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**SPECIAL EVALUATION OF THE
USAID/CARE FOOD FOR RELIEF WORK PROGRAM**

**Dacca
April 8, 1978**

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INTRODUCTION

The Evaluation Team consisted of five individuals, each with a different background and institutional base. Two members of the Team were provided the opportunity to make a field visit and meet with project related persons in Dacca before the full Team began an intensive one-week examination to analyze project operations and relevant policy issues. During this one week, the Team met with BDG, CARE, USAID, WFP officials and others who provided insights and information about the project. In addition, four members of the Team made a two-day field visit to Comilla during the seven (7) day evaluation to observe field operations. The evaluation's terms of reference are included in this report as an appendix.

Although the time provided for this evaluation was short, the Team was able to learn a considerable amount about the project as a result of the ready accessibility and frankness of the people with whom they spoke. The Team would like to extend special appreciation to Mr. Jon O'Rourke of USAID who provided the Team with both information and insights, as well as very able logistical support, and Mr. Trevor Page, WFP Senior Advisor, who was an observer on the Evaluation Team and whose extensive experience in food aid operations greatly assisted the Team in its deliberations. We would also like to extend our thanks to Secretary Khasru and his staff for their very warm reception and their helpful comments.

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I. General Overview of Project Implementation to Date

The CARE Food for Relief Works Program (FFRW) began implementation in 1976. It included a five year \$1.5 million grant from USAID to CARE for management services. The PL 480 Title II commodity input over the five year period was approved at a level of 450,000 MT of wheat. The Project Paper stipulated that midway through project implementation a special evaluation was to be conducted to assess progress toward attainment of objectives, and to recommend possible changes in direction for the remainder of the program. This report describes the results of that evaluation.

In carrying out the evaluation, the Team had access to a wide range of information on the project, including project appraisal reports, related studies and analyses, internal USAID documentation, CARE and WFP reports, field trip reports and various memoranda. The use of this information together with interviews, field visits and general analysis was the basis for the evaluation. In view of the limited amount of time available for this evaluation, the Team selected key issues for examination and analysis. The Team's scope of work is attached.

The Food for Relief Works project was designed and funded primarily as a relief project. The Project Paper states (page 4) that "the purpose of the project is to provide employment" and "the completion of rural earthwork projects provide work, which is the goal". On page 7 of the Project Paper the relief objective of the project is further clarified by the statement that it "will directly reach and directly benefit only 0.5% of rural employment".

As a result, the Team reviewed performance of the project to date in terms of this relief orientation. However, it was also the Team's view that many aspects of the project extend beyond its stated purpose and goal and have development implications. These aspects are treated later in this report.

The Team found that after two and a half years of implementation the project has had a high degree of success in providing employment through the completion of rural earthworks projects. In CY 1977, the second year of project activity, 790,000 laborers were employed and over 1,000 rural earthwork projects involving the movement of 1.53 billion cubic feet of earth were completed. For FY 1978 1,020 projects are programmed and person-days of employment created are expected to exceed 1977 levels.

An analysis of the program outputs described on pages 21 and 22 of the Project Paper indicates that the general outputs (a, b and c) are well underway at this point in the evaluation and that the specific outputs (d and e) required by the end of FY-76 were achieved within a reasonable degree of accomplishment. (See PAR report dated 8/25/77).

Project implementation depends heavily on an effective monitoring and control system. It is the Team's opinion that the Fixed Amount Reimbursable (FAR) system is appropriate in the Bangladesh context, as modified by the provisions for up to 50% advance shipment. However, in discussions with the Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation (MRR) the Team found dissatisfaction on the part of the Ministry with the FAR system. The primary problems described were (a) that the FAR system was at variance with the procedures followed by other FFRW program donors, (b) that it appeared to give undue authority to CARE field staff and (c) that it resulted in less wheat actually being supplied as compared to the amount originally programmed.

However, the reimbursement process insures the high degree of management and control which has characterized the success of the CARE FFRW project and is an essential component. The 50% advance shipment allowance provides the flexibility needed to ship in advance of full reimbursement when it may be anticipated that stock levels will be low at the time of final repayment. Further, the multi-year nature of the project (450,000 MT over 5 years) provides the opportunity to program higher levels the next year when a full reimbursement may not have accrued the previous year.

Logistics are a serious constraint to successful project implementation and forward planning of commodity requirements is essential. Such planning must start from "the bottom up" on a countrywide basis and take into account estimated BDG year-end stock levels, rate of usage, shipping time and port and inland commodity movement requirements. In addition, these factors must be reviewed as a component of total food levels, procurement and movement within Bangladesh. It is the Team's finding that the parties involved in Food for Work in Bangladesh have the capacity to undertake such planning and accurately assess commodity requirements, shipping levels and estimated arrival dates. It was also the Team's finding that excessive questioning of field judgement in this regard by AID/Washington has led to delayed commodity arrival and reduced program impact.

