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TRIP REPORT

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PURPOSE: Evaluation of Heifer Project International's Performance
Under AID/PDC/PVC Development Program Grant

Organizations and Persons Contacted: Heifer Project International, Inc.

National Headquarters Office
825 West Third Street/P.O. Box 808
Little Rock, AR 72203

International Livestock Center
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Perryville, AR 72126

Terry Ford, Executive Director
Jeanette Leverett, Administrative Secretary
Jerry Bedford, Development Director
Bill Beck, Deferred Giving Director
George West, Communications Associate
Patti Webb, Development Secretary
Charles Burwell, Program Director
Gordon Hatcher, Program Director
Becky Boyd, Programs Associate
Frankie Reynolds, Program Secretary
Ellen Hatcher, Program Secretary
Armin Schmidt, Evaluation Director
Jerry Aaker, Evaluation Associate
Thanh Nguyen, Evaluation Team Leader
Asha Sahita, Evaluation Secretary
Jim Wilmot, Finance Director
Dorothy Franklin, Finance Assistant
Sheila Sipes, Accounting Clerk

Ed Martsolf, Director
Warren Chitwood, Herdsman
Ivan Slagle, Herdsman Assistant
Norman Brand, Farm Manager
J. L. Maxwell, Farm Assistant
Pearlie Singleton, Secretary
Robert Reynolds, Truck Driver
(Volunteer)
Bill & Helen Nye, Ranch Hosts
(Volunteers)

Observations and Accomplishments

Observations and interviews with staff members of Heifer Project International (H.P.I.) at both the National Headquarters Office and the International Livestock Center, indicate that H.P.I. has developed an appropriate design/evaluation system to be permanently incorporated within the existing organization's management structure. In analyzing the past performance of H.P.I. projects the management has questioned what the future should be for the organization. The newly developed design/evaluation system will focus H.P.I. on the development of small holder livestock enterprises with greatly improved efficiency and impact. An interesting in-depth review of H.P.I.'s performance in carrying out a Design/Evaluation Project, partially funded by A.I.D. Grant pha-G-1188, was conducted. The report follows.

I. Background

- A. In 1977 the Board of Directors and staff of H.P.I. after long deliberation, embarked on a Project Design and Evaluation effort which is partially funded by an A.I.D. Development Program Grant (DPG). The work actually began in May 1978 with the hiring of a Director of Evaluation. A part-time Associate Director and a part-time Team Leader were added to the project staff in the summer and the fall of that year.

A.I.D. support for this project is scheduled to end on April 30, 1981. A request for extension of support to December 31, 1981, however, has been submitted and approved.

As specified in the Letter of Agreement signed by A.I.D. and H.P.I. on September 29 and October 14, 1977, respectively:

The purpose of the project is to establish an appropriate project design and evaluation system which will become a permanent part of the HPI organization.

B. Definition of Evaluation:

For HPI, evaluation is the discipline of looking at programs and projects in an informed, rigorous and systematic manner in order to help the HPI staff, HPI Board of Directors and project leaders make informed decisions about their work.

Thus it has been the task of the Evaluation Department to develop a system that will enable them to collect, analyze, interpret and present information when it is needed in a form that is most useful for decision making.

II. Summary of Work Accomplished

The work of the Evaluation Department has been directed toward achieving the purpose of the project. The task has involved work among programs and projects as well as at the International Headquarters and the Regional Offices.

