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**Second Annual Report  
An Evaluation Of The Central American  
Peace Scholarships Program**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY , FY 1987**

**October 1, 1986 - September 30, 1987**

Submitted to:  
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# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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The Agency for International Development (AID) was charged by the U.S. Congress to implement the Central American Peace Scholarships project (CAPS) to achieve two primary goals. AID's CLASP Project Paper, revised 1987, expresses the dual goal as follows:

*The goal of CLASP is to contribute to the formation of more effective manpower resources, thereby ensuring the leadership and technical skills needed for the progressive, balanced and pluralistic development of selected Caribbean basin and South American countries and to strengthen mutual understanding between the United States and its Latin and Caribbean neighbors.*

This report provides program managers and other interested individuals with information regarding the extent to which this dual goal is being realized and suggestions as to how they can further refine and improve the implementation of the CAPS project.

## **GENERAL CONCLUSIONS**

Overall, the CAPS project in the six Missions and the Regional Office for Central America and Panama (ROCAP) can be considered a success, both by the objective standards defined for the CLASP and by the personal reactions of the Trainees. Though there are deficiencies in some areas, particularly in fostering ongoing ties between Trainees and the U.S., the program is clearly promoting its primary goals to the extent that Trainees report a positive image of the U.S. and that training has helped them reach their own and their countries' objectives.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Several documents provide the bases for implementation of the Central American Peace Scholarships project. Two of these, the "Report of the National Bipartisan Committee on Central America" (i.e., the Kissinger Report) and the "CLASP Project Paper," set forth general objectives and guidelines applicable to the CAPS project in all countries where it exists. Seven other documents, Country Training Plans for each of the six Central American countries and ROCAP, along with policy guidance cables offer country or context-specific interpretations of the general objectives and guidelines. An assessment of the project's performance must take all of these documents into consideration since each document represents some element of the background against which the project is to be evaluated.

### **The Kissinger Report**

The Kissinger Report provides the policy goals to be assessed: (1) the foreign policy/democracy goal and (2) the skills/training goal. The central message of the report was that Central America's crisis is real and acute; that the U.S. must act boldly to meet it; and that

the stakes are large for the United States, for the hemisphere, and most poignantly, for the people of Central America. The Commission expressed the conviction that political, social, and economic development goals must be addressed simultaneously. Perhaps the most important emphasis in the report is its insistence that social and economic progress would not be obtained without **providing access to that process for those who previously have not been an integral part of it.** Three of the report's most potent recommendations follow from that conviction; the report recommends:

- the establishment of a program of 10,000 government-sponsored scholarships to bring Central American students to the United States;
- careful targeting to ensure participation of people from all social and economic classes; and
- adequate preparation, such as English-language training or necessary remedial academic work, in order to satisfy admission requirements for programs in the United States.

According to the guidance given in the Kissinger Report, CAPS requires two essential phases: (1) Trainee selection in accordance with overall policy goals and (2) provision of appropriate training to chosen candidates.

### **The CLASP Project Paper**

AID interpretation of the Kissinger Report targets the socially and economically disadvantaged--70 percent economically disadvantaged and 40 percent women. Other specified target groups--actual and potential leaders, youth and special-concern groups--have no percentages designated in either document. Thus, the final decisions are left to implementors at AID Missions. They have decided what percentages to assign to targeted sub-groups in accordance with demographic and social conditions existing in a given country. The Kissinger Report stipulates 10,000 scholarships. CLASP, which encompasses two separate regional projects--CAPS and LAC II--was originally assigned 7,833 (later raised to 8,500) scholarships: 7,063 for CAPS; 770 scholarships (later changed to 5,000) for LACII. The United States Information Agency (USIA) will fund an additional 3,000 scholarships.

Recruitment and selection of Trainees is a very important step in the implementation of the CAPS project. Missions are obliged to select women (at least 40%) and the socially/economically disadvantaged (at least 70%). Missions also are encouraged to select actual and potential leaders, youth, and persons living in rural areas.

Training--the other area of decision-making--involves two components: (1) Experience America, which responds to the goal of strengthening mutual understanding; and (2) Skills Training, which responds to the skills development goal. These components make up the training process.

## The Country Training Plans

Based on the CLASP Project Paper, each Mission is required to develop a Country Training Plan (CTP). The CTP may be regarded as a "road map" that guides the implementation process. CTPs offer a level of concreteness and specificity much greater than that of policy documents such as the Kissinger Report and the CLASP Project Paper. CTPs provide clear-cut objectives and strategies to define Mission training programs.

## SELECTION

### Are those targeted to be served being served?

Yes. The population targeted for the CAPS project is being reached. CAPS Missions select Trainees according to established selection criteria--consistent with the Kissinger Report, the CLASP Project Paper and Country Training Plans--(i.e., women, youth, leadership, and the economically disadvantaged.) As of September 1987, 6,189 Central Americans were trained through CAPS. These Trainees were classified as follows: women, 2,162 (36%); leadership, 5,274 (89%); economically disadvantaged, 4,804 (82%); rural, 4,367 (73%); and youth, 1,085 (18%). (It is important to note that there are overlapping categories of Trainees. For example, a Trainee can be classified as a woman, an actual leader, and economically disadvantaged. The effect is that numbers reflected in each category will add up to more than 6,189 Trainees.) A very high proportion of Trainees was selected on the criteria of leadership and economic disadvantage. This reflects the priority given these criteria by the CAPS Missions and ROCAP. The following paragraphs discuss each target group in terms of selection (see Figure 1).

