

MUCIA/AID Project

The Institute of Agriculture and Animal Sciences
of Tribhuvan University

Rampur, Nepal

End of Tour Report

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INTRODUCTION

Probably the two most interesting periods in a project are the initial and the final phases. I was fortunate in being a team member during the last two years of the MUCIA project for assistance to the Institute of Agriculture and Animal Sciences at Rampur, Nepal. This report deals with activities from the beginning of my assignment in late 1982 through May 1984. My long-term assignment terminated ahead of the completion date of the contract due to personal reasons. Dr. Herbert Whittier was named as Team Leader for the remainder of the MUCIA contract period.

I was fortunate also in having a part in the early planning for assistance to IAAS under AID sponsorship. From the time of my first short-term assignment in 1970 (to recommend whether AID should provide assistance to the College of Agriculture [the predecessor of IAAS]), I came on three more short-term tours for MUCIA in connection with IAAS. I was a member of another short-term team to Nepal in 1971 to evaluate AID's food-grain assistance program in the Terai and visited Rampur at that time also. The project progress report for the period 1 July 1982 to 30 June 1983 gives additional information about these assignments in Nepal.

The period covered by this report had higher activity in short-term advisors to the project and a greater amount of non-degree training for IAAS faculty members than occurred during any other 20 month period. The start-up period of the project in 1976-78 had the second largest number of short-term advisors serving.

Only one participant left for degree training during the period of this report, but two others had left just before it. With only two years remaining for the project, no Ph.D. training could be approved. It appears, however,

that the two who left in the summer of 1982 for graduate degrees in the U.S. may be able to stay for completion of their Ph.D. degrees.

The severe limitation on degree training was compensated somewhat by providing two overseas observational tours in which ten IAAS faculty participated by providing two courses on campus for faculty improvement, and by providing training in short courses in the USA for an additional nine faculty members. Details of these may be found in the project Progress Reports.

Eight members of the IAAS administrative support staff left for three weeks of training in administration at U.P.L.B. in the Philippines in early June 1984 and another observational tour to universities and research centers in India was scheduled for the last two weeks of June.

THE SETTING

Enough has been written about Nepal's economy and the role of agriculture in that economy so that nothing further is needed here. Any interested reader is referred to World Bank appraisal reports, AID reports, Government of Nepal reports as well as many reports of the MUCIA project itself. The latter include end-of-tour reports of long-term and short-term advisors, Joint Annual Review reports, and project progress reports.

This report attempts to describe briefly the progress at IAAS during the period of my long-term assignment there and to discuss briefly the opportunities and the challenges for IAAS in the years ahead, as I see them.

The IAAS campus buildings and facilities, and the faculty and student body numbers at Rampur in 1984 far exceed the expectations I had on my first visit in 1970 or even on the third in 1975. In 1970 there were only the vacant (at the time of the visit) panchyat training center buildings and

surrounding poorly maintained grounds. In 1975 IAAS was in operation with assistance from an AID adviser. The main focus was on training vocational agriculture teachers. The AID building assistance program had not begun.

In 1984 the AID building program was completed. Student hostels, faculty houses, a classroom-laboratory building, library, medical clinic, canteen, water supply and distribution system, storm and sanitary sewers, roads and sidewalks have been provided by this program.

Fifty-three faculty members have completed advanced degrees and returned to IAAS. An additional 14 faculty members are still studying outside Nepal and should return to IAAS upon completion of their advanced degrees.

Since advanced degree training outside Nepal has been one of the most desirable rewards for IAAS faculty members, the near removal of this incentive had obvious adverse effects on staff morale. Added to this was the uncertainty regarding continuation of external assistance to IAAS. After a period of hope for a continuation of the MUCIA contract, it became known that there would be no extension. There is the strong probability of a new project (IAAS II), co-financed by USAID and World Bank. Planning for this project has recently occupied the minds of many IAAS faculty members, with improving and falling of morale as rumors and facts about the probable nature of the new project were sorted out. At this writing the contractor for IAAS II project has not been selected.