In the context of a relief project, the Team also noted that the detail presented in the various parts of the Project Paper tended to impose excessive requirements upon project implementation. Specific requirements dealing with numbers of projects, cubic feet of earth moved, numbers of people employed, etc., appear to have been included in order to satisfy AID programming requirements dealing with the preparation of Project Papers, logical frameworks, etc. While this approach (use of AID programming procedures and criteria) may have seemed appropriate at the time in order to obtain AID/Washington approval for the \$1.5 million five (5) year CARE grant, there is little reference in the Project Paper to the fact that the grant funds were primarily intended to justify CARE management services, not to move earth or employ landless labor. The result of this approach has been an exponential expansion of project criteria and monitoring requirements from USAID to CARE and the Relief Ministry and to the field staffs of both organizations. The resulting reporting and documentation requirements appear excessive when compared to other AID dollar or PL 480 grants of equal or greater magnitude. If the project is to be gradually reoriented towards development, additional analysis and reports will be required. To the extent that reporting or relief aspects are minimized, development objectives can be facilitated.

II. The Project Objectives

The Evaluation Team found some ambiguity in the Project Paper in regard to the project's objectives. The Project Paper attempted to justify the project in terms of both relief and development objectives. The Project Paper identified the development objectives as secondary to the relief objectives. The expectation that the relief activities would result in positive development impact was explicitly stated. It was reported that at the time the Project Paper was prepared there was an urgent need to begin relief operations. The stipulation of more specific development objectives would have required a level of development planning and monitoring that would not easily fit the Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation's mode of operations. Feeding needy people was the first priority and if a development effect could be achieved by this approach so much the better. Time and circumstances would not permit a more direct conscious effort to maximize the development impact of food for work projects.

The Evaluation Team agrees with this original approach emphasizing the relief aspects of the project. The need for relief was clear, the use of food for work was a strong improvement over the "gruel kitchen" relief of prior years, the assumption that the food for work would make a favorable contribution to development was widely accepted. USAID, CARE and the BDG moved with expediency to meet a clear relief objective. The development objectives remained in the background.

Now, after two and a half years of project operations, the Evaluation Team reviewed the earlier reasons for not approaching development more directly and found that existing circumstances merited a reorientation of the project's objectives. The CARE/BDG relief operation has been put into operation and, to a large extent, routinized. The question no longer remains if FFRW can be implemented but rather how implementation can be improved. The idea of limiting the project to a relief food for work operation for the sake of expediency can no longer be justified.

The need for relief still exists. The domestic food supply has increased primarily because of more favorable climatic conditions. However, the numbers of landless unemployed and underemployed who do not have the means to purchase food grains has also increased. At the same time, there is an urgent need to provide development assistance to the rural areas both to maintain the increase in agricultural production and to find means to generate employment for the rural poor. The role that food aid can play in this development effort appears critical.

In Bangladesh, an effective strategy to move concessional development assistance into the rural areas has not yet been developed. The World Bank and other donors have encountered serious problems in recent attempts to initiate large scale rural development programs. USAID is undertaking some pilot activities to identify more effective approaches to assisting rural development in Bangladesh. Food aid, at present, is the major instrument available to the Bangladesh Government to provide development services to the rural population. As such, it represents a scarce resource that Bangladesh can ill afford to use for relief without also maximizing the development impact of this assistance. The objectives of relief and development do not appear to be mutually exclusive. However, by combining these two objectives and giving them equal status, a different kind of project emerges that does not fit the classical mold of either relief or development. The Evaluation Team foresees some potential bureaucratic hurdles that must be overcome with this type of dual objective project.

III. Development Impact of Ongoing and Completed FFW Projects

An important gap which has been identified by the Team is the absence of analysis on the developmental and environmental impact of the FFW projects already completed or now underway. These issues are important in terms of the objectives set out in the Project Paper. Quite clearly the AID Mission at the time the Project was prepared expected positive development effects to ensue as a result of the earth moving activities. Among the prospective benefits mentioned were flood control protection, additional irrigation, new water storage

facilities, improved communication via roadways and land reclamation. It was noted that these FFW activities could have some negative impact, however, and water drainage problems and blockage of irrigation canal by flood control embankments were specifically singled out for mention. Nevertheless, the AID Mission was by and large optimistic on the achievement of some development impact and asserted that the "project will help bridge the twin challenge of improving socio-economic conditions and agricultural production for those in depressed rural areas. The program will provide some contribution to the BDG agricultural strategy of food sufficiency by expanding the rural infrastructure supportive of agriculture". Generally speaking, this attitude still prevails amongst AID Mission staff members, and has been reflected by high ranking members of the BDG such as Relief Secretary Khasru who has stated that, "distressed people will be given free food against work with the object of making the country self-sufficient in food so that they will not need relief in the future".

