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July 27, 1983

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MEMORANDUM

TO : See Distribution
FROM : NE/TECH/SARD, ^{B. Salvo} Bernard J. Salvo
SUBJECT: Evaluation Report--YMCA/Lebanon, Vocational Training in Building Trades Project (268-0318)

Attached is subject evaluation report and related correspondence received from the Mission recently. Your quick review of these materials and comments will be appreciated.

An Action Memorandum and Project Amendment extending the activity for one more year and adding \$750,000 is being processed for approval by the end of this week.

Attachments: a/s

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ADDENDUM
TO
EVALUATION REPORT
U.S. - AID YMCA, LEBANON VOCATIONAL
TRAINING PROGRAM

The purpose of this addendum is to provide additional information to supplement and/or clarify the main Evaluation Report (of June 17, 1983). Three issues are addressed here: (1) the status of women graduates, (2) the effect of the program on school attendance, and (3) further feedback from employers.

1. Status of Women: As was reported in the main report the total number of women in the vocational training program is 103. Two women were originally included in the sample. Since further information about women was required, an additional group of ten women was invited for interviews. Five are graduates of the drafting program and five are graduates of the interior decoration program. In regard to age the range is 18 to 25 years; number of years of formal schooling completed ranges between nine years and two years of college. Only one of them has had prior work experience: she taught in an elementary school for one year.

There seems to be a sharp difference between the graduates in drafting and those in interior decoration in regard to current employment. All subjects are recent graduates; four of the graduates in drafting are currently employed in their field of specialization. On the other hand only one of the graduates in interior decoration is now employed. All of the five women who are not employed are seeking employment and they have reflected varying degrees of confidence about job prospects. However, the group in interior decoration expressed concerns about their ability to enter the job market, and requested that YMCA seek avenues to help them.

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2. Effect of the VTP on School Attendance: Based on the responses of the original sample of 64 subjects and also on the group of 10 women interviewed more recently, admission into the VTP has no effect on school attendance. The admission policy set up by the VTP is such that entrants either be out of school at the time they apply for admission or be at least 16 years of age or older. Some of the subjects have continued their formal schooling while pursuing attendance in the VTP during their free afternoons. This group represents some one-eighth of the total sample. Practically all others can be classified either as persons who had reached their highest formal education and had already left school, or those who already were employed.

3. Further Feedback from Employers: In addition to the two employers mentioned in the main report, interviews were conducted with four others. Three of the four have also been instructors in the VTP (one each in drafting, plumbing, and interior decoration). These are small contractors who usually come in contact from site owners, and it is natural that they employ the graduates of the VTP. The responses obtained from this group of four are identical with those obtained from the original two. They confirmed the previously stated facts regarding the level of preparation on the graduates, their attitude toward work, their motivation, and willingness to follow instructions of their superiors. The remarks have been particularly positive regarding the graduates in drafting. The fact reported earlier about their employability corroborates this claim.

The question of feasibility of soliciting financial assistance from employers was also explored. The results confirm the findings reported earlier. It is doubtful that employers would respond to appeals to participate in the support of the VTP. At best, only small contributions could be expected.

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One further recommendation seems necessary. Considering that some of the female graduates are having difficulty entering the job market, it seems necessary to set up some mechanism to help them. It is recommended that a very small part of the grant be ear-marked toward setting up a (mostly informal) placement service whereby employers and potential employers are contacted. There is need to reorient employers in their views about the capabilities of women, and to help place the qualifications of the applicants before them and to encourage them to hire women. If the question of cost becomes a problem, the placement service being recommended could be limited to the initial placement of every female graduate into her first employment.

Prepared by Nathir G. Sara
Beirut, Lebanon
July 11, 1983

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Young Men's Christian Association

O. Box : 11 5520 Beirut, Lebanon — Tel. 3 6 6 0 9 9 - 3 6 9 7 6 0 -- Cable : Dedication

15th April, 1983

Dr Nathir G. Sara
American University of Beirut
Beirut - Lebanon.

