

STREET FOODS PROGRESS REPORT #2

March 15, 1984

End of Project Seminars: Senegal, Philippines, and Bangladesh

As the first round of country studies under the Street Foods project nears completion, a series of seminars have been scheduled in each country for interested groups and individuals both in the provincial town of the study and in the capital city. Preliminary findings are presented and discussed. Emphasis is given to recommendations that would ameliorate the vulnerable position of most street food sellers or would improve the quality of the food sold. Seminars for the Senegal project were held in Dakar and Ziguinchor during December 1983. EPOC was represented by Irene Tinker and Monique Cohen. Street Foods project directors from several second-round countries were present at the Dakar presentation as well. The meeting in Ziguinchor, which was conducted in French, was attended by 26 people, including provincial representatives of central ministries as well as employees of the Casamance Regional Development Authority and research institutions in the Casamance. The Dakar seminar attracted 31 people. Presented in English, this meeting was attended by American and Senegalese employees of USAID, representatives of international funding agencies and the PVO communities, as well as numerous independent consultants. In view of the interest provoked by this meeting, a second seminar will be held in Dakar, this time in French, in order to reach a broader Dakar audience, including representatives of national research institutes and government agencies.

Results of the Philippines study were presented in Iloilo and Manila during January 1984; EPOC was represented by Tinker. Alex Umadhay, Regional Director for Region VI chaired all-day sessions, both of which included workshops where the seminar participants debated recommendations. Among the 35 people attending the Iloilo seminar were the Governor of Panay and the Mayor of Iloilo. Several officers of the market and vendor associations were also present. The rest of the group consisted of scholars and civil servants concerned with employment, nutrition, and health. The Manila seminar, attended by 44 people, included presentations by government officials from the planning, micro-enterprise, and food safety divisions. Gelia Castillo, a member of the EPOC International Advisory Committee, related the Street Foods study to several on-going projects in Manila that try to assist poor women, a large number of whom are street vendors. In addition to these formal presentations, Gerald Barth discussed the project at the Institute for Philippine Culture where he and Mei-Jean Kuo have been fellows. Irene Tinker met with a large organizational group of women at a meeting sponsored by the Asia Foundation to present EPOC's approach to study women's issues and to discuss the findings of the Philippines study.

In Bangladesh, the two formal seminars, in Manikganj and Dhaka, bracketed a one-day fair in Manikganj during which the vendors were introduced to representatives of local voluntary organizations. This fair was one of several interventions aimed at improving the lot of the vendors. The extent to which these contacts result in new organizations or services will be monitored by EPOC, as will the credit scheme we are sponsoring in Manikganj.

The first seminar conducted in Bangladesh was opened by the Sub-District Officer in the chair. The Director of the Women's Affairs, Division of the Ministry of Social Welfare and Women's Affairs, the project sponsors, came out from Dhaka for the seminar. Also present among the 44 participants were the circle officer and the local magistrate. Like the Dakar seminar, many people in the audience were from local or international private voluntary associations. At both seminars, the case studies were presented by the local social science staff members and the credit proposal by the head of the local PVO which will run the scheme. Fifty-three people heard the English presentation in Dhaka.

At all of the seminars, street foods were served as snacks at the break. Their composition and name engendered arguments in every case, underscoring the wide variety of foods called by a particular name in different regions. Credit as an issue was central in all discussions, but was tempered in Manila by suggestions that production was a greater limitation. Urban-rural linkages for the production and marketing of street foods was of great interest to development planners, particularly in connection with the current emphasis on greater food self-sufficiency in developing countries. In all countries, the magnitude of the sector impressed policymakers and should have the effect of greater recognition of the importance of street foods as employment and food for the urban poor.

Points raised at the seminars will be included in the final reports from each country. Implications for development programs will be reported in the final report to USAID later this year. Holding these seminars was an important part of the project; their results clearly contribute to the validity and reception of the project results.

Street Foods Workshop: Dakar, December 1983

Street Foods Project Directors from Egypt, Nigeria, Ghana, and Senegal also met in Dakar in December to discuss the course of their research. In addition to attending the Senegal project seminar, participants discussed the work in their own countries, including the methodological process each is following. Some interesting points of contrast between the projects emerged from the workshop.

Nigeria: Ile-Ife is the site of the Nigerian study. It is a city of 135,000 and a provincial urban center with the presence of the University of Ife and other institutions of higher education. Ilesa, where results from the study will also be disseminated, is 20 miles from Ile-Ife

and has a population of 200,000. Both cities are regional centers for the local marketing system.

Both Ife-Ife and Ilesa are Yoruba cities. Yoruba women are widely engaged as street vendors, market traders, and intermediaries in trade between urban and rural areas. Since most Yoruba women work, it is common for them to purchase all or parts of meals for themselves and their families. School children are also large consumers of street foods, especially breakfast. Because they occupy such a central place in the local diet, a major consideration in the study will be the nutritional value of street foods.

The team hypothesized that people tend to eat less if they eat street foods than if they eat a diet of foods cooked at home. They plan to look at the effect of street foods on children and on vendors' children as well as the relationship between fast and street foods.