From the outset there was a great deal of reluctance to measure the project against the criterion of development for it was asserted that "the total resource provided by this program, although justifiable on the micro level from a cost/benefit point of view, is not sufficient when compared to the total resource requirements to significantly effect broad improvement goals and purpose". Moreover, although the Mission felt "certain that the projects implemented will have beneficial effects on food production, rural transportation, etc., quantifying and measuring the benefit would be a costly and difficult task, for there are many variables that are neither a part of nor influenced by this project (HYV seeds, credit, fertilizers) but that may play vital roles in raising agricultural yields". Thus the USAID opted to target only that which was, in their view, more accessible, i. e., man-days of employment and quantity of earth moved.

As a result of these decisions a great deal of speculation has arisen as to the impact that the individual sub-projects are having as well as their cumulative effect. During the course of the review the Team has heard the entire spectrum expressed. Some are certain that Bangladesh is benefiting in a developmental sense by the implementation of these projects. The AID Mission is generally supportive of this stance, although it is prepared to acknowledge the possibility that in some cases

adverse consequences both in terms of social equity consideration as well as environmental impact may have resulted from some of the projects.

Others are less sanguine. Some officials observed that although the FFW projects were probably on the whole beneficial, more additional development impact could be achieved if more attention were given to their location. Where relatively equitable land tenure patterns prevail, for instance, rural works projects could be expected to result in increased agricultural production. On the other hand where this was not the case, i. e., where large land holders maintained a grip on the land, one could not expect significant production increases to ensue since the landholders already enjoyed a sufficient income and would not encourage additional production because the additional income generated might to some extent have the effect of liberating their sharecroppers and employees.

Instances were also related where for one reason or the other some FFW projects might be having a negative development impact. For example, the construction of an embankment might benefit a large landholder or the land of one group of peasants at the expense of others. Even more seriously, some raised the more ominous possibility that although each of these projects might be too small to have any deleterious effect, their cumulative impact in terms of Bangladesh's water drainage situation might be damaging. That is to say, unless each project were examined in terms of its own environmental consequences and in light of what is being done elsewhere, the probabilities are that in the long term more harm than good would be accomplished.

It has already been suggested that concepts of relief and development are not mutually exclusive. The foregoing raises the possibility that unless development and environmental effects are conscientiously examined adverse environmental and developmental results may be occurring and the short term relief and employment objective may in the long run be counterproductive to Bangladesh's economy. It is the opinion of the Team that as a necessary first step, research and evaluation of a representative sample of completed and ongoing projects be made in order to ascertain their socio-economic as well as their environmental impact. It is suggested that this research encompass

not only CARE projects but WFP projects as well, in order that the necessary comparisons might be drawn and consequences analyzed.

IV. Constraints to Achievement of Development Impact

A. Lack of a Conscious Effort for Development

As a result of vague secondary development objectives in the FFRW project design there was little conscious effort to plan and implement projects in a manner that would enhance the development effect. Little attention was paid to the likelihood that necessary complementary assistance in the form of appurtenant structures, agricultural inputs, credit facilities, etc. would be available to make the finished earthworks viable. It is evident to the BDG, CARE and USAID personnel that appurtenant structures are important to the viability of many earthwork structures. CARE has started a separate experimental project through the Rural Development Ministry to provide assistance in adding appurtenant structures to completed food for work projects. Projects were selected using engineering, administrative and political criteria with little consideration given to a project's potential development impact compared to alternative projects. With no appreciable conscious effort made to enhance the development characteristics of the projects, insufficient attention was paid as to how projects could fit together into a larger development scheme. Completed earthworks were often not revisited after subsequent floods to see how well they fared and what could be done to ensure that the development effect of the earthwork would not be lost.

CARE and BDG staff communicated to the Evaluation Team that although they shared the hope that the food for work projects would have a positive development impact, they did not perceive development planning to be a part of their program responsibility.

However, in order to attain maximum development results, adequate technical inputs are essential to individual project completion and success. Such items as the use of culverts in road construction to minimize standing water caused by newly build embankments is an example of the technical planning and

appurtenant structures required in many projects. More coordinated local planning is needed in most water-related projects to ensure proper water flow over regions or "basins". In this context, mapping is essential to better chart overall flow of water throughout systems in order to assess the impact of individual projects. Such maps apparently exist and are in the possession of the BDG. These should be made available to the project.

B. Lack of Time and Manpower to Meet Demands of Development Planning

All information obtained by the Evaluation Team would indicate that Bangladesh officials concerned with development at the local, or thana level by and large lack the time, capability and/or inclination to become appreciably involved with advance planning in reference to local initiative FFW projects. Compounding this constraint is the Central Government position that since this project primarily is an employment creating relief effort, the BDG expects that their thana officials take on the added administrative burden of this program, along with their many other duties, without additional support. The one exception to this is the creation of 400 positions referred to as Project Implementation Officer (PIO) within the MRR to work at the thana level. However, some of these have not as yet been filled, and approximately 25% have no technical training or experience. Nevertheless, the MRR seems to look upon the establishment of these PIO posts as a significant additional BDG input for the implementation of the program signifying a relatively high governmental priority, given budgetary limitation. Therefore, the Evaluation Team concludes that to significantly involve local officials in development planning for FFW projects considerable training and improvement in management systems and additional support will be required. For example, involving PIOs in works measurements and additional training for them in other aspects of project planning and implementation would be very useful.