Dear Dr. Sara:

You have been selected to evaluate the US-AID sponsored YMCA/L Vocational Training Program. It is understood that we will engage the services of two graduate students to assist.

The evaluation will cover the period since the program was last evaluated in February 1982. However, emphasis and the primary purpose of this evaluation is to cover the training program since it was resumed after the Israeli invasion.

The evaluation shall consist of the following and it is understood that you and your assistants will take all measures necessary to assure a valid and comprehensive final report. Our files are open to you for your investigation and all records and documents should be examined prior to field work. We will do our best to assist you with the logistical help such as transportation and typing.

The evaluation must center on the graduates. Approximately 700 young men and women have graduated since last fall. If possible, the whereabouts and status of each should be ascertained. A random sample, say 100, should then be selected for a more thorough analysis. We would want to know how has the training changed their lives, income and status: Are they better off because of their training? Are they practicing the skill in which they were trained? How many trainees dropped out of the training prior to graduation and why? Somewhat more nebulous is the project purpose, "To assist in the physical reconstruction of Lebanon". Has the project made an important contribution to this end, or have most of the graduates moved to the Gulf? Also, the success of entrepreneurial seminars should be assessed, i.e. how many attendees of these seminars are now private contractors in their own right.

In addition, and as called for in the 1982 Grant Agreement, the evaluation will identify medium-term goals of the program.

Young Men's Christian Association

P. O. Box : 11-5520 Beirut, Lebanon -- Tel: 336097 - 369750 -- Cable : YMCALEB

Dr. Nathir G. Sars (continued)

10th April, 1963

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One focus will be on trying to determine the levels of capability and willingness of trainees, potential employers, and site communities to assume greater responsibility for financial support of the program. The evaluation should analyze particular aspects of the program not fully evaluated in earlier studies, e.g. more opportunities for women and the effectiveness of training provided women thus far; the program's impact on school attendance and continuation; the results and the community spirit process fostered by the program. Furthermore, the evaluation should consider the contribution of the program in terms of the total situation, keeping in mind the reconstruction effort envisioned in the country, as well as look into possibilities of using new techniques and/or training areas in the future. This would include an appraisal of overall vocational training needs vis-a-vis the training the YMCA offers, and if training emphasis should be shifted.

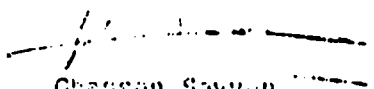
We would like to have the final report within 30 days of the date of this letter, though it is understood that an additional week or two may be needed.

We are prepared to offer you L.L. 14,000 (fourteen thousand Lebanese Pounds) for your undertaking the study: half of this amount will be paid at the mid-point in the evaluation and the other half after submission of the final report. The YMCA/L will directly reimburse the graduate students for their services at a mutually agreed to fee. Their requests for payment should be certified by you.

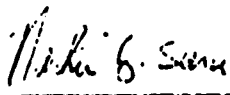
Mr. Kurt Shafer of AID Mission will also be involved in the evaluation.

If you agree with the basic terms outlined above, please so indicate by signing herebelow.

Yours sincerely,


Ghassan Sayyan
General Executive
YMCA/L

AGREED:


NATHIR G. SARA

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U S - A I D - YMCA/LEBANON

VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM

EVALUATION REPORT

Prepared by

Nathir G. Sara

Associate Professor of Education

American University of Beirut

June 17, 1983

INTRODUCTION

The Vocational Training (in Building Trades) Project is now in its fifth year of operation. After an initial pilot run in 1977 -- financed by YMCA/Lebanon -- an initial grant was provided in September, 1978, by U.S. AID. The Project has since continued to be supported by U.S. AID. The current operations are covered by a grant of \$750,000 for FY 1982 with the expectation that the PVO (YMCA/Lebanon) provide \$165,000 to cover the cost of tools and miscellaneous expenses. This report describes the operations conducted during the period August, 1982, to early May, 1983. The total number of trainees involved in various locations is 752. The target set for the VTP for the entire fiscal year is to enroll some 2,560 men and women in 32 or 33 sessions. The success rate was set at 80 percent; i.e., it was expected that approximately 2,050 persons complete the program on schedule.

