

Title XII Analysis, by Richard Bissell

Richard Bissell gave background on himself and noted that he was chosen to do the study because he represents the middle ground.

The first of his tasks was to look at the roots of Title XII to ground the current study in an historical context. Mr. Bissell explained that USAID was the premier leader for development assistance 30 years ago. Technologically, agriculture was building on the momentum of the green revolution, and there was an agreement to attack poverty at its rural roots. Generally, people agreed that the path to development had to go through the countryside. Several strong forces coalesced to strategize the approach: powerful leadership in Congress, vocal and articulate commitment of land grant universities, institutional expertise, technical expertise with AID to manage the agriculture programs.

Title XII reflects an offer by the university community to make their expertise available, and the expectation was that the universities would participate, from start to finish and at all levels, in planning and programming agriculture interventions to alleviate poverty. Title XII represented a melding of university and AID resources. The plain meaning of the Title XII legislation was implemented, and the Agency and the university worked together as partners.

Since then the profile of agriculture in international development has fallen. In the year 2000, there was an amendment passed to update Title XII to reflect the new realities. The subject matter was expanded to be more interdisciplinary and tied to other areas of development, such as child survival and health. Additionally, land grant universities were no longer operating on their own. Rather, they were working with partners in the public and private sectors, and that needed to be reflected in the new legislation. In the amendment, there was also a re-emphasis of the dual mandate of strengthening US agriculture in conjunction with agriculture in developing countries. The amendment was passed without a formal hearing and never had a formal endorsement by USAID. As a result, lots of senior people and key stakeholders never read it, and were not even aware that it had been passed.

Mr. Bissell summarized the second of his tasks, stakeholder interviews. He noted that there is really no pattern that emerges regarding opinions of Title XII, and there was an incredible plurality of views. Some of the broad issues he identified included:

- There was some difference on whether Title XII should apply to US agriculture. For the most part, interviewees agreed that the central issue is food security in developing countries. Some saw the objective of dual benefits as onerous and sometimes incompatible, and perceived that they could be penalized if they did not show results that provided a benefit to US agriculture.
- Regarding the strategy paper to implement Title XII, it does not appear that it drives programming. Mostly, it is useful if you had already made your decision that was aligned with the document, and then could use the document to explain the rationale for programming.

- USAID has a “Policy Determination-4” (PD4), which almost no one had heard of, but which still exists within ADS. PD4 refers to the Memorandum of Understanding between the Agency and BIFAD, and is on the books as a non-mandatory policy. Key operational sections of the PD4 were carried over into the higher education policy, which is mandatory. Thus, it is not clear cut that PD-4 is mandatory as it relates to BIFAD.
- There are lots of different views about BIFAD and SPARE and what their role is, which, overall, results in a lack of clarity on the status of BIFAD and SPARE. It is clear to most, however, that the true partnership relationship no longer exists.
- Several other issues which surfaced include definition/perceptions of partnerships; the process for using Title XII to carry out projects; the overall role of research in AID programming, which has been decried by some decisionmakers as a “bottomless pit.”

The last section of the report focused on options for taking action:

- Need to engage the USAID Administrator in agriculture issues
- Need to strengthen staff expertise in agriculture
- Need to rebuild the constituency behind agriculture as an engine for development. BIFAD could play a role in conveying these ideas to the American public.
- There should be a broader participation in Title XII across the Agency
- Universities need to demonstrate their comparative advantages

Discussion of Title XII

Sharron Quisenberry, BIFAD Board-What do you consider a best first step in building partnerships and communication?

Richard Bissell-Look for transitions to make inroads.

Morris Whittaker-From our university, there was a disengagement that was purposeful. We had just invested a lot of money and staff, and then the decision was made to eliminate the strengthening grants. At that point, we saw AID as an unreliable partner. To re-engage would take some sense of security, and some assurances by the Administrator and Congress. On the part of the university, I think that there was the idea that the university could do it all, and this finally resulted in us doing too much not very well. We should have limited our scope and concentrated on doing it at a higher quality.

Peter McPherson, and others in audience-Agreed that the first 10 years of Title XII were very productive because there was a staff associated with BIFAD and agriculture was generally well-funded.

Ed Price, Texas A&M-With the amendment, there was an intentional decision to widen the scope because the resources were in other sectors. It seemed that at the end of the paper, the focus was mainly on CRSPs. However, Title XII is a much broader mandate, and in the revision, attention should be paid to seven or eight other programs. Thus far, there has been no hearing on the revision and no discussion outside of Congress.

Richard Bissell-Currently, Title XII is associated mainly with the CRSPs.

David Sammons, USAID and Purdue-That is because the CRSPs are practically the only thing left that is associated with Title XII. The perception in the Agency is that universities think only about where they will get their money, and that there is a sense of entitlement among universities. I have found this to be untrue. Rather, universities recognize that there are federal sources of funding that are up for competition, and that excellence is requisite. The relationship between USAID and universities has been poisoned by this word “entitlement,” and it has not allowed universities to participate on the basis of excellence. The other thing that is problematic to establishing relationships is that the university, by its nature, is concerned with long-term research and degree training. Without the educational platform, the sustainability of development is called into question.

John Thomas, USAID-The conditions that allowed the collaborative, productive relationships between the Agency and universities no longer exist. Richard Bissell notes that the Agency needs to more widely convey the message about agriculture, but what is the message that we can deliver? That needs to be defined.

Woody Navin, USAID-My colleagues spend 80% of their time on CRSPs. It is a misuse of time, because we fight over a pie and don't try to grow the pie. We need to show how our work is accomplishing Agency objectives. For example, the formation of agriculture cooperatives is demonstrative of Democracy and Governance. With regards to PPC, that has been taken over by State, and there is no room to do that right now. It is essential that we gain the attention of the Administrator.

Tim Williams, University of Georgia-BIFAD, with the resources it has, has a limited ability to change its position. In terms of appropriations, they should focus on Title XII, rather than focusing on the CRSPs.

Peter McPherson-The draft paper will be placed on the website, and is open for comments. This is a time of transition so perhaps it is a good time to move forward on this, and for the university and BIFAD to articulate a broader vision that has its roots in history, but is modern, too. In terms of resources, we can minimize the fighting over them if we find some new resources. Right now is a good time to think creatively and broadly, and to revitalize a new way of collaborating.

Levels and Trends in USG Funding for African Agriculture 2000-05, Key Recommendations and Options for Updating and Expanding the Assessment, by Julie Howard

Dr. Howard presented a PowerPoint. Highlights of the presentation follow:

