UNCLASSIFIED
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PD-AAS-568

PROJECT EVALUATION SUMMARY (PES) — PART I

Report Symbol U-447

1. PROJECT TITLE	2. PROJECT NUMBER	3. MISSION/AID/W OFFICE
Community Based Integrated Rural Development Project	519-0215	USAID/El Salvador

4. EVALUATION NUMBER (Enter the number maintained by the reporting unit e.g., Country or AID/W Administrative Code, Fiscal Year, Serial No. beginning with No. 1 each FY) 85-1

/x/ EOP Evaluation

☐ REGULAR EVALUATION ☐ SPECIAL EVALUATION

5. KEY PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION DATES			6. ESTIMATED PROJECT FUNDING	7. PERIOD COVERED BY EVALUATION
A. First PRO-AG or Equivalent FY 79	B. Final Obligation Expected FY ___	C. Final Input Delivery FY 85	A. Total $ 1,915,815 B. U.S. $ 873,711	From (month/yr.) September 24, 1979 To (month/yr.) January 31, 1985 Date of Evaluation Review

8. ACTION DECISIONS APPROVED BY MISSION OR AID/W OFFICE DIRECTOR

A. List decisions and/or unresolved issues; cite those items needing further study. (NOTE: Mission decisions which anticipate AID/W or regional office action should specify type of document, e.g., airgram, SPAR, PIO, which will present detailed request.)	B. NAME OF OFFICER RESPONSIBLE FOR ACTION	C. DATE ACTION TO BE COMPLETED
A Cooperative Agreement (Project No. 519-0300) was signed between USAID/El Salvador and Save the Children Federation (SCF) on February 4, 1985. This new Agreement is in the total amount of $5,858,688 ($3,648,888 AID Grant and $2,209,800 counterpart funds) and covers a five-year period of project implementation. In the Cooperative Agreement, USAID included the following Special Provision G.1.(c):		
"SCF will furnish to A.I.D., not later than March 31, 1985, in form and substance satisfactory to A.I.D., an implementation plan to carry out the recommendations resulting from the evaluation conducted by Rural Development Services of Project No. 519-0215."	David Rogers, SCF Jaleh de Torres, AID	March 31, 1985
USAID issued Implementation Letter No. 1 dated May 30, 1985 accepting SCF's implementation plan for carrying out the recommendations of the evaluation. The actual implementation of recommendations is in process and USAID/El Salvador is monitoring their progress.		

9. INVENTORY OF DOCUMENTS TO BE REVISED PER ABOVE DECISIONS

- ☐ Project Paper
- ☐ Financial Plan
- ☐ Logical Framework
- ☐ Project Agreement
- [X] Implementation Plan e.g., CPI Network
- ☐ PIO/T
- ☐ PIO/C
- ☐ PIO/P
- ☐ Other (Specify) _____
- ☐ Other (Specify) _____

10. ALTERNATIVE DECISIONS ON FUTURE OF PROJECT

- A. ☐ Continue Project Without Change
- B. ☐ Change Project Design and/or ☐ Change Implementation Plan
- C. ☐ Discontinue Project

11. PROJECT OFFICER AND HOST COUNTRY OR OTHER RANKING PARTICIPANTS AS APPROPRIATE (Names and Titles)

Jaleh de Torres, Project Officer, OET, USAID/El Salvador

Leopoldo Garza, Director, OET, USAID/El Salvador

David Rogers, Director, SCF/El Salvador

12. Mission/AID/W Office Director Approval

Signature: R. Schoult

Typed Name: Robin Gomez, Mission Director

Date: 12/31/85

AID 1330-15 (3-78) Prepared by: OET:JdeTorres:bpa

Cleared by: OET:LGarza
DPP:RLeón de Vivero
PRJ:DBoyd

A. List decision and/or unresolved issues; cite those items needing further study.	B. Name of Officer Officer Responsible for action	C. Date Action to be Completed
The major actions to be taken as a result of the recommendations are as follows:		
1) Operational distribution of impact areas assigning several communities to one promotor for coordination of all sector activities.	David Rogers, SCF Jaleh de Torres, AID	May 1985
2) Development of a more formal training program for community volunteers and creation of the position of "specialized volunteers".	David Rogers, SCF Jaleh de Torres, AID	July 1, 1985
3) Documentation of project activities on a simple form which periodically will show progress towards objectives, problems, and solutions.	David Rogers, SCF Jaleh de Torres, AID	Jan. 1, 1986
4) Development and implementation of an incentive program for personnel.	David Rogers, SCF Jaleh de Torres, AID	Jan. 31, 1986
5) Establishment of a rural community banking system.	David Rogers, SCF Jaleh de Torres, AID	June 30, 1986
6) Development and implementation of a systematic training program for promotors and community volunteers in financial management, development, management and evaluation of projects, community organization, and cooperativism.	David Rogers, SCF Jaleh de Torres, AID	June 30, 1986
7) Strengthening of community organization to carry out self-help development projects.	David Rogers, SCF Jaleh de Torres, AID.	July 1, 1989

PART II - SUMMARY

Overall Quality of the Contractor's Report

Rural Development Services of New York carried out this end-of-project evaluation under a contract with Save the Children Federation and in coordination with USAID/El Salvador. The firm made an extensive study of all areas included in the scope of work and came up with numerous recommendations for improvement in similar project activities.

In spite of the fact that the evaluation team was impeded in carrying out its scheduled visits to the impact area due to the mandated suspension of transportation, it still managed to interview Save the Children field promotors and several volunteers at a site outside of the impact area at the same time that it conducted a short visit to a part of the impact area.

The contractor followed the approved scope of work. As described in Part I of the Project Evaluation Summary, the evaluation resulted in a series of recommendations accepted by both AID and Save the Children. These recommendations are being implemented by Save the Children in their new Cooperative Agreement No. 519-0300 with AID. Quite often, however, the evaluators used words which could well be sensitive to the current political situation.

Acceptance of Recommendations Made by the Evaluation Team

All recommendations of the evaluation team were accepted. Save the Children was required to draw up an implementation plan for evaluation recommendations. The actual implementation of the recommendations is being monitored by USAID.

Adequacy of Executive Summary

The information provided by the contractor under the executive summary (P. 1-18) is complete and presents a cross-section of the whole report.

Quality and Accuracy of the Development Impact and Lessons Learned

In spite of the absence of reliable baseline data at the beginning of the project, Rural Development Services established mid-project indicators (1982) and measured impact for each sector activity as of 1984.

The analyses made under (Project Impact P.60-66) and (Lessons Learned P. 78-79) are comprehensive. It is estimated that 20,000 people in the impact area living in 35 communities were benefitted by the project interventions in the three sectors of productivity, health/

nutrition, and education. The program increased average yield per manzana and average area planted. Average total production among the members of solidary groups in the project is shown in the following manner:

	Average Total Production (in quintales)			
Crop	1982	1983	1984	% Change 82/84
Corn	29.9	43.4	78.9	164%
Sorghum	13.7	22.1	27.0	97%
Total	43.6	65.5	105.9	143%

Child vaccination, deparasitizing, and primary health care helped reduce child morbidity and mortality. The primary school annual within grade dropout (comparing initial and final registration) decreased from 13% to 9% and promotion rate increased from 75% to 79% between 1983 and 1984.

These contributions are consistent with one of AID's overall goals of broadening the benefits of growth to increase the opportunity of the poor. The project directly impacted on AID's objective to expand health, community development, and training services to rural areas. This project supported Save the Children Federation efforts to improve socio-economic conditions of the poor in the rural areas of the north-eastern part of El Salvador.

