

Report of a

## LATIN AMERICAN REGIONAL WORKSHOP

September 14 - 26, 1980  
La Siesta Hotel, Panama

by BONNIE BIRKER, Deputy Director

A SUMMARY OF THE LATIN AMERICAN REGIONAL ORIENTATION WORKSHOP

The International Family Planning Project sponsored a regional workshop held in Panama from September 14-26, 1980. The overall objectives of this workshop activity included the following:

- 1) Strengthen the use and application of educational materials;
- 2) Present the needs and interests in Latin America related to home economics/family planning/population education;
- 3) Present new international directions which were presented in the Pre-Congress and IFHE Congress activities in the Philippines;
- 4) Determine the functions of home economics associations in Latin America; and
- 5) Develop future plans for educational projects in Latin America.

Recommendations for follow-up from this workshop include:

1. Local level -- (a) home economists will promote integrated concepts and seek support from their institutions where they work; (b) preparation and implementation of country projects; (c) request technical assistance to develop and implement projects; and (d) strengthen or initiate local associations.
2. Regional level -- (a) direct observation of other country projects in action; (b) exchange experiences in sub-regional meetings; and (c) conduct annual regional workshops.

The workshop was coordinated by the Regional Assistant Director, Clelia Gilbert and a local planning committee. Three University professors served as resource persons as well as staff representing three international organizations and the AID Population Officer. The thirty-two (32) workshop participants had been selected through contacts with key home economists from Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama and Paraguay. They represented home economics programs in both formal and non-formal education as well as family planning associations.

The workshop was designed to provide orientation about the AHEA Project and its materials as well as to ascertain the needs and interests of home economics leaders to develop potential activities for integrated home economics/family planning/population education activities in their country. Through the presentations of speakers and small work groups, daily discussions provided greater awareness and self-determination of the integrated approach in home economics programs as well as coordination with family planning organizations. Staff presentations on the Project and procedures for involvement provided background information for the participants' development of draft proposals of activities as well as motivational and organizational activities they plan to initiate upon their return to the country. A panel presentation and discussion of regional and national associations as well as the functions and meeting of the International Federation for Home Economics generated ideas for new country initiatives. As a result of these various methods and topics covered, each participant presented draft proposals and the final evaluation revealed that the immediate, short-range and long-range results were positive especially in providing training and confirming home economists' capabilities to have integrated home economics programs.

Number of participants 32

Project Funding \$ 38,716.

Number of staff 3

Number of observers, committee members 12

#### OBSERVATIONS OF THIS ACTIVITY AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE ACTIVITIES

##### I. PARTICIPANTS

There were 32 participants from 12 countries. (Two participants spent only one week each).

The group was very heterogeneous with professors, extension workers, administrators, social workers from family planning associations, a home economist from a literacy program, community workers, etc. The combination was successful for the orientation stage where a variety of ideas and experiences were shared. Because of the different knowledge bases each participant had, it was sometimes difficult to keep the group together and respectful of each persons' input. Also, many times the level of presentation was not appropriate for the level of training or experiences of some of the participants. Although they seemed socially accepted by the majority, the four representatives from family planning associations could have been recognized more as resource persons to offer motivational aspects of integration and program development.

Representation from the different countries of Latin America was good. Nine of the countries had never received information about AHEA-IFPP before. Not all countries represented have a "population problem" although there was deep interest in the topic and family life as the uniting force. It is unfortunate there were not additional representatives from Mexico or Dominican Republic in order to provide more input and representation from other sectors.

In the future, as more Latin American home economists are identified, more specific criteria for selection should be used and communicated to the participants in the invitational letter. Criteria could include:

1. previous experiences in family planning;
2. amount of home economics training;  
amount of commitment and position in which decisions and projects can result in order to implement program activities.

Participants from previous Project activities such as Summer Institutes and consultations, should be informed/invited to return to Project activities. For example, Miranice Sales from Brazil, Virginia Lattes from FAO-Chile and Marta Cecilia Villada from Colombia have never received any follow-up and were not aware of Project continuation after their participation in U.S. Project activities.

## II. PLANNING

### A. Timing

The amount of time for collaboration between Deputy Director and Regional Assistant Director to develop the proposal and workshop program was not used well as had been anticipated in April. Likewise, in the selection of participants and invitations there was not an appropriate amount of time to exchange information through written communications and therefore excessive phone conversations and AID cable traffic was needed which should have been avoided. Future workshops must have at least four months from the time the work proposal is presented (ideally by the workshop coordinator) until implementation.