Previous Evaluation Reports. Two evaluation reports, dated August, 1980, and February, 1982, were made available to the present evaluator. It is very clear that the evaluations conducted to-date have been extremely positive. This fact was later reiterated in the FY 1982 Project Document. Some of the highlights of previous evaluations are summarized below:

1. The VTP has made a visible impact on perceptions of Lebanese as to the value and status of work;
2. The VTP has made possible entry of women into vocational skill areas;
3. The program has had a significant effect in improving community spirit;
4. Continuation of the VTP is justified in view of the demand-supply picture in the building trades manpower of Lebanon.

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

The method used in the present evaluation is, to a degree, similar to the method used in the previous evaluations. Special effort was made in this study to justify the use of an incidental sample by comparing it to the target population. Information was solicited from a variety of sources, as follows:

1. YMCA statistical records;
 2. On-site interviews with:
 - a) a sample of trainees currently enrolled (during May, 1983)
 - b) a sample of graduates of 1982-83 training sessions;
 - c) session supervisors;
 - d) local community influentials (including a few employers)
- Visits were made to five training centers which are:

- Ashrafiyeh (Beirut)
- Bint Jbeil
- Nabatiyeh
- Shayah/Ghubairi (Beirut)
- Yater

Interviews were conducted according to a pre-planned interview guide. However, whenever the opportunity presented itself, the evaluator and the research assistant attempted to probe into issues to obtain additional information.

LIMITATIONS

The ideal way to go about this kind of evaluations is to do a follow-up study on a random sample of all enrollees (graduates and non-graduates). This was not possible. It seems that (1) many of the graduates leave their locale soon after graduation, (2) many of those who continue to live in the same area cannot be contacted due to lack of telephones, and (3) many of those who are invited for interviews are either too busy to give of their time or they fail to see the significance of such an evaluation. Added to these factors are the problems of security in the country and the fact that this evaluation had to be completed within a matter of only five or six weeks.

The constraints listed above led to abandoning the idea of using a random sample. Instead, an incidental sample was

used, i.e., a sample was selected from those persons who were accessible to the evaluator during site visits. To make up for the weakness of non-random sampling, effort was made to examine results carefully for contradictions, and also to balance reports from trainees with reports from others who have been directly or indirectly informed of the Project.

FINDINGS

1. **Characteristics of the Graduates:** At the start of this evaluation study, 610 persons (out of 752 enrollees) had successfully completed training. Tables 1 through 5 present data on the graduates in regard to age, level of formal education, areas of specialization, occupation prior to joining the training program, and ratios of success in each of the areas of training. Since there is no reason to expect any important difference between this group and the group of trainees currently (or soon will be) enrolled, the characteristics detailed below are generalized to the total population of graduates during 1982-83.

Table 1
Distribution of Graduates by Age

	17 years or younger	18-20 years	21 years or older	Total
Number	397	116	97	610
Percentage	65	19	16	100%

Table 2
Distribution of Graduates by Level of Education

	Illiterate	5 years	9 years	Secondary School	Beyond Sec.Sch.	Total
Number	55	185	155	210	5	610
Percentage	9	30	26	34	1	100

Table 3
Distribution of Graduates by Area of Specialization

	Electri- city	Tiling	Plumbing	Build- ing	Bar Bending and Carpentry	Plaster- ing	Inter Decor
Number	119	162	156	55	29	14	74
Percentage	19	27	26	9	5	2	12

Table 4
Distribution of Graduates by Occupation Prior to Training

	Unemployed or Students	Manual	Technical	Professional	Total
Number	259	175	166	10	610
Percentage	42	29	27	2	100

Table 5
Graduates as % of Total Enrollees

Electri- city	Tiling	Plumb- ing	Build- ing	Bar Bending and Carpentry	Plaster- ing	Inter. Decor.	Total
79	81	84	100	81	70	80	81%

To summarize, the graduates are:

- mostly young: only 16 percent of them are 21 years old or older;
- mostly literate: only 9 percent of them are illiterate while 35 percent have 11 years of schooling or more;
- unequally distributed among various specializations in the building trades, with tiling and plumbing appearing as most attractive;
- generally are without much work experience: only 29 percent of them had been employed in technical or professional occupations while 42 percent entered training without any prior work experience.