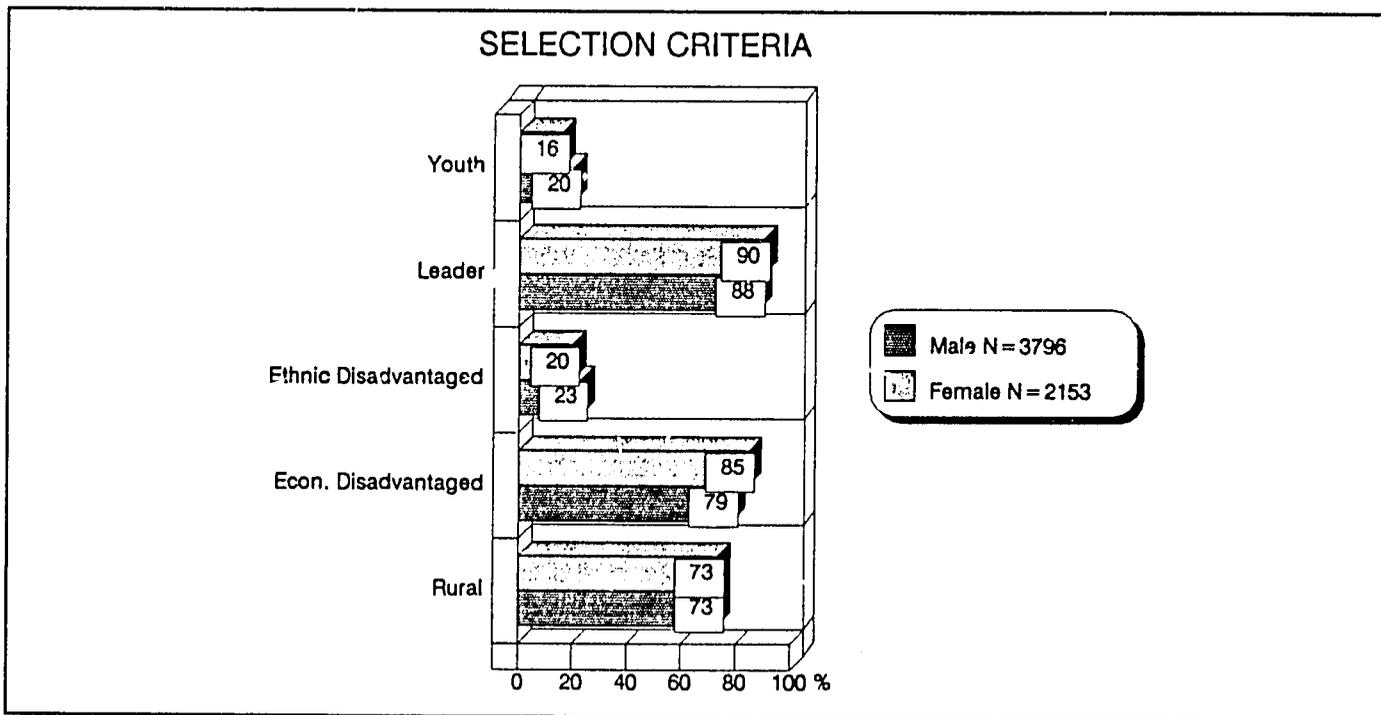


FIGURE 1

### Does the proportion of scholarships given to women reflect program targets?

**Almost.** The overall total percentage of awards to women since the program's inception is 36%, which falls slightly short of the AID mandate. However, in FY 1987 the overall target of 40% women was exceeded, reaching 45% (see Figure 2). Belize, Costa Rica and Guatemala have met the 40% women target established by the project. Other Missions have not.

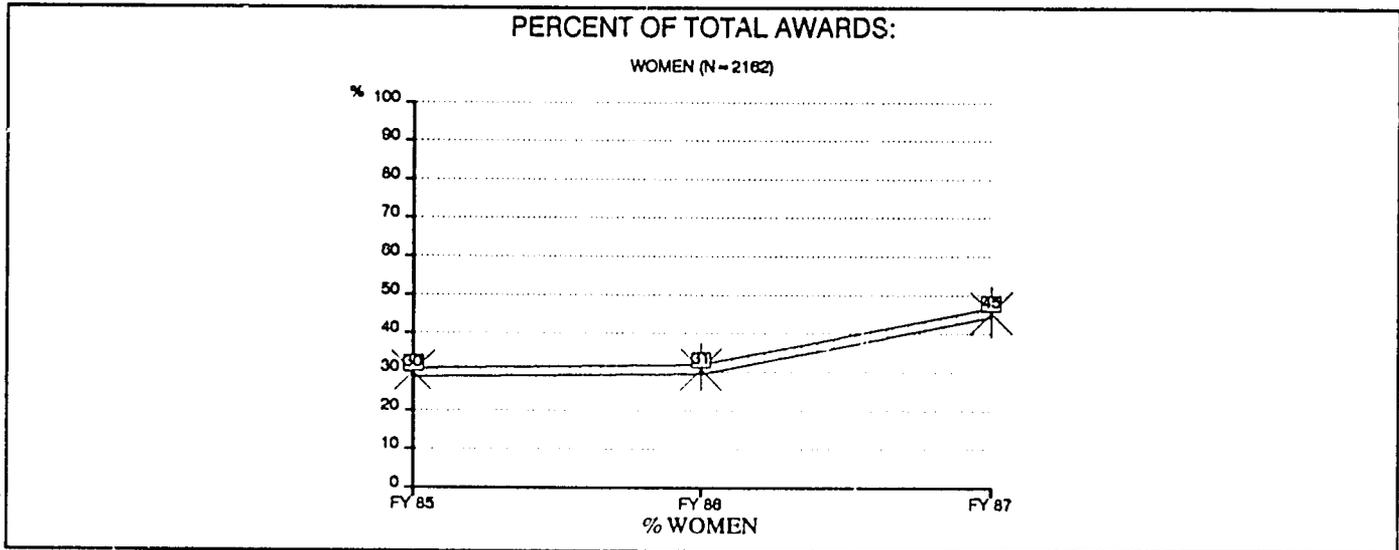


FIGURE 2

### Are the scholarships given to women qualitatively different from those given to men?

**No.** The quality of the awards issued to women does not vary from the quality of those issued to men, indicating that program implementors are conscientiously carrying out the spirit of the project vis-a-vis participation of women (see Figure 3).

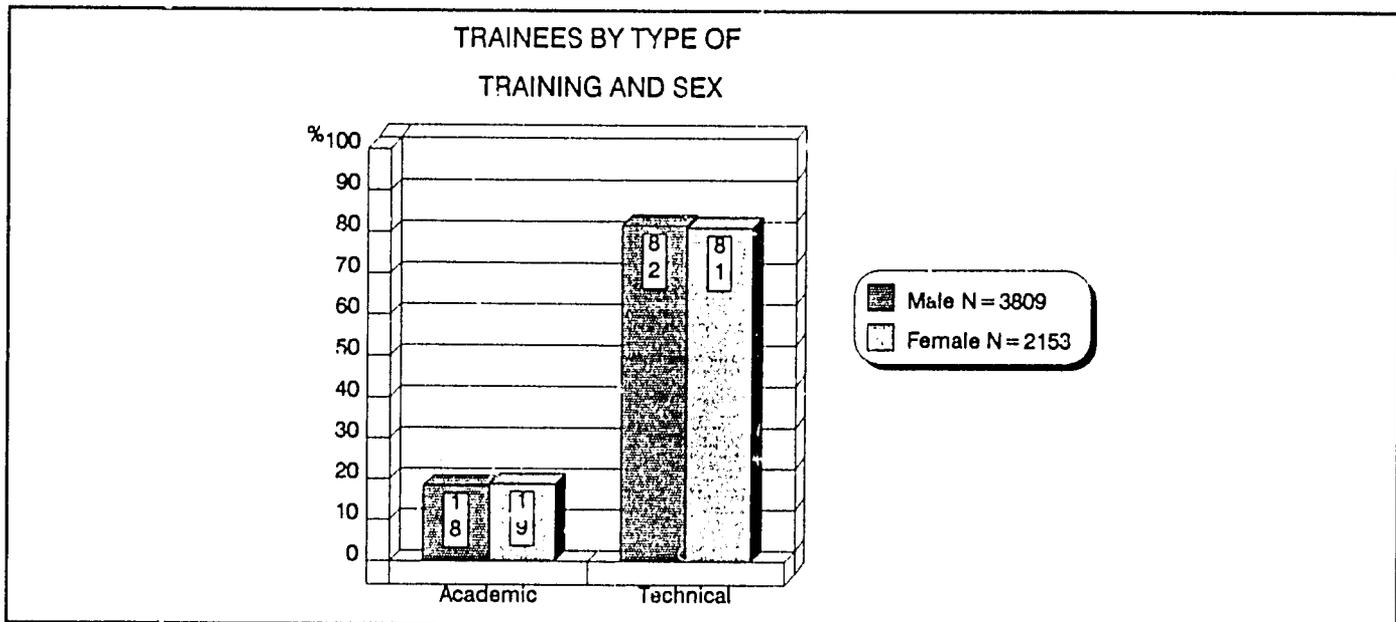


FIGURE 3

### Are scholarships being given to rural populations?

Yes. Although there is no concrete policy mandating a set percentage for rural-urban distribution, program managers gave preference to candidates from rural areas, thereby using rurality as part of the selection criteria. In FY 1987 over 80% of all awards were given to rural populations.

### Are scholarships being given to the economically (and socially) disadvantaged?

Yes. Most awards were granted to the economically disadvantaged as defined by the Missions and coded into the Missions' computerized CLASP Information Systems (CIS). Although the proportion of total awards granted to the economically disadvantaged in FY 1985 was not very high (48%), the proportion for FY 1986 jumped to 85%; and in FY 1987 there was further increase--to 93%.

### Does the educational level of Trainees reflect that a broad spectrum of society is participating in CAPS?

Yes. To the extent that years of schooling is an indicator of social context, we would expect to see a wide range of years of schooling among Trainees reflecting the wide range of target groups. This is indeed the case as noted by the following figures. Most Trainees completed at least some junior high or high school. More than one-third of the Trainees (38.4%) completed between 7 and 12 years of formal schooling, and slightly less than one-third (32.1%) completed 13 years or more. Just under 30% completed less than 7 years of schooling (see Figure 4).

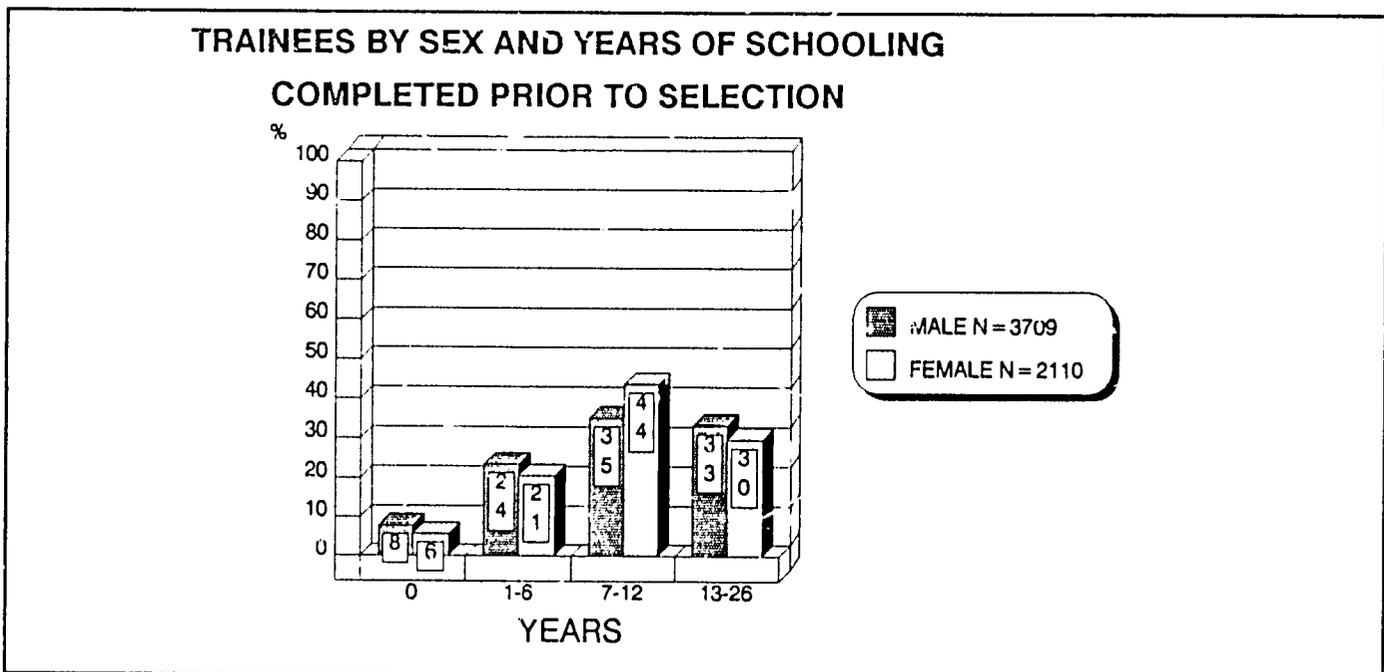


FIGURE 4

**Does the schooling of Trainees' parents provide further evidence that the CAPS program is serving the targeted population?**

Yes. When we look at the years of schooling of the parents of Trainees we find even more convincing evidence that program implementors are reaching their target populations. Parents of the CAPS Trainees typically had much less schooling than their children. More than one-third (39%) of the Trainees' parents had completed no (zero) years of schooling, and less than half (43.5%) had completed 1 to 6 years of schooling, as shown in Figure 5. Only 13.5% and 4%, respectively, had completed some secondary schooling and some college-level courses (see Figure 5).

