

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Dr. Peter Benedict, Senior Social Scientist
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FROM: Dr. Robert Firestine
Urban Economist/Fiscal Planner
Amman Urban Region Planning Group (AURPG)
c/o USAID, Amman, Jordan

DATE: December 7, 1978

SUBJECT: Final report on AURPG consulting,
USAID contract no. AID/NE-C-1558 (Jordan)
Technical Services and Feasibility (Project 278-0181)
(Amman Urban Planning)

I am pleased to enclose my final report on this contract in Amman, Jordan, during the period 12 October through 11 December 1978.

Enclosures:

1. Five-page final report
2. Attachment: formal AURPG evaluation of Abu Nuseir new community proposal
3. Attachment: formal reply of AURPG to questions on the Abu Nuseir project
4. Attachment: preliminary internal working paper on public finance, budgeting, and local fiscal planning in Jordan

cc: Dr. Arch Dotson (1)
Dr. David Lewis (1)
AID Reference Center (2)

Robert E. Firestone
Contract No. AID/NE-C-1558 (Jordan)
Technical Services and Feasibility
(Amman Urban Planning)
Project No. 278-0181

1.

WORK ACCOMPLISHED DURING THE PERIOD
14 October through 7 December 1978:

1. Prepared a formal evaluation, attached herewith, of the proposed Abu Nuseir new community, working with a team of three Jordanian junior staff.
This report outlines both financial and conceptual problems of the Abu Nuseir proposal and recommends against further implementation of the project at this time.
2. Prepared the formal reply by the Amman Urban Region Planning Group (AURPG) to a set of questions on the Abu Nuseir project by the consultant designer of the proposed new community, Mr. Jürg Schindler of the Zurich firm of Schindler & Schindler.
This document is also attached herewith.
3. Conducted meetings and discussions Mr. Jürg Schindler and representatives of the Jordanian Housing Corporation relating to the Abu Nuseir proposal.
4. Provided on-the-job training in economic evaluation techniques and in report preparation and presentation to the three-member Jordanian junior staff which assisted me in the above analyses.
5. Investigated the scope and functioning of Jordan's public finances and fiscal planning, emphasizing the actual application of major revenue instruments and the problems of fiscal planning coordination among the various public sector agencies.
Preliminary internal paper on this topic is attached.

FURTHER WORK OF THE AURPG REQUIRING THE SKILLS
AND KNOWLEDGE OF AN URBAN ECONOMIST/FISCAL PLANNER

Dr. Arch Watson, USAID Senior Advisor to the AURPG, is of course the final authority on all appropriate future tasks to be performed by USAID's urban economist/fiscal planner at AURPG. However, given the evolving character of the AURPG and the potential development of sometimes unforeseen short-term obligations, all the possible work tasks for an urban economist/fiscal planner cannot completely be specified in advance. Nonetheless, more than a majority of the two dozen analytic projects currently planned or in progress clearly rely upon the professional skills and knowledge of an urban economist/fiscal planner, at least in large part:

Working paper on sectoral programming

Working papers (2) on master planning

Working paper on tendering

Working papers (2) on national planning

Critical sites/programs reports

Working papers (2) on information systems

Draft chapters on settlement, industrialization,
and the regional poor

Working paper on budgeting

Working paper on urban design

Working paper on land economics

Working paper on environment

Working paper on planning law

First interim draft plan for the Amman Urban Region

Second interim draft plan for the Amman Urban Region

Beyond the concern for the urban economist/fiscal planner per se, moreover, is the broader and much more crucial problem of the continued provision of adequate leadership manpower to the AURPG in general. This question breaks down into two elements: expansion of the expatriate professional staff to work with Drs. Dotson and Lewis in these formative months of the AURPG operation, and identification and employment of high-quality Jordanian mid-level professional senior staff who are capable of providing competent technical leadership to the Jordanian junior staff over the long-term future of AURGP after all expatriate advisors have departed.

First, despite the tireless high-quality efforts of Drs. Dotson and Lewis, the scope of the current work alone is more than they should be expected to

handle without additional expatriate professional staff. Ideally, an urban economist/fiscal planner would provide the best complement to their skills over the coming months, with occasional support from short-term experts in the fields of planning law, environmental planning, and social science analysis. What is more important in general, however, is that an additional individual or individuals capable of working effectively with the current Jordanian junior staff be hired to supplement the efforts of Drs. Dotson and Lewis so as to guarantee the timely completion of the large number of important analytic tasks which they have properly set out for themselves and the the AURPG.

Second, over the longer-term future of the AURPG organization, the employment of technically competent senior staff of clear leadership caliber is essential to the fulfilment of the ultimate promise of this agency. The present Director General of AURPG cannot be expected to carry the burden of the vital technical supervision of the group's generally bright though inexperienced Jordanian junior staff, none of whom now has the maturity or background to shoulder technical leadership responsibilities in AURPG once the American advisors have left the scene. Indeed, unless steps

are taken by, say, mid-Spring to hire this kind of capable technical leadership, it is likely that the brightest and most productive of the current Jordanian junior staff will succumb to the temptation of more lucrative and potentially more dynamic work opportunities elsewhere. Such an eventuality would render largely ineffective the useful capacity-building endeavors in AURPG to date, and it would leave instead only the least capable junior staff to carry on this important work. Such developments could be prevented by the timely recruitment of a technically competent Deputy Director who could provide dynamic internal leadership of what would then continue to be an enthusiastic and well-trained team of urban planners. With their local knowledge and growing on-the-job experience with modern urban/regional planning techniques, such a team -- with the proper long-term technical supervision -- would be a unique asset to Jordan and a model for the entire Middle East region. The transition to such an effective continuing organization should begin soon with the timely recruitment of the appropriate AURPG Deputy Director.