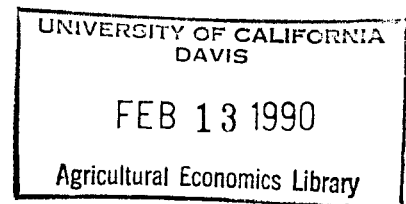


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INSTITUTIONAL-BUILDING LESSONS FROM  
USAID'S AGRICULTURAL FACULTY  
DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN NIGERIA



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**INSTITUTIONAL-BUILDING LESSONS FROM USAID'S  
AGRICULTURAL FACULTY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN NIGERIA**

Authors: Glenn L. Johnson and Bede N. Okigbo

This paper evaluates the impacts of USAID projects to assist in developing agricultural faculties at Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), the University of Ife (UNIFE), and the University of Nigeria (UN). Earlier evaluations of these projects have not given adequate attention to the social, cultural, political, and infra-structural constraints that faced both Nigerian and American administrators of these university projects (Jaeger; Johnston, *et al.*; Gamble, *et al.*; Wilcock and McDowell; and Lele), the exception being a recent one by Francis Idachaba.

**The General Environment for Building Institutions  
in Nigeria Shortly After Independence**

Independence for Nigeria was a time of euphoria and of international goodwill toward Nigeria manifested in large assistance grants and concessional loans. Although the British left a public service well staffed with trained Nigerians and residual expatriates and a Westminster parliamentary democracy, the task of forging a united Nigeria remained. The three and later four regional governments each had grievances. There was a rivalry among major political parties which were frustrated by the fact that none of them was able to win a majority in regions other than their own. A national census was contested and not accepted by all regions. The jockeying for control of the Federal government and various grievances fueled the civil war which put a sudden end to the two USAID projects in Eastern Nigeria and adversely affected the other two.

**Agricultural Institutions in Nigeria from  
Independence to the End of the Civil War**

There was no provision for a Federal Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) at the time of independence. With the pre-independence creation of the regional MOAs, the Federal

Department of Agriculture which was responsible for research, training, and extension was reduced to a Federal Department of Agricultural Research (FDAR). The FDAR coordinated and provided funds to various agricultural research stations for rice, cocoa, medicine, and oil palm which were substations or headquarters of the British Commonwealth Interterritorial Agricultural Research Organization. Nigeria also inherited a number of marketing boards for cocoa, oil palms, cotton, peanuts, rubber, etc., set up by the British to stabilize export crop prices, promote their marketing and improve production. But these boards were also used to tax farmers and raise government revenues. Prior to independence, there was only one faculty of agriculture at the Federal University of Ibadan (UI). There and in the rest of Nigeria the British way of handling universities and agriculture was firmly established.

#### **A Transactions Cost Approach to the Analysis of Public Choices Vis-a-Vis Institutional Change**

The authors of this paper have found that the transactions costs approach to understanding public choices vis-a-vis institutions provides valuable insights into the processes and difficulties the administrators of the UN, ABU, and UNIFE encountered in developing the three agricultural faculties. Establishment costs were encountered in creating these faculties as organizations housed in physical plants subject to changing the "rules of the game." Dismantlement costs also involved existing organizations, "ways of doing things," and physical plants. Together, establishment and dismantlement costs constitute transactions costs. We have drawn on the works of North, Williamson, Buchanan and Tullock, and Bromley. Transactions costs theory indicates that institutional development will not go forward effectively when there are (1) difficulties involved in measuring costs and returns, (2) decision-makers are in a position to take their personal and group interests into account in making public choices, (3) free riding,

cheating, and opportunism are hard to control, (4) knowledge is uncertain, and finally (5) when ideological attitudes and irrational commitments are present.

**Four USAID Projects to Help Three Agricultural Faculties  
at the UN, ABU, UNIFE, and the Umudike Station**

Within four years after Nigeria's independence in 1960, USAID signed four agreements to assist with development of (1) the entire UN in the east including its faculty of agriculture, (2) the faculty of agriculture at ABU in the North (3) the faculty of agriculture of UNIFE (now Obafemi Awolwo University) at Ile-Ife in the West and (4) the Eastern MOA's research, extension, and training station at Umudike. Numerous reports from the U.S. universities that assisted these faculties were used in preparing this paper but are not included in the list of references because of Journal limitations on print space.