CARE has established a nationwide infrastructure to monitor this activity. This comprises a headquarters and nine unit offices involving up to 10 expatriate staff and nearly 250 national employees. This machine is almost exclusively geared and oriented towards monitoring the amount of earthwork to be performed/completed and the corresponding wheat to be reimbursed, with little consideration to development and/or socio-economic factors. This effort would appear to be producing outstanding results in reference to the mandate to ascertain that the earthwork is

initiated, that wheat is distributed, that implementation problems are minimized, and that the amount of work actually accomplished is confirmed. This procedure, at least to an observer involves, and evidently requires, an excessive number of reports and extensive, time consuming, field travel by the CARE staff. It is doubtful if such an intensive monitoring role by a sponsoring agency of a Title II program is even remotely emulated for any other such project in the world.

This would suggest, provided funds were made available, that CARE Bangladesh would have the capability and flexibility to gear up to an expanded overall role in development planning activities. However, any such expansion would have to be reviewed against probably political and practical constraints. The BDG appears to be concerned about CARE's extensive presence throughout the country. Moreover, CARE's management problems in keeping this network functioning smoothly are already taxing its administrative resources.

In concert with any expanded role by CARE in pre-project selection and development planning, it is the Team's opinion that an effort should be made to streamline monitoring procedures, with an objective towards a reduced involvement in this program function. This would allow reorientation of CARE-Bangladesh efforts to the selection of projects from a sound feasibility, socio-economic and developmental standpoint, without the expansion of an overall CARE in-country presence. Recommendations for streamlining monitoring procedures and documentation are discussed in later sections of this report.

C. BDG Administrative Constraints

In several discussions an issue has been raised concerning the ability and the willingness of the MRR to become involved in development projects since currently its priorities clearly are in the direction of its traditional relief role. At present, however, there does not appear to be any reasonable alternative to the MRR since the Ministries that could be expected to concern themselves more with development considerations - MLGRD and the Agriculture Ministry - do not appear to have as effective an outreach capability as the MRR now possesses. And while it is true that the MRR is primarily oriented towards relief activities, the Team has been assured that they also share

in the ultimate objective of agricultural self-sufficiency and increased long-term employment common to the other BDG development institutions.

In light of the above, the Team has concluded for the present that the project should continue under the auspices of the MRR. We note, however, that the MLGRD local officials currently assist the PIOs in supervision of FFW project activities and the Agriculture Ministry may become involved in such activities in the near future. Thus training in development planning could be offered under the project to CO Devs and SDOs in those areas where development projects under the CARE FFW program are initiated. This would enable these officials to understand the needs of project planning, to participate more effectively in the planning process, and to bring other local level officials into active participation in this process. Under these circumstances we would expect that flexibility could be maintained in terms of identifying the most suitable institutional framework for future operations and evaluation of this subject should be an ongoing process.

Another helpful measure would be for the Water Development Board to give closer attention to those projects singled out by CARE and MRR as specifically development-oriented projects. We recognize that this entity is understaffed at present, but since we are suggesting a gradual process in terms of a shift to development criterion, perhaps additional technical assistance could be provided to the Board in order to increase its capacity.

As noted throughout this report a continued emphasis on better project planning is vital. The project approval system presently in effect under the MRR appears to be cumbersome, mainly because it is centralized in Dacca. We believe a more efficient approach would be to vest more detailed project decision authority with local officials who would approve projects within levels, regions, etc., prescribed by the Relief Ministry in Dacca.

D. BDG Monitoring Capability

The Evaluation Team was not in a position to statistically or otherwise verify the BDG monitoring capabilities for such a FFW program. It can only be assumed, as a result of the extensive program monitoring structure established by CARE, (as discussed above under the section on manpower), that there is some doubt as to the adequacy of BDG monitoring capabilities in reference to the demands of overall Title II programming mandates. This would tend to conflict somewhat with Part I D (a) of the Project Paper which states "Rural earthwork projects have a long history in this area. Local Government officials are familiar with both design and administrative procedures required to implement these types of projects".

The Team is under the impression, from various presentations in its field review and discussions with CARE and WFP personnel, that monitoring procedures do exist within the BDG bureaucratic structure. Similar local initiative FFW projects are supported through the WFP and other donor governments which evidently rely on the BDG monitoring procedures. Provided that there would be no objections from the BDG or the donors involved, the Evaluation Team feels that it would be a worthwhile exercise to conduct an in-depth review, on a random basis, of the monitoring procedures which were applied to these projects, and attempt a comparison of the work achievement results with similar projects which received CARE monitoring.