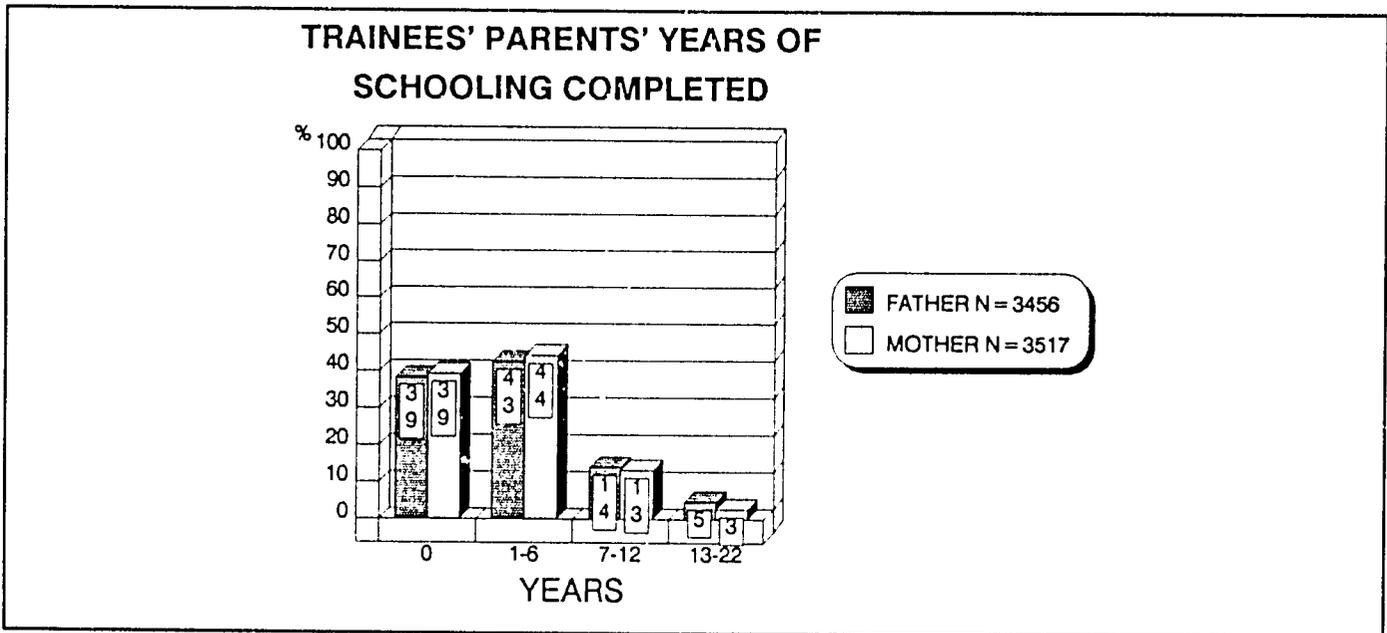


FIGURE 5

**Are CAPS Trainees selected from a variety of fields?**

Yes. Most of the Trainees had been prepared in agriculture (27.7%), followed by education (14.0%), business (6.6%), manufacturing (5.5%), and health (5.3%). One-quarter (25%) of Trainees had been prepared in other fields of study.

**Are CAPS Trainees selected from a range of occupational areas?**

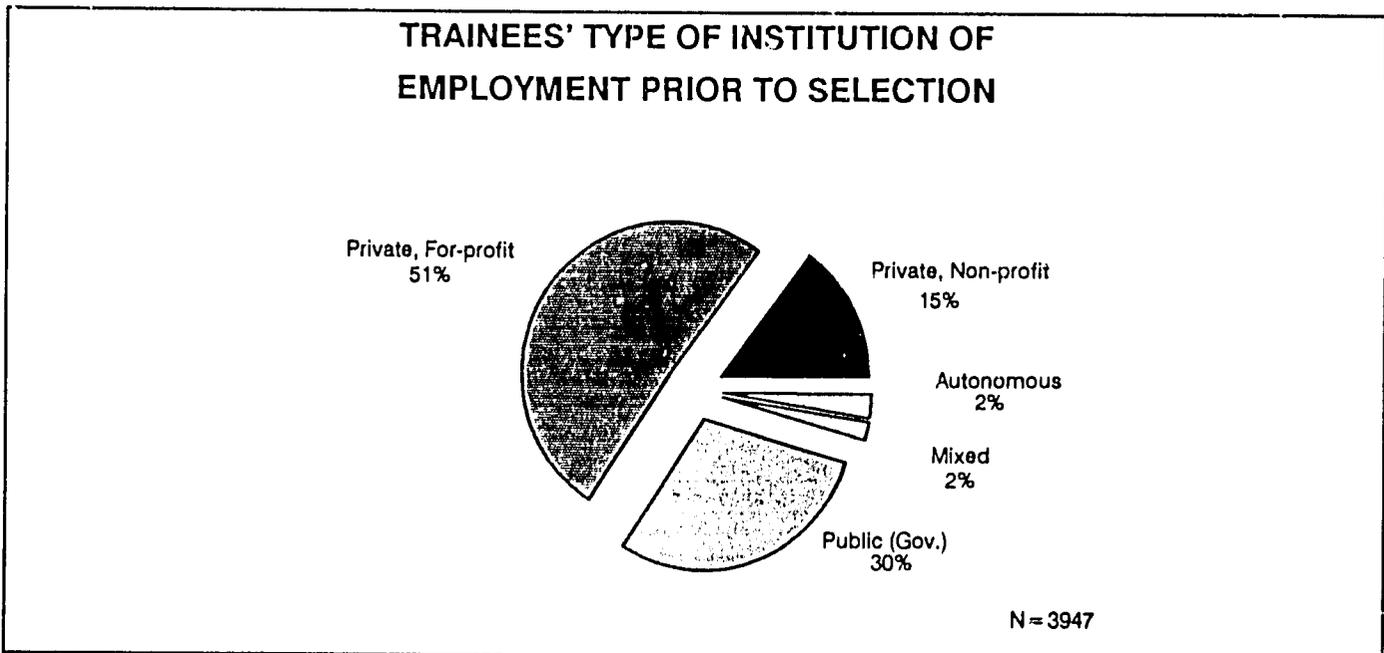
Yes. Trainees most frequently classified their occupations as unskilled worker (24.8%), student (18.3%), and skilled worker (15.9%), according to Table 1. Other categories were professional (13.9%), technician (9.0%), and business (9.0%).

**TABLE 1**  
**SCHOLARS BY SEX AND OCCUPATION**  
**PRIOR TO SELECTION**

AREA OF PREPARATION	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
	N = 1845	N = 3206	N = 5051
STUDENT	20.6%	17.0%	18.3%
BUSINESSMAN	14.1%	6.0%	9.0%
UNSKILLED WORKER	27.5%	23.2%	24.8%
MANAGER	1.1%	3.4%	2.6%
SKILLED WORKER	11.6%	18.4%	15.9%
SEMI-SKILLED WORKER	2.1%	2.7%	2.5%
PROFESSIONAL	14.6%	13.5%	13.9%
TECHNICIAN	3.7%	12.1%	9.0%
OTHER	4.6%	3.6%	4.0%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Are Trainees selected from both the private and public sectors?**

**Yes.** About two-thirds (66%) of Trainees were employed in the private sector at the time of their selection, 51% in private for-profit organizations, and 15% in nonprofit organizations. More than one-quarter (30%) of the Trainees were employed in the public sector. This proportion includes those who worked for the public schools. The remainder were employed in the autonomous sector (2%, publicly funded but not administered by the government) and the mixed sector (2%, co-funded by public and private agencies) (see Figure 6).



**FIGURE 6**

## TRAINING

### What training is provided?

This section considers the extent to which the general CAPS training process has been carried out by the objectives outlined in the Kissinger Report, CLASP PP and all CTPs. The following areas are discussed: Trainees' assessment of training -- both Skills Training and Experience America components (including impact of the training on Trainees' careers); Trainees' recommendations for improvements in the programs; and the degree to which the CAPS program appears to have met its objective of building stronger ties between U.S. and Central American citizens.