The administrators of the three universities were confronted with transactions costs for university organizations, physical plants, and "rules of the game" or ways of doing things. Sometimes these had to be retained because establishment costs for new ones were prohibitive or because those on hand were worth too much in use to be dismantled. These costs and "values in use" were, more often than not, non-monetary in nature and involved rather intrinsic ethnic, religious, political, social, and military and personal values there were extremely hard to measure. Those making decisions about the future of the agricultural faculties were imperfectly informed in an environment characterized by instability and conflicts over personal, party, and group interests. Opportunities abounded for free riding, collusion, and the pursuit of self, agency, and group interests to the detriment of Nigerian agriculture and Nigeria. Student strikes were common. Ideologies and irrational pre-convictions also played roles in setting the stage for the unfortunate civil war.

*The University of Nigeria in the Eastern Region*

Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Governor General and later President of Nigeria, was also a former leader of the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) party. He dreamed of a "land-grant like" university located in the East to serve the entire population of Nigeria. Consequently, the UN (which was established by the Eastern regional government) aspired to be a national university. USAID assistance was obtained to help establish the UN in the Eastern Region. Though Michigan State University (MSU) assisted in the establishment of the whole of the UN, this paper deals mainly with the development of its agricultural faculty, except as other parts of the MSU/UN project impinged on the agricultural faculty.

Establishment and dismantlement costs were high for the UN's college of agriculture. The Eastern Region MOA's Umudike station that needed to be effectively linked with UN's agricultural faculty was located 170 km away. MOA's British-oriented functionaries did not want to link the MOA's Umudike station closely with the UN faculty of agriculture. Unfortunately, these relationships of Umudike to the UN's faculty of agriculture were not clarified early enough. USAID's contract with Colorado State University (CSU) to assist Umudike made the situation still more complicated. The costs of dismantling and/or modifying the MOA's Umudike organization and facilities so as to integrate them into the work of the UN's agricultural faculty were very high and were not paid.

Soon after the establishment of the UN at Nsukka in 1960, the Federal government of Nigeria turned over the Nigerian Colleges of Arts and Sciences (NIGERCOLs) to their respective regions. The UN inherited the NIGERCOL campus at Enugu 60 km away from Nsukka and had to operate two campuses, one at Nsukka (UNN) and the

other at Enugu (UNE). This duality explains our use of the acronym UN here rather than UNN as sometimes done since UNN ignores the Enugu campus.

Both animal husbandry and veterinary medicine were needed in the East to support the production of poultry, pigs, and trypano-tolerant dwarf ruminants. USAID did not regard itself obligated to support a veterinary faculty at the UN and, therefore, withheld building funds from the UN's agricultural faculty. With the outbreak of the civil war and closure of the UN, the veterinary medicine, CSU/MOA/Umudike relationships and other issues went unresolved (Zerby and Zerby, Obiechina, *et al.*).

*Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) in the Northern Region*

The Northern Region's decision to establish ABU at Zaria was facilitated by using the NIGERCOL Zaria campus as a nucleus for ABU to keep establishment, dismantlement, and/or modification costs low. Though ABU lacked qualified Northerners to attend the university and staff its faculties, a virtually intact complement of competent British expatriate agriculturists was on hand to fill most of ABU's important agricultural positions without incurring high non-monetary and non-monetary transactions costs. USAID awarded a contract to Kansas State University (KSU) in 1963 to assist only the agricultural and veterinary medicine faculties at ABU. While smaller than MSU's contract at the UN, the KSU contract provided relatively greater assistance for agriculture and veterinary medicine. ABU also received financial support from the federal government through its Institute of Agricultural Research (IAR). ABU's clear-cut regional role and especially its nearness to IAR (the regional research, training, and extension station) lowered transactions costs for linking its extension, research, and training activities with those of the Northern Regional MOA. Fortunately the British expatriates who played much more significant roles in the North than in the

East and West saw the opportunity to coordinate research, extension, and resident instruction and supported KSU in the move.

*The University of Ife (UNIFE) at Ile-Ife in the Western Region*

In the Western Region, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Premier of the Region and leader of the Action Group (AG) party, decided to establish a university at Ile-Ife, the legendary origin of the Yorubas. Since the UI, which was established as a federal university in 1948, had not developed a close relationship with the Western Region MOA, UNIFE had the opportunity to do so. The situation was complicated by the MOA's research, training, and extension station at Moor Plantation being located in Ibadan about 70 km from Ile-Ife. While at the beginning UNIFE was based at the NIGERCOL was only about 10 km from the Moor Plantation, the situation changed when the UNIFE was moved to Ile-Ife. UNIFE took more care and time to plan and develop the physical plant at Ile-Ife and work out relationships with the Western MOA's Institute of Agricultural Research and Training (IAR&T) than was done at UN. A USAID contract to assist UNIFE in developing only its faculty of agriculture was signed with the University of Wisconsin (UW) in 1984. Unlike ABU and much like UN, the UNIFE suffered high establishment and dismantlement costs.

