institutional set up was neither unprecedented nor unjustifiable within the Ministry of Agriculture, but it was a proposal requesting a significant change. The credibility

of the project in proposing this change was not assumed -- it had been earned. Only after demonstrating through the accomplishments of the project and the ISU that communication support could consist of a broad range of media products and support services did the project manager approach Ministry officials with a proposal to improve the productivity potential of an ISB by supporting the institution of the ISB.

The project's work with the ISU also had demonstrated the willingness and enthusiasm of Ministry sections and other agencies to work with the ISU and provide personnel and material resources to a communication support agency. In return these sections and agencies received staff training, media production, and assistance with design of promotional campaigns.

Finally, the project had made a positive impression on some very senior officials within the Ministry and other Central Government agencies. They had seen that communication support activities had strong positive potentials for assisting with the integration of diffuse agricultural projects and providing useful and necessary feedback to government from both farmers and other operational levels of the Ministry.

The proposal for the new ISB clearly outlined the history of the communication support project and stressed that

while it had succeeded in making the ISU temporarily productive, the unit had not become self sustaining. In fact, the proposal suggested that much of the project's work for the Ministry in Accra would quickly erode if the ISB were not approved and established.

The reasons for the need to create an ISB were presented succinctly in the proposal:

Each [of the ISU's main sections, print media, visual media, and electronic media] lacks a high caliber effective head with self-starting initiative because such Ghanaians, and they do exist, are uninterested in the salaries the ISU can offer at present.³³

The proposal outlined the benefits of creating the ISB as a parastatal organization within the Ministry. This would give the ISB the potential to recruit needed talent and the ability to generate sufficient local and foreign assets to operate self sufficiently.

The proposal for formation of the ISB was written and submitted to the Ministry two months before the communication support project finished in Ghana. It was approved by the Ministry of Agriculture in May 1979 and sent to the Central Government. Two days before it was to come up for Central Government approval, there was a coup within the military and the ruling group was removed from power. The new leaders decided to put off all but the most essential economic policy decisions for a period of four months. The proposal was among those matters tabled.

The project ended before a new civilian government took power four months later and the fate of the proposal remains unknown.

Summary

This chapter described the activities of the communication support project in the Upper Region and the translation of lessons learned in the pilot area into a proposal for a national Information Support Board.

The original plan, goals and structure of URADEP were used by the project, not as an operational definition of Upper Region integrated development, but as a starting point from which to design strategies for farmer-centered communication support. Modifications of URADEP's communication and training plans were based on research conducted by the project in the Region and included additional resources, re-designing the Communication and Training Department, obtaining Dutch assistance in the form of TREND, and developing IFCAT as a multi-media production and training institute.

The new structure of the communication and training facility built within the pilot region for URADEP was described in detail. Additional communication support functions performed by the project from its position outside of URADEP were described as having important implications because of the problems that had been caused within the Min-

istry by URADEP's formation as a new type of regional autonomous service agency.

The chapter discussed new forms of support provided by the project to the National Rabbit Project. This further support demonstrated the breadth of the project's activities to include a variety of media forms, research, demonstrations, interpersonal and group skills training, and work toward obtaining support for the National Rabbit Projects from international agencies.

The chapter concludes with an outline of the project's proposal to change the status and structure of the Information Support Unit into a national Information Support Board with the Ministry of Agriculture. The ISB was proposed and justified as a potential method of meeting multiple Ministry goals and also providing Ghana with the potential to provide farmer-centered communication support.