The Department of Health Services, University of Ife sees the EPOC/Nigeria street food project as a logical extension of their own activities with street food vendors as well as serving as an aid in their ability to critically examine their programs. The State Government has long had a policy to improve the quality of food sold outside schools. Responding to this need, the Department of Health Services, University of Ife, has been conducting biannual two-week courses for vendors who sell to school children. The classes deal with hygiene, food handling, menu design, and diet enrichment. The course was originally designed for vendors applying for a license to sell in school compounds. In the past three to four years, however, the participants have included those vendors who sell at banks and outside office buildings. They have attended voluntarily; the course is seen to give them status.

The team plans to make these courses an important part of their street foods project. They will examine the possibility of extending the training program to other vendors and perhaps expanding its content as well. Moreover, the training program will provide a point of contact with vendors so that the researchers can better consider their needs and ways to increase income earning potential.

The street food trade in Ile-Ife is much more extensive than that identified in Ziguinchor. Stalls are everywhere, catering to an urban population that extensively eats street foods. A new phenomena in street foods in Ile-Ife is the spread of franchised fast foods catering to white- and blue-collar workers, as well as low-income households. Both men and women are involved in selling food from trucks. These fast food mobile operators compete with indigenous street food vendors, and have begun to displace traditional women ambulatory vendors who carry food on their heads. Since the price of the two types of food is about the same, it remains to be seen whether the traditional female street food vendors will be forced out of business.

The research team is directed by Olufemi Kujore, head of the Department of Nursing at the University of Ife. Olufemi has over 30 years experience in nursing practice, education, and administration. V. Aina Agboh is the research associate. She is a community health nursing specialist who has run the biannual courses. Dr. Tola Pearse, a sociologist from the University specializing in medical sociology, and Dr. I. F. Smith, a nutritionist at the Department of Community Health, also work on the team. The EPOC consultant on this project is Dr. Lillian Trager, Assistant Professor at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside.

The project began in October. Since then, they have begun a literature review and familiarized government officials with the project. The research will follow the same lines as previous EPOC street foods projects with seminars at the end to sum up the results. The team also hopes to disseminate the information through media campaigns, if links with a suitable organization can be made.

Ghana: The Ghana project, begun in September 1983, is primarily one of action because of the current food supply problem. Since food is scarce, street foods have become an increasingly important part of the urban diet. It is easier to purchase street foods than to find ingredients to prepare meals at home.

The project began with a study of twelve women in six food groups. Using this information, the team hopes to organize women into groups based on a common food such as cassava, or corn. They will assist the vendors in accumulating enough capital to obtain a loan and then to use the money to buy supplies in bulk. In this way, they plan to generate higher returns for the vendors and develop a commitment to a vendor association. While other product groups have vendor associations, street food sellers do not. Such a network of mutual support will help the women overcome some market bottlenecks such as transportation, hoarding by middlemen, lack of capital, and lack of storage facilities.

Esther Ocloo, General Manager of Nkeulenu Industries Limited, heads the project committee. She is assisted by Dr. Florence Dvolo and Barbara Schmidt-Rocksloh-Papendieck.

Egypt: Although the Ford Foundation awarded a grant to Sarah Loza, the head of SPAAC (Social Planning, Analysis, and Administrative Consultants), to collaborate with EPOC in a street foods project in Minia, governmental procedures to obtain clearance for the project delayed its commencement until recently. Meanwhile, other research work that Loza is carrying out in Upper Egypt has enlarged her experience in working on projects related to women's income earning and will be useful when developing the questionnaires. Her first action in Minia will be to set up an advisory committee, including local and city and provincial officials.

An emphasis in this study will be on the food processing in order to encompass women's activities. Whether food processing done outside the

seller's family will be included is not yet decided. Neither is it clear where the line is between restaurants and street foods in the Egyptian context. During the mapping stage, all food establishments will be included so that the total universe will be known. This approach is one that will be useful in all subsequent studies.

Ford-Funded Project: Thailand

Recently, the Ford Foundation approved the expansion of the street foods project into Thailand. This project is a collaborative effort between CURSI and EPOC. The EPOC consultant on the project is Dr. Cristina Szanton, Research Associate, South Asian Institute, Columbia University, New York.

The researchers will follow the pattern of previous EPOC street foods projects, with the choice of one provincial town for an in-depth study. The research will include a local mapping and census, a survey of vendors, the selection of five foods in which women are significantly involved, a nutritive analysis of these foods, a survey of customers and a survey of local PVOs and community groups who might help to further the goals of the project. Finally, the project will conclude with two seminars and a report of the research results.

This study will add a new dimension to the street foods project. The researchers hope to examine the potential for economic growth and mobility offered by street foods to both rural-urban migrants and long-term urban residents. Because street foods are a major source of urban food supply, they also hope to gain a better understanding of rural-urban linkages. For example, they will study the rural origins, marketing, and/or preparation of many basic street foods ingredients for sale in urban settings and the back and forth movements of rural populations using street food sales as a means of survival in urban areas. They also plan to study the changes in opportunities, especially for female vendors, caused by the entrance of larger entrepreneurs into the market.