*The Consortium for the Study of Nigerian Rural Development (CSNRD)*

Even before the Western Region and UW got the UNIFE construction program well underway, USAID officials decided they needed an overall evaluation of their extensive agricultural projects and programs in Nigeria. AID Washington officials decided that a consortium of the four participating U.S. universities should evaluate and recommend improvements in USAID's Nigerian agricultural projects and programs. CSNRD was established to do this. It was a legal entity owned and controlled by other U.S. agencies working on Nigerian agriculture as well as the four U.S. universities. On the Nigerian



side, CSNRD was related to the relevant Nigerian universities and agencies. As CSNRD's work got underway, it became clear that USAID's Nigerian programs could not be evaluated independently of those of other donors and lenders. Consequently, CSNRD developed relationships with Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Bank, and the foreign assistance agencies of a number of other countries.

### **Policy Constraints on Nigerian Agriculture**

A number of poor policies and institutional arrangements and rules of the game reduced the effectiveness of the three faculties in improving Nigerian agriculture. These included (1) marketing board levies on export crops, (2) policies and programs that interfered with the establishment of a national market and price system, (3) financial imprudence, (4) lax rules of the game that permitted marketing board and petroleum revenues to find their way into privileged government budgets, party coffers, and sometimes private hands, (5) programs favoring government operation of input supply industries, (6) policies and programs reflecting the perception that Nigeria was over-producing export and under-producing food crops, (7) failure to generate programs and organizations capable of effectively organizing and coordinating Nigeria's agricultural research, extension, training, and degree efforts to serve her agriculture, and (8) policies that stressed state farms and farm settlements to the neglect of independent small-holders. Unfortunately, these policies and programs foster what Tweeten now refers to as the "economic degradation process" (EDP).

### **The Civil War and Its Consequences**

There was a military coup on January 15, 1966, as a result of (1) political unrest in the Western Region and the declaration of a state of emergency and deployment of troops there, (2) regional tensions and grievances, and (3) dissatisfaction with the performance of politicians in power. Another coup occurred later in the year. These

coups set off a series of events that led to a civil war in July 1967 that lasted two and a half years to end in January 1970. Nigeria's agriculture which was not doing well before the war did even poorer during and after the war that added physical chaos to institutional instability. War probably represents the ultimate in transactions costs.

More specific consequences of the war included (1) abandonment of regionalized political organizations for a more unified nation under a military regime, (2) replacement of 4 regions by first 12, later 19, and now 21 states in addition to the Federal capital territory, (3) the establishment of a Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources (MANR), (4) reduced ethnic tension as some of the minority groups attained their own states, (5) federal takeover of all universities with financing through the National Universities Commission (NUC), (6) an uncontrolled spending spree (triggered by the oil boom) that included expansion of agricultural development schemes stressing food crop production, (7) neglect of export agriculture and loss of Nigeria's leadership in the world trade in palm oil, cocoa, and groundnuts, (8) termination of USAID's assistance program, and (9) rapid establishment of new universities.

#### **Post-War Appraisals of Nigerian Agriculture**

As Nigeria's civil war drew to a close, the agricultural situation was appraised by FAO, CSNRD, a National Conference on Reconstruction and Development (NCRD) that was concerned with the whole of Nigeria not just the agricultural sector, and a national Agricultural Development Seminar (ADS) that used FAO and CSNRD appraisals as points of departure.

The FAO report (1965) stressed food and nutrition problems in a manner that encouraged Nigeria's unfortunate attempts to achieve local as well as national food self-sufficiency to the detriment of international trade, food production, the production of export crops, increases in per capita income, and the development of a system of

market-oriented prices (Tweeten). In rather sharp contrast, the CSNRD (Johnson, et al.; Eicher, 1986) appraisal stressed the need for expansion of both export and food crop production, modification of the constraining agricultural policies and programs discussed above, and the need to organize and coordinate three major agricultural faculty centers at UI/UNIFE, UN, and ABU so as to support coordinated agricultural research, resident instruction, and extension for their respective areas of the country.

The NCRD (Ayida and Onitiri) dealt with the entire Nigerian economy with one out of fourteen papers devoted to agriculture. It barely touched on the need to reorganize and coordinate agricultural research, training, and extension programs to serve the MOA's of the new states.