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AN EVALUATION OF THE COMMUNITY BASED INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT IN NORTHERN LA UNION, EL SALVADOR

by

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February 15, 1985

Prepared under contract between Rural Development Services and Save the Children Federation dated December 3, 1984

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
1	Executive Summary	1
	Introduction	
	Principal Findings	
	Principal Recommendations	
	Evaluation Methodology	
	Description of Beneficiaries	
	External Factors	
2	Program Management and Financial Administration	19
	Financial Summary	
	Organizational Structure and Staffing	
	Administrative Procedures	
	Human Resource Management	
	Financial Management	
	Project Disbursement Procedures	
	Planning	
	Project Reports	
	Program Monitoring	
	Information System	
	Project Close-out Procedures	
	Project Evaluation	
	Institutional Support	
3	Project Activities	37
	Productivity Sector	
	Education and Literacy Sector	
	Health and Nutrition Sector	
4	Project Impact	60
	Productivity Sector	
	Education and Literacy Sector	
	Health and Nutrition Sector	
5	CBIRD Methodology	67
	Training and Technical Assistance	
	Community Organization	
	Financial and Material Resources	
	Project Management	
	Outreach and Diffusion	
6	Project Efficiency and Lessons Learned	77

TABLES, CHARTS, AND FIGURES

Table 2-1	Financial Summary	19
Figure 2-1	Organizational Chart	21
Figure 2-2	Informe Financiero	30
Figure 2-3	Informe Mensual	32
Table 3-1	Financial Summary--Productivity Sector	38
Table 3-2	Financial Summary--Education & Literacy Sector	47
Table 3-3	Financial Summary--Health & Nutrition Sector	51
Table 4-1	Yields: Pre-Project vs. Current Situation	62
Table 4-2	Family Income: Pre-Project vs. Current Situation	63
Table 4-3	Health Impact Information	64

CHAPTER I

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. INTRODUCTION

In September 1979, Save the Children Federation/El Salvador (SCF) received an Operational Program Grant (OPG) from USAID/El Salvador in the amount of US$ 873,711 to implement a program of Community-based Integrated Rural Development in the municipalities of El Sauce and Concepcion de Oriente in the Department of La Union. The grant was to provide financial support for the general administration of the project, as well as training activities, local community development projects and the purchase of needed commodities. The three basic development activities to be promoted at the community level were a) Health & Nutrition, b) Education & Literacy, and c) Agriculture & Cottage Industry. As a result of what were perceived to be significant successes of this project in improving the lives of the beneficiaries targeted, SCF was encouraged by USAID/El Salvador to develop a follow-on project proposal to finance an expansion of the CBIRD model to other regions of El Salvador. Given that this project involved a more than 300% increase in funding for SCF over the previous OPG, it was considered vital that a formal evaluation be conducted to both a) substantiate the claims of SCF technicians and prior evaluations that the project had indeed generated significant benefits, and b) to make recommendations as to what, if any, changes might be required in SCF's project design, management, and operating procedures before undertaking an expansion of the project to allow for implementation of the model in other regions of El Salvador beginning in 1985. To this end, SCF contracted Rural Development Services (RDS), an independent consulting firm, to conduct a three-week evaluation of the program during December, 1984, the findings of which are reported in this document.

B. Principal Findings

1. General

Generally speaking, the evaluation team was extremely impressed with the accomplishments of the SCF program with regard to improving the quality of life of the rural poor living in the impact area. These accomplishments are all the

more impressive when viewed against the background of the unfavorable political, economic and environmental conditions prevailing in the region (See Section D, "External Factors"). Among the program's positive features were:

- significant gains in agricultural production and productivity
- significant increases in family income due to agriculture and animal husbandry
- significant improvements in family health and nutrition, especially of children
- encouraging trends in school enrollment
- a high level of self-help and attitude among the volunteer workers that "the program is the benefit"
- broad coverage, including the dissemination of project technology and benefits to large numbers of indirect beneficiaries
- the development of a significant number of competent, dedicated community leaders
- effective project management, including a fairly sophisticated planning system and tight financial controls

While the evaluation team found substantial room for improvement in the SCF program, the deficiencies identified were seldom serious ones and in no case had these constituted a brake on the program's forward momentum. The most problematic shortcoming of the project at this time — and one which, if not addressed, could erase much of the progress made — is the failure of the SCF to promote the institutionalization of the project with local human and financial resources. This point will be taken up further in the section under recommendations. Other shortcomings of the project were:

- the failure of the cottage industry component to produce the anticipated increases in family income and other benefits
- a fairly large turnover rate among the volunteers participating in the program, due to lack of financial or other incentives
- an underutilization of the commodities distributed under the latrine project
- complaints on the part of the field personnel of lack of support from the central office
- a failure on the part of the project management to relate plans to reporting and information systems, thus making evaluation by objective difficult
- a partial breakdown of the mechanisms needed to insure community participation in the decision-making process, as well as to expedite the flow of information from the field to the central office.

2. Program Impact

The evidence gathered by the RLS team basically supports the findings of previous evaluations that the project

has effected significant improvements in the lives of the intended beneficiaries. These benefits were perceived in all three project sectors: Health & Nutrition, Education & Literacy, and Agricultural Productivity. The only component of the project which clearly failed to generate significant benefits was that of cottage industry development. The overall positive impact of the project was confirmed both in certain key project indicators and in the subjective testimony of the beneficiaries interviewed. The former are summarized below, by sector.

a. Productivity Sector

In the case of the agricultural sector of the project, a combination of 100% increases in yields and twenty percent increases in acreage planted has led to a more than doubling of basic grains production since the grupo solidario project was initiated in 1982. These increases have been achieved with relatively modest additional investments in inputs, with the result that real net income (adjusted for a 58% devaluation of the colon between 1982 and the present) from agriculture and animal husbandry has approximately doubled since 1982. Corresponding benefits in family nutrition due to increased availability of basic grains and animal protein have also been documented.

The total number of direct beneficiaries of this component was 357 families, or 2,356 persons. An additional 10,000 persons may be estimated to have benefited through imitation of the cultivation practices disseminated, although, not in the same degree as the direct beneficiaries.

b. Education & Literacy

The impact of the Education sector was difficult to assess due to the lack of an evaluation-oriented recordkeeping system. For the two primary activities, construction of classrooms and promotion of school clubs, for example, it would have been instructive to have "before" and "after" figures for enrollment at the community level. Nevertheless, based on school-level data for both municipalities, significant improvement was registered between 1983 and 1984 in three key areas: a) total enrollment increased from 4,041 to 4,973 (+23%), b) the promotion rate increased from 75% to 79%, and c) the dropout rate decreased from 13% to 9%.

These positive indicators for the system as a whole suggest that, despite the existence of many disincentives to remaining in school (lack of employment opportunities, economic hardship, demand for on-farm child labor), an increasing number of children are being persuaded to continue their education. While the lack of comparative and baseline data makes drawing firm conclusions difficult, it would seem

that, given the low level of government and other PVO activity in this area, the SCF program could claim to be at least one factor in these trends.

Regarding the literacy program, the twenty-six volunteers working in this area reported having trained a total of 113 persons, 69 women and 44 men, to read and write.

c. Health & Nutrition

As with Education & Literacy, the impact of this component was difficult to assess due to the lack of indicator-oriented records. Interviews with the volunteers and promoters associated with the project, however, indicated that community residents view the impact of this project to be extremely positive in a number of areas. Health guides indicated that the extensive training in nutrition and health had resulted in definite behavioral changes on the part of the participating mothers. The evaluation team also found that the community residents see a link between project activities and the demonstrated decrease in child mortality. Health guides stated that in four communities of Concepcion de Oriente, there was a decrease in child mortality from 18 in 1980 to 0 in 1984.

3. Community Organization

An important objective of the project was to create self-sustaining institutions at the community level which would provide for a continuation of the services beyond the termination of external funding and technical assistance. In general, the evaluation team found that, while competent, effective community leaders have been trained during the five year project period, and a number of functional committees have been formed, there is as yet no permanent structure, either at the community or municipal levels, which would survive a withdrawal of SCF's assistance program.

For the most part, committees are organized around the implemention of specific projects as opposed to the identification and resolution of problems on an on-going basis. Four municipal committees, which appear to have assumed more permanent functions, not only with specific projects, but as liaisons with SCF technicians and promoters for purposes of communications and resource mobilization have also been formed. It was, in fact, the evaluation team's impression that these municipal committees have been developed and strengthened at the expense of - or in lieu of - strong and permanent community-level organizations.

Given the ad hoc nature of the community-level committees, the most meaningful way to analyze their effectiveness is on a component-by-component basis:

a. Productivity

The primary organizational vehicle for the agricultural productivity component has been the grupo solidario (GS), although many key functions in the credit process have been increasingly designated to the agricultural sector committee (CA). The program's experience with this model has been highly successful to date: GS are small, easily organized and have proven to be good credit risks. SCF groups have not suffered the fate of other GS's elsewhere in El Salvador, which have dissolved when members were unwilling to assume the loans of other borrowers in the group who had defaulted. SCF technicians working with the groups attribute this to an intensive orientation process in which GS's are encouraged to choose their members carefully and according to the criterion of creditworthiness. Leadership is democratically elected; groups are self-supervised, creating a sense of responsibility and accountability for all resources received.

The organizational process with the small enterprise projects was not as successful. None of the groups which received loans or grants in 1982 and 1983 still exist as groups today, although the assets of some of the projects were recovered and sold to individuals.

b. Health & Nutrition

To an even greater extent than with the productivity component, the functions of this program area have been subsumed by two municipal committees, which to a certain extent rely heavily upon the abilities of the SCF promoters. At the community level, the implementing agent are the 73 "health guide", working on a voluntary basis 34 communities. The health guides interviewed demonstrated a high level of familiarity and commitment to the program, as evidenced by their willingness to work as many as eight days per month for the project, frequently covering their own travel expenses.