Notes

1. "Appraisal Report of the Upper Region Agricultural Development Project -- Ghana," World Bank Document, Report No. 1061a-GH, June 3, 1976, p. 1.
2. The appraisal report had been written by a team headed by the World Bank's West African Section Office. Richard Grimshaw was the head of the project proposal team.
3. The project proposed for Ghana had both borrowed and unique characteristics. It was the largest project of its type being headed by an indigenous program manager. The URADEP program manager was Dr. Assibi O Abudu, a native of Ghana's Upper Region.
4. "Appraisal Report," p. 1.
5. "Appraisal Report," p. 5.
6. "Appraisal Report," p. 5.
7. This story was first told to communication support project personnel during interviews with Upper Region Ministry staff. The source was the only expatriate Senior Agricultural Officer in Ghana, R. A. Dhramani. He was terminated from the new URADEP in 1978.
8. "Appraisal Report," p. 9.
9. "Appraisal Report," p. 9.
10. "Appraisal Report," pp. 9-10.
11. "Appraisal Report," p. 11.
12. "Appraisal Report," pp. 11-13.
13. "Appraisal Report," pp. 14-15.
14. "Appraisal Report," pp. 16-17.
15. "Appraisal Report," Annex 11, Chart 1.
16. "Appraisal Report," Annex 3, Schedule 4, p. 1.
17. "Appraisal Report," Annex 10, p. 1.
18. "Appraisal Report," Annex 10, p. 1.

19. "Appraisal Report," Annex 10, p. 2.
20. "Appraisal Report," Annex 8, p. 1.
21. "Appraisal Report," Annex 8, p. 3.
22. "Appraisal Report," Annex 8, p. 13.
23. "Appraisal Report," Annex 8, p. 4.
24. "Appraisal Report," Annex 8, p. 16.
25. "Appraisal Report," Annex 8, pp. 17-18.
26. "Appraisal Report," Annex 11, Table 1, p. 2.
27. "Appraisal Report," Annex 11, Chart 2.
28. At the time of these interviews the Upper Region Agricultural Development Program had no official name. "URADEP" was coined at the ISU in January 1977. By that time most persons in the Upper Region referred to the Program as the "World Bank Project."
29. This Institute was scheduled for conversion under the Program to the training facility for the Communication and Training Department. But at the time when work on the agricultural show display was progressing, the Navrongo Farm Institute staff had not been notified by officials in Accra that this major change was scheduled.
30. Although this account sounded incredible, shortly after the seminars were completed the communication support project manager had it verified by the Chief of a village involved while on a routine visit to a tomato growing area.
31. This survey was designed and administered by the author of the present study. He was present throughout the period of design and interviewing and led all pullout discussions with interviewers and coding staff.
32. The production technique employed for the rabbit slide/tape set was referred to by FAO/DSC as "docu-drama." This technique involves a complete dramatic script written around an educational theme and then photographed in the field. In the case of the rabbit slide tape over 240 slides were used to tell a story of the trials and eventual successes of a new rabbit

breeder in the Upper Region. Scripts were translated into local language by the radio trainees and matched to the frames.

33. "Results and Recommendations: Strengthening the Information Support Unit and Library - Ghana," UNDP/FAC Terminal Report on GHA/75/004 July, 1979, p. 25.

CHAPTER VI
DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT
COMMUNICATION AS VIEWED FROM
GHANA PROJECT

Introduction

Chapters three, four, and five established the context of a specific communication support project in Ghana and described its activities.

The description detailed a constraint-filled, problematic environment, the project's responses to this environment, and its work toward stated goals. When the project finished in Ghana, the ISU was still not self-sufficient. Even regular publication of The Ghana Farmer had not been achieved.

The project did, however, accomplish many objectives, including a wealth of experiential data for exploring parameters and functions of communication support. At a general level, the project description may be useful for those interested in the feasibility of communication support activities within a specific Third World context. These descriptive chapters may also be useful for planners requiring reference data in order to better understand complex,

and often conflicting goals relevant to the multiple agencies normally involved in large scale assistance efforts.

Although the descriptive chapters may have considerable value on their own, here they are used primarily as the basis for specifying a pragmatic view of development support communications. While development support communication may be a broader field of activities than those carried on by the communication support project, its activities both within and outside the Ministry of Agriculture were attempts to use communication in support of development assistance. By examining the accomplishments and failures of this project, the problems and scope of development support communication are made more clear.

Examination of the project begins with general observations about communication support. Then the project is defined and clarified in terms of new ideas about development and the conceptual communication model of Westley and MacLean.

General Observations

Based on the Ghana project, four general observations suggest that broad limits be used in future discussions of development support communication.

1. Communication support need not be restricted to production of media products or training for mass media

staffs. Such a restriction was not evident in the project. The project was involved in interpersonal skills training and communication strategy designs. These designs stressed balanced use of various mass media and channels as well as group and interpersonal channels. The project also designed strategies directed toward organizational change. Finally, the project directed systematic research on new production techniques, institutional management, and farmer social systems.

2. Communication support need not be confined to the work directed at a specific interface between inter-related social and institutional systems. The project did not have a singular orientation toward, for example, the relationship between farmers and the Ministry, farmers and other farmers, or different subsystems within the Ministry. Each of these interfaces was a project focus, frequently simultaneously, as the project attempted to move farmers and the Ministry alike toward development oriented activities and goals.
3. Communication support need not be constrained by a pre-planned set of resources. As the project demonstrated, the resources required to build a communication support system were treated as variables, not

as a predefined limitation. Knowledge of existing conditions assists in planning, but the process of setting up a communication support system may itself generate knowledge of unforeseen problems that require additional resources. The project continually sought new resources in response to problems that emerged as the communication support system progressed. The planning of the system and its actual development continually interacted, resulting in redefinition of needs and frequent abandonment of earlier designs. Prior planning was found to be a necessary, but by no means a sufficient condition for providing communication support. Planned resources certainly had an influence on project activities, but the communication support effort showed that additional resources can be generated when necessary.

4. Communication support need not be oriented toward support of a single institution or type of project even if the communication support agency is attached to a single institution or project. As the project showed, communication support products and activities can serve a wide variety of projects and programs. The project's production of a single publication or other media product often served to link together different programs and projects within the

bureaucratic layers of the Ministry. Communication support activities like the publication of an internal newsletter have the potential to create new channels between the bureaucratic layers of assistance institutions.

This potential for improving internal and external linkages was a dynamic of the ISU despite its own position within the structure of the Ministry of Agriculture. In other words, the project demonstrated the functional freedom of the ISU to gain access and information throughout the multiple levels of agencies both inside and outside the Ministry of Agriculture.

Dispensing information obtained while gathering data for publications and training courses was also an ISU potential. This potential was realized continually in the Upper Region as IFCAT staff members were able to discuss farmer problems with various URADEP technical personnel due to their work with the farmers on related matters.

The ISU work on publications -- particularly The Ghana Farmer -- necessitated project staff interviews with several department directors. Frequently, in the course of such interviews, the staff member would be able to inform the director about happenings

elsewhere in the Ministry which were relevant to solving his department's problems. The project provided information immediately in many cases or put the interviewee in contact with persons having more information. The project's communication support agency encompassed a cross-agency information gatherer with a potential two-way informal channel among agency sections and outside institutions.

Further specification of development support communication requires a more detailed analysis of the project's activities. This analysis will search for consistent threads to distinguish between project activities oriented toward persuasion and diffusion and those oriented toward farmer-centered development. The analysis turns to Westley's and MacLean's model as a conceptual guide and explores the functions and goals of the project both in its Accra headquarters and in the Upper Region. But, before addressing this question, the importance of the organizational context of the project necessitates more detailed discussion.

Institutional Setting of Communication Support Agencies

In one major respect communication support as it was practiced by the project in Ghana was no different from the development support communication efforts sponsored by

various UN agencies and national governments. Each of these efforts takes place within an organizational context of some larger institution sharing the goal of rural and/or urban poor assistance.

While units or agencies providing communication support usually include media production personnel and some type of media production equipment, they always operate within a set of constraints dictated by their parent institution(s) and by the constraints of a dynamic political, economic, and technological environment.