As it became definite that MUCIA would not necessarily be the contractor for IAAS II and that the MUCIA team would have no responsibility for its planning, the effectiveness of the MUCIA team decreased appreciably. Planning was being done by AID in more detail than seemed to me to be advisable and with less provision for input from IAAS faculty than seemed desirable.

It is anticipated that the project final report will include the numbers of faculty and students at IAAS each year, as well as details of training carried out under the project. It should also include the names and periods of service of long-term and short-term advisors for the entire period. Thus, there is listed here only the information about those serving at Rampur during the period of this report, as follows:

LONG AND SHORT TERM ADVISORS FROM OCTOBER 1982 THROUGH MAY 1984

Name	Specialization and Home University	Term of Service
Dr. Weslie Combs	Animal Sciences Michigan State University	Sept 82 - Long
Dr. Herbert Whittier	Rural Development and Extension Michigan State University	Dec 82 - Long
Dr. Marlowe Thorne	Plant Sciences and Team Leader University of Illinois	Nov. 82-June 84 Long
Mr. David Krauss	Instrument Maintenance Michigan State University	July-Aug 83 Short
Dr. Charles Cress	Statistics and Research Design Michigan State University	July-Sept 83 Short
Mr. James Miller	Campus Planning University of Illinois	Oct. 1983 Short
Mr. John Beecher	Library Science University of Minnesota	Nov. 1983 Short
Dr. Carroll Wamhoff	Teaching Improvement Michigan State University	March 1984 Short
Dr. Colleen Cooper	Teaching Improvement Michigan State University	March-April 84 Short
Dr. Andrew Sofranko	Academic Planning University of Illinois	May-June 84 Short
Dr. Russell Odell	Academic Planning University of Illinois	May-June 84 Short

PERSONS FROM OUTSIDE NEPAL WHO VISITED THE PROJECT

Name	Specialization and Home University	Period
Dr. Ralph Smuckler	Dean, International Programs and Studies, Michican State University	July 1982 April 1983 February 1984
Dr. William Flinn	Executive Director, MUCIA Ohio State University	July 1982 September 1983 March 1984
Thomas Reed	Member, Board of Trustees Michigan State University	April 1983
Darrell Fienup	Campus Coordinator, MUCIA Project Michigan State University	February 1983 September 1983
Maxine Thompson	Professor of Horticulture Oregon State University	April 1983
Charles Greenleaf	AID/Washington, D.C.	October 1982
Rocky Staples	AID/Washington, D.C.	January 1983
Roger Cuyno	University of the Philippines Los Banos, Philippines	September 1983
Larry Crandall	AID/Washington, D.C.	January 1984
Ardell Ward	Assistant Campus Coordinator MUCIA Project Michigan State University	March/April 1984
Charles Doane	Director, Overseas Support Office Michigan State University	May/June 1984

DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES AT IAAS

1. Staff Development

Since only two years remained between the beginning of the period of this report and the Project Activity Closing Date (PACD), no Ph.D. training could be approved. Nanda Joshi and Gyan Kumar Shrestha had left for further graduate training in the USA in late summer 1982. Both had already been awarded M.S. degrees. Mr. Shrestha was later approved for Ph.D. training at Oregon State University, even though the project could not support him for the

entire period required. B.B. Basnet was approved for M.S. training in Agricultural Engineering at the Asian Institute of Technology in Thailand where he should complete his degree before the end of 1984. AID/N has recently authorized MUCIA to provide financial support for Mr. Basnet through calendar 1984.

Four degree training positions were awarded to IAAS for Fall 1984 under the AID direct support training program in India. Four faculty members were nominated and three have reportedly accepted. The fourth declined for personal reasons, as did his alternate. The hope that degree training in the U.S. may be provided under IAAS II (AID and World Bank co-financed project proposed for the next five years) may have dampened the enthusiasm of some faculty members for degree training in India.