### B. Assistance of Committees

Organization and cooperation from local home economists as 1) local arrangements committee and as 2) a program/steering committee to assist the Workshop Coordinator throughout the planning and duration of the workshop would ease more of the pressures and distractions which the Coordinator had to handle during the workshop. Perhaps with more delegation and guidance, volunteer committee members could more effectively assist with opening/closing ceremonies, social activities, confirmation and rescheduling of participants' travel, field trips, etc. In that none of the local arrangements committee were participants and it was inconvenient for them to attend workshop sessions, more workshop participants could have been considered for assisting with committees.

### C. Invitations

Because of the rushed invitations and confusion about actual selection of participants, important key home economists were not accepted for the workshop. Because they may have valuable contributions and be key participants for Project activities at a later time, it is important that both Headquarters and the Regional Office follow-up with letters, copies of reports and Project materials. (Especially noted are: Mexico, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, El Salvador, Colombia and Brasil)

#### D. Site of Workshop

Despite many pros and cons of the workshop location, it probably was the most appropriate for the situation. Positive aspects of the location were: 1) location in the country of residence of the Workshop Coordinator/Regional Assistant Director where she knew resource persons/suppliers/contacts, etc.; 2) proximity to airport for arriving participants from other countries; 3) a country easily accessible for international flights.

Negative aspects were: 1) a country where expenses are relatively high due to inflation; 2) use of hotel facilities rather than other training facilities which might be less expensive; 3) lack of an organized, cohesive group of local home economists to assist with the workshop; 4) a country where more Project-related activities are evident to support workshop objectives during field trip; and 5) lack of large group seating for at least one meal a day.

#### E. Program

More coordination and preparation of the workshop objectives, approach, resource persons, and content would have been desirable in order to present a concise, sequential development of integrated home economics/family planning and population education concepts and their relation to the AHEA Project and its involvement in new countries. Use of previous workshop materials and Headquarters' examples would have provided a better workshop format and direction rather than attempting to create a new approach that was not fully developed considering the needs and levels of involvement of workshop participants.

### III. PROGRAM

#### A. Organization

Two weeks was an adequate and necessary amount of time in order to adequately cover the amount of motivation and content for this workshop.

It was important that the Workshop Coordinator was of the same culture and could speak the same native language as the participants in order to better relate to and accommodate the group.

With experience, the leadership and coordination of the workshop should improve so there will be a more organized, stable approach and and base as well as the ability to adjust program without personally defending the program.

#### B. Content

The workshop objectives as stated were appropriate however activities and level of presentations in the first week were not consistent with the objectives nor the audience selected.

More and earlier orientation about the Project in the workshop program could have facilitated orientation in a more effective and time-efficient way.

Although the sections on research evaluation were good and the approach was well-done, it did not relate significantly to the objectives, nor the headquarters directives, Project forms used or connect with the previous research/evaluation workshop held in Jamaica in 1979.

The resulting proposal drafts did not reflect the input of the workshop.

#### C. Consultants

There should have been bio-data submitted before the workshop in order to better select experts who have the level of knowledge and experiences appropriate for the task. Greater care should be taken not to hire family members--especially when it is important to be objective and have input and daily evaluation from the group.

Had the staff had more input to impart philosophy and experiences of the Project rather than outsider's interpretations of what was said, there could have been greater assurance that the "multipliers" will be carrying the same, desired message.

#### D. Committee Assignments

A great deal of focus, time and preoccupation on the part of the participants and workshop committee was spent on various assignments delegated the first day. Although the daily summaries and daily evaluation as well as the final evaluation were important elements, the amount of emphasis and degree of effort made should have been minimal in relation to the workshop objectives and program. This type of participation was more evident as "busy-work" rather than having an impact on the input and results of the workshop.

### IV. FUNDS

Funds transfer to workshop coordinator was helpful and more efficient for handling of funds--especially for preliminary activities.

There should be closer control of the budget figures throughout the workshop. For example, transportation of local committee, xeroxing costs, etc. seemed to run on without any limits or checked to see how much had been spent. More efficient use of funds could have provided the same or better workshop results -- it seemed that much paper, xeroxing and travel occurred that could have been prevented with better planning and coordination.

### V. STRENGTHENING ASSOCIATIONS

Most of the workshop participants will be a part of their country advisory committee for Project activities. In countries where there is little home economics infrastructure, this can be a significant beginning for developing

some organizations. During this workshop, little attention was given to the functioning or make-up of the advisory committees and should be provided soon and translated into Spanish.