A. Field Studies

July 1978- Study of status of current information in H.P.I. program files.
October 1978- Rocky Boy's Reservation, Montana
November 1978- Belize Feedstuff Project
January 1979- Ecuador Field Study
May 1979- Tanzania Field Study
August 1979- Mail and Interview Survey: Field Evaluation of H.P.I.
October 1979- Guatemala Field Study
February 1980- Liberia Feasibility Study
August 1980- Philippines Field Study
October 1980- Ecuador Feasibility Study
March 1981- Belize Country Program

B. Information Systems: Forms and Reports

February 1979- Feasibility Checklist
November 1979- Project Summary Computer Report
November 1979- Project Livestock Computer Report
January 1980- Revised Project Presentation Form
January 1980- Revised Progress Report Forms
February 1980- Country Program Request
February 1980- Country Program Report
April 1980- Project Review Sheet-for screening projects
May 1980- Project Production and Participation (Evaluation) Report
August 1980- Livestock Inventory System and Reports

C. Evaluation Workshops

October 1978- Program Committee
March 1979- National Office and Regional Staff
August 1979- Program Committee (Policy Paper)
September 1979- National Office and Regional Staff
June 1980- H.P.I. Representatives: Belize, Bolivia, Haiti and Mexico at International Livestock Center
August 1980- Ad Hoc Committee on Evaluation
September 1980- National Office and Regional Staff
October 1980- H.P.I. Representatives and Project Counterparts: Central America
November 1980- Field staff Cameroon
March 1981- Barbados--Counterparts and Representatives in the Caribbean

D. Other

The Evaluation Department also played a major role in the process of developing the H.P.I. Policy Paper between April 1979 and March 1980. Assistance was provided in the development of a concept paper for a Matching Grant proposal which was submitted in August 1980, and the Matching Grant proposal to A.I.D. in December 1980. Special field trips to Cameroon, Colombia, the Dominican Republic and Jamaica have been undertaken by Evaluation Staff. Also, an evaluation manual for "field staff" and "non-professional evaluators" has been written.

III. Summary of Results

A. National and Regional Offices

H.P.I. now has:

- A set of clearly stated policies and priorities.
- A more accurate and accessible information system in the Program Department.
- An operational livestock inventory system in the National and Regional offices.
- Tools for systematically screening program proposals, project proposals and requests.
- Enhanced staff capability in conducting evaluations and utilizing evaluation findings.
- A growing awareness and sensitivity to the perspectives, findings, and needs of the persons with whom H.P.I. is working.
- An Evaluation Office as a permanent part of the Program Department structure.

B. Programs and Projects

H.P.I. representatives and counterpart persons in five countries have participated in test evaluation studies. These persons, working with the H.P.I. Program Department, reviewed evaluation findings and chose alternatives for future action.

- In general, the H.P.I. representatives and counterparts have identified the strengths and weaknesses of the projects studied.
- Local leaders and H.P.I. Program personnel have taken steps to consolidate project strengths and to select options for overcoming project weaknesses.
- More projects have baseline data and routine scheduled self-evaluations for reporting, problem identification and re-planning.
- In Ecuador, acting on recommendations and options presented by the Evaluation Department, the H.P.I. Program Department transferred ownership of Rancho Ronald to the Ecuadorian 4-F Foundation in order to increase efficiency; provide training and small animals to rural youth; and to continue its cattle dispersal, training and extension work among local farmers.

- In Guatemala the evaluation study included a village-level survey which identified the need for greater local involvement in program planning. In response, H.P.I.'s counterpart organization, ACAPEC, entered a six-month organizational feasibility study; decentralized control in order to include small farmers in decision making; and established three regional livestock committees.
- The evaluation study of the Kitulo Ranch in Tanzania brought about an intensified awareness of and a concern about key production and management problems, and a realization that the project objectives should be revised. The specific recommendations for H.P.I. and the Kitulo ranch are being used as H.P.I. continues to develop a responsible plan of action regarding Kitulo.
- In Zanzibar, following a careful review of the evaluation report with H.P.I. personnel, increased cooperation among the Ministry of Agriculture, FAO, Danish volunteers and H.P.I. has resulted in: construction of new facilities on a central farm, improved A.I. services to small farmers, construction of a much needed access road, better management, development of clear objectives and development of a plan for village-level bull stations.
- Final recommendations and options for future development of the Philippine Program are in the final stages of development. These will be based on the results of an April 1980 survey of 192 small farmers in 25 projects followed by a period of review and negotiation with the Philippine Rural Life Center.

