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AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

UNITED STATES A.I.D. MISSION TO COSTA RICA

Ann Rept.

May 16, 1973

U.S.A.I.D.

UNITED STATES EMBASSY
SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA



70-DAB-519-A1

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Files

FROM: Irabel Chacón *J. Chacón*
Project Evaluation Coordinator

SUBJECT: Annual Review: RTAC Project

PURPOSE: Improve the quality of available knowledge in the hard sciences and mathematics

The internal AID evaluation review of the subject project was held on May 10, 1973, with the following staff members present: Thomas McMahon, Project Manager; Peter Kreis, AID Affairs Officer; Ana Sayagués, Program Officer; Daniel Greene, Controller; and Isabel Chacón, Project Evaluation Coordinator.

I. DISCUSSION

Mr. McMahon described the current status, activity and problems related to this project. Concrete activities include the following:

1. RTAC is a regionally funded Latin American program, operated in each country through an automatic distribution list of books translated into Spanish. Therefore, Missions are unable to control book selection or quantities required.
2. Up until two years ago, RTAC's system was based on quizzing the Missions on books desired. The Missions, in turn, submitted lists of books and quantities required. The system proved too involved and slow and was, therefore, substituted for the more functional automatic listings.
3. The Costa Rica Mission receives books from RTAC in fourteen different categories. RTAC's annual input has been roughly estimated at US\$40,000. Also, an RTAC film library is being successfully operated in Costa Rica, with USIS personnel, on a loan basis system to solicitors. This component of the RTAC program is working satisfactorily.

The local distribution of books, however, is presenting serious problems, since some of the books received are sent in bulk to a limited number of institutions. The receiving institutions, in turn, are responsible for the distribution. No records of recipients are maintained, nor is a receipt system in operation. Some of the books have been incorrectly addressed. The highly technical content of these books makes them useless in areas where the educational achievement is limited to a high school level.

4. Up to the present time, the lack of storage space at the USAID Mission has made immediate disposal of the books necessary to avoid blocking the building's corridors.
5. At present, the USAID Mission has no personnel available for the proper handling of this project. The former project coordinator, Oscar Castro, left USAID employment as of April 1, 1973.

II. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The RTAC project offers an excellent source of technical literature in Spanish for use by teachers at the University and vocational school level, as well as by the public and private sectors. This potential is not being realized because of lack of personnel and adequate system control.
2. This project must be completely reorganized to achieve the desired impact of increasing technical information and serving both public and private sectors with new reference material.

In addition to working out a more effective distribution system, a budget from the Mission's allotment should be made available to purchase books for interested parties.

3. The new system should include a manageable control system, as well as adequate storage facilities.
4. It was agreed that a special committee would revamp procedures and submit a full project proposal to the Evaluation Committee NLT July 10, 1973.

ICH/frs

cc: Amb. Viron Vaky
Mr. Peter Kreis
Mr. Thomas McMahon
Mr. Daniel Greene
Mr. Thomas McKee
Miss Ana Sayagués
Mr. William Rodgers, USIS

PROJECT DESIGN SUMMARY
LOGICAL FRAMEWORKLife of Project: _____
From FY _____ to FY _____
Total U. S. Funding _____
Date Prepared: May 7, 1973Project Title & Number: RTAC Print Media & Film Distribution Program

| NARRATIVE SUMMARY | OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS | MEANS OF VERIFICATION | IMPORTANT ASSUMPTIONS |
|---|---|--|--|
| <p>Program or Sector Goal: The broader objective to which this project contributes: (A-1)</p> <p>Improve the quality of available knowledge in the hard sciences and math.</p> | <p>Measures of Goal Achievement: (A-2)</p> <p>RTAC/Mexico evaluation</p> | <p>(A-3)</p> <p>RTAC/Mexico evaluation</p> | <p>Assumptions for achieving goal targets: (A-4)</p> |
| <p>Project Purpose: (E-1)</p> <p>Provide best technical books, pamphlets and films in Spanish to C.R. libraries, professional institutions and schools above secondary level and to university bookstore.</p> | <p>Conditions that will indicate purpose has been achieved: End-of-Project status. (B-2)</p> <p>Feedback in the form of letters from recipients of books and films.</p> | <p>(B-3)</p> <p>Receipts Requests Letters</p> | <p>Assumptions for achieving purposes: (B-4)</p> |
| <p>Project Outputs: (C-1)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Books distributed Books sold by bookstore. Films shown to groups | <p>Magnitude of Outputs: (C-2)</p> <p><u>1972</u></p> <p>180 book titles 150 films loaned 200 pamphlet titles</p> <p>approximate value \$ 40,000</p> | <p>(C-3)</p> <p>Receipts</p> | <p>Assumptions for achieving outputs: (C-4)</p> |
| <p>Project Inputs: (D-1)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Books sent to Mission under automatic distribution. Books ordered for sale by cooperative bookstore. Films loaned from RTAC library. | <p>Implementation Target (Type and Quantity) (D-2)</p> <p>Whatever RTAC sends to Mission Project.</p> | <p>(D-3)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Mission records RTAC files | <p>Assumptions for providing inputs: (D-4)</p> <p>That Mission will continue to have funds for cost of mailing and staff to run program.</p> |

RTAC NARRATIVE:

The RTAC program in Costa Rica has deep institutional acceptance among long-term recipients on the automatic distribution list.

A review of the system revealed that a half-time technician and a half-time secretary-typist would be able to run the in-country distribution. The departure of former RTAC Officer was seen as an opportunity to review the entire distribution system and set new local guidelines in accord with RTAC general policy and the future direction of the CR Mission.

The Mission decided to hire the two, above mentioned part-time staff members under one-year contracts. The entire 14-category distribution list will be reviewed and analysed. Recipients will be deleted where it is judged they are not making adequate use of the books. New libraries and organizations will be selected to receive books. A system of control will be initiated to insure that the books arrive and are used in accordance with both Mission and RTAC policy.

The local RTAC operation will also continue to support the University of Costa Rica Bookstore with required training, technical assistance and continuous backup service. The possibility of starting new bookstores at the Technical Institute at Cartago and new University at Heredia will be explored.

RTAC will also be asked to provide technical assistance for the Ministry of Education to improve operation of its Film Library which has run into administrative problems.

The Mission has also decided to study the requirements of highly technical books in Costa Rica. Based on findings it will reduce the number of books sent in certain highly sophisticated subjects.

Six months after the initiation of the new system a review will take place to determine its effectiveness.