As a consequence of the absence of community-level committees, the initiative for most projects appears to come from the SCF promoters assigned to this component, and, to a lesser extent, from the two municipal committees and health guides.

c. Education & Literacy

Three organization units have been created to implement projects in this sector: the school club, the literacy circle, and the community education committee. The school club is by far the largest and most active of these. There are 28 at present, in seven schools, implementing projects in four areas: sports, arts, health and agriculture. The clubs are governed democratically by a committee of six members, all of whom are students. The literacy circle, on the other hand, is a transitory, passive group, organized for the sole purpose of teaching its members to read and write. Likewise, the community education committee is organized around a project, e.g., the construction or rehabilitation of a classroom, and dissolves once this function has been fulfilled. There are as yet no municipal level committees to oversee the activities of this sector.

4. Program Management by Sector

a. Productivity Sector

Two municipal 'Comites Agricolas (CA) play a major role in overseeing the projects in this sector and participate in all phases of the management process: planning, budgeting, implementation and financial control. This role is most prevalent in the credit, animal vaccination, and silo construction projects; training and technical assistance remain the domain of the four agricultural promoters. The small enterprise component was also managed primarily by the promoters, although implementation was obstensibly the responsibility of the groups benefitting.

The credit program, as coordinated with the Banco de Fomento Agropecuario (BFA), serviced a total of 357 borrowers in 1984, for a total loan volume of approximately 200,000 colones. In most cases, credit was delivered in a timely fashion and at a reasonably low cost. Many farmers complained that the amount of credit was insufficient for their needs, and that it was only available for production of traditional crops, not purchase of animals. The newly assigned manager of the BFA, in an interview, vowed to correct these deficiencies. Another complaint voiced by the farmers was that the BFA occasionally ran out of fertilizer and the borrowers had to make multiple trips to Santa Rosa to pick up their inputs. Some objected to the legal fees required by the bank for all loan contracts and the fact that at least one guarantee was required per GS. The repayment rate for the SCF GS's was exceptionally high: 98%.

The animal vaccine program was also managed efficiently and effectively, resulting in broad coverage at low per unit cost. A silo construction project for on-farm storage was also effectively implemented, although it appears that the demand was substantially underestimated. Management of the small enterprise project was deficient in several respects: failure to perform feasibility studies for the projects implemented; failure to adequately train and prepare the beneficiaries; lack of follow-up technical assistance once projects were underway.

b. Health & Nutrition

Management of the vaccination and deparasitization campaigns was excellent with the municipal committees and volunteers cooperating, under the guidance of the promoters, to reach large numbers of beneficiaries at low cost. On those projects which required more planning and technical follow-up, however, performance was at times less impressive. In the case of the women's clubs, while the volunteers' work was described as exemplary, the lack of adequate training and support from the field and central offices has resulted in less than maximum utilization of the available volunteer resources. In the case of the community health guides, the lack of systematic resupply procedures has resulted in decreasing capital stock and higher administrative costs (transportation, etc.) to participating health guides. Regarding the Family Garden project, which resulted in the cultivation of 237 vegetable plots for better nutrition, much of the harvest was lost due to the failure to coordinate with the agricultural promoters for necessary technical assistance. In the case of the latrine project, while 237 units were constructed and delivered, only 26 have been installed, due partially to poor technical support and lack of follow-up by volunteers and promoters.

c. Education & Literacy

Having no municipal level committees, responsibility for implementation of projects in this sector lies with the four promoters. The consultants found that the existing division of labor between these promoters - one in each municipality assigned to clubs, the other to the literacy program - was somewhat inequitable, given that the lion's share of the work appeared to be with the school club program.

It is not surprising, then, that the club promoters' performance frequently fell short of the objectives and goals they had set for themselves. In 1984, for example, the promoters planned to construct five playgrounds; one was completed. The impression given by the reports is that promoters are attempting to implement a multitude of projects

simultaneously. By contrast, the reports of the literacy promoters indicate a much reduced level of activity. The most frequently mentioned problem is the "decrease in attendance" of the circles.

5. Overall Program Management

The evaluation team found program management to be extremely effective. The planning system, in particular, is quite sophisticated and involves a high degree of participation among beneficiaries, field and central office SCF personnel. The Plan de Implementacion Anual (PIA) provides a solid foundation for the quarterly and monthly plans developed by the staff. In the field, promoters demonstrated a thorough knowledge of the overall objectives of their sector and their weekly activities were geared to the realization those objectives.

The chief weakness in the management system was in the area of reporting and program evaluation. While regular weekly and monthly meetings are held between the coordinator and the promoters at which problems are discussed, formal mechanisms for follow-up on the policy changes and recommendations which arise from these meetings will not be adequate in the future given the expansion of program activity. In addition, while quarterly reports have documented activities and progress toward objectives, a separate document analyzing successes and problems in the first impact area could provide a valuable tool to SCF/El Salvador in replication to other impact areas.

The evaluation team found the financial management of the program to be adequate, allowing for both tight controls and the flexibility needed for a decentralized field operation. The team was pleased to learn that even in the case of failed projects (cottage industry), concerted efforts have been made to recover the funds invested. The only shortcoming has been the fact that, to a large extent, communities and committees still rely heavily on the SCF staff to manage the resources of their projects, lacking trained treasurers of their own.

6. Training & Technical Assistance

Given the SCF program's heavy reliance on "self-helpism", it was to be expected that its success or failure would rely to a large extent on its ability to train community leaders and volunteers. In general, the evaluation team was highly impressed with the competence of the community leaders and volunteers interviewed. At the same time, the desire of these program participants for further training and skill acquisition could be described as insatiable.

The expertise sought was of both a technical and administrative nature. In many cases, volunteers encharged with the implementation of a project had received only a cursory, one-day seminar by way of explanation of their duties. The consultants had the impression that the expressed high turnover rate among the volunteers in each sector was due at least in part to the failure of SCF to provide more follow-up courses to deepen volunteers' knowledge in their specific areas of responsibility.

7. Program Efficiency

While a rigorous analysis of project costs and benefits was not possible due to several limiting factors, the calculations below do support the evaluation team's opinion that the SCF model is a low cost, efficient means of providing services to the rural poor.

a. Cost per Beneficiary Serviced

Assuming that the entire impact area population benefited from the program and that the total costs of the five-year OPG were $1,138,776, the total cost of the program has been $11.39 per year per beneficiary. That is significant in the face of other rural development projects that cost more than $200/year per beneficiary.

b. Benefit/Cost Ratio

The only benefits estimated with precision are the income increases due to the agricultural projects which amounted to an additional US$ 228.56 per beneficiary per year. Multiplying this by 357 beneficiaries and discounting the stream of revenues over twenty years at 10% yields a Net Present Value of US$ 764,130, or approximately 67% of the total program cost. If we assume that the Productivity Sector accounts for one third of the budget, or $379,592, the benefit/cost ratio is 2.01. Benefits over the next twenty years are twice the cost of the project. While social benefits (education and health) cannot be measured in the medium term, one can justify the investment of the OPG solely on the increased income streams from the Productivity Sector.

C. SUMMARY OF PRINCIPAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. General

a. Institutionalization of the Program

The evaluation team feels strongly that, in order to consolidate the progress made thus far, and realize significant future benefits, SCF should actively encourage the

creation of a domestic, beneficiary-controlled institution capable of managing and/or coordinating the services presently provided. While there would be both advantages and disadvantages to this step (see Chapter V), the consultants feel that the former far outweigh the latter. If this recommendation is accepted, SCF should begin to analyze, with the program beneficiaries, the advantages and disadvantages of the alternative organizational forms: cooperative, association or corporation. At the minimum, however, based on the present and future scope of the services required, the organizational form chosen should have the following capabilities:

- Provide both economic and social services, either directly or indirectly, to the membership
- Enter into contracts with individuals and other organizations
- Borrow and relend funds
- Purchase and resell commodities
- Import certain commodities and equipment duty free

b. Training

A properly designed training program could resolve a number of the project's more serious problems: the high turnover among volunteers due to lack of incentives, the gaps in technical assistance, and, lack of institutionalization. The concept of rewarding service with further training (as opposed to pecuniary compensation) is not only fully consonant with and supportive of the "self-help" philosophy of SCF, but makes sense in terms of achievement of the other project objectives as well. The precise form this training takes will depend, in great part, on SCF's decision regarding the previous recommendation, i.e., whether or not to assist the beneficiaries in the development of a more formal, member-controlled organization. In the former case, community leaders would need to acquire skills pertinent to the governance and management of organizations, whereas in the latter, a basic orientation in the planning, implementation, financial control and evaluation of projects would suffice. In either case, however, the consultants feel strongly that the present "Plan Nacional de Capacitacion", while adequate for the preparation of the promoters, does not adequately address the needs of the volunteers.