The promotion of country associations was an effective way to suggest organization without encountering many of the inter-country politics and geographical difficulties. It is important to emphasize a systematic approach to organizing their associations with a total representation of all home economists (not just the extension workers, or just the teachers). It is more important that new associations be small and functional rather than be formed for status. A handbook should be developed, in cooperation with the IFHE Regional Committee on strengthening associations, especially for Latin American countries. The Project handbook on Guidelines developed by Pamela Greene seems "too British" and too formal to be adapted or translated for the Latin American situation.

#### VI. MATERIALS IN SPANISH

The provision of all workshop materials, visuals and references in Spanish was essential and very successful due to the efforts of the Workshop Coordinator.

For future development of Project materials in Spanish, it is recommended that Latin American home economists be as involved as possible in the process of developing, adapting, translating, reviewing and revising of materials so they feel they belong to them. It was evident that they could not identify as much with the Project prototype materials and expressed their desire to "create" materials in Spanish. As a result of these reactions, it would be recommended that due to lack of positive feedback or interest, the Sourcebook for Teachers or Family Planning kits not be printed in quantity unless the Regional Assistant Director or more Latin home economists request it.

The Spanish translation of THE LINK is an important contribution to the communications, identification with the Project, and motivation for carrying out planned activities as they relate both to integrated programs, to basic home economics content and the profession. This publication must be continued with adequate input from the Latin America/Caribbean region.

#### VII. FUTURE PLANS

Because the observed results of the workshop seemed to be narrow in scope - achieving principally an "awareness" of the integrated approach and the AHEA Project, it will be important to not assume that orientation to the Project or the educational materials has been achieved. It should be assumed that the resulting country activities proposed will also be at the "awareness level" and any further stages of orientation and training would be more effective with additional support/direction/training from Project staff or consultants who can provide more of the Project orientation. It is highly recommended that additional workshops be implemented soon, on a sub-regional basis to provide more training in the actual integration of population education/family planning concepts into home economics and the use of the Project materials which are now in Spanish as well as encouraging the developing of adapted materials and curricula. Specific, "hands-on" training is important for these

participants especially since basic home economics training is limited in most of these countries (perhaps excluding Brasil, Colombia and Guatemala).

Project plans for materials development and training for adolescents should definitely include Latin America region. There are good models and experiences that have already taken place (although home economists have not been involved directly). They should be consulted and have input in the activities and likewise, home economists should be involved so they can more effectively reach out and deliver educational programs to the adolescents in their rural and urban programs. It seems that interest and motivation are high as expressed by most country representatives. Especially impressive was Rebecca Mata from APLAFA in Panama who works in their special teen program doing educational programs with a type of "integrated approach." She speaks very good English and has had considerable experience and a good outlook which could be beneficial to a workshop on developing materials and training programs.

Curriculum development is an important activity for many of the Latin America countries which will become involved in the integrated programs. Maria Villarreal could be a valuable and good consultant to assist other countries in this area as it is recognized as one of her strengths.

Consideration should be given to the "tier status" of the Latin America countries. After initial activities in Guatemala with favorable receptivity and good potential, plus the expansion of contacts and development of the annual workplans in the Philippines, Guatemala could be considered for "emphasis country status". Other countries which could be supported and assisted to achieve this status would be Colombia and El Salvador. Brasil should definitely be considered to begin orientation activities and receive a consultation visit since the invitation has already been offered. Despite the lack of infrastructure in Mexico, it seems that motivation of two home economists and the potential for initiating activities in a small way are good indicators for Project involvement. Reconsideration is needed for continuation of Panama as an emphasis country. If there cannot be acceptable and timely reporting of funded activities and if there is no possibility to have a cooperative, functioning advisory committee with expanded leadership, the future country activities will probably be limited to a few student activities and those reports and activities which the Regional Assistant Director can handle. Ecuador and Costa Rica should be considered for minimal activities and materials, technical support and correspondence may be sufficient for initial activities in Bolivia, Paraguay and Dominican Republic.

Identification of English-speaking home economists is important for future involvement and invitations to international events. Among the participants at this workshop were: Nadia Romero and Thelma Santamaria from Mexico; Irma Luz Toledo de Ibarra from Guatemala; Nydia Londono and Adela Arango (limited) from Colombia; Myriam de Oliveira Fernandes from Brasil, and Maria Teresa Aguirre from Dominican Republic/Colombia.