The ADS (Fed. MANR) was highly Nigerianized even though the FAO and CSNRD reports were points of departure. The National Agricultural Advisory Council contributed to ADS work. In ADS deliberations, the FAO pro-economic degradation (Tweeten) orientation towards food self-sufficiency carried the day despite the valiant efforts of such young Nigerian social scientists as Samson Olayide who presented extensive projections showing the favorable consequences of institutional and policy changes along the lines suggested by CSNRD. Several years later, ideas similar to Olayide's have been re-advanced by Eicher (1982), Idachaba, and Tweeten.

#### **Agricultural Research and Extension in Nigeria After the Civil War**

Since the war, there have been numerous attempts by competent Nigerians to organize Nigerian science and technology including agricultural research. Successive institutional arrangements include the Nigerian Council of Science and Technology (NCST) that established the Agricultural Research Council of Nigeria (ARCN). Before much could be done, the NCST was replaced by the National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA) under which an extension liaison service unit was

established at Samaru. Neither the Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Resources (NISER) at UI nor the Economic Development Institute (EDI) at UN were placed under a research council. A civilian regime in 1979, abolished NSTDA and replaced it with the Federal Ministry of Science and Technology (FMST) that was later joined with the Federal Ministry of Education (FME) to become the Federal Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (FMEST). In 1985, under still another military regime, the two ministries were re-separated! Changes came so rapidly at such high transactions costs that self-interested persons, agencies, and groups could prevent sustained effective re-organization and coordination to promote their interests. In none of the above reorganizations was research in the universities brought under any of the councils, the NSTDA, or the FMEST. All of these successive attempts to coordinate and reorganize were relatively unsuccessful. The most recent attempt establishes still two more agricultural universities to organize and integrate agricultural research, extension, and resident instruction in Nigeria. The transactions costs for this attempt are likely to be so large that success will be difficult.

#### **Changes in National Agricultural Development Programs**

Nigeria has had five development plan periods since independence. They have included such special agricultural development programs as the National Accelerated Food Production Program (NAFPP) 1972-73, Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) 1976-80, the Green Revolution Program (GRP) 1981-84, and a restoration of elements of the NAFPP after the last military coup in 1985. Of these programs, the NAFPP was the most successful. These successive agricultural development programs failed to achieve balanced emphasis on food and export crop production and the need of farmers for income to re-invest in the production of both. The pre-war process of economic degradation (Tweeten) has continued unabated.

**Development of University Education Relevant  
for Agriculture in Nigeria from the End of the Civil War to 1987**

Growth in Nigerian universities has been very rapid (Okigbo, 1981). Starting from one university in 1961, there were 29 universities by the end of 1987 including one for the military. Student enrollments reached over 150,000 by the 1986-87 academic year. The number of graduates expanded from 425 in 1962-63 to over 30,000 in the 1986-87 academic year.

**Accomplishments of the Three Agricultural Faculties  
and Assisting U.S. Universities**

The three Nigerian and four U.S. universities have made significant contributions.

The IAR at ABU developed the strongest agricultural research, extension, and resident instruction linkage among the three faculties. Though the university-wide, land-grant linkage is strongest at the UN, its agricultural linkages with the MOA and extension are weak due in part to the separate USAID/CSU/MOA contract at Umudike.

Participants from staff development programs of the three faculties now occupy important senior positions throughout the country.

The ABU/IAR program involved veterinary as well as agricultural sciences. IAR also developed an agricultural extension liaison unit unmatched at UN and UNIFE. ABU developed a successful farming systems research program. All three agricultural faculties developed theoretical and practical training at various levels. The ABU and UNIFE agricultural faculties are associated with various sub-degree schools of agriculture while the UN is not. However, the UN trains veterinary technicians and uses its Continuing Education Center for training, conferences, and workshops, some of which serve agriculture.

In Nigeria the UN pioneered the system of general agricultural courses with specialization in the final year. It was the only one of the three universities offering vocational education courses in agriculture and home economics.

The physical plant at the UN lagged behind those for the other two universities in part because the onset of the civil war stopped USAID funds for such construction.

ABU's well-established, federally-financed research unit, the IAR continued its success to become a national crop center in NAFPP. UNIFE's IAR&T released improved cow-pea and tomato varieties and developed a good soil research and analysis laboratory that has provided useful extension services.