The consultants recommend, therefore, that a more comprehensive training plan be developed which provides for:

a) orientation of community leaders in the initial steps towards the creation of a more formal, member-controlled organization,

b) a "training as reward" concept, whereby volunteers and leaders can advance beyond the minimal skills required to implement SCF projects,

c) a more formal training program for volunteers that establishes and maintains necessary skills and knowledge. and

d) preparation of minimal visual aids and reference materials for volunteer use.

c. The New OPG

The evaluation team has no reservations whatsoever regarding the capacity of the present SCF team and director to implement an expanded project in other regions with equal or greater success than the present effort in Northern La Union. The management capabilities, human resources and administrative procedures implemented in the last year will generate successful management of an expanded OPG. Recommended changes or improvements in program management and administrative procedures have been discussed in various sections throughout this report. In addition, in order to fully utilize the experience of SCF staff from northern La Union, we recommend that SCF:

- Require that each of the central office technicians spend a month or as long as possible in the impact areas, traveling extensively with promoters, volunteers and community leaders to achieve as total familiarity as possible with their problems, attitudes and suggestions.

- Make extensive use of the promoters, community leaders and volunteers from the present impact areas in the orientation and training of leaders from new areas.

- To the extent feasible, commit to paper the experience of the SCF staff, particularly that of the field coordinator, in all operational areas: community organization, productivity, project management, health & nutrition, education & literacy training, general administration. SCF has successfully implemented a program under extremely difficult conditions: that experience should be shared both with other impact areas and with the development community in general.

- Delegate more formal authority to the impact Area Coordinators.

- Provide a more formalized project information system to track project activities and achievements of objectives.

d. Dissemination

The experience of the SCF project holds valuable lessons for similar projects elsewhere in the country and the region (See Chapter VI, "Lessons Learned"). SCF should publicize the results of this project, both within and outside El Salvador, to give other programs and agencies the benefits of the lessons learned.

D. PRODUCTIVITY SECTOR

1. Credit

The new BFA manager in Santa Rosa has promised that credit for 1985 will be open-ended, both with regard to volume and purpose. The SCF field staff should take him up on this offer and supply as early as possible a comprehensive credit plan which would provide for the financing of a) more basic grains acreage, b) purchase of livestock, and, provided that adequate technical assistance can be guaranteed, c) introduction of non-traditional, cash crops.

In the event that the BFA does not live up to its promises in this regard, SCF should consider the possibility of complementing the available BFA loans with capital channeled through an alternative credit scheme described in Annex A. Briefly, this credit scheme, called "Rural Community Banking", provides a means of reaching large numbers of farmers quickly with modest size loans, without redtape or excessive administrative costs. This mechanism would have the added advantage of constituting a type of "credit as reward" incentive to ag volunteers. Those whose work was particularly outstanding might be eligible for larger loans.

2. Micro-enterprise Projects

The failure of these projects appears to have been due less to their irrelevancy to the communities' needs than to the difficulties posed by group administration. Funds for such projects in the future should be made available to individuals as well as groups. The "Rural Community Banking" concept described in Annex A is especially appropriate for this type of small-scale home industry.

3. Training & Technical Assistance

The following modifications are suggested to improve effectiveness of the training and technical assistance program:

- To resolve the coverage problem, SCF should consider creating a further position--that of "voluntario especializado"--as a bridge between the promoter and the GS.

This person in fact already exists as the President of the GS; all that remains is to provide him with advanced training and confer upon him a title. In keeping with the "training as reward" philosophy of the program, this person would require no further compensation beyond regular opportunities to advance his knowledge, including, perhaps, scholarships.

- SCF promoters should supervise the volunteers at least the first time they demonstrate the new technology in the their communities to ensure that the practices are being taught correctly.

- Some type of "reconocimiento" should be offered to CDTA graduates (e.g. diplomas), together with written pamphlets summarizing the different components of the technical packages taught. This would encourage whole as opposed to partial implementation of the packages.

- The CDTA program should be expanded to offer courses in more advanced technology for those ready to go beyond basic grains agriculture. An SCF technician working in this area has suggested a three-level system be implemented which provides beginning, intermediate, and advanced training. The intermediate and advanced levels should include instruction on the economics of small farmer agriculture, and provide farmers with some basic analytical tools for monitoring the comparative profitability of alternative production strategies.

E. HEALTH & NUTRITION

1. Training

The training program for volunteers should be more formalized, as recommended in section a., and should include instruction on how to motivate groups and basic program management skills. While the "Plan Nacional de Capacitacion 1984/85" includes training techniques for promoters, it should also be provided at the volunteer level.

The volunteers should be backstopped in the field with audio-visual aids. Other PVOs in El Salvador have already developed these materials (i.e., Caritas and CALMA) and might make them available to SCF at cost.

2. Incentives to Volunteers

SCF should create the same "upward mobility ladder" in the health volunteer training program - i.e., beginning, intermediate, advanced - as with the ag volunteer program. The "Rural Community Banking" funds could also be utilized for such incentive purposes.

3. Community Health Chests

It is recommended that the medicine be sold at a slightly higher markup to provide a slight reserve for transportation expenses of the volunteers and that it be purchased by the health committees.

4. Family Gardens

The responsibility for providing technical assistance to these should be delegated to the agronomists who have received specialized training in vegetable gardening at the CDTA.

5. Latrine Project

SCF should re-evaluate the original project design and make a determination whether, given soil conditions in the region, it is feasible. Where soil conditions permit, program implementation should be completed.

6. Growth Monitoring Program

This project provides not only a means of providing feedback to mothers on their children, but also provides the necessary information to SCF on the impact of the nutrition project. The SCF program is at a competitive disadvantage with the Caritas project, however, in that the latter "rewards" mothers by giving them free food when they bring their children in to be weighed. SCF could meet this competition, as one of the volunteers suggested, by requiring that all beneficiaries of the "Community Rural Banking" program demonstrate that they have been monitoring their children's weight gain.

F. EDUCATION & LITERACY

1. Recordkeeping & Evaluation

As stated earlier, there is every indication that the School Clubs program has had an impressive impact on enrollment in the local school system, however, under the present project design, this impact cannot be measured. As part of the development of a comprehensive project information system (see section G), the consultants recommend that promoters maintain separate records of the enrollment and performance of students joining the clubs vs. those who do not.

2. Literacy Program

While certain progress has been made, the literacy program does not appear to be one which has "caught fire" in the impact areas. While not specifically critical of the SCF

"literacy circle" methodology, the consultants feel that much could be learned from the examples of national level programs such as have been implemented in Colombia and Venezuela. As a resource for information on these programs, the consultants recommend that SCF consult the Simon Bolivar Foundation, based in Miami, Florida.

3. Incentives to Volunteers

The literacy volunteers should be included in the "training as reward" program, perhaps with modest scholarships to continue their own formal education in San Miguel. A system of progressive incentives could be implemented, whereby for each year of service, SCF finances a year's direct costs for secondary level education.

G. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

1. Planning

The SCF planning system is excellent.

2. Reporting & Information

Concomitantly with the implementation of the new OPG, the consultants recommend a comprehensive overhaul of the reporting and information system. Reports should be organized on a project/objective basis, and would include, for each period, progress towards objectives, activities, problems encountered and recommended solutions. A suggested format for these is presented in Chapter 2. At the central office, the information contained in these reports should then be processed electronically and analyzed by sector and region for monitoring and decision-making. The system should be comprehensive but simple to manage, and, above all, should provide feedback to the field staff and beneficiaries.

Project controls need to be formalized. A file must be maintained for each project funded by SCF and specific minimal information must be maintained in those files.

3. Financial Controls

The evaluation team found the financial control system to be adequate. In the event that further adjustments are required, SCF/Connecticut is the appropriate entity to recommend and implement them.

4. Evaluation

Formalization of the Reporting & Information System would, as a natural consequence, greatly facilitate periodic program evaluation. SCF should systematize this process as

well, and, within the cost parameters of the project, provide for ample participation of the beneficiaries. An outline of a suggested "Participatory Evaluation" methodology, used withgreat success by Rural Development Services in other countries, is provided in Annex B.

In addition, ongoing evaluation could occur through the maintenance of household diaries by project beneficiaries. Through these diaries, the households could monitor direct program impact on their families: nutritional status of their children, child mortality and morbidity, family income, changes in behavior, and household improvements.