Training is comprised of two essential components: Experience America and Skills/Education training. Each section is discussed below.

### EXPERIENCE AMERICA

#### Do Trainees complete their training with positive views of the U.S.?

Yes. Trainees consistently perceived the U.S. positively and felt that the program had increased their understanding of U.S. life. A majority visited or lived with U.S. families and attended cultural, athletic, and civic events. They expressed positive views toward the U.S. (see Figures 7 & 8).

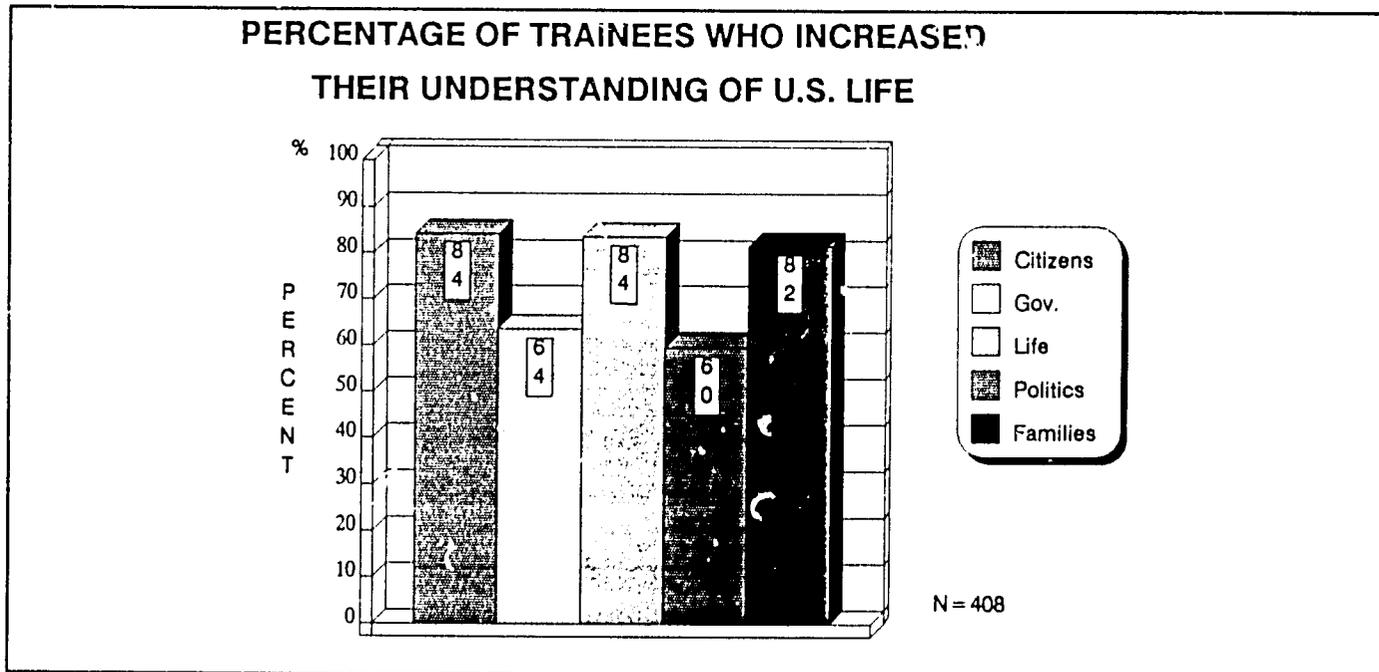
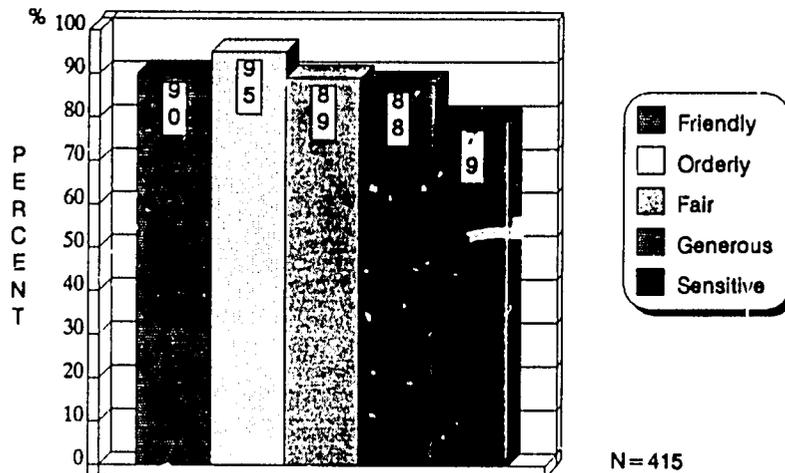


FIGURE 7

**RETURNEES: PERCENTAGE OF TRAINEES WHO VIEW THE U.S. ON CHARACTERISTICS**



**FIGURE 8**

**Are Trainees provided with a range of activities?**

**Somewhat.** Perhaps the lesson to be learned from this is that although articulation of the Experience America Component did not begin until the February 1987 CAPS Conference in Antigua, Guatemala, the Missions have begun to respond. However, the Missions must continue their efforts to describe the Experience America Component in their Country Training Plans; and the Agency should continue to insist on more detailed plans of this component through the Country Training Plans review process. The contractors, in turn, should be required to offer involvement with U.S. citizens. For example, contractors should arrange for affiliations with counterpart organizations as well as professional and occupational associations. In addition, there should be opportunities for experiencing the way U.S. institutions function.

**Skills Training**

**Were the skills training objectives realized?**

**Yes.** Trainees were satisfied about their training programs and felt that the training improved their work performance. Ninety-six percent were satisfied with their scholarship programs, and 82% felt that their training objectives had been achieved. These figures drop slightly for returned Trainees, to 92% and 78%, but are still overwhelmingly positive. Of returned Trainees, most reported that the training was useful for their jobs (89%), improved their work performance (82%), and helped them in faster career advancement (84%).

**Are there areas in which the CAPS program can be improved?**

**Yes.** Trainees provided many suggestions for program improvement. The biggest complaint that Trainees had was that the programs were often too short for the material covered and that

the Trainees in a program were sometimes too diverse in backgrounds and skills. These problems have implications both for the Missions and for the contractors and training institutions. Missions must use selection criteria that group Trainees appropriately. Contractors and institutions must make greater efforts to determine the preparation of the group before the program begins and to adjust materials accordingly. From Trainee comments, we also know that most Trainees prefer a practical, rather than theoretical, training approach focused on a few specific topics.

An area where improvements in the program are clearly needed is that of creating lasting ties--social, professional, and economic--between Trainees and U.S. citizens. Social activities with volunteer families, such as homestays, are only one source of ongoing ties. Another approach might be volunteer contacts in the U.S., recruited from professional organizations or Chambers of Commerce.