Of the 59 members of the academic faculty of Rampur, 6 have the Ph.D. degree and 47 have the M.S. degree. Thus about 90 percent have advanced degrees and this is an excellent showing for an institution so young. In addition, 4 more faculty members should return with the Ph.D. and 1 more with the M.S. degree in the next two years. This does not mean that additional training is not necessary or not desirable. It does indicate to me that additional degree training is not the most serious need at IAAS at present nor will it be in the immediate future. Planning for the new project should include detailed study by IAAS, USAID and the contractor of specific deficiencies in training in various IAAS disciplines. Drs. Sofranko and Odell made some recommendations in their June 1984 report. Dr. Hatch and Mr. Rauniyar, AID Consultants, also made training recommendations in their May 1984 report. These should be helpful to all those responsible for the IAAS II Project.

The severe limitation on the number of faculty who were sent for advanced degree training during the period of this report was compensated somewhat by

short-courses and by observational tours. Ten faculty members were sent to the U.S. in 1983 to attend subject matter short-courses offered by U.S. universities in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Details regarding courses and persons attending may be found in the project progress report for the period July 1, 1982 to June 30, 1983. Five IAAS faculty members were sent on an observational tour to Indonesia, accompanied by the Rural Development and Extension adviser, Dr. Whittier. Five others went to Italy and Greece accompanied by the Animal Sciences adviser, Dr. Combs. Details of these tours are reported also in the 1982-83 progress report.

A group of eight IAAS staff members left for three weeks of training in administration at U.P.L.B early in June 1984. An observational tour to Universities and Agricultural research centers in India was completed the last two weeks of June. Nine IAAS faculty members participated, with Dr. Whittier accompanying them.

Two short-courses were offered on campus at Rampur with apparently successful results. In the late summer of 1983, Dr. Charles Cress conducted the six weeks course: Statistics and Research Design. In March and April 1984, Drs. Carroll Wamhoff and Colleen Cooper offered the course: Effective Classroom Teaching. Both courses were well attended and participants reported they found the information useful and stimulating. The MUCIA team has felt this is the most cost-effective method of non-degree training. Excellent courses can be presented by well-qualified instructors with minimal disruption of regular IAAS programs. On the other hand, faculty members are not exposed to a foreign culture. They also do not get the added benefits of travel and of the possible accumulation of foreign currency which may result from their attending short courses overseas. While these added benefits are not

necessarily objectives of training under the project, the lack of them may decrease enthusiasm of faculty for short-courses held on campus.

2. Evaluation

Considerable attention has been given to evaluation of performance of faculty members in teaching, research, extension, administration and public service. A faculty committee developed a set of guidelines and rating forms. These were considered in faculty meeting and revisions made. The utility of the evaluation scheme will not be known of course, until it is given a serious trial. There seems to be considerable reluctance to initiate such a trial. The traditional evaluation is weighted heavily in favor of seniority and there may be fears that the system to which they are accustomed may be upset.

It is difficult, of course, for one human being to evaluate another objectively. Yet administrators have need for evaluation of those over whom they have authority. Administrators also have responsibility for evaluating faculty members and for attempting to reward merit and to institute corrective measures to assist those of inferior performance.

If an evaluation system is to be worthwhile, there must be some mechanism for rewarding faculty according to the degree of merit indicated by the evaluation. At IAAS, salaries are set for various ranks and for steps within ranks. It is, however, apparently possible to give more than a one step increase in salary if reason can be shown for doing so. It is also possible to reward with training opportunities, and with approval of invitational travel to meetings, conferences, etc.

At IAAS there continues to be a recognized need for a good faculty evaluation system and for utilizing the available rewards to best recognize superior merit. The organization which provides funding for the rewards has a

responsibility to require IAAS to utilize evaluation in selection of those to be rewarded. Sometimes it is difficult to veto a proposal to send for training someone who has performed in a less than superior manner. Yet the veto must be utilized when necessary. It was used in two instances of faculty recommended for short-term training during the period of this report. In one instance the training requested appeared to be more to improve the faculty member's morale than to meet the needs of IAAS or to reward superior performance.