H. EVALUATION MEHTODOLOGY

The best way to describe the disparity between the planned evaluation methodology and the actual is to quote poet Robert Burns: "The best laid plans of mice and men aft gang aglay". On the drawing board, the evaluation called for, in addition to a thorough review of all pertinent written material (reports, previous evaluations, budgets and plans) a field visit of approximately ten days wherein the consultants would interview project personnel, community leaders, beneficiaries, and volunteers based on a random sample of on-site visits. In practice, a number of obstacles made adherence to this plan impossible. The initial problem was the 'paro', i.e., the promise, communicated via Radio Venceremos, on the part of the FMLN to burn every vehicle attempting to negotiate the roads north of Santa Rosa de Lima. Once the 'paro' was lifted, the consultants proceeded with impunity towards Concepcion de Oriente, completing what proved to be the only day of unrestricted field work. The following day, the consultants were surprised in Concepcion by a band of 80 heavily armed guerrillas who, after subjecting the market day crowd to tiresome speeches and shaking down the local storekeepers for provisions, withdrew to a position just across the bridge, effectively sealing off our return to Santa Rosa. Having been interrogated by the comandante of the insurgent forces as we sat breakfasting in a local comedor, we thought it imprudent to press our luck, and, as a consequence, made a dignified retreat (on muleback) across the border to Honduras, where we remained for two days, awaiting news that it would be safe to return and continue our work.

But when word finally came it was negative: the guerrillas, far from withdrawing, had been interrogating other members of the SCF communities, making inquiries as to who we were, what our mission was, etc. Instead of returning to Concepcion, then, we opted to rendevous with selected promoters, community leaders and volunteers in Santa Rosa, where we could continue our interviews.

In all, despite these adversities, the consultants were able to interview a broad sample of promoters, volunteers, and community leaders. The only real deficiency was our inability to visit more than three communities and talk to the beneficiaries. This shortcoming was in part compensated for by the fact that SCF volunteers are also beneficiaries themselves, albeit, perhaps among the more motivated and articulate.

The interviews themselves were structured so as to obtain the beneficiary's (or promoter's, volunteer's or leader's) perception of the program in a broad sense: its objectives, activities, accomplishments and shortcomings. Despite the constraint of having to work out of Santa Rosa de Lima, full day sessions were had with both the promoters and volunteers associated with each of the three main project sectors: Agriculture, Health & Nutrition, and Education & Literacy. See Annex A for a list of people contacted and Annex B for a list of evaluation activities.

I. DESCRIPTION OF THE BENEFICIARIES

The Northern La Union impact area is located in the northwestern portion of La Union Department on the Honduran border. To the east lies the Guascoran River; to the north is the Guanijipil River. The topography is relatively mountainous; the soil is rocky or sandy. Most of the arable land is cultivated with corn or sorghum, or is dedicated to pasture. Only four percent of the land remains in forest.

Within the two municipalities of Concepcion de Oriente and El Sauce, roughly three quarters of the population is rural. The total population is estimated at 20,000. Average family size is estimated at seven.

Due to the scarcity of jobs and the general inhospitability of the region, one of the areas chief exports is illegal emigrants to the U.S. (It was even commented, facetiously, by one of the SCF personnel that the main objective of the program should be to teach English in preparation for the trip up north.) Most of the heads of household in the region are <u>munifundistas</u>; the consultants were chagrined to learn that the land reform, especially decree 207, had had almost no impact on the area. The reason cited was that FINATA never promoted the decree, and that the potential beneficiaries feared reprisals from the landlords.

Many families supplement their diet and income through animal husbandry. The SCF project, as mentioned, has made a major contribution in the area with the vaccination program, which has saved the lives of thousands of pigs, chickens and cattle. Likewise, average yields for the region among SCF beneficiaries have risen from approximately 16 <u>quintales</u> per <u>manzana</u> to 30.

Approximately 43 percent of the population is illiterate and only 23 percent of the children aged seven to fourteen attend school. Of the 21 schools in the area, 4 are closed, and several have eliminated the upper grades due to lack of teachers. There is a high level of absenteeism, although this trend seems to have been partially reversed recently, possibly due to the efforts of the SCF program.

Health conditions in the area can be described as deficient. Seventy-five percent of the children under five years old suffer from first degree malnutrition. The most common diseases affecting the population are gastro-intestinal disorders, parasites, malaria, rheumatism, respiratory illness and eye infections.

While it was impossible for the consultants to measure with any precision the average income level of the beneficiaries, due to our inability to collect survey data in the field, it is obvious that, despite the gains registered, SCF beneficiaries still occupy the lower rungs of the socioeconomic ladder in El Salvador. If the impact data gathered from the sample of six agricultural volunteers can be used as a very rough estimate, per capita income is in the neighborhood of US$ 95.00 per annum.

J. EXTERNAL FACTORS

The external factors affecting projects implemented in El Salvador are boiler plate: guerrillas, depressed economic conditions, restricted mobility, considerable risk to personal security. An additional factor in the Concepcion and El Sauce municipalities is the outmigration to the United States, a situation which leads to instability in communities and is probably a factor in the high turnover rate among leaders and volunteers in the program. This same factor causes problems for credit programs; an often heard joke in the region is that the main purpose of loans is to buy bus tickets to Mexico.

The failure of the agrarian reform is another constraint on the program in the sense that it places a limit on the development potential of the beneficiaries, who have no incentive to make extensive improvements (such as irrigation systems or reforestation) in their farms since they do not own the land. Lastly, the environment of the region itself must be taken into account. The consultants were frankly amazed at the quality of the soil (or, more accurately, the quality of the rocks) in some areas, which obliged farmers to plant in the crevices between fractures in the bedrock.

CHAPTER II

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT AND FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

This chapter presents a financial summary of activities to date, briefly describes financial management procedures, and then concentrates on a description of the program management procedures of Save the Children: planning, project approval, monitoring, reporting, and evaluation. The final section will present a brief analysis of the institutional support supplied to SCF/El Salvador by USAID, Save the Children/Westport, and the Salvadorean Government (GOES).

A. FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The original OPG received by Save the Children in September 1979 for US$ 652,526 received several modifications increasing the budget to the present US$ 873,711 and extending the termination date of March 31, 1983 to January 31, 1985. As of November 30, 1984, SCF had spent 90.0% of the total budget as outlined in the following table.

Table 2-1

FINANCIAL SUMMARY
as of November 30, 1984

Budget Category	Budgeted Amount	Expenditures to Date	Budget Balance
Field Office Services	$ 216,173.55	$ 208,414.97	$ 7,758.58
Travel	19,587.40	16,674.16	2,913.24
Capital Assets	83,637.03	75,410.98	8,226.05
Program	296,753.32	263,844.94	32,908.38
Direct AID	186,835.65	170,193.68	16,641.97
Home Office Overhead	70,724.07	52,324.07	18,400.00
TOTAL	$ 873,711.02	$ 786,862.80	$ 86,848.22

Under the Direct AID category, a total of 78 projects have been funded to date for a total of C 918,068.36. Of this, colones 269,780.89,780.89 was budgeted for 21 projects in the Health/Nutrition Sector, C 256,475 for 19 projects in the Education Sectors, C 44,069.85 for eight infrastructure projects, C 62,295.37 for thirteen cottage industry projects and C 285,447.25 for twelve projects in the Agricultural Sector. See Chapter 3 for a more detailed description of the individual projects and a breakdown of their individual budgets.

B. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND STAFFING

SCF staff is located in two areas. Technical support and central administration is provided by a small professional staff located in a small office in downtown San Salvador. Project implementation and supervision is provided by a group of eleven promoters located in two field offices in the impact area itself: El Sauce and Concepcion del Oriente. Figure 2-1 presents the organizational chart of SCF/El Salvador.