2. Characteristics of the Sample: The total number of trainees interviewed was 64. Among those 50 were graduates and 14 were still in training at the time of the interviews. The characteristics of this sample are reported in Tables 6 through 9 below:

Table 6
Distribution of the Sample by Age

	17 years or younger	18-20 years old	21 years or older	Total
Ashrafieh/Beirut	1	4	3	8
Bint Jbeil	4	14	7	25
Nabatiyeh	7	4	4	15
Shayah/Ghubeiri	1	6	3	10
Yater	1	3	2	6
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	14	31	19	64
	22	48	30	100%

Table 7
Distribution of the Sample by Level of Education

	5 years or less	6 - 8 years	9- 11 years	Bach. II	Beyond H.S.	Total
Ashrafieh/Beirut	0	2	4	1	1	8
Bint Jbeil	8	7	10	0	0	25
Nabatiyeh	1	3	10	0	1	15
Shayah/Ghubeiry	0	3	6	0	1	10
Yater	0	3	2	0	1	6
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Total	9	18	32	1	4	64
	14	28	50	2	6	100%

Table 8
Distribution of Sample by Area of Specialization.

	Drafting	Elec- tricity	Tiling	Plumb- ing	Bar Bending and Carpentry	Plaster- ing	Inter. Decor. and Painting	Entrepre- neurial	Total
Ashrafieyh/Beirut	1	3	0	2	0	0	2	0	8
Bint Jbeil	0	4	6	7	0	0	0	8	25
Nabatiyeh	0	3	6	2	0	0	4	0	15
Shayah/Ghubeiri	0	3	1	1	0	0	5	0	10
Yater	0	0	1	0	2	0	3	0	6
	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	1	13	14	12	2	0	14	8	64
	2	20	22	19	3	0	22	13	100%

Table 9
Distribution of Sample by Previous Occupation

	Unemployed or Student	Building Occup. s	O t h e r		Total
			Unskilled	Technical	
Ashrafieh/Beirut	1	3	0	4	8
Bint Jbeil	10	3	2	10	25
Nabatiyeh	8	2	1	4	15
Shayah/Ghubeiry	5	1	1	3	10
Yater	1	2	1	2	6
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Total	25	11	5	23	64
	39	17	8	36	100%

*Include a public school teacher

An examination of the characteristics of the sample with those of the population reveals the following differences:

- the subjects in the sample are somewhat older than the subjects of the population; 30% of the sample are 21 years or older while only 16 percent of the population is in the same age bracket;
- the ratio of illiterate or semi-literate persons is smaller in the sample than in the population. In other words, most of the subjects in the sample converge around the two brackets of 6 to 8 years and 9 to 11 years of schooling. On the other hand, the sample contains more than the expected ratio of persons with education beyond high school.

-- the sample is similar to the population in the ratio of persons who entered training without prior work experience. On the other hand, the sample contains more than the expected ratio of persons with experience in skilled occupations.

The above observations lead to the following conclusion: that the sample used in this evaluation is somewhat "more sophisticated" than the total population. As a result, effort will be made to tone down achievement when the findings are interpreted on the basis that the accomplishments of the sample are probably greater or more favorable than those of the population at large.

In addition to the sample of trainees, interviews were held with 19 persons who, directly or indirectly, seemed relevant as persons with information about the VTP. This group of individuals is composed of some of the community influentials in the five sites that were included in the visits. The group consisted of: 5 site supervisors, two employers, one engineer, one District Governor, one Mayor (Qa'im Maqaam), a farmer, a Unifil officer, a Mukhtar, a Director of Municipality, a municipal accountant, two businessmen, and two teachers. Information obtained from these individuals will be presented in a later section of this report.