Attempts should be made by the staff and key home economics leaders to provide more coordination and direction in program development and planning of country activities so that there is more "grass-roots level" orientation and expanded, (cost beneficial) economical activities rather than trying to be caught up into planning more activities which are of higher status and provide the best comforts for an elite group of home economics leaders. The

lessons learned from previous Africa and Asia workshops and observation of other Latin American activities by other organizations should be useful in providing more suitable, direct program direction for Project activities in Latin America rather than repeating some of the same pitfalls.

The excellent support and encouragement from the AID Population Officer in Panama and his interest and concern for the work of the Regional Assistant Director and Project activities in Panama and throughout the region were greatly appreciated and his suggestions for future strategies and activities should be sought and given attention.

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SUMMARY OF COUNTRY PROPOSALS DEVELOPED

\*\*To be finalized and authorized in each country before being sent to Panama for translation and submission to AHEA-IFPP headquarters.

BOLIVIA	Training Course for 120 in Ministry of Agriculture (1 month) \$2,860.  National Seminar for 20 Teachers (2 weeks) \$3,830.
BRASIL	Orientation Seminar for 50 Home Economics Leaders (3 days) \$23,175.
COLOMBIA	Orientation and Curriculum Planning Workshop for 30 Home Economics Leaders (6 days) \$18,400.  Workshop on Sexual Education and Communications Techniques for 30 Home Economics Leaders/Trainers (6 days) \$17,340.
COSTA RICA	Workshop on the Use and Application of Teaching Materials for 20 Social Promoters in Ministry of Agriculture (3 days) \$3,800.  Ten Mini-Workshops on the Use of Materials and Teaching Techniques for 300 Teachers from I & II Cycles of Public Education (3 days each) \$4,737.  Ten Mini-Workshops on Integration and the Use of Materials and Teaching Techniques in the Area of Family and Social Relations for 230 Teachers from III Cycle of Public Education (3 days each) \$4,935.
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	Seminar-Workshop on the Educational Materials for 30 Participants from Family-Related Institutions (6 days) \$33,700.
ECUADOR	Training in Family Planning as a Component in Integrated Rural Development for 41 Change Agents in a Two-Year Program \$25,650.  Diagnostic Research to Determine the Feasibility of Coordinating an Integrated Project for 200 Families, and 37 Workers in Campesino Development Project (9 months) \$4,896.
EL SALVADOR	Reproduction and Printing of Adapted Materials (1100 copies) \$5,000.  Training in Integrated Educational Materials for Three Institutions Working with Rural Families (10 days) \$5,000.
GUATEMALA	Curriculum Revision Workshop for Home Economics School for 30 Teachers (4 days) \$2,300.

GUATEMALA  
(cont'd)

Orientation Workshop on Family Education for Home Economics Workers and Family Workers in Formal Education--Focus on Adolescents (4 days) \$2,518.

Orientation for Study Committee to do Adaptations, etc. for 16 Home Economists from Various Activities (4 days) \$2,570.

Orientation Seminar for Formal Education for 40 Teachers (4 days) \$4,300.

Training for Home Economics Students and Leaders of Mothers Clubs by APROFAM (9 month program) for 15 students and 200 leaders -- \$28,644.

Research to Determine Knowledge of Community Development Workers (4 month period) \$273.

Training on the Use and Application of Educational Materials for 31 Home Economists in Community Development \$2,633.

HONDURAS

Base-line Study by ASHONPLAFA to Determine Roles and Functions of Home Economics Workers (4 months) \$1,400.

Training Course in Health Education and Family Orientation for 16 Extension Workers (2 months) \$1,250.

MEXICO

Round-Table Meeting to Motivate and Inform About Training in Family Education for 100 Administrators (1 day) \$22.

Key Trainers Training in Integrated Home Economics Programs for 40 Home Economics Workers (1 month) \$16,183.

PANAMA

Training for 7 Home Economists and Students in the Integration of Home Economics Teachers into the Maternal Infant Program at Social Security (1 month) \$4,250.

Meeting and Agreement with Administrators and Professionals to Develop Integrate Programs for 6 Professional and 2 Directors from I Cycle of Ministry of Education (7 months) \$230.

PARAGUAY

Orientation Training in Home Economics and Family Life Education for 30 Home Economists and Family Planning Teachers from Rural/Urban Areas (2 weeks) \$5,700.