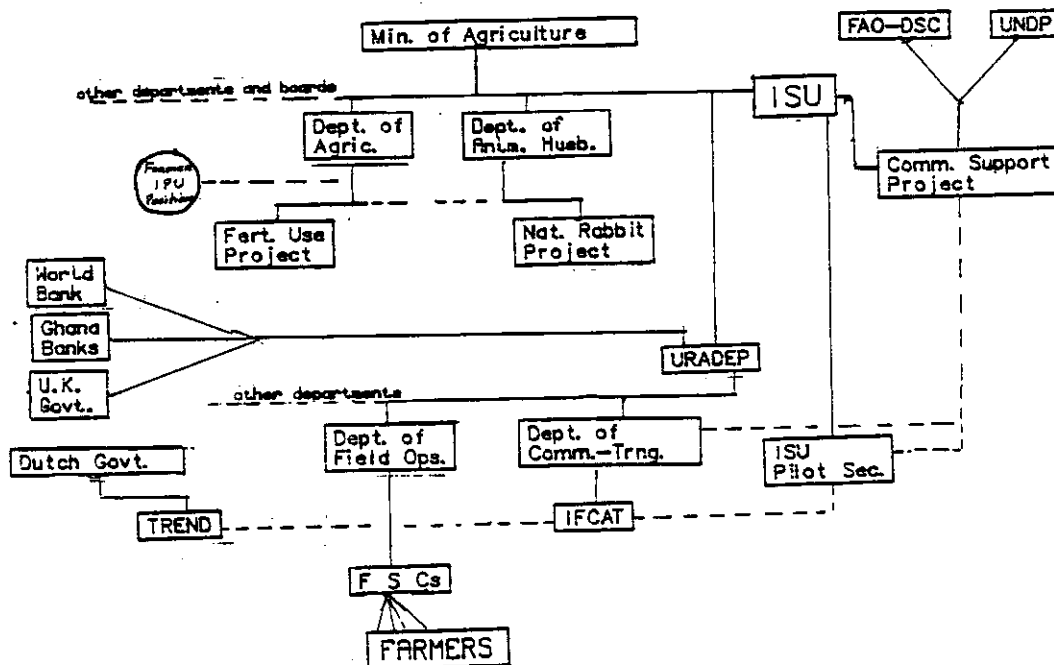
Structural Position Affected Access and Activities

The communication support project in Ghana demonstrated that moving a communication support agency to a higher bureaucratic level in the parent institution can make that agency more accessible to each of the institution's sections. The project also showed that this change allowed the ISU more latitude in choosing which Ministry projects and agencies it would work with. Moving the ISU out of the Department of Agriculture and into a position as an adjunct to the Senior Principal Secretary in effect, defined the ISU structurally as a resources agency jointly shared by all Ministry departments. The ISU's position within the Ministry was made complex with the establishment of the pilot section in the Upper Region and its attachment to IFCAT.

Organizational Position of ISU and
Communication Support Project

Figure 6.1 shows the structural position of the ISU and the communication support project (CSP) within the Ministry and within the other resource organizations (FAO and UNDP). This structural set up increased the potential for the ISU and the project to work with a variety of Ministry related agencies and to utilize a variety of strategies in response to requests for communication support.

Figure 6.1: Organizational
Linkage of ISU and CSP to Ministry
and URADEP



The communication support project was independent of the Ministry in regard to its funding and the placement of its executive bases in UNDP and FAO. These agency inputs in the project design were partially responsible for the goals that went beyond rehabilitation of the ISU. These broader goals justified many of the project's diverse activities in the Upper Region. They also justified the project's efforts to change the structure and functions of the ISU within limits tolerated by the Ministry.

Supporting Institution
Restricts ISU's Farmer
Orientation

Although placement of the ISU within the Ministry and the project's organizational link to FAO and UNDP permitted considerable freedom of activity, this structural position also implied constraints. Without continued Ministry support of the ISU, the communication support project would not have been extended beyond its original 16-month term. Project extension depended upon Ministry support in discussions of funding allocations with UNDP. The Ministry and UNDP jointly decided whether funding would be extended. Thus, either the Ministry or UNDP could cancel the project if either judged its activities as progressing too slowly toward stated goals.

FAO served as a project advocate with both the government and UNDP. However, because FAO's evaluation of the project was in terms of its own priorities among the project's goals, the goals known to be important to FAO also served as a constraint on project activities.

Budget and Staff Cuts and Project Expectations

Constraints on project activities -- dictated by its linkage to other organizations -- were mitigated by the severe problems of Ghana's bureaucracy and economy. These problems were so severe that neither the UN agencies nor the Ministry had high expectations that the project would actually attain its stated goals. Their expectations were lowered further when the bulk of the planned project's resources were eliminated from the operational budget by UNDP. However, project personnel, for a variety of personal and professional reasons, remained determined to have the project perform sufficiently well to warrant its extension. Only through extension would the project be able to continue to explore communication support systems, and to rebuild the ISU into a viable communication support agency.