3. Current Employment of the Sample: Data on current employment of the subjects in the sample are provided in Table 10 below:

Table 10
Distribution of Sample by Current Occupation

	Unemployed or Student	Employed in Field of Train- ing	Employed in Other Construc- tion Field	Employed in Non- Construc- tion Field	Total
Ashrafiyeh/Beirut	1	6	1	0	8
Bint Jbeil	2	20	3	0	25
Nabatiyeh	8	3	1	3	15
Shayah/Ghubeiry	2	7	0	1	10
Yater	0	4	0	2	6
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Total	13	40	5	6	64
	20	63	8	9	100%

It is evident that the largest category --63% -- is that of persons employed in the fields in which they were trained. Another 8% are employed in the construction trades, but in areas other than their specialized training. Only 9% are employed in fields other than construction. Twenty percent are either unemployed or are still students. To further clarify this last fact, nearly half of the persons still under training already had part-time or full-time jobs. On the other hand,

among the 20% of unemployed, a few are regular school students who were not actively seeking employment, while a few others had just completed their training and were optimistic about securing employment in the immediate future. The interviewers encountered only two persons who were skeptical about their potential for success in construction work.

4. **Earning Power of the Graduates:** The graduates who have secured work in the construction industries are earning rather impressive wages. Exact figures could not be obtained, but the majority reported that their earnings were doubled or tripled as a result of their newly acquired skills. The usual figure reported by the subjects ranges between L.L.2,000 to L.L.3,000 per month. Furthermore, most of the subjects reflected a high degree of confidence that the future would only be better.

5. **Place of Employment:** This has been a very difficult question to answer. During interviews with the sample subjects (and with community influentials and training supervisors), effort was made to obtain information about migration and immigration patterns. The following picture emerged, and it is presented with some skepticism as nobody seemed to have definite information:

a) Approximately 40 percent of the subjects seem to aspire to obtain employment outside Lebanon. The lure of significant monetary gains as a result of employment in the Gulf countries is quite strong. This is further reinforced by the strong tradition of "temporary immigration" for a number of years during

which young Lebanese hope to accumulate capital then to return to their country.

b) The estimates obtained regarding the graduates who have left their place of residence and/or training points to some 25 to 30 percent who are now working outside Lebanon.

c) More than half the subjects confirmed, at least verbally, their desire to work in or near their villages, or in Lebanon. Some subjects reflected a strong patriotic spirit and commitment to the reconstruction of their country.

Assuming that the information in the previous paragraph describes an approximation of reality, a positive and significant element should be recognized: the phenomenon of temporary immigration by young Lebanese has been proven as one of the strengths of the Lebanese economy. Even at present, and perhaps more so during the past eight years, the balance of payment of Lebanon has been sustained partly because of the estimated \$150 million that expatriate Lebanese send to their families each month. In the opinion of this writer, the reconstruction of Lebanon will depend partly on what the Lebanese working abroad could send back to this country, and partly on the will and determination of Lebanon to start and sustain the reconstruction process.

6. Further Information from the Sample: One of the most striking observations we made during the interviews was the high level of motivation and the keen sense of purpose

exhibited by the subjects. When asked about their objectives in pursuing training, almost all responded by indicating clearly that they wanted to be acknowledged master craftsmen. There never was any hesitation, neither was there any indication of what might elsewhere be called an identity crisis (a phenomenon rather common to adolescents and young adults).

In regard to the quality and conduct of the training program, only a few (six or seven) abstained from strong praise. The typical comment was something like: "All I know now is what I have learned here. I feel I have learned enough skills to work as a master in Lebanon or in the Gulf (or in Europe, etc.). These comments represent one side of the picture. In a later section dealing with the views of employers, a somewhat more modest response will be reported.