This study on monitoring capability would be for the purpose of determining if a certain percentage of the tasks which are currently performed by CARE Bangladesh could be adequately handled by and transferred to the BDG, i. e., to ascertain whether the BDG's monitoring role has been stifled by CARE. The ultimate objective would be to reduce the administrative and monitoring functions currently performed by CARE, so as to make it possible for that organization to turn its attention to development and socio-economic factors with a similar, or even lower, personnel and management input.

The study should include projects completed in past years as well as ongoing work so a comparison of the durability of construction can be made. It would be helpful to learn if increased durability can be attributed to the CARE monitoring system.

V. Recommendations for Enhancing the Developmental Effects of the FFRW Program

A. Cash for Work Instead of Food for Work

A recurrent theme raised by various persons with whom the Evaluation Team spoke has been that of initiating cash payments for work rather than food payments. The cash could be raised in several ways, but one of the easiest would be for all food (Title I as well as that now designated as Title II) to be brought in under Title I and a portion of the Taka proceeds of the sales used for cash for work programs. The arguments against converting all or a part of the program to cash revolves basically around the proposition that since cash is easier to steal, monitoring would be more difficult. In addition, there may be some unanticipated inflationary effects.

On the other hand, those in favor of cash assert that provision of food may have a depressing effect on local agricultural production and further, that monetizing the system might generate other kinds of productive activity in depressed rural areas. In any event, it is noted, in Bangladesh society cash and food are readily interchangeable and there is good evidence that some food is presently being sold by the workers, so partial or total cash payments may just be an acknowledgment of what is occurring already.

An unknown factor in the equation is the nutritional effect of substituting cash for wheat. Wheat is more nutritious than an equal amount of rice, the food of preference in Bangladesh. Since cash may well be utilized for rice purchases rather than wheat, one can reasonably foresee only marginal nutritional benefits for the poor people involved in FFW programs.

USAID is currently starting up two rural works projects, one to build feeder roads and the other irrigation facilities. These projects will include evaluations which assess the benefits of the project's planned cash for work mechanism as compared to FFRW systems.

B. Reducing the Geographic Spread of Projects

In 1977, 3,751 separate projects were carried out under the auspices of the CARE FFW program (including rainy season projects). Clearly there was no way in which CARE, given its relatively limited field staff, could have previewed and monitored each of these separate endeavors. Yet if the program is to become more developmental in its thrust it will be necessary to give closer attention to each project, certainly in the selection and design phase, and probably in terms of project monitoring also - particularly if appurtenant construction is involved. This dichotomy can only be resolved if the geographic scope is curtailed, and if within a given geographic area fewer but larger projects are undertaken. In meeting these criteria the important relief objectives need not be abandoned, since distressed individuals can be mobilized from nearby thanas. Optimally therefore, each CARE unit administrator should have a limited number of projects meeting development criteria within his jurisdiction. These projects would be coordinated and selected in accordance with established criteria (see below). By limiting the number of projects in this way the administrative burden which now rests on CARE's shoulders could be substantially diminished and project quality improved.

Unfortunately, adoption of this approach would entail a decision to abandon two operational and politically-oriented principles upon which the program now is based. First, the EDG perceives it necessary for each thana to have one or more projects to evidence, apparently, Government concern and outreach. The argument is made that since there are needy people in each thana requiring assistance, there must be projects in each of these units to service their employment and food requirements. However, experience has shown that workers will migrate to project sites outside their own thanas. In addition, in those cases where movement of workers is not feasible, or where political considerations require the initiation of a project in a thana not covered by a CARE project, the MRR has other donor resources available for those purposes.

Secondly, some modification of the existing "local initiative" process may be implied. At present, the BDG and CARE select projects which originate at the Union Parishad and thana levels in a somewhat piecemeal fashion. The development impact may be improved by first developing a comprehensive thana plan and then fitting the local initiative proposals into this plan. Assistance can be provided to the Union Parishad and thanas to help improve the project planning process.

By eliminating the quota system for thanas and other levels of administration, problems may arise with local thana and U. P. officials. However, the same arguments can be made as previously - the Relief Ministry has other resources at its disposal which can be utilized to placate these individuals.

C. Establishing Development/Administrative Criteria/Guidelines for Project Selection

In order to begin to shift the project in a more developmental direction it will be necessary to prepare a series of development criteria and administrative guidelines to make the project selection process more effective. In terms of development these criteria should specify what kinds of projects are to be undertaken, the circumstances under which socio-economic analysis is to be conducted to insure maximization of benefits to the rural poor, when hydrological analysis is warranted, the manner in which such projects are to relate to overall Government development plans, specifically including the plans of the Water Resources Board, maintenance requirements and finally the manner in which the FFW projects will relate to the activities of other donors in the agricultural area.