IV. The Project Design and Evaluation System for H.P.I.

In order to describe the Project Design and Evaluation system as simply as possible, brief answers to several key questions are presented below:

A. Is evaluation needed?

Evaluation is a necessary process through which the basic assumptions of H.P.I. are questioned, the traditions of H.P.I. are reassessed, and a new vision for changed circumstances is developed. Through this process H.P.I. will be enabled to gain a deeper understanding of its actual impact upon the lives of persons and communities. Evaluation is needed to identify H.P.I.'s strengths and to help discover options for increased effectiveness. Evaluation is a necessary tool for bringing the knowledge and experience H.P.I. has gained in the past to bear upon present and future challenges.

B. What kind of system is being developed?

H.P.I. is striving to develop an evaluation system that is ongoing, collaborative, mutual and appropriate.

H.P.I.'s ongoing component of its evaluation system includes planning and evaluation throughout the life of the project.

The collaborative component involves everyone that is responsible for the project. The persons in the field who operate the project also

initiate, plan and request assistance for H.P.I. in evaluating the project. The collaborative component also involves close consultation and joint decision making by the Program Director, the Evaluation Director and the Executive Director.

The mutual component of H.P.I.'s evaluation system involves the evaluation of H.P.I.'s performance by counterpart persons in other countries as well as their evaluation of their own projects from their point of view. H.P.I. will not simply judge projects unilaterally from its own perspective.

The appropriate component is flexible enough to recognize and to respect the cultural diversity that characterizes H.P.I.'s work with people in other countries.

C. What kind of work will be done?

The basic task of the Evaluation Director is to collect, analyze, present and interpret information when it is needed in a form that is most useful for decision-making. The Evaluation Office is involved in four key points in the life of H.P.I.'s projects 1/:

1. Assistance is provided to the Program Director, Area Directors, and the Program Committee during the program and project screening process. Feasibility studies of selected projects are conducted, and a systematic review of all projects is done on all proposals.
2. The Evaluation office, with major assistance from the Program Associate, is responsible for program and project monitoring.
3. Programs and projects are evaluated according to mutually agreed upon questions, using methodologies that have been approved by all parties according to schedules that are acceptable to everyone involved. Reports are prepared and distributed to the appropriate persons.
4. The Director of Evaluation initiates and coordinates post-evaluation reviews and planning sessions. The findings and recommendations are reviewed at the project site. These findings, in addition to what has been learned in other projects, will be used by decision makers in charting a course of action for the project and for H.P.I.

The work of the Evaluation Director also involves conducting special studies of selected projects or areas of policy interest, visiting project sites, holding evaluation training sessions with H.P.I. representatives and counterpart persons and leading in careful thought and discussion of the meaning of the findings in light of major world trends and issues.

1/ For sake of brevity, projects refers to local projects and programs in other countries.

D. Who will be responsible for evaluation?

Evaluation in H.P.I. is the responsibility of the Director of Evaluation. The Office of Evaluation is located in the Program Department. The Director of Evaluation is assisted on a one-half time basis by the Program Associate and by a part-time secretary.

E. What will the evaluation system cost?

A.I.D. funding for the evaluation project has been extended to December 31, 1981. At the end of the grant period the cost will be borne by H.P.I. The 1982 costs, which include salaries, benefits, travel, office expenses and consultants is projected to amount to approximately 1.7 percent of the total estimated H.P.I. budget, or between \$55,000 and \$58,000.

V. Expected Benefits to H.P.I. and Local Projects

A. H.P.I. is expected to benefit from evaluation in the following ways:

- Improved stewardship of persons, time and money.
- Utilization of a growing store of relevant and accessible information for decision making.
- Sharing among projects of lessons learned.
- Closer association with persons at all levels.
- Broader and deeper understanding of the impact of H.P.I.'s work on persons and communities.
- Systematic monitoring, tracking and reporting.