Finally, there is a spirit of community. At no time did any person express apprehension about over-supply of tradesmen if the VTP were to be continued. In fact, some of the graduates have been instrumental in recruiting others to join the program. On a few occasions statements were volunteered by the subjects in which they expressed a hope that training sessions be organized in other villages and other locations.

MANPOWER NEEDS

According to reports from the Lebanese Ministry of Housing (released in newspapers and television on several occasions), the reconstruction of Lebanon is (1) of high priority to the Government of Lebanon, and (2) is estimated to cost L.L.63 billion

(\$15 billion). The vast destruction of residential, business and industrial structures is known to all and need not be documented here. In addition, there is need to repair existing roads and highways and to build new ones. Also evident is the will of Lebanon -- government and people -- to rebuild the country. What remains to be accomplished is, first and foremost, the establishment of the authority of the State over the entire country. Beyond this the country will need sufficient material and human resources to start the gigantic task of reconstruction.

According to a reliable source*, there are at present 58,685 persons engaged in the building industries in Lebanon. This figure represents 6.73% of the total labor force of Lebanon estimated at 872,000. According to the same source, the share of the building industries of the total labor force in the Arab region ranges between 3.40% (in Sudan and Djibuti) and 31.89% (in the United Arab Emirates and Oman). The average is 7.46% of the labor force, engaged in the building industries in the Middle East. Estimates by N. Khalaf et al** for manpower needs in the building industries for Lebanon in 1979 were set at 62,311 (had the war not taken place and if demand assumed normal or non-war conditions).

* Arab Labor Office, "Facts about the Arab Labor Force and Horizons for Development," Majalat al-Anal al-Arabi, 25 (October-December 1982) pp. 12-43.

** See M. Khoury, Evaluation Report, Feb. 1982.

Two estimates of demand are presented below:

1) Assuming that the share of the building industries of the total manpower of Lebanon is the same as the average for the Middle East, i.e. 7.46%, the figure would be 62,951 persons in the building industries.

2) Using an arbitrary rate of 10% of the labor force to engage in the building industries (and this rate may well be justified by reconstruction needs) the figure will be 87,200 persons.

The present evaluator believes that the second estimate is more probable with one qualification; the qualification being the establishment of peace in Lebanon, and the start of the reconstruction process. If so, the building trades labor force should be increased by some 28,500 persons.

FEEDBACK FROM COMMUNITY INFLUENTIALS

It is very difficult to pin down the motives and the "politics" of community influentials when they make statements about such projects as the VTP. We attempted to probe into issues and to return to questions already answered in an effort to check for consistency. As it turned out, there seemed to be a very strong feeling of appreciation and support for the program. Information presented in this section is organized according to category, but represents a condensation of information obtained from the interviewees. Each of the observations listed below was espoused by at least two persons (except when

quotations are cited); in some cases near unanimous expressions were recorded.

- Lebanon is on the threshold of a great era of construction and prosperity. Let there be peace and the graduates of the VTF will play a very important role in rebuilding the country as well as in helping its economy regain its power.
- Employers now do not have to delay work because of shortages in semi-skilled and skilled craftsmen. The experience in the past has been the stoppage of aspects of construction work until a master could be scheduled to take charge of them. Further, the monopoly of the established masters is now being broken by the influx of able and motivated young persons anxious to enter the labor market.
- Demand by young persons to enter training in the building skills is continuing. After explaining that he receives inquiries about this project from young persons in his community, a public official said, "We insist, rather request and hope, that the project be continued. It is a vital part of the life of this community ... we cannot at present provide material resources for its support, but we may be able to do so in future."
- Change in the orientation toward learning and work was reported by several of the leaders interviewed. The change is from boredom and purposelessness among students

pursuing academic studies to specific learning behavior toward learning vocational skills directly relevant to work.