Generally it is assumed that increased agricultural production leads to increased employment. The Evaluation Team has learned that this is not always the case. In some parts of Bangladesh a new irrigation canal will allow farmers to plant a boro crop which is high yielding and lower risk than the aman and aus crops he may previously planted. In those areas where flood waters recede slowly, the farmer will not have the time to harvest aman and aus before planting the boro crop so he concentrates on the boro crop and no longer plants the aman and aus. He may experience some increases in production, but the labor requirements of the boro crop are less than the combined aman and

aus crops. In areas where flood waters recede rapidly the farmer can supplement his aman and aus crops with a boro crop.

The Evaluation Team recommends that the objective of employment generation be given higher priority than increased agricultural production. In the above examples, an irrigation canal that allows farmers to plant boro along with aman and aus would receive higher priority than one that simply allows farmers to switch from high risk aman and aus to low risk boro.

On the administrative side the guidelines should describe, inter alia:

- a) The Project selection process.
- b) A balance between variables of project size, project distance from Government offices and number of projects.
- c) Project monitoring requirements.
- d) Post-Project evaluation procedures.

The Evaluation Team emphasizes the need for close coordination with the BDG in the development of these criteria and guidelines.

D. CARE Involvement in Proforma Development Prior to Submission

Official CARE involvement in the project selection process occurs after MRR has already narrowed down the list of possible projects. This year CARE was given 1,886 projects from which it chose 1,020. CARE reviews the projects it receives and will often improve the physical design of the projects prior to execution. In this way, CARE has been able to make a contribution to improving the quality of the project designs in addition to its major role of monitoring implementation. While this may be sufficient given the current relief orientation of the project, making such incremental improvements in project design will not suffice if development criteria are to be considered in project selection. CARE staff have expressed concern that the current system of proforma development does not promote good technical planning and that a large number of proformas have many technical errors or omissions. To improve performance of the local officials in developing the proformas and to enhance development impact it is recommended that CARE staff become involved in proforma development. The CARE personnel who

will be working on the development aspects of the FFRW program should choose a number of potential projects in selected areas and provide assistance to the UPs and thana officials in planning. These project proformas should be given special attention and priority in the MRR approval process.

E. Previewing all CARE Projects

According to the CARE staff, performance on construction of previewed projects is often superior to that of the non-previewed projects. This may be due to the improvements that CARE staff make to the proformas of the previewed projects or because the post-survey measurements, which determine the amount that the BDG is to be reimbursed for the project, provide a strong incentive to do a better job. While this approach has been controversial among BDG officials, many BDG officials have praised the CARE monitoring effort and the better projects that it produces. Accordingly, the Evaluation Team recommends that CARE and the BDG work towards the goal of bringing all projects under the previewed and post-survey system.

The Evaluation Team suggests some additional modification in the monitoring process. For example, the number of visits required per project should reflect the need for repeated visits. At present, all previewed projects are visited monthly, however, for many projects it may be necessary to visit only on a before and after basis. Further, the projects selected should be scheduled in a manner that spreads out the start and finish dates over the dry season so that CARE staff are not overburdened at any one time.

F. Women's Role in FFW

According to a study carried out by the Dacca University Nutrition Department less than 1% of the FFW workers are women. Another study, "Women in Food for Work: The Bangladesh Experience" conducted as a part of WFP's evaluation of 1977, indicates that there are a large number of women who need relief and are also willing to do earthwork.

A problem in employing women on FFW projects is that often they cannot carry as much as the men, and therefore they are not able to earn a subsistence wage. This basic subsistence wage has been estimated at 3 seers of wheat for 70 cubic feet of earthwork, and women can generally do only 50 cubic feet in the same amount of time. To resolve this problem WFP is currently supporting more than 70 projects that employ only women workers at a higher rate per cubic feet to meet their subsistence needs. The Team found that it is not administratively feasible to have both men and women working at the same site but receiving a different ration rate.

The Evaluation Team therefore recommends that special CARE FFW projects be identified as all-women's projects and make wheat allocations to cover the increase needed for these projects. CARE and the BDG should attempt to maximize the number of projects for women given the obvious need of many women for employment and the psychological effect that these projects apparently have on both men and women in regard to the women's position in the labor market.

The Evaluation Team recognizes the potential for increased abuse in projects specifically for women. However, in view of the broad benefits expected to result from this kind of project, we urge whatever additional monitoring requirements necessary for its success. CARE may wish to consider ease of access for monitoring as one criterion for selection of women's projects.

G. Increasing Budgetary Assistance to the FFRW Program

It is the Team's view that additional funding, beyond food resources, could considerably enhance project performance and development outreach. Training needs, equipment, maintenance, technical services, appurtenant structures and improved inland transport and storage could all benefit from additional funding availability. Such funding could come from a variety of sources - Title I or Title III proceeds, USAID dollar funding or through the permissible sale (particularly in the case of transport and storage) of some portion of the Title II commodity grant.