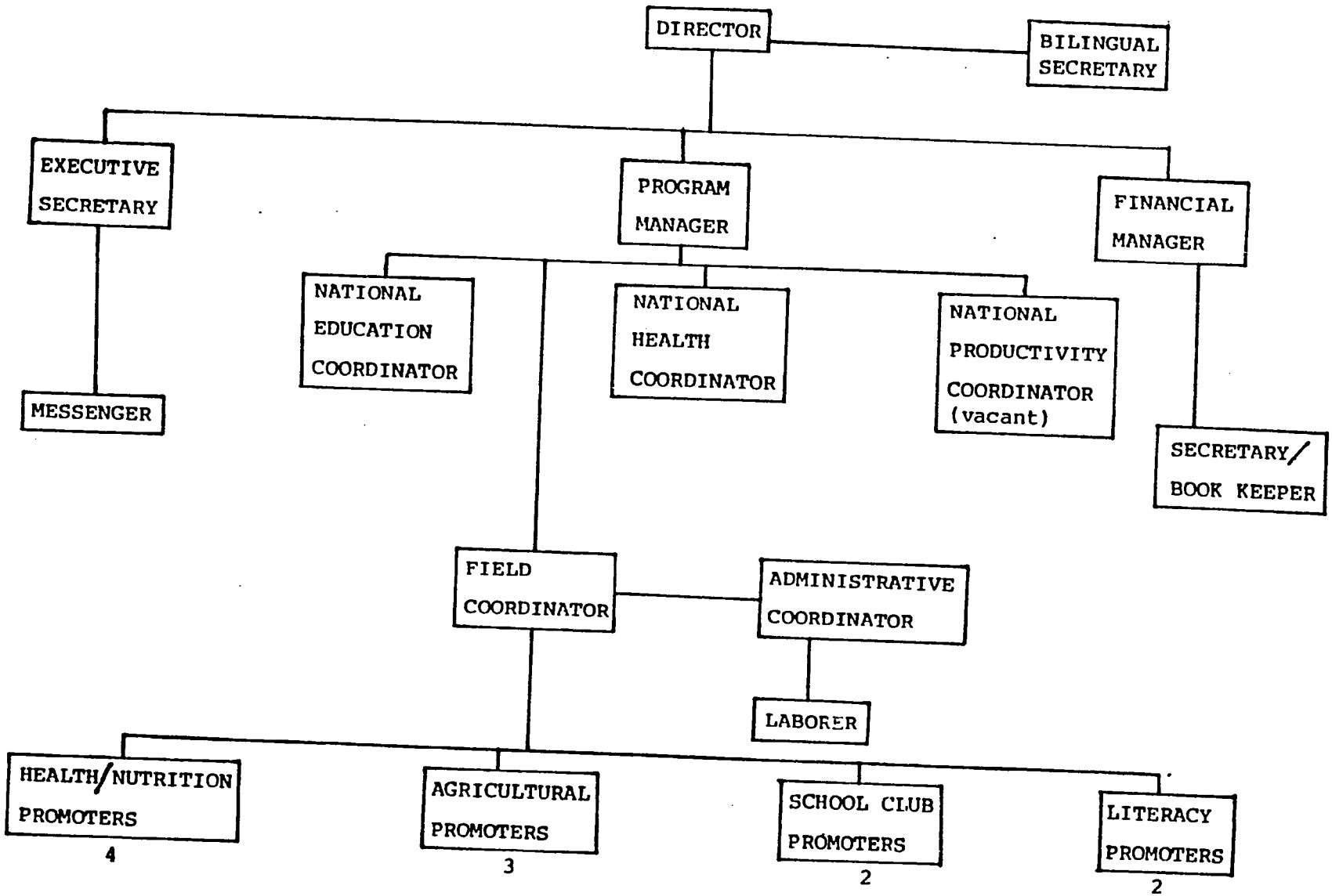
Save the Children/El Salvador is headed up by David Rogers, who has been with the program since its inception in 1979. He brings considerable experience not only in Latin American development but in the unique problems and challenges facing the small farmer. He is assisted by Ernesto Moran who filled a newly created position of Project Manager in February, 1984. Bringing extensive experience in program management and professional training in agriculture, Sr. Moran coordinates all program activities, supervises all program staff, and supports Mr. Rogers in administration and planning functions.

Reporting to Sr. Moran are two recently-hired professionals who will support the health/nutrition and education sectors. Dr. Javier Lorenzana, a physician with a specialty in public health, joined SCF in June, 1984. Sandra de Barraza, hired in July, 1984, is responsible for coordinating Education Sector activities and presently for coordinating all staff and volunteer training activities.

Weakness. Both of these two staff positions were developed in order to provide direct technical support to the impact area and both individuals are directly accountable for the success of project implementation in the impact area To that end, administrative procedures dictate that they visit each impact area once a month in order to ensure project implementation and to provide necessary technical assistance. As of the end of November, this was not the case. Sra. de Barraza had made one visit to the impact area, spending a total of five days and Dr. Lorenzana had spent only seven days in the impact area -- an average of less than one day a month.

Figure 2-1

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



This lack of field experience makes it difficult for the San Salvador professionals to understand the actual working conditions of the impact area. To make matters worse, according to promoters, neither had spent significant time visiting project sites but had remained in the project office in El Sauce. In addition, it appears that Sra. de Parraza has been involved in other administrative activities which have further limited the time that she had available to support the impact area staff. Promoters complained about the lack of support from the National Education and Health Coordinators and requested more assistance.

Recommendation. It is highly recommended that each of the national coordinators spend up to a month in the impact areas in order to acquaint themselves with the program and the regional characteristics. The Project Manager has spent 31 days in the impact area since February, the National Coordinators should also attempt to spend more time in the field. This recommendation was also made by the project beneficiaries during the participatory evaluation of January, 1984.

Recommendation. It is quite clear to the evaluators and has also been recognized by SCF that the National Education Coordinator cannot adequately support the Education Sector and also be responsible for training of SCF staff and project volunteers. SCF has considered the possibility of placing this responsibility under the coordination of the Project Manager. Each sectoral coordinator (including the Productivity Sector Coordinator when that position is filled) will plan the training needs of his/her sector in conjunction with Sr. Moran, who will be responsible for coordinating training activities and providing necessary resources. In light of the increase in funding and program activities under the new OPG, this separation of functions is necessary to ensure adequate support to the various sectors.

Financial management and general administration is under the jurisdiction of Rolando Aquilar who has been with SCF since January, 1983. His aptitude and dedication is clearly demonstrated in the excellent control over organization resources as described later in this chapter. In addition to central office responsibilities, he also provides support and supervision to the impact area in financial areas; in 1984, he spent fourteen days in the impact area. Three secretaries and a messenger/driver complete the San Salvador office.

The Impact Area office is headed up by an Field Coordinator who reports directly to the Project Manager in San Salvador. Alejandro Benitez, who presently holds that position was a agricultural promoter for four years before he was promoted to

that position in April of this year. Responsible for project implementation at the field level, he coordinates and supervises a staff of 14, has direct control over the impact-area budget, and is responsible for planning, implementation, and evaluation of all program activities in the impact area.

Weakness. Sr. Benitez demonstrates tremendous commitment to the program and displays an excellent command of not only the program but of the region. He is, however, relatively weak on planning and implementation skills. During the present OPG this lack of administrative skills has not posed serious problems; San Salvador staff have been able to complement his weak areas and take advantage of areas where he is strongest (field supervision, agricultural techniques, etc.). With the initiation of the new OPG and additional project impact areas, however, San Salvador staff will not have the time to be involved in program administration. Additional authority will have to be given to this position.

Recommendation. We strongly recommend that San Salvador carefully evaluate the experience and expertise that Sr. Benitez offers in program management areas in the light of the increased responsibility that this position will require in the future. With four years of program experience in the impact area and given the difficulties of encountering competent individuals willing to work in that area, every attempt must be made to provide him with the training and technical support necessary to fulfill the responsibilities of that position. Only if that is not possible should SCF consider hiring another individual with more experience and training in project administration; in that instance, Sr. Benitez could be given the position of field supervisor and could also be utilized as a "consultant" to the other impact areas.

Reporting to Sr. Benitez, Orlando Montesinos, the Administrative Coordinator, is responsible for administration, financial management, monthly audits of the current projects, and training of Committee Treasurers in accounting and administration. Two messengers, one in each of the project offices, complete the project staff.

Weakness. Despite the fact that Sr. Montesinos' job description including a training responsibility, his activities in this area have been minimal. The project beneficiaries interviewed stated that he had provided minimal and inadequate training in financial management and that when he does visit the project (whether community or municipal level) it is in the capacity of an auditor rather than a trainer. He has, according to project participants, provided no training other than that provided during the seminars held in the project offices. No on-the-job training or follow-up has been included in this training activity.

Recommendation. This lack of training in financial management presents a serious problem in this program both in terms of control of institutional resources and with regard to the institutionalization of the CBIRD methodology. It may be that the "financial controller" is not the most appropriate person to provide financial training--treasurers might feel a bit timid in asking questions of the person who will eventually arrive to investigate their financial records. SCF might consider either utilizing another individual at the national level or bringing in an external consultant who could provide an initial seminar in elementary accounting to promoters and Committee Treasurers. That person could then provide necessary technical support and guidance to SCF in necessary follow-up to the initial training. Simple materials outlining simple accounting procedures should also be developed as reference materials for seminar participants. See Chapter 5 for a more detailed discussion on training requirements.

Three groups of promoters support the three sectoral programs, generally assigned to one of the two municipalities of the impact area: El Sauce or Concepcion del Oriente. They either handle all communities alone (in the case of the Education Promoters) or in conjunction with the other sectoral promoter assigned to that municipality. Specific communities or projects are not assigned. Through weekly visits to the communities, the promoters provide technical support and assistance as required to the volunteers who are responsible for the actual implementation of the projects in their communities.

Strength. All promoters interviewed by the evaluators demonstrated a strong commitment to the program and brought a wide variety of skills and experience to the program. These individuals are to be admired for their commitment and dedication to a program located in an area of the country that offers very little in terms of diversion and recreation and challenges the staff to overcome daily logistical as well as programmatic problems. The community leaders interviewed reiterated the finding of the evaluators, citing the promoters as fundamental to project success.