- The project is viewed as a home-grown activity and seems to be the subject of conversation among people. This is particularly true in small communities and seems to be reinforced by volunteer work on the part of the trainees. In Bint Jbeil, the trainees worked as volunteers in building five public toilets in the market section of the town. In Yater, the trainees contributed toward the construction of a school house (see below)
- A Unifil officer called on the evaluator to provide his own observations. He cited a couple of examples of how the project has had an impact on the lives of young persons (in Yater), then added:

"The graduates mostly work outside this immediate area; some are working in the Gulf countries. This is good. They send money back to their families and they do something which is far more important. They become a (cultural) link between the world outside and the isolated world of this village."

The Netherlands Company of the Unifil Forces stationed near Yater contributed money (some L.L.70,000) last year toward the construction of a school house in Yater, and

at the time of the interview this officer said his company was raising more money to help complete construction. Part of the labor is being volunteered by the trainees in Yater.

-- In regard to the level of competence of the graduates, it seems that the VTP provides them with basic skills. It takes three months to a year for the graduates to become fully proficient in their skill areas. The two employers who were interviewed indicated that new graduates come to work with a good level of conceptual understanding and with basic performance skills. A few months of supervised work are needed until they mature into the required level of skill in their fields.

-- Finally, there was some good folk wisdom. The one farmer who was interviewed said he did not know much about the VTP, but he was aware of its "good reputation", and added: "Our youth are now disciplined. You have saved them from the streets and coffee shops; open a school and you'll close a prison."

PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN

The FY 1982 Project Document is emphatic about the participation of women in the VTP. The sample of trainees included only two women: one in interior decoration and one in drafting. Both were still in training at the time of the interview. Data reported in this section were obtained from YMCA records.

The total number of women, enrolled in the three relevant areas of drafting, interior decoration and electricity, is 103. The majority are in drafting with a total of 53 trainees. Interior decoration has attracted 40, and 10 women are being trained in electricity. The Director of YMCA explained that the enrollment of women last year was zero, that it is 103 this year, and the target for next year is 300. It has not been possible to evaluate the performance or employability of women graduates, and a special effort should be made to look into this matter next year.

ENTREPRENEURIAL SEMINARS

According to YMCA records, one entrepreneurial seminar was completed in the Bekaa' area, another was conducted at the time of this evaluation. Eight of the persons interviewed in Bint Jbeil were enrolled in that community's entrepreneurial seminar. The graduates of the Bekaa' session could not be reached because of the conditions in that part of the country. The limited information obtained from the Bint Jbeil group is indicative of optimism by the trainees regarding their ability to establish their own independent private business. No conclusions can be reached at this stage. This is another area of evaluation that has to be postponed till next year.

THE QUESTION OF LOCAL SUPPORT OF VTP

The question of readiness of local communities to participate in the financial support of the VTP was pursued with a few of the graduates and all of the community influentials who were interviewed. The responses were mixed:

Nearly two-thirds of the subjects expressed mild to strong reservations about the desirability and/or feasibility of initiating such effort. A summary of their arguments is presented below:

- People in Lebanon, and particularly people in Southern Lebanon, have suffered great financial losses during the last eight years. Many have lost the source of their livelihood; many have had to abandon their homes; some of those have had to relocate more than just once. It is doubtful that they might be able to contribute much toward the support of the VTP.
- People, especially in Southern Lebanon, have been coerced into paying unlawful taxes and protection money to local militia groups. To ask them to contribute to the VTP now would seem to some as just another form of unlawful and unwelcome taxation.
- Public officials indicated that their offices normally would provide small grants, but at present this is just not possible. Their limited budgets are directed to the effort of cleaning up rubble and garbage, maintenance of

roads, repairs to electrical and water supply systems, and the like. Perhaps some contributions could be made in the future.

- A few of the graduates showed great gratitude for the training opportunity they have had, but indicated that they were poor themselves, and that they should give priority to their families.