Although follow-up is a recent add on, its importance is evident. The lack of current ties may also be due in part to the lack of follow-up services. Better follow-up services might support the continuation of contact between U.S. citizens and Trainees as well as help Trainees to maintain contact with each other and to share their new skills with others in their countries.

## **PROJECT ADMINISTRATION**

An important activity of evaluation is to inform AID of the administrative and management issues which affect project implementation performance. These issues are often discussed informally or observed during the technical implementation field visits. The following sections discuss the more important issues which have arisen during FY 1987.

Our observations and opinions were formulated over the past year during visits to AID Missions, participation in AID conferences and contractor conferences (which we have facilitated on a regular monthly basis), visits to Trainees, and from the various data collection instruments which we have administered to Trainees, contractors, AID staff, and trainers.

**What innovative methods does the Bureau use to manage the CAPS project?**

**Regular contractor meetings in Washington.** The Bureau hosts a monthly meeting of CAPS, PTIIC and APSP contractor personnel to discuss issues of relevance to the contractors. Topics of meetings have included the Historical Black Colleges and Universities programming requirements, AID program duration requirements, Experience America activities, new U.S. tax policy and its impact on Trainees, and other topics.

Many contractor personnel have commented on the usefulness of these meetings in providing them with a sense of Agency commitment to the project and its goals.

The meetings have played very important roles in team building which incorporates contractor, Agency and evaluation personnel.

**Regional conferences.** At least once each year, regional conferences have been held which include AID/Washington, USAID, and contractor personnel. The conferences have provided an opportunity for all parties to discuss issues of interest, problems, and share experiences. They have been fundamental in conveying a sense of the nontraditional aspects of scholarship projects.

**Use of a process evaluator.** The Aguirre International/Checchi contract is unique in that it makes provisions for an evaluator from the project start-up in order to provide data needed for ongoing project implementation assessment and improvement.

**Institutionalization of Country Training Plans (CTPs).** The use of CTPs for project implementation is unique and has provided a context in which to assess project implementation and accomplishments. The plans have evolved over the past two years and now provide a more accurate projection of expected activities.

**Development of Experience America objectives.** At project start-up, most Agency managers and decision-makers were unable to distinguish between the nature of the CAPS training and traditional AID development training. LAC/DR/EST has excelled in clarifying the difference between the two types of training and ensures that CAPS training is focused on both Skills Training and Experience America activities. The Agency has successfully transmitted the concern of the Congress to Missions.

**Is the Training Cost Analysis (TCA) being implemented?**

**Yes, in part.** TCA has been used successfully to review and select proposals for several contracts in the region.

The use of the TCA for reporting expenditures has been more difficult to implement due in part to the lack of an adequate reporting form in the initial TCA system. (No ability to report in-country costs was provided and the level of reporting was too aggregated.) These problems have been confronted by the Bureau in coordination with OIT and a revised system will be issued early in FY 88.

**Are follow-up activities being provided?**

**Yes, albeit limited at this time.** Our first visit to Central American Missions almost two years ago identified the follow-up problem. Many Trainees had returned and were quite distressed that they had not received any contact from the Mission. They expected to participate in some sort of ongoing activity.

Follow-up activities to date have been fragmentary. Some Missions, primarily Guatemala, have implemented follow-up programming. Funds have been allocated to conferences and projects which incorporate returned Trainees. Costa Rica has hired a part time staff person who debriefs returning Trainees, as has El Salvador. Panama has stipulated that its contractor design a follow-up program which encompasses all U.S.- trained Panamanians (the current uncertainty over the Panama program may affect follow-up plans). The Georgetown CASP

program has identified outstanding leaders from its programs and has provided them with additional training to allow them to form a base for follow-up in country. In addition, LAC/DR/EST's Tom Donnelly has recently been loaned to the Georgetown program in Central America to help coordinate follow-up.

Guidance Cable (STATE 322904) stipulated the importance of follow-up activities. However, no additional funds have been allocated nor activities stipulated as yet.

**Is the lead time provided for Trainee placement adequate?**

**Yes, overall.** However, some Missions have sent Trainees to the U.S. with only a few day's notice. Contractors must then program and place the arriving Trainees with little or no information on Trainee background or skills. "Sudden" placement increases the chance for poor training.

**Do the staffs at CAPS training institutions receive an orientation to the CAPS program?**

**Somewhat.** This is perhaps the most sensitive and yet the most serious element in the implementation of CAPS and other scholarship programs. The people who will contribute most to the success of the Trainees' experience are the local Americans who teach, train and interact with the Trainees on a daily basis. These people must understand the special focus of CAPS to adequately program the Trainees. Over the course of our evaluation, we have visited several training programs in the U.S. and spoken with many people who are charged with the implementation of programs at the local level. Many of them have not received adequate information on the program purpose and their responsibilities. Many contractors attempt to convey the CAPS objectives to the training institution; others do not. Achieving a clear understanding of project goals by the local trainer is impaired by the many levels of organizations that separate the local trainer from the Mission Project staff. A Trainee may pass from the Mission to a local contractor representative, to the U.S. contractor, and to a training institution.

## **COST OF CAPS TRAINING**

**Have CAPS cost-containment efforts been successful?**

**Yes.** Expenditures by the Agency on training costs for CAPS are very low and they have been contained over the life of the project. This containment can be attributed in part to careful attention to cost by Agency managers at the highest levels. Contractors and other project implementors are very aware of the need to contain costs. The implementation of the Agency's Training Cost Analysis (TCA) has helped focus attention on the issue of costs; however few contractors are reporting consistently using TCA.

Training costs presented below are divided into two logical categories: costs for technical training and costs for academic training.

## Technical Training Costs

Technical training is defined as all training not designed to lead to a degree from an academic institution. Costs remain quite low for overall technical training. The \$2,535 per training month figure has not changed significantly since last year; however it is appreciably lower than the FY 85 cost figures (see Figure 9).

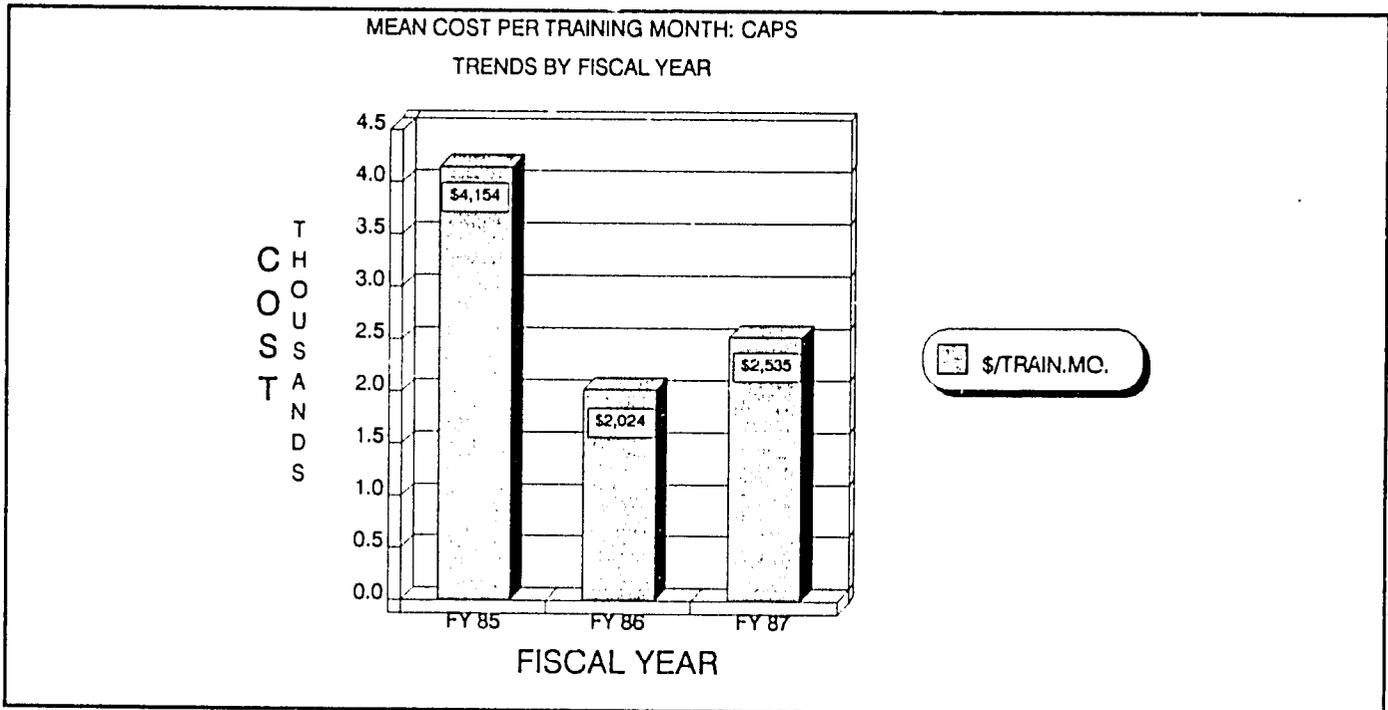


FIGURE 9

ROCAP and Guatemala have demonstrated the largest cost decline over the period of the project. Belize's and Panama's costs have risen. Belize's cost rose into the high range for FY87 while Panama's costs rose to the mid range (Panama's costs in FY 86 were very low.)

Costa Rica's costs are stable and very low. Honduras' and El Salvador's costs are high and have not varied much over the life of the project.

Considerable cost differences exist among Missions. Both Panama and Costa Rica continue to show very low costs per training month. The primary reason for these low costs is the decision by these Missions to train large numbers of youth through 4-H type programs. These programs are very low cost.

The Mission spending most on training is Honduras followed by El Salvador. Even though costs in these Missions were higher, we note that the portion of extremely high cost programs (those costing over \$5,000 per training month) has been eliminated. The difference among Missions is quite marked. Costa Rica will provide almost four times as many months of training

for their program as the higher-cost Missions will provide at current spending levels. Higher-cost Missions either will have to send fewer Trainees or provide shorter training programs than Costa Rica (see Figure 10).

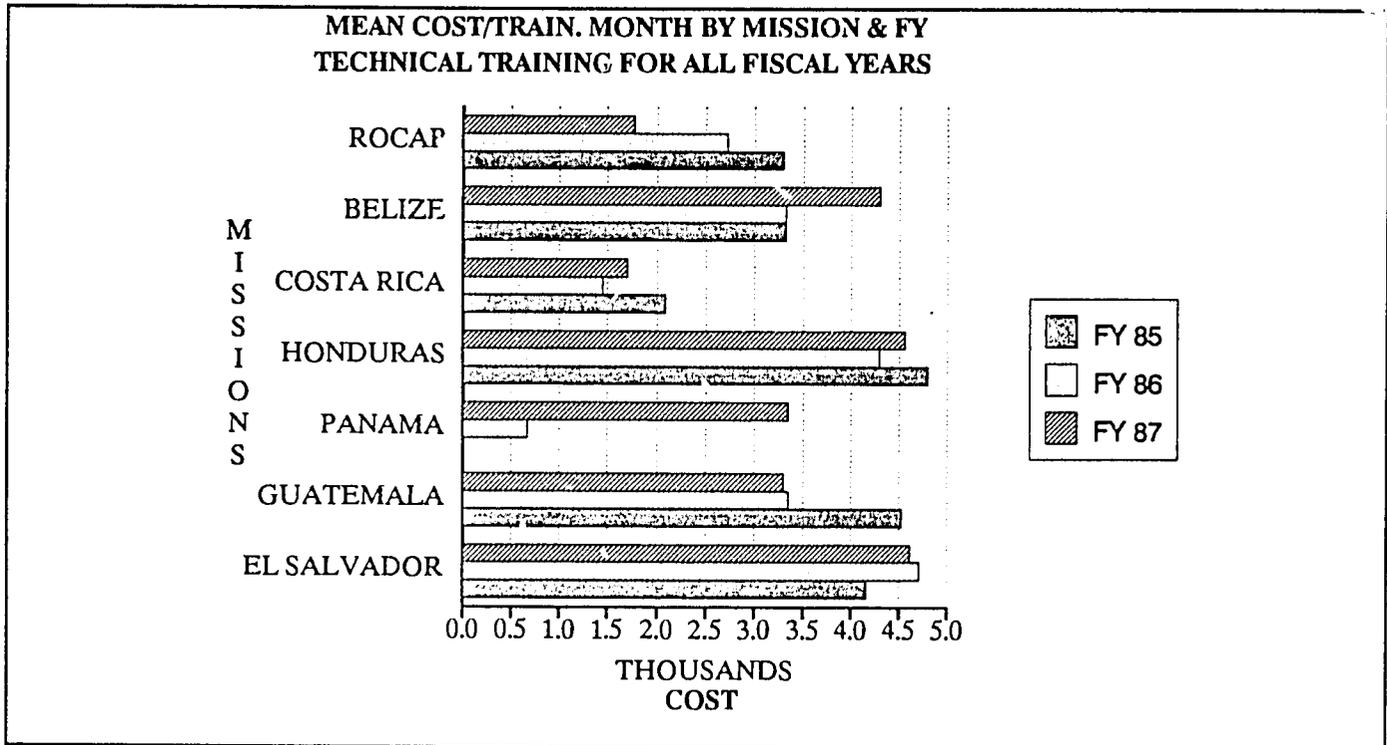


FIGURE 10

### Academic Training Costs

Academic training costs are also quite low. Honduras has the lowest overall cost. Academic costs are especially low considering that they include costs of significant in-country training and programming. The contractors for Panama and Honduras maintain in-country staff and perform many predeparture activities. The contractor for El Salvador performs some activities in country (Note: the costs reported for Honduras include several in-country training months for many Trainees which lower the overall cost per training month.) (see Figure 11).

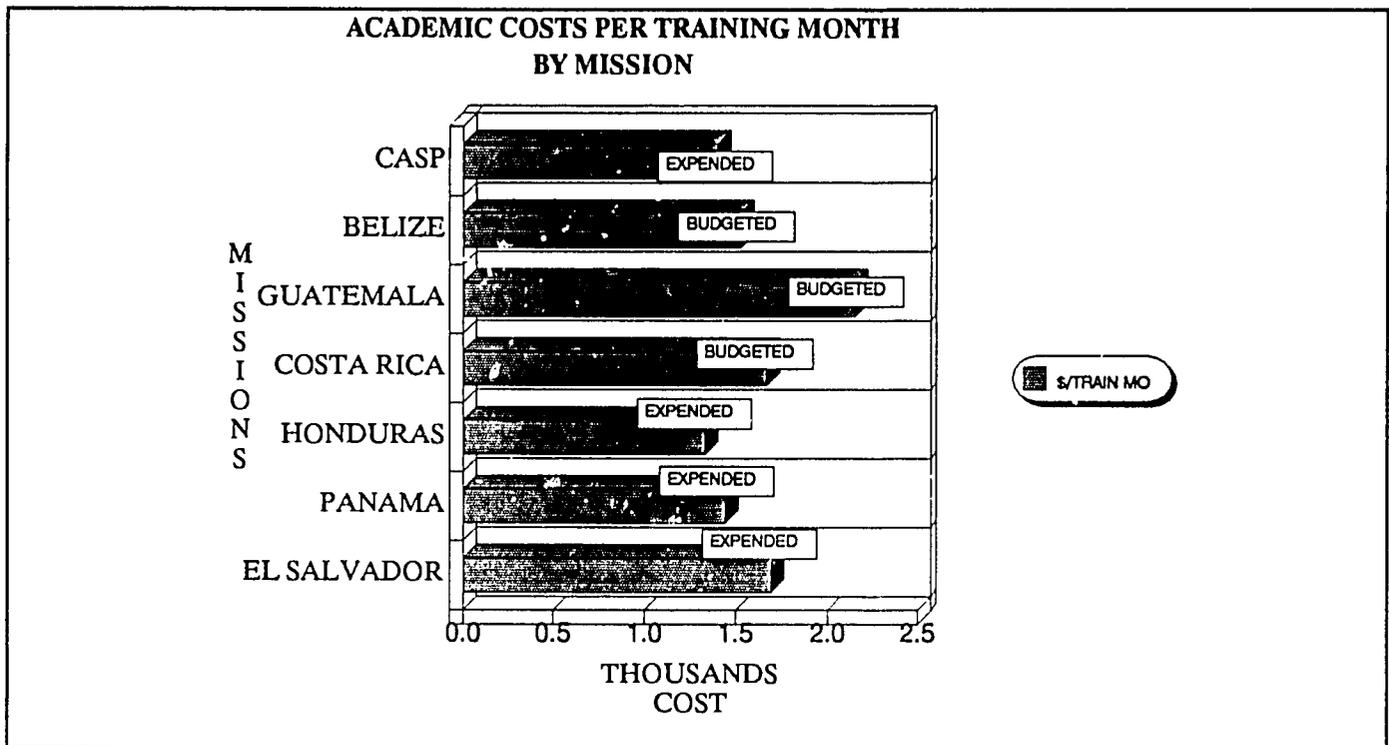


FIGURE 11

Many academic Trainees to date have been enrolled in community colleges, which helps maintain low costs. In this context, we may expect costs to rise somewhat as trainees enter four-year institutions.

Unlike technical training costs, academic-cost figures should be viewed with care since some of the costs (especially OITs) are budgeted and others are actual expenditures. OITs costs reflect total expected program costs while other contractors' costs are actual expenditures to date which may rise significantly over time. As Training Cost Analysis use expands, we can expect all costs to reflect actual expenditures.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this Second Annual Report lead to a number of recommendations:

1. More awards should be given to women. To date, 36% of all awards have been to women. This is very close to the goal of 40%. Missions that have not reached their goals are: Honduras, El Salvador and ROCAP.
2. AID, contractors, and institutions must make greater efforts to determine the preparation of the group before the program begins and to adjust materials accordingly. From Trainee comments, we also know that most Trainees prefer a practical, rather than theoretical, training approach focused on a few specific topics.

3. Strategies must be sought to ensure a greater tie between U.S. life and culture and the returned Trainees in light of the fact that, overall, 65% of respondents report they maintained no links with the U.S. after their return to their home country.
4. LAC/DR/EST should continue using its working group to standardize TCA reporting formats and procedures for all contractors, Mission Project Officers, and Contract Officers. This effort by LAC/DR/EST will help alleviate confusion on the part of all parties regarding how cost data should be reported, when data should be delivered, and to whom. The working group should also address the use of TCA for management purpose (e.g., define issues such as the appropriate unit of analysis Project Officers should use to assess the cost of training as well as the frequency with which such assessments should be done).
5. LAC/DR/EST should closely monitor short-term training of less than one month to determine if it falls within the CAPS mandate. The Country Training Plan reviews and recent cable guidance clarifying the Agency policy vis-a-vis length of training are positive steps in guiding the Missions.
6. LAC/DR/EST should develop a strategy to highlight the need for follow-up, how it may be implemented and funded, and what activities prove to be successful. Many Agency managers may not focus on follow-up as an integral action related to project goals.
7. Attention should be paid to developing a training module for CAPS implementors to assist them in developing training requests that adequately describe the Trainees, their social context, and follow-up activities subsequent to the training.
8. Related to Recommendation #7, training should be provided to CAPS Mission staff that will enable them to develop clear instructions for contractor programming agents. CAPS implementors should understand the importance of receiving a Training Implementation Plan that contains at a minimum: 1) a discussion of how the proposed training relates to CAPS goals; 2) clear training objectives; 3) description of activities to be performed in order to reach objectives; 4) an evaluation plan that will monitor progress towards reaching objectives as well as final program outcome; and 5) possible follow-up activities in country.
9. LAC/DR/EST should continue its efforts to ensure that all Mission and field staff understand that considerable lead time is required to program and place Trainees. The standard already established by LAC/DR/EST is to allow contractors six months to program academic Trainees and three months to program technical Trainees. This standard should be enforced.
10. LAC/DR/EST should develop a concise official description of what it expects from the skills/training and Experience America programs. CAPS contractors should be required to distribute this statement to all training institutions and individuals who may become involved with the Trainees if they can be identified beforehand.
11. LAC/DR/EST should sponsor a symposium for experts, contractors, and Mission staff to review progress to date in realizing Experience America objectives and implementing alternative follow-up strategies.