The abilities of the ISU and the pilot activities of the project to surpass expectations engendered Ministry support for extension. From the perspective of the Ministry, the project had to have appeared useful in assisting that organization to attain its own goals.

The relationship of the project's organizational position and linkages to its activities demonstrated the importance of organizational context in explaining how and why these activities took place. The goals of the project could not be divorced from this context. The communication support project gave various goals different priorities from the perspectives of agencies on whom the project depended for funding and authority. These different priorities on various project goals can be traced back to the original negotiations that resulted in the project's plan.

Complexity of ISU Publication

While consideration of the project's structural links to its parent organizations is an important factor in understanding the project's constraints, communication support is more related to functions of a media production and training agency than to its structural position. To understand the functions of communication support from the project experience requires an examination of how the project operated in relationship to alternative goals.

Analysis of ISU and communication support project functions within the structures of the Ministry and the development assistance system of FAO and UNDP asks who and what any one activity or product was for. The Westley and MacLean model of communication processes and functions can assist in answering these questions.

As noted in the first chapter, Westley and MacLean described a channel role (Cs) in mass communication processes. This role produces messages that are intended to serve the needs and purposes of some behavioral role (Bs).

In the project analysis, the small farmer is the behavioral role (or audience role). Remember that the argument for utilizing Westley's and MacLean's model was that its conceptual description of mass communication processes contained a mass message producer serving as a responsive audience agent. This agent (the mass communication professional or institution) attempted to provide information which extended the audience's (Bs) environment in useful ways for the audience.

Furthermore, this model conceptually portrayed mass communication processes that were highly suitable for examining communication support in relation to the new ideas about farmer-centered development.

The model's complexity accounted for several dynamics of communication including data interpretation, the environment, feedback between functional components, and movement of data between functional components. Because of the multiple goals of the project and the ISU, many of the products that were developed had complex functions. Examining the functions of ISU and the communication support project products shows that no product was oriented solely to the goals and purposes of Ghana's small farm population.

The model's utility is shown when the product's functions are broken down. In most cases, the project's response to small farmer problems included production of mass media messages. However, the messages served both to inform the farmers and to influence the behavior of various institutional actors and agencies in specific ways.

Production of Rabbit Book Served Multiple Goals

The production of the booklet on hybrid rabbit breeding clearly demonstrated the multiple functions of the communication support project. Production of this booklet functioned to improve the interface between the National Rabbit Project and the farming population. The booklet carried new information to farmers likely to contribute to the solution of well known problems of consumable meat production and cash income generation. This booklet function placed the communication support project in a role of assisting the ISU to act in what Westley and MacLean described as a channel role (C). The ISU and the project functioned to extend the farmers' (Bs) environmental knowledge in useful ways. In this example, the National Rabbit Project operated as a purposeful communicator (A). Its goal was to influence the behavior of the farmers (Bs) in a predictable way with regard to livestock rearing (X).

With this publication, the project and ISU were definitely biased toward the farmers' needs. Several revisions of the original technical material given to the ISU by the National Rabbit Project were based on methods more acceptable or feasible in the local environment. The project encouraged booklet recipients to make suggestions for more appropriate methods or to reveal problems with recommended methods. In Westley and MacLean terms, a feedback channel was instituted between the ISU in a C role and the farmers in the B role.

While this is an accurate analysis of the communication support project's activities in relation to rabbit breeding, it is by no means comprehensive. Production of the rabbit booklet also functioned, as the communication support project planned, to improve the interface between the National Rabbit Project and the Ministry's Department of Animal Husbandry. The booklet informed the Department about rabbit breeding in an effort to have the Department increase its organizational support for the innovation. In regard to this function, the communication support project acted indirectly as an agent of the farmers but not as an interpreter and gatekeeper of purposive messages being directed toward them. Rather, the communication support project became an advocate for the farmers--through its support of the innovation--to increase the likelihood that those farmers who saw rabbit