However, some of the responses showed understanding of the need for and significance of local participation in the support of the VTP. During discussions with those individuals, two ideas emerged:

1. Employers may be surveyed by YMCA, and an informal placement service could be established through which employers would get to know about the graduates. Good will would thus be promoted and would be the basis of tapping employers for voluntary contributions.
2. Communication should be maintained with the graduates. Requests for contributions could be made to them a year or two after graduation.

Both possibilities listed above are worth pursuing. A third is offered by the present evaluator based on his observation that not all trainees are in financial need. Some, though a minority, enter the training program while they hold technical or professional jobs. A fee system may be introduced

so that persons known to be "above the poverty line" would be required to pay a certain percentage of the cost; e.g., 10 percent. More affluent individuals would be required to contribute up to 20 percent of the cost. Very poor trainees would not be required to pay anything. This approach would generate at least 7 percent of the total cost of the VTP.

There are problems with proposals (1) and (2) above. In fact fund raising efforts in Lebanon have traditionally been less than successful. People show willingness to help their families, their relatives, and to a less extent their friends and neighbors. The idea of making generous donations to charitable or commonweal organizations is foreign to the Lebanese. (For example, the American University of Beirut among whose graduates are some of the most successful and richest men and women of the Middle East still cannot convince alumni in large numbers to make donations and save the university from bankruptcy). On the other hand, the YMCA of Lebanon should maintain discussions with government organizations and with graduates and employers, and should seek to effect change in their values and attitudes toward this problem.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

1. New Directions for the VTP: Although it has not been possible to evaluate the impact of the VTP on women trainees, the question has to be raised regarding extent of participation and relevance of the training areas to women in Lebanon. It is noted that only 4 percent of the total number of trainees are women. The target set by the VTP for next year is to raise this figure to 12 percent.

Though a few women have entered training in electricity, it is doubtful that the graduates would be easily employable

in a market dominated by males, and in a culture that is not very flexible in its general attitude toward its definition of what is and what is not appropriate for women. It is expected that entry of women into this field of specialization (i.e., electricity) will continue to be limited and will not have a significant impact on the reconstruction of Lebanon. Other fields may be developed that are more appropriate for women in Lebanon.

The program in drafting is one such field. Entry of women into this program has been encouraged, and it does not discriminate between the two sexes. The only limitation in this program is that it requires a relatively high level of education, and in this regard it discriminates against persons with less than high school education. Other programs are needed.

The suggestions received from the subjects of the sample (including community influentials) were extremely limited and stayed within the narrowest boundaries of tradition. Often the fields of sewing, needlework, embroidery, and nursing were proposed. None of these could be justified as part of the VTP in building trades. However, it may be feasible to introduce a course in finance and accounting whereby women could learn office skills relevant to construction contracts, payroll, book-keeping, and the like.

Suggestions for potential new skill areas have included heating and refrigeration, operation of earth-moving equipment, auto mechanics, and repair of farm equipment. It is recommended

here that YMCA explore feasibility of introducing programs in heating and refrigeration and of offering at least a couple of sessions on pilot basis next year. It does not seem feasible to provide training in operation or repair of construction equipment as capital costs would be much too high.

2. Future Evaluation of VTP: There is need to incorporate the process of evaluation into the conduct of the whole VTP. This year's evaluation has been hindered by four problems: Loss of communication with the graduates, especially the women; the dates of the entrepreneurial seminars in the areas that were accessible to the evaluator turned out to be too late to allow assessment of effect of training on the careers of the trainees; the rather insufficient time period allotted for the evaluation; and, finally, the overall security situation in the country. To counter some of these difficulties, it is recommended that:

- a) records be kept -- as much as possible -- on the movement of the graduates for at least the first year after graduation;
- b) the entrepreneurial seminars be scheduled early in the fiscal year;
- c) trainees who are observed as likely to drop out of the program should be interviewed, and information should be recorded as to reasons for withdrawal and type of work they may enter.

- d) finally, the evaluation process be scheduled relatively early to allow the evaluator two months for data collection and a couple of weeks for preparing the final report. This last recommendation is especially relevant if the evaluator is assumed to be a professional person with a full-time job to attend to.