Taka costs for CARE operations should continue to be borne by the BDG.

VI. A Direct Approach to Development

The Evaluation Team has explained above why it is now appropriate to approach the FFRW program with a more developmental mind-set. The question remains how this can be accomplished. Given the short time of the evaluation, the Team members have had only a brief opportunity to learn about the dynamics of development in rural Bangladesh. Therefore, the Team is recommending only general guidelines to assist CARE, USAID and the BDG in evolving a more detailed framework for undertaking development activities in Food for Work projects.

From an administrative standpoint, shifting the entire project to a development orientation would entail extensive restructuring of procedures and processes. Moreover, the new administrative structures have yet to be identified, and some initial testing will be required to get a better understanding of what is needed and what might be workable. The Team anticipates that much more will have to be learned about approaches to development objectives within the context of FFW before the BDG is ready or willing to make large scale changes in the program. Accordingly, it is recommended that some testing of development approaches be undertaken in selected CARE unit areas initially. This experimental stage should be undertaken using a systematic approach to maximize the learning experience for later decisions regarding development program expansion. As various new methods are applied over the course of this experiment, information on results should be quickly fed back to decision makers so that improvements can be made.

In this respect, we note that the project is now scheduled to terminate at the end of five years. The Evaluation Team does not see any justification for this termination date. The need for food assistance will clearly extend well into the future. Recent studies indicate that the number of landless unemployed is increasing. Even if agricultural self-sufficiency is attained by 1985 it is realistic to assume that a large portion of the rural poor will not have the purchasing power to meet their nutritional needs. The reorientation of the project to provide more development impact can give Bangladesh a powerful instrument to provide long-term

benefits to the rural population. It is recommended that the project be extended initially an additional two years to allow sufficient time to complete the development planning experiment. The form of the project and the level of funding and food aid should be reevaluated at least biannually.

The Team also recommends that a development planner (perhaps a CARE expatriate in the initial phase) be assigned to each of two or three selected CARE units. The planner would have overall supervisory responsibility for operations, but the unit would also have a national administrator to oversee the monitoring function. This would provide ample opportunity for the planner to devote his time and energy to identifying and implementing various development approaches to be incorporated in the unit's food for work projects. It is suggested that the planner have one or two Bangladeshi assistants (equipped with motorcycles or jeeps). Furthermore, these planners should have a more general background than the current CARE technical staff, who are mostly engineers. The development planner and his assistants would assist the local officials in UPs and thanas to plan food for work projects in a more comprehensive manner to maximize the development impact. They would be involved in the initial identification of projects and then help follow through to the design and implementation stages. The development planner should orient his activities not only to find the most effective development approaches but also to improve the skill level of local planners and implementers by on-the-job training.

Consideration should also be given to assigning a development planning specialist to work with District and Central Government officials in developing the type of support that will be needed from these levels for effective local operations. CARE should also provide short-term assistance both to the Government and its own field staff, when necessary, to provide guidance on such matters as management and information systems, sociology, hydrology, economics etc. to facilitate project selection and implementation, as well as to maximize the learning experience. Periodic evaluations should be scheduled to assess results to date and recommend modifications. Towards the end of the three-year period a special evaluation should be conducted to determine whether more needs to be learned before expansion of the development system can be attempted. At this time, the evaluators

should examine whether broader institutional changes may be necessary.

The Team strongly urges that attention be given to development impact in all of CARE's FFW projects. While the most development gains should be expected in the experimental units where comprehensive development planning will be undertaken, there should be room for improvement of procedures and criteria in all other units without making radical changes in the overall program. As lessons are learned through testing in the experimental unit areas during the three-year period, CARE and the BDG may find that these can be readily incorporated into other FFW areas. Any incremental changes that can be accomplished in the first three years for the overall program will facilitate expansion of the development operation in later years. However, such incremental changes should take into consideration the possibility of more fundamental institutional changes after the experimental period.

CARE and the BDG would benefit from a communication to all field staff emphasizing the need to obtain maximum development impact from each project and providing some informal guidelines on the types of impact to be considered. While this initial action does not give them many of the tools that will be necessary for improved development planning, it will help start a transformation of their current view (as perceived by the Evaluation Team) that food for work is mainly to employ and feed the rural poor, and that development is of only minor significance in this program. The Team encourages the CARE staff to incorporate development criteria in its selection process as rapidly as time, manpower and available project information permits.

The Team recommends that the reimbursement system maintain its current orientation to performance on construction of the physical earthworks and not be expanded to include performance in achieving desired development impact.