The proposal that selection of those to be sent for degree training should be made by the contractors' representatives in the U.S. seems to have considerable merit. It is proposed that three candidates be nominated for each training position and that the selection be made on the basis of record of performance and, perhaps, on the basis of letters of recommendation also. Whatever scheme is used, more weighting must be given to performance and less to seniority or to pressure from the individual and his friends.

i. Program Development

Teaching and curriculum

At Rampur there presently are students in four curricula: 3 year B.Sc (about 300 enrolled), 2 year I.Sc Agr (for JT's) (about 90 students) and 2 year I.SC program in basic sciences (about 215 students). The I.Sc.Ag. program is being phased out and currently is not expected to be offered after 1985-86. A 5 year B.Sc program will begin next year and will replace the 3 year B.Sc by about 1988. JTA training will be offered only at the branch campuses, Lumjung and Paklihawa.

The best available statistics indicate about 700 students at Rampur in 1984-85, decreasing to slightly over 600 in a few years. The B.Sc. in animal science may be offered at Rampur within five years. About 150 students will

receive the B.SC in agriculture each year at Rampur with 50 B.Sc.'s being awarded annually to Nepalese students by Indian universities under the USAID support program and 20 B.Sc's awarded annually under a German-funded project. Thus B.Sc's in agriculture total about 220 per year. Manpower requirements indicate that on the average about 200 B.Sc students are likely to find employment each year. About 830 JT/JTA positions are estimated to be available each year and the output of Paklihawa and Lumjung campuses will be about 600 per year.

Thus it appears that the estimated requirement for students with one or two years training and for those with B.Sc degrees will be reasonably well met. There is concern as to whether the training will be of the desired quality. There has been a change recently to the annual system of instruction and the curriculum has been revised. Some improvements have resulted but not all the deficiencies of concern to advisers have been corrected. These include: (1) excessive number of contact hours per week (35 or more); (2) excessive number of courses to be taken simultaneously (8 to 11); (3) inadequate number of electives (3 in the 5th year only); (4) inadequate emphasis on practical courses (the work experience program has been all but eliminated) (5) excessive absenteeism of students and instructors (6) inadequate teaching materials: textbooks, handouts, worksheets.

4. Research

Thirty research projects have been approved by the IAAS research committee for MUCIA funding. The Sofranko-Odell report (June 1984) lists project titles, leaders and approved funds for the 30 projects. Nineteen projects were approved prior to October 1982 but no copies were in MUCIA files nor in IAAS central files. The secretary of the research committee located copies of the projects and one document was drawn up and signed by Dean IAAS

and by the MUCIA team leader in early 1983 to formalize approval of the nineteen projects.

Between October 1982 and October 1983 only four more research projects were approved for MUCIA funding. In March and May 1984, seven additional projects were approved for funding. Six more were approved in late May 1984 subject to availability of funds before the PACD. Of the 23 projects approved by October 1983, 16 are reported to be completed and reports have been written on 8 of them.

Sometimes it appears that the greatest incentive for getting a project approved is to get a salary supplement for vacation periods and to get a bicycle and/or calculator. The idea of approving the payment of one or two months salary for faculty members who remain on campus and do research during vacation periods seems to have merit. However, there has been little monitoring of presence on campus. It has been extremely difficult to get progress reports submitted on schedule and generally those received have been so brief as to have little substantive information about research done.

Guidelines for approval of projects and for allocation of funds provide that an initial allocation be made sufficient to get the project started. Then a report of progress accomplished and an accounting for funds spent must be made in order to get additional funds transferred for the project. Project leaders complained that they could not get an accounting of funds spent from IAAS accounts offices. Dean Sinha then set up a special account for research projects with one individual in charge which seems to have solved that problem. IAAS has advanced funds to project leaders but has not been able to get an accounting from some of them as to how money has been spent nor to get them to return unused advances. The IAAS finance and accounting offices have given MUCIA periodic reports of funds received and of disposition of those

funds. These reports indicate that if the funds which have been advanced and are as yet not accounted for by project leaders could be recovered, the projects approved recently could all be funded. MUCIA has had no control over handling of the funds once they have been transmitted to IAAS. Additional funding has been withheld if satisfactory progress is not made and/or satisfactory reports are not received.