Weakness. This deep respect by project participants has created a certain level of reliance and dependence on the promoters. Community-level project meetings appear to be held only when the promoter is present. Health guides stated that the community organization process needs to rely heavily on the outside individual as they have more status than a local resident. The Agricultural Committee Treasurer stated that he could not fill out the FORSOS nor maintain his financial records alone -- those two activities occurred only when the promoter had the time available to work with him.

Recommendation. This heavy reliance on promoters is due in large part to the inadequate management and financial training provided to the volunteers -- a problem also identified by the promoters. Not only have the volunteers received inadequate training in project management but the promoters have not received adequate instruction in the education process and training techniques. With the educational curriculum established in the Plan Nacional de Capacitacion and with systematic and continuous training in project management as described in Chapter 5, this heavy reliance on outsiders will be minimized.

Recommendation. SCF requested the evaluator team to make an assessment of the present sectoral organization of promoters. Problems had been identified withint this system by community residents and promoters. It was difficult for the program to work as an "integrated rural development program," cited several staff, if the promoters were attending to communities in a sectoral and somewhat "uncoordinated" manner. Promoters provided examples in which they had identified problems when visiting a community but because the issue was not related to their sector, it was not their responsibility, and indeed perhaps felt reluctant to interfere. Several projects, such as school and family gardens, school medicine chests, have suffered from the sectoral approach. These projects are coordinated by promoters who have not had extensive training in those subject areas; the more appropriate resource person, with his/her own sectoral responsibilities, perhaps that time constraints prohibit their active participation.

Both SCF and community residents strongly suggested that the organization return to the previous structure where communities were assigned to individuals who were then responsible for the coordination of all activities within that geographic area. The evaluation team agrees with an adaptation of this organization. We recommend that the promoters be organized in municipal teams. Each promoter would be responsible for coordinating all activity within his/her communities but the individual skills and experience of the team members would be used as required. During the weekly meetings, the promoters would identify the technical requirements for their communities and the appropriate promoters would visit their communities. If a community had a problem with their family gardens, one of the agronomists would visit that community to provide technical support. Each promoter could develop their present skills and acquire new ones through a series of technical courses given by the National Coordinators.

Weakness. SCF identified high field staff turnover as a continual problem. When viewed in totality, the situation is more positive than would be expected given the geographical location of the impact area. The Field Coordinator has been with the organization for four years and the average length of service of the promoters is 17 months. Several reasons were given by promoters for the high desertion rate:

1. The project impact area is located in a "zona conflictiva" where military skirmishes and transporation "paros" are not uncommon.

2. No restaurants, movie theaters, or video parks provide diversion.

3. Promoters stated that San Salvador at times placed them in an unfair position in that their schedules have second priority to what the central office ultimately dictates.

4. Promoters, like most Salvadorans, expressed a keen desire for additional education; living in the impact area where no educational facilities are available makes that impossible. In addition, promoters stated that SCF would not give them sufficient leave of absence to study outside the impact area.

Recommendation. We believe that the development of a formal training strategy, as outlined in the Plan Nacional de Capacitacion will make an important impact on the promoters. Not only will it create a more effective team of promoter but a formal training program will also provide to those promoters possibilities for personal improvement and growth. In addition, by creating a team approach to development, the promoters can be exposed to other sectors other than their specialization which will counteract the "boredom" that they feel working in only one sector. SCF must create a career track for these individuals; perhaps they can be transferred to or heavily utilized in the other impact areas as they are opened--bringing their experience and training to bear in other regions of the country.While the evaluation team.

C. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

During the last year, SCF has developed an excellent series of administrative memos which together with the "Field Office Manual" provide adequate guidance and ensure administrative control. SCF might consider translating relevant portions of the "Field Office Manual" into Spanish and consolidating them along with the administrative memos into one document which could then be distributed to all staff, including the impact area.

D. HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

SCF has prepared a series of procedural memos governing personnel policies which provide advice on interviewing potential candidates, contracting additional employees, and evaluating personnel. A six month evaluation of new employees is followed by yearly reviews which provide feedback by supervisors.

Strength. The evaluators found the evaluation process to be excellent with well-developed formats and performed in a positive, constructive environment in which employees are encouraged to improve their work performance.

Weakness. SCF has identified high staff turnover as a serious problem, both at the field level as discussed earlier and in San Salvador. This high turnover has resulted in the present situation where the Director and the Financial Manager are the professional staff who have been with the program longer than a year. The average number of months of tenure at the national level for professional staff is ten and one ha f months.

Recommendation. The evaluators could not determine the reasons for the high turnover in the San Salvador office. We do recommend, however, that SCF institute an exit interview process whereby all employees terminating employment with SCF would be given the opportunity to discuss their reasons for leaving. Based on these exit interviews and interviews with other available ex-employees of SCF, a written review of primary reasons for termination of employment (including termination with or without cause) could be prepared as a basis for a series of recommended policies or employee benefits that could counteract the major causes of desertion.

E. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Under the original scope of work, the evaluators were to participate in the Management Audit carried out by the internal audit team from Westport. During the course of the audit that focus was altered by the internal audit team and by the logistical situation in the impact area. A determination was made by the internal auditors that information on the internal controls of SCF was an internal matter and was, therefore, inappropriate in an external document. In addition, extensive review of the financial records in the impact area was made impossible for the transportation "paro" called by the guerrillas and by the fact that the Administrative Coordinator was in San Salvador at the time. This report cannot, therefore, provide an in-depth analysis of the financial management procedures of the San Salvador nor of the impact area office. This section will instead concentrate on financial management as it affects program management.

During the five years of the OPG, the use of several disbursement procedures each with a different treatment of the exchange rate has resulted in some confusion and discrepancies between the expenses reported by SCF and those accepted by the USAID. Operating on a cash advance system, SCF has at times carried one cash advance at the official exchange rate of ..... C 2.50 = US$ 1.00 and another at the fluctuating parallel market rate which USAID authorized in mid-1982. Under the OPG, financial management and reporting will not present any problems, however, due to the fact that SCF will now operate off a Federal Reserve Letter of Credit.

Recommendation. While not a requirement under the new OPG, SCF/El Salvador should send monthly financial reports to USAID/El Salvador.

Strength. The financial records reviewed in San Salvador and in the impact area were up-to-date, orderly, and provided adequate control over US Government funds.

F. PROJECT DISBURSEMENT PROCEDURES

The impact area is provided with a cash advance for operations which appears to be adequate for the level of activity under the old OPG, having presented no cash flow problems. As financial reports are provided to San Salvador monthly, the rotating fund (representing planned cash needs for two months) is then replenished up to the established level with a check for approved expenses.

Upon project approval, the President/Treasurer fills out a form requesting disbursement of funds, outlining the budget items they wish to spend it on. This form, after review by the appropriate promoter, is presented to the impact area office where it is first reviewed by the Administrative Coordinator to determine whether there are funds are available and that the expenses planned are included in the budget. After his review, the Field Coordinator signs the request , and a check is prepared by the Administrative Coordinator and presented to the committee for cashing. The committee members cash the check in Santa Rosa de Lima or San Miguel where the necessary items are then purchased. Based on limited information provided by the volunteers, the municipal committees do not have a bank account for SCF funds--as they are usually spent as soon as received.

Monthly, the committees must fill out a financial reporting format, called the FORS06, which lists SCF funds received and spent and resources generated by the community during the month. This is prepared the 23rd of the month to give San Salvador the necessary time to incorporate this information in their monthly financial report for presentation to Westport.

Weakness. As a means of gathering necessary information for Westport accounting requirements, the FORS06 is an adequate and appropriate tool. As a planning/monitoring tool for use by communities, promoters, and other SCF program staff, it has no value whatsoever. It provides no cumulative information for monitoring expenses against the budget and against physical progress to date. While that information is available in the impact area through "tarjetas auxiliares," financial records at the central office level do not track cumulative expenses on a project by project basis.

Recommendation. We recommend that the format be changed to one resembling a prior FORS06 which would provide information useful to program people and community residents in an easily-accessible format. Figure 2-2 presents an example of a suggested format that might be adaptable to this program. This would be filled out for SCF-funded expenses as well as for locally-generated resources although the budget categories would necessarily be different. In the first and second columns would be listed the budget categories and approved budgeted amounts as outlined in the FORS03. The community would indicate the expenses of the present reporting period in the third column, the total expenses to date in the fourth, and the budget balance for each item in the last column. A written guide should be prepared and made available to Treasurers.

