

PD-AAS-211

U 2 3 1 1

FINAL REPORT TO USAID/BOLIVIA

Curt Schaeffer  
Regional Technical Advisor  
Cochabamba  
November 8, 1985

## FINAL REPORT - CONTRACT TERMINATION

TO: Gerard Bowers, Director, Department of Health  
& Human Resources USAID/B

FROM: Curt Schaeffer

RE: Termination of Contract as Regional Technical Advisor  
for Food for Peace Program

DATE: November 8, 1985

My contract stipulates that a final report be written upon termination of work with USAID/Bolivia. I began working for the Food for Peace Program January 3, 1984 and terminated my contract October 31, 1985. Since July of this year I have worked for USAID part time and for PRITECH (Technologies for Primary Health Care) part time. This report will review my work of the last 2 years and include observations and recommendations based on my experience as a Regional Technical Advisor for the Food for Peace Program.

I was originally hired to work as a FFP Inspector for the Emergency Program that was set up as a result of the drought in the Bolivian highlands. From January to August 1984 I worked exclusively with the organizations involved in the Emergency Program in the Department of Cochabamba and Chuquisaca. From September 1984 to October 1985 I worked in the same geographical areas with the Regular Plan food programs.

The Emergency Program was in large part successful in spite of incredible shortcomings and mismanagement on the part of some of the participating organizations. The USAID Food for Peace staff was expanded to handle the increased responsibilities under disaster relief program.

My concern is that the lessons learned from the USAID response to the drought in Bolivia be taken into account in the future. A solid base of experience was developed during the year of work in which 5 people labored full time in La Paz office and other 4 in regional offices not to mention secretarial support. The following are the lessons learned from my perspective - most of which could be applied to any disaster situation:

1. Coordination with all organizations involved in an emergency situation is essential. USAID recognized this and created what has since become a white elephant - OFINAAL (Oficina Nacional de Alimentación). The idea was correct to have one body responsible for overall coordination with offices in all departmental capitals.

Unfortunately OFINAAL had no interest in coordination and chose to distribute Canadian and European Economic Community products. As a result there was little coordination and the distribution of food was not nearly as effective as it could have been.

2. Planning must be done quickly and effectively. It is advisable that 3-6 weeks are utilized to thoroughly analyze affected areas

both by jeep and by air if necessary. Otherwise planning is based on outdated and inaccurate information. This happened during the Emergency Program when the Defensa Civil studies were the basis for all Title II food assignments by geographic region. The result was that there was no targeting of hardest hit areas. Instead food was distributed to virtually all rural areas regardless of need and in some areas rural villages received food from 2 or 3 different organizations.

A final note on planning is that regional PVO office directors should be included when planning is going on at the national level. It is the regional offices that must implement the program and logically are most experienced. Politically it is important because of the historical problem with centralization in Bolivia.

3. Guidelines for distribution and the use of the Title II products should be well defined and agreed upon by all organizations involved. Otherwise there is a great deal of confusion and resulting problems at the regional level.

There should obviously be a conformity of rations, beneficiary contributions, etc.

4. No organization should be allowed to participate until it is certified to have adequate staff, office support/materials, transport and warehouse facilities. USAID promised resources particularly transport to some of the distributing organizations during the Emergency Program and the resources were never forthcoming. The result was that some regional offices were left with no means of transport and in some cases no office materials. No program is often better than a program that has no control over the products being distributed.
5. Local organization should be encouraged to participate at each regional level. Throughout the country there are a number of indigenous and international development programs that work in specific provinces. These organizations usually do not work with Title II products but they have experience, understanding and access to rural areas that are often affected by disasters. It is only natural then to include these organizations in the planning and the resulting distribution. USAID should put together a comprehensive list of these organizations by department and occasionally update it so that the information is available and accurate.
6. Commodity sales programs should be considered for future disasters. The rice sales program during April-May 1984 was successful in that a large amount of rice was sold in rural areas throughout the country, pesos were generated from the sales for development projects and the response of the campesinos was positive.

Of course a major consideration is that the commodity(ies) sold do not compete with domestic production and effect prices. There does appear to be an appreciation on the part of the campesinos that it is better to buy donated commodities instead of receiving them at no cost.

7. USAID used the Emergency Program as an excuse to bring other organizations into the Title II fold. Officially this was done because CARITAS could not possibly handle the distribution needs. Unofficially this was done to give CARITAS competition and a push to improve its programs. While it was not a bad idea to sign up new organizations, it was done too quickly and with very little if any certification for program capability. This has had disastrous results in the Regular Program which are just now being resolved between all food distributing organizations.

The Emergency Program concluded with a month long evaluation that involved all participating organizations except CARITAS. The evaluation was a necessary process during which organization evaluated organization. Again my concern is that many of the lessons from the Emergency Program were very slow to be translated into the Regular Program.

For example, such issues as targeting by organization to:

- 1) avoid duplication and 2) work in the high need areas where the program will have an impact. This is just now being resolved by USAID.