B. The programs and projects which participate in the H.P.I. evaluation system are expected to benefit from evaluation in the following ways:

- Development of appropriate analytical and decision making skills.
- Acquisition of relevant management skills.
- Strengthen project groups by means of goal setting, record keeping, and taking stock of progress.
- Knowledge of those species and breeds which perform best under local conditions.
- Access to assistance in finding options for overcoming technical or organizational problems.

VI. Conclusions

H.P.I. is now in the stage of applying the knowledge and experience gained from the four field tests to its overall style of operation. Thus the Program Department, the Executive Director, the Finance Department and the Evaluation Department are engaged in a process of working together to incorporate the evaluation function into the ongoing operational procedures of H.P.I. This activity is directly related to the achievement of the development of an organizational framework for change and the improved ability to review and revise, where needed, existing operational methods.

H.P.I. is a very complex organization comprised of local level committees, five regional offices, and field staff and representatives in addition to a national headquarters staff. This organization currently relates to 68 projects in 27 countries.

H.P.I. has submitted a Matching Grant Proposal to A.I.D. proposing the creation of a "Comprehensive Livestock Development Program" directed toward assisting indigenous groups and counterpart organizations primarily in Central America, Asia, and the Caribbean region, to enhance their capability to plan, assemble resources, and obtain the management skills necessary for the development of successful and substantial livestock projects. The Matching Grant Proposal is an admission that the animal component itself is but one aspect of a livestock production system that requires several factors to sustain development. Through project evaluations H.P.I. is aware that greater attention to training, management services and follow-up assistance at the basic level will result in decreased animal mortality, increased production of food and offspring, and a greater number of pay-back animals for distribution to new participants.

The process of revising H.P.I.'s existing operational methods falls into three parts: (1) initiation of revised reporting procedures at the program and project level; (2) adoption of revised screening, monitoring and evaluation procedures at the H.P.I. headquarters, and; (3) development of an integrated information system within the H.P.I. organization. In my opinion they are making excellent progress in that process.

Extensive field experience and H.P.I. intentional focus on evaluation have revealed that project groups often are unable to assemble the resources and management skills necessary for a successful livestock project. Lack of these resources and management skills is often reflected in nutrition and disease problems, low conception rates, inadequate pasture management programs, reduced productivity, and increased animal mortality. The "Comprehensive Livestock Development Program" is aimed at responding to these basic needs.

The program seeks to incorporate a more complete range of inputs and support services than H.P.I. and counterpart groups have traditionally been able to provide to livestock development efforts. This will include: livestock provision and distribution; veterinary services and supplies; forage development and feedstuff information; training of technicians, project level workers and livestock recipients; extension, follow-up, and technical services; planning and evaluation. In some project areas the comprehensive approach will call for the support (on a limited basis) of local breeding centers and foundation herd development.

The "Comprehensive Livestock Development Program" not only will provide these additional inputs for ongoing programs but also will provide resources for new projects in other areas of need. (The number of bona-fide requests received by H.P.I. substantially exceeds its presently available resources.)

The total cost of the "Comprehensive Livestock Development Program" is \$2,977,000. It is proposed that the program be funded by A.I.D.'s Office of Private Voluntary Organizations, and H.P.I. funding requested from A.I.D. would be in the form of a Matching Grant for \$1,342,000, which is 45 percent of the total program cost. The H.P.I. contribution will be \$1,635,000, 55% of the total program cost.

Joint funding for this program will support the provision and distribution of livestock, appropriate-level training, material support, para-veterinary services, professional services, transportation, project audits and evaluation.

At the end of the three year Matching Grant program it is expected that a minimum of 68 community and regional-level projects will have been assisted, and that H.P.I. will have increased its ability to provide comprehensive services to livestock projects.