While the Team views development impact objectives as entirely compatible with relief objectives, there may be a need at times in the future (during or after extensive cyclone or flood damage) to relax some of the development criteria to move food quickly to disaster areas. The Team urges that the development criteria be maintained to the maximum degree possible without unduly impeding disaster relief, and that the full set of development criteria be reestablished as soon as conditions permit.

SUMMARY OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The reimbursement arrangement should be continued, and the principle permitting up to 50% advance shipment of annual wheat requirements should be firmly established. AID/Washington should accept the judgment and recommendations of the CARE and AID Mission on shipping levels and schedules.
2. An evaluation should be undertaken jointly by USAID, CARE and WFP of completed and ongoing FFW projects in order to ascertain their developmental, socio-economic and environmental impact. In addition WFP local initiative and CARE projects should be compared to ascertain if more stringent CARE monitoring has made any significant difference, subject to BDG and donor concurrence.
3. Additional funding for ancillary activities such as training, appurtenant structures and food storage/handling should be provided where considered desirable or essential for the improvement of the program.
4. In order to achieve greater developmental impact and improve monitoring, the geographical scope of projects should be curtailed and within a given area fewer but larger projects be undertaken.
5. The appropriateness of the MRR as the overall implementing agency should be subject to continual reexamination.
6. More detailed project decision authority should be vested with local officials who would play a greater role in the project selection and approval process, according to the guidelines prescribed by the MRR in Dacca.
7. CARE should streamline monitoring procedures with the objective of reducing involvement with this program function, so as to allow reorientation towards development planning without expanding overall in-country presence. Steps should be taken to minimize the reporting requirements from CARE to USAID on the relief aspects of the program.

8. Current USAID programs in Rural Works utilizing cash for work should be evaluated to assess their economic and nutritional impact, in comparison with FFW. This study should also examine the administrative advantages in each.
9. Development and administrative criteria and guidelines for FFW projects should be jointly prepared by BDG, USAID and CARE.
10. Project proformas for future development projects receiving CARE assistance in their preparation should be given special attention and priority in the MRR approval process.
11. CARE and the BDG should work towards the goal of bringing all FFW projects under the preview and post-survey system.
12. CARE and the BDG should attempt to maximize projects designed exclusively for women, and should make appropriate adjustments in the rate of compensation to take into account their lesser carrying capacity.

The recommendations for initiating development-oriented activities as part of the FFW program are concisely described in Section VI of the evaluation report.

APPENDIX

April 5, 1978

USAID/CARE FOOD FOR RELIEF WORKS PROGRAM TERMS OF REFERENCE SPECIAL EVALUATION

I. OVERALL OBJECTIVE

The overall objective of the evaluation is to provide assistance to USAID, CARE and BDG management, and it is not to be regarded in any way as an audit or an inspection. To this end the evaluation will be supportive of the Food for Work initiatives that are underway, and shall include, to the maximum extent feasible, the participation of representatives from all three parties in all states of the process described. The major interests of this evaluation are questions involving the appropriateness of overall BDG, USAID and CARE policy toward the program, and the desirability of that policy vis-a-vis the Congressional Mandate.

II. PURPOSE

The more specific purposes of the evaluation are to (1) conduct a formal review of the performance of the program; (2) assess its achievements, implementation problems, and progress to date in terms of the original purpose of the Project Paper; (3) determine what changes are needed for the remainder of the 5-year program to improve its effectiveness in achieving its goals and purpose.

III. SPECIFIC TASKS

Given the very short amount of time available to the evaluation team a limited number of issues are to be addressed. It is agreed that the following issues are the most critical and that the team will concentrate its effort on these, supplementing this list only to the degree that time permits:

1. Determine the impact of the ongoing and completed FFRW projects.
2. Determine whether the relief component of the project is sufficient to justify the costs of the projected to the U.S.G., CARE and the BDG.

4. Identify the constraints to the achievement of development impact.
For example:
 - a) Lack of manpower, time and a conscious effort on the part of the BDG, CARE and USAID to achieve the development impact.
 - b) BDG administrative/political constraints.
 - c) Degree to which CARE monitoring role stifles BDG initiative.
 - d) BDG monitoring capability.

5. Determine measures which can be taken to enhance the development effect of FFRW projects. For example:
 - a) Cash for work instead of food for work.
 - b) Relocation of the project within the BDG to a more developmentally-oriented Ministry.
 - c) Developing greater uniformity of objectives and procedures among key donors/implementers.
 - d) Reducing the geographical spread of projects.
 - e) CARE involvement in proforma development prior to submission.
 - f) Establishing a set of development criteria for project selection.
 - g) Establishing administrative guidelines/criteria for project selection (e.g., size of project, distance from office).
 - h) Previewing all CARE projects.
 - i) Increasing women's role in food for work.
 - j) Change of CARE staffing pattern (use of CARE development planners and Bangladesh administrators).
 - k) Emphasis on long-term employment generation over agricultural production.
 - l) Increasing USAID budgetary assistance to project.