In spite of problems, the research funding under the MUCIA project has resulted in noticeable research activity amongst the IAAS faculty. The 30 projects which have received allocations of funds include 6 in Agronomy and Soil Science, 5 in Horticulture, 7 in Plant Protection, 8 in Animal Science, in Social Science (including Rural Sociology, Extension Education, and Agricultural Economics), and 1 in Agricultural Botany. Twenty-four IAAS faculty members were involved as principal investigators on these projects and many more were cooperating on the various projects.

While it is easy to count research projects and numbers of faculty involved, it is difficult to evaluate the quantity or quality of research accomplished. As the project reports are completed and more reporting is done in journals which submit manuscripts to peer review, a better appraisal can be made. Each advisor can cite projects in his subject matter area which are well designed and well managed and other projects which lack such design and management. Having all three advisors serve on the IAAS research committee has helped to improve design. Accompanying this has been better review of proposed projects by the IAAS faculty members of the committee. As more experience is gained by the faculty and administration, better research will no doubt result. It is hoped that there will be a diligent follow-up in getting the results of the research published in format which will make it

readily available to other scientists, to extension workers and ultimately to farmers.

Interest in research seems to be growing on campus. If means can be found to reward faculty members who successfully pursue research, the research program will progress. Government of Nepal has not funded research at IAAS in any substantial manner and the feeling has been that this was not required as the MUCIA/AID project provided all the funds needed. A long-term commitment of GON should be made to research, with donor agencies providing only temporary funding. Proceeds from the sale of commodities produced on IAAS farms should be readily available to IAAS to develop better facilities for research, extension and teaching.

5. Extension

The extension program operates with an appointed leader who serves as chairman of the Extension Committee. There has been increasing activity in providing services for farmers in the area and in training faculty and students in extension methodology. Vaccinations of animals have been provided at numerous locations in the panchayat. Field demonstration plots have been installed and labeled with appropriate signs. Diagnostic services for crops and livestock have been provided. Information on market prices of commodities has been made available.

Numerous changes have been made in the chairman of the committee. Some are inevitable but they have been excessive with disruptions to the program. It is hoped that there will be a more stable extension administration in the future. Little real responsibility is assumed by departmental chairmen and by most faculty for the extension program. It seems difficult to receive adequate credit for extension activity unless one has a full-time extension appointment. This situation is not unique to IAAS and many U.S. Land Grant

Universities had this problem during their maturation. Its solution at IAAS would provide additional stimulation to the extension program.

6. Public Service Activities

Some IAAS faculty members are becoming active in consulting with other governmental agencies and with donor organizations. This can provide additional experience as well as supplemental income. It will increase the prestige of IAAS and its faculty. However, such activity can interfere with teaching, research or extension on campus unless adequate controls are exercised. Some guidelines need to be drawn up for guidance of faculty and some monitoring of consulting should be done to keep it within approved limits.

Linkages with other organizations should be improved by service of IAAS faculty members as consultants for those organizations. There is need for strengthening linkages with the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Education, the National Planning Commission and other GON offices. There is also need for strong linkages with other donor agencies.

7. Administration

The appointment of B.P. Sinha as Dean of IAAS was a decided step forward in the Institute's progress. IAAS had been operating with acting deans for over a year and there are well-recognized problems in building long-range programs with temporary leadership. Dean Sinha is a sincere, hard-working, congenial administrator who takes his responsibility very seriously. His position has more responsibility than it has authority, however, and he is continually plagued with inadequate funding. Fortunately the MUCIA budget has been flexible enough to permit support of many services and activities which would not have been possible without MUCIA help. Our working relationships have been good and it has been possible to provide such things as petrol and

repairs for vehicles; salary support in selected instances; support for student activities and sports; and typing, mimeographing and photocopying.