Another example is uniform rations by all organizations to:

- 1) avoid competition by beneficiaries; 2) avoid inter-institutional conflict; and 3) have a uniform nutrition program that can be complimented with such things as instruction on the use of the products, recipes, etc. This will be addressed by the FFP office for fiscal year 1987.

As far as I know, this was the only internal evaluation of the Food for Peace Program. Outside consultants are brought in from time to time to evaluate a specific program or organization but the FFP office grinds on with no internal evaluative mechanism. This is a short-coming both for personnel and for the program. The FFP officer should do a brief evaluation of each employee every 6 months and the program should be evaluated every 12 months. This simply helps insure that employees are doing what they should be doing and the program is complying with the stated goals and objectives.

In September 1984, the Emergency Program was officially put to rest. The entire FFP staff changed pace and began working intimately with the Regular Program. These are the Title II programs that have existed for years primarily through CARITAS/Bolivia but more recently through SAWS/OFASA, Food for the Hungry and Servicio Nacional de Desarrollo de Comunidades.

As Regional Technical Advisor, I worked closely with all of the above organizations in Cochabamba, Aiquile and Chuquisaca. My

time with the organizations was almost evenly split between field supervision and work in each organization office. Without a great deal of detail I will provide the reader with my observations and recommendations.

The Regular Program has received more attention and positive input in the last year than anytime in its history. This is evidenced by:

1. Training programs for Title II organizations on planning and program implementation have been conducted on 2 occasions for all participating organizations.
2. Much closer monitoring and accountability so that organizations are not doing anything they choose. This will decrease in intensity as the 3 of the 4 regional offices have been closed.
3. The distributing organizations have received financial support through outreach grants from USAID.
4. Title II has been tapped as a source of funds to help the organizations bolster their food for work programs.
5. A countrywide targeting plan has been established and is now being implemented in which the various organizations are dividing up geographical areas in each department.
6. A system for utilizing a computer to track movement of Title II products and have greater accountability is being developed with each organization.

All of the above are positive steps that have been or are being taken. My concern is the future of these programs and their effect on Bolivia. The FFP programs have always been managed as if they are set in cement "the food will always be there".

I believe this approach to be wrong and damaging because it not only creates a strong dependency but fosters a lack of initiative on the part of the campesinos. This is particularly true of the mother-child program, where a centro de madres may have existed 10 to 15 years but has absolutely nothing to show for their efforts -usually not even a regular meeting place.

My recommendation is that there be a well defined program with say a limit of 2 years on the Title II products. Again the idea of the products is to act as a stimulus or incentive to the mothers to develop their own activities particularly in terms of infant health and nutrition. But the products should not be the entire reason for being which is the case for many mothers clubs.

Food for work has also created a dependency in many areas where campesinos are given Title II products for virtually any community project from clearing roads to building schools. When no products are available, there is no interest in carrying out community projects that were once considered annual work projects in which everyone voluntarily participated. This is obviously not true in every village but it has become a pattern in many areas particularly where OFASA works.

I would like to see USAID force the distributing organizations to be more creative in their approach to food distribution and development. For example, CARITAS will be distributing CSM flour as one of its 3 commodities this year. CSM is a combination of corn, soya and milk that is best used as flour. This is a product that could be produced locally with a little stimulus and the prospect of a future market. So CARITAS-CRS could propose to USAID that CSM be imported over a 3 year period while there is support for developing local production and the local market. At the point that there is local production and demand for the product, CARITAS could stop using CSM and cut back to 2 products. This is simply an example of what could be done. The problem is that institutions are in the business of perpetuating themselves and any discussion of reducing programs and/or products is politically threatening. My feeling though is that USAID is in a position to be more demanding and forceful with the organizations.

In the long run I see the Title II FFP programs as being very damaging to rural Bolivia unless there is a change in the focus and approach of the organization. I personally believe that if fundamental changes are not made the FFP program will slip back into the same old traditional approach in another year or two. Without belaboring the point, USAID can assume a responsible role of making food programs more accountable, short term (put time limits on everything) and development oriented. Any thing less will be business as usual and a negative influence on rural Bolivia.

For instance, 3 of the 4 regional offices have been closed. Both supervision and accountability of the PVO's at the regional level will diminish. The burden then is on the one remaining regional technical advisor and the FFP staff in La Paz. The La Paz personnel tend to get caught up in the seemingly endless rounds of meetings, paperwork and administration. Field supervision becomes a secondary or tertiary activity.

My recommendation is that the regional technical advisor be pushed hard to cover an area like Cochabamba, Oruro and Chuquisaca or Cochabamba, Chuquisaca and Potosi while the La Paz personnel divide up the other departments and stick to a rigid schedule of supervision. Otherwise the PVO's tend to slip back into familiar bad habits that are counterproductive. USAID receives the monthly spread sheet of distribution from each organization but this is only one means of supervising and evaluating the work of the PVO's.

I could go on and on but the readers attention is already waning so I will close. If there is a question or a request for details please let me know. I did not see any point in including charts and statistics to back up my statements but the information is available.

Finally I want to thank USAID for giving me the opportunity to work with the Food for Peace Program for 2 years. It was a real learning experience that I enjoyed and benefited from.