G. PLANNING

The planning system created by the SCF is sophisticated and more importantly has been successfully implemented. This could be used as an example for other development projects--no matter what their focus. With the approved OPG document as a foundation, yearly implementation plans, PIA's (Plan de Implementacion Anual), have been developed which have shown significant improvement over the past two years. They have become increasingly more specific and concrete with regard to objective setting and activity planning and represent an institutional planning document that is used by all professional staff from Mr. Rogers all the way down to the promoters in the impact area, who demonstrated a thorough knowledge of sectoral objectives and activities. These PIA's are then translated directly into quarterly, monthly, and weekly plans for staff activities. In the field, weekly planned activities of the promoters directly supported the achievement of established objectives.

H. PROJECT REPORTS

A detailed memo prepared by Sr. Moran late this year provides detailed instructions in the preparation of quarterly reports by field staff on project progress. For each sector, activities during the quarter are listed with specific achievements against project targets identified.

Figure 2-2

INFORME FINANCIERO

DESARROLLO JUVENIL COMUNITARIO

Nombre de Proyecto _____ Numero de Proyecto _____

Periodo de Donacion _____

Periodo de Informe _____

CATEGORIA	PRESUPUESTO APROPADO	GASTOS DEL PERIODO	GASTOS HASTA LA FECHA	SALD PRESU
TOTAL				

Fondos disponibles al comienzo del período _____

Más fondos recibidos en este período _____

Menos gastos de este periodo _____

Fondos disponsibles al finalizar el período _____

Preparado por _____ (firma)

_____ (nombre)

_____ (cargo)

_____ (fecha)

Weakness. While this provides information on activities, it does not present that information in a format that is useful for planning and supervision. While project activities are listed, they are listed in aggregate for each sector -- not by specific objective. Finally, while there is a section entitled "Problems and Possible Solutions," problems are not listed in relation to specific projects and seldom are solutions actually offered.

Recommendation. We recommend that a project reporting format be developed and implemented -- with a separate one-page report prepared for each project. As the proposed format, (Figure 2.3) the objectives for each projects are outlined at the top of the sheet. Achievements for the period and the date are then listed in the second section. The third section lists the activities undertaken during the reporting period. The fourth section lists the problems encountered during the implementation and the last section lists one or more recommended solutions for each problem identified. Depending on the information requirements in San Salvador and the degree to which that office wishes to be involved in monitoring field activities, the reports could be filled out monthly or quarterly. Once again, we recommend the development of an accompanying guide for use by the committees. These reports would also provide information necessary for periodic reporting to donors as well as providing an effective project monitoring tool for SCF.

I. PROGRAM MONITORING

The two reporting formats proposed in this section would allow for a tighter control over progress to objectives and expenses to date in relation to that achievement. These reports should be reviewed by the Field Coordinator who would then ensure that the appropriate action is taken. Through the periodic reports and Sr. Benitez' comments and analysis of those reports, San Salvador would be able to ensure that the necessary action has been taken. This is important in view of the relative low level of administrative experience of the Field Coordinator and the level of autonomy that that area will have under the new OPG.

J. INFORMATION SYSTEM

Weakness. One of the major problem encountered by the external auditors when attempting to measure not only program impact but activities to date was poor program documentation. The institution lacks some of the more information necessary for minimal planning and evaluation activities. While the evaluators were impressed with the ability of long-term staff to quote data off the top of their heads , the written information available is fearfully inadequate. While quarterly

Figure 2-3

INFORME MENSUAL

DESARROLLO JUVENIL COMUNITARIO

Nombre de Proyecto _____ Numero de Proyecto _____

Período de Donacion _____ .Mes _____

Objectivos:
Logros del período: Logros hasta la fecha:
Actividades:
Otros Exitos:
Problemas:
Soluciones:

reports of activities began in March 1980 and provide a clear written account of project activities and progress toward objectives. project files in San Salvador and in the impact area were found to be relatively incomplete. In San Salvador, files contained only a copy of the original project proposal (FORS03) and a few but not all FORS06. The impact area files were more complete--containing the forms requesting funds in addition to the original FORS03 and most if not all FORS06. Neither contained any information at all on project activities.

Recommendation. The new OPG has proposed the purchase of a computer, we recommend that SCF contract an outside computer consultant to develop a computerized information system that can not only classify information on project activities but also provide a means of tracking program impact over time. A determination of the information needs should be made. Base line information needs to be obtained on all impact areas envisioned under the new grant, ensuring that information on established indicators is gathered. Information on activities should be gathered on a project by project basis--with information further detailed by individual communities. It is extremely important that SCF be able to track the performance of this project as it will serve as a base of experience and information for the expansion into other areas of El Salvador as well as into other countries. After the effort and energy put into this project, it is absolutely critical that a written history of that be available.

Recommendation. We also recommend that project controls be formalized. Each project file must contain certain basic documents. With the FORS03 as the foundation, each project folder must also contain:

1. copies of amendments to budgets or objectives
2. list of communities incorporated in project design with targets for each one
3. copies of periodic project activity reports
4. copies of comments and analysis of reports prepared by the Field Coordinator
5. copies of monthly financial reports
6. other descriptive material on project-related activities

This information should be located in San Salvador as well in the impact areas. With increased coverage, San Salvador can serve at the central information clearing house. In order to apply lessons learned from the present impact area (the Pilot Project) and subsequent modifications, the information must be available for synthesis by National Coordinators.

K. PROJECT CLOSE-OUT PROCEDURES

As a corollary to the previous recommendation, at project termination, a final report should be prepared which summarizes achievements of objectives. activities implemented, and lessons learned. With information on the total project cost and the number of beneficiary families served, a cost per beneficiary can be calculated. A description and analysis of the problems encountered and the solutions attempted will offer valuable information in the planning and implementation of other similar projects.

L. PROJECT EVALUATION

Strength. In addition to its required mid-point evaluation, SCF carried out a participatory evaluation with more than 350 project participants in January of 1984. Significant staff time and effort was spent on not only the implementation of those two evaluations but of the application of the resulting recommendations. SCF has demonstrated a commitment to self-evaluation rarely found in private voluntary organizations.

Weakness. While the participatory evaluation provided considerable data and feedback from project participants, it was not focused on program impact. As such, it provided little information for measuring ongoing impact on the socio-economic situation of project participants as measured by indicators established in the OPG. As mentioned earlier in this report, no base-line data is available for the impact area; while the participatory evaluation provides some data on child mortality and child malnutrition, there are no prior-period figures with which to compare.

Weakness. In addition, SCF has not placed high priority on training community residents in program evaluation. Mothers are both unaware that growth monitoring is a direct means of measuring project impact and of the importance that evaluation plays in program management.

Recommendation. In order to create a base-line data to measure the program impact of the future OPG, we recommend that all available socio-economic information be prepared. That information should be supplemented as required to ensure that information is available for all indicators outlined in the OPG document.

Recommendation. We recommend that a seminar be held with the volunteers. The first seminar would involve three days. The first day would be spent in the discussions of evaluations and their importance. The second day, the volunteers would develop indicators for the project sectors based on the OPG.

and then develop survey instruments to be used in a participatory evaluation. After practicing the use of those instruments among themselves, the volunteers would go to the "campo" for a week to interview a pre-determined number of community residents. The final seminar would be spent in the tabulation of the results and the preparation of a final report. The promoters would be closely involved during the process, so that they could provide technical support.

Recommendation. During this seminar, a set of household records could be developed that would allow the households to measure direct impact of the program on their family: income, production, child mortality and morbidity, household improvement, and behavior changes. etc.

M. INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

1. United States Agency for International Development

Comments about support from USAID were generally positive. A major confrontation occurred between USAID and SCF in 1981 due to the USAID policy at that time of funding only those programs supporting the agrarian reform. Despite that, the relationship between USAID and SCF can be characterized as one of mutual respect and understanding. The other misunderstanding between the two institutions from the different treatment that the two institutions gave exchange rates and reporting of expenses has been resolved by the utilization of a Federal Reserve Letter of Credit under the future OPG.

It was noted, however, that the USAID technicians seldom visit the project area--primarily because of US Embassy security restrictions for all personnel. We recommend that when security permits, USAID staff, especially Americans, make an effort to visit the impact area.

2. Save the Children/Westport

SCF/San Salvador has an ideal position with regard to relations with their home office. They receive all the technical support and assistance when required but without unnecessary interference in the internal operations of the field office. Mr. Rogers characterized their position as "autonomous but with all the support that we require." Control of the budget is entirely in the hands of San Salvador; when Westport makes expenses on behalf of the program, they are very careful to inform Mr. Rogers in writing.

3. Salvadoran Government (GOES)

Considering the budgetary constraints and the series of serious problems facing the GOES and the fact that the impact area is in a zone of conflict, the GOES has been able to come through with a surprisingly high level of support to this program. Despite the lack of personnel and shortages of medicines, the Ministry of Health played a significant role in the vaccination and deparasitation campaigns. The Ministry of Education has provided adequate technical support to the literacy program through its field staff who work closely with the literacy promoters and volunteers.