At present there are two Assistant Dean positions, both filled. Dr. Kailash Pyakuryal serves as Assistant Dean for Administration. Mr. Narayan Kunwar was recently appointed Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs, succeeding Dr. Tej Bahadur K.C. who completed his term. There are now eleven departments; the names of chairmen are given in the July-December 1983 progress report of the project. Duties and responsibilities of chairmen are not well defined. They have few, if any, funds over which they have control and almost no support staff. Assistant Deans have fairly well-defined responsibilities and are given considerable freedom to carry out responsibilities. Assistant Deans and Chairmen serve as advisory bodies to assist the Dean in IAAS administration. All serve on the Research Committee, Teaching and Curriculum Committees.

Department chairmen should be provided some training in administration of departments. Visits to agricultural universities in other countries would be quite helpful. Training sessions on campus and seminars in administration could also be valuable. Chairmen should have important input into selection of faculty members of the department and in recommending merit increases and other rewards for superior performance. They will need secretarial and other help as they proceed to take on more responsibility for departmental administration.

Dean Sinha's term of appointment will be completed in slightly more than one year. Serious attention should be given soon to decide whether his appointment will be renewed. If he is not offered reappointment or if he does not accept reappointment, a search should be instituted for his replacement well ahead of the end of his term. IAAS should not again have an acting dean for a long period of time.

FUTURE PROSPECTS

A new project is being planned for support to IAAS for another five years. AID and World Bank plan to co-finance the project and details are being worked out with His Majesty's Government. The current MUCIA project terminates September 30, 1984. One advisor will be at Rampur for the following six months, supported by a personal services contract with AID. It is hoped that the new project will be operational by the end of the six months period and a new technical assistance team in place at Rampur. This is highly unlikely in view of the speed with which governments usually proceed with such contracts.

The new project is being planned to be administered by IAAS with the Dean IAAS serving as Project Director. Much detailed planning has already been done by AID and World Bank with some inputs from IAAS. The amount of advanced degree training to be provided to IAAS faculty members and the number of advisors who will serve are current items of discussion. Construction of additional facilities, particularly for animal sciences, will be provided by World Bank financing.

SUMMARY

The final two years of the MUCIA contract have been interesting ones. A work plan was developed by the team following the generalized work plan developed by Wilson and Sofranko in mid-1982. Much has been accomplished, but not all activities in the project work plan have been completed. The MUCIA team has worked together well and cooperation between the team and IAAS has been good. The administration of IAAS has been very satisfactory. Support provided by the MUCIA project office at Michigan State University has been excellent.

Each advisor assumed some administrative responsibility. Dr. Combs served as medical and safety liaison and usually served as Acting Chief of Party in my absence. Dr. Whittier supervised vehicle maintenance and repair and handled scheduling of transportation provided IAAS, particularly for extension activities. Each MUCIA team member had a vehicle and a driver assigned to him so scheduling problems were at a minimum. Each advisor was treated as a responsible individual and each acted with responsibility. Both Dr. Combs and Dr. Whittier made major contributions to the success of the project during the past two years. They are professionally competent, hard-working, sincere scientists and educators. It has been my pleasure to work closely with them.

I am grateful that I had experience in administration of programs and of people before this assignment. This should be one of the requirements for a team leader on any overseas assistance project, in my opinion. A project in a foreign country is a poor place to start to learn administration.

Support by the Nepalese employees of the MUCIA project was generally excellent. I found them to be a hard-working, sincere group with loyalty to MUCIA and IAAS. It is unfortunate that essentially all of them will have to seek other employment at the close of this project and probably not be available to the contractor for IAAS II.

The faculty members and the support staff of IAAS are also to be commended for their contributions to the current favorable progress of IAAS. They are generally well trained, sincere, and dedicated to Nepalese agriculture and higher education. Some seem to lack incentives for putting forth the full effort of which they are apparently capable. It is sincerely hoped that ways can be found during the next few years to provide those incentives.