Only MSU had responsibility for assisting an entire university. The UN (1) ushered in a wide range of training opportunities in agriculture including home economics (that opened up opportunities for rural females) and vo-ag training, (2) pioneered in demystifying the sixth-form, advanced level, and London matriculation requirements for success in universities, (3) introduced four- and five-year degree courses that led to national approval of a primary, junior high, senior high, and four-year college program in Nigeria, (4) introduced general studies programs for all students including those in agriculture, (5) introduced the course system and grade point averages based on sequential and final examinations of students each year, and (6) was the most successful of all three universities in marrying selected aspects of the English and U.S. educational systems.

### **Institution Building Lessons**

This major section is broken down into general and specific lessons.

#### *General Lessons*

(1) Institutions manifest themselves in three interrelated, interdependent forms: (a) as rules of the game, (b) as organizations, and (c) as physical plants.

(2) There are costs to be borne as well as gains to be derived from changing institutions in any of their three forms. Dismantlement and establishment costs are involved. Together, they constitute transactions costs.

(3) Transactions costs are often involuntarily imposed on peoples and groups; hence, Pareto-optimality is of limited applicability in institution building analyses. Induced institutional change theory, while very useful, does not adequately handle important social, political, and military variables.

(4) Success in organizing Nigeria's agricultural establishment has continued to elude her despite significant efforts by a large, increasingly competent group of Nigerian agriculturalists who have served on councils, boards, and study groups. Layer upon layer of agricultural faculties have been created (Eicher, 1989). Research institutes, councils, and governing agencies have been created, changed, and dismantled without organizational success. Agricultural development programs were planned, started, replaced, and dismantled without substantial impacts on agricultural production. Nigeria still has much organizational work to do on her agricultural establishment. Large transactions costs are still ahead before the economic degradation process (EDP) in Nigeria's agricultural sector can be reversed.

(5) One of the most important lessons from this analysis is that the transactions costs approach to the study of institution building is likely to be as useful in planning the future of Nigeria's agriculture as it now is in understanding its past.

#### *Specific Lessons and Recommendations*

(1) Projects for building agricultural faculties need to be based upon pre-project orientations and feasibility studies that give careful attention to social, political, religious, and military as well as technical and administrative variables affecting the likely success of the project.

(2) Attention should be given to the overall organization of the agricultural establishment of a country in which technical assistance is being given to particular agricultural faculties. The much needed CSNRD effort in this regard came too late and was overcome by the civil war before it could modify the degrading economic environment in which the three specific agricultural faculty development projects operated.

(3) USAID's faculty development contracts in Nigeria were long-term. Unfortunately, they were terminated prematurely by the civil war and by increases in per capita Nigerian income (from oil) that disqualified her for USAID assistance. Despite this, it must be stressed that agricultural faculty building projects are necessarily long-term. Twenty to twenty-five years is about the appropriate length. Had U.S. assistance been legally possible and more welcome in Nigeria after the civil war, these three contracts should have been extended along with the work of the CSNRD to improve the agricultural faculties and provide a less degraded agricultural economy to which they could contribute.

(4) The conflict between the contracts AID extended to MSU and to CSU indicate a need at that time to coordinate USAID's education and agricultural activities.

(5) This review of the successes and failures of the agricultural faculty development projects in Nigeria indicates that the situation was too complex for failures and successes to be explained by such simple single considerations as (a) attempts to or not to establish a land-grant system, (b) emphasis or lack of emphasis on generating agricultural technologies, (c) failure or success in revising adverse, economically degrading agricultural policies and programs, and (d) success or failure in developing human capital. These factors are individually so important and complementary that balance with



respect to them is so crucial that failure or success in developing an agricultural sector can hardly be attributed to any one of them, alone.

### Conclusions

The experience of the USAID assisted faculties of agriculture and universities reveal: (1) some successes in institutional and manpower development, (2) that both successes and failures are partly attributable to the complex Nigerian political, social, and cultural environment; the backgrounds, attitudes, and peculiarities of individuals in both public services and the universities; and the British colonial legacy, (3) that constant changes in inappropriate and inconsistent agriculture policies, programs, and commitments detracted from success of the USAID projects in stimulating agricultural production (Tweeten) (4) that British "rules of the game," educational points of view, and attitudes towards the functions of government and universities constrained development of land-grant orientations at the three agricultural faculties and particularly at the UN.

In general, the four USAID contracts made substantial contributions to development of three of Nigeria's agricultural faculties and the Nigerian agricultural establishment. Neither difficulties experienced in organizing the Nigerian agricultural establishment nor low-growth rates in agriculture can be blamed on these four projects, none of which were responsible for national coordination and organization of Nigeria's agricultural establishment.

## AUTHORS

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A more detailed version of this paper is available from the Department of Agricultural Economics